



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter



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“The robin flew from his swinging spray of ivy on to the top of the wall and he opened his beak and sang a loud, lovely trill, merely to show off. Nothing in the world is quite as adorably lovely as a robin when he shows off - and they are nearly always doing it.”

— Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*



Conservation News

The U.S. Congress is proposing serious changes to the Endangered Species Act. It should never be forgotten the Endangered Species Act protects the biodiversity that ultimately makes it possible for homo sapiens to survive. Make your phone calls--the future of your children and grandchildren is at stake.

Scott Pruitt has been approved as EPA administrator who has a past record of opposing many EPA rules including one on Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, a public health measure estimated to prevent 11,000 premature deaths, 4,700 heart attacks and 130,000 asthma attack each year. Call now to let your Representatives and Senators know where you stand on clean air and clean water and the regulations necessary to maintain a healthy environment for future generations.

Our work is cut out for us, no time to waste.

Sue Vernier, Conservation Chair, Evansville Audubon Society

Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN)
U.S. Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-4814
Webmail:
www.donnelly.senate.gov/contact/emailjoe

Evansville Office:
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Jerry Parkinson,
Regional Director

Representative Larry Bucshon (R-IN-8th)
U.S. House of Representatives
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Webmail: www.bucshon.house.gov

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Larry Ordner, SW IN Field Director

Senator Todd Young (R-IN)
U.S. Senate
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Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-5623
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www.young.senate.gov/content/contactsenator

Evansville Office: No Phone Number

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: 202-456-1111
Webmail: www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

Additional websites:

www.senate.gov
www.house.gov

Contact IN legislators: www.iga.in.gov -- Click on *Find Your Legislator* & enter your address to find your state senator & rep info

EAS Minutes February 21, 2017

President Batema called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm with a quorum present. Sue Vernier moved and Judi Russell moved that the minutes from the previous meeting be approved. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report :The following balances were reported for February:

Bulk Mail: \$119.10 CD:\$4873.06 Savings:\$ 5.09
Checking w/o Reserves: \$ 2042.71
Checking w/ Reserves:\$ 4912.65

* Reserve Accts. Total: \$ 2869.94

* Reserve Accts. Balances

Educ. & Conser. Available: \$ 1626.26 E-Scripts: \$262.87

OVB: \$ 980.81

Treasurer Rosenquist also noted that we have received \$ 1410 for annual fund donations, and renewal notice mailings were briefly discussed.

Field Trips: The following dates were noted: 4 March Cane Ridge; 1 and 15 April Audubon Wetlands; 13 May Blue Grass.

Programs: Andrew Nunn will present " Invasive Species" in March Heath Hamilton from PRNWR will discuss the Barn Owl Nest Box program tonight.

Conservation: Sue Vernier has sent out a list of Federal congress members. Concerns about possible provision changes of the Endangered Species Act were noted. Possible state-wide concerns include Solar Net Metering; CAFO regulation, and state forest logging set asides

Education: Andrew reported that we received a priority list of Mrs. Michelle Smith's grant request at a total of \$ 725.00 which would cover seeds, storage tubs, ear buds for listening to bird calls, photo processing, field trip expenses, and a Susan Fowler presentation. Maryann Watson moved and Carolyn Bennett seconded that the request be granted. Motion was approved. We may yet receive other requests. We were reminded that the Schnucks E-Script monies go to education.

OVB: Emails have been sent out.

Old Business Updates: We still need someone to head-up Jr. Birders, and Sunday's trip to Audubon was noted.

New Business:The website is now EVVAudubon.org. Members are asked to check the site and note corrections or areas of concern/interest ex. local birding hotspots. We are seeking a new website manager. Volunteers are needed for the 14 May Spring count. Newsletter deadline is 27 Feb. President Batema noted a nominating committee is needed soon.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryann Watson
Secretary

Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking for replacements for two of our volunteers. The first is a person to be the coordinator for our very successful Junior Birder program. This program consists of typically six hikes throughout the year with young birders, ages 8 to 18, and led by our very knowledgeable Chris Newman. The coordinator basically needs only to schedule the dates and coordinate with the participants. The popularity and success of this program can be seen from the comments of the Jr. Birders in the report in this and previous newsletters. If you have questions, you can contact Carol Pettys, who originally organized the program and has done a great job since its beginning. Her email is pettys1234@aol.com.

The second position needing to be filled is for newsletter mailing. This job consists of just getting the newsletters from the printer, attaching the mailing tabs and address labels, and delivering them to the downtown Post Office with the mailing form. There are six newsletters per year. If you are interested, please contact president Don Batema, dbatema@evansville.edu.



ON-LINE NEWSLETTERS

We are again inviting members to choose the on-line version of our newsletter, rather than the printed, mailed copy. The two advantages are, first, that it saves postage and paper (trees), and the second is that the on-line version includes color photos of birds submitted by our members, shots from field trips ,etc. If you would like to try this option, please send your name and email address to Steve Heeger, sdheeger@sbcglobal.net. If you have already been using this option and have changed your email address, also please send in your new address. Of course, the on-line version is available on our website, evvaudubon.org, for those wanting to view the additional photos not included in the mailed version.



Interested in endangered species??

The Indiana Endangered Species list can be reached via the DNR Wildlife Diversity Section page:
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2356.htm>

Meet your Legislators in Posey County area
March 11, 9 AM - 11 AM CST at Poseyville Community Center,
25 W. Fletchall Ave.
Featuring Congressman Bucshon, Rep. Wendy McNamara and Sen. Jim Tomes -- provides the community with an opportunity to meet with elected leaders.

We had 13 chilly souls show up for the EAS Sloughs Sauerheber trip this morning where the temperature was 18° at 7 AM, highlights were 4 species of Raptor (including 9 Bald Eagles) and several species of waterfowl, including several hundred Snow Geese. We then headed to the recently opened Audubon wetlands to check out the new trail and boardwalk, highlights were both kinglets and a flyby Wood duck. Thanks to everyone for going, our next trip will be March 4th to Cane Ridge WMA.

Bob Meier

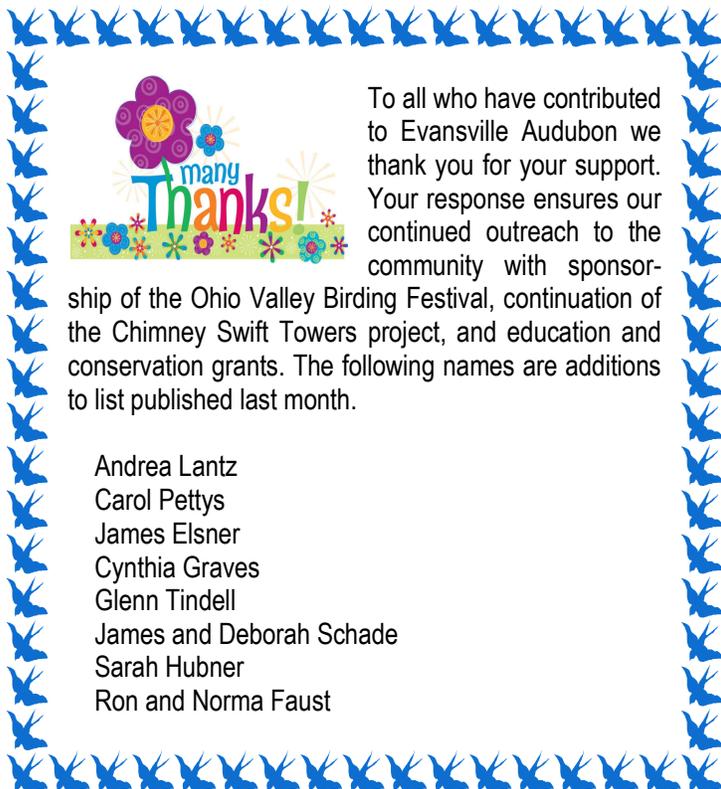


International Migratory Bird Count

The "International Migratory Bird Count", otherwise known as our "Spring Bird Count", will be held on May 14. This is, in fact, an important international event, enlisting the efforts of birders and ornithologists around the world on that one day, to record the data on birds in all countries, for assessing the status of all the species, and at the same time, the effects of environment, pollution, and the overall health of the bird populations.

We will be doing the count on the 14th for the Vanderburgh County area. If you would like to join in this count, which is always enjoyable in being able to record the migratory and non-migratory birds, including especially the colorful warblers that are just passing through, we would love to have your help.

For those who don't feel they are experienced birders, you can join up with some of our good birders and learn some new birds, or you can also help in recording the sightings. If you would like to join us, please contact Steve Heeger at 812-499-0177 or sdheeger@sbcglobal.net. For those not wanting to go out in the field, you can also count at your feeder for the day. Use the same contact information for details.





To all who have contributed to Evansville Audubon we thank you for your support. Your response ensures our continued outreach to the community with sponsorship of the Ohio Valley Birding Festival, continuation of the Chimney Swift Towers project, and education and conservation grants. The following names are additions to list published last month.

- Andrea Lantz
- Carol Pettys
- James Elsner
- Cynthia Graves
- Glenn Tindell
- James and Deborah Schade
- Sarah Hubner
- Ron and Norma Faust



Attention Schnuck's Shoppers!!!

Please support Evansville Audubon by shopping at a Schnuck's grocery

store. Just pick up a Schnuck's eScrip Customer Card at the customer service desk and follow the directions on the card to register. Our group ID number is: 500023419

A percentage of your purchases at Schnucks' will benefit the education funds of EAS. Every time you shop at Schnuck's give the checker your eScrip card to scan. It's just that easy and it won't cost you a thing! We thank Schnuck's for donating over \$500 to our education funds via eScrip. This money is used for various environmental/conservation projects.

Questions? contact Carol: pettys1234@aol.com or 867-6231

Visit our Website at www.evvaudubon.org

Latest information regarding field trips, photos, recent bird counts, etc.

Contact the webmaster at:
brian.taylor@haubstadt.com





Conservation News

Congress has wasted no time introducing legislation changing rules relating to conservation and rolling back environmental regulations. If this is of concern to you, contact your two U.S. Senators and your Representative (information found elsewhere in this newsletter) and discuss the issues that matter to you. Below is a short list of some of the actions taken which affects your clean water, clean air and public land:

- House Bill H.R. 49 introduced to open up the Coastal Plain of the Arctic NWR to oil and gas development.
- House and Senate repealed the Stream Protection Rule that restricted coal companies from dumping toxic mining waste into streams and waterways. Hazardous waste has destroyed an estimated 2,000 miles of streams in Appalachia. The Rule included several important safeguards for clean drinking water and the well-being of communities living near coal mines.
- House passed resolution to repeal Alaska Refuge Rule which prohibited aggressive predator control practices, such as aerial gunning of wolves and gassing pups in dens and killing brown bears over bait, from occurring on Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges. This rule did not affect subsistence hunting.
- The House of Representatives changed their rules to assign public lands a value of \$0 in the event of any attempted public lands giveaway. The purpose being to make it easier to sell off our public lands or transfer to the states.
- House efforts to "repeal and replace" the Endangered Species Act. Among the proposals: Undermining the use of science under the ESA and blocking federal protections or denying existing protections for individual species, including wolves and sage grouse.
- An executive order issued that required all regulations from the federal government cost regulated industries \$0 in 2017 without taking into account the benefits of saving lives, protecting our health, safeguarding fundamental rights and preserving wildlife and open spaces.
- Scott Pruitt, new Administrator of Environmental Protection Agency, as former Oklahoma Attorney General sued EPA 14 times. He will now be in charge of Clean Air Act standards.

The optimum depth of water in a birdbath is two and a half inches. Less water makes it difficult for birds to take a bath; more makes them afraid.



Upcoming Programs

Programs are at WWNP, at:700pm

March 21, 2107, "*Hemlocks under Attack*", Andrew Nunn

April 18, 2017, "*The Singing Life of a Bell's Vireo*", Don Batema

May 16, 2017, "*Attracting beneficial insects to your landscape to reduce the use of pesticides*", Paul Bouseman

June 20, 2017, *Indiana's Bicentennial: "Under the Arms of an Elm"* Susan Fowler

News from Patoka NWR

As of late last week, the replacement boardwalk and observation deck complete with two benches at Snakey Point Marsh has been completed. It is made of plastic wood and is supported in place by legs on pads placed in the bottom mud of the marsh. It extends further out into the waters of the marsh. Very nice facility that the public should enjoy.

Refuge Manager, Bill McCoy

Attention Young Birders!



The Jr. Birders of the Evansville Audubon Society would like to invite you to John James Audubon State Park on Saturday, April 23, at 2:00 PM. They will be assisting Chris Newman, JB leader, on a bird hike for students ages 8-18. Meet at the museum's upper parking lot where binoculars will be provided. Preceding the JB hike are two other programs for kids. Basic Birding 101 at 11:30 AM and Hands-on Bird Banding at 12:30 PM. The JB hike will follow at 2:00 PM. All are free!!

There are many other opportunities for young and seasoned birders during the Ohio Valley Birding Festival.

Go to: ohiovalleybirdingfestival.org for the whole schedule of events April 21-23 and May 5-7.

Questions? Contact Carol at pettys1234@aol.com

HELP PATOKA RIVER NWR (and Refuges across the country)

This is a case of the unintended consequences of removing regulations that do have a purpose to protect us and our local Refuge. Please contact Congressman Bucshon and voice your concerns regarding H.J. Res.45 and the attempt to disapprove the updated Rule for operations of oil and gas wells on National Wildlife Refuges.

The Rules for Operation of Oil and Gas Wells on National Wildlife Refuge lands were originally written in 1965. After several years of working on a rewrite, the final updated rule was published in the Federal Register in December, 2016. Unfortunately, this rule, after extensive public review and comment periods, has been included in the House Joint Resolution 45 to be considered for regulatory reversal by vote of the House and Senate.

The new Rule is important in that it requires a Special Use Permit from the refuge to protect surface resources on refuge-owned land where the mineral estate has been reserved by a third party. It also requires a bond to cover the cost of site restoration when the oil well is plugged and closed. You may be surprised to learn that Indiana does not require a bond for new oil wells if the operator has no record of recent citations.

If some question the new requirement for posting a bond with the Refuge when drilling an oil well on refuge-owned lands, consider the fact that in the past year the Patoka River NWR has discovered three abandoned oil wells, all in the floodplain, with one leaking crude oil right next to the old river channel. The State Division of Oil and Gas had records showing the wells were all plugged and cleaned up in 1995. Guess who is going to pay for the plugging of these three oil wells? Not the operator that drilled the wells nor the contractor paid to plug the wells. This can easily cost \$10,000 per well or more depending on site access and problems with the well casings.

Patoka River NWR has extensive coal mine land and oil development within or just outside its boundaries and has made every effort to work responsibly with the resource developers to balance the goals of the Refuge and the health and safety of the surrounding communities with the economic benefits of the mining and oil industries. This has worked well with responsible operators, but sometimes there are instances of operators who are not so competent and responsible and occasions arise where potentially hazardous situations must be cleaned up. It is in everyone's best interest if those who created the problem are required to pay for the cleanup rather than the taxpayer.

Reversing the new Rule is a bad idea. Ask your Congressman to drop from consideration in H.J. Res. 45 the reversal of the National Wildlife Refuge Oil and Gas Rule regulation (a similar action has already been done for the National Parks).

Sue Vernier, Conservation Chair
Evansville Audubon Society

GBBC! A First for Jr. Birders!

Seven Jr. Birders met at John James Audubon State Park on Saturday, Feb.18, to take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count. It is a worldwide bird count held over 4 days in February each year. The JB's learned how to collect bird data which was then sent electronically to Cornell for interpretation. Thanks to the park for having the feeders full of seed and bird ready. The birds were cooperative.

The JB's saw 12 species from the wonderful bird room. Of note were: 4 Purple Finches near 2 House Finches for easy comparison and 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches near White-breasted Nuthatches. Thanks of Chris Newman, JB leader. He had lots of good information and stories for the kids. He's such a pro! Also thanks to the moms, dads, grandparents, EAS members Maryann and Steve, who helped. A record number of participants for this JB event...18!

After tallying the whole group's count, we visited the new Audubon Wetlands boardwalk near the river. We were met by the chirping of spring peepers. It started to rain shortly after arrival so the hike was cut short. But 6 more families know its location and can return on their own.

Jr. Birders welcomed 2 new members, Thomas and Willa. Ryan, sporting a new pair of Eagle Optic binoculars, helped Thomas ID the birds. Willa teamed up with Ellie, a classmate at Evansville Lutheran School.

Memories from the Jr. Birders:

"I enjoyed counting all the birds so we could learn more about the local bird populations." Ryan

"That was my first time doing the bird count with the Jr. Birders. I liked it! I really liked the boardwalk, too! I can't wait to go back." Lily

"The meeting at Audubon was the first time I have done the national bird count. It was a cool experience and I learned the right way to do a bird count." Kolten

"I really loved it! My favorite bird that we saw was the Purple Finch because I had never seen one up close. The boardwalk area was cool but I was sad it started raining and we could not get farther than we did." Ellie

All in all, it was a good time for all.

The Jr. Birders will assist Chris on a hike at John James Audubon State Park on Sunday, April 23, at 2:00 PM. It's part of the Ohio Valley Birding Festival. Kids, ages 8-18, are welcome to join us. Free! Check out the website: ohiovalleybirdingfestival.org for details.

Questions? contact Carol at pettys1234@aol.com

It will be time to elect officers soon. We are looking for volunteers for the Nominating Committee. Please contact Don Batema, if you are interested! (812) 464-2847, dbatema@evansville.edu

There is an enclosed flyer that is meant to be folded as a tri-fold brochure for the Ohio Vally Birding Festival. Enjoy!

Evansville Audubon Society
Evansville, IN
Permit No. 1666
Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve
551 North Boeke Road
Evansville, IN 47711

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Newsletter Editor: Judi Russell, (812) 626-0865, jrussell@usa.com
Visit our website at: www.evvaudubon.org

Moving? Send change of address to:
Steve Heeger
15340 Cemetery Road
Evansville, IN 47725

The mission of the Evansville Audubon Society is to promote the awareness of and appreciation for birds and other wildlife and their habitats through education and conservation.

Not an Evansville Audubon Society member? Join now and become a member of the National Audubon Society as well. **Current members** should renew with National Audubon Society. **Chapter Code C9ZH030Z**

\$20: 1 year introductory rate

\$15: 1 year Student/ Senior (62 and over) rate

\$30: 2 year Special Rate

Mail to: Niles Rosenquist, EAS Treasurer, 732 S. Willow Rd., Evansville, IN 47714

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My check enclosed

Checks payable to: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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