



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter

www.evvaudubon.org

Volume 53, Number 7, March-April 2023 Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve 551 N Boeke Rd. Evansville, IN 47711

Meet the Celebrities of Southern Indiana

Whooping Cranes once extirpated from the Midwest and on the brink of extinction, are a treasured visitor of Indiana every winter. In the 1940s, only a small population of around 20 Whooping Cranes remained in the western United States. In 2001, efforts to save Whooping Cranes led to the establishment of the Eastern Migratory Population, a completely reintroduced population that stretches through much of the Midwest and southern United States. In the summer, Whooping Cranes within the Eastern Migratory Population will breed in Wisconsin, and in the late fall, they will migrate to their wintering locations in western Indiana and northern Alabama. The International Crane Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to conserving cranes worldwide, is continuing to support the growth of this population by releasing Whooping Crane fledglings raised in captivity through costume and parent-rearing techniques and supporting the hatching of chicks in the wild. As a result of these efforts, nearly 80 birds make up this population and offer a spectacular opportunity to view one of the rarest crane species worldwide throughout the eastern United States and right here in Indiana.

In southern Indiana, we are lucky to have a large annual wintering population of around 15-20 Whooping Cranes at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County. Another 4 Whooping Cranes have been wintering in the Gibson County area.

A regular wintering crane to keep a lookout for is W4-22, a chick who recently hatched in the wild. With the majority of cranes in the Eastern Migratory Population raised in captivity, this is an exciting new addition to the flock! This season W4-22 can be found around Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area spending time with her parents, wild hatched W1-19 and costume reared 1-17. W4-22 looks distinct from other Whooping Cranes because she has a cinnamon-colored head and armpits. By the time W4-22 makes it back to Wisconsin in the early spring, she will have white plumage and blend in with the other adult Whooping Cranes!



At the International Crane Foundation, we rely heavily on citizen scientists reporting their sightings of Whooping Cranes. Information on their locations assists in our understanding of habitat use, migratory patterns, survival, breeding pairs, and more. Most Whooping Cranes within the Eastern Migratory Population are banded with black, red, white, and green bands on one or both legs. As you are watching for Whooping Cranes around southern Indiana, please report any sightings to bandedcranes.org and remember these crane safe behaviors.

- Give Whooping Cranes their space and stay 200 yards away from cranes at all times.
- Understand their behaviors – head up and wings back mean take a step back!
- Respect private property and only park in designated areas to view Whooping Cranes.
- Report Whooping Crane harassment, disturbance, or poaching to 1-800-TIP-IDNR.
- Head to www.savingcranes.org for more information about Whooping Cranes, the Eastern Migratory Population, and how you can protect cranes in your community!

PROGRAMS

Programs will be the third Tuesday of **every other month beginning in September, 2022**, at Wesselman Woods Nature Center at 6 PM (central time) and are free and open to the public.
NOTE: Any last minute changes will be posted on our Facebook page and Website and via email.

March 21, 2023 -- "Mesker Park Zoo: Helping to Bring the Eastern Hellbender Back From the Brink of Extinction in Indiana" presented by Leigh Ramon, Animal Curator, Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden. In 2014, Mesker Zoo joined a partnership with Purdue University, IDNR, The Nature Conservancy, and two other Indiana zoos with the purpose of increasing the number of hellbenders in the Blue River. Join Leigh on the journey to find out where the program began, how far it has come, and where it is going.

May 16, 2023 -- "Proper Management of Purple Martins and Bluebirds" presented by Mike Brown. Mike lives in western Kentucky and has around 80 pairs of martins each year and his colony fledged over 400 young last year. He also manages a bluebird trail.

BIG 100 CONTEST HONORABLE MENTIONS

Kathy Bell-167 FL
Chuck Mills-151 AZ
Jared Emmack-116 IN
David Stone-114 KY, 104 IN
Mark Welter-112 IN
Steve Bell-110 IN
Heath Harlan- 107 IN
Bob Meier-106 IN
Evan Speck-104 IN

FRIDAY MIGRATION WALKS

March 31-Burdette Park@5pm
April 14-Audubon Wetlands@5pm
April 28-Howell Wetlands(in conjunction with the OBVF)@5pm
May 12-Eagle Slough@5pm

Sycamore Land Trust Arbor Day Tree Giveaway! Friday, April 28, 2023 11AM - 2PM

Free native tree saplings, Old National Bank Atrium, One Main St., Evansville. Additional giveaways from Wild Birds Unlimited, Ancient Roots Native Nursery and information from Evansville Audubon Society and Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge.

THANK YOU!

To those who have donated to our fundraising campaign since our last newsletter... *Carolyn Egan, Brian Taylor, Par IT Consulting*

FIELD TRIP

May 6- Harmonie SP"warbler madness"
Meet at the pool parking lot at 6:15am, this event will once again be led by local linguistics professor, Dr. John Meridig. You don't wanna miss this one.

Howell Wetlands Birding Hike

5 P.M.--Meets at Howell Wetlands parking lot at 1400 Tekoppel Ave, Evansville, IN; Approx. 2 hrs.



Accompany us on a search for early spring migrants during a walk through this restored wetland park on Evansville's west side. If you have binoculars, bring them along.

Saturday, April 29

Birding at Audubon Wetlands*

7 A.M. --Meets at Audubon Wetlands, across from 790 Wolf Hills Road, Henderson, KY. Approx. 2 hrs.; Wear shoes for marshy conditions.

A wetland property acquisition essentially doubles the size of Audubon State Park. Help us identify this bottomland forest's bird guests. This property has an active bald eagle nest.

This hike is dependent upon Ohio River flood stages. If water levels at Evansville surpass 32 ft., please meet at Audubon Park Museum for an alternative hike.

Audubon's Bird Migration Walk*

9 A.M. --Meets at Audubon Museum, John James Audubon State Park; Approx. 1.5 hrs.

The park's Beech-Maple forest is an urban oasis for woodland songbirds and shorebirds. In addition to the seven woodpecker species, several neo-tropical migrants make their home here. Join us as we hope to spot Eastern Bluebirds, Baltimore Orioles, Yellow-Throated and Prothonotary Warblers, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Belted Kingfishers, Indigo Buntings, Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds, White-Eyed and Red-Eyed Vireos. New birders are welcome! (Members of Evansville Audubon Society's [Junior Birders](#) will assist with this hike.)

**Portions of these hikes may be ADA accessible. Please ask your hike guide for information.*

Family Birding Fun!

10 A.M. --12:30 P.M.; Stop by anytime! Audubon Museum; J.J. Audubon SP

Make-N-Take "Birdnoculars"--These fun little paper creations will keep young eyes focused on spotting skills and develop hand-eye coordination. Get your kids well on their way toward exploring nature and becoming birdwatchers!

Bird Behavior Scavenger Hunt--Observing birds in the wild is fun but takes some patience and skill. Bird behaviors are plentiful and may vary from species to species. Take our scavenger hunt challenge and look carefully while you're here. How many bird behaviors can you find?

"Helping Bluebirds Survive and Thrive" presented by bluebird authority, Bob Peak

11:30 A.M.—Audubon Museum, J.J. Audubon SP; Approx. 30-40 mins.



Having established bluebird trails in Audubon Park, Land Between the Lakes, Lake Barkley SRP, and other counties in KY and TN, Bob Peak has volunteered many years of his life to assisting populations of Eastern Bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species. The invaluable data he collects assists avian researchers with continued studies of our native birds. Join us for this informative look at bluebird monitoring projects.

Building the Xbox Nest Box

12:15 P.M.—Audubon Museum, J.J. Audubon SP; Approx. 30-45 mins. Cost: \$15/box, preregistration recommended

Give a helping hand to the survival of bird species in your area! Try out your carpentry skills by building a nest box to enhance cavity-nester habitat. Bob Peak and park naturalists will assist you during this hands-on workshop.

Participant space is limited—reserve your \$15 nest box kit by contacting the Audubon Museum at (502)782-7918. Pay in person prior to the workshop. "No-show" reservations will be released at 12:15 P.M. to anyone waiting.

"Raptors Wild!" presented by The Talon Trust

1:30 P.M. --Friends of Audubon Meeting Room, J. J. Audubon SP; Donations accepted for The Talon Trust; Approx. 1 hr.

Enjoy an interactive personal experience with live raptors! Volunteers from The Talon Trust, Inc. will share stories of birds that have been injured and can't survive in the wild, and now serve as ambassadors for their species.

The Talon Trust, Inc. is a local volunteer-based organization dedicated to the conservation of native raptors through rescue, rehabilitation, and education. All donations received by The Talon Trust go to help feed and care for injured raptors.

Owl Puke--Yuck! Or Not?

2:45 P.M. --Audubon Museum Nature Center, J. J. Audubon SP; Approx. 1 hr.

The thought of owl puke may seem disgusting, but wait until you see what's inside that lump! These nocturnal hunters seek out all sorts of prey. Discover what critters the owls consider a tasty dinner when you dissect a sterilized owl pellet. You just may be amazed at what you find!

Sunday, April 30

Eagle Slough Natural Area Birding Hike

7:00 A.M. --Meet at the Eagle Slough entrance on Waterworks Rd., just north of Ellis Park; Approx. 2 hrs.

This local urban wetland was recently returned to its natural state. Join us for an early morning birding walk through this 127-acre property. Expect to see a variety of warblers, migratory

songbirds, and late shorebirds, including Wood Ducks, Winter Wrens, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, and more. If you have binoculars, bring them along.

Family Birding Fun

11:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M.; Stop by anytime!
Audubon Museum; J.J. Audubon SP

Bird Behavior Scavenger Hunt—Observing birds in the wild is fun but takes some patience and skill. Bird behaviors are plentiful and may vary from species to species. Take our scavenger hunt challenge and look carefully while you're here. How many bird behaviors can you find?

Person-Banding Station—Understand more about the bird banding process by creating your own unique color-banded identification bracelet. What story will your person-band tell?

Hands-on Bird Banding Workshop, with Master Bird Bander, Scott Kramer

11:30 A.M. --1 P.M.; Stop by anytime!
Audubon Museum; J. J. Audubon SP

Help with an ongoing conservation project as we catch, identify, band, and release birds from John James Audubon State Park. Bird banding helps us understand bird migration, behavior, social structure, lifespan and survival rates, and population trends. A great opportunity for seeing feathered friends up close, so bring a camera!

Beginner Nature Photography Seminar

12:30 P.M.—Audubon Museum, J.J. Audubon SP; Approx. 1.5 hrs.

One of the keys to great nature photography is

John James Audubon State Park

3100 US Hwy 41 North, Henderson, KY • (270) 826-2247 • parks.ky.gov

choosing the right camera settings. Join us for a beginner's seminar for improving your nature photos! We'll share some basic tips for making the most of your camera, then take it outdoors to apply these techniques for a photo shoot within the park. Bring a digital camera or cell phone with you.

Park Raptors Meet & Greet

2:00 P.M.—Audubon Museum Theater, J.J. Audubon SP; Approx. 45 mins.

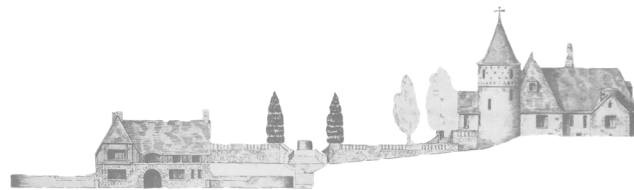
Having non-releasable live birds of prey as educational ambassadors has been a long-standing tradition at Audubon Park. Our park naturalists will share our birds with you in this up-close "Meet & Greet." Hear personal stories and learn of their incredible adaptations!



For future event information, check out the **Evansville Audubon Society** website:

<https://www.evvaudubon.org/field-trips>

For **State Park** program information, please visit: <https://www.parks.ky.gov>



The John James Audubon Museum houses one of the world's largest collections of original artwork and artifacts of America's first great artist--**John James Audubon**—who was both a naturalist and an ornithologist.

Please call (270)826-2247 for Museum information.



2023 Schedule of Events

Information can be found at:
evvaudubon.org & parks.ky.gov.

Activities are **FREE**, unless otherwise stated!

Friday, April 28

Patoka River NWR Birding Hike
7 A.M. --Meets at Boyd Woods, Oakland City, IN



Approx. 2-3 hrs.; Sturdy shoes are recommended.

Join us for a birding walk through Boyd Woods in search of warblers and other migratory songbirds. We'll continue the hike past Snakey Point Marsh for possible views of waterfowl and marsh birds, and end at a little-visited portion of Columbia Mine Preserve to look for grassland sparrows.

Directions: East on SR 64 out of Oakland City 1 mile from SR 357 (Main) to CR 1275E (look for Refuge sign). Turn left and follow signs to Snakey Point Marsh and continue on to parking lot on left at Boyd Woods (Maxey Marsh on the right).



Evansville Audubon Society Minutes January 17, 2022

meeting by Zoom

Program: at 6:00 PM – A Vision for Restoring the Great Lakes presented by Daniel Suarez, Audubon Great Lakes.

Business Meeting convened at 6:55, quorum present, 10

Minutes: approved as distributed by email

Treasurer's report:

Previous Month's Checking Account Balance: \$4907.11

Income: Memorial Donation – Lewis \$1000.00, Memorial Donation Watson \$275.00, Appeal letter \$3230.00, Interest \$0.03. **Total Income \$4505.03**

Expenses: Newsletter printing 39.00, Donation letter printing 21.00, USPS annual fee \$275.00, Bulk mail deposit \$100.00, Wesselman Woods Donation \$300.00, **Total Expenses \$ 735.00**

Current Checking Account Balance: \$8677.14

Checking Without Reserves: \$2266.30

Reserve Accounts: Education & Conservation \$1620.84, Jr. Birders \$280.00, Lewi Memorial \$4510.00,

Total 6410.84

Other Accounts: Bulk Mail \$186.05, Savings \$5.09, Certificate of Deposit \$4,189.51, **Total \$4,380.65**

The Lewis family will get in touch to discuss using funds for a memorial project.

CD renewed at 4%

Expended Edu an Con Money General	\$200
Tekoppel School	\$400
Patchwork (pending)	\$600
OVBF (pending)	\$150
Wesselman Woods	\$300
Total	\$1650

Field Trips:

Land Between the Lakes, Feb 4, meet at Columbia Sports in Henderson at 6:30 AM

Migration walks will meet every other Friday at 5:00 PM, start March 31

Junior Birders:

OVBF April 29, \$ 150 approved for bluebird box kits, EAS will pay \$15 registration fee for any Jr. Birders participating in the bluebird box building program with Bob Peak at Audubon SP, to be paid from Jr. Birders fund.

Programs:

March 21, 2023 -- "Mesker Park Zoo: Helping to Bring the Eastern Hellbender Back From the Brink of Extinction in Indiana" Leigh Ramon, Animal Curator, Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden.

Conservation:

Niles gave an update on efforts to protect Wesselman P ark, A group is advocating for relocating the planned pickleball courts from the grassy area within the park to the Roberts Park area or to dispersed the courts to parks around the city, Sue mentioned the Climate crisis event on Feb 1, Audubon Advocacy event Jan 30, both at the State House.

Education & Conservation Grants:

A request from Susan Fowler for a \$750 education grant was discussed and approved. Details had been emailed to board members.

Events:

Amanda Joest is chair of a new Events committee. Next event is Party for the Planet at Mesker Park Zoo, April 22

Old Business:

Electronic Vote Since Last Meeting--On Dec. 21, 2022, Sue Vernier made a motion to approve a request from LD Harry to spend up to \$150 to cover lumber expenses to build bluebird box kits that will be used at the Ohio Valley Birding Festival. The motion was approved by a majority of the Board.

New Business:

We need nominations for offices, board members with term expiring and term limited president term limited

Bob Meier, Pam Kimsey board term limited

Jim Ladoto and Kate Lynch can serve second three year term on Board

Items from the floor:

Bob Meier, Evan Speck and Sue Vernier were interviewed for an Evansville Living Article on local birding.

Meeting adjourned at about 7:35

Submitted by Niles Rosenquist, Secretary

Evansville Audubon Society
Evansville, IN
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Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve
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Visit our website at: www.ewaudubon.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** may renew directly with National Audubon Society at www.audubon.org

Chapter Code C9ZH030Z

\$20 minimum membership includes one year of the award winning Audubon magazine

My check enclosed made payable to:
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Mail to: Sue Vernier, EAS Treasurer
580 N 350 E
Princeton, IN 47670

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

If this is for a gift, please include name and address of person giving gift:

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