



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter

www.evvaudubon.org



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A Message from Our President

“Hope” Is The Thing with Feathers, by EMILY DICKINSON...

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops – at all -
And sweetest in the Gale – is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird -
That kept so many warm -
I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet – never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

In these trying times of COVID-19, Evansville Audubon has needed to cancel its March and April events; but as I write this, the trails at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve and the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge are open. The shorebirds and earliest warblers are already moving through. The flowers are blooming, the birds are singing, and the trees are budding. Go out to your deck, your yard, your special birding spot, and find the solace and strength that nature provides. Hope springs eternal from the power of nature.

Because we are uncertain of how long the the COVID-19 directives will continue, we are asking our members to frequently check our website, evvaudubon.org, or our Facebook pages: Evansville Audubon Society and Jr. Birders of the Evansville Audubon Society, for the latest status on our May and June programs, board meetings, and field trips.

As more states and communities adopt “shelter in place”, National Audubon has just launched “Audubon for Kids (and Kids at Heart)” – a new online space to help kids explore and feel connected. Audubon has adapted classroom science curriculum for at-home learning and created lots of birdy DIY projects. This resource for families can be found at Audubon.org.

Take care, be safe, and remember, you are what hope looks like to a bird,

Sue Vernier, President

Jesse Meier Memorial
September 19, 2001- March 13, 2020



“No parent should ever have to bury their child.” I will never forget these words from a dear elderly lady at my church, who had just lost her son. With a heavy heart, I must once again report the passing of another member of the Evansville Audubon Society, Jesse Meier. This fine young man, the son of Bob and Mary Meier, passed away on March 13, 2020.

Jesse was a senior at FJ Reitz High School and was on the Reitz Bowling Team. He was also a very gifted musician and played multiple instruments. Finally, he was an avid birder and member of the Evansville Audubon Society, as well as a board member. Jesse led hikes for several organizations and participated in numerous citizens science projects. On one special project he helped gather data for the DNR's Indiana Marshbird Monitoring Program. He was a special young person who will be sorely missed.

The family has requested that memorial contributions be made to the Evansville Audubon Society, with contributions going towards our Jr. Birders program.

Sue Vernier, President

FUTURE FIELD TRIPS

Due to the continuing unsettled situation with COVID-19, our field trip chair feels it's best to go on summer break and start over again in the fall. However, to help get through these trying times and still be connected to birds and nature, Evansville Audubon has the following suggestions:

1. **YOU CAN STILL GET OUT AND BIRD.** We just can't do it in groups at this time. In fact, the Audubon Society encourages birders to go out in order to help relieve stress. Just be sure to follow social distancing as you bird. Your backyard, or our favorite birding areas like Wesselman Woods, Howell Wetland, Eagle Slough, Patoka River NWR and the Bluegrass are open and with the arrival of spring migrants, it is a good time to get out.
2. **AUDUBON FOR KIDS.** The National Audubon Society has put together some online activities to help you connect with birds and nature while many are at home. Each week a new theme will be presented. Check out the following website:
www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kids
3. **WEB CAMS.** Web cams can be a lot of fun to follow. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology hosts and partners with many other groups that show nests for many birds. You can find web cams at the following website:
www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/

As soon as we can go out as a group, we will let you know. In the meantime, check out the online activities that will help keep you motivated until we can go on hikes again.

The **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE** submits the following slate of Officers & Directors to be voted in at the June 16 annual meeting. We are still in need of a Programs Committee Chair and an Education Committee Chair. If you are interested or have a recommendation, please contact Maryann Watson, pakawats@aol.com or 812-838-0546.

Officers:

President – Brian Taylor
Vice-President – Sue Vernier
Treasurer – Richard Vernier
Secretary – Carolyn Egan

New Directors, Term Ending 2023:

Bob Meier
Niles Rosenquist
Pam Kimsey
Kate Lynch

Replacement Directors, Term Ending 2022 (filling two vacancies):

Phil Copp
Pat Copp

Replacement Director, Term Ending 2021 (filling a vacancy):

Amanda Joest

Please extend a great big THANK YOU! to retiring members Don Batema and Chris Briggs. The remaining directors are not up for re-election and will continue serving out their terms: Steve Heeger, Jim Kimsey, Mary Jo Campbell, Maryann Watson, Jim Campbell.

Trump Administration Moves to Weaken Migratory Bird Safeguards

Now at risk is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of our most important wildlife conservation laws. The Trump administration's proposed rule would codify a controversial legal opinion issued by the Department of Interior declaring the MBTA does not prohibit unintentional killing of migratory birds. Passed by Congress in 1918, the MBTA is one of the oldest wildlife conservation laws. Both Republican and Democratic administrations have applied the act to prohibit, without a permit, both intentional and unintentional killing of covered species. This interpretation has created standards that require oil producers to put nets over crude oil waste pits, as well as better siting and operation of wind turbines. If these proposed changes are finalized, companies will no longer face legal consequences or have incentive to use best management practices to avoid activities that are deadly to migratory birds. And that's true for small construction sites and major oil operations alike. Consider the consequences. When a million birds died in the wake of Deepwater Horizon, BP had to pay \$100 million in fines because of the MBTA. But under the weakened law, they wouldn't pay a dime. They could simply claim those deaths were accidental.

Audubon has mobilized to defend the MBTA and is challenging the administration in court, and just helped introduce legislation in Congress that reaffirms the law—H.R. 5552 Migratory Bird Protection Act. Contact your congressman and ask for his support.

Sue Vernier

Evansville Audubon Society Minutes February 18, 2020

Program at 6PM Sharon Sorenson presented a fascinating program entitled "How Birds Behave".

Following the Program the Business Meeting was called to order at 7:25 by President Sue Vernier.

Minutes President Vernier asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes as emailed, there being none, minutes were accepted as emailed.

Treasurer's Report The following balances were reported and accepted.

Bulk Mail \$154.54 Savings \$5.09 CD \$4062.80 Checking w/o reserves \$1944.22

Checking \$4177.49 Ed&Cons Available \$1626.61 E-Scripts \$6.66 OVBF \$0. "Checking" is from check register, includes transactions not on the bank statement. Treasurer's report attached to Secretary's minutes. Annual Donations Drive has received \$2,810.00 from 39 donors.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Field Trips – Kentucky Dam Trip had 13 people but they only saw 6 species of waterfowl. March 14 is the trip to Goose Pond. May 2 Harmony S.P. Hike.

Program – The March 17th program will be "Friends of the Patoka River NWR" presented by Nancy Gehlhausen.

Jr. Birders – Five children and 6 adults attended the February 15 Great Backyard Bird Count. No new people. Mary Jo and Jim Campbell purchased 8 Jr. Birder T-Shirts for members.

Conservation – Sue Vernier discussed Trump administration move to weaken Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the newly introduced bill H.R. 5552, Migratory Bird Protection Act, to defend the MBTA.

Action is needed against Indiana H. R. 1414 which impedes efforts to retire coal plants and replace with cleaner technology; bill passed the House and will go to the Senate.

Education & Conservation Grants – Notices have been sent to EVSC and JJ Audubon SP saying that money is available for grants.

OVBF – 4/17 – 4/19 & 4/25 are the dates. A brochure will be inserted in the next newsletter.

OLD BUSINESS

Nominating Committee Members Maryann Watson, Steve Heeger, a third member is needed.

Letter to Senator Braun - Sue Vernier wrote a letter to be signed by EAS Board Members inviting the Senator to attend the Climate Leadership Summit in Evansville. Copy attached to secretary's minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

Sue announced the passing of Carolyn Bennett on January 24. She was a long time member.

Boy Scout Merit Badge Conservation Activities – Jim Campbell will contact DNR about providing receptacles for fishing line at Bluegrass FWA. The Boy Scouts would assemble and place these at Bluegrass. Mary Jo Campbell moved and Bob Meier seconded that we spent \$350 for the materials to make the receptacles for mono filament fishing lines. Motion carried.

Sue received a letter asking that we have a booth at "Earth Day 2020: Going Green At Home" that is to be held at Wesselman Woods on Saturday, April 18th. She is going to decline since our OVBF event is being held at that same time.

Mary Jo Campbell moved and Jim Campbell seconded that we adjourn. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Carolyn Egan, Secretary

Addition to the February 2020 Minutes

\$500 Pledged to Climate Leadership Summit

On March 24, 2020, Sue Vernier, President, requested a motion from the Board of Directors to pledge a sponsorship for the August 27 Climate Leadership Summit. Brian Taylor made the motion that we fund a sponsorship in the amount of \$500 to show our support of the Climate Leadership Summit. Don Batema seconded the motion made by Brian Taylor. Over the next 24 hours a majority of the Board (13 voting) voted "yes" for the motion. The motion was approved. Sue Vernier requested that Carolyn Egan, Secretary, keep a copy of the electronic email vote for the official March records.

Jr Birders

There are no Junior Birder hikes scheduled at this time. Please check the EAS Facebook page for updates.

The Jr. Birders participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count by observing, recording, and reporting birds at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve Saturday, February 15. Alisyn, Evan, and Nick joined us in the parking lot where we did some birding before the Nature Center opened. Our first bird was a loudly calling Red-shouldered Hawk soaring over the trees, and then a Pileated Woodpecker drummed for us. Later, after noting some of the common residents of the woods, we heard some Rusty Blackbirds and found them perched in the top of a tree. This is a species of special concern due to its declining population.

At the feeders we were treated to some great observations of the birds and squirrels due to the bright sunshine. Seeing the glistening crown of the Red-bellied Woodpecker was especially noteworthy. Some of the other birds we noted were: Carolina Chickadees, Carolina Wren, Downy Woodpeckers, a Hairy Woodpecker, and Tufted Titmice.

Later, after the others had left, Elijah arrived with his aunt, uncle, and brother. After viewing the birds at the feeders, we decided that it had warmed enough to go outside to see the birds of prey. While learning about the birds. we were treated to wing displays by the eagle and vulture, and even the calls of the eagle.

Evansville Audubon Society
Evansville, IN
Permit No. 1666
Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve
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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** 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

Name _____

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

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

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