



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter

www.evvaudubon.org

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NATIONAL AUDUBON'S 2025 'STATE OF THE BIRDS REPORT' U.S. Bird Populations Continue Alarming Decline

The 2025 U.S. State of the Birds report, produced by Audubon and a coalition of leading science and conservation organizations, reveals continued widespread declines in American bird populations across all mainland and marine habitats, *with 229 species requiring urgent conservation action.*

The worst losses are among grassland birds (down by 43% since 1970), but forest birds have been hit hard too. Even waterfowl, which had been improving, are showing steep declines since 2022. The report comes five years after the landmark 2019 study that documented the loss of 3 billion birds in North America over 50 years.

The 2025 report shows that birds across most habitats have suffered major losses since 1970. Grassland and aridland species have been dealt the heaviest blow: Both groups lost more than 40% of their total populations over that period. What's more, the trends for many habitat groups have gotten worse. Even waterfowl, which had previously been a conservation bright spot amid the alarming declines, have seen their numbers drop since the last report.

For one, grassland birds have remained in dire straits as their habitat has disappeared, often converted for agriculture. Despite efforts to preserve or restore prairie habitat, such as Audubon's partnership with ranchers, the Great Plains region is losing 1 to 2 million acres of grasslands each year. The tallgrass prairie really stands out as an area where there's a five-alarm fire.

Meanwhile, long suffering shorebirds have also continued to see declines, facing threats from rising and warming seas on top of coastal habitat losses across their expansive ranges. Out of all the habitat groups, shorebirds have the highest number of “tipping point” species identified in the report—those that have lost more than half of their populations in the past 50 years.

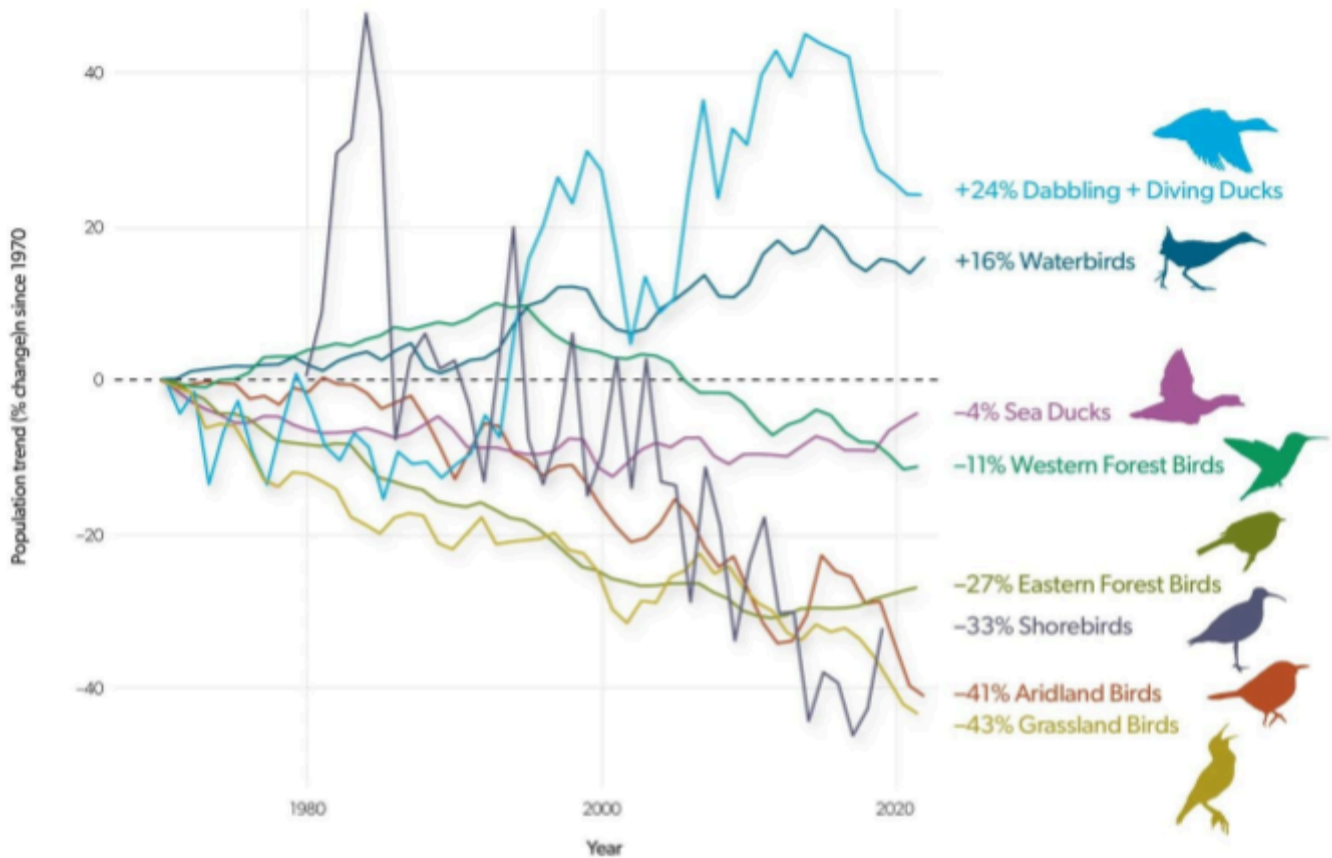
Waterfowl, on the other hand, have seen a reversal in their fate—but in the wrong direction. These species had long been touted as a conservation success story, and their populations are still up 24% since 1970, largely due to expanded protections for wetlands. Yet since around 2017, that upward trajectory has seen a dip, as dabbling and diving duck populations are now 10% below their long-term averages.

Even our beloved eastern forest birds have shown a 27% decline—birds listed as “tipping point” species include the Eastern Towhee, Eastern Whip-Poor-Will, and Wood Thrush. It's the reason Evansville Audubon is participating in

the Chasing Melody Indiana Wood Thrush Conservation Project.

But it's not too late to take action! Audubon is hopeful that the growing interest in birds and birding can help spur support for the kinds of investments birds need. More than 1/3 of U.S. adults identify as birdwatchers, and the hobby has become a major economic driver across the country. Learn more about the health of the nation's bird populations and what you can do to help us bring birds back by supporting National Audubon and becoming active in your local Evansville Audubon Society chapter.

Long-term Population Trends for America's Birds



State of the Birds 2025 Long-term Population Trends - Courtesy of Cornell Labs of Ornithology



YOUR HELP IS NEEDED -- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM IN CRISIS!

An action alert from the National Wildlife Refuge Association:

"Since the start of this year, the National Wildlife Refuge System has been hit hard—really hard. Approximately 20% of refuge staff have been lost since January- through firings, deferred resignations, early retirements, and unfilled vacancies. Refuge employees are being told they can't travel, can't spend more than a dollar, and might not be able to come to the office because their lease won't be renewed. And this is just the beginning. We're hearing that up to 40% of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff could be lost by the end of April, as more early retirements and hiring freezes take hold. That includes the people who manage National Wildlife Refuges—our nation's only public lands set aside specifically for wildlife conservation.

Just 15 years ago, there were over 3,400 people managing the Refuge System. Today, that number is closer to 1,800—and falling fast. Buildings are being vacated. Refuge offices are closing their doors. And in places like Camas National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho, entire refuges are now at risk of being handed over to the states." -- National Wildlife Refuge Association

Evansville Audubon can report that our own Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge has exactly two full-time employees and one of the two is the office staff; if she chose to take retirement, her position would not be filled. There are many needs on the 10,000 plus acres of the Refuge that are either going unmet or fall to the few dedicated volunteers of the Friends group to accomplish.

What can you do? Please send a message to your Congressman and two Senators. Be sure and personalize your message to include what the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge means to you. Even better, call your Congressman and Senators.

Contact information:

Senator Todd Young, 202-224-5623

website: young.senate.gov (email form on website)

Senator Jim Banks, 202-224-4814

website: banks.senate.gov (email form on website)

Representative Mark Messmer, 202-225-4636

website: messmer.house.gov (email form on website)



Be a part of birding's biggest team! [Global Big Day](#) is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on 10 May, help celebrate [World Migratory Bird Day](#), and share the birds you find with eBird. Participating is easy—you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations to eBird online.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS!!

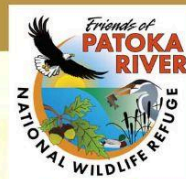
The Nominations Committee is looking for volunteers to fill out a slate of candidates for Officers and Directors positions to be voted in at our June annual meeting. **Do you have an hour or two every other month that you can devote to helping Evansville Audubon with the task of meeting our mission to *promote the awareness of and appreciation for birds and other wildlife and their habitats through education and conservation?*** The Board meets every other month from September thru May to conduct this vital mission.

For Directors, we still have three open positions for 3-year term ending 2028.

Attending our five board meetings during the year is an easy way to be part of Evansville Audubon and help with our mission.

Presently, all four of our Officers are eligible and agreeable to serve another term, but new faces are always welcome! The positions are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

If you are interested in helping Evansville Audubon with this very necessary need to conduct the business of the Evansville Audubon Society, please contact Alex Gansmann, Nominations Chair, at alexander.w.gansmann@gmail.com or Sue Vernier, President, rsavcaver2@gmail.com.



'Otterly' Amazing Otters!

Presented by The Friends of the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge



River Otters at Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge Photo by Steve Gifford

When:

Saturday May 17, 2025
at 10 AM CDT

Where:

Boyd's Station at Snakey Point
Marsh

Indiana's rascallions, river otters, make their home at the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. There are even hiking trails on the Refuge named in their honor. Come learn about the otter's natural history, surveys, and management in Indiana with the state's furbearer specialist, Geriann Albers, on Saturday, May 17 at 10 am CDT at Boyds Station at Snakey Point Marsh.

Following the program there will be a guided hike on the Otter Run Trails to look for signs of the otter. The hike will take approximately 1 hour. The trails are in a low lying area and mud can be expected. Long pants, appropriate walking shoes and insect repellent are necessary. In case of flooding, the hike may be rerouted or cancelled.

To get to the Boyd's Station parking lot, head east on SR 64 through Oakland City. Just outside of the city, past the brown sign directing you to Snakey Point Marsh, turn left on CR 1275E. In 1/2 mile, bear left on paved 1300E; it will become gravel. Continue one mile to the parking lot located on the left side of the road. Join us for an "otterly' amazing experience!

PROGRAMS

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

May 20, 2025 -- "Wildlife Wonders", presented by nature photographer Bill Vieth. A photo slideshow featuring birds of the Brazil Pantanal, Costa Rica and the U.S.

June 17, 2025 -- Annual Meeting & Elections. A social get-together with your fellow Audubon members to share light refreshments and birding stories, and elect incoming officers and directors. Bring snacks and finger food to share, such as cheese & cracker tray, fresh fruit, desserts (cookies, brownies), wraps or pizza from your favorite sandwich shop. Evansville Audubon will have disposable table service available and lemonade to drink; however, you are encouraged to bring your own beverage and environmentally friendly table service. Bring your family and friends to this annual social event.

July & August 2025 -- Summer Break. Next program and board meeting will be September 16, 2025.

SLATE OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS CANDIDATES FOR ANNUAL ELECTION, June 17, 2025

The following slate of officers for one-year terms and two directors for term ending 2026 (filling vacancies) will be submitted for a vote at the June annual members meeting:

President - Sue Vernier

Vice-President - Niles Rosenquist

Treasurer - Richard Vernier

Secretary - Brian Taylor

Directors - term ending 2026

Greg Meyer (filling vacancy)

Jim Kimsey (filling vacancy)

The following Directors serving out their terms ending 2026 and 2027 are not up for election but listed for your information:

Directors - term ending 2026

Jeremy Ross

Directors - term ending 2027

Pam Kimsey

Hope Hartmann

Alex Gansmann

The Nominations Committee is still searching for Directors to fill 3 vacancies for term ending 2028. They encourage anyone who can devote an hour or two for our 5 board meetings each year to please contact Alex Gansmann, Nominations chair, alexander.w.gansmann@gmail.com, or Sue Vernier, President, rsavcaver2@gmail.com.

Evansville Audubon Society Minutes March 18, 2025

Program: at 6:00 PM – Richard and Sue Vernier, birders and photographers, gave a presentation of “On the Hunt for Hummingbirds in Arizona and New Mexico”.

The program was given at the Wesselman Woods Nature Center.

The business meeting convened at 6:58pm after the program concluded. A quorum was present with seven board members - Brian Taylor, Richard Vernier, Sue Vernier, Niles Rosenquist, Jim Kimsey, Pam Kimsey and Alex Gansmann.

Minutes: The January 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

Treasurer's report: Richard Vernier gave the treasurer's report as of 2/28/2025.

Income of \$100.02, NAS Collaborative Grant, Donation appeal letter and interest Expenses of \$1,000, Sycamore Land Trust Sponsor a Preserve, Eagle Slough.

Current checking balance is \$4,823.97.

Checking account without the reserve account balances is \$4,053.97.

Reserve account balances

Education & Conservation \$490

Jr. Birders \$280.00

Total \$770

Other Accounts

Savings \$5.09

CD 14 month at 4.85% \$3,546.83

Total \$3,551.92

Committee Reports:

Field Trips- Sue Vernier announced the February 18th woodcock walk was cancelled due to weather. Field trip chair Bob Meier announced he had a great turnout and trip on the KY Lake trip. Details can be found on the Audubon Facebook page along with pictures. Bob and John Meridig will be hosting their annual Harmonie State Park walk on May 3rd at 6:30am. Bob will also be leading an afternoon migration walk on Friday, April 25 at 5pm at Howell Wetlands for the Ohio Valley Birding Festival. He is planning a Big Sit on Saturday, April 12th at 6:30am at Eagle Slough on the observation deck. **Programs-** The May 20th program “Wildlife Wonders” will be presented by nature photographer Bill Vieth.

Junior Birders- No update.

Advocacy- Niles Rosenquist told the group about conservation programs at risk from Federal cuts. Flyers were handed out for a Messmers Missing rally. He also mentioned HB 1007 and SB 423 concerning energy bills to restrict coal power plant closures and promote use of small nuclear power. He noted that the Wesselman ponds are now full with all the rain we have been having. **Education and Conservation Grants-** A new request for assistance with Motus tags is mentioned below in new business.

Events – Amanda Joest will represent EAS at Earth Day 2025 at Wesselman Woods on April 19th from 10am to 2pm.

Media/Marketing- No update.

OVBF: The Ohio Valley Birding Festival will be from April 25th through the 27th. A flyer was distributed.

Old Business :

Sue Vernier reported Niles Rosenquist has volunteered for the program chair position. Alex Gansmann reported no one has come forward to fill our director seats. The search will continue.

New Business:

Sue Vernier asked for volunteers to assist Amanda Joest at the Wesselman Woods Earth Day.

The new tariffs in place on Canadian goods has increased the cost of the MOTUS tags being sourced there for the Chasing Melody wood thrush project. A motion was made and approved to give an additional \$100 to help cover the additional costs.

Items from the floor:

Jim Kimsey reported that Brownstown, IN has seen approximately 1,500 dead sandhill cranes due to bird flu. Other significant deaths were snow geese and mallards.

Pam Kimsey reported seeing whooping cranes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm

Submitted by Brian Taylor, Secretary

Evansville Audubon Society
551 North Boeke Rd.
Evansville, IN 47711

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.

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www.facebook.com/evvaudubon

To receive newsletters & notices of EAS activities:
Go to our website at <https://www.evvaudubon.org>
and sign up at the bottom of the page, or send your email address to
info@evvaudubon.org

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.

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

Chapter Code H03

___ My check enclosed made payable to:
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Mail to:
EAS Treasurer
c/o Evansville Audubon Society
551 North Boeke Rd.
Evansville, IN 47711

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (to Receive Newsletters & Notices of EAS Activities):
