

# Gardening for the Birds

By Jennifer Boyce, Eagle Creek Park Naturalist • Indianapolis, IN • jennifer.boyce@indy.gov

Gardening for birds invariably means gardening for the invertebrates on which they depend. Whether it's a nectar-gulping Ruby-throated Hummingbird or a seed-eating Indigo Bunting you hope to attract to your home, it's the number and diversity of munching insects and prowling spiders that will determine the success of your bird-friendly backyard.

**Why garden for insects?** The answer to this question illustrates the intricate connections landscaping choices have on our bird populations. A mother Carolina Chickadee must feed her nestlings more than 5,000 caterpillars. While berries and seeds form crucial food resources throughout the year for many eastern North American birds, invertebrates sustain populations as the dietary staple for almost all bird nestlings. Watching an American Goldfinch periodically visit your nyjer feeder is of great enjoyment, but watching one take up residence on your property is a thrill!

**How do I garden for insects?** The number one, most important guiding principle is providing native plants. Native plants have evolved over thousands of years and are intricately connected to other plant and animal species in their habitat. Some insects (like caterpillars) chew the leaves of native plants. Other insects use syringe-like mouthparts to suck juices from leaves and stems. Others (like wasps and predatory beetles) will prey upon the plant-eaters. Spiders, the primary food source for hummingbird nestlings, will take up residence in an insect-rich yard. With the installation of native landscaping you will have laid the foundation for a healthy, diverse, and functioning ecosystem in your own backyard and you will be rewarded a hundred-fold with happy birds.

**Do some native plants benefit birds more than others?** If we are looking to support nesting bird populations, the heaviest hitters are native trees. Oak trees support an amazing diversity of caterpillar species which results in the most food for nesting birds. Neotropical migrants rely on the bounty of caterpillars provided by oaks. Willows, cherry, birch, poplar, and maples are all wonderful caterpillar host-plants. What about herbaceous (non-woody) plants? Goldenrod, often and unfortunately confused with ragweed, is a great choice for attracting insects who feed upon the plant, insects who lay their eggs within their hollow stems, and birds who feed upon the seed heads. Cup plant, named for the water-collecting cups formed where leaf meets stem, provides a pool to drink, pollen to collect, and hollow stem for egg-laying. Coneflowers gone to seed are great food sources for finches. A grouping of Cardinal Flower will bring you happy hummingbirds. Woody shrub-like viburnums



Backyard bird habitat with water source with coneflower, mountain mint, water willow, viburnum, queen of the prairie, and blueflag iris. Above: Leaf-eating katydid. Lower right: Syrphid fly pollinator on Spiderwort.

provide nutrient-rich berries, shelter, and are a leafy food source for insects as well.

**What other elements should be present in my bird-friendly garden?** There's good news for gardeners: pile those fall leaves high in your garden beds rather than bagging them. If you need to have a tree removed, ask the company to mulch it and use it in your beds. A good layer of organic material is important for nutrient cycling, retaining moisture (less watering), and of course making a home for invertebrates. Many invertebrates overwinter or complete their life cycle in the insulation of leaf-litter or hollow stems, so waiting to do your spring garden clean-up or omitting it all together can be helpful to wildlife. Leaving tree stumps, large branches, or logs interspersed in your garden can make a home for decomposers. A downed log may bring you a close encounter with a Pileated Woodpecker or Northern Flicker. Water sources such as a bird bath or an in-ground or container pond are important habitat features for birds and insects alike. Many birds rely on tree cavities for nesting, leaving aging mature trees or snags can provide essential space for nestlings. A brush pile can bring sparrows.

**What elements should not be present in my backyard habitat?** If possible, exotic invasive plant species should be omitted from backyard bird habitats. Once you establish your native-plant wonderland, your yard will have a better predatory-prey balance. Predatory insect populations control "pest species" and can eliminate the need for pesticides.

*Continued on page 7*

# Upcoming Audubon Programs, Events, and Field Trips

All programs are held at the Holliday Park Nature Center, 6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, at 7:30 p.m. They are free and open to the public. This will be the last program until September.



Indiana Young Birders Club members Nick Kiehl, Landon Neumann, Matthias Benko, Jonathan Bongtrager and Ceth Williams.

## Dawn to Dusk: Two Young Birders' Take on a Big Day

**Tuesday, May 15, 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Holliday Park Nature Center, Indianapolis  
Presenters: Matthias Benko and Ceth Williams

Last spring, five young birders took on a grueling 24-hour competition known as a Big Day. Hyped up on Red Bull and various forms of carbohydrates, the group logged 151 species despite birding on April 30, an early date for migration. Although it poured most of the day, these young birders were still able to find birds such as Chuck-will's-widow, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Wilson's Phalarope, and Barn Owl. Join Matthias and Ceth for an account of their day, from midnight to midnight.

## Weekday Warbler Field Trip to Sodalis Nature Park

**Friday, May 11, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

Sodalis Nature Center, 7700 S. County Road 975 E, Plainfield

Join Mark Welter at Sodalis Nature Park in Hendricks County in search of migrating warblers and other Spring arrivals.

In 2011, a collaborative effort among Hendricks County Parks & Recreation, the Indianapolis Airport Authority, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service established Sodalis Nature Park in southeastern Hendricks County. This 210-acre tract lies within 2,200 acres of land acquired by the Airport Authority for the purpose of wetland conservation and habitat protection for the endangered Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*), after which the park is named.

Once opened to the public, Sodalis quickly became known as one of the most productive birding hotspots in Hendricks County. 158 species have been recorded there, according to

eBird records, including 34 warbler species, 12 sparrow species, and all the vireo, swallow, and woodpecker species expected in Indiana. In addition to migrants, we will also target some of the species that breed in the park. One of the park's specialties is Prairie Warbler; territorial males can usually be seen and heard along the Oak Trace trail. If we are



Prairie Warbler. Courtesy of Mark Welter

lucky, we may also discover whether the Mississippi Kites that nested in the park last year have returned.

Participants will meet in the parking lot at 8:30 a.m. The trip is expected to take 2-3 hours. Trails through the park are a mix of gravel and dirt and are normally an easy walk, but interior trails can become very muddy after even moderate rain, making access problematic. Appropriate footwear is recommended. Contact Mark with questions at mwelter521@yahoo.com or (317) 755-6530.

## Spring Migrant and Warbler Hike at Eagle Creek Park

**Thursday, May 17, 2018, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.**

Eagle Creek Park Marina, 7602 Walnut Point Road, Indianapolis

Join Amy Hodson on a spring migrant walk at Eagle Creek Park, one of the best birding locations in the Indianapolis area providing great habitat for warblers, vireos, tanagers, and flycatchers.

The group will meet at the Marina and move to other locations within the park pending that morning's bird activity. Participants can expect the walk to end around 10:00 a.m. There is a \$5 fee per car to enter the park if you do not hold a yearly park pass. If we leave the marina, trails could be muddy so wear appropriate footwear. Registration is not required and the event is open to the public.

## Beers with Birders at Metazoa

**Thursday, June 7 from 6 to 8 p.m.**

140 S College Ave., Indianapolis, IN

Join the Amos Butler Audubon Society for an evening at Metazoa Brewing Company. We will collectively share our birding experiences and adventures at this informal gathering. This event is free and open to the public.



## Spring Migrant Hike

Friday, May 18, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Ritchey Woods Nature Preserve  
10410 Hague Road, Fishers

Join Scott Enochs as he leads you on a hike through Ritchey Woods Nature Preserve. This hike will target migrating warblers, vireos, tanagers, and flycatchers. We will meet at 8 a.m. at the Ritchey Woods Nature Preserve parking lot. Participants can expect the hike to end around 10 a.m. Trails could be muddy so wear appropriate footwear. Contact Scott at (317) 850-4801 or msenochs@comcast.net if you have any questions. This event is free and open to the public. Registration is not required but appreciated.

## Kankakee Sands Trip

Saturday, May 26, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Traders' Point Dick's Sporting Goods  
6030 West 86th Street, Indianapolis

Join Scott Enochs as he leads you on a trip to Kankakee Sands in search of breeding sparrows. Targets for the trip will include Song, Field, Vesper, Henslow's, Grasshopper, and Lark Sparrows. We will seek out other species as well, like Orchard Oriole and Blue Grosbeak.

Meet at 6 a.m. at the Dick's Sporting Goods located at 6030 West 86th Street in Indianapolis and carpool to Kankakee Sands. Walking will be minimal, and we will likely stay close to the roads. Participants can expect to return to Indy around 3 p.m. Contact Scott at (317) 850-4801 or msenochs@comcast.net if you have any questions. This event is free and open to the public. Registration is not required but appreciated.



*Henslow's Sparrow.*  
Courtesy of Scott Enochs.

## Great Blue Heron Rookery Programs

Saturday, May 5, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

Wednesday, May 16, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Saturday, May 26, 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Friday, June 1, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

The Rookery Preserve, 25440 Scherer Avenue, Arcadia

Join a naturalist at the Great Blue Heron rookery in Hamilton County. From the Stoops Observation Deck, we will enjoy watching and talking about the resident Great Blue Herons, who are busily courting and tending their nests. Some equipment will be available, but bring binoculars, spotting scopes, and photography equipment if you have it.

These events are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is preferred. To register, call (317) 774 -2574 or email amanda.smith@hamiltoncounty.in.gov.



## Eagle Creek Birding Festival

Saturday, May 12, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Ornithology Center, 6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis

Join Eagle Creek Ornithology Center for the Eagle Creek Birding Festival! This is an all-day event where registrants can choose between expert-led birding tours of Eagle Creek Park, conservation seminars, family activities such as nature hikes and owl pellets, and live bird programs. Call or follow us on Facebook (@Ornithology.Center) closer to the event for the schedule of hikes and class choices.

For full-day access: \$25 per person, \$20 per person with Family Rate (3+ individuals, call for discount). Park admission is included in the cost and lunch is provided for full-day attendees.

## Urban Bird Walks hosted by Garfield Park

June 16, July 21, August 18, September 8  
8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Cost: \$5 per person

Garfield Park, while being a very urban park, is a sanctuary for wildlife. Join a park naturalist on a walk through the park in search of birds. Even if you have never been on a bird walk before or consider yourself an expert birder, this program is for everyone. Remember to wear comfortable walking shoes and bring binoculars. If you don't have binoculars, a limited number will be available for use to anyone who needs them. Meet at the Conservatory entrance. Registration is required. To register, visit [indy.gov/playindy](http://indy.gov/playindy).



*Garfield Park. Courtesy of Jessica Helmbold.*

## Local Bird Hikes

### Cool Creek Park

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel  
2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. and every other Sunday at 8 a.m.  
May 6, 9, 16, 20, 23, 30; June 3, 13, 17, 20, 27

Meet in the parking lot at the bottom of the road by Cool Creek, past the Nature Center. For more information, call 317-774-2500 or visit myhamiltoncountyparks.com.

### Eagle Creek Park

6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis  
Every Sunday at 9 a.m.; May 6, 13, 20, 27; June 3, 10, 17, 24; July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; Aug. 5, 12, 19, 26; Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Meet at the Ornithology Center. For more information, call 317-327-2473.

### Fort Harrison State Park

6000 N. Post Road, Indianapolis  
Every Sunday in May at 8 a.m.; May 6, 13, 20, 27

Meet Don Gorney at the Delaware Lake parking lot.

### Greenfield Bird Hikes

2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month at 8-10 a.m.  
May 12 and July 14 at Beckenholdt Park  
2770 N. Franklin Street, Greenfield  
June 9 and July 28 at Thornwood Nature Preserve  
1597 S. Morristown Pike, Greenfield  
June 23 at Brandywine Park  
900 E. Davis Road, Greenfield

Stay up-to-date via facebook.com/groups/Greenfield-Birders. For more information, contact Adam Wilson at NikonBirdHunter@gmail.com.

### Holliday Park

6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis  
The third Tuesday of the month at 8 a.m.  
June 19, July 17, Aug. 21, and Sept. 18.

Meet in front of the nature center. For more information, call 317-327-7180.

### Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab

3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis, May 2 at 8 a.m.

Meet at the St. Francis statue next to Allison Mansion on the north end of campus. For more information, contact David Benson at dbenson@marian.edu.

### Southeastway Park

5624 South Carroll Road, New Palestine  
Mondays at 9:10 a.m., May 7, 14, 21, and 28.

Meet at the Nature Center at Southeastway Park. For more information, call 317-327-2473.

### Strawtown Koteewi Park

12308 Strawtown Avenue, Noblesville  
Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. May 2 and June 6

Meet at the Taylor Center of Natural History. For more information, call 317-774-2574 or visit myhamiltoncountyparks.com.

## Working with the International Crane Foundation

By James Kawlewski • Perham, MN • kawlewskja@mnstate.edu

In summer 2017, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) decided to address illegal shootings of Whooping Cranes in Indiana by creating the Whooping Crane Outreach Program Assistant position – a position I held from November 2017 – March 2018. The aim of the position is to reach out to locals and educate the public about this rare gem in their backyard, Whooping Cranes. After a one-month training period at the ICF headquarters, I headed down to Linton.

Relocating to rural Indiana all the way from Minnesota has its challenges. Imagine moving to a new area with no friends or family, where your only connections are the people who work with your organization. (Luckily, those people are very nice!)

My work began on Nov. 1, 2017 with a Whooping Crane survey to familiarize myself with the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area property and the work of ICF volunteers. For the first two months, I searched for programming opportunities, attended meetings to maintain partnerships, and presented programs to the public. It was challenging to establish myself at first since this is a new program for Indiana. But the next couple of months were different.

Following a press release that made it into five newspapers around Indiana, opportunities for outreach exploded. Even though I got sick with pleurisy, Jan. 2018 was successful. However, February was the best month because I almost doubled the amount of people that I reached in my first two months. Altogether, I reached out to over 3,000 hunter and non-hunter children and adults.

My favorite part of working in Indiana with ICF was traveling around the state and meeting new people. This was an invaluable experience to be a part of and I think the Whooping Crane program will build upon my success in the future.

*(ABAS supported the Whooping Crane Outreach Program in Indiana through a \$25,000 grant).*

### ABAS Post-its

## What are your “go to” field guides?

There are so many field guides for our area, but I've always found myself picking up the Sibley Guide to Birds. David Sibley is an incredible artist, and I've always thought that his paintings are extremely accurate and useful for identification purposes. If you tend to prefer photos over drawings, I would highly recommend the Kaufman Field Guide by Kenn Kaufman.

—Rob Ripma, President

**Have a burning question for Rob? Send us an email at [info@amostbutleraudubon.org](mailto:info@amostbutleraudubon.org)**

## Cavities — The Good Kind

By Adam Wilson • Greenfield, IN [✉ nikonbirdhunter@gmail.com](mailto:nikonbirdhunter@gmail.com)

Birders young and old know that habitat plays a large role in all of our lives, humans and birds alike. From wetlands to forests, tundra to fields, all have specific ecosystems that dictate what birds will and will not be around. For example, cavity nesting species rely on wooded areas with living trees and dead snags. Our state of Indiana is more than 50% agricultural land, excluding urbanized areas. Learning this information over the past few years, my wife Sara and I wanted to support our cavity-nesting feathered friends: Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. Neither of these birds are currently in any immediate danger, but there doesn't need to be a clear and present danger to take positive action.

Bird housing projects when well managed can assist these cavity nesters with shelter from the elements and a safe place to raise their broods. Sara and I recently launched a 16-house project at one of our favorite local parks in Greenfield, Beckenholdt Park.

In the summer of 2017, Sara and I began the research process for pitching a bird housing project to our local parks department. We read studies on house types, placement, monitoring, statics, and so forth. By September, I began reaching out to knowledgeable individuals in the state and beyond. We had a rough idea of the scope and the nature of

the project but wanted to feel confident before we started in any direction. The input and support I received exceeded our hopes and gave us clear direction on further research as well as installation requirements. After completing a prototype at our house, the project looked achievable. All we needed to work out was funding, parks department approval, installation, and monitoring.

Over the fall months, we continued to clear hurdles—with help, of course. After hearing about our housing project, Ted Meyer championed a grant request to the National Audubon Society that was accepted. With additional support from Amos Butler Audubon Society, we were able to fully fund this project and approach the local parks department for approval.

Next, Sara and I met with Ellen Kuker, superintendent of Greenfield Parks, and her team, who gave us their full support. It isn't every day that a plan is pitched at no cost and with no maintenance needed from the city or parks department. Things continued to look up, and over the winter we gathered materials and planned the installation. Prepping as many pieces as we could, our goal was for the installation to have very little construction involved.

By the time mid-March hit, we were ready to install. I'm happy to say the day went off without a hitch. Carol Blaser, Sara, and I placed eight pairs of houses (16 total) at Beckenholdt Park within just a few hours on Sunday, March 18, 2018, along with Amy Hodson's wonderful motivation and documentation.

Throughout breeding season, we will monitor the houses every few days or closer. I'm sure that we will learn a lot over our first season and we hope to provide a good amount of data by the end of the summer.

Feel free to keep up with our updates via our Greenfield Birders Facebook Group (search "Greenfield Birders" on Facebook). Updates from the monitors will pick up once there is activity, but we welcome any observation from the housing locations that any passerby notices from the walking trails.



Adam Wilson, Sara Wilson, and Carole Blaser installing the bird houses at Beckenholdt Park in Greenfield. Bluebird houses. Eastern Bluebird, Southern Indiana. Photos courtesy of Amy Hodson.

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To shop at AmazonSmile, simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and enter Amos W. Butler Audubon Society in the search bar. You can use your existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, wish list, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings remain the same.

Bookmark [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. Let your shopping be not just for your family and friends, but also for the birds of Central Indiana, like the Cerulean Warbler.



# Event Recaps

## Trivia for Birds!

By Wesley Homoya • Indianapolis, IN • [whomoya@yahoo.com](mailto:whomoya@yahoo.com)



Courtesy Wes Homoya

“Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?” Wes Homoya and Ash & Elm Cider, that’s who! On Feb. 7, we cooked up a fun night for all for the purposes of raising funds for Amos Butler Audubon Society and heeding the call to “eat, drink, and be merry.” During the evening of wit and revelry, over 30 bird-brained Hoosiers gathered to test their avian knowledge and cider-imbibing talents.

When Professor Barny Dunning entered the tasting room, a hush fell over the crowd, and his team/family soon proved to be quite formidable. But an Austin Broadwater-led faction prevailed in the “Double Final Jeopardy Lightning Round.” Winners took home glassware, merchandise, and cider from Indy’s premier hard cider purveyor.

I curated three rounds (“Sex,” “Sounds,” and “Shenanigans”) of comical, questionable, and clever questions, even stooping so low as to attempt a woodcock impersonation live and on camera. Nevertheless, the evening was deemed a success for the crowd, the cidery, and the birds. Rumor has it that more trivia and cider is coming soon, both back at the near-eastside downtown locale and perhaps even to a celebration in September at Eagle Creek Park. Cheers, everyone!

## ABAS Goose Pond FWA Field Trip

By Jessica Helmbold, Education Chair • Indianapolis, IN  
[jh\\_beagle@hotmail.com](mailto:jh_beagle@hotmail.com)

On Sunday, March 18, 2018, Amos Butler Audubon Society hosted a field trip to Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area (FWA) as an addition to our Waterfowl ID Workshop and as a spring field trip for the membership at large. Our hope was to have folks from the Waterfowl ID Workshop attend the field trip. While no one from the workshop was able to join us, we did have a sizeable group. There were about 20 attendees at any point during the field trip, with Mark Welter leading the trip. The weather was favorable, a nice 60-degree sunny day. We were out in the field from about 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and saw a myriad of species, not just waterfowl.

Our species list included just over 50 species. Of note were: Canvasback, Horned Grebe, Common Snipe, Sandhill and Whooping Cranes, American White Pelican, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Green-winged Teal, Black-necked Stilt, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, and Double-crested Cormorant. The Whooping Crane pair had not yet left the area on migration. They were in a spot where the sun was literally in your face and almost disappeared against it. But in Mark’s scope, you could see these majestic birds very well. The Black-necked Stilts were in a marsh across from the new visitor center. We ended the day with an attempt to find the Yellow-headed Blackbird that had been sighted

on previous days. Yellow-headed Blackbird is a migrant that is fairly rare in Indiana. Unfortunately, it continued to be a rarity, because we could not find it.

Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable time and gained more knowledge about birds from Mark’s vast birding knowledge. Thanks to everyone who came and thanks to Mark Welter for leading this eventful and prosperous birding trip.

## Beers with Birders at Blind Owl Brewery

By Joanna Woodruff, Recording Secretary • Indianapolis, IN  
[jwoodruff@conservingindiana.org](mailto:jwoodruff@conservingindiana.org)



Courtesy of Joanna Woodruff

Amos Butler Audubon Society hosted its fifth Beers with Birders event on March 22 at Blind Owl Brewery located off East 62nd Street in Indianapolis. We had a wonderful turnout with old friends and new friends. About twenty people were in attendance. The event was hosted in a separate party room off the main restaurant/bar which made for better communication and more personalized service. A food menu was also available for folks to grab some dinner and drinks and enjoy the company of others. It was a wonderful evening!

Our quarterly Beers with Birders events offer an informal and fun opportunity to gather together at various breweries across the city and to share in birding experiences and adventures. These events are open to the public and publicized on our website and social media. In recent months, we’ve visited Metazoa Brewing Co., Ash and Elm Cider Co., and Indiana City Brewing. We’ve had between 10-35 people in attendance, including a mix of members and non-members. We hope to gain more ABAS members and even volunteers or new board members.

Indianapolis breweries have kindly offered donations from the event in which a portion of proceeds from the night come directly back to ABAS. If you have personal connections with any local breweries or restaurants, we’d love to hear from you as we are always looking for new places to host these events. Contact Joanna Woodruff, who helps organize Beers with Birders events for any suggestions.

We hope you can join us for our next Beers with Birders event most likely in June. Follow our social media or visit our website for announcements of upcoming Beers with Birders events.

# Waterfowl ID Workshop

By Jessica Helmbold, Education Chair • Indianapolis, IN  
jh\_beagle@hotmail.com

On Saturday, March 17, 2018, Amos Butler Audubon Society hosted its second Waterfowl ID Workshop under my tenure as education chair. This time, I decided to lead the workshop myself. Waterfowl is my favorite group of birds. Tell me you want to go birding and I might oblige; tell me that ducks have been recently posted there on eBird and I will drop everything. My love of waterfowl has developed from many years of raising domestic ducks and working with waterfowl at Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland. Of course, I was naturally excited to teach the Waterfowl ID Workshop.

This workshop also received a lot of interest and had 10 people in attendance. During the workshop we reviewed the swans, geese, and ducks that are on Indiana's waterfowl sighted species list. When we finished going over half of the species we took a break to watch waterfowl from the Ornithology Center's viewing area. Eagle Creek reservoir, as always, was teeming with water birds. We saw Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Mallard, Canada Goose, Ruddy Duck, Green-winged Teal, American Coots, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, and Pied-billed and Horned Grebes (while not technically waterfowl, still worth mentioning).

Thanks to everyone who attended the workshop! While we covered a lot of species, hopefully you now know a few species better than you did before. As always, feel free to share your feedback or suggestions for future programs and workshops.



Courtesy of Adam Barnes.

## Meet the Board: Adam Barnes

Adam Barnes grew up in Indianapolis and graduated from Indiana University with a B.S. in Outdoor Recreation and Resource Management. He has worked in the environmental education field since 2001 for the YMCA, Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, and served over ten years working for the City of Indianapolis as the Manager of Holliday Park. He is currently the executive director of the Friends of Holliday Park, a non-profit organization that supports the park through capital improvement projects, fundraising and advocacy. Adam is also involved in a number of community organizations and sits on the board of the Friends of White River. He birds just enough to get himself in trouble and enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife, two kids, and the world's fastest basset hound.



Participants of the Waterfowl ID Workshop. Courtesy Jessica Helmbold.

## Gardening for the Birds

*Continued from page 1*

Herbicides should be avoided as well to protect birds and other wildlife. Native plants purchased at some chain-nurseries may be pre-treated with insect-detering chemicals. Be sure to purchase native plants though a reputable vendor. Organizations like Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society (INPAWS) as well as Spence Restoration Nursery and Prairie Nursery have resources available.

For a more in-depth discussion on gardening for birds, I recommend Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*. As we enter a period sometimes termed "the sixth great mass extinction," it's hard to understate the imperative role that homeowners must play in maintaining biodiversity in urbanized areas. A rethinking of what a yard is (and can be) may determine the fate of many of our beloved bird species. If each Indiana home owner were to convert a substantial part of their turf-grass (ecologically impoverished zones) to diverse native plantings, our yards, communities and state will experience the many benefits of gardening for birds.



# Amos Butler Audubon Society BIRDATHON 2018

The endangered  
Whooping Crane is  
in need of community  
education to protect  
it in Indiana



## A Campaign To Save Birds

Amos Butler Audubon's mission is to promote the enjoyment and stewardship of the birds of Central Indiana. Each of the following Birdathon 2018 projects will play a significant role toward this end.

### Saving Winter Habitat in Central America

In our partnership with the American Bird Conservancy to preserve winter habitat in Guatemala, local partner FUNDAECO will purchase a 265-acre property called Guaytan to showcase a demonstration farm. As one of six BioCenters in the country, it will preserve migratory bird habitat while serving as a training ground for local farmers. By growing sustainable, environmentally compatible crops, locals will learn ways to earn income. Central Indiana birds found wintering there include Wood Thrush, Kentucky Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler.

### Central Indiana Urban Forest Research

The Indiana Forest Alliance will be using Birdathon funds to identify the remaining high-quality forest woodlots in Marion County to evaluate their use as potential stopover habitat for migratory birds. The goal is to initiate a dialogue with city planners about integrating the inventory of remaining forests in Indianapolis into the new Land Use Plan for the City.

### Community Education

Two projects will focus on educating the community about the importance of birds. The International Crane Foundation has embarked on a comprehensive, multi-year initiative to inspire Indiana citizens to promote the protection of the endangered Whooping Cranes. In August the Indiana Audubon Society will host a Hummingbird Migration Celebration, a festival for the Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

### Local Habitat Restoration

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful will spearhead the restoration of an area known as the Fall Creek Orchard Greenspace with native perennials, fruit trees and shrubs. By providing food sources and habitat, this will create an inviting space for birds.

Our ongoing partnership with the Marian University continues environmental restoration in the Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab. School groups attending EcoLab field trips and service groups from Marian University will be the primary participants in planting bird and insect-friendly native vegetation.

### Raptor Rehabilitation

The Indiana Raptor Center will purchase software to assist in fulfilling its reporting obligations. By tracking trends in the occurrence of injury and disease, it will gain data to compare with other raptor rehabilitation centers, ultimately leading to improvement in care for injured raptors.

### Birdathon Teams Will Be Out Counting

Birdathon teams will be scouring Indiana during May to count the maximum number of species possible in a 24-hour period and asking donors to sponsor their efforts. If you don't know a team member, you could choose to make a donation directly to the Birdathon. Either way, your dollars will go far to ensure the future of the birds of Central Indiana.

**Make a difference, make a pledge!**

START PROTECTING OUR BIRDS TODAY. CUT HERE AND MAIL YOUR PLEDGE OR GO TO [WWW.AMOSBUTLERAUDUBON.ORG](http://WWW.AMOSBUTLERAUDUBON.ORG)

### AMOS BUTLER AUDUBON BIRDATHON 2018 PLEDGE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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My gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed, payable to Amos Butler Audubon. *Your gift is deductible as allowed by law.*

Free Amos Butler Audubon Society membership. **First-time members only.** \$20 or more donation required.

**Thank you for sponsoring the Amos Butler Audubon Society Birdathon. Your donation will go toward:**

- Purchase of wintering habitat for migratory birds
- Migratory bird stopover habitat research
- Local bird-friendly habitat restoration
- Community education about the importance of birds

Return to Donna McCarty, Birdathon Chair, 7492 Runningbrook Ct., Indianapolis, IN 46254-9770



# The Making of Daubenspeck Community Nature Park

By Greg Gerke, President of DCNP • Indianapolis, IN  
daubpark@hotmail.com

Daubenspeck Community Nature Park (DCNP) is a 22-acre gem in the urban northside of Indianapolis. The park's mission is to develop and preserve a true urban nature park that facilitates human appreciation of the park and the natural community it represents. To accomplish this, the park includes special ecosystems including a tall-grass prairie, a native forest, and restored wetlands. The successional restoration of habitat is accented by hiking trails, educational programs that are open to the public, nest boxes for bats and birds, and an observation deck.

The park is named after the Daubenspeck family, the original farmer of the tract where the park is located. In 1960, the Daubenspeck family donated 15 acres of undeveloped land to the Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Washington Township for public use. In 2003, the school district was facing budget shortfalls and considered selling the land for development. Neighbors surrounding the property realized that there was an over-abundance of development in the area, and subsequently, a severe lack of green space and wildlife habitat. So, several neighborhoods banded together and campaigned to instead have the land set aside as a park.

After a long battle, the MSD agreed to lease the land to establish DCNP for a dollar per year in a unique public and nonprofit partnership. The same neighborhoods that helped save the land donated an additional eight acres of forested land on the north end of the park, owned by the North Willow Farms Neighborhood Association. Thus, a nature park was born.

DCNP then established a board of directors for management of the park, drew up by-laws, and set up a 501(c)3 tax-exempt entity for donation and grant purposes. Volunteers began the process of restoring the natural features from what was a fescue field, and encouraged the public to utilize the newly-built park.

Today, the park is still 100% volunteer-driven. Numerous features have been added by public and private groups such as the Boy Scouts of America, commercial entities, individuals, and local schools. Some of the many features include a large observation deck, bridges over the creek, boardwalks, flower boxes, an information kiosk, a gravel parking lot, and numerous other projects that help the wildlife and help with managing the park.

In the last 12 years, the park has hosted countless volunteer work days. A massive effort to eradicate invasive species (honeysuckle, wintercreeper, Canada Thistle, Callery Pear, multiflora rose, etc.) over the years has yielded impressive results given how overrun the property was prior to the park's inception. During the process of restoring the prairie, the board also had a controlled prairie burn to control invasive species.

The local community has been treated to ecological tours presented by guest speakers and experts that selflessly share

their time and talents with visitors. Topics have included but are not limited to bird walks, prairie wildflower walks, bees and pollinators programs, night hikes, stream stomps, archeology programs, raptor walks, bat hikes, wetlands programs, maple syrup tapping, and a nature photography walk.

Since its creation, the park has received numerous awards including the City of Indianapolis's Sustainability Award, the Monumental Affairs Award from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Indianapolis Power & Light Company's Environmentalist of the Year Award, and the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. In addition to the huge increase in wildlife, hundreds of people (and their pets) walk the trails of Daubenspeck Park each year. If you haven't checked out the park, we invite you to come enjoy this rare piece of urban greenspace!



Eagle Scout boardwalk builders. Greg Gerke with a dragonfly. Red-tailed Hawk. All photos courtesy of Daubenspeck Community Nature Park.



# Indiana Young Birder Q&A with Aidan Rominger, Age: 18

By Aidan Rominger • Indianapolis, IN • [arominger26@gmail.com](mailto:arominger26@gmail.com)

## **ABAS: When did you first pick up binoculars?**

AIDAN: When I was much younger, my parents and I would have dinner at my grandparents house. Every time we would visit, I would look at their copy of Sibley's Guide to Birds of North America. Being a toddler, I could barely read, however I was fascinated by the vibrant colors each bird embodied—a unique pattern for each bird. I began memorizing the birds in my head, without knowing what they were called. As I got older, this fascination grew and grew, and before I knew it, I had memorized nearly every species within the guide. I had received my first pair of real binoculars at the age of 11. From that moment on, I set off on the challenging, yet exciting path to becoming the best birder I can be.

## **What is your earliest or most memorable bird-related experience?**

I've had a surplus of experiences such as, having a Ruffed Grouse bite at my shoelace in Morgan Monroe and a Northern Hawk-owl nearly skim the top of my head in Duluth, but by far the most powerful and impactful moment I've ever had came to me at a time when I had least expected it. Back in 2014, my father passed away causing my perception of reality to be slightly altered. What helped me most was birding. My Mom, brother, and I had taken a trip to see family in Michigan. On the car ride home, it was mostly silent other than the occasional song on the radio. I was thinking about my dad throughout the entire four-hour car ride.

I was gazing at my feet until I suddenly felt the need to look out the window. A sudden rush of adrenaline shot down my spine, as the first bird I had seen the entire car ride was a Golden Eagle, soaring elegantly right over our car—and on Kessler in Indianapolis of all places! I somehow managed a few photos of the bird in the quick time I had and was immediately in a better state of mind. To this day, whenever I have the joy of viewing this graceful species, I think of my father. My dad supported my birding from the start and he is the reason I got involved in the Indiana Young Birders Club. I have him to thank for my success in the birding community, and my development as a person. I truly don't know where I'd be without him.

## **This fall, you're heading to college at Purdue University and studying in their Bachelor of Science Wildlife program. What about the program most excites you?**

I'm extremely excited to join Purdue's Forestry and Natural Resources team this fall, mainly because I have many friends that are either in or have been through the program and have greatly benefited from it. I met with one of the top leading Junco scientists in the world, down at her home university, IU, and asked her in the midst of our complex Junco conversation what wildlife program favors the kind of bird research and work that I was thriving to have. She favored Purdue.



*Aidan chilling with a Mountain Chickadee near Lake Dillon, Frisco, Colorado. Courtesy of Aidan Rominger.*

Purdue's extensive wildlife program has interested me ever since I began birding. Before classes start up in the fall, I will be working for Purdue doing point counts in Hoosier-National Forest alongside other researchers in the program. Working under Barney Dunning, and alongside other students that share a common interest to me, really makes me excited for my future with the program. The chance to possibly pick a species to study myself someday makes me extremely excited for what the future holds as a Boiler-maker.

## **To what extent do you think you'll pursue a bird-related career? Or are you interested in other career pathways?**

In college, my goal is to have the opportunity to conduct as much data on particular species of birds that many scientists have little knowledge about due to either a lack of resources or a lack of understanding of the species. I'd like to work on a worldwide scale, however in college, I can see myself conducting mostly North American bird research.

I am more fascinated with a certain species behavior than I am with the anatomy of a particular species. I find subspecies evolution to be the most intriguingly interesting and a complex construct within the entire avian world. I have studied the Dark-eyed Junco intensely – the intergrades, hybrids, and of course individual subspecies –and have even contributed to research on particular intergrades.

After college, I'd love to travel the world doing what I care about most: birding. Joining a tour guide company for the first years on my own would allow me to fulfill my life-long passion for birds around the globe. My dream is to lead tours in the mountainous regions of Europe, perhaps in connection with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and showing bird lovers like myself species they've never laid eyes on before.

## **We hear you've recently upgraded your camera gear to a Canon 7D Mark II. Tell us about your photography goals and what inspired you to take the plunge.**

Yes, I have dropped my "ol' reliable" Canon PowerShot SX50 and upgraded to a newer, much more professional Canon model. I've always dreamt of having a DSLR and finally decided it was time to purchase a new camera. I decided on the Canon 7D Mark II with a 100-400mm lens with a 1.4 teleconverter for longer-to-reach subjects. Growing up, I was glued to TV series like Planet Earth and Blue Planet. I have always longed to become a researcher/photographer for BBC or National Geographic. Perhaps someday I can make my dream a reality.



## What's your favorite local patch?

My all-time favorite local place to bird is a 25-acre private property down the road from my house. It is my safe haven, and it most definitely is a haven for birds. I've found 120+ species on the property over a two-year period. Some of the highlights over the years from the patch have been a fall Worm-eating Warbler (in the Indianapolis area!), multiple Merlins, Northern Saw-whet owl, and multiple Olive-sided Flycatchers on the same day.

The property itself is a small patch of wilderness in a city full of development. During spring and fall migration, I've had days with well over 25 species of warblers at the patch and I see most of the eastern Empids and Cathrus thrushes that occur within the Midwest on an annual basis. The patch's secret for housing so many migrants is what is called the "Island effect." The island effect is formed when migrants are flying over heavily populated, urban environments and are in desperate need of rest. So in order to take refuge for the night, they look for the darkest patches of city (consisting mostly of heavy forests, parks, etc.). I'm very fortunate to have access to this beautiful property and I will cherish it for however long the property stands.

## What are some of the last six months' highlight experiences and/or milestone birds?

Within Indiana, there is only a very short list of possible rarities/vagrants that would add to my state list and my life list. If I had to pick a few species that I'd like to target in the state, it would be birds such as: Northern Goshawk, Swainson's Hawk, Varied Thrush, Cave Swallow, etc. In terms of birds that I'd like to focus on finding that many people may not think to look for, if I have the opportunity, would be passing Kirtland's Warblers, potentially in the pineries of northern Indiana, and the extreme southeast corners of the state for potential nesting Brown-headed Nuthatches and Swainson's Warblers.

In late August, I'm joining a few birding friends on a pelagic trip in California. I've never been to California, so birding there has definitely been a goal of mine for a long time. I have the potential of getting tons of lifers and I'm extremely excited to see what kinds of unexpected species pop up in the state from now until my trip.

## What one bird are you are currently obsessing over?

My friends joke that every season I obsess over a different species, and they're partly right. However, in my defense, these species are never easy to find, which makes me even more obsessed in finding them. Every spring and fall, I cannot wait to go out and search for my favorite warbler in North America, the Connecticut Warbler. Arguably, out of all of the birds I "obsess" over, they are at the top of my list.

In terms of life birds, I could say that my most wanted bird in the ABA area is a Northern Goshawk. They are one of my favorite raptors on the planet, but in each place I have searched for them I've came up empty. Varied Thrush is up there next to Northern Goshawk in terms of my most wanted U.S. birds still left on my wishlist. I chased a bird in Chicago recently and waited eight hours without success, and the kicker was that it was seen all throughout the day on the previous day. Both are lifers that I have only dreamed of seeing. Maybe someday...

## *Donations*

*Thanks to Ash & Elm Cider Co. for hosting "Trivia for Birds!" on Feb. 7, where 10% of all sales that evening were donated to ABAS in the amount of \$70.*

*Thanks to Chipper Woods Bird Observatory for their contribution to the birds for many years. They have closed their doors and chose ABAS as a recipient of a final distribution of funds.*

*Lastly, thank you to the 122 contributors to our year-end giving campaign, which raised \$8,404 in contributions. The campaign is our largest source of funds for ABAS programs, field trips, workshops, newsletters, website maintenance, and other activities throughout the year. Your generous support keeps us helping the birds.*

## **Indianapolis Market Tower Peregrine Patrol**

Each spring to early summer falcon watchers gather downtown to keep an eye on falcon fledglings. Sometimes they can fly reasonably well, but sticking landings can be a bit tricky. If the young birds end up on the street they need to be collected and taken back to a higher perch. This is when the Peregrine Patrol can use some help with monitoring. Please email or text Gigi Caito [mjcaito@gmail.com](mailto:mjcaito@gmail.com), (317) 691-2056; or email Sue Ham [srcham1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:srcham1@sbcglobal.net)



## Amos Butler Audubon Society Chapter Supporter Membership

### Membership benefits:

- 100% of your dues support local Audubon educational programs and urban conservation projects
- *Audubon LifeLines*, the chapter newsletter
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Mail to: ABAS Membership Chair

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Indianapolis, IN 46280

e-mail questions to: [info@amosbutleraudubon.org](mailto:info@amosbutleraudubon.org)

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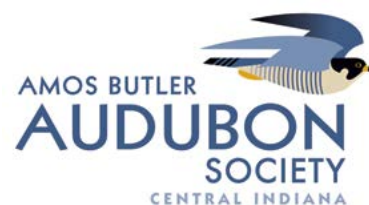
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[info@amosbutleraudubon.org](mailto:info@amosbutleraudubon.org)

## ABAS Logo Gear

Have you noticed the snazzy ABAS logo shirts that many of the board members have been wearing lately? We recently set up an account with local apparel company, Concept Prints, to provide embroidered logo gear for our members and events. Whether it's one shirt to help you show your Audubon pride or an order of 20 for a team representing ABAS at an event, ordering is easy. Simply visit [www.conceptprints.com](http://www.conceptprints.com) and click the "Featured Catalogues" link to browse the wide variety of apparel offered. For pricing details, questions, or to place an order, email our account manager, Shiron Miller, at [shiron@conceptprints.com](mailto:shiron@conceptprints.com). Orders usually arrive within two weeks and can be paid for when received. A terrific new way to support ABAS!

## E-Mail Address Anyone?

Join with hundreds of other members who have gone green by signing up for the electronic *LifeLines* newsletter and meeting reminders. Send your request, including your full name, to [info@amosbutleraudubon.org](mailto:info@amosbutleraudubon.org). This shift towards electronic communication continues to save ABAS hundreds of dollars in printing and mailing costs annually.



*Our mission: To promote the enjoyment and stewardship of the birds of Central Indiana*

**Amos Butler Audubon Society**

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