

New Year's Resolutions: Birder Style!

By Amy Hodson

The end of a year brings a time of reflection and hope. We think about experiences from the past and feel hopeful about what is to come. The concept of a New Year's resolution is born in those moments of reflection and manifests with promises to do something better. Whether it's making it to the gym more often, reading more, spending time with someone, or doing something you love, most of us can find an aspect of life that we would like to make better.

Birding gives us a unique twist on this tradition that helps us enjoy what we are most passionate about — the world of birds. I spent some time surveying birders and here are the top 10 Birding New Year's resolutions from the results of 588 votes.

10. Actually Go Birding

Getting into the field more frequently was a common goal from many. I can only imagine how many more birders are out there that are ready to hit the road with their binoculars this year. Find your local bird hikes and GO BIRDING!

9. Bring my Family Birding/Get my Family into Birding

We have all been there. That blissful moment where you think that your mom, spouse, or child is asking a question about birds that might actually spark them to pick up your spare pair of binoculars. For those of you who have accomplished this great feat – Bravo! For most of us, the quest is still ongoing.

8. Find a Birding “Crew”



New Years Resolution: “Birders Birding” group

Birding doesn't have to be a solo sport. Whether you find a local regularly scheduled bird walk, make some friends on a field trip, or even find a group of like-minded photographers, birding with a group can be a lot of fun. Be aware that “adulting” usually finds a way to prevent a get-together. During those times, remember that this is 2020. Social media is here to keep us all connected. Group chats with friends who actually want to talk about birds are almost as good as enjoying a stellar view of a Short-eared Owl together.

7. Click, Click, Click! It's Time to “up” my Photography Game

Let's be honest. We all love looking at gorgeous photos of birds. Over the past decade, the ranks of birders who carry a camera has grown at an incredible rate. With the flexibility of digital photography and the ease of hybrid cameras (point-and-shoot meets a DSLR), finding a birder without a camera is a true rarity. There are three main angles to this New Year's Resolution:

- Learn more about your current gear and how to take better photos
- Learn more about where to take photos and go there
- Begin your journey down the path of the bird photography world

If this resolution speaks to you, good luck no matter where you are in your journey. You can join ABAS on one of our photo hikes too.

6. Say “Goodbye” to that Photo Backlog

This is the second and final resolution directed towards you camera-carrying birders. We all know you went to California in 2017. We saw your iPhone photos on Facebook, but where are those bird photos? Sure, you got one picture of a Long-billed Curlew posted, but the world is (not-so-patiently) waiting for the rest.

Remember that your external hard-drive can only last so long. Until you go through all of those photos from Goose Pond FWA in January of last year, you're just eating up space.

The New Year offers a chance to say goodbye to that photo backlog and get into the habit of downloading your SD card every time you get home. After that, get ruthless with yourself. If you don't care enough about the photo to process it within a month or so from shooting, DELETE!

5. Target Species – Nemesis no more!

The one that got away. If you longingly (or angrily) think about that one species that you've spent so much time, money, and countless hours whining to your friends about, know that most of us have one, and most of us still chase them. Don't let past events get you down. Remember that you've got this. Go. Get. That. Bird. I'm looking at you Mr. Ruffed Grouse.

4. Break out those Journals

Sketching and field notes are a tradition in birding that runs as deep as John James Audubon. This lost art seems to be making a comeback as many claimed that using field journals is their New Year's resolution. This practice results in an enhanced remembrance of sightings, reporting them on eBird and personal lists more thoroughly, and capturing the moment for future years to come. I personally commend this resolution. Good luck to you artsy and detail-driven friends.

3. Did you Hear That?

Birding by ear. Most of us have been on a bird walk with that one guide who seems to know every call, chip note, song, and flight call there is. What if we could just learn a fraction of birding

Continued on page 5.

Upcoming Audubon Programs, Events, and Field Trips

All are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

The Best of Birding in Central America — Which Country is Right for You?

Tuesday, January 14, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Holliday Park Nature Center
6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN

Join ABAS President and Sabrewing Nature Tours owner Rob Ripma as he explains what factors you should consider when deciding which country in Central America you want to visit. From birding and experiencing the culture of Guatemala to discovering the remote and exciting Darién province in Panama, Rob will help you explore all the best birding options in this incredible region!

Jaribu and Coppery-headed Emerald
courtesy of Rob Ripma.



The Secret Love Life of Birds

Tuesday, February 11, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Holliday Park Nature Center
6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN

Deception? Fidelity? Promiscuity? These words are not typically associated with the mating behavior of birds. But the amorous avian world is much more complex than our naturalist forefathers would have ever believed. Join Team Schaust, father and son, as they share research on the pair-bonding strategy of birds through some fascinating facts and humorous analogies to our own crazy courtship behaviors.

Will Schaust has always had a love of the outdoors. He grew up camping with his family and graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Outdoor Recreation. After working at McCormick's Creek State Park for four years, he went to Eagle Creek Park where he is now the Ornithology Center Manager. This allows Will to continue his study into the wonderful world of birds.

As Chief Naturalist for Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. (WBU), John Schaust has spent the past 15 years supporting over 300 WBU stores by helping their customers be active backyard birdwatchers and thoughtful stewards of nature. Prior to joining WBU in 2004, John spent 26 years as an Interpretive Naturalist with various federal, state, and local park agencies. He is an avid birder and has been a licensed bird bander for over 30 years.



Two birds that have interesting love lives... Red-winged Blackbird courtesy of Mark Welter. Wilson's Phalarope courtesy of Jeff Timmons.

Christmas Bird Count for Kids

Friday, January 3, 8:30 am to 12:00 pm
Zion Nature Center
690 Beech Street, Zionsville, IN

Whether your child is curious about the natural world, loves to go birding or has never birded before, ABAS volunteers will help your child discover birding and might light within them the curiosity for nature. This workshop is great for scouts working on badges. The free event will include a short lesson on the basics of birding; bird watching out on the trails and inside at the feeder station windows; learning how to collect data; followed by snacks and an awards ceremony. Bring binoculars or field guides if you have them. Dress for cold weather and hiking.

This event is for kids ages 5 to 15 years old with adults. Registration is required as space is limited. Register by emailing nature-center@zionsville-in.gov.

Celery Bog Nature Area Field Trip

Saturday, January 11, 8:00 am to 11:00 am

1620 Lindberg Road, West Lafayette, IN

Join new ABAS Field Trip Chair Chuck Anderson for a field trip to Celery Bog Nature Area near West Lafayette. This will be a great opportunity to view waterfowl and year-round resident birds. Target birds are Redhead and Canvasback ducks, with a possibility of spotting a Long-tailed Duck. Snow Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose also frequent the bog.

The terrain is flat and trails are well managed. The hike will be 2 to 2 1/2 miles. Restrooms are available at the Lilly Nature Center after 10:00 am. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Dress appropriately for the weather. We'll meet at 8:00 am at the Marathon gas station located at the I65 exit #175 Lafayette/Delphi and caravan from there.

There is no fee for the field trip. However, it is limited to 12 participants and registration is required. Email Chuck at chucka1999@aol.com or text (317) 767-5438 to reserve your spot on the field trip.



Redhead courtesy of Jeff Timmons, Northern Pintail courtesy of Mike Timmons.

Bird Photography Walk at Eagle Creek Park

Saturday, February 1, 9:00 am to 10:30 am

6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis, IN 46278

Join Amy Hodson on a walk at Eagle Creek Park to photograph birds. All levels of photography are welcome, especially beginners! Don't have camera gear quite yet, but still want to learn? This will be a great opportunity to learn about the basics of bird photography.

The group will meet at the Ornithology Center to practice shooting at the feeders. We will then head into the park to see what migrants and resident birds we can find!

Registration is required. Please RSVP for this event by emailing info@amosbutleraudubon.org. Although there is no fee for this walk, park entrance fees apply.



Hairy Woodpecker courtesy of Amy Hodson.

Winter Lakefront Field Trip

Saturday, February 8, 6:30 am to 6:00 pm

Meet at Menards in Lebanon:

402 Sam Ralston Road, Lebanon, IN

Join birders extraordinaire Lisa and Randy Vanderbilt as they lead you in search of wintering gulls, waterfowl and any vagrants that may be in the area at the Indiana Lake Michigan lakeshore.

We will meet at the Menards off I65 exit #140 in Lebanon at 6:30 am in the SE corner of the parking lot and caravan/carpool to the lakefront.

We will spend the morning and early afternoon visiting various sites around the Indiana lakeshore. Little time will be spent hiking, though some hiking terrain would be considered moderate to rugged. Make sure you dress appropriately for the weather conditions. Most of the time will be spent traveling to as many sites as possible to scan the lake. Participants can expect to return to Indianapolis around 6:00 pm. There will be a break for lunch in the Gary/Chesterton area.

The event is free and open to the public. Registration is not required but appreciated. Please text Chuck Anderson at (317) 767-5438 or email chucka1999@aol.com to confirm participation or to ask any questions.



Iceland Gull courtesy of Mike Timmons.

Local Bird Hikes

Eagle Creek Park

6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis, IN

Every Sunday, 9:00 am to 11:00 am

January 5, 12, 19, 26

February 2, 9, 16, 23

Meet in front of the Ornithology Center.

Holliday Park

6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN

Third Tuesday of each month

Start times vary during the year

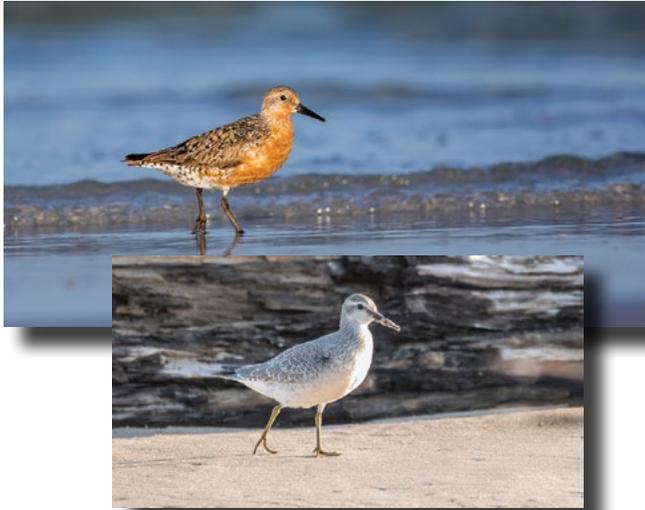
January 21, 8:30 am to 10:00 am

February 18, 8:30 am to 10:00 am

Meet in front of the Holliday Park Nature Center.

Local Scientist Helps Save Threatened Red Knots

By Bob Baker, Ph.D.



*Red Knot in breeding plumage courtesy of Jeff Timmons.
Red Knot in winter plumage courtesy of Randy Vanderbilt.*

Occasionally a person with a special passion or vision comes forth to carry an idea to fruition. Jay Bolden, senior biologist at Eli Lilly & Co. and a birder, saw the possibility of replacing the horseshoe crab blood-clotting factor with the synthetic recombinant factor C (rFC). The clotting factor is essential in testing required to check for possible endotoxins in injectable pharmaceuticals. To supply the biomedical industry with the clotting factor requires approximately 500,000 crabs each year. Although the amount of blood taken from each crab isn't lethal, many die. This has diminished the number of eggs available for shorebirds.

Migrating shorebirds depend on the crabs' eggs for energy to fly to the Arctic nesting area. For example, in 1991, the beaches of Delaware Bay contained 100,000 crab eggs per square yard. In recent years, there have been only 5,000-6,000 eggs per square yard, a very sharp fall. The shorebirds have difficulty replenishing their fat stores sufficiently and arrive at the nesting grounds in poor condition to reproduce. Consequently, the numbers of Red Knots greatly decreased. In 2014 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the species threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

It was apparent to Jay Bolden that the expansion of the biomedical industry would require even more blood for increased testing. Additional deaths of the crabs due to the need for their blood would continue to severely impact several shorebird species.

To get FDA approval, the use of rFC had to be shown equivalent to or better than the old blood test in the manufacture of a new drug. First, Jay had to turn salesperson and convince Lilly management of the primary benefits: lower costs and higher reliability. The good news is that Lilly has recently received permission to use the rFC test for endotoxins in the manufacture of a new drug.

Jay Bolden's science vocation and his birding avocation brought about the first FDA approval of rFC. Hopefully, other members of the biomedical industry will follow. This would relieve the pressure on the horseshoe crab, which should ensure the Red Knot and other shorebirds a feeding stopover at Delaware Bay sufficient for the long migration to their Arctic nesting grounds.



Bob Baker is a retired Lilly Research Scientist and past President of ABAS ('85-'87)

Ecoblitz 2.0: Hoosier National Forest Reveals Undisturbed Woodland Ecosystem

By Jeff Stant, Executive Director of the Indiana Forest Alliance

This spring, the Indiana Forest Alliance (IFA) moved its Ecoblitz inventory to a second site, this time in the Hoosier National Forest (HNF) approximately 25 miles south of the Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe Back Country Area. The site comprises 734 acres on the upper watershed of Combs Creek, which flows through the heart of 12,000 acres of contiguous Hoosier National Forest surrounded by state and national forest. The forests in this watershed were closed canopy when the HNF acquired them in the 1940s to 1960s and have not been managed for timber harvests since. The slopes draining into Combs Creek are covered entirely with native hardwood trees without any non-native pine stands. These attributes make the Combs Creek tract one of the best examples in the state of a wild, native interior forest.

The U.S. Forest Service has issued permits to IFA to undertake surveys of life in this tract for the next three years. Since May, IFA has initiated surveys for reptiles and amphibians ("herps"), insects, birds, vascular plants, fungi, spiders, and bats at Combs Creek.

Indiana birding expert Brad Jackson led eight other birders in surveys on June 29 and 30, 2019 that resulted in the identification of 38 unique species of birds by sight and sound throughout the Combs Creek area. These included many Worm-eating and Hooded

Warblers, both listed as species of special concern in Indiana, and the state-endangered Cerulean Warbler. Five more birds were later identified including another species of special concern, Eastern Whip-poor-will, heard frequently at night during bat surveys.

For 2020 we are also planning a bird survey that will employ participants in stationary locations on a grid, identifying birds by sight and sound for a limited period. This will generate results that can be compared with those of the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment in Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests. We are also planning to study the nesting success of the Cerulean Warbler and other uncommon forest songbirds identified so far at Combs Creek. IFA would welcome the participation of volunteers from ABAS for these surveys. Please contact Rae Schnapp at (317) 602-3692 if you are interested.

Jeff Stant is the Executive Director of the Indiana Forest Alliance. In 2017 the ABAS Birdathon funded the IFA's grant request for "Identifying and Mapping the Nesting Habitat of the Cerulean Warbler in Indiana Forests."



On both days of the survey, birders could hear the Black-throated Green Warbler in the higher elevations of the survey area, even though this bird is uncommon in Indiana during the summer. Photo courtesy Fyn Kynd.

The Making of Central Park: A Gem in Hamilton County

By Brittany McAdams

Carmel's Central Park was established in 2007 and is divided into two main areas by the Monon Greenway: Central Park East and West. Central Park West houses the waterpark and Westermeier Commons, and the East has beautiful wooded trails—the Monon Community Center is on both sides.

All of Central Park was old farmland (80 acres East and 80 acres West), except for an old homestead on the east side which is now known as Central Park East Woods. When Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation bought the property to turn it into a park, they were required to mitigate 4 acres of land per acre of development. This means that for every one acre of parking lot, or community center, there needed to be 4 acres of mitigated natural area.

To determine what the area naturally would have been, tile drains were removed from the old agricultural fields and the soil was surveyed. Not surprisingly, the site had poorly drained soils and the land would be best mitigated as a wetland. Central Park's lagoon and wetlands now boast great recreational fishing, bird watching, and is a destination for all folks traveling through and living in Carmel.

Note from the Editor:

Only 12 years after the park's creation, Central Park in Hamilton County has now recorded 178 species of birds according to eBird records. This includes a pair of resident Barred Owls, Red-shouldered Hawks, and songbirds galore. This space has also created habitat for migrants as they pass through central Indiana. Some of those include Green-winged Teal, Lark Sparrow (found by ABAS board member Brian Cunningham), American Woodcock, Golden-winged Warbler, and Blue Grosbeak. Be sure to take some time out of your birding schedule to stop by Central Park.



This Golden-winged Warbler stopped by Central Park on its fall migration path. Photo courtesy of Amy Hodson.

There's Still Time to Make Your 2019 Year-End Donation

ABAS members and supporters, you all should have received information about our annual year-end fund campaign. To those who have already donated, THANK YOU! If you'd still like to donate, send your check in the return envelope provided in our mailer to ABAS, PO Box 80024, Indianapolis, IN 46280, or donate right now, by going to http://www.amosbutleraudubon.org/join_donate/.

Consider designating your donation to the Permanent Fund for the long term financial health of ABAS. Thank you, on behalf of the birds of Indiana and the members of ABAS. Happy New Year and thanks for all your support in 2019. We are looking forward to exciting programs and events in 2020 and beyond.

New Year's Resolutions: Birder Style!

Continued from page 1.

by ear this year? Opening up your ears to spend time studying bird sounds is one of those "next level" birding skills, but it's never too early to start. Want some tips for getting started?

- Bird with someone who has an excellent ear and don't be afraid to ask, "What is that and how do you know what it is?"
- Invest in a "Birding by Ear" CD/digital set. Peterson's and Sibley's both make excellent learning tools.
- Spend time being aware of bird songs while out in the field and most importantly ...
- Don't be afraid to be wrong! Identifying a bird by sound can be even trickier than by sight. Everyone gets it wrong, including the experts. Give it your best shot and do your best to remember the lesson when you get it wrong.

2. eBirding

The feedback regarding eBird New Year's resolutions was vast and amazing. Since the introduction of this "birder's dream come true" tool, over 100 million bird sightings are contributed each year.

The younger generation of birders seemed to really cling to eBird as their focus for a New Year's resolution. Some of those angles included:

- Submit an eBird checklist for every time you go birding
- Submit a higher count of birds/checklists via eBird
- Find a new hotspot, get it submitted, and have it approved by eBird
- Submit more photos via eBird for the Macaulay Library

If you are new to eBird or have yet to begin using it, you can learn more here <https://ebird.org/>.

1. New Year = New Lists

As soon as the clock strikes twelve, the New Year has begun. The excitement builds as you lie awake in bed impatiently waiting for daylight. And then – It. Is. On!

As soon as you can make it to your window, it's time to see what your first bird of the year will be. Remember to shield your eyes from the bush where the House Sparrows are. No one wants a House Sparrow as their first bird of the year!

With the New Year comes brand new lists. Let's focus on seeing more birds in the yard, in the county, in the state, in the country, or heck, let's go for broke – in the world! The opportunities for year listing are nearly endless.

Every year can be a "Big Year." It just depends on your focus and dedication. We all know that you have the heart. It's no wonder that January 1st is the most exciting day of the year for birders who keep any type of year list.

Happy New Year to all. ABAS wishes you luck with whatever your goals, dreams, and aspirations might be this year. Make 2020 your best year of birding yet!

Special Donations

In memory of Liz Day by David Watt

All who give a little extra with their ABAS memberships

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
- Workshops and entertaining monthly program meetings

One-year individual membership \$25

Two-year individual membership \$45

One-year household membership \$40

Two-year household membership \$75

Lifetime individual membership \$500

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (please include) _____

Make checks payable to: Amos Butler Audubon Society

Mail to: ABAS Membership Chair

P.O. Box 80024

Indianapolis, IN 46280

e-mail questions to: info@amosbutleraudubon.org

Amos Butler Audubon Society

Officers:

Rob Ripma, *President, Executive Committee*

Ted Meyer, *Treasurer, Past President,
Executive Committee, Membership Chair,
Website Coordinator*

Joanna Woodruff, *Recording Secretary,
Executive Committee*

Board Members:

Chuck Anderson, *Field Trip Chair*

Adam Barnes, *Volunteer Chair*

Austin Broadwater, *Lights Out Indy Chair*

Brian Cunningham

Amy Hodson, *Communications Chair*

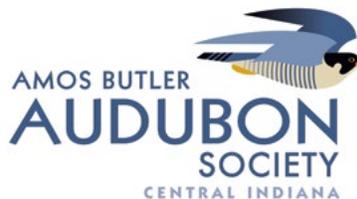
Jessica Helmbold, *Education Chair*

Karen LaMere, *Program Chair*

Doug Sherow, *Conservation Chair*

Additional Committee Chairs:

Donna McCarty, *Birdathon Chair*



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

Amos Butler Audubon Society

P.O. Box 80024

Indianapolis, IN 46280

Visit our website:

www.amosbutleraudubon.org

Sign up for the online LifeLines at
info@amosbutleraudubon.org