



Corvids or COVID? Birding While Self-Isolating

By Will Schaust, Eagle Creek Ornithology Center Manager, william.schaust@indy.gov

Contrary to popular belief, birds do not have to follow any travel advisories or stay-at-home orders. This is especially true during migration. While it may seem like cruel timing to be trapped at home during our favorite time of year, fear not. There are plenty of ways to bring the birds to you.

As much as it pains me to say it, birding is not essential. There may be secretary birds, but I've never seen a pharmacist bird or a banker bird which means that we all need to follow proper social distancing procedures to help flatten the curve and keep people out of hospitals. While the act of birding itself may be a great example of social distancing, try to think of the bigger picture. What if you need gas? Food? Restroom? These shared services are hotbeds for spreading the virus.

As I mentioned earlier, this does not mean all is lost. There are plenty of ways to get your bird fix from the comfort of your own couch. I have compiled a few resources that will bring the birds to you.

Turn your Yard into a Feeding Station

Shoeless Joe Jackson said in the movie *Field of Dreams*, "If you build it, they will come" and the same principle can be applied to the birds. Turning your yard into a bird-friendly habitat only takes a few steps to provide you with hours of entertainment, no baseball diamond required. Bird feeding has been rapidly increasing to become one of the biggest hobbies in America. In order to set up your yard to be an effective feeding station, consider implementing the following resources:

- **Food** – Let's be honest, the only way we get birds into our yards is to bribe them for their company. Food is an essential part of any feeding station, and the birds can tell if you're not giving them the good stuff. The main benefit of the food that birds eat is the oil content. This fat will provide valuable energy to your famished feathered friends, especially during the cold winter months. But surprisingly, birds are not that reliant on us for their daily diet. Feeders only account for about 20% of their total diet. As far as what kind of food you put out depends on what birds you want to see. Black Oil Sunflower is a great "catch-all" birdseed for a wide variety of species. Suet is great for woodpeckers and nuthatches, and nectar is a fairly cheap and easy way to see hummingbirds and possibly orioles. For nectar, combine 1 part sugar with 4 parts warm water to dissolve the sugar. Store refrigerated and allow to come to room temp before putting in your nectar feeder.
- **Water** – Since birds don't have sweat glands they don't need as much water as a mammal would, but that doesn't mean they don't get thirsty. For the most part, birds lose their water from their droppings and respiration and usually need to have a drink at least twice a day to replace their lost fluids. Many predatory birds (insectivores, fish hunters, or raptors) get their hydration from the prey that they catch. A water feature is also a great way to attract birds that you may not typically see at a feeding station. It doesn't have to be anything fancy; something like a bucket or pie tin will work great. Many warblers, vireos, and even raptors will visit for a bath.
- **Cover** – We humans did not follow after our wilder relatives when it comes to eating. We sit in restaurants packed with other people, out in the open, relying on mutual trust that we won't start looking at each other as prey. Birds practice a much different behavior when it comes to their eating habits. They prefer to stay hidden in cover, fly out to a feeder and grab a seed, and then return to that cover to eat safely. By planting trees and bushes in your yard, you are providing protection from hawks, cats, and other predators. If you want to maximize your benefit, plant something that has flowers or fruit for our pollinators. As always, we want to make sure that these plants are native, not invasive.



Gray Catbird nest by Amy Hodson

- **A Place to Raise Young** – While some birds may choose to build a nest in your newly planted trees, others prefer a little more protection from the elements. Cavity nesters like chickadees, bluebirds, wrens, and swallows will love a nest box or tree cavity. The American Bluebird Association has plenty of plans if you want to build your own box. I would recommend using lumber that is resistant to outdoor elements such as cedar or oak. Never use pressure-treated wood. It is treated with a pesticide and fungicide that can harm the birds. If you want to keep things easy and purchase one, many nature stores or hardware stores will have kits or pre-made boxes.

Certify your Yard

Wild Birds Unlimited has made it incredibly easy to certify your yard as a wildlife habitat. Partnering with the National Wildlife Federation, they have laid out five easy steps that will earn your yard that certification. www.wbu.com/certify-your-yard/

Take Advantage of Urban Environments

Even in suburbia, there are plenty of places where you can find birds. Many bird species are known as synanthropes or synanthropic, meaning that they benefit from the artificial habitats that humans have created around them. Other examples of this would be squirrels, raccoons, deer, and rabbits. Your neighborhood is filled with all kinds of wildlife to see. I even managed to find a Lark Sparrow in the alley behind my house. I have pictures for those who may not believe me. It doesn't matter what type of habitat is surrounding your neighborhood, good birds can be found all around us.

Wildlife Web Cams

As we all turn to the internet to work, shop, and entertain, it's good to keep in mind that sometimes birds surf instead of fly. Live streams usually mean a creek teeming with wildlife, though I guess this works too. Of course, I won't have enough space to put all the available cams. These are a few of my favorites. Quit looking at cat videos and check out these great live streams:

- **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** – The definitive resource for all things birds does not disappoint. These fine folks currently have 11 live streams from all over the world including Panama, Canada, and various U.S. cities. Both feeder and nest cams show off a wide variety of species both familiar and new. I would highly recommend checking out the Barred Owl Nest Cam, which is located at Wild Birds Unlimited's CEO and Founder Jim Carpenter's house in Zionsville <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>

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Upcoming Audubon Programs and Events

All are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, all of these events are subject to cancellation. Please check our website event calendar before attending an event to see if it might have been canceled. Once restrictions are softened, we might also schedule last-minute events.



Harnessed Tiger Moth courtesy of Chuck Anderson

The Darkside of Lepidoptera

Tuesday, May 12, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Holliday Park Nature Center
6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN

Join Amanda Smith, Superintendent of Natural Resources and Education for the Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Department, for an informative discussion about the dark side of Lepidoptera, specifically moths. They make up 90% of the Order of Lepidoptera. However, they share very little of the excitement or appreciation that surrounds their more popular cousins, the butterflies. Moths are critical to the food webs, extremely diverse, understudied, and many are more striking than the prettiest butterfly. In this program we will discuss moth identification, their importance in the ecosystem, how to attract them, tips on moth photography, and provide connections to resources and projects geared to helping people learn about these fascinating and yet often overlooked insects.

Volunteer Training

Thursday, June 18, 9:30 am to 11:00 am

Thursday, August 20, 9:30 am to 11:00 am

Holliday Park Nature Center
6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN

ABAS is making it easy to volunteer with our Volunteer Training Program. Each session will focus on a different topic designed to provide volunteers with hands-on opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills needed to help with chapter programs and events. No experience needed, open to individuals age 16+.

These sessions are free and are open to the public. Register by emailing Abarnes@HollidayPark.org.

Local Bird Hikes

Please check our website event calendar before attending a bird hike to see if it might have been canceled.

Spring hikes at Southeastway Park have already been canceled.

Chimney Swift watches are not yet set and we expect to have one or two in August.

Eagle Creek Park

6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis, IN

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

May hikes canceled

June 7, 14, 21, 28; July 5, 12, 19, 26; August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Bird hikes have been through May. Rescheduling to be determined. When resumed, 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

May through August 8:00 am to 9:30 am

May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18

Meet in front of the Nature Center.

Spring Migrants at Starkey Park

667 Sugarbush Drive, Zionsville, IN

Saturday, May 23, 8:00 am to 9:30 am

Join Whitney and Jonathan Yoerger for a spring bird hike. Meet in the parking lot at Starkey Park.

Thornwood Nature Preserve Bird Hike

1597 South Morristown Pike, Greenfield, IN

Second Saturday of each month, 8:00 am to 10:00 am

May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8

Join the Greenfield Birders for a bird hike. Beginners are welcome. All walks are weather pending. Stay up to date with any changes by searching "Greenfield Birders" on Facebook.

Beckenholdt Family Park

2770 North Franklin Street, Greenfield, IN

Fourth Saturday of each month, 8:00 am to 10:00 am

May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22

Join the Greenfield Birders for a bird hike. Beginners are welcome. All walks are weather pending. Stay up to date with any changes by searching "Greenfield Birders" on Facebook.

Fort Harrison State Park

6000 North Post Road, Indianapolis, IN

Sundays in May, 8:00 am to 10:00 am

May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Meet Don Gorney at the northeast corner of the Delaware Lake parking lot.

Garfield Park Urban Bird Walks

2432 Conservatory Dr, Indianapolis, IN

One Saturday a month, 8:00 am to 9:30 am

May 9, June 13, July 11, August 15

Meet at the Conservatory entrance.

Girls Gone Birding

By Lindsay Grossman

President of the South Bend – Elkhart Audubon Society
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Girls Gone Birding Group

It all started so organically. My friend Julie and I live over 80 miles apart. She is in Griffith (NW Indiana) and I'm in Mishawaka (North Central Indiana). We met on an Indiana Audubon Society trip to Sax-Zim Bog – the kind of magical birding trip that forever binds birders together. Ironically, we actually didn't talk much on the trip, but afterward, we kept running into each other and eventually figured out that we get along quite nicely. Our physical distance kept us from getting together too often, so we decided we needed a plan.

We agreed that we wanted to do some fall birding and to try to puzzle out the confusing fall warblers at some of the migrant traps in NW Indiana. We set a date to meet and were both pretty excited to finally get out birding together. I can't remember if it was her or me that first suggested we invite someone else to join us, but the conversation resulted in "I'll ask Carol". "How about Angie?" she responded. Before we knew it, we had a handful of people interested in going. We looked at the names and it was then that we remarked, "Hey, they're all women. How cool." It wasn't our intention for it to just be women, that's just how it came together.

There were a total of ten female birders who showed up on a late September morning for that first gathering. We had an amazing day exploring Hammond Bird Sanctuary and Forsythe Park. Some of us stayed for only a few hours and some kept birding until the sunset. We saw beautiful birds, had great conversations, and laughed. We all agreed that we had to do this again sometime. I still remember sitting on a railroad tie, surrounded by sparrows in the grasslands around us, and basking in that feeling of having just added a great lifer, an Upland Sandpiper. I remarked that we were "Girls Gone Birding." It's not the world's most inventive name, but it instantly stuck. It seemed official – we had a name.

Lifetime Memberships

All lifetime memberships go to the Permanent Fund. Lifetime individual membership is only \$500 and it is fitting that it goes to the long-run benefit of ABAS. The Permanent Fund can never be spent. Similar to an endowment, the goal is that investment proceeds can be spent as the Board of Directors determines. Any donation throughout the year can be directed towards the Permanent Fund as well.

The ten of us were all on Facebook, so it seemed natural to transition from talking via Facebook Messenger to having an actual group where we could post photos, create events, keep better track of our conversations, etc. – the things that make Facebook so wonderful. We then began to grow as we thought of more friends we wanted to add to our little make-shift group. We only had two rules, you had to be a birder from Indiana or a nearby state, and had to identify as female. That was it.

We meet on average once a quarter, more during the busy birding seasons of spring and fall. We have had purely social evenings, but most of the time we go birding together along with the social aspect. We have also had board game nights and attended events such as Birds and Brew together. Since our current membership is more northerly based, most of our meetups happen in the northern half of the state, but we're not limiting ourselves to that in the slightest. We have plans to visit places like Eagle Creek and Goose Pond together sometime soon.

This group has meant a lot to me personally. I consider most of the women good friends of mine. Some of the women have yet to go to a single event and that's ok. None of us go to literally every event. Most get invited by a current member to our first event and make some new instant friends. There are no hangups in this group. We are not pretentious or proud. We all still laugh fondly at the ID mistake we made on an oddly plumaged ruddy duck at Wakarusa Treatment Plant. That's who we are, a bunch of women who enjoy being out in nature together with other women of the same mindset. We found something that strikes a chord in a lot of women and we gladly add them into the mix. Care to join us?



Girls Gone Birding Group - Board game night playing "Wingspan"

Special Donations

State employees who sign up to have payroll deductions contributed to ABAS

All who contribute through AmazonSmile by naming Amos Butler Audubon Society as their charity

The 135 donors to our year-end appeal

Corvids or COVID: *Continued from page 1*

- SW Bald Eagle Nest Cam – Located just outside Fort Myers, FL is a pair of Bald Eagles that have nested right off the highway for close to a decade. There are 4 different camera angles to choose from and plenty of eagle action to see. Don't be fooled, even though the website is for Dick Pritchett Real Estate, I am not trying to sell you a Florida condo or timeshare. <https://dickpritchettrealestate.com/>
- Audubon Web Cams – Literally stretching from coast to coast, Audubon has put webcams on pelagic birds, passerines, raptors, and much more. Puffins, Osprey, Blue Jays, and Hummingbirds are just a few highlights. <https://www.audubon.org/birdcams>



Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Amy Hodson

Online Programming

Do you have a junior ornithologist at home and need some educational resources? The Eagle Creek Ornithology Center has recently moved to an entirely virtual program offering. Starting on March 23rd, we began featuring a different group of birds of prey in "Raptors: An Online Nature Series." Our current schedule is as follows:

- Hummingbirds on May 4
- Migration on May 11
- Eagle Creek Park Virtual Trail Highlights on May 18
- Baby Birds on May 25

Each week we will be showing behind-the-scenes clips, conservation stories, ID features, craft ideas, scavenger hunts, and much more to keep all members of the family entertained. All content will be posted on our Facebook page, so even if you miss the premiere you'll still be able to catch all the action. <https://www.facebook.com/Ornithology.Center/>

As things get increasingly more unsure, I think it's important to make the best of every situation, especially this one. While I sit here writing this article in March, I have no idea what things will look like by the time this is released. What I do know, is that many of us revert back to the simple things that make us happy. Wild Birds Unlimited CEO and Founder Jim Carpenter titled his 2017 book "*The Joy of Bird Feeding*" and I couldn't agree more. There is a simplistic joy in the exchange between avian and human. I would also add that there is a sense of joy when one reflects on a project with a sense of pride and accomplishment. When you transform your yard into an avian all-you-can-eat buffet, it will make seeing those woodpeckers, chickadees, cardinals, and hummingbirds that much more special.



*Song Sparrow
by Amy Hodson*

Behind the Lens: Jason Jablonski

Note from the Editor: When thinking about the next photographer to interview for this series, Jason Jablonski was an obvious choice. Jason is a premier bird photographer in Indiana. His photos span the country with a home base right here in Indiana. Enjoy!



Mourning Warbler by Jason Jablonski

Editor: When did you know that you were going to pursue capturing photographs of birds?

Jason: I spent two years in Alaska from 1999 to 2001. While I was there I bought my first camera, a Canon Rebel with a Tamron 100-300mm lens to help me capture all the big game and scenery the state had to offer. After a steep learning curve, printing roll after roll, I finally started getting the hang of it, but I had zero interest in birds at the time. I remember taking my first photos of a Bald Eagle as it was fishing offshore. I was so excited to see the results, but when I picked up my film I was disappointed. It was my first realization that birds are tough to photograph, and I went back to big game and scenery photos. I was snowshoeing one day and took a photo of a Northern Hawk Owl that happened to be sitting right in front of me. I had no idea what it was at the time. I thought it was a "cool enough" looking bird to take a few pictures, but didn't think much of it at the time. I moved back to Indiana and put the camera away. Nearly 10 years later, I spotted a small flock of Cedar Waxwings in our front tree. Something just clicked. I was amazed by these birds and started researching. I had zero idea that there were so many amazing birds here in Indiana and I was hooked. I invested in a Canon 40D and a new lens and I was off. I still lose sleep when I think about all the amazing birds that I saw while in Alaska, but didn't pay any attention to because they didn't have antlers or giant claws. I remember seeing Red-throated and Pacific Loons and completely ignoring them. That would never happen today.

Editor: Is there a specific species that "sparked" your interest in photography?

Jason: The amazing Alaska scenery, grizzly bears, and giant moose got me interested and excited about photography while I was there. Bald Eagles made me aware of larger birds, but the Cedar Waxwing caused me to dig deeper and got me interested and eventually hooked on birds.

Editor: What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of bird photography?

Jason: I feel the most challenging aspect of bird photography is patience. Patience is a lost art, which I am guilty of losing many times, but is key to being able to capture birds in their element. We have all been trained to want results instantly, so having to wait for a bird that has no interest in being photographed can be frustrating. It has taken me years to get photos of certain species, but when the day comes that you are finally in the right place at the right time, it is worth the wait.

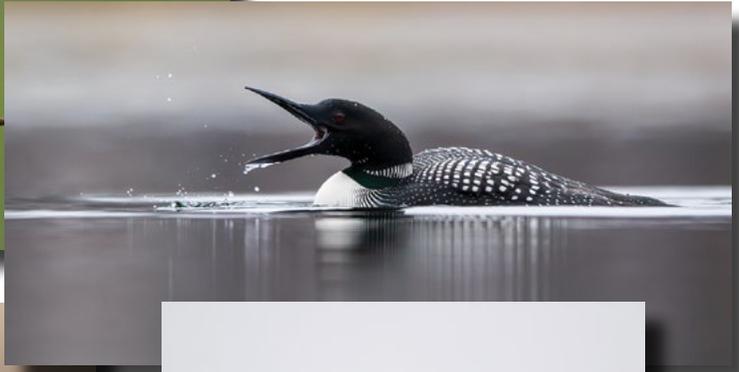
Editor: Spring photography is finally here. What is your favorite aspect of taking photographs in the spring? What tips do you have?

Jason: Spring photography is the most exciting time of the year because no other season offers so many opportunities to photograph different birds. It can be overwhelming and seems to be over in a flash. I have learned over the years that I have been most successful when I try to

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(Top left) Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
(Top right) Common Loon
(Below left) Ring-necked Duck
(Below right) Ruddy Duck
All photos by by Jason Jablonski



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narrow down a few “target species” and spend my time focusing on those. Each year I pick a few birds that I would like to attempt to photograph. I try not to get in a rut of going after the same, easy targets. Even when the target species may not cooperate, the effort put in is usually rewarded with some other photo opportunity. Like every birder or photographer, there have been many times when I come home disappointed with the lack of photos from a trip, but when things come together just right, it is very rewarding.

Editor: What was the most impactful tip you have learned about bird photography?

Jason: The most impactful technique I have learned is to try and be on the bird’s level. I was missing something when I looked at my photos and I couldn’t quite figure it out. I don’t remember how I learned about this “technique”, but I still remember my first attempt. I found a Horned Grebe swimming near the shore and decided that was my moment to try it out. I was hesitant to lie on the ground, mainly because of what other people might think. However, when I saw the results, I never thought twice about it again. It was a game-changer for me.

Editor: What photograph are you the most proud of, and why?

Jason: I have been lucky to get many photos that I am proud of for different reasons. For some, I was in the right place at the right time. For others, I worked hard to obtain them. The one image that keeps coming to mind is a photo of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that I took in Oklahoma on a return trip from New Mexico a few years back. As a family, we would drive to New Mexico every spring break to visit my sister and do some birding. When we would reach Oklahoma I would watch the fence lines all the way to New Mexico hoping to see a Flycatcher. I was always surprised at how many we would actually see, but there was never a place to safely pull off. After continuously watching the fence, I spotted two birds. Almost as important, there was a side road that might allow access to those birds. For the next 5 miles, I anxiously looked for an exit to get off the interstate and we finally came upon one. I immediately exited and headed back to the spot, hoping I would be able to find that road and the

birds. While driving I had my wife put in the settings on my camera that I thought I might need, so I would be ready in case the birds were skittish. We found the road and the birds were still there. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher has been at the top of my “Must See” list since I got into birding, so my anxiety was high. Despite my nervousness, I snapped off as many shots as I could so that I could hopefully guarantee a few would be sharp. That still stands as one of my most memorable birding experiences that I was able to share with my family. I still can’t believe I was able to get a shot that I love to this day!

Editor: What is something you wish you had known as a beginning photographer that you know now?

Jason: I am only 41 years old, but when I started photography, film was the only option. Digital photography has made learning photography so much easier and allows you to review your work and make improvements immediately. That instant feedback has been game-changing. Along with digital technology, advancements in photo sharing options, such as Flickr or Facebook, have made it possible to receive feedback from others. If used properly, it can be helpful. Many of the basics of photography are the same as when I was learning, but the camera and editing advancements have made it possible to capture images that were impossible years ago, and that is exciting.

Editor: What is your next big adventure as a bird photographer?

Jason: We had several trips planned this year, including a week on the Gulf of Mexico and a few days on the Atlantic Coast. Unfortunately, like many others, we had to postpone those trips. I am always excited to visit new places and see new birds. Every state has unique photo opportunities, but with all the uncertainty right now, I am grateful to have a yard that allows me to enjoy birds all year round. I am looking forward to spending time at home, sitting in my blind with my children overlooking our water feature.

A Career in Birding – Sabrewing Nature Tours

By Ted Meyer, Treasurer ABAS

Many of us know Rob Ripma. We've birded with him at Eagle Creek or other places. He is the President of ABAS. He is also an owner of Sabrewing Nature Tours. Along with his partner, Brian Zwiebel, who runs the photography side of the business, they offered about 20 tours in 2019. How does one end up with this type of career? Let's explore how Rob chose to even try this in the first place, and how he was able to build a successful business.

Rob grew up in Carmel and his family always had feeders in the backyard. His mom is a birder and his younger brother, Eric, dove into studying everything about birds when he was ten. At the time Rob was in high school and busy with athletics. It was while attending Indiana University in Bloomington that Rob developed a deeper interest in birds. With his future wife, Stephanie, he would often go out to Lake Monroe, Brown County State Park, Yellowwood, and Goose Pond areas after classes and on weekends to get away from campus.

Rob always knew he wanted a business degree and focused his coursework on Accounting, Finance, and Marketing. It was during his junior year when he started thinking about having a career in birding, environmental, or conservation fields. While trying to explore how to marry business and birding, he interviewed for other jobs to see if anything else piqued his interest. He realized he wouldn't be happy with a traditional nine-to-five job in the long run and began thinking about how he could make his own career path.

After graduating in 2008, he began studying coding and website design in order to start his first business, Nuttybirder.com, "The Place to Go to Find Birds." The site was created to help birders find critical information about birding hotspots in the United States. The site is no longer active.

Rob worked in the corporate accounting world for about a year. It wasn't for him. He began to work part-time at Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) in Carmel while continuing to work on NuttyBirder. Rob met a lot of people working at WBU, including people involved in local not-for-profits. He began speaking at local schools, garden clubs, nature centers, etc. He was asked to become Birds & Blooms magazine's online bird blogger. Rob was really enjoying this variety of jobs and volunteer work, all directly related to birds and birding. Though he wanted more. "I just didn't know exactly what that looked like yet," he told me.

In retrospect, one organization stands out as being formative through both the specific tasks he was involved in and the people he met. Rob began volunteering for The Biggest Week in American Birding, an annual event put on by Ohio's Black Swamp Bird Observatory. He started leading field trips for the event in 2010 and quickly began serving as Field Trip Coordinator which he still does. Through the many hours spent guiding people around Northwest Ohio and teaching them about our migratory birds, his interest and eventual love of leading trips was born.

During his early times at the festival, he got to know Brian Zwiebel who was planning to start a tour company and invited Rob to join him. Any big career change or new endeavor isn't something to be taken lightly, nor is it without risk. Rob and Stephanie had some big conversations before Rob and Brian officially started Sabrewing Nature Tours.

I felt like I had finally found something that not only I was meant to do but that would make me happy. Stepping away from the part-time jobs that contributed financially to our family was a risk. However, Stephanie is a fantastic businesswoman and has achieved success on many levels in her line of work. We decided together that I would sign on to Sabrewing Nature Tours in the summer of 2014 and give it my all to build it into a thriving business.

Sabrewing's first birding tour was 2015 to Costa Rica and the growth has been steady since then. Rob worked full time on the new business and went to multiple festivals to promote the business. He was also busy scouting locations. Here's their philosophy on the business.

From the very beginning, my partner Brian Zwiebel and I have stayed true to our core beliefs. Our mission is to inspire and cultivate excitement for the natural world by creating first-class experiences with exceptional personalized service in incredible locations around the globe for birders, nature-lovers, and photographers. We personally scout every location to evaluate lodging, infrastructure, transportation, guides, and safety. We purposely keep the number of participants low so we can guarantee a fabulous experience for all. We don't compromise on quality in any aspect of our business.



(Top) Guatemalan Tour Group photo with Sabrewing Nature Tours. (Left) Tour owners, Brian Zwiebel and Rob Ripma.



(Right) Rob and Stephanie Ripma at Bird Fair in England

Since our inception in 2014, we've added five guides and our tour offerings now reach four continents. We were honored to be selected by Zeiss Sport Optics two years ago as one of their three tour company partners worldwide, and our guides love carrying Zeiss binoculars and spotting scopes out in the field. One of our favorite things is to interact with potential and current clients, guides, fellow tour operators, and other nature lovers at festivals and fairs. We interact at vendor booths, guiding field trips, conducting workshops, or giving keynote speeches. This year, we'll be at a minimum of six birding festivals and are already looking forward to sharing our experiences, photographs, and knowledge with fellow birding and photography lovers!

Looking ahead to the future, Rob sees growth for Sabrewing Nature Tours. They continue to expand tour locations and the types of tours they offer, such as fundraising tours for non-profits like Friends of Holliday Park. In addition to growing the business, there will be a personal challenge as well. Rob and Stephanie will welcome their first child later this spring. Asked about future travel, Rob will continue to scout locations and lead tours.

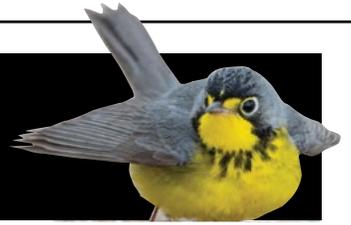
Stephanie is fully supportive of what I do. There are countless families who have one parent or the other that travel for their job. Will expanding our family be life-changing? Definitely. Will it be difficult? Yes, at least at first. There is no doubt in my mind that we can figure out this new normal and both she and I will continue to have successful careers. We are a team, and we also have a great tribe of people around us.

My wife and I have been fortunate to be able to go on three of Sabrewing's tours – Honduras, Ecuador and the Galapagos, and Brazil. Rob led the first two and his brother Eric led Brazil. I can attest that the local guides, accommodations, and the food is all top-notch. The tour itineraries are well thought out. All logistics go smoothly as you are met at the airport and each birding lodge is prepared for your arrival. Rob and his brother compliment the local guides well. Their extensive knowledge of birding in Latin America is extremely helpful.

It is impressive what Rob has built in just a few years. If you're interested in these types of trips, I would highly recommend checking out Sabrewing Nature Tours offerings. Their website is www.sabrewingtours.com. It is wonderful to see new birds and add to your life list with someone who so enjoys birding.

Amos Butler Audubon Society BIRDATHON 2020

This Canada Warbler is facing population declines due to habitat loss



Three Billion Birds Lost

Last fall a sobering statistic hit the news media — there are an estimated 29% fewer birds in North America than in 1970. That's three billion birds, including some common species such as Barn Swallows. This drives home the urgency for Amos Butler Audubon Society's mission to promote the enjoyment and stewardship of the birds of Central Indiana. This year there are six projects for which we are asking your donation.

Improving Habitat for Migratory Birds in Colombia

This year we are celebrating the 20th-anniversary of our collaboration with the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) in conservation efforts in Latin America.

The Central Andes of Colombia are particularly important for many migratory bird species, yet this area exhibits some of the highest rates of deforestation and severe forest fragmentation in South America. Key hotspots and wintering range have been identified here for the Cerulean Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler and Canada Warbler. All three are facing population declines due to habitat loss. In 2018 ABC established the Central Andes BirdScape to respond to the threats. Its scale is impressive: 120 miles long from north to south and an average of 67 miles across.

Birdathon contributions would fund planting 18,000 native trees in the Chinchiná watershed. These trees would help create mini-corridors of habitat and enrich forest fragments around coffee farms. The ultimate goal over the next two to three years is to produce and plant 100,000 trees from established nurseries with 13,000 trees ready to plant this spring.

Habitat Restoration To Benefit Birds

While it is of utmost importance to protect wintering habitat for our migratory birds, it is also crucial to maintain and increase local habitat. The Birdathon will be funding two such projects this year:

- Marian University EcoLab. ABAS has enjoyed a long-term affiliation with the EcoLab, having sponsored native plantings here since 2004.
- Keep Indianapolis Beautiful will be restoring prairie habitat at the entrance to the Sarah T. Bolton Prairie of Poetry Park in Beech Grove.

Taking Care of Our Raptors

- The Indiana Raptor Center will use its Birdathon grant for much-needed repairs to four intermediary flight cages and a housing cage for Bald Eagles.
- Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center staff members will use expertise gained from a workshop on raptor behavior and training to upgrade the care of their seven raptors and enhance programs for the public.

Engaging Future Conservationists

- Camp Utopia's week-long summer camp for children aged 10 to 13 is focused on birds and careers in conservation.

Make a Difference, Make a Pledge

Birdathon teams will be scouring the state during May counting birds and asking donors to sponsor their efforts.

If you don't know one of our team members, you could choose to make a donation directly to the Birdathon. Either way, your dollars will go far to ensure the future of our Indiana birds.



START PROTECTING OUR BIRDS TODAY. CUT HERE AND MAIL YOUR PLEDGE OR GO TO WWW.AMOSBUTLERAUDUBON.ORG

AMOS BUTLER AUDUBON BIRDATHON 2020 PLEDGE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

YES, I'LL SUPPORT YOU WITH MY PLEDGE OF:

_____ (.10, .25, .50, \$1) per species for a total of _____

- Bud & Carl's Legacy Carbon Neutral Community Hospital
 Horned Grebes EcoLab Noddy Little Gulls Team Bishop
 Wild Birds Unlimited Las Aguilas Aarpias Parks Peeps
 Bird Questers Westside Wonders Brownsburg Railsitters
 Team member _____
 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:

• American Bird Conservancy winter habitat restoration for migratory birds • EcoLab and KIB local bird-friendly habitat restoration • Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center • Indiana Raptor Center • Camp Utopia

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

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

Lifetime membership goes to Permanent Fund

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (required) _____

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*

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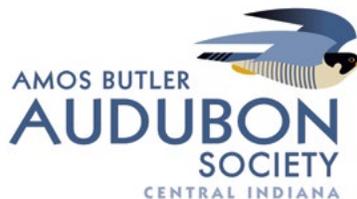
Karen La Mere, *Program Chair*

Doug Sherow, *Conservation Chair*

Phillip Weldy

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