



Left inset photo of Pete's Monarch TCL506 by Lee Ann Zobbe. Right inset photo of TCL504 by Alfonso Banda. Map and Banda photo courtesy of Monarch Watch.

An Amazing Recovery

by Donna McCarty

Birdathon Database Curator Pete Drum and his daughters, Susan and Amy, recently received some exciting news — a Monarch butterfly (tag TCL 504) that they tagged in Westfield, Indiana on September 20 had been recovered in the town of Jaumave in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas on November 1. Monarch tagging efforts are organized by Monarch Watch, a nonprofit education, conservation, and research program based at the University of Kansas that focuses on the butterfly, its habitat, and its spectacular fall migration. According to their website, Alfonso Banda, Head of the Department of Natural Resources in Tamaulipas, Mexico, was the first to recover a tagged Monarch butterfly in Mexico this year. Alfonso has graciously given us permission to use his photo of the tagged Monarch. The butterfly was alive and well when it was released to continue on its way to an overwintering site after having traveled an estimated 1,385 miles. It is amazing enough when a bird completes a journey such as this, but how in the world does this featherweight insect manage to accomplish such a feat?

In an e-mail to Pete, Alfonso explained that he had taken his photo as part of a photography contest organized by his employer. One hundred photographers had participated for \$4,000 in prize money. Alfonso commented that with more eyes and cameras in the field, the probability of spotting tagged Monarchs has increased.

As many of us have noticed or read about, the population of Monarch butterflies has greatly decreased during the past decade. This population decline has resulted not only from loss of overwintering habitat in Mexico but also in large part from the scarcity of its host plant, milkweed, here in North America. Herbicides used in farming have largely eliminated this plant across its formerly broad range. Gardening groups and many nurseries are conducting campaigns to get more people to plant milkweed plants in their home gardens, something you may wish to consider for many reasons, one of which is so that Pete will have more opportunities to tag these winged marvels.

To learn more about tagging Monarch butterflies, please visit www.monarchwatch.org.

Harlequin Ducks Cause Birding Shock in Indianapolis

By Don Gorney

A species that likes fast-moving and turbulent waters, the Harlequin Duck typically spends the winter along the rocky coastlines of the northern United States and Canada. Seeing the species in Indiana often requires scanning the crashing surf along various concrete and stone breakwalls on Lake Michigan. If you get lucky, you might get a poor look at a Harlequin bobbing in the waves next to a breakwall. If you are real lucky, you might spy a Harlequin near a breakwall on a calm day when waves do not obscure the view. Seeing the species away from Lake Michigan is extremely unlikely; in fact, there have only been two such sightings in Indiana since 1980.

That explains why I went into birding shock when I found two Harlequin Ducks on a retention pond at the Precedent Office Park on the north side of Indianapolis on December 8. "It can't be!" I thought. "The birds are close, right out in the open, on perfectly calm water!" In other words, in conditions in which Harlequins are rarely found. After assuring myself that I was both awake and sober, I obtained photos to document the sighting just in case the birds decided to find less pleasant waters. Then I began calling other birders to let

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Female Harlequin Ducks photo by Don Gorney

Upcoming Audubon Programs

All Programs are held at the Holliday Park Nature Center, 6363 Springmill Road, Indianapolis, at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. They are free and open to the public. Information: Email Maggie Jaicomo at Margaret.jaicomo@gmail.com or call (260) 403-3172.



January 13: How Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI) Helps Indiana's Birds

Speaker: Rachel Eble, Associate Director of CILTI

Amos Butler Audubon is a significant supporter of CILTI's efforts to protect the most important remaining natural areas in Central Indiana. This partnership is especially evident in one of CILTI's current projects, preserving forested land in their Hills of Gold Core Conservation Area in southwestern Johnson County. Come join us at this presentation for a chance to learn more about the CILTI/ABA partnership to protect critical habitat.

February 10: Around the World with Wes in 227 Days



Speaker: Wes Homoya

Ok, so it wasn't truly around the world, but Sycamore Audubon Society (Lafayette region) Vice President Wes Homoya will share what he's learned about the birds and ecosystems of Hawaii and Ecuador during his stints there from February to September 2014 as an endangered species biologist and bird lodge manager/guide, respectively. Wes will present pictures and stories from both the world's most isolated archipelago and from a country the size of Colorado with twice the number of bird species as in all of North America — should be fun!



March 10: Birding Adventures in Argentina

Speakers: Randy and Deb Patrick

Randy and Deb Patrick participated in a three-week tour of Argentina's Ibérica Marsh and the Peninsula Valdés area, conducted by Trogon Photography Tours. The Ibérica Marsh, three million acres of mostly unspoiled wildlife habitat, is the second-largest wetland in the world (after the Pantanal in Brazil) and is known for its great birding. The Peninsula Valdés is known for its sea lions, elephant and fur seals, and breaching Southern right whales, along with other interesting mammals as well as awesome birds. One must remember that birding photography is not a sport to find all of the avian species in an area but to obtain great photos of as many species as time permits. Join the Patricks as they share the grand fun and great photography they experienced.

Mark Your Calendar! The next Great Backyard Bird Count is February 13-16, 2015

For information on how you can participate, check out this link: www.BirdCount.org

Local Birders Add Species to the Panama Bird List



By ignoring the adage “Don’t sweat the small stuff,” three Central Indiana birders recently made a significant contribution to Panama birding. On November 22, Jeanette Frazier, Elcira Villarreal, and Elizabeth Booth were birding in Altos del Maria, a residential community in the province of Cocolé in west central Panama. They were enjoying views of Yellow-faced Grassquits in the grass and Plain-colored Tanagers and Red-legged Honeycreepers in a small tree overhead when they noticed a small sparrow feeding with the grassquits. No illustration in the Angehr/Dean field guide to the birds of Panama matched the sparrow, so they knew it must be unusual. They took note of the bird’s appearance and also took photos, which Jeanette sent to Alfred Raab, a birding friend in Altos del Maria. Raab recognized it as a non-breeding-plumaged Chipping Sparrow and forwarded the photos to Jan Axel Cubilla of the Panama Record Committee. Jan emailed Jeanette confirmation that the sighting had been accepted as the first documented record of Chipping Sparrow in Panama! Details of the sighting will be posted soon on the Panama Rare Bird website Xenoris.com. For more information about Chipping Sparrows and their normal winter range, please visit http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/chipping_sparrow/id. ABA commends Jeanette, Elcira, and Elizabeth for their quick thinking in photo-documenting this rarity.

Harlequin Ducks

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them know about the great find. Through phone calls and postings to various Internet and Facebook sites, birders learned about the rarities and began arriving about an hour after my initial sighting. Many of them took photos of the cooperative birds. It was the first time many of the birders had seen a Harlequin Duck.

The pair of ducks, assumed to be females rather than immature males, was present throughout the afternoon to the pleasure of those who were able to stop by after work. The birds were last seen at dusk. By dawn the next morning, when birders again began searching for the Harlequins, they were gone. Although only a one-day wonder, the pair had been seen by dozens of birders and by a few curious office park workers.

Cool Creek Park Beginning Bird Hikes

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel

Wednesdays and every other Sunday

January 4, 14, 18, 21, 28; and

February 1, 11, 15, 18, 25

9-10 a.m.

Meet in the north parking lot past the Nature Center

Birds are fascinating, and watching them can be an awe-inspiring experience. Catching a glimpse of these gorgeous creatures, however, can be frustrating, and learning how to identify all of them can be overwhelming! Join our Naturalist staff and other guest leaders (when available) Sunday and Wednesday mornings, and we will learn together. This will be a great opportunity for birdwatchers of all levels. You may begin anytime during the season and come as often as you like. Pre-registration is not required. Don’t forget your binoculars! For more information, contact Amanda Smith at amanda.smith@hamiltoncounty.in.gov or call (317) 774-2500.

Hamilton County Parks & Recreation Program: Love is in the Air

Saturday, February 28 at 3 p.m.

Indoor presentation 3-4 p.m.

Taylor Center of Natural History

12308 Strawtown Avenue, Noblesville

Rookery Presentation 4:15-5 p.m.

25440 Scherer Avenue, Arcadia, IN

In February, people are celebrating Valentine’s Day in many different ways — like buying their sweetheart candy, taking them out to dinner, dancing, and delivering flowers. It turns out that birds are also reestablishing pair bonds with their mates around this same time, too! During this program we will explore the similarities between our traditions and those of the birds by taking a peek into their lives. Audience members will then be invited to the Rookery Preserve to see the Great Blue Herons, which should be busy working to repair their nests and courting their mates.

Regularly Scheduled Bird Hikes

Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center

6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis

Every Sunday year-round, 9 a.m.

Meet at the Ornithology Center.

Information: (317) 327-2473

Cool Creek Park

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel

Every Saturday, 8 a.m.

Meet in the north parking lot of Cool Creek Park,
past the Nature Center.

Information: (317) 774-2500

2015 Amos Butler Audubon Board, Officers, and Committee Chairs

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Amos Butler Audubon Chapter Supporter Membership

Membership benefits:

- 100% of your dues support Amos Butler Audubon educational programs and urban conservation projects
- *Audubon LifeLines*, the chapter newsletter
- Workshops and entertaining monthly program meetings

☐ **One-year chapter supporter \$20**

☐ **Two-year chapter supporter \$35**

One-year student memberships are free. Chapter supporter can be combined with National Audubon membership for a total of \$40.

☐ **National Audubon Society Membership Introductory Offer \$20** for first-time members only. Includes *Audubon* magazine

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Make checks payable to: **Amos Butler Audubon**

E-mail questions to:
info@amosbutleraudubon.org

Mail to: Martyn Roberts, Membership Chair
Amos Butler Audubon
5945 Ralston Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46220

☐ I do ☐ do not want Amos Butler Audubon to share my name with the National Audubon Society. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent provided by law. C3ZH000Z

E-Mail Address, Anyone?

Join with hundreds of other members who have who have gone green by signing up for the electronic *LifeLines* newsletter and meeting reminders. Send your request, including your name, to Martyn Roberts at info@amosbutleraudubon.org. This shift towards electronic communication continues to save Amos Butler Audubon hundreds of dollars in printing and mailing costs annually.

Are You a Chapter Supporter?

The expiration date of your Chapter Supporter membership is printed on the mailing label on the paper copy of your *Lifelines*, to the right of your name; "N/A" denotes that you have not paid Chapter Supporter dues. To determine the expiration date of your National Audubon Society membership, refer to the address label on your *Audubon* magazine.

If you receive *LifeLines* electronically or if you have any other membership questions, please contact Martyn Roberts at info@amosbutleraudubon.org or call (317) 251-2908.



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

**Visit our web site:
www.amosbutleraudubon.org
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