

## Young Birder's Expert Skills Valuable to Eagle Creek Park Breeding Bird Survey

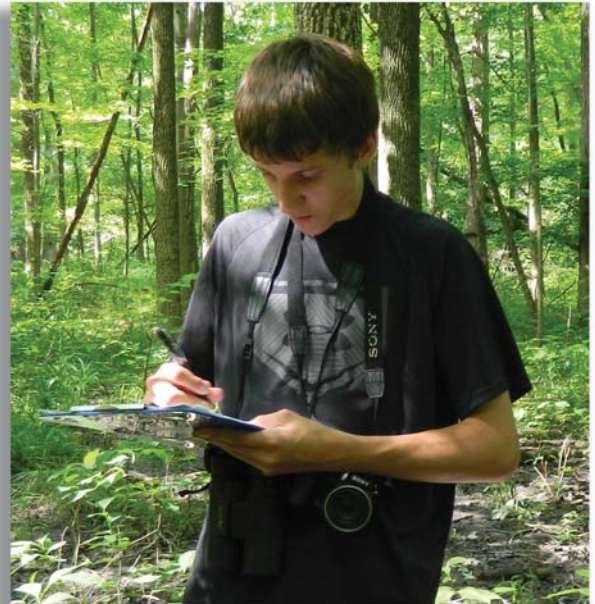
by Don Gorney

This past June, while most 13-year-olds were enjoying their freedom to sleep in and then spend the day playing video games, Aidan Rominger, a Park-Tudor School student, was frequently arising before sunrise to spend several hours in the field assisting with a breeding bird survey (BBS) at Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis. His incentives for waking so early were to acquire valuable field experience and a paycheck. Before conducting surveys on his own, Aidan needed to demonstrate to me that he was capable of identifying birds by sight and sound and recording the necessary information on a data sheet. After accompanying me on several point count surveys to learn the process, Aidan conducted about six surveys on his own, with me monitoring nearby. During the test surveys, Aidan demonstrated that he had the birding skills to identify birds with his eyes and his ears and the maturity to adhere to protocols.

Survey protocols were rigid, requiring Aidan to stand for 10 minutes at a time at one of 68 pre-designated locations in the park, recording all of the birds he saw and heard. The survey data form required him to record the date, time of day, weather, location, and, of course, the identity and number of each species of bird present and to record each species by its standardized four-letter abbreviation. Aidan also had to estimate and record his distance from each bird detected.

Conducting a BBS takes a great deal of knowledge and experience because about 80% of the birds are detected by ear, not by sight. In other words, you see only about 20% of the birds and thus need to be able to correctly identify the remaining 80% by voice alone. Although many years of experience normally are required to master birding by ear, Aidan had taken a shortcut and had done it in a high tech way.

Aidan's interest in birds started very early. He reports that his parents told him that he began reading bird books as a toddler. He's never stopped. At only 13 years old, Aidan's field experience was limited, but in addition to reading about birds, during the previous three years he also had spent considerable time at home studying bird songs and calls on CDs and on Internet sites such as the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "All About Birds." Repetition and memorization certainly had paid off, as in the field he demonstrated a remarkable ability to recall bird songs even of species new to him.



Park-Tudor School student, Aidan Rominger

Aidan plans to study ornithology in college, preferably at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He says that his participation in the Eagle Creek Park BBS provided him with valuable field experience and gave him a sense that he had contributed to science and conservation. Aidan plans to use his BBS wages to help purchase a spotting scope. He says that no matter how far he goes as a birder or ornithologist, he will always remember that Amos Butler Audubon provided his first field work and first paycheck.

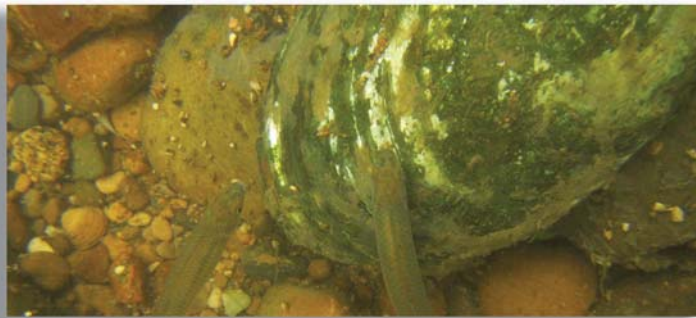


Did you read about the ground-dwelling, nocturnal parrot? How about Eagle Creek Park being accepted into the Saving Important Bird Areas program by the National Audubon Society?

Or maybe you caught the latest bird profile in our 75 Species series to celebrate our 75th anniversary. If you have "liked" the Amos Butler Audubon Facebook page, then you may have seen those posts. Facebook provides an entertaining and interactive way for our organization to get information to our members. If you have not "liked" our Facebook page yet, please visit [www.facebook.com/amosbutler](http://www.facebook.com/amosbutler) and do so today.

# 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 Brittany Davis Swinford at [bluemoosey8@yahoo.com](mailto:bluemoosey8@yahoo.com) or call (812) 340-0824.



## September 10: Freshwater Mussels of Indiana's Rivers and Streams: A Resource in Peril

**Presenter:** Brant Fisher, Non-game Aquatic Biologist  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Diversity Section

Monkeyface, Purple Wartyback, Wabash Pigtoe, and Fatmucket are just a few of the mussel species that call Indiana home. Nongame Aquatic Biologist Brant Fisher will present on conservation efforts by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to preserve and reintroduce endangered mussels in our waterways. Freshwater mussels are considered one of the most endangered groups of animals in North America. They play an important role in the freshwater aquatic ecosystem by filtering water and serving as bio-indicators of water quality. In his presentation, Brant will share his expertise and suggest ways in which we can do our part to protect this precious resource from decline.

This program coincides with the White River Festival taking place September 3-29. For details about the festival, please visit [www.whiteriverfestival.org](http://www.whiteriverfestival.org).

## October 8: Purdue Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment: A 100-Year Forestry Study

**Presenter:** Jeff Riegel, Field Technician Supervisor  
Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment, Purdue University



The Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment is a long-term, large-scale experimental study of forest management practices and their impact on the ecosystem. This project was begun in 2006 in response to the absence of baseline data and scientific research on current and past forest management plans. This 100-year study, with its many partners,

is examining the flora and fauna of South Central Indiana forests. It includes research on a wide range of subjects: forest dynamics/vegetation, oak regeneration, breeding birds, Cerulean Warblers, owls, bats, small mammals, White-tailed Deer, salamanders, Eastern Box Turtle, Timber Rattlesnake, wood-boring beetles, moths, and even human dimensions. Join Jeff Riegel for a dynamic presentation on current studies and results of the first seven years of this 100-year project.

## November 12: Bird Safari in Africa



**Presenters:** Ros Smith, research scientist, Eli Lilly, and Maurice Scheetz, retired research scientist, Eli Lilly

From the Malachite Kingfisher of the Okavanga Delta of Botswana to the Ground Hornbill of the grasslands of the Serengeti to the Jackass Penguin in the waters off Cape Town, Africa boasts an amazing diversity of birdlife. Habitats ranging from the deserts of Namibia to the rainforests of Tanzania are home to birds uniquely adapted to their environments. While on safari looking at larger animals, Ros and Maurice — traveling by foot, canoe, and jeep — identified more than 280 species of birds during two month-long trips to Africa (2006 and 2011). Come join them as they share encounters and photographic highlights of their African bird safari.

## December 10: Lake Erie Pelagic Birding Trips



**Presenter:** Rob Ripma, birder and photographer

When most birders think of pelagic birding trips, they envision going miles out into the ocean and possibly becoming terribly seasick. Luckily, in recent years there has been a huge increase in the number of pelagic trips held on Lake Erie and other Great Lakes, and the species that are routinely seen are pretty amazing! At tonight's meeting, Rob will present about the Lake Erie pelagic trips that he has been leading for Black Swamp Bird Observatory (Ohio) for the last several years.



# Audubon Events, Field Trips, and Bird Hikes



## White River Festival

The White River Festival celebrates the West Fork of the White River and its tributaries, beautiful and important natural resources that run through 16 counties in Central Indiana. Festival events will be held throughout September to highlight ways in which the river touches our lives — recreational treasure, inspiration for art, sustainer of wildlife, and major supplier of drinking water for communities up and down its winding banks. The festival offers something for everyone — art exhibits and performances, family activities, river cleanups, tours, bird walks, and lectures.

As a festival partner, Amos Butler Audubon is hosting three events related to the White River. On September 10, our monthly program will focus on freshwater mussels found in the White River and elsewhere in Indiana; on September 14, we will offer a bird walk at Potter's Bridge Park in Noblesville; and on September 22, we will offer a bird walk at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Details below for these events. Find out how you're connected to the White River even if you don't live right next to it!

For festival details, to sign up for weekly festival updates, or register for the 5k walk/run on September 7, see [whiteriverfestival.org](http://whiteriverfestival.org). You can also follow the festival on Facebook at White River Festival and Alliance.

## Bird Walks Celebrating the White River

### Potter's Bridge Park

19401 N. Allisonville Road, Noblesville

**Saturday, September 14, 4 p.m.**

Stroll the White River Greenway Trail at Potter's Bridge Park while we look for birds! Water attracts birds all year long, but fall migration is an especially great time to be along the river looking for them. Binoculars will be helpful, but if you don't have them you can borrow a pair of ours. If the birding is slow, we will talk about native plants on which birds depend. Meet in front of the south end of Potter's Bridge for this White River Festival event. For more information, call Amanda Smith at Cool Creek Park at (317) 774-2500.

### Indianapolis Museum of Art

4000 Michigan Road, Indianapolis

**Sunday, September 22, 3 p.m.**

Meet at Lake Terrace to celebrate the autumnal solstice by watching for birds along the White River and elsewhere at the museum's 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park. Lake Terrace is located on the southeast side of the lake and is near the Park of the Laments artwork. This hike will be led by Don Gorney and is an event of the White River Festival. Binoculars will be available for loan. For information, please contact Don at [don@amosbutleraudubon.org](mailto:don@amosbutleraudubon.org)

## Loblolly and Limberlost: Tracing the steps of Gene Stratton-Porter Saturday, September 7, 7:00 a.m. to approx. 1:00 p.m.

Meet at Walmart, 8300 East 96th St., Fishers

This timely field trip coincides with fall migration and the celebration of Gene Stratton-Porter's birth 150 years ago. Stratton-Porter was an author, naturalist, and photographer who wrote about the Limberlost Swamp, at the time 13,000 acres, and advocated for its protection. The swamp was drained, however, and was a distant memory until Ken Brunswick took action in 1991 to restore a portion of the great wetland. In all, 1,600 acres have been restored. On this trip, we will visit two restored sites, known as Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve and Limberlost Swamp Wetland Preserve. Best of all, Ken Brunswick, the man behind the restoration efforts, will be our guide. Target families include herons and egrets, shorebirds, marsh birds, eagles and raptors, and songbirds. This is expected to be a productive trip.

Meet in the southwest corner of the Walmart parking lot (opposite Wendy's), located at 8300 E. 96th St., Fishers, at 7:00 a.m. We will carpool to the greatest extent possible. Our first stop will be at Loblolly where a two-mile trail snakes around the wetland. Then, we will bird Limberlost from the county roads. The field trip should end at about 1:00 p.m. The trip will be led by Scott Enochs and Don Gorney. If you have questions, please contact Scott at [msenochs@comcast.net](mailto:msenochs@comcast.net).



# Audubon Workshop, Field Trips, and Bird Hikes

## **Introductory Sparrow Identification Workshop**

Saturday, September 28, 1:30 p.m.

Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center, Indianapolis

Join Scott Enochs as he walks you through basic identification of resident and migratory species of sparrows found in Indiana. After the presentation, those interested can visit the Ornithology Center's viewing room to use their new skills while observing and identifying sparrows visiting the feeders. Free with park admission. Registration is required — contact the Ornithology Center at (317) 327-2473.

## **Sparrow Identification Field Trip**

Saturday, October 5, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Location to be announced

Join Scott Enochs as he leads you on a field trip to a local hot spot in search of resident and migratory species of sparrows. Our seven target species will include Song, Field, Swamp, White-throated, White-crowned, Nelson's, and LeConte's. Participants will have their choice of attending the 8 a.m. or 11 a.m. trips, but space will be limited to 10 people on each trip. We will meet in the southwest corner of the Traders Point Dick's Sporting Goods and carpool to the fullest extent possible, as parking is limited at our destination. Free. Registration required — contact Scott Enochs at [msenochs@comcast.net](mailto:msenochs@comcast.net). Please be sure to note which of the two tours you wish to attend and include the names and contact information of all participants. Questions? Contact Scott at the email address above or call him at (317) 850-4801.

## **Crown Hill Cemetery Bird Walk**

Sunday, October 6, 3-4:30 p.m.

700 West 38th Street, Indianapolis

Visiting Crown Hill Cemetery, the third-largest non-governmental cemetery in the U.S., for birding and history is a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Join Don Gorney as he leads participants along the winding roads of the cemetery, which is south of 38th Street in Indianapolis. Expect to observe resident birds like woodpeckers and hawks as well as migrants, including sparrows and warblers. This will be an easy walk along flat, paved surfaces. The route will take us past the gravesite of Amos Butler, after whom our chapter was named, where we will pause to pay our respects. Meet at the Gothic Chapel, which is most easily accessed from the Boulevard Place and 34th Street entrance. From 38th Street, turn south onto Boulevard Place and continue to 34th Street. Turn right at the cemetery's large stone gate, continue past the building at the entrance, and follow the WHITE LINE painted on the road to take you directly to the Gothic Chapel. Binoculars will be available for loan. Questions? Contact Don at [don@amosbutleraudubon.org](mailto:don@amosbutleraudubon.org).

## **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

### **Fort Harrison State Park**

5753 Glenn Road, Indianapolis

Each Sunday in September and

October, 8 a.m.

Leader: Don Gorney

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

Meet at the Delaware Lake parking lot.

### **Marian University EcoLab**

3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis

Every Wednesday starting September 4, 8 a.m.

Leader: David Benson

[dbenson@marion.edu](mailto:dbenson@marion.edu)

Meet at the St. Francis Colonnade.

### **Cool Creek Park**

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel

Wednesday and every other Sunday

8:30-10 a.m.

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

Information: (317) 774-2500

**Saturdays, September 7, 14, 21, 28;**

**October 5, 8 a.m.**

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

Information: (317) 774-2500

### **Strawtown Koteewi Park**

Taylor Center of Natural History

12308 Strawtown Avenue, Noblesville

First Wednesday of the month

September 4 and October 2

8:30-10 a.m.

Meet at the Taylor Center of Natural History

Information: (317) 984-5556



## Cool Creek Park Birding Activities

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel

### Beginning Bird Hikes

Wednesdays and every other Sunday,

September 2, 12, 16, 19, 26, 30;

October 10, 14, 17, 24, 28, 31

8:30 to 10:00 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 [amandasmith@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:amandasmith@hamiltoncounty.in.gov)



*Brewer's Blackbird photo by donna McCarty*

### Saturday Morning Fall Migration Bird Hikes

Saturdays, September 7, 14, 21, 28;

October 5, 8 a.m.

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

Information: (317) 774-2500

Catch a peek of some beautiful birds as they make their annual trip south this fall. The hikes are led by well-known birder, Keith Starling. Hurry — some species will not stay around long. After the hike, stop by the Nature Center's wildlife viewing room for coffee and doughnuts. Don't forget to bring your binoculars!

## Another Exceptional Birdathon

by Donna McCarty

We set our most ambitious goal ever for Birdathon 2013 to fund an exceptional number of grant requests. Grant recipients were chosen on the basis of their potential to fulfill our mission to promote the enjoyment and stewardship of the birds of Central Indiana. Of course, we already knew that we had the most exceptional donors, volunteers, and team members anywhere, so we forged ahead with the decision to attempt to raise more than \$33,000. Well, we not only met that goal, but we exceeded it, finishing with a grand total of \$35,773!

In another stroke of good fortune, Amos Butler Audubon was chosen as a recipient of the Whole Foods Community Support Day. This was quite an honor, as they partner with only four groups each year. On a designated day, a total of 5% of one day's sales are donated to a local non-profit organization. The two stores involved set a record for this event: \$5,048. Whole Foods elected to support our chapter's Lights Out Indy initiative.

More teams than ever — 15 in all — conducted a Big Day event this year, including two new teams comprised of young birders: the Indiana Young Birders Club team and Benson's Junior Rangers. We were delighted to have a respectable roster of veteran teams that apparently enjoy this sleep-deprived-inclement-weather battle to count bird species enough to do it year after year. Results ranged from meager (especially warbler numbers) to outstanding. Our lone bike team nearly froze to death on a cold, miserable day, while the UIndy team finished with an impressive total of 168 species, only four shy of the all-time ABA Birdathon record of 172 species.

This successful Birdathon means that 1) critical winter habitat for many of our migrants will be preserved through the American Bird Conservancy's Cerulean Warbler corridor project, 2) important research data on Cerulean Warblers will be gathered by two Ball State research projects, 3) local habitat will be enhanced at the Marian University EcoLab and along Fall Creek, and 4) enriching educational experiences will be provided by the Eagle Creek Ornithology Center, Jameson Camp, and the Indiana Raptor Center — all for the benefit of the birds of Central Indiana.



*Benson's Junior Rangers Birdathon team*

## 2013-2014 Amos Butler Audubon Board, Officers, and Committee Chairs

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Amanda Smith, *Recording Secretary*

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Martyn Roberts, *Membership Chair*

### Staff:

Don Gorney

*Director of Bird Conservation and Education*

## 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:** Mail to: Martyn Roberts, Membership Chair  
Amos Butler Audubon Amos Butler Audubon

E-mail questions to: 5945 Ralston Ave.  
info@amosbutleraudubon.org 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  
e-mail: info@amosbutleraudubon.org**

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