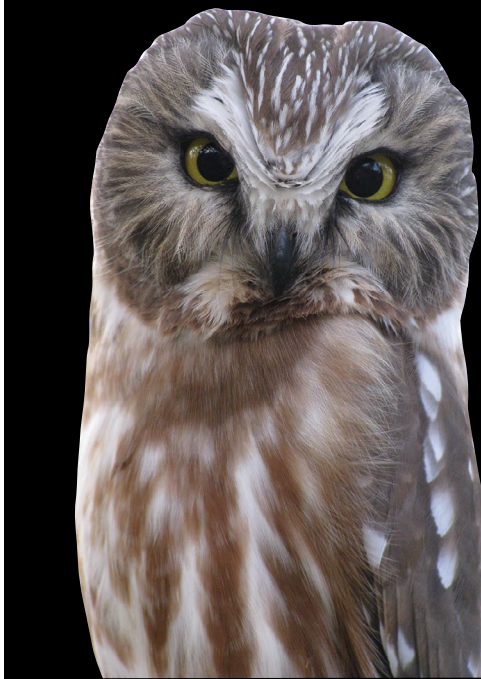


2017

*Amos Butler
Audubon Society*

BIRDATHON REPORT

*The diminutive
Saw-whet Owl
is the focus of
a research project by
Purdue University*



Thank You for Sponsoring the 2017 Birdathon

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Amos Butler Audubon Society Birdathon, the most successful fundraising event in the history of the chapter. With this year's donations of \$25,670 plus carryover funds, we have raised a grand total of \$720,675 since 1987. It would not be possible to continue such an endeavor without the generous support of your donations. You have shown a remarkable commitment to our mission to promote the stewardship and enjoyment of the birds of central Indiana.

This year your sponsorship has extended our project with the American Bird Conservancy to purchase a parcel of land in Guatemala critical to the protection of an important biological corridor and migratory bird flyway. This wintering and stopover habitat is vital to at least 40 species of Neotropical birds, the very ones we value so highly because they come to North America to breed. With your dollars, our grants to Purdue and Ball State Universities have enabled important research on these breeding birds, resulting in data that will be used to institute better management practices to ensure their survival. By supporting nature-oriented summer camps, educational outreach projects and hands-on local habitat restoration, many more people will come to understand the importance of birds.

We hope you elected to sponsor one of our dozen Birdathon teams. This year we lost our longest-running team and one of our top fundraisers, the DNR team. After a stellar 20-year run, members decided it was time to retire. However, a non-birding offspring of one of the team members decided to have a special event to carry on the tradition. Be sure to read all of the team's accounts to find out who took top fundraising honors and who won bragging rights for top species count.

A sincere thank you to all of our Birdathon sponsors from Donna McCarty, Birdathon Chair; members of the Birdathon committee; and the board of directors of the Amos Butler Audubon Society.

Contributors of \$100 or more:

Ellen Aiken & David Hunt	Cloyce & Chris Hedge	Kara Pearce
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Jane Hammock	Randy Patrick	

Volunteers who raised Birdathon donations of:

\$1,000 or more	\$500 to \$999	\$100 to \$499
Mike Bishop	Lou Anne Barriger	Brian Cunningham
Mary Ellen Gadski	Dave Benson	Polly Nicely
Donna McCarty	Casey Hedge	Kathy Feldman
April Sterling	Wes Homoya	Jeanette Frazier
Janet Tuten	John Munshower	Nick Hedge
Wren Upchurch	Amanda Smith	Robin Hedge
Laurie Voss	Marty Williams	Jane Hammock
		Nancy Tikijan
		Amy Hodson
		Ceth Williams
		Barbara Jablonski
		Betsy Wilson

Corporate Sponsor:

\$1,500 *Wild Birds Unlimited*, 4040 East 82nd Street

Special Contributors:

Janet Tuten, Birdathon Database Curator
Pete Drum, Birdathon Database Curator Emeritus
Mary Ellen Gadski, International Projects Coordinator
Barbara Jablonski, Silent Auction Coordinator
Don McCarty, Birdathon Treasurer
Bill Murphy and Mary Ellen Gadski, Report Editors

#1 Fundraising Champs: Noddy Little Gulls



Team members (l-r): Laurie Voss, Lou Anne Barriger, Kathy Feldman, April Sterling

Staying Warm on Our Big Day

By Laurie Voss

Who would have thought that our first Birdathon to include an owl species (actually two species) would tally only 122 species in all? And in an exceptionally rainy spring that we would see only two species of ducks and two species of shorebirds (one being a dowitcher)?

The Birdathon is always a challenge and unpredictable, which makes it so much fun. The Noddy Little Gulls, this year consisting of Lou Anne Barriger, Kathy Feldman, April Sterling, and Laurie Voss, decided to stay warm and head south on May 13th. The birds, however, had other plans. We did manage to squeeze out 24 species of warblers but missed some common ones like Black-and-white, Magnolia, and Chestnut-sided. We ran into several other good birders and even had our picture taken by Mr. Goose Pond himself, Lee Sterrenberg. Commiserating with the other birders about the low numbers of birds was helpful for our spirits.

We had a great time as always, basked in the sunshine of the day, and ended our bird count with Chuck (will's-widow) in Greene-Sullivan State Forest, as well as with our ever-favorite Common Nighthawk in downtown Linton. Although weary at the end of the day, we are so grateful for the opportunity to support the Birdathon and all of the wonderful programs that receive grants from the money we raise. Also, big thank you goes out to our many donors for their generous support. 🐾

#2 Fundraising Champs: Bud & Carl's Legacy Team



Team members (l-r): Jerry Williams, Amanda Smith, Keith Starling, Janet Tuten, Marty Williams

Wait Until Next Year!

by Keith Starling

It was another memorable day, like Birdathon days always are. Good friends taking time to be together, pursuing a passion we all share, while raising funds to support the many important grants that support our passion. The Bud and Carl Legacy Team (B&CLT) met at 3 a.m. to start an adventure that consisted of driving 18 hours across the state in pursuit of what ended up being a disappointing number of bird species. Our total species count of 135 represented our lowest total in a number of years. That being said, it seems strange to attach a label of disappointing to a day that was so much fun, so rewarding, and so gratifying. Although our total count was down each individual species seen was a wonder, and the total experience can only be described as breathtaking.

We choose to go a week earlier than usual this year and conducted our Big Day on May 8th. Our route varied little from past years consisting of stops at Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Goose Pond WMA, Eagle Creek, Recession Acres (Noblesville), a few other specific spots in Hamilton County, and all the space in between. The weather was good but a little cool and the skies were a little cloudy, which seemed to keep the song down a bit. We ran into a little flooding everywhere we went, especially at Goose Pond, which resulted in a lot of lost time and backtracking. The B&CLT ended our Big Day as we always do, exhausted physically and mentally, wishing we had seen more species, discussing our plans for next year, and toasting, with an adult beverage, our friendship and passion for birding.

The B&CLT would like to thank our families for allowing us to take a full day out of our busy lives to pursue our passion, plus the many donors who contributed to our team helping to fund the important grants that benefit the birds. We also thank Donna, Barb and Amos Butler Audubon Society for hosting the Birdathon and allowing us the honor of participating in this treasured event. As a long-time Cubs fan, I can say with sincerity, wait till next year! 🐾

#3 Fundraising Champs: Team Carbon Neutral



Team members (l-r): Chuck Benson, Dave Benson, Wes Homoya

An Unexpected Kookaburra Report

by Dave Benson

Over the winter, several of us Birdathoners had discussed what percentage of the team needs to see what percentage of the birds in our counts. We went back and forth on a few proposals, but I got the feeling that other teams just don't understand the complexities of Team Carbon Neutral. For example, what if the only bird your teammate/brother identifies is a Kookaburra in an old gum tree?

Wes and I climbed on our bikes in Zionsville at 4 a.m. and headed down to Eagle Creek Park, picking up American Woodcock in a field along the way. The morning in the park was fruitful, and we managed to hit our goal of 100 species before we left for the Scott Starling Sanctuary. There we picked up a few more species, like Blue-winged and Prairie Warblers, before hitting the road for grassland and mudflat species. That's when brother Chuck finally joined us and dropped his bombshell Kookaburra sighting; another write-in species from my brother. With all of the rain, there were plenty of muddy fields, so we managed to pick up Least, Semipalmated, and Solitary Sandpipers along with a few other species of shorebirds before the lure of choriqueso and cervesa overcame us. Thanks to all of our sponsors! And don't worry, you won't be charged for any Australian species! 🐾



Team members (l-r): Jane Hammock, Casey Hedge, Nick Hedge, Robin Hedge. Not pictured: Cloyce Hedge


The Red-Necked Loons A Big Day Big Sit

by Cloyce Hedge

The Red-necked Loons had a two-pronged strategy. Part One was for Cloyce to bird while golfing at Cool Lake Golf Course in the morning with our afternoon host, Jeff Welty; Part Two was to do a Big Sit at Welty's Lake Holiday house. The Big Sit also involved food, drink, and conversation, of course. The team executed this plan on Memorial Day, May 29th.

The golf prong of the plan produced some good birds, including Bobolink, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Orchard Oriole, but mostly golf. The Big Sit portion of the plan was much more fun. It yielded the bulk of the birds, mostly common species, but with a couple of surprises. Part of the fun was that the team members really engaged in spotting birds. Casey picked out a Baltimore Oriole in the tippy-top of a tree; Robin spotted a fly-by Mallard as she sipped her IPA. Nick was especially good at hearing and spotting birds; he heard Blue-gray Gnatcatchers calling in the lake house yard, spotted a Warbling Vireo in the nearby tree, and saw a large bird soaring high overhead that turned out to be a Bald Eagle. Jane proved to be relentless in keeping our checklist in order. We ended the day with a total of 53 species.

All of this was pulled off during a busy time on the lake, with lots of Memorial Day revelers speeding by pulling kids on tubes and skis. The team also had a few distractions on the porch, with too much food, drink, and conversation. But we had fun, saw a few good birds, and contributed to the great cause that is the Amos Butler Audubon Society Birdathon.

Thanks to Jeff and Yvonne Welty for hosting our team; Stan and Diana Miles for moral support and beer; Chris Hedge and Jane Hammock for preparing most of the food; and Cory Robinson for help with the checklist, overall positive vibes, and driving half of the team to the lake. Most importantly, thank you to all of our donors who supported this fun and worthwhile endeavor. 




Team members: Linda and Mike Bishop

Team Bishop Entertained by Dueling Warblers

by Mike Bishop

After seemingly endless rain in early May, we finally chose the 15th for our 2017 Birdathon effort. We began our day at Eagle Creek, starting at the marina, where we got off to a good start with several species of warblers and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. We added to our list at the ice skating pond and then had a productive walk through the north end of the park, adding two vireos, a few more warblers, and a Bald Eagle that flushed from a perch by the water. A quick walk along the coffer dam added a high flying Osprey and Forster's Terns. An American Kestrel was hanging around at the Eagle Creek airport while we ate our lunch. We hit the interstate to get out of town and exited to drive toward Goose Pond FWA through the country, picking up a handful of birds along the way. Arriving at Goose Pond, we found predictably high water and almost no shorebirds but did hear American Bittern, Sora, and Marsh Wren. A Yellow-breasted Chat and Common Yellowthroat


were having a loud and physical skirmish in the marsh vegetation. The chat earned the victory on points. We moved on to Greene-Sullivan State Forest, where we picked up a few nice additions. We backtracked to Goose Pond as the light was fading and watched a large group of very tentative Black-crowned Night-Herons eventually fly over. We finished the day with a Barred Owl perched on a pole near the marsh. Considering the lack of shorebirds, we felt good about 129 species we managed to log on this beautiful (and rain-free) May day. Thanks to our generous sponsors and Amos Butler Audubon Society for supporting bird conservation! 



Team members: Madeline Medley, Charlie Berry, Madison Berry, Noah Fitzgerald, Presley Hill, Justus Hill, Wren Upchurch

Wren's Warblers Big Day— Not a Big Bird Count

by Melissa
Upchurch

On June 4th, Wren and her team of Warblers set out by foot from Eagle Creek Park's Ornithology Center, hiking south to the marina. It was a muggy, sunny day with no wind. The birds must have all been hiding as Justus, Maddie, Madison, Noah, Presley, and Wren found only 26 species. Although the count was low, the fun and giggles were abundant! As always there was some added adventure, like two years ago when the group came upon a goose egg and one of the girls picked it up and was chased by the momma bird! (Thankfully all were unharmed.) This year the Warblers found a large snapping turtle laying its eggs next to a creek bed. As the Warblers grow, so does their love of nature. Wren would like to send a big THANK YOU to her team and to all of those who donated! 


Community Hospital Team Species and Temperatures in the 90s

by Doug Sherow



Team members: John Munshower and Doug Sherow. Not pictured, Greg Steffen

Dr. John Munshower, Douglas Sherow, and Greg Steffen spent from 5:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. traversing central, southwest, and western Indiana, driving more than 275 miles in search of many elusive birds. Our June 3 trek resulted in 99 confirmed species. The trip went well until mid-afternoon, when the temperature

rose to 90°+ and fatigue set in, both on the part of the birds as well as the observers. Fortunately a good supply of Long's donuts and lots of coffee sustained us throughout the day. An excellent Mexican-cuisine luncheon offered a brief noontime respite. All in all, we felt pretty lucky to get 99 species. John, Greg, and I would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of the kind, supportive people who contributed to the Amos Butler Audubon Society Birdathon on our behalf. Your donations will be used to help preserve and continue our efforts to benefit the birds of central Indiana. 

Team Wild Birds Unlimited Big Day Birding in the Rain

by Amy Hodson



Team members (l-r): Rob Ripma, John Schaust, Brian Cunningham, Amy Hodson


When it comes to making lemonade out of a lemon of a morning, Team Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) did it! Busy schedules meant the date of our Big Day had been set nine months in advance.

We weren't going to let a little bit of rain get in our way! On April 29th, Team WBU set out to find birds in the stormy weather. Since it was early in spring migration, our plan was to bird a southern route for better chances at tallying both warblers and shorebirds.

We began our day at 5 a.m. in the Bloomington area, looking for nightjars and owls. Even though we had waited for a storm cell to pass, there were still bone-shaking lightning strikes close by. As the sun came up, the constant rainfall made it difficult to find the birds we needed. We stayed focused and kept at it!

By 11:30 a.m. the sky started to clear, and the bird activity really picked up. After a couple of great stops in the Bloomington area, we were off to bird Goose Pond FWA. The morning versus the afternoon felt like two completely different days of birding.

We managed to tally a respectable 142 species for our Big Day final count. The best species of the day was a rare Black-bellied Whistling-Duck which Brian Cunningham had originally spotted at Goose Pond.


A special thank you to all of our sponsors. We truly appreciate your support for our team and for the important projects being funded by the Birdathon. We would also like to thank our families, friends, and especially Wild Birds Unlimited for making our Big Day possible through its generous support. 



High Count Champs: The Horned Grebes

by Ryan Sanderson

Team members (l-r): Wes Homoya, Nick Kiehl, Mike Maxwell, Aidan Rominger, Ryan Sanderson, and Tim Street

The Horned Grebes had another successful year running its Birdathon. We traversed the state, starting at Goose Pond FWA late Friday night and ending up at Kankakee FWA late Saturday night, finishing with 177 species. We got several target birds with highlights including Wilson's Phalarope, a late Red-breasted Nuthatch, 29 warbler species, and perhaps the coolest bird, a non-countable Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler hybrid at Beehunter Marsh. As always, everyone on our team had loads of fun. We would like to thank all of our sponsors for helping in the cause of conservation! 




Las Aguilas Harpias: You Never Know What You Will Find!

by Jeanette Frazier

Team members (l-r): Jeanette Frazier, Elcira Villarreal, Carole Boylan

Las Aguilas Harpias scheduled its birding efforts for the 24-hour period from 3 p.m. Tuesday, May 16, through 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 17. We began our count at Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area in Greene County. First we visited Beehunter Marsh areas 2 and 3, observing Yellow-breasted Chat; Barn, Cliff and Tree Swallows; and Indigo Buntings. After visiting the check-in station at BH1, we found a Bell's Vireo. In the afternoon we stopped at various Goose Pond parking lots and were rewarded with appearances of three species of raptors, Red-headed Woodpecker, Wild Turkey, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, and Black-necked Stilt. We enjoyed a beautiful sunset and evening bird song before returning home.

On Wednesday morning we ventured to Eagle Creek Park, where high winds kept birds mostly under cover. We did find eight species of warblers, including a showy Canada Warbler. On the north side of the park, after much intent listening, we were able to include a singing Henslow's Sparrow. Team Las Aguilas Harpias members are content with our relaxed pace and reasonable count total of 82 species. We enjoyed beautiful scenery, amiable conversation, and the entertaining treasure-hunt aspect of birdwatching. You never know what you will find!

We are grateful for the sponsors supporting our team. 




Team EcoLab Logo Bird Found

by Dave Benson

Team members (l-r): Deb Patrick, Randy Patrick, Dave Benson

The Marian University Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab team this year again chose a 24-hour period spanning two days. The tactic seemed worthwhile. We started on May 10 at 5 p.m. Birding only the Marian University properties, we were able to pick up 67 species, including Yellow-bellied and Acadian Flycatchers and 13 warbler species before dark.

Although we started at 4 a.m. the next day, the only nightbird we found was the pair of Common Nighthawks nesting on the Marian University buildings. Throughout the day we slowly filled out the checklist with sightings of Orchard Oriole, Black-throated Green Warbler, Hairy Woodpecker, and a few others. Deb Patrick found the bird of the day: a Green Heron, the logo of the EcoLab! Thanks to our sponsors for choosing a team with the smallest coverage area in the middle of the country's 13th largest city! 

The Indiana Young Birders Club Exceeding Expectations

by Nick Kiehl



Team members (l-r): Nick Kiehl, Landon Neumann, Matthias Benko, Jonathan Bontrager, Ceth Williams

The Indiana Young Birders Club team exceeded expectations on our April 29th Birdathon Big Day. Team members began right at midnight in Yellowwood State Forest and despite steady rain managed to pull out Whip-poor-will and Chuck-will's-widow before sunrise. Yellowwood and Paynetown SRA produced most of the breeding and migrant warblers that we needed, and a flock of Willets at Paynetown was a nice bonus. Goose Pond WMA had a decent number of shorebirds, including multiple Wilson's Phalaropes. A Black-bellied Whistling Duck, found by the Wild Birds Unlimited Team, and a couple of owls and rails made for a great end to the day and brought us to 155 species. We'd like to thank all of our sponsors for their encouragement and willingness to support bird conservation. 

2017 Birdathon Species List:

(geese, swans, ducks) Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Trumpeter Swan, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck; (game birds) Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey; (grebes) Pied-billed Grebe; (cormorants) Double-crested Cormorant; (herons) American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron; (vultures) Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture; (hawks, kites, eagles) Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk; (rails, gallinules) King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot; (cranes) Sandhill Crane; (plovers) Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer; (stilts, avocets) Black-necked Stilt; (sandpipers) Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope; (gulls) Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull; (terns) Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Common Tern, Great Frigatebird; (pigeons, doves) Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove; (cuckoos) Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo; (owls) Barn Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl; (nightjars) Common Nighthawk, Chuck-will's-widow, Eastern Whip-poor-will; (swifts) Chimney Swift; (hummingbirds) Ruby-throated Hummingbird; (kingfishers) Belted Kingfisher; (woodpeckers) Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker; (falcons) American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon; (flycatchers) Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird; (vireos) White-eyed Vireo, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo; (jays, crows) Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow; (larks) Horned Lark; (swallows) Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow; (chickadees, titmice) Carolina Chickadee, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse; (nuthatches) Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch; (wrens) House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren; (gnatcatchers) Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; (kinglets) Ruby-crowned Kinglet; (thrushes) Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin; (mimids) Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher; (starlings) European Starling; (pipits) American Pipit; (waxwings) Cedar Waxwing; (warblers) Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat; (sparrows) Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow; (cardinals and allies) Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel; (blackbirds, orioles) Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole; (finches) House Finch, American Goldfinch; (Old World sparrows) House Sparrow

Official combined count total of all teams: 203 species

- 177 **The Horned Grebes:** Wes Homoya, Nick Kiehl, Mike Maxwell, Aidan Rominger, Ryan Sanderson, Tim Street
- 155 **Indiana Young Birders Club:** Mathias Benko, Jonathan Bontrager, Nick Kiehl, Landon Neuman, Ceth Williams
- 142 **Wild Birds Unlimited:** Brian Cunningham, Amy Hodson, Rob Ripma, John Schaut
- 135 **Bud's & Carl's Legacy Team:** Amanda Smith, Keith Starling, Janet Tuten, Jerry Williams, Marty Williams
- 129 **Team Bishop:** Mike and Linda Bishop
- 122 **Noddy Little Gulls:** Lou Anne Barriger, Kathy Feldman, April Sterling, Laurie Voss
- 120 **Carbon Neutral:** Dave Benson, Chuck Benson, Wes Homoya
- 102 **Community Hospital:** John Munshower, Doug Sherow, Greg Steffen
- 82 **Las Aguilas Harpias:** Carole Boyelan, Jeanette Frazier, Elcira Villarreal
- 78 **EcoLab Team:** Dave Benson, Debbie Patrick, Randy Patrick
- 53 **Red-Necked Loons:** Jane Hammock, Casey Hedge, Cloyce Hedge, Nick Hedge, Robin Hedge
- 26 **Wren's Warblers:** Charlie Berry, Madison Berry, Noah Fitzgerald, Presley Hill, Justus Hill, Madeline Medley, Wren Upchurch