

AUDUBON LIFELINES A PUBLICATION OF AMOS BUTLER AUDUBON SOCIETY A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Amy Hodson • Have an idea for a story? Send an email to info@amosbutleraudubon.org

# The Harmful Effects of Mosquito Fogging

By Mary Ellen Gadski

In the past few years in Indianapolis, the number of companies promising to rid backyards of mosquitos has gone up dramatically. Their advertising yard signs have popped up all over my neighborhood. Last spring I experienced two door-to-door salesmen knocking on my door to give their pitch about how "family-friendly" their fogging is. Much to my distress, several of my closest neighbors signed up and had their yards repeatedly sprayed all summer long, sometimes as often as once a week. I have yet to meet anyone who wants to be bit by mosquitos, but do the people who fall for the sales pitch understand the many possible harmful effects of commercial fogging, to both the environment and their own health?

To start with the environmental effects, fogging with synthetic pyrethroids kills <u>all</u> insects, not just mosquitos. Pests are affected by pyrethroid applications, but so are predatory beneficial insects that may be susceptible at a lower dose than the pest, disrupting the predator/prey relationship. Butterflies, caterpillars, honey bees, fireflies, and even certain earthworms all are killed by the sprays. Pesticide applicators may claim that their pyrethroid fogging doesn't harm bees, but it's essentially for their marketing purposes.

Pyrethroids are moderately toxic to birds, but they are also indirectly affected because of the decrease in their food supply. Steve Holmer, Vice President for Policy at the American Bird Conservancy, stated in his email to me on this subject: "The impact of reduced food sources is a cause for bird declines." Dr. Colin Purrington, professor of evolutionary biology at Swarthmore College from 1997 to 2011, explained that the population levels of swallows and flycatchers have dropped in the last several decades because there are fewer insects for them to eat. An article in Cornell Lab of Ornithology's magazine reviewed studies of the diets of hummingbirds and concluded that small arthropods (spiders) comprise a high percentage of their food, especially for their nestlings. Pyrethroids also kill arthropods.

Insects perform essential ecological roles, starting with pollinating 90 percent of all flowering plants. In recent years, the importance of pollinators has come to the forefront of American consciousness since so much of our food production depends on them. But more than that, insects are the basis of the food chain that supports all life. As entomologist Dr. Douglas Tallamy of the University of Delaware has written: "We are winning the undeclared war against insects at our own peril." At Newfields' virtual horticultural symposium this past February, Tallamy sadly indicated that mosquito fogging companies were reversing all the good work he's accomplished over the past 40 years in educating the public on the crucial role that insects play in nature.

If you want to know more about the health effects of synthetic pyrethroids, you might start with the chemicalWATCH factsheet produced by Beyond Pesticides of Washington, D.C. Its introduction asserts:

Pesticide products containing pyrethroids are often described by pest control operators and community mosquito management bureaus as "safe as chrysanthemum flowers." While pyrethroids are a synthetic version of an extract from the chrysanthemum, they were chemically designed to be more toxic with longer breakdown times and are often formulated with synergists, increasing potency and compromising the human body's ability to detoxify the pesticide.

The factsheet goes on to say that tests of some pyrethroids on laboratory animals reveal striking neurotoxicity when administered by injection or orally. The World Health Organization explains that synthetic pyrethroids are neuropoisons that act on the axons in the peripheral and central nervous systems. The EPA classifies some pyrethroids as possible human carcinogens. Many have been linked to disruptions of the endocrine system, which can adversely affect reproduction and sexual development, interfere with the immune system, and



Bee courtesy of Mark Welter

An excerpt from Douglas W. Tallamy's most recent book: Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard (Timber Press, 2020), p. 210.

Contrary to what the fogger operator may have told you, the pyrethroid-based insecticides used by mosquito foggers indiscriminately kill all insects, not just mosquitos. Ironically, targeting adult mosquitos is the worst and by far the most expensive approach to mosquito control, because mosquitos are best controlled in the larval stage. Put a five-gallon bucket of water in a sunny place in your yard and add a handful of hay or straw. After a few days, the resulting brew is irresistible to gravid (egg-filled) female mosquitos. After the mosquitos have laid their eggs, add a commercially available mosquito dunk tablet that contains Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt), a natural larvicide, to your bucket. The eggs will hatch and the larvae will die. This way, you control mosquitos, and only mosquitos, without the use of harmful insecticides.

# **Upcoming Audubon Events and Field Trips**

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 even

## Birding Belize: It's UnBELIEZEable!

### Tuesday, May 11, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm Eventbrite: https://unbeliezeable.eventbrite.com



Clockwise: Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Slaty-tailed Trogon, Northern Emerald Toucanet photos courtesy of David Rupp

David Rupp, owner of IndiGo Birding Nature Tours in Bloomington, will give a presentation about birding in Belize, an emerging destination in Central America. David fell in love with Belize on his first visit and has led multiple birding tours to Belize since. The presentation will feature photos from recent tour participants as well as from Belizean photographers.

Belize is only the size of Massachusetts but has a bird list of nearly 600 species. From 22 species of hummingbirds to the Ocellated Turkey, Belize offers birds of all shapes, sizes, and colors. The combination of tropical birding and diverse and fascinating culture make Belize appealing for all levels of birders. As a bonus, the people are super-friendly and the food is delicious!

David will introduce you to the different regions of the country, some unique birds you can find, and give some examples of the variety of lodging that could fit a tight budget or provide a luxurious experience. David hopes to be joined via Zoom by his friend Isaias Morataya, guide extraordinaire at Black Rock Lodge and the #3 eBirder in Belize, who will share some of his passion for birding and answer questions as well.

David is a former board member of both ABAS and the Sassafras Audubon Society and began his career as a naturalist in the Indy Parks system.

This will be an online program using Zoom. Participants will register using Eventbrite and there will be a limit of 90. To register go to https://unbeliezeable.eventbrite.com. Once we are close to the program date, you will receive an email with an invite to a Zoom meeting.

## **ABAS Field Trips**

### Masks on Hikes and Limited Numbers

It is anticipated that masks will be required for the majority of all field trips and local hikes. There may be times when we can spread out and get a quick break from the masks. Many hikes will also have a limit to the number of participants and require registration. Please check the details of each hike and register as appropriate. Priority will be given to ABAS members early in the registration process for those hikes with limited numbers.

## Bird Hike at Marott Park & Nature Preserve

#### Friday, May 7, 8:00 am to 10:00 am Marott Park & Nature Preserve 7350 North College Ave, Indianapolis, IN

Experienced birders from ABAS will lead a bird hike sponsored by the Friends of Marott Woods Nature Preserve. Beginning birders welcome. This should be primetime for spring migration. The preserve has dirt trails and there are decent hill climbs so wear appropriate footwear. Don't forget to bring your binoculars.

The bird hike is free and no advanced registration is required. We'll meet at the preserve parking lot.



Ovenbird courtesy of Amy Hodson

#### Sodalis Nature Park Spring Hike Saturday, May 8, 7:30 am to 10:00 am 7700 South County Road 975 East Sodalis Nature Park, Plainfield, IN

Join experienced birder and field trip leader, Scott Enochs, as he leads you on a bird hike at Sodalis Nature Park in search of migrating warblers and other spring arrivals. Sodalis is known as one of the most productive birding hotspots in Hendricks County. 170 species have been recorded there, including 34 warbler species.

Trails through the park are a mix of gravel and dirt and are normally an easy walk, but interior trails can become very muddy after moderate rain. Appropriate footwear is recommended. We'll meet in the parking lot at Sodalis Nature Park.



The field trip is free but limited to 12 participants and registration is required. Priority registration is available to ABAS members through April 15, 2021. After that date, if any open spots remain, non-members may register. To register email Chuck Anderson at chucka1999@aol.com or text Chuck at (317) 767-5438.

Prairie Warbler courtesy of Amy Hodson

### Spring Birding at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge

#### Sunday, May 16, 7:30 am to 1:00 pm Muscatatuck NWR 12985 East US Hwy 50, Seymour, IN

Join ABAS Education Chair Jessica Helmbold for a day of celebrating the best of spring. Enjoy southern Indiana blooming, migration, and lunch after the outing.

Meet at the Muscatatuck Visitors Center, 12985 East U.S. Highway 50, Seymour, Indiana, at 8:30 am. We'll bird until 12:30 or 1:00 pm. Please remember to dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring any water, hats, bug spray, and sunscreen you need. As always bring your binoculars. An optional lunch will be at a local eatery with the location to be determined. Participants will be responsible for paying for their own lunch. Let us know in advance if you are planning to join the group for lunch so we can make reservations at the restaurant.

There will be no fee for the field trip and it's open to the public. Registration is required. If you have any questions and to register for the field trip, email Jessica at jh\_beagle@hotmail.com.



Green Heron courtesy of Amy Hodson

## Newfields Bird Hike

#### Saturday, June 5, 8:00 am to 10:00 am 1550 West 38th Street, Indianapolis, IN

Join ABAS at The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park at Newfields for bird hikes on this beautiful property along the White River and Central Canal. The hikes will be led by ABAS President Rob Ripma.

Meet at the free parking at the loop just <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> mile west of the 38th Street entrance to Newfields. The address given for this event is approximate. You'll need to be heading west on 38th Street to enter the loop parking area. Take the White River Pkwy East exit.

The hike is free and open to the public. Registration is requested by emailing us at info@amosbutleraudubon.org.



American Goldfinch courtesy of Amy Hodson

#### **Chimney Swift Events**

We plan to have at least one event in August. Please check the ABAS event calender on our website for information as it becomes available.

## ABAS Field Trip Recap West Park Woodcock Walk March 6, 2021

On March 6th, 36 birders gathered just before sunset at West Park in Carmel for the ABAS annual Woodcock walk. There was a brief informational presentation before walking to the location where there would be the best chance to hear the Woodcock peenting and to see them perform their aerial display. Shortly after sunset, a Great Horned Owl was heard calling in the distance. It then flew closer into a nearby tree where it could be easily viewed by the birders. After several minutes of calling, it flew overhead giving everyone great looks.

A few minutes later we began to hear the peenting sounds that male Woodcocks make when attempting to attract a mate. We then observed the birds as they took flight and we could hear the chipping trill made by their wings as they ascended and the twittering sound they make on the descent. The group then moved closer to a spot where there might be a better chance to catch sight of one on the ground. We were rewarded when one landed just in front of us on the paved trail and using a flashlight, everyone got excellent views.

Shortly thereafter, we called it a night and headed back to our cars. Those that had never seen a Woodcock before seemed excited about the sighting and many that had previously seen them commented that it was the best views that they had ever experienced.

We can't wait until next March!



*Birders at West Park waiting for American Woodcocks to perform their aerial display* 

## 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.

## Local Bird Hikes

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.

### Masks on Hikes

It is anticipated that masks will be required for the majority of the local hikes. There may be times when we can spread out and get a quick break from the masks.

## Eagle Creek Park

6515 Delong Road, Indianapolis, IN Every Sunday, 9:00 am to 11:00 am May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 June 6, 13, 20, 27 July 4, 11, 18, 25 August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Meet in front of the Ornithology Center.

## **Holliday Park**

6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN Third Tuesday of each month from 8:00 am to 9:30 am May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17

Meet in front of the Nature Center.

### **Cool Creek Park Bird Hikes**

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel, IN Every Saturday from 8:00 am to 10:00 am May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 June 5, 12, 19, 26 July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 August 7, 14, 21, 28

Join expert birder Keith Starling. Meet in the north parking lot past the Nature Center.

### <u>Cool Creek Park Beginner</u> <u>Bird Hikes</u>

2000 East 151st Street, Carmel, IN Every other Sunday 8:30 am to 10:30 am May 9, 23 June 6, 20 July 4, 18 August 1, 15, 22 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Wednesday from 8:30 am to 10:30 am May 12, 19, 26

June 9, 16, 23, 30 July 14, 21, 28 August 11, 18, 25

Meet in the parking lot at the bottom of the road by Cool Creek, past the Nature Center. This is a great opportunity for birdwatchers of all levels.

### Strawtown Koteewi Park

12308 Strawtown Avenue, Noblesville, IN First Wednesday of each month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am

May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4 Meet at the Taylor Center of Natural History. For more information, call (317) 774-2574.

## Fort Harrison State Park

6000 North Post Road, Indianapolis, IN Sundays in April and May from 8:00 am to 10:00 am May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

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

## <u>Garfield Park</u> <u>Urban Bird Walks</u>

2432 Conservatory Drive, Indianapolis, IN One Saturday a month from 8:00 am to 9:30 am

#### May 15, June 12, July 10, August 14

This Indy Parks event requires registration through their system. Meet at the Conservatory entrance.

### **Greenfield Birders Hikes**

Stay up-to-date via facebook.com/groups/ Greenfield Birders. For more information, contact Adam Wilson at NikonBirdHunter@gmail.com.

#### **Thornwood Nature Preserve**

1597 South Morristown Pike, Greenfield, IN 2nd Saturday of the month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14 Meet in the parking lot.

#### **Beckenholdt Park**

2770 North Franklin Street, Greenfield, IN 4th Saturday of the month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28 Meet in the parking lot.

Special Donations

/Thanks to all who have donated to the permanent fund including our nine Lifetime members

Thanks to all who have donated to Birdathon past and present. We have big grant year in 2021 and appreciate all who donate to the many worthy projects.

## Support ABASusing AmazonSmile

ABAS every time you shop, at no cost to you with the added bonus that Amazon donates a portion of the purchase to ABAS.

To shop at AmazonSmile, simply go to smile.amazon.com and enter Amos W. Butler Audubon Society in the search bar. You can use your existing Amazon account on AmazonSmile.

Bookmark smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. Let your shopping be not just for your family and friends, but also for the birds of Central Indiana, like the Cerulean Warbler.



American Bittern seen by many birders in Eagle Creek Park in April demonstrating its ability to hide among the reeds. Photo courtesy of Kathy Broshous.

# Amos Butler Audubon Society BIRDATHON 2021

The Cerulean Warbler is one of the most imperiled songbirds in North America



## Birding for Bucks to Save Birds Preser

Amos Butler Audubon Society is now in its fourth decade of birding for bucks to save birds. Many species such as the Cerulean Warbler are still in peril, but there have been some uplifting success stories as well. Our national symbol, the once-endangered Bald Eagle, has made an astounding comeback with more than 300,000 currently in the lower 48 states, demonstrating there is hope for saving other bird species. In the spirit of optimism, please help us raise the \$39,611 necessary to fund the following 2021 Birdathon conservation-focused projects.

## Improving Migratory Bird Habitat in Colombia

The Central Andes of Colombia provide important wintering habitat for many of the neotropical migrants that pass through Indiana, among them the Cerulean Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler and Canada Warbler. All three of these species are facing population declines due to habitat loss. This area exhibits some of the highest rates of deforestation and forest fragmentation in South America.

To respond to this threat, in 2018 the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) established the Central Andes BirdScape. The area abounds in coffee plantations, recognized as an important habitat for migratory birds. The ultimate goal over the next two years is to produce and plant 100,000 native trees along the banks of rivers and streams in the Rio Claro watershed, creating mini-corridors of habitat and enriching forest fragments around coffee farms.

While ABC made progress in 2020, the pandemic changed the dynamics of how tree planting and outreach to coffee farmers could be accomplished. Contact had to occur in small groups instead of large-scale workshops. To move things forward in the pandemic's second year, ABC has requested that our Birdathon dollars fund a position for a forestry technician. The forester will provide one-on-one technical expertise and meet with individual coffee producers to engage them in planting agreements.

## Preserving and Enhancing Local Habitats

- Mud Creek Conservancy: \$5,000 toward the purchase of the 25-acre Sargent Road Nature Park preserving high-quality habitat in a publicly accessible urban area.
- Marian University EcoLab: \$1,500 to continue a multiyear, ongoing project using students to plant native trees and perennials in an urban gem.
- Keep Indianapolis Beautiful: \$2,000 to establish a native plant nursery, which will make bird-friendly plants available to the public to create backyard habitats.

### Research

- **Ball State University:** \$2,728 to fund a study to investigate how the conditions the Cerulean Warbler experience in South America may effect its reproductive success on its breeding grounds.
- **Purdue University:** \$735 for purchasing equipment necessary for banding Saw-whet Owls to get a better understanding of the condition of the migrating owls as they pass through the state.
- Indiana University: \$4,958 to support a study of windowstrike mortality on campus buildings.

#### Education

- Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center: \$4,000 to enhance the center's first-class taxidermy exhibit, plus a research project in collaboration with Lights out Indy.
- Indiana State Museum: \$2,100 to promote increased accessibility and to the museum's ornithology collection.
- Utopia Wildlife Rehabilitators: \$1,590 to provide materials and transportation for youth attending Camp Utopia

### Make a Difference, Make a Pledge

Your dollars will go far to ensure AUDUB the future of our Indiana birds.



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

## AMOS BUTLER AUDUBON BIRDATHON 2021 PLEDGE

Name	YES, I'LL SUPPORT YOU WITH MY PLEDGE OF: (.10,.25,.50, \$1) per species for a total of	
Address CityStateZip	□ Bud & Carl's Legacy □ Carbon Neutral □ Community Hospital □ Horned Grebes □ EcoLab □ Noddy Little Gulls □ Team Bishop □ Wild Birds Unlimited □ Las Aguilas Aarpias □ Bird Questers □ Brownsburg Railsitters □ Other □ Team member	
PhoneEmail	<ul> <li>My gift of \$ is enclosed, payable to Amos Butler Audubon. Your gift is deductible as allowed by law.</li> <li>Free Amos Butler Audubon Society membership. First-time members only. \$20 or more donation required.</li> </ul>	
Thank you for sponsoring the Amos Butler Audubon Society Birdathon. Your donation will go toward:		

Protecting winter habitat for migratory birds
 Enhancing and preserving local bird-friendly habitat
 Research projets to benefit birds
 Educational opportunities for the public to learn about birds

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

## Help Track the Effects of Climate Change — and Help the Birds You Love

By Chandler Bryant, Conservation Chair of ABAS

What's even better than watching birds? Knowing you've done something meaningful to protect them. Join your fellow ABAS members and local community science advocates in working to collect data about climate change and its impacts on our local bird populations and distribution. National Audubon's 'Survival by Degrees' study shows that two-thirds (64%) (389 out of 604) of North American bird species are at risk of extinction from climate change. The good news is that our science also shows that if we take action now we can help improve the chances for 76% of species at risk.

Audubon's Climate Watch program is a new tool in the toolbox for land managers and Audubon Scientists to learn how birds are using the landscape and adjusting their ranges based on climate suitability. For example, the Mountain Bluebird is vulnerable because in the vast majority of its summer range, the climate conditions that this bird needs — temperature, amount of rainfall, and other environmental factors — will shift northward and eastward. This bird may be able to move into new areas over time, or it may struggle to adapt.

To test predictions made in Audubon's 'Survival by Degrees' study, Audubon has developed Climate Watch, which aims to document species' responses to climate change and test Audubon's climate models by having volunteers in the field look for birds where Audubon's climate models predict they will be in the 2020s. When you participate in Audubon's newest community science project, you'll give Audubon scientists vital data on how birds are faring now — which guides our most effective conservation work to help them adapt. You will be joining hundreds of other science-driven individuals working together to collect large amounts of data to be analyzed to help inform the target of our conservation work to protect birds.

Join ABAS as we participate in Audubon's new community science program, Climate Watch. If you can identify Eastern Bluebirds, White-breasted Nuthatches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, American Goldfinches, or Eastern Towhees, by sight and/or sound, or are eager to learn, put your bird knowledge to use and help us conduct surveys to see how these species are already responding to climate change in our area. Even if you are a beginning birder, you can help. Audubon's Climate Watch has local coordinator volunteers available to help teach beginners how to identify birds that we will be surveying, how to correctly survey based on Audubon's study protocol, and how to reserve a "survey square" and "survey points" for your surveys.

The next season of Climate Watch is May 15 to June 15, 2021. Be sure to check out the Climate Watch website (www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch) to learn more about participating in this exciting new program including guidance on conducting a safe and socially distant survey. Contact Chandler Bryant, Conservation Chair of the ABAD and Local Climate Watch Coordinator, at (765) 210-9618 or chandlersbryant@ gmail.com, for more information about joining or help getting started and organized. ABAS has created a sign-up so we can track who from our area is participating and be sure that we are helping local volunteers complete the surveys. The link to the sign-up is https://forms.gle/ZvF84K2nxeCMenhu9.





*Red-breasted Nuthatch and Eastern Bluebird courtesy of Amy Hodson* 

Grab your binoculars. Birds need your help!

### The Harmful Effects of Mosquito Fogging

Continued from page 1



Giant Swallowtail courtesy of Amy Hodson

increase chances of breast cancer. A 2015 research paper in the journal Environmental Health found an association between exposure to pyrethroids and ADHD. The active ingredients and formulations used by the various fogging companies vary, so if you are concerned about your possible exposure, find out which chemicals they use and research the compounds individually.

If you want to control mosquitos in your yard, there are many alternatives to fogging. Dr. Purrington offers 10 practical suggestions, ranging from the ones we already know, like wearing long sleeves and pants when mosquitos are most active, to ones that came as a surprise to me, such as getting rid of those downspout extenders that pool stagnant water and provide breeding sites for mosquitos. The accompanying sidebar from Dr. Tallamy's most recent book, *Nature's Best Hope*, outlines an intriguing way to get rid of mosquitos the most effective way: in their larval stage, without killing all the other insects in our yards. This summer I will test this method when mosquitos are most bothersome (usually late summer). It seems such a simple, non-toxic solution.

I'm old enough to remember the windshield of my parents' car being covered in squashed insects when we would take summer drives in the 1950s and 60s. With the global decline in insects since that time, we no longer have to scrub windshields of debris. That's visual proof of how far insect populations have dropped since then. We need to examine the heedless ways we are contributing to that decline and keep in mind the words of eminent biologist E.O. Wilson:

"If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos."

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*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