



2021 BIRDATHON REPORT

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

*It is listed as endangered
in the state of Indiana.*



Thank you for being a Birdathon supporter

What a banner fundraising success we have had due to your generous donations! The Birdathon campaign set an all-time record for January 1 to June 30. You donated a whopping \$32,518 to benefit the birds of Central Indiana. With a challenge to fund 10 grant recipients for a total of \$39,611, every dollar was crucial. Thanks to your generosity and to sufficient carryover funds from our first online auction, we met this lofty goal.

Projects you have made possible include habitat protection in Colombia, important for wintering neotropical warbler species. We funded three research projects—one on Cerulean Warblers, one on Saw-whet Owls, and the third on window strikes by birds. We supported a local native plant nursery as well as bird-friendly habitat restoration at the Marian University EcoLab. The purchase of 25 acres for the new Sargent Road Nature Park on the northeast side will be made possible by your gift. Your donation also supports education projects focusing on the importance of birds at The Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center, Camp Utopia and the Indiana State Museum.

As the vaccine allowed the return to more activities, Birdathon teams were able to go back to traveling together. The biking birders turned in another impressive species total, but this year a team scouring the state via auto tallied the highest species count of 162. Most impressive, however, was the Noddy Little Gulls team, which set a new fundraising record of \$8,395!

A sincere thank you to all of our Birdathon donors from Donna McCarty, Birdathon Chair, members of the Birdathon Committee, and the Board of Directors of the Amos Butler Audubon Society.

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Sharon Gremel	John & Marcia Munshower	Miles Zevin
David & Linda Hamilton	Stephen & Susan Nawrocki	Robina Zink
Cara Hasselbeck	Polly Nicely	

Volunteers who raised Birdathon donations

\$1,000 or more	Greg Silver	Wes Homoya	Jenna McElroy
Dave Benson	Janet Tuten	Keith Starling	John Munshower
Mike Bishop	Laurie Voss	April Sterling	Bill Murphy
Mary Ellen Galski	\$500 to \$999	Marty Williams	John Schaub
Becky Heck	Lou Anne Barriger	\$100 to \$499	Doug Sherow
Donna McCarty	Jeanette Frazier	Linda Bishop	Elcira Villarreal
Deb & Randy Patrick	Barbara Jablonski	Brian Cunningham	

Corporate Sponsor:

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

Special Contributors:

Janet Tuten, Birdathon Database Curator
Mary Ellen Galski, International Projects Coordinator
Ted & Cindy Meyer, Report Editors
Allison Evans, Online Silent Auction Coordinator
Don McCarty, Birdathon Treasurer

1st-Place Fundraising Champs: Noddy Little Gulls



Team members
(l-r): Becky Heck,
Bill Murphy,
April Sterling,
and Laurie Voss

2021 Wild Adventure

By Laurie Voss

What does a lit-up dashboard, a gas cap, rain, smoke, a volunteer fire department, and a reveal party have to do with a Birdathon? A lot if you were the Noddy Little Gulls this year. To find out more about our detour, you will have to ask one of us for this funny story.

The Noddy Little Gulls, this year consisted of Becky Heck, April Sterling, Laurie Voss, and Bill Murphy, who graciously subbed at the last minute for Lou Anne Barriger. We began our adventure at Lake Michigan on May 14 at 9:30 pm and ended on May 15, 24 hours later at Celery Bog. We had some wonderful birds in between such as a Lark Sparrow amidst a hillside of Lupine, a Western Meadowlark at Kankakee, and a Sedge Wren and a very late American Golden Plover at Pine Creek Game Bird Habitat.

We had some big misses this year including a very short warbler list, our nemesis owls, and even a Carolina Chickadee due to our 3-hour detour. However, with all that, we felt good about our 138 species.

We want to give a BIG thank you to the many people who sponsored us this year. Birdathon had a lofty goal this year and you all stepped up with your generosity. We are encouraged each year by your support to go out and try to make you proud. We are so proud of all of you as well. Thank you all and we look forward to new adventures next year. 🐾

“We had some big misses this year including a very short warbler list, our nemesis owls, and even a Carolina Chickadee due to our 3-hour detour.”

2nd-Place Fundraising Champs: Bud & Carl’s Legacy Team



Team members:
(l-r): Janet Tuten,
Keith Starling and
Marty Williams

Sleeping In for a Change

By Janet Tuten

Something new this year. We headed South the night before our Birdathon so that we could wake up and start birding instead of driving. That worked for Keith and me. However, Marty was stuck back in Indy looking for a transmission that he misplaced. He’s planning on submitting his \$4000 “in-kind donation” for his transmission cost. He’s got a receipt.

Greene-Sullivan was excellent this year and produced 27 warblers for us. We seem to have a problem with warblers, though. If we hear them, we have to find them. If we are looking at them, we can’t move on to the next spot, even if it’s the seventh American Redstart of the day. That didn’t bode well for racking up the species count, but come on, they’re warblers! Overall, we stuck to our schedule pretty well, hitting Goose Pond, Eagle Creek and finishing at Celery Bog where we had both the red morph and gray morph Eastern Screech-Owls. We managed to get all our Birdathon day “nemesis” birds, the ones that you can’t believe you didn’t see. We’re looking at you, Northern Mockingbird.

Thank you to our generous donors, families, and to the ABAS Birdathon Committee. Your support makes this event enjoyable and worthwhile. 🐾

“We managed to get all our Birdathon day “nemesis” birds, the ones that you can’t believe you didn’t see. We’re looking at you, Northern Mockingbird.”

3rd-Place Fundraising Champs: Carbon Neutral Team

Team members:
(right) Dave Benson
and Wes Homoya
(below) Jonathon
Yoerger and
Whitney Yoerger



Starting and Ending with Owls

By Dave Benson

We started and ended this year with Owls and went on a sixty-mile bike ride in between. The weather didn’t cooperate with our planned 24-hour period spanning two days, so this year we started at 4:00 am from Zionsville where we immediately picked up Great Horned Owl and a Yellow-breasted Chat. We then cruised down to Eagle Creek Park where we fought for our first 100 species including 26 warblers. But, the first 100 species by bicycle are always the easiest, and it got harder from there as we put more and more miles in heading to Eagle’s Crest for Prairie Warbler, on the road for shorebirds and grassland species, then back up to Starkey Park in Zionsville where Whitney identified a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Our last bird in Zionsville was an Eastern Screech Owl at a park where we struck out the week before. What fun and a great result, 133 species, nearly matching our record. Thanks to our supporters for their contribution to the joy of the birds of Indiana. 🐾

“...we fought for our first 100 species including 26 warblers. But, the first 100 species by bicycle are always the easiest, and it got harder from there...”



Las Águilas Arpiás Birds Rock!

by Jeanette Frazier

Team members (l-r): Jill Carr, Jeanette Frazier and Elcira Villarreal

Frazier started counting in their yard in Hendricks County and located the day's most interesting specimen across the street in a small wetland — a leucistic Spotted Sandpiper. Birding continued across northwestern Marion County to northeastern Marion County where they were joined mid-afternoon by Jill Carr. Last year's team members, Betty Yan and Victor Chen, sent moral support via photos of species they were seeing. Fortunately, the team had also seen those species. Ultimately, the active trio needed a pause and were refreshed with an ice cream break.

Team Las Águilas Arpiás would like to thank all of our friends and allies for your contributions to the 2021 ABAS Birdathon endeavor. Birds Rock! 🐦



EcoLab Team Lots of Eyes Makes for a Record Year

By Dave Benson

Team members (l-r): Dave Benson, Paul & Roxy Evans, Deb Patrick (back row) Dean Peterson and Chandler Roberts

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Seriously, there is nothing more fun than Birdathon. It's for a good cause — the conservation, knowledge, and enjoyment of the birds of Indiana. This year we had a lot of eyes on Team EcoLab, searching the properties at Marian University for avian life. We ended up with a record year, 85 species, including 4 Green Herons, the EcoLab Logo-bird. Thanks to all our sponsors for their support of team EcoLab! 🐦



Team members: Linda and Mike Bishop

Team Bishop Starting A Big Day in a Hot Tub

By Mike Bishop

After postponing our 2021 Birdathon effort three times due to illness, we finally made it out of the house on May 19th. We began the

day in the hot tub at midnight where we heard a Barred Owl after just a few minutes. After a night's rest, we moved to Fort Harrison State Park, armed with tissues and cough drops, and began the search under overcast skies. We found Solitary Sandpiper and Acadian Flycatcher along the creek and picked up Blue Grosbeak in the walnut grove. Our next stop was Eagle Creek Park where we spotted a Common Loon and enjoyed close views of a Kentucky Warbler. After an unproductive visit to Starling Sanctuary, we drove north to Celery Bog Nature Preserve in West Lafayette where we added several species, including Pied-billed Grebe, Blackburnian Warbler, Eastern Phoebe, and Common Nighthawk. An evening drive through the country on the way back to Indianapolis added Horned Lark, American Kestrel, and Dickcissel to the list. Despite being a bit under the weather, we managed over 20,000 steps, a much more impressive tally than our bird list.

Many thanks to our generous sponsors for their support, and ABAS for promoting bird conservation! 🐦

Brownsburg Railsitters A New Record for the Big Sit

By Wes Homoya



Team members (l-r): Wes Homoya, Barb Homoya and Mike Homoya

On May 8th, 2021, the Homoya family, Mike, Barb, and Wes, had the privilege of running their 3rd annual "Big Sit" Birdathon as team "Brownsburg Railsitters." We were stationed on the B&O Trail bridge over White Lick Creek. From just before sunrise through midday, we once again set a new record, this time with 86 species observed over the course of 7 hours at the site. Highlights included a whopping 19 warblers including below eye-level looks at our faves — Black-throated Blue, Bay-breasted, and Blackburnian. We also had a cooperative trio of foraging and singing Purple Finches, a dawn flyover of Pectoral Sandpipers and Lesser Yellowlegs, a Green Heron that briefly perched high atop a tree above the bridge, a hen Wild Turkey crossing the creek, and the resident celebrity Barred Owl mama with her two adorable owlets. Another treat was having several local birding friends pop by later in the day to say hello and lend additional eyes and ears to the endeavor, including ABAS members Jeanette Frazier, Elcira Villarreal, Becky Heck, Mary Kay Pitts, Julie Jenson, and Nick Dwenger. Numerous trail users also stopped to chat and see what all the fuss was about, and several got to watch and enjoy some of the birds located by the team.

The Homoyas would like to thank all involved with the creation and protection of the trail and creek and surrounding forest, as well as all of our generous sponsors. See you next year on the bridge! Good birding! 🐦

Species Count Champs: Team Wild Birds Unlimited

Our Return to a Big Day

By John Schaust



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

How great was it to be back to a full-blown Birdathon Big Day? No separate cars, no masks, and no social distancing. Just lots of miles, lots of birds, and lots of fun!

With our recent taste of newfound freedom, we just had to go for another extreme big day, and once again, our north-to-south route did not disappoint. After a short night's stay at Potato Creek State Park, Friday, May 21, started off with a bang at 2:30 am at Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area. With plenty of field and marsh birds singing and owls calling, it delivered the most enchanting experience of our entire day. Two hours later, with 23 birds tallied, we headed off towards Lake Michigan.

Michigan City Harbor produced our biggest surprise of the day, a Snowy Egret walking the beach in the early morning sunlight. A perennial favorite, Indiana Dunes State Park seemed to be slower than in past years, but it did come through with a nice variety of warblers, vireos, and other woodland birds.

We worked Kankakee Sands hard and made a number of quick stops at other promising locations. With 135 species, we decided that a 165 total was a real possibility, as long as the birds continued to cooperate.

First, Owen-Putnam State Forest produced our much-needed southern warblers, giving us a 31 warbler day. Then on to Goose Pond which sometimes hands us lemons and sometimes lemonade. It did produce all anticipated species and a variety of shorebirds to help build our list to 162 species.

After 18 hours of non-stop birding and travel, 162 looked like a pretty respectable number to finish off our awesome day of birding.

Thanks to our families for the sacrifices of the time apart and for their unquestioned support of our passion for birding. A special thank you to all of our wonderful sponsors. We truly appreciate your support for our team and the important projects funded by the ABAS Birdathon! 🐦


*Congratulations to all of our
2021 Birdathon teams,
and a sincere thanks to all of
their sponsors!*

Community Hospital High Crimes and Misdemeanors



Team members (l-r):
Doug Sherow, Greg Steffen and
John Munshower

nately, this year we were not able to permit any photographic evidence, as there are warrants out for some of us, due to high crimes and misdemeanors. The photo shown was taken three years ago when we looked much younger.

We are grateful to all of the donors who supported the Community Hospital team. 




Team members (l-r): Susan
Nawrocki, Jenna McElroy and
Stephen Nawrocki

and I decided to just enjoy a day adding to our family's COVID Big Year count. A Great Horned Owl, perched five minutes from our home in Greenwood, got the morning off to a good start. We then proceeded south and hit Lingle Road in Morgan County just after dawn. Although there was plenty of water in the flooded farm fields, no shorebirds were present. We did, however, pick up an unexpected Peregrine Falcon. After stopping for the reliable Purple Martins at the McDonald's in Spencer, we did a quick tour through McCormick's Creek State Park. There we heard Kentucky and Hooded Warblers. It was then on to Goose Pond, where we spend the remainder of the day moving between the Goose Pond wetlands, and the forests of nearby Green-Sullivan State Forest. Even in the hot afternoon, the birds were fairly active, and we were surprised to get good looks at a pair of conversing Least Bitterns on the Main Pool. We scored Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Chats, and a handful of shorebirds. The sun went down just as two Sandhill Cranes in breeding plumage crossed the horizon. Our last

By Douglas K. Sherow

On May 8th Greg Steffan, John Munshower, and I embarked on our Big Day. We traveled approximately 270 miles throughout Central and Southern Indiana, ending up at Goose Pond. It was a partly cloudy day with a cool wind that kept temperatures down most of the day. We kept bumping into other birders as a result of it being the Global Big Day of birding. We put in essentially a 10-hour plus day. Our final tally was 99. Unfortunately,


species was a Common Nighthawk circling the lights in Linton. Overall, we recorded 97 species, 17 of which were new for our year list, and about 14 wood ticks, which fortunately didn't seem to like how we tasted.

Thank you sponsors so much for supporting our fun family day of birding and donating to the wonderful projects the ABAS Birdathon is funding this year! 




Team members (l-r): Ryan
Sanderson, Aidan Rominger and
Nick Kiehl

We started at 5:00 am with a drive over the Olio Road Bridge picking up Mute Swan in the dark, then headed to Eagle Creek Park adding a large number of warblers for the day. The highlight was a beautiful male Mourning Warbler at the skating pond. We headed south to Bloomington to get a few straggler woodland species, and then ended up our efforts at Goose Pond. Our last bird of the day was an American Woodcock flushing from the side of the road just before midnight for a total of 158.

Aidan Rominger, Nick Kiehl and I would like to thank our sponsors for donating this year. 



Team members:
Kristina and Logan
Lakins


plumage. After picking up the grassland species scattered throughout Goose Pond, we started our way towards Bloomington. The choice to chase the recently seen Clay-colored Sparrow on the IU campus proved to waste a large portion of the afternoon. We finished the day birding towards our house where we could refuel and head out the following morning. The rest of our 24 hours were completed at Eagle Creek Park to pick up as many warblers and woodland species as we could. The Birdquesters finished with 130 species which was a new record for the team. Thank you to our friends and donors and a major thank you to the other teams that continue to raise money for Indiana birds. 

Horned Grebes A Shorter Route, but Lots of Birds

By Ryan Sanderson

The Horned Grebes Birdathon team completed our Birdathon in a somewhat abbreviated route this year.

We started at 5:00 am with a drive over the Olio Road Bridge picking up Mute Swan in the dark, then headed to Eagle Creek Park adding a large number of warblers for the day. The highlight was a beautiful male Mourning Warbler at the skating pond. We headed south to Bloomington to get a few straggler woodland species, and then ended up our efforts at Goose Pond. Our last bird of the day was an American Woodcock flushing from the side of the road just before midnight for a total of 158.

Aidan Rominger, Nick Kiehl and I would like to thank our sponsors for donating this year. 

BirdQuesters A Wild Sparrow Chase

By Logan Lakins

For the 2021 ABAS Birdathon, the Birdquesters team was a dynamic duo. Kristina Lakins and I started our day by birding Goose Pond in the late morning sun. The Main Pool East provided mudflats littered with over 12 species of shorebirds highlighted by Black-bellied Plovers in breeding

2020 Birdathon Species List:

(geese, swans, ducks) Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck; (game birds) Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey; (grebes) Pied-billed Grebe; (cormorants) Double-crested Cormorant, Neotropic Cormorant; (herons) American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green Heron; (vultures) Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture; (hawks, kites, eagles) Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk; (falcons) American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon; (rails, gallinules) Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot; (plovers) Black-bellied Plover, American Golden Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer; (stilts, avocets) Black-necked Stilt; (sandpipers) Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, 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) Least Tern, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Forster's Tern; (pigeons, doves) Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared Dove, Mourning Dove; (cuckoos) Yellow-billed Cuckoo; (owls) Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl; (nightjars) Common Nighthawk, Chuck-wills-widow, Eastern Whip-poor-will; (swifts) Chimney Swift; (hummingbirds) Ruby-throated Hummingbird; (kingfishers) Belted Kingfisher; (woodpeckers) Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker; (flycatchers) Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, 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) Carolina Wren, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh 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; (waxwings) Cedar Waxwing; (warblers) Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat; (sparrows) Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow; (grosbeaks, buntings, tanagers) Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager; Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel; (blackbirds, orioles) Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole; (finches) Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch; (Old World sparrows) House Sparrow

Official combined count total of all teams: 198 species

- 162 **Wild Birds Unlimited:** Brian Cunningham, Rob Ripma, John Schaut
- 158 **Horned Grebes:** Nick Kiehl, Aidan Rominger, Ryan Sanderson
- 138 **Noddy Little Gulls:** Becky Hek, Bill Murphy, April Sterling, Laurie Voss
- 137 **Bud's & Carl's Legacy Team:** Keith Starling, Janet Tuten, Marty Williams
- 133 **Carbon Neutral:** David Benson, Wes Homoya, Jonathan Yoerger, Whitney Yoerger
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- 84 **Las Águilas Arpias:** Jeanette Frazier, Elcira Villarreal