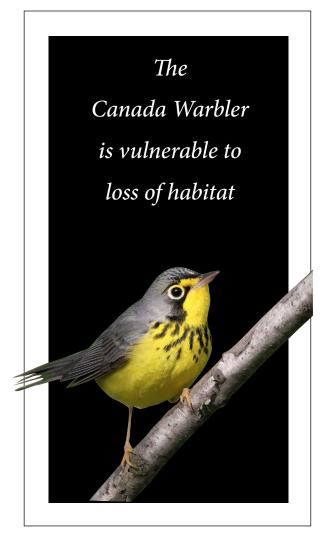


## 2022 BIRDATHON REPORT



# Thank You for Another Banner Year!

A fter having a record-breaking effort in 2021 for donations — \$32,518 from January 1 to June 30 — we figured we'd be hard pressed to come anywhere near that total in 2022. Thanks to loyal and generous donors like you, combined with outstanding efforts by our team members and volunteers, we came darned close. While not eclipsing last year's record, Birdathon 2022 very nearly matched it with \$32,151 in donations during the same period.

We had an ambitious goal of funding \$38,556 in grant requests. With your donations and a substantial carryover, we will fully fund all 10 grants. American Bird Conservancy will be able to continue its tradition of championing the Central Andes Birdscape in Colombia. Marian University and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful will add more bird-friendly habitat in Central Indiana. We are supporting research on why some birds are better than others in responding to climate change as well as the value of native versus cultivated plants for bird species.

With our grant to Central Indiana Land Trust, you will be able to watch a Bald Eagle nest online via a camera in Oliver's Woods. A custom-made table at Newfields' Ruth Lilly Visitors' Pavilion will enhance your birdwatching experiences. Thanks to the binoculars and scope available at Marott Woods and other local birding sites, more individuals will begin birdwatching. This summer, youngsters at Camp Utopia enjoyed another nature-focused, weeklong day camp.

The Noddy Little Gulls claimed top honors as both Fundraising Champs and Species Count Champs. Bud & Carl's Legacy team placed second in both categories. Be sure to read the tales of their Big Day events as well as those of our other 10 teams.

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	Munshower	
David & Linda Hamilton	Stephen & Susan Nawrocki	
Cara Hasselbeck	Polly Nicely	

#### Volunteers who raised Birdathon donations

\$1,000 or more	Greg Silver	Linda Bishop	\$100 to \$499
Mary Ellen Gadski	Keith Starling	Jeanette Frazier	Linda Bishop
Wendy Kindig	Janet Tuten	Barbara Jablonski	Logan Lakins
Jeremiah Oden	Laurie Voss	Wes Homoya	John Munshowe
Donna McCarty	\$500 to \$999	Matthew K.	Doug Sherow
Deb & Randy	Lou Anne Barriger	Marty Williams	Patti Steffen
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#### **Corporate Sponsor:**

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

#### **Special Contributors:**

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

# 1st-Place Fundraising and Species Count Champs: Noddy Little Gulls



Team members (l-r): Lou Anne Barriger, Wendy Kindig, Jeremiah Oden, and Laurie Voss

#### Owls, Shorebirds, and More

by Laurie Voss

When your first bird is an Eastern Screech Owl, you know your Birdathon adventure is going to be great. That doesn't begin to describe the fun that the Noddy Little Gulls team, comprised of Lou Anne Barriger, Wendy Kindig, Jeremiah Oden, and me, had this year. In past years, we have notoriously missed owls, but this year we had two, adding a Barred Owl about an hour later. What a great start at the Dunes State Park on May 16.

The next morning we had to work our way across the northern part of the state for our 21 species of warblers and other passerines. Then we traveled down to Kankakee Sands where the grassland birds and the mother-load of shorebirds awaited us. Unit E, which has a "scrape" in the middle of a prairie, produced 17 species of shorebirds. It was hard to leave that area but Willow Slough was calling us.

On our scouting trip the day before, we had seen Willets, a White-faced Ibis, and Cliff Swallows at that location. However, just one day later, the water was dried up and few birds were there, so we continued to Celery Bog.

Celery Bog was a big bust—we only saw one bird. We couldn't even get a Carolina Chickadee. As the sunlight was waning, we were feeling very discouraged until we got a call from Bill Sharkey, who asked us if we wanted to add a Ruff to our list. Jeremiah sailed us to the spot that was about a mile from his house. Flying out of the car and with the help of others who were there, we all were able to see the bird before it took off. It was a great way to cap off our day as we ended with 143 species.

We want to give a hearty thanks for the support of our sponsors who generously donate to the Birdathon. Your support and donations are the real reason we do this.

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



Team members: (l-r): Fred Wooley, Janet Tuten, Marty Williams, Patty Steffen, Matthew K., Keith Starling and Amanda Smith

#### The Best and Worst of Times

by Janet Tuten

It was the best of times (shorebirds), it was the worst of times (warblers). Isn't that always the way it works out?

We added some fresh faces to our team this year — some with experience, some young eyes/ears, and some help trying to keep our Facebook page up to date. Since additional people present more schedule conflicts, we went out a tad later than we usually do. We headed north to catch all those warblers that had already come through Central Indiana. I guess they made good time because they just kept going to Michigan and we missed a lot of them.

We spotted the Monk Parakeet this year! First we stopped where they were supposed to be, but no parakeets were to be found. We were already behind schedule but you still have to eat. So, while we were fixing sandwiches to eat in the car, we had a parakeet flyover. Can't beat that! Oh wait, we can. We managed to add Virginia Rail and Sora at that same location because, thankfully, Fred likes to tromp through any marshy, reedy ditch he can find.

There were lots of shorebirds at Kankakee Sands this year. It was hard to tear ourselves away. Matthew really shined. I asked him how he got so good at shorebirds so quickly. He answered: "I watch eBird and go to all the puddles."

Thank you to our generous donors and families and to the ABAS Birdathon Committee. Your support makes this event enjoyable and worthwhile. We'll see you at the puddles!

# **3rd-Place Fundraising Champs:** EcoLab Team



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

### Morning Birding Saves the Day

by David Benson

Team EcoLab, consisting of Chandler Roberts, Deb and Randy Patrick, and me, did its Big Day on Marian University's Indianapolis campus. We started the hot afternoon of May 9 hoping for migrant species but had little success. Deb Patrick achieved the best sighting of the day: a diurnal beaver that was patrolling the Jens Jensen pond.

The next morning, birding started slowly but steadily picked up pace as we sighted one warbler after another. We enjoyed Cape May, Wilson's, and Blackburnian warblers, plus a surprise Yellow-billed Cuckoo. And of course, our logo bird, the Green Heron, was a highlight. We capped off the day with a great view of a Cooper's Hawk, ending with 83 species. Not bad for a small property in the middle of the big city! Thanks to our donors for their support.

"We headed north to catch all those warblers that had already come through Central Indiana. I guess they made good time because they just kept going to Michigan and we missed a lot of them."

**Bud & Carl's Legacy Team** 



Team members (l-r): Maikel Wise, Dave Benson, and Wes Homoya

### Team Carbon Neutral Bidding for Birdathon Glory

by David Benson

CLook! An Eagle, a Hawk, a raptor, an Owl!" With that exclamation. I knew we had done

well recruiting our newest team member, Maikel Wise, to join Wesley Homoya and me on team Carbon Neutral for our May 16-17 bid for Birdathon glory. Although the bird turned out to be a single, rare, daytime sighting of a Barred Owl, the possibilities were nearly endless! It's that sense of hope and optimism that becomes crucial as the miles build on sleep-deprived legs. And so it was Maikel who convinced us to go after, and succeed in finding, a reported Connecticut and Mourning warbler combo on a very slow morning in Eagle Creek Park.

It was a difficult 24 hours all around with very little shorebird habitat, zero gulls, almost no water birds, and few migrant flocks. However, thanks to Wesley's incredible ears and magic ability to make new species appear one by one (Blue Grosbeak, Broad-winged Hawk, Bobolink), we managed to rack up an impressive total of 126 species on our 45-mile pedal pursuit. We thank all our donors for their generous support.

# **Team Bishop Best Numbers Posted by Pedometer**



Team members: Linda and Mike Bishop

by Michael and Linda Bishop

On May 12, our Birdathon list began with a Barred Owl calling from the yard shortly after midnight. After a night's sleep, we started our trek at Fort Harrison State Park and quickly realized it was an apprentiably making it to 88

unseasonably warm day — eventually making it to 88 degrees. Bird activity was very low, though we picked up a few birds, highlighted by Louisiana Waterthrush and Blue Grosbeak. We tromped through Ritchey Woods, adding only Willow Flycatcher to the tally. Our next stop was Eagle Creek Park where we added a few species to the list, including a Red-breasted Merganser near the dam. Starkey Park in Zionsville added Tennessee Warbler and Belted Kingfisher. After an unproductive visit to Oak Hill Cemetery in Lebanon, a drive through the country on the way back to

Indianapolis added American Kestrel, Eastern Meadowlark, and Common Nighthawk. In the end, we counted only 92 bird species, but our best numbers of the day were from the pedometer — we tallied over 10 miles walking! Many thanks to our sponsors for their generous support, and Amos Butler Audubon Society for promoting bird conservation.



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

### Las Aguilas Harpias Traveling from Afar To Bird Locally

by Jeanette Frazier

Having just returned from South Africa, we wanted to get out to see some

Indiana birds and spring migration activity. Staying local, we visited Eagle Creek Park where we managed only a few warblers, though we enjoyed our familiar stomping grounds. It was especially rewarding to listen to a singing Kentucky Warbler on the North Loop Trail.

We enjoyed a delicious lunch at The Loft before working our way home to Hendricks County.



Team members: Logan and Kristina Lakins

### The Birdquesters Kristina's Two-Lifer Day

by Logan Lakins

The Birdquesters continued their run as a two-person team to end with their highest personal total to date, 131 species. Starting at Cane Ridge, Kristina and I hoped to find a Piping Plover that had recently been seen. There was no Piping Plover, though we did add an unexpected

Willet to our list. Our next stop was at Goose Pond, where we spent the evening watching Black Terns and Least Terns fly over our heads. Later that night after the storms passed, we were treated to a singing Chuck-will's-widow and a Barn Owl, which was a lifer for both of us. The last portion of our day was spent at Eagle Creek Park and Sodalis Nature Park where we searched for as many warblers and forest species as we could find. Big thanks to Scott Enochs who got us on a singing Connecticut Warbler, which was Kristina's second lifer of our trip. Once again, thank you to all our family and friends who donated and a bigger thanks to the rest of the teams that continue to raise money for Indiana birds.

# **Brownsburg Railsitters The Best Birding Bridge in Brownsburg**

by Wesley Homoya



Team members (l-r): Mike Homoya, Barb Homoya and Wes Homoya. Photo taken while birding on a Natural Selections tour led by Wes in Trinidad and Tobago.

After breaking our own record four years running, we knew repeating the feat this year would be tough. When we checked our calendars and discovered we'd have to do our Big Sit on May 21 this year, we were pretty confident we'd struggle to find enough lingering, leftover migrants. Boy, were we right!

Posting a meager 60 on the species checklist, we nevertheless had an awesome time on "The Best Birding Bridge in Brownsburg," enjoying the birds and showing a few of them to fellow trail users. A caterpillar-feasting Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a local Barred Owl being mobbed by angry corvids, and a particularly boisterous Acadian Flycatcher (all at eye-level or below as is typical at this spot), were a few of our favorite memories. A big thank-you to all of the wonderful people out there supporting the Birdathon with us.



Team members (l-r): Heather McNamee, Stephen Nawrocki, Susan Nawrocki, and Jenna McElrov

### Team Nawrocki Retracing Our Route

by Stephen Nawrocki

Team Nawrocki (Stephen, Susan, Jenna, and Heather) conducted its 2022 Birdathon on May 16, exactly one week earlier than we had in 2021. Because we saw no migrants

last year, we thought we would try an informal experiment: we would re-trace our exact route from 2021 and see how this one-week difference would affect our migrant count. Like last year, our first bird was a Great-horned Owl calling before dawn at our Greenwood home. We then hit Lingle Road in Morgan County, proceeded to McCormick's Creek State Park, and then to Goose Pond and Green-Sullivan State Forest for the rest of the day and early evening.

The weather was beautiful except for strong and continual winds from the west, which unfortunately served to put down the birds. As a result, we only picked up one migrant warbler,

but we were luckier with shorebirds (seven migrants, including a flock of around 40 Hudsonian Godwits at the East Pool—a lifer for all of us!) We missed the fairly reliable Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows at Goose Pond but saw a migrant Vesper Sparrow and an Alder Flycatcher.

Once again, we finished the day with a Nighthawk circling the lights in Linton, bookending our 2022 effort in déjà-vu fashion. Overall, we recorded 108 species, 16 of which were migrants—a better tally than the 97 species and no migrants last year. Thanks to all of our donors!



Team members (l-r): Becky McClain, Wesley Homoya, Ben Miller and Maggie Miller

### Mud Creek Creepers The Creepers Find a Creeper

by Wesley Homoya

The Mud Creek Creepers scored a "Perfect 50" on our inaugural run. When we

realized that the only dates we could do were May 27/28, we knew we would be likely to get mostly a "breeding bird baseline." The only non-breeding migrant we had tallied was our final species, a single, lingering Swainson's Thrush (found by new birder Becky McClain). One of the other biggest highlights was confirming a probable nesting Brown Creeper on the property! Presumably, the bird was on territory due to the late date and presence of a singing male in appropriate habitat. We also noted nesting kingfishers and Louisiana Waterthrush. And we saw them all from the patio/yard/hot tub! Thank you to all our sponsors.



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

### Wild Birds Unlimited Not Bad for a Rainy Day

by John Schaust

You would think a three-person team would have an easy time

picking a Birdathon Day, but for Brian, Rob and myself, May 18 was the only day we could all match on our calendars. Come rain or shine, we were committed to spending the day combing Central Indiana to build our Big Day list.

The overcast day started around 7:00 am at the Eagle Creek Marina. It would be an understatement to say that the next two hours were nothing short of amazing. The marina lived up to its reputation as we tallied 75 species including 18 warblers along with multiple thrushes, vireos, woodpeckers, and flycatchers.

The remainder of the morning found us birding many of the other Eagle Creek hotspots. The Ice Skating Pond was alive with new species and we added four new warblers. By noon, our tally stood at 103 species.

Not a bad morning, and our hopes were high for an equally productive afternoon. But then Mother Nature had other plans. The overcast skies darkened, and torrential rains followed. After a quick run up to a flooded field near Sheridan, which added eight new species, we decided to call it a day.

Despite the weather, our team had a great day and we would like to thank our families for their unquestioned support of our passion for birding. A special thank-you to all our wonderful donors. We truly appreciate your support for our team and the important projects funded by the Amos Butler Audubon Society Birdathon.

# Community Hospital 20 Warbler Species for the Day



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

by Doug Sherow

Our 2022 Big Day of Birding got off to a slow start several days after we had originally planned. This was due to a shoulder injury, which occurred the week before. As a result, the members of the Community Hospital Team set out on its trek on Monday, May 9, at less than 100% capacity. With my left

arm in a sling, I was unable to hold binoculars. However, I was able to be the scribe for our journey.

Our day began at Eagle Creek Park, finding Purple Martins at the Marina. We also saw a good number of songbirds in the park, including several warbler species, eventually tallying 20 species for the day. From Eagle Creek we headed southwest through Morgan County, where we had lots of passerines, warblers, orioles and even a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We also spotted a Wild Turkey on this part of our trek.

Further southwest we stopped at a bridge across the White River where we found a large colony of Cliff Swallows. On other parts of White River bottomlands, we did not do so well due to the water levels.

Onward to Goose Pond where we found Bell's Vireos, Northern Bobwhite, Bobolink, Dickcissels and Blacknecked Stilts.

We headed back to Indy, stopping at an Osprey nest on our return to Eagle Creek Park. After our 270+-mile trip we finished around 4:30 pm. Our weather was pleasant all day, but water levels were high everywhere and resulted in fewer shorebirds, as well as waterfowl. Regardless, we all had a great time as usual.

#### 2022 Birdathon Species List:

(geese, swans, ducks) Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser; (game birds) Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey: (grebes) Pied-billed Grebe; (cormorants) Double-crested Cormorant; (herons) Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron; (vultures) Turkey Vulture; (hawks, kites, eagles) Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk; (falcons) American Kestrel; (rails, gallinules) Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot; (cranes) Sandhill Crane; (plovers) Black-bellied Plover, American Golden Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer; (stilts, avocets) Black-necked Stilt; (sandpipers) Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, Ruff, Short-billed Dowitcher, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope; (gulls) Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull; (terns) Least Tern, Caspian Tern, Black Tern; (pigeons, doves, parrots) Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collard Dove, Mourning Dove, Monk Parakeet; (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) Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flucatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird; (vireos) White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo; (jays, crows) Blue Jay, American 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) White-breasted Nuthatch; (creepers) Brown Creeper: (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; (mimics) Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher; (starlings) European Starling; (pipits) American Pipit; (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, 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-andwhite Warbler, American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat; (sparrows) Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song 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, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, 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: 185 species

- 143 Noddy Little Gulls: Laurie Voss, Lou Anne Barriger, Wendy Kindig, Jeramiah Oden
- 137 **Bud's & Carl's Legacy Team:** Matthew K., Keith Starling, Patty Steffen, Janet Tuten, Marty Williams, Fred Wooley
- 131 BirdQuesters: Logan Lakins, Kristina Lakins
- 126 Carbon Neutral: Dave Benson, Wes Homoya, Miakel Wise
- 111 Wild Birds Unlimited: Brian Cunningham, Rob Ripma, John Schaust
- 108 Team Nawrocki: Jenna McElroy, Heather McNamee, Barbara and Stephen Nawrocki
- 106 Community Hospital Team: John Munshower, Doug Sherow, Greg Steffen
- 92 Team Bishop: Mike and Linda Bishop
- 83 EcoLab Team: David Benson, Debbie Patrick, Randy Patrick, Chandler Roberts
- 63 Las Águilas Harpîas: Jeanette Frazier, Elcira Villarreal
- **Brownsburg Railsitters:** Barbara Homoya, Mike Homoya, Wes Homoya
- 50 Mud Creek Creepers: Wes Homoya, Becky McClain, Ben Miller