



INDIANA AUDUBON QUARTERLY
VOL. 95, NO. 3. AUGUST 2017

Spring 2017, page 1

INDIANA AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

Founded 1898

Incorporated 1939

OFFICERS

President.....	Jeff Canada	president@indianaaudubon.org
Vice President.....	Ryan Slack	vp@indianaaudubon.org
Past President.....	Amy Wilms	wilmsab@indianaaudubon.org
Secretary.....	Kim Ehn	kmehn@comcast.net
Treasurer.....	Sally Routh	treasurer@indianaaudubon.org
Editor Cardinal (Director).....	John Lindsey	birdindiana@gmail.com
Webmaster.....	Amy Wilms	wilmsab@indianaaudubon.org

DIRECTORS

Term Expires 2017

John Lindsey
Michael Hall
John Velasquez

Term Expires 2018

Amy Kearns
Kim Ehn

Term Expires 2019

Kristin Stratton
Mark Welter
Shari McCollough

FIELD NOTE/COUNT EDITORS/BIRD RECORDS CHAIR

Editor Quarterly.....	Brad Bumgardner	bumgbj01@hotmail.com
Field Note Editor (Spring).....	Bob Carper	bobngc2157@yahoo.com
Field Note Editor (Summer).....	Ken Brock	kj.brock@comcast.net
Field Note Editor (Fall).....	Kim Ehn	kmehn@comcast.net
Field Note Editor (Winter).....		Open
May Bird Count and Final Edit Editor.....	Matt Kalwasinski	mattkalwassinski@yahoo.com
Summer Bird Count Editor.....	Amy Kearns	akearns@dnr.in.gov
Winter Feeder Count Editor.....	John Castrale	jsascastrale@gmail.com
Christmas Count Editors.....	Jeff Canada	jeffcanada3@yahoo.com
Indiana Bird Records Committee.....	Kirk Roth	rothkirk@hotmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Brad Bumgardner

TRUSTEES OF THE MARY GRAY/DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Karen Henman

Sally Routh

Open

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Sally Routh (Chairperson) Amy Wilms

PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY (LIVING)

Susanna Arvin
John F. Branham
Thomas Brinduse
Kathleen Hoover
Dr. Russel Mumford
Jane Miller

Sallie Potter
Karen Henman
Edward Hopkins
Paul Steffen
Rebecca Lewis
Amy Wilms

Thomas Potter
Alan W. Bruner
Marge Riemenschneider
Gerald Dryer
Carl Wilms
Brad Bumgardner

INDIANA AUDUBON QUARTERLY
 (Formerly the Indiana Audubon Society Yearbook)
 Published in February, May, August and November by
 The Indiana Audubon Society, Inc.
Editor's Address: 85 Old Hickory Lane, Valparaiso, IN 46385
Email: bbumgardner@indianaaudubon.org
Visit our website at www.indianaaudubon.org

Vol. 95, No. 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUGUST 2017

Letter from the Executive Director
 Brad Bumgardner.....4

A New Hybrid Gull for Michigan City
 Kenneth J. Brock.....5

Spring 2017 Indiana Field Notes
 Bob Carper.....10

Jane Brooks Hine: An Indiana Bird Woman
 Terri Gorney.....15

Indiana Audubon Black Hills Trip Report
 Brad Bumgardner.....20

Cover photo: Juvenile Long-eared Owl on private farm, *Lagrange County*, 28 June 2017. Photo by Sam Plew.

Back cover photo: Mississippi Kites in West Lafayette, *Tippecanoe County*, 14 May 2017. Photo by Jeff Timmons.

CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE INDIANA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Life Membership	\$675.00	Individual	\$30.00
Cardinal Club	\$100.00	Library (subscription only)	\$30.00
Contributing	\$50.00	Student (full-time only)	\$20.00
Family	\$35.00	Single issues	\$6.00

Membership fees may be sent to: Sally Routh, 12284 Daugherty Dr., Zionsville IN 46077

Letter from the Executive Director

Welcome to the latest issue of the Indiana Audubon Quarterly. For this issue, I take on both the editor role, but also as the Society's first Executive Director. As a longtime member (and certainly not as long as many of you!) I'm excited to see IAS take off in this new direction. I think there is a lot of promise and potential with IAS that everyone is a part of. While so much of the on the ground action occurs within the National chapters, IAS has a niche we can fill on the statewide level.



We're at a crossroads to find the right balance between leading the way in the state for bird conservation, as well as promoting the current work of the Society while not spreading the volunteer base of the Society to thin or to exhaust existing volunteer help. Despite being the largest and most well-known Audubon group in the state, our Society has minimal presence at state birding festivals and events. Many members haven't even seen our great sanctuary in Connersville.

The Society has benefited from strong and active leadership with a desire to see change and new ideas. Capitalizing on this momentum is paramount for IAS. The board and executive committee recognize the value of the Society, its role, and the role of the sanctuary. A challenge presents itself in getting the membership (and non-members) to develop interests for the stewardship of the Society as well.

I think we must continue to network the members. These members cover a vast area that is Indiana. The membership is stretched and covers all four corners of the state. We need to create more partnerships, while not appearing cliquish.

All of these things must be accomplished within tight fiscal and social realities that constitute the operating environment in which we exist. Above all else, we want to be certain that the effect of our efforts will be continued many years beyond the current board membership. I ask that and all members consider dropping me a note. Let me know what you want to see out of Indiana Audubon Society. Perhaps tell me what you see that we're doing well. Give me your ideas, and let's work together for a stronger society that meets our shared conservation and education goals.

I thank everyone for casting a vote in favor of change and allowing me to help in meeting our vision. I see a great future for our great organization!

Brad Bumgardner
IAS Executive Director

A New Hybrid Gull for Michigan City Harbor

Kenneth J. Brock, Chesterton, IN
kj.brock@comcast.net

Suddenly, John Cassady yelled, “what’s that dark-backed gull?” A group of birders were focused on a swirling flock of gulls that were actively feeding along the beach at Michigan City Harbor on the afternoon of 3 December 2016. The observers included: Matthew Beatty, Mike Bourdon, John K. Cassady, Ryan Hamilton, Nick Kiehl, Ryan J. Sanderson, Mike Maxwell, Jeffrey J. McCoy, Randy J. Pals, Michael A. Topp, Lynn H. Vernon, and the author. Following John’s alert I got on this small gull and immediately pegged it as an adult Franklin’s Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) see Fig. 1. John K. Cassady’s website contains additional photos of the Michigan City Bird.



Fig. 1. A flight shot of the Michigan City Harbor hybrid gull on 3 December 2016. Note the pale head markings and the single small “mirror” on the outer most primary. Photo By John K. Cassady.

Upon closer study, however, a number of features were not right for Franklin’s. For one thing the mantle, which was only a half-shade darker than nearby “Ringers,” was too light. Also the white band that separates the black primaries from the gray upperwing on adult Franklin’s was absent (Fig.1). the dark patch behind the eye was also much paler than one would expect for *Larus pipixcan*. A quick discussion led to the conclusion that the bird must be a hybrid, perhaps a Franklin’s X Ring-billed Gull. As none of the half-dozen birders present had ever heard of that particular hybrid combination, everyone present with a camera focused (no pun intended) on obtaining documentation photos.



Fig. 2. The “Colonel” in breeding plumage at the Kentucky Fried Chicken parking lot (Chicago) on 25 March 2010. The mantle tint is intermediate between Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls and the hood is gray rather than black. Photo by Amar Ayyash.

During the observation Ryan Sanderson fired a photo of the hybrid off to Amar Ayyash, the Midwest’s recognized gull authority. Based on the photo, Amar, who was in Wisconsin at the time, quickly identified the bird as a Laughing Gull X Ring-billed Gull hybrid. It turns out that Amar has had extensive experience with this hybrid, as he had photographed it in Chicago and in N.W. Indiana on numerous occasions. Indeed, Amar christened this hybrid the “Colonel,” based on its preference for a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) parking lot, which was its frequent hangout (Fig. 2).

Historical Background

Beginning in the early 2000s an adult Laughing was frequently observed at a McDonald's on the Illinois side of State Line Road adjacent to Hammond. This McDonalds is directly across E106th Street from the above-mentioned KFC. On 6 July 2002 Jeffrey J. McCoy actually coaxed this bird across the state line into Indiana by offering it a few McDonalds' fries. According to Walter J. Marcisz, birder Margaret Baker had a second-hand report of an adult Laughing Gull copulating with a Ring-billed Gull at the afore mentioned Kentucky Fried Chicken parking lot on 30 April 2002. Clearly an adult Laughing Gull regularly summered along the state line in extreme N.W. Indiana and Chicago's south side in the early 2000s.



Fig. 3. This is Indiana's first photograph of the "Colonel"; it was taken on the Hammond Sanctuary Beach 5 Mar 2011 by Michael Topp.

The first local report of a hybrid occurred at the KFC lot in spring 2001 and was documented by Walter Marsicz and Tadas Birutis (Amar Ayyash personal comm.). According to Amar this individual was in first-cycle plumage. The identification of this hybrid's parents was strengthened when the USDA Wildlife Service photographed an adult Laughing Gull on a nest in a Ring-billed colony at Lake Calumet in June 2007. This site is about four miles west of the Indiana state line. The nest contained one egg and constituted Illinois's first breeding record for the Laughing Gull (*Meadowlark*, A Journal of Illinois Birds, Volume 17, Number 1- *fide* Walter Marcisz). However, reports of hybrids prior to 2007 clearly indicates that nesting also occurred earlier.



Fig. 4. The "Colonel" and its mate at Calumet Park, IL on 14 April 2012 (Amar 2012). Compare the bird's size and mantle tint with the Ring-billed Gull. Interestingly, the pair was observed copulating, revealing that the Colonel was in fact a female—oops. Photo by Amar Ayyash.

John C. Kendall logged Indiana's first report of this hybrid at the Hammond Sanctuary (located about 0.5 miles east of KFC) on 3 March 2008. Additional Indiana reports occurred in 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, all were in northwest Hammond. On 5 March 2011 Michael A. Topp obtained Indiana's first photograph of the "Colonel" (Fig. 3). The Michigan City Harbor hybrid constitutes the first lakefront record away from areas adjacent to the Indiana-Illinois state line.

The “Colonel” In alternate plumage the “Colonel” is superficially similar to a Laughing Gull. Compared to a pure Laughing Gull it is larger (about the size of a Ring-billed Gull as seen in Fig. 4.), has a paler mantle tint, a gray hood (paler around the eye), and orange (rather than black legs). Amar observed the birds shown in Fig. 4 copulating, revealing that the “Colonel” was in fact a female, as the male Ring-billed mounted her several times. Ayyash (2010) also heard the bird vocalize and described the sound as similar to a “nasally Ring-billed.” A photo of the bird in basic plumage appears in Ayyash (2016) and is illustrated in Fig 6. Amar also believes that more than one hybrid has occurred in the Chicago area (personal comm.).



Fig. 5. The “Colonel” in flight at Calumet Park, IL on 11 March 2011. Note that the primary pattern, especially the mirror on p10, matches that of the Michigan City bird shown in Fig. 1. Photo by Amar Ayyash.



Fig. 6. A 21 August 2016 photo of the “Colonel” in winter plumage. A flight shot taken at this time revealed that the bird was still molting its primaries. Amar Ayyash took the picture at Calumet Park, IL.



Fig. 7. The Michigan City hybrid (right) with a Ring-billed Gull showing the smaller size of the hybrid. Photo by the author.

The Michigan City Bird

As it was smaller and paler mantled than the “Colonel”, the Michigan City hybrid was clearly a different individual. Based primarily on its smaller size, the latter was initially called a Franklin’s X Ring-billed hybrid. The conclusion that the parents were in fact Laughing and Ring-billed gulls relies heavily on the well-documented occurrence of Laughing X Ring-billed hybrids on southern Lake Michigan and the primary pattern. The wingtip pattern of the Michigan City bird is basically that of a Laughing Gull with an added mirror on the outermost primary (p10). Note also that the primary pattern of the Michigan City bird shown in Fig 1, is virtually identical to that of the “Colonel” shown in Fig. 5.

Additionally, the photograph of a hybrid that is strikingly similar to the “Colonel” appears in Howell and Dunn (2007) on page 14. This photo, which was taken on the shores of Lake Michigan at Two Rivers, Wisconsin reinforces the parentage of this hybrid, as Howell and Dunn refer to the Wisconsin bird as a Laughing X Ring-billed hybrid.

Although there is no physical evidence to support this contention, the paler mantle raises the possibility that the Michigan City hybrid was in fact a backcross between the “Colonel” and a Ring-billed Gull (i.e., an F2 hybrid).

In the birding world it is always inspiring to find something new. This fascinating hybrid certainly elevated the spirits of all present on that chilly December day.

Acknowledgment

The author is indebted to Amar Ayyash who provided extensive background material and photographs for this report. Amar also reviewed an early draft and offered suggestions that greatly improved the article.



Fig. 8. Close up view of the Michigan City hybrid. Note the similarity to the basic-plumed “Colonel” shown in Fig. 6. Photo by the author.

References Cited

Ayyash, Amar (2010) A Laughing Ring-billed Gull, *Anything Larus*, <http://www.anythinglarus.com/2010/03/laughing-ring-billed-gull.html>

Ayyash, Amar (2012) Laughing and Ring-billed Paired Up, Illinois Birders' Forum 16 April 2012. <file://localhost/Users/kennethbrock/Desktop/LAXR%20article/Laughing%20x%20Ring-billed%20Paired%20Up2.html>

Ayyash, Amar (August 2016) The "Colonel" Lives, *Anything Larus*, <https://goo.gl/ZwFCID>

Cassady, John K., John Cassidy's Gallery of Bird Photographs and Artwork <http://jkcassady.com/gallery/rbguX.htm>

Howell, Steve N.G. and Jon Dunn (2007) *Gulls of the Americas*, Houghton Mifflin, New York, NY, 516pp.

Spring Indiana Field Notes 2017

Bob Carper, Spring Field Notes Editor

bobngc2157@yahoo.com

Weather

March was not record setting like February but was warmer than usual. The month was wetter than normal and generated more snow than February. March state average temperature was 42.1°F which is 1.4°F above normal. This ties 2003 as the 37th warmest March on record. March state precipitation averaged 4.15” which is 0.75” above normal and the 40th wettest March since 1895.

Regionally March 2017 precipitation totaled to near 140% of normal across northern Indiana, 130% in central counties, and 110% of normal in the south. Normal March precipitation ranges from 2.7” in northeast Indiana to 4.2” in the southwest corner of the state.

April was a very warm and wet month in Indiana, nearly setting a new monthly temperature record. The snow season ended in early April. The April state average temperature was 57.3°F. This is 6.0°F above normal and ties 2010 as the 2nd warmest April on record. April state precipitation averaged 4.81” which is 0.87” above normal and ties 1984 as the 30th wettest April since 1895.

Regionally April 2017 precipitation totaled to near 120% of normal across northern and southern Indiana and 130% of normal in central counties. Normal April precipitation ranges from 3.5” in northeast Indiana to 4.5” in the southwest corner of the state.

May was yet another active weather month with 11 days of severe weather. The May state average temperature was 61.3°F which is 0.7°F below normal. This ranks as the 55th coolest May on record. May state precipitation averaged 6.94” which is 2.54” above normal, making it the 12th wettest May on record since 1895.

Regionally April 2017 precipitation totaled nearly 170% of normal across northern Indiana, 180% in the central part of the state, and 130% of normal in the south. Normal May precipitation ranges from 3.8” in northeast Indiana to 5.0” in the south-central section of the state.

Weather info from <https://iclimate.org/weather-summaries/>

First a note of thanks to Jim Haw for submitting reports the few years I've been doing the Spring Field Notes. I never met Jim but always looked forward to his reports. As I read on IN-Bird he will be missed.

I'd also like to thank Michael Brown who took the time to submit photos. And especially to Ken Brock (KB) for once again allowing me to use his **INDIANA BIRD REPORT: SPRING 2017**.

Recap/Highlights

As Ken Brock noted in his report the takeaway of the spring 2017 birding season is waterbirds apparently headed north early, resulting in diminished numbers for the season. In contrast, landbirds arrived early and were unusually plentiful with many record counts.

As noted in the weather section above the unusually warm weather appears to have stimulated most waterbirds to move north earlier than normal. This affect is most apparent for the waterfowl and gulls.

The highlight of the season was Indiana's **Golden-crowned Sparrow** discovered on 16 April at the feeder of Indianapolis birders Annie Aguirre and Tanner Troyer.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Black-bellied Whistling Duck – A singleton was found at Goose Pond, *Greene* (several people) on 29 April. A stunning flock of 20 was found at a private residence in *Boone*, (Lisa Burr) on 15 May. The latter report almost doubled Indiana's previous maximum count of eleven. An additional six were reported at a golf course pond in Terre Haute, *Vigo* (Jim Sullivan) on 20 May. KB

Cinnamon Teal – One was reported from Goose Pond, *Greene*, (Michael Brown) 4 Apr.

American White Pelican - It was another good spring for this species with 9595 reported. Numbers peaked in early March with 1000 reported at Goose Pond, *Greene* (Chuck Lunsford) KB.

Double-crested Cormorant - On 23 May Allisyn-Marie Gillet List and Amy Kearns surveyed the large nesting colony on the East Chicago Lakefront, *Lake*. They counted 6500 individuals (excluding chicks) and 3250 nests. KB

Neotropic Cormorant - An immature was found at Eagle Creek Park, *Marion* (Aidan Rominger) 3 Apr. Jim and Susan Hengeveld photographed an adult at Lake Lemon, *Brown* 15 Apr. The latter is a first county record. On 14 May another bird appeared at the Hengeveld's.

Great Egret - It was a record spring for this egret. On 23 May Allisyn-Marie Gillet List and Amy Kearns surveyed the large nesting colony on the East Chicago Lakefront, *Lake*. They counted 266 adults (excluding chicks) and 133 nests. KB

Little Blue Heron - An adult was found at Kingsbury FWA on 6 May (John K. Cassady & mob). KB And a single was found at Muscatatuck NWR, *Jennings* (Dan Kaiser) 2 May.

Cattle Egret - It was the best spring for this small egret since the big invasion of 1996. Reports came from eleven counties, but were concentrated in the southern tier. The peak count was 14 logged in *Pike*, (Jeremy Ross) 12 May. KB

Black-crowned Night-Heron - A DNR survey of the large colony at the Arcelor Mittal Steel plant in East Chicago, *Lake* (Allisyn-Marie Gillet List & Amy Kearns), yielded 178 adults and 88 nests. KB

Glossy Ibis – One was discovered at Kingsbury FWA, *LaPorte* (Jeffrey J. McCoy and John K. Cassady) 20 May. Two were later seen at the same site.

White-faced Ibis - First seen as three unidentified *Plegadis* ibis flying over Goose Pond, *Greene*, on 6 April (Travis Stoelting), the birds were relocated and identified on Apr 10 (Amy Kearns and Gary Langell).



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks in Terre Haute (Vigo Co.). Photo by John Lindsey.



Glossy Ibis at Kingsbury FWA, Laporte Co. on May 20. Photo by Jeff McCoy.

Michael R. Brown photographed a single alternate bird on the Graysville bottoms on 30 May.

Pacific Loon – One was found at Lake Lemon, *Greene*, (Amy Kearns) 6 May

Red-necked Grebe - One was among several Horned Grebes on Adams Lake, *LaGrange* (Sam Plew) 11 Mar FB.

Golden Eagle - There was an adult circling low over the fields east of Bloomington, *Monroe* (Todd Elliott) 1 Mar.

Osprey – One was found at Potato Creek S.P., *St. Joseph*, (Bob Huguenard) on 6 Mar providing the second earliest record for the northern tier. KB

Swainson's Hawk - A light-morph adult flew past the Dunes S.P. Green Tower, Porter (Many) on 26 Apr KB.

Yellow Rail – One was flushed at the Mississinewa Reservoir Spillway, *Miami*, (John C. Kendall) 21 Apr

King Rail – One found at Muscatatuck NWR, *Jennings* (Dan Kaiser) 3 May.

Shorebirds - Mediocre is the appropriate descriptor for the 2017 spring shorebird flight. Thirty species were reported, several of which appeared in very low numbers. The poorest showing was made by Western Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope, both of which went unreported. In contrast, record spring numbers were logged by Long-billed Dowitcher, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Willet. KB

Willet - It was an unprecedented spring for this migrant, as the season total exceeded the next highest spring total by almost 100 birds. KB. Flocks of 33 birds were reported at both Driftwood FWA, *Johnson* (Don Gorney) and at Summit Lake, *Henry* (Kamal Islam & ornithology class). 27 Apr

Ruddy Turnstone – A flock of 25 were found in *Hancock* (Adam and Sarah Wilson) 20 May. KB

Red Knot – A single bird was found in *Gibson*, (Amy Kearns) 3 May. This was the southern tier's first spring record ever and Indiana's first spring report since 1999. KB

Ruff -At least three females were reported, all in the southern tier. The first appeared at Goose Pond FWA, *Greene* (Jeffrey J. McCoy) Apr. 14. The second was at Cane Ridge, *Gibson* (Amy Kearns) Apr 18, and a third in *Warrick*, (James H. Campbell) 30 Apr.

Red Knot – One was reported in *Gibson*, (Bob Decker) 3 May

Piping Plover - One was discovered at Goose Pond, *Greene* (Bob Decker) Apr 17

Hudsonian Godwit – Two birds were reported. One at the Wabash Floodplain Fields, *Vigo* (Peter Scott) 20 Apr and at Grant Street Marsh, *Lake* (Rick Welton) 13 May



White-faced Ibis in Graysville Bottoms, Sullivan Co., May 30. Photo by Michael Brown.



Willet at Goose Pond, Greene Co. Photo by Michael Brown.



Ruff at Goose Pond, FWA (Greene Co.) on April 14. Photo by Michael Brown.

Gulls - The season was exceedingly poor. The Arctic breeders were down significantly. A 23 May DNR survey of the Arcelor Mittal Steel plant on the East Chicago lakefront, *Lake*, yielded an estimated 35,000 Ring-billeds and 200 Herring Gulls. KB

Laughing Gull - The eight birds reported this season ties the all-time high spring count set back in 2001. The season's maximum tally began when a singleton on Fall Creek Trail at Geist Dam, *Marion* (Nick Kiehl) 6 May. Following up on the report two days later 3 alternate adults were found at the same site. (Don Gorney and Aidan Rominger) And a lone bird was found at Michigan City Harbor, *LaPorte* (Brendan Grube) 30 April KB

Western Kingbird – The all-time early state arrival date was set when a bird was spotted in *Pike*, (Jeremy Ross) 27 Apr KB

Fish Crow - Arrived early this year with a new early date at Howell Wetland, *Vanderburgh* (Bob Meier) 28 Feb KB.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow - Another new early arrival date for Indiana was set on 9 Mar with one photographed in southern *LaPorte* (Eric Michael). The state's next earliest spring record is 21 March. KB

Carolina Wren - This spring's total exceeded last year's record by almost 600 birds. It was clearly an excellent spring. KB

Townsend's Solitaire - The bird that wintered at the old Perkinsville Cemetery, *Madison*, lingered until 4 April (Lois Rockhill), providing Indiana's third latest spring record. KB

Smith's Longspur - The spring total was the lowest in four years. KB

Ovenbird - Although several winter records exist, a 4 Apr bird documented at Goshen, *Elkhart* (Annie Aguirre), tied Indiana's earliest spring date. KB

Worm-eating Warbler - An early arrival date for the state was set with one found in the Metocinah Creek Area, *Wabash* (Conrad Harstine and Debby Vincent) 2 Apr. The next earliest date was 7 Apr. KB

Prothonotary Warbler - It was a record spring for this striking warbler. Indeed the Prothonotary spring totals have progressively increased annually since 2012. KB

Swainson's Warbler - Indiana's fifth was reported in Harmonie S.P., *Posey* (John Meredig) 22 May. This is the state's first report since 2011. KB This record is pending documentation to the Indiana Bird Records Committee.

Blackpoll Warbler - Surprisingly, early-date record-tying males were observed on opposite ends of the state on 15 Apr. A singing male at Indian Creek Trail, *Harrison* (The four Ransdells - (Christine, Eden, Samantha, & Taylor) and an alternate-plumed male at a *LaPorte* feeder, (Eva Groth) KB



Townsend's Solitaire at Perkinsville Cemetery, Madison Co. Photo by Michael Brown.

Nelson's Sparrow – The only report was a singing bird at Willow Slough, *Newton* (Jeffrey J. McCoy) 20 May. This only Indiana's second reported singing record. KB

Harris's Sparrow - The only report consisted of one seen briefly in the Vigo County Bottoms, *Vigo* (Steve Lima) on 23 Apr. KB

Golden-crowned Sparrow – The state's first was discovered at an Indianapolis feeder, *Marion* (Annie Aguirre and Tanner Troyer) 16 Apr. If accepted by the Birds Record Committee it will constitute Indiana's first record. The bird lingered until at least the 18th and was seen by more than

77 birders thanks to the extremely generous homeowners. Scores also photographed this handsome visitor from the Western U.S. KB



Nelson's Sparrow at Willow Slough FWA, Newton Co. on May 20. Photo by John Cassady.



First state record Golden-crowned Sparrow in Indianapolis, Marion Co. Photo taken April 17, by Aiden Rominger.

Yellow-headed

Blackbird - The Grant Street Wetland, *Lake*, male returned on 22 Apr and remained through May (Michael A. Topp). An adult male was reported in *Orange* (Amy Kearns) 10 May. And a lone bird was reported in SW *Allen*, (Rodger Rang) 29 Apr

Brewer's Blackbird - It was a record season with some 264 reported. KB

Winter Finches - Among the nonpermanent residents only the Purple Finch was reported in above normal numbers. The Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin were exceptionally rare and crossbills and Evening were entirely absent. KB

Jane Brooks Hine: An Indiana Bird Woman

Terri Gorney, Fort Wayne, IN
bandtgorney@aol.com

I was first “introduced” to Jane Hine while transcribing Maurice McClue’s *Natural History Memorandum* (1919-1957). He mentioned her in his journal. Maurice peaked my interest in Jane and her bird notes. No one in the Indiana birding community knew anything about her when I began my search in 2008.



Jane Brooks Hine

Jane Brooks Hine was born in 1831 in Lake County, Ohio. In 1837, the Brooks family moved to Erie County, Ohio. Jane attended Oberlin College and became a teacher by profession until her marriage in 1857 to Horatio Hine. She was a lifelong student of the birds.

In 1861, they moved to land in northern DeKalb County, Indiana. His father had bought this land in the 1830s and it was pretty much left in its natural state when they arrived.

Through friend Bob Wilder, I found a descendant of Jane’s, then another. I was amazed that she kept birding journals! Jean Faulkner and Maynard “Butch” Hine were very generous in allowing me to copy her journals. The ink in the first journal was so light, I needed to digitalize it to read it. It was written in the old style of English. The journals were like reading a piece of Indiana history. Some of her writings are dated and others are not.

Jane was given credit for contributing to Amos Butler’s *Birds of Indiana*, 1898. Her best birding articles were done when she was in her 60s and 70s. Some ideas for articles came directly from her journals. Her best-known writing was the *Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries and Game for Indiana*, 1911. Jane’s chapter was called *Game and Land Birds of an Indiana Farm*.



The Hine family were early settlers in DeKalb County.

She has a record of over 400 bird sightings with the American Phenology Bird Project on USGS.gov. In 2010, I was honored to be asked by Jessica Zelt, the coordinator, to write a short biography of Jane for their website.

At the time of her death, she was a well-known speaker. She was a member of the National Ornithology Society which published a booklet as a memorial to her after her death. She belonged to the Literary Societies of Waterloo and Auburn. She belonged to the Indiana Audubon Society.

The following writings are from Jane Hine’s birding journals that are owned by her descendants. She called her home *Birdlawn* and the adjoining farm *Meadowlark*. The farm was in northern DeKalb County. Jane loved the swale, pond, and wet places on the farm as she knew it meant “water birds and waders” were attracted to those places.

Study of Bird Life: Four Days with a Flock of Jack Snipe

No morning could be lovelier than that of April 15th 1884. All the world was dressed in snow so soft and fluffy that it looked like condensed mist. But the sun came out warm and the snow melted rapidly.

About ten o'clock the Killdeer were calling in the low land of the pasture not far from the house – and they called me.

A small pasture of upland cornered down into the low land of the main pasture where there was a belt of flags. I crept along the fence of this small pasture as far as I thought the birds would allow me to come. I looked for the Killdeer but could not see them nor any other birds, but I quietly lingered.

In a little while, a flock of Jack Snipe were busily feeding among the flags. How did they get there? It seemed to me like magic.

I wanted to be nearer. Presently the cows came trailing along the cow path close to the opposite side of my fence. I saw the birds were not disturbed as the first of the line passed near them, so I joined the procession till I reached the angle of the fence and was within ten yards of the flock of snipe.

The snow had melted to slush out of which the tussocks of flags came up like islands. The snipe were standing in the slush as they fed from the black earth at the roots of tussocks.

There were at least twenty birds in the flock. They were as near together as their business would allow – one at each tussock.

And such a busy trembling. The heads of all the birds of the flock were trembling, trembling, trembling as they probed and felt about in the soft, black earth at the root of the flags.

There was no pause in their feeding only as now and then one would stop to wash his bill with a back and forth movement in the slush or to stretch his long, slender, white-lined wings straight upward.

And so silent were they. I could see them and their movement, but could hear no sound. Once a bird rose and flew away and gave a cry as he rose.

They practiced the proverb: “Stick to your bush.” Each bird worked at his tussock so long as it had food to yield. As I watched I saw that no tussock was missed, they were taking the belt clean as they went. Already they had left about four yards of the belt behind them.

Now and then I saw a piece of the white root of the flag in the bill of a bird. This was not sweet flag that the birds are said to be so fond of all of kind.



After some time I raised my eyes to see a hawk come and perch on a tree near the flags. When I looked back the snipe had disappeared entirely from my sight. I knew they had skulked, I thought I would keep steady watch of the spot that I might see them rise.

The hawk remained a long time. Finally he espied game in the distance. As he rose from the tree my eyes rose also but only for an instant. When they dropped, the hawk still in the air not yet far from the tree, there the snipe were busily feeding. Again it seemed like magic.

The hawk returned with a frog to his former perch and ate it there. This time the snipe did not skulk; they went right on with their business. They knew that no hawk but a hungry one would disturb them.

The moon was at it full. I left my bed at two o'clock that night and went to visit the snipe. I threw a pebble to find if they were there. One rose with his sharp little cry and flew away. In the morning their advance on the strip of flags showed that they had fed that night just about the same as the day before.

On the morning of the third day a flock of Redwing Blackbirds came and, three or four times played about in the air. As they played a few of the snipe would quietly rise and play with one another within the flock of blackbirds. Whenever the blackbirds alighted on the tree they dropped to the ground.

By the fourth morning the birds had advanced until they were near the railroad. A workman came and waited for his comrades. At his coming the snipe skulked but not so completely as from the hawk. Their long bills were thrown lengthwise, their backs and their large, wide-open eyes showed plainly. They remained so while the workmen were collecting but, at the first stroke of the pick, they were up feeding.

The belt of flags was almost finished by the evening of the fourth day and by the next morning all the snip were gone.

At the Swale

It was the middle of April. Rail were migrating. I went to the swale. I climbed out over the water and among the reeds on a rail fence by the road side, made myself comfortable and watched. It was a sunny still afternoon. No stir of reed or wild grass blade to show that there was any living thing in that part of the marsh. But I stayed and watched.

After a while, at the angry grunt of a Bittern, up pops a Sora with a startled cry; up into the air, then right back again, feet first, into the reeds. Of course, the Sora went scudding away from the Bittern, but there was no stir among the reeds to show the way he ran.



By and by, where the road cuts the marsh, a head appears through the reeds—only the head with the long-curved bill of the Virginia Rail. It is cautiously looks up the road; looks down the road; takes time to consider, then out sprints the bird, tail jut, jut jutting at every step as he runs across the road into the reeds beyond.

At twilight that field that had lain so still and silent in the sunlight was all a cackle with Rail.

After Our Swale was Drained our boys, one day in May were mowing the wild meadow when out ran a Sora from her nest and off through the unmown grain – “ran like a rat,” the boys said; the same as others are pretty sure to say when speaking of a running Rail.

The boys left the nest with a good patch of grass about it but the bird did not return - could not, a family of Rails must have more covert to move about in than a small patch like that.

The drained marsh was so dry that the nest could be and was – very snug down among the roots of the grass. It was made of the harsh, broad blades of the wild grass coiled into a well hollowed cup — a substantial but coarse unlined cup. There were six eggs; all plain, creamy drab- I have seen the smallest of the pullet eggs that looked much like them. I broke the eggs and they told me that the bird began her sitting with the first one as they were in different stages of incubation. One egg had black down half an inch long another was fresh as if laid that day. How many more would the mother lay? Rails are prolific as Quails.

Think of the little father taking and caring for them; taking bird by bird as it leaves the shell and runs away from the nest; one today, another tomorrow till the mother is ready with the last one hatched to join the father and the brood. Or do the father and mother take turns in stilling – who knows?

But however that is; soon after the last one comes from the shell is the time, I think when our pair of Sora bring their brood to our orchard pond for night feeding. Early in June their craking begins and their soothing crake, crake, crake, crake lulls our sleep through the nights. They do not come at evening until the twilight is deep enough to be a covert for them. Many times, and year after year, I have watched to get a sight of the birds – watched in vain acceptance; then, in the deep twilight I could just discern the form of a bird as it came running over the orchard grass.

There are other wet spots within our hearing that on June nights, used to be visited by Rail – what appeared – so I thought by the craking – to be one family here, another there, but it has been a number of years since they have been heard at any of those places and their craking has been, and is, heard less and less at the orchard pond.

As for myself, it has been a rare thing for me to hear the call of the Sora or any other than June nights; but last year I heard the craking of the bird on the night of November 1st. The next spring after the Sora’s nest was found my husband startled a Virginia Rail from her nest as he was mowing reeds in another part of the marsh. This nest was in the tussock of reeds but, like the Sora’s it was made of sword grass.

It seems by descriptions I have read that the nests of these Rails are sometimes shallow, like saucers, but both of these were as deep and cup-like as any Robin’s nest. The Virginia Rail’s eggs were the color of ripe cream as it stands unskinned in the pan and were spotted and specked with brown and lilac.

One spring, not long since, a Virginia Rail came to a neighbor’s poultry yard for a dog’s visit. He kept in hiding under the hen house but came out morning, noon and evening and fed with the hens – like the Duck within the flock of Crows he seemed to feel that he was free from observation while mingling with the flock of hens.

The Forest

The sixty-acre forest that my husband had set apart to be sacredly kept in its primitive state was very dense everywhere except at an opening in the trees above a broad watery strip where water stood the same as in the pond that almost covered upon its upper end. The flat of black loam that bordered the swale and pond lay dark in the shade of its great trees – black walnut here, elm there. In this quiet retreat, so safe from intrusion by men, so shut out from all glare of sunlight, the pair of Woodcock who homed there year after year could probe in the soft ground by day as well as by twilight or moonlight – not too much light on that shaded share for their great night seeing eyes to bear.

Then between this flat and a small swamp beyond came a peninsula from the upland, grassy and pleasant with a few popular trees and prickly ash bushes scattered over it. That was there the Woodcock nest wood be – quite likely, if not disturbed under the same bush year after year. It was that I had my adventure with the Woodcock.

My Adventure with the Woodcock

The little cur beside ran under the low branches of a bush and out came a Woodcock that lay at my feet as if hurt and distressed. I stooped expecting to catch but she struggled on just out of my reach. Another step and grasp; another and another. She struggled through the two rail fences of the road and I over them into a neighbor's oat field. We went on that stooping, grasping chase to the middle of the field before my mania left me – would not have left me then, but the bird left me. She raced on wing and skimmed neatly along just above the ground to the roads beyond. But as soon as she reached the wood, while I still stood there, dazed and bewildered, she rose into the air above the trees and with slow, majestic flight, proceeded back to her nest.

A young friend told me of a thwack he received on the back while walking on a slope near one of our lakes. He wheeled and there lay a Woodcock; but he did not yield to her as I had done.

In another part of our farm are a few acres of "wood lot." On one seventeenth of April I startled a Woodcock from her nest in a half cleared border of these woods. In a slight depression close to the stem of a small, low bush lay four Sun-colored, spotted eggs. The nest was thinly lined with dry leaves.

At the foot of an orchard that sloped down to the bottom land of Cedar Creek a pair of Woodcock had their nest year after year at the root of an apple tree whose leaning trunk gave it shelter.



Indiana Audubon Society Black Hills Trip Report

Brad Bumgardner, Valparaiso, IN
bbumgardner@indianaaudubon.org

On June 3-9, Indiana Audubon Society hosted its first trip to the Black Hills. It was a chance to record many western bird species for Indiana birders, as well as see the amazing scenery. The trip was only 50 miles longer than the North Dakota tour, offered a few years ago. Trip costs were kept low for participants, and we used passenger vans for the 900+ mile trip to South Dakota.

Participants met at Cool Creek Park at 9am on Saturday, and drove a nonstop 12-hour drive to Sioux Falls, SD. Very little birding was done that day. We met three other participants in Sioux Falls, who joined us the next day.



Happy birders in the Black Hills, June 3-9, 2017.

Day 2 involved a 3.5 hr. drive west to the Badlands. Here, participants got their first glimpse of western birds, as well as the amazing landscape of this national park. Right away at the Visitor Center, a magpie flew over, and both Western Kingbird and Say's Phoebe were in the parking lot. A pair of Violet-green Swallows were swooping nearby. It was a good sign for more to come. Driving farther in the park found Loggerhead Shrike, nesting Say's Phoebes, a brief flyby Prairie Falcon, and the trip's first Burrowing Owl.

The trip then proceeded to Custer State Park. A quick stop at a gas station got Katherine Henman her lifer Brewer's Blackbird before arriving. At the park, the group viewed the new multi-million-dollar visitor center, and did light birding around the building, picking up Yellow Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cliff Swallows, the first of many Northern Flickers with red shafts, and Lark Sparrow. The group then continued on and did the wildlife loop for looks at Mountain Bluebird, American Bison, and Pronghorn Antelope. Arriving at the hotel in Custer, the group had a late dinner.



Black-billed Magpie. Photo by Mark Welter.

Day 3 saw the group travel to the dry western portion of the black hills. Hell Canyon is known for its diverse assortment of western specialties, and in a 3 hour walk the group picked up Plumbeous Vireo, Clark's Nutcracker, MacGillivray's Warbler, Dusky Flycatcher, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Rock Wren, and Canyon Wren. It was a very productive stop. Additionally, Spotted Towhees, Warbling Vireos, House Wrens, and White-throated Swifts were found.



Lewis's Woodpecker. Photo by Mark Welter.

From Hell Canyon, the birding group took an uphill climb to Elk Mountain, where the burned forest provided good views of Lewis's Woodpecker and Red Crossbill. Rock Wrens were seen well at the lookout. Down below in Roby Canyon, the group was successful in finding Virginia's Warbler, the most northeast breeding population for this species. The special white-winged Dark-eyed Junco was also seen here. This is an endemic sub-species in the Black Hills. Before leaving, not one, but two Western Tanagers were also seen well.

Day 4 sent the group north to the deep canyons of Spearfish. Spearfish hosts the most eastern population of American Dipper. This population is believed to be genetically distinct from the main population. Upon arrival, the group quickly found singing Yellow-rumped Warblers (Audubon's), and had fly over Pine Siskins. Down in the canyon bottom by the water singing redstarts and Golden-crowned Kinglets

greeted the group. The star of the show appeared a few times, scrambling up the waterfall walls, and making brief flybys. Afterwards, a short drive 3 miles downstream to Bridal Veil Falls wowed everyone. Here, two adult dippers were watched feeding two babies that had recently fledged. They would bob and beg for food whenever the parents came by. Back upstream, Red-naped Sapsucker, more redstarts, and a Red-eyed Vireo finished the Spearfish list. The group ate lunch in the canyon before leaving and added one last bird overhead... Peregrine Falcon.



American Dipper feeding young in Spearfish Canyon. Photo by Mark Welter.



Group birding above Sylvan Lake. Photo by Mark Welter.

Back south, the group made a late afternoon drive to Sylvan Lake. The high-altitude lake area is often good for crossbills, however none showed up this day. Instead the group was treated to low soaring Osprey, Red-naped Sapsucker, and a pair of Gray Jays. A drive down the needles highway provided awesome views of the Black Hills before heading back for dinner.

After dinner, the group then traveled south to Wind Cave where an evening foray into the campground found Western-Wood Pewee, Pygmy Nuthatch, and a large number of flying nighthawks. In addition to the normal peenting, many were booming their territorial displays. When things finally got dark enough, the star of the evening came out, as the group watched a Common Poorwill circle around in the field, and landing on wood stumps and fence posts. It was a spectacular view of this hard to see nightjar.



Pronghorn Antelope were common in Custer and Wind Cave. Photo by Mark Welter.

Lewis's Woodpecker, but could not find the elusive Black-backed Woodpecker. A stop along Stockade Lake also failed. But goodies were still seen, including a feeding Red-tailed Hawk, Great-blue Herons, and Western Tanager. Dinner was held in the famed State Game Lodge, where the group was treated to close up views of American Elk on the drive back to Custer.

Day 6 brought the group back through the Badlands for one last look for two target species. While driving past the Mt Rushmore monument, a pair of mountain goats entertained us on the side of the road. Particularly when their baby came out for all to see. Just before entering the Badlands, two Burrowing Owls were seen, and one target species... Lark Bunting. After entering the park, a bonanza of birds were found. Not 2, not 9, but 29 Burrowing Owls were seen in short order. The park's 30 total for the day may be a site record (at least on eBird). Upland Sandpipers were walking in the open, as



Baby mountain goat in the Black Hills. Photo by Mark Welter.



2 Long-billed Curlews driving away a Swainson's Hawk in Badlands National Park. Photo by Mark Welter.

well as 4 Long-billed Curlews. About this time, an adult Swainson's Hawk kettled overhead, sending two curlews up in the air to intercept. It was a jaw dropping experience for us Indiana birders. More curlews would be seen as we continued into the park, while also adding our one and only Brown Thrasher on the trip. On the drive back to Sioux Falls, American White Pelican were seen in a nearby pond.

Back in Sioux Falls, the group reveled in a successful week of birding. After a nice dinner, the group finished the evening viewing the amazing waterfalls found near downtown.

Day 7 would bring a long haul back to Indiana, with many birders recording 20 or more lifers. 116 species were seen on the trip for the week.

Most participants found this to be their first time in the Black Hills, or their first since childhood. They saw this amazing place through new eyes and a new appreciation for the diverse habitats that host a

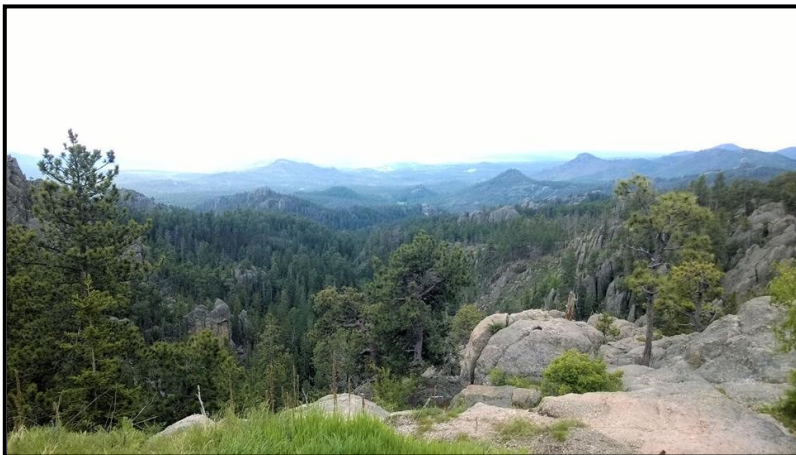
fascinating assortment of birds. It is hoped that a return to the Black Hills can be offered sometime in the future.



Sylvan Lake scenery in Custer State Park.



Roadside birding in Badlands National Park.



Black Hills State Park and National Forest.

