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Email: bbumgardner@indianaaudubon.org
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Cover photo: First winter Franklin's Gull at Michigan City Harbor, Laporte County, 16 October 2017.
 Photo by Matt Beatty.

Back cover photo: Orange-crowned Warbler at Lye Creek Burn, Montgomery County, 16 October 2017.
 Photo by Shari McCollough.

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A Tattler Wandering Indiana: A New State Species

John Kendall, Warsaw, IN

Jeffro595@yahoo.com

Eric Michael, Mishawaka, IN

echoem@att.net

Brad Bumgardner, Valparaiso, IN

bbumgardner@indianaaudubon.org

Introduction:

Finding of a Wandering Tattler on July 20 at Michigan City Harbor was a birder's dream. Three lucky birders were involved with the initial discovery, soon to be joined by others crowded around the normally lonely end of the Lighthouse Pier. Pending IBRC voting, Wandering Tattler will join a list of great vagrant shorebirds found the past few years in Indiana. The following represent the direct documentation accounts from the three original finders of the bird.

Eric Michael:

I arrived at 8:40 a.m. during a westerly rainstorm, hoping to see shorebirds that might be dropping out. After the rain passed, the sky remained overcast, with winds over 20 knots. Brad Bumgardner and John Kendall went to the end of the Lighthouse Pier with a short-staying Brendan Grube. I went out just a little before noon, meeting Brad and John—who headed back to the beach for lunch. He mentioned that some photogenic Ruddy Turnstones had landed briefly at the Lighthouse. While scanning the outer break wall for shorebirds, a medium to large dark charcoal gray-colored bird with a long, straight bill was below the Turnstones. At first, I tried to make the hard to see shape into an immature Starling.

Brad offered me a look through his scope of what could be a Spotted Sandpiper. This gray bird now showed darkly-barred flanks, unlike a Spottie. I began hurriedly taking photos (from the experience of having birds fly away), mentioning the barring on the flanks. He agreed and began searching through his field guide phone app.

About this time, John returned from lunch. Upon receiving a brief description of the bird and asking if it had barred flanks, John immediately and correctly initially submitted the idea that it was a Wandering Tattler. This was a species which was unfamiliar to me. We soon eliminated all other possibilities. Since it was initially unknown whether it was a Wandering Tattler or a Gray-tailed Tattler, it was decided it was a Tattler sp. and news was posted as such on social media. Many observers arrived and the bird chose to remain out in the open on and off for more



Wandering Tattler at Michigan City Harbor, 20 July 2017. Photo by Brad Bumgardner.

than an hour, eventually moving out of sight to the back side of the break wall.

Brad Bumgardner:

Eric Michael joined us around noon, and like John and I earlier, began to do scans of the outer break wall. Around 12:25pm, Eric asked about a small dark gray bird he had spotted sleeping in the rocks on the far eastern end. I made a quick look and noted the shorebird, with its bill tucked in. To me, at first, the supercilium suggested Spotted Sandpiper. Eric quickly noted the overall gray appearance, and what appeared to be barring across the bird's belly, which deviated from expected Spotted Sandpiper plumages. I agreed and began studying the bird in more detail. As it awoke, we noted the thicker, longer bill, overall gray body, and yellow legs. The barring was more noted as it moved positions.



Wandering Tattler at Michigan City Harbor, 20 July 2017. Photo by John Kendall.

At this point, John Kendall returned from lunch, and as I was thumbing through possible western vagrants, John yelled out that our descriptions matched that of a Tattler, just as I was looking at the tattler page on my Sibley app. We had a Tattler! Within minutes, we were joined by many others. For the first hour, the bird was very visible, with short naps. After 2:30pm, the bird became increasingly more difficult to find, as it spent time in between rock cracks or on the back side of the outer break wall. I left at 3:50pm, having watched the bird since the initial sighting.

John Kendall:

Upon my return from a beach lunch at 12:15 pm, Brad inexplicably shared: “well, we have a bird”. The description that he and Eric gave was: “Larger than a Turnstone, streaking/barring all down the flanks and just gray...” Were the legs yellow? “Yes, maybe so”. It was also...hiding in the rocks. The descriptions holistically suggested a Wandering Tattler. I just couldn't think of another medium-large shorebird with such “stumper” field marks in fall. Furthermore, it was now hidden, acting like a “rockpiper”—the drab shorebirds with a tendency to work the crevices and thus, disappear among the rocks. Fresh in mind was my last visual image of a “gray ghost” Wandering Tattler doing just that on a pelagic trip out of Half Moon Bay, California.

The bird was lying down, facing us, only showing a cap and short, white supercilium. While watching it, the bird suddenly popped up its head and turned 90 degrees. Seeing the bird's bill and face, I said (unable to stop from unconsciously channeling Flounder from the movie Animal House) “oh boy, is this (gonna be) great!” Red Knot, Stilt Sandpiper and others were thus eliminated. We studied the bill length, shape, short supercilium, dark loreal line and grayish cap, further suggesting a Tattler.

Soon, it stood up and walked. The barring, yellow legs, size and shape made it clear that we had a Tattler. Photos confirmed views showing that the barring continued throughout the under parts, eliminating the Pacific species, Gray-tailed Tattler.

I thank Brad and Eric, who found the bird, stayed with it long enough for me and others to see it

and were kind enough to include me on the documentation. Thanks to Jeff McCoy for advertising and shaming me into investing in my first \$40 annual Michigan City Harbor parking pass. It was a lot of fun interacting with the many birders who came to see it!

Some notes on Wandering Tattler

East of the Rockies, Wandering Tattler is listed as an accidental or casual vagrant. From readily found information, there are now at least 9 records east of the Rocky Mountains and possibly as many as 12 and split between spring and fall. Pending Indiana Bird Records Committee acceptance, this record would be the 5th record of Wandering Tattler on the Great Lakes (4 in July/August). There are three records of 40-70 years ago on Lake Erie near Niagara, ON; 2 recent records on Lake Michigan (Illinois, and this pending Indiana record); and a recent record identified as Wandering/Gray-tailed Tattler in Michigan.

Being almost entirely a North American breeder, Wandering Tattler might seem to be a bit of an odd and perhaps an unlikely candidate as a vagrant shorebird here. It seems almost counterintuitive that there are species of “Asian” shorebirds (e.g. Ruff, Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers) that appear more regularly east of the Rockies.

The bird has very low detectability. Similar to Surf-bird in habits and distribution, Wandering Tattler is a “loner”, nesting singularly in open alpine meadows. It breeds in Alaska east to extreme NW Canada and winters on rocky coasts and jetties on both Pacific islands and the west coast. A relatively small population nests on the Chukchi Peninsula in extreme NE Russia. As of 2008 at least, only two Wandering Tattler nests were known from Yukon Canada, in part because

there is almost no coverage of the huge, remote expanses of their breeding habitat, which may also include some birds eastward into the Northwest Territories. Wandering Tattler’s breeding range and estimated population (10,000-45,000) are not accurately known. There are fall records of numbers of birds along coastlines in Alaska and British Columbia, suggesting that individual birds make post-breeding movements to coastal post-breeding staging areas. What follows is a medium-long distance migration to wintering areas in the south pacific and to winter along the west coast from British Columbia southward. Most Wandering Tattlers fly SW to south pacific islands, while a slightly smaller number of birds fly SSE to winter along the pacific coast. Adults (this record) leave beginning in mid-July with juveniles leaving at least one month later. The lack of a fuller understanding of breeding and staging distribution and apparent multitude of medium-long fall migratory trajectories (SW, S and SSE) makes this species’ migration path quite variable.

One type of avian vagrancy is Misorientation. Misorientation occurs when birds programmed to fly for a certain length of time in a certain direction vary their course in a predictably linear



Wandering Tattler at Michigan City Harbor, 20 July 2017. Photo by John Kendall.

pattern. Typical “mirror image” type mis-orientation vagrancy involves birds typically confusing east with west, heading ESE instead of WSW or SE instead of SW.

This is evidenced by being able to draw a line through the path of vagrant records on a globe through the destination locations back to where the birds breed (or stage). Reverse migration is an extreme form of mis-orientation, where the bird migrates 180 Degrees off course, heading north when it should go south, and vice-versa.

Interestingly, the 4-5 (5 if we include the Michigan record as a Wandering Tattler) fall Great Lakes’ records are on a line that suggests some type of east/west mis-orientation. For some unknown reason, the line does not connect with a point of origin location in Alaska, but rather would have to be south of the known breeding range. Since fall records in the east occur from zero to seventy years ago and follow the same migratory path, it would make sense that the vagrants are coming from historical breeding or possibly staging sites rather than some new location.



**Wandering Tattler watching at Michigan City Harbor, 20 July 2017.
Photo by Carol Goodall.**

Nearly year-round rock-pipering seems to be paying off. In addition to a handful of eastern Surfbird records (one on Lake Erie), there are also two NE coast US records of the western Pacific Gray-tailed Tattler during the past 5 years. The quest for Surfbird in Indiana has begun.

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National Lampoon’s Animal House, (1978) Universal Pictures.

Summer Indiana Field Notes 2017

Ken Brock, Chesterton, IN

kj.brock@comcast.net

The season's highlight was the inconceivable appearance of a Wandering Tattler on Michigan City Harbor's outer breakwater. According to research conducted Matthew Beatty no more than 15 have ever been reported away from the Pacific Coast. Other good finds included an inland Western Grebe, an adult White Ibis, Black-throated Blue Warblers, and a dead Painted Bunting.

Summer weather yielded near average temperatures and ample precipitation (see table). As a result scores of shorebirds occurred in flooded fields across the state.

Temperature & Precipitation at Indianapolis: Departure from Normal		
	Temp (°F)	Rainfall (in.)
Jun	+0.1	+2.28
Jul	+0.8	+1.63

Breeding season highlights included:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:- It was a record summer for this species with 10 birds reported (STYM=1.50). Records included a singleton at Kingsbury FWA on 3 June (Jeff McCoy), four in Terre Haute the following day (Steve Lima), and five at Goose Pond FWA on 10 June (John Adams).

Trumpeter Swan:- According to a 17 July e-mail from Allisyn-Marie Gillet, "Carl Voglewede from the USDA APHIS got some photographic evidence of the trumpeter swan cygnet during his surveys this year, confirming that the trumpeter pair was able to successfully nest in Indiana. The exact location is being kept confidential for the time being to avoid stress on the new Indiana family.

Northern Pintail:- The (5) males that Lynn H. Vernon found at Grant Street Wetland on 17 June tied Indiana's third largest summer count (STYM=1.65).

Western Grebe:- On 27 June 2017 Bill Hubbard obtained excellent photographs of one on Lake of the Woods in Geneva, thereby providing Indiana's second June record (and the first away from Lake Michigan). The bird was also a first Adams County record and the second record for northeastern Indiana (STYM=0.10).

Neotropic Cormorant:- An apparent immature was documented near the Willow Slough headquarters on 27 June (Edward M. Hopkins), providing Indiana's 18th record.

Snowy Egret:- Leland & Thaddaeus Shaum, Neal Miller, and Carl Yoder found (1) at Grant Street Wetland on 16 June. On 19 June Matt Kalwasinski logged (3), two at the Hammond Cinder Flats and one at 129th Street wetland, tying the lakefront's second largest daily count.

White Ibis:- On 15 July Steve Lima found an adult in the Vigo Co bottoms near Kennett. This individual lingered through 24 July, providing Indiana's sixth adult record.

White-faced Ibis:- While conducting a Breeding Bird Survey in Wayne Co on 22 June, Bob Kissel discovered a *Plegadis* Ibis with reddish eyes and a white border surrounding a dull red face.

Sandhill Crane:- On 7 July Ronald and De Ronk found a colt near their Sullivan Co home. This report provided Indiana's southernmost breeding record.

SHOREBIRDS

Piping Plover:- There was an excellent late July flight with 10 "pipers" reported on the lakefront (TYM=2.25). The breakdown by age was: five adults and five juveniles.

Black-necked Stilt:- Copulating birds were observed at a Tippecanoe Co roadside pool (Hwy231 & CR800N) on 24 June (John K. Cassady, Lynea S. Hinchman, & KJB). On 17 July Edward M. Hopkins found an occupied nest at the site. Thanks to careful monitoring by Jeff Timmons a first breeding record for Madison County was confirmed on 12 July when he observed a family group of (4) near Lafayette. Michael R. Brown provided the following fascinating report from the Graysville area of Sullivan Co, "6 nests with eggs were originally seen but half were abandoned as the water completely disappeared within a week. The other 3 nests continued in the dry field and eventually (about 2 and 3 weeks later) fledged 11 chicks. At least 3 of these are now flying juveniles moving around the area."



American Avocet:- A dozen were reported, all on Lake Michigan (STYM=18.4). Jeff Packer logged the peak count, a flock of (9) at Michigan City Harbor on 23 July.

Juvenile Black-necked Stilt in Tippecanoe Co., 10 August 2017. Photo by Brad Bumgardner.

WANDERING TATTLER:- Incredibly, one was found at Michigan City Harbor about noon on 20 July. At that time Eric Michael, who was standing at the lighthouse with Brad Bumgardner, spotted the bird among the outer breakwater boulders. John C. Kendall was the first to put a name on the bird. In the next few hours at least 20 birders visited the lighthouse to see this visitor from the Pacific Coast, which (if approved by IBRC) will constitute a first Indiana record.

Marbled Godwit:- A 24 June flock on the Michigan City Harbor outer breakwall evolved from (3) (Jeffrey J. McCoy) before noon to (7) by late afternoon (Allee Forsberg and Kevin Cornell).

Willet:- A total of 38 were reported this summer. (STYM=103). Joe Bailey logged a noteworthy inland report of (8) at Fairfax, Lake Monroe on 11 July.

Sanderling:- An alternate adult at Michigan City Harbor on 8 July (Mike Bourdon et al.), provided the lakefront's fifth earliest fall record.

Baird's-Sandpiper:- On 22 July Bob Huguenard and Jeff McCoy observed (3) individuals in the rarely reported adult plumage at the Pierce Road wetland in St. Joseph Co.

Short-billed Dowitcher:- On 11 June Dan Collins, Gary and Lisa Bowman found (1) at Cane Ridge WMA. This is Indiana's latest spring record by 8 days; the earliest fall date is 25 June.

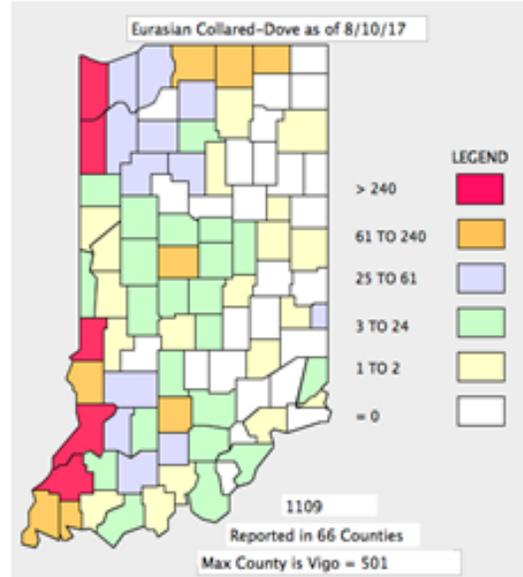
Eurasian Collared-Dove:- This species, first reported in the state in 1999, has now expanded into 66 counties. The 1109 in the above map lists the number of Indiana records. Note also that the reports are concentrated in the western portions of the state.

Merlin:- Remarkably, one were reported in late June. An observed bird was perched along I-65 in southern Lake Co on the 24th (John K. Cassady). This report constitutes Indiana’s third record for June.

Black-billed Cuckoo:- The 41 reported this season constitute a record total for the summer season (STYM=13.7). The previous maximum of 27 was recorded during the summer of 2003.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo:- A remarkable 782 were reported for the season (STYM=208), which is an all-time summer maximum for Indiana.

Willow Flycatcher:- It was a record season with 642 reported for the summer (STYM=273). The peak tally was (23) that John K. Cassady logged at Beverly Shores on 10 June, but Steve Lima counted (22) at the Universal Mines on that same day.



Loggerhead Shrike:- Goose Pond’s third record was logged in unit GP6E on 24 June (Landon Neumann and Sean Verkamp). A nice photograph confirmed the sighting.

Blue-headed Vireo:- On 21 June Alex Sharp, Clayton Delancey, and Garrett MacDonald captured and banded (1) in HEE Unit 8, Brown County. The bird was also photographed in hand. This is the southern tier’s fourth summer record (all in June).

Red-breasted Nuthatch:- On 13 June Donald Sutherland, who was birding in Muncie, stated, “We heard the honking of Red-breasted Nuthatch and when it was listed as rare on the list, we decided to play the song to be sure we were not crazy and three fledgling RBNUs showed up.” This is Indiana’s ninth occurrence of breeding within the state; the most recent was in Westville (LaPorte Co) on 21 June 2009.

Marsh Wren:- It was another good summer for this species on the lakefront with reports from 13 different locations. The season’s peak tally was (33) counted at Grant Street Wetland on 3 June (Lynea S. Hinchman).

WARBLERS

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER:- Astonishingly, two Black-throated Blues were reported this summer and both were in Brown Co. These reports constitute Indiana’s first July and first nesting records; Indiana’s closest chronological Black-throated Blue (a male) occurred in Boone Co on 24 June 1989.

On 7 and 8 July Matthew Wistrand reported a female Black-throated Blue, paired with a male Cerulean Warbler, tending a nest on a private Brown Co road. Very low quality photos accompanied the report, but failed to confirm the identification. On 12 July Garrett MacDonald,

Clayton Delancey, and Alex Sharp saw the bird and agreed with Matthew’s identification. They also obtained audio of the female’s chips and observed 3 nestlings.



Adult male Black-throated Blue Warbler in Brown Co., 12 July 2017. Photo by Will Britton.

Incredibly, 8.5 miles further east (also in Brown Co) Will Britton mist-netted an adult male Black-throated Blue in Yellowwood State Forest on 12 July. Britton included a photograph showing the male in hand.

Canada Warbler:- Surprisingly, despite record season totals for most warblers, Canada Warblers were not reported in the state this summer (STYM=3.2).

Clay-colored Sparrow:- The season's only report consisted of a bird that Annie Aguirre found at Boot Lake Preserve, Elkhart Co on 11 June.

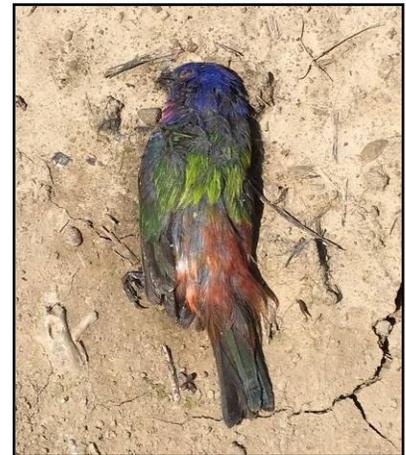
Fox Sparrow:- Indiana's fourth latest record was logged at the Hammond Sanctuary on 3 June (Bob Huguenard).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak:- Garrett MacDonald reported one singing in Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment Unit 8 (Brown County) on 9 July. This is only the 15th July record for the southern tier of counties (six of which were in Brown Co).

PAINTED BUNTING:- On 6 June Indiana's fourth record (all males) was found by a crew working the power line right-of-way in Howard Co. As was the case with two of the three previous records, the bird was found dead. Joni James submitted a photograph of the specimen for documentation. See the subsequent article for the full details on this record.

Yellow-headed Blackbird:- A major surprise occurred 26 June when Kimberly Ehn discovered a male at parking lot "H" in Reynolds Creek G.H.A.. Kim's observation provided a first site record and Porter County's first report in two years.

Conventions:- Summer totals are frequently compared to average seasonal counts in the "Dunes area" (Calumet Region or lakefront) over the past 20 years, including the present year. This value is abbreviated "TYM" for Twenty Year Mean. The term "STYM" refers to the twenty-year mean for the entire state.



Dead Painting Bunting found in Howard Co., 6 June 2017. Photo submitted by Joni James.

Indiana Bird Records Committee 2016 Annual Report

Kirk Roth, Indianapolis, IN
kirkroth@hotmail.com

The following is a recap of the 2016 Indiana Bird Records Committee (IBRC) records and other activities of the committee.

There are some records from 2016 yet to be voted upon, it is expected that these will be sent to committee in late January. These include the Townsend's Solitaire, a Long-tailed Jaeger, Little Gull, Pacific Loon (Lake County and Marion County), Prairie Falcon, Western Kingbird, and White Ibis. There were several submissions this year for species which are not on the current review list, and these were not reviewed by the committee. These submissions were for the following species: Pileated Woodpecker, Harris's Sparrow, Northern Goshawk, Great Egret (in December 2016) and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (in December 2015).

In 2015, the Black-tailed Godwit was added to the Indiana state list. The IBRC chair solicited opinions of shorebird experts from Europe and Australia on the subspecies identity of this bird. All agreed that it was more likely to be *Limosa limosa islandica* based upon several photographs. Their opinions will be archived with the IBRC record for this bird, along with the photos they were supplied. This information may be important in the future, as there is potential for a taxonomic split within this species. An article titled "The Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilis principalis*) in Indiana" by Benjamin E. Leese was admitted to the archive.

The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) made several taxonomic changes this year which affect Indiana birds. Early in 2017, the IBRC intends to update the state checklist in accordance with the order of the AOU list. Also, two vagrant Indiana species were split by the AOU. The former Green Violet-ear was split into the Mexican Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) from Central America and the Lesser Violet-ear (*Colibri cyanotus*) from South America. Indiana records pertain to the Mexican Violet-ear and the state checklist was adjusted accordingly. The other split concerning a species with an Indiana record is the Western Scrub-Jay being split into the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) and the California Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*). Available photos of the scrub-jay which occurred in Tippecanoe county in 1999 are inconclusive, showing characteristics like both California Scrub-Jays and Woodhouse's varieties from Texas. Investigation into this record is ongoing.

Records reviewed in 2016:

Thayer's Gull, St. Joseph; 12/4/15; Accepted, Verified
Spotted Towhee; Putnam; 1/14/16; Accepted, Verified
Iceland Gull, St. Joseph; 1/29/16; Accepted, Verified
Slaty-backed Gull, Porter; 2/20/16; Accepted, Verified
Ruff, Benton; 3/27/16; Accepted; Verified
Ruff; Gibson; 4/3/16; Accepted; Verified
Neotropic Cormorant; Sullivan; 4/3/16 Accepted, Verified
Neotropic Cormorant; Marion; 4/21/16 Accepted, Verified
Cinnamon Teal, Gibson; 4/27/16; Accepted, Verified
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Monroe; 4/28/16; Accepted, Verified



**Spotted Towhee, Putnam County, 23
January 2016. Photo by Kevin Cornell.**

White-winged Dove, Grant; 5/7/16; Accepted, Verified
 Western Kingbird; Vanderburg; 5/8/16; Accepted, Verified
 Ruff, Hancock; 5/8/16; Accepted, Verified
 Kirtland's Warbler, Porter; 5/10/16; Accepted, Verified
 Ruff, LaPorte; 5/15/16, 5/16/16, 5/17/16; Accepted, Verified
 Black Rail, Jackson; 5/15/16, 5/17/16, 5/18/16, 5/20/16; Accepted, Verified
 Kirtland's Warbler, Lake; 5/17/16; Accepted, Verified
 Eurasian Tree Sparrow; Tippecanoe 6/19/16; Accepted, Verified
 Swallow-tailed Kite; Owen; 7/26/16; Accepted, Verified
 Swallow-tailed Kite (Lynnville), Pike; 8/13/16; Accepted, Verified
 Swallow-tailed Kite (Petersburg), Pike; 8/20/16, 8/23/16; Accepted, Verified
 California Gull, LaPorte; 8/31/16; Accepted, Verified
 White-winged Dove, Parke; 9/1/16, 9/5/16; Accepted, Verified
 Sabine's Gull, Monroe; 9/12/16; Accepted, Verified
 Brant, Lake; 9/16/16; Accepted, Verified
 Yellow Rail, Porter; 10/6/16; Accepted, Single Documenter
 Yellow Rail, Montgomery; 10/22/16; Accepted, Single Documenter
 California Gull, LaPorte; 10/24/16; Accepted, Verified
 Pine Grosbeak, Porter; 11/22/16; Accepted, Single Documenter
 Neotropic Cormorant; Dearborn; 8/13/13 Not Accepted
 Arctic Tern, Kosciusko; 5/26/15; Not Accepted
 California Gull, Marshall; 12/27/15; Not Accepted
 Great Black-backed Gull; Marion; 2/23/16 Not Accepted
 Cave Swallow, Park; 4/3/16; Not Accepted
 Ruff, Pike; 4/5/16; Not Accepted
 Western Tanager; Porter; 5/17/16 Not Accepted



White-winged Dove, Grant County, 07 May 2016. Photo by Ryan Sanderson.



Sabine's Gull, Monroe County, 14 September 2016. Photo by Evan Speck.

The IBRC re-evaluated the 2007 record of Audubon's Oriole in Jefferson County. The record has been moved from "Origin Hypothetical" to the main list. Discussion of this record was contentious and led to debates regarding related topics as follows:

- 1) When should records be reconsidered. The bylaws stated that any record may be reconsidered for reasons stated in writing. Committee member John Kendall took issue that the precedent in his experience had been that new information must be presented, however nothing in the bylaws states this. After lengthy discussion, it was decided by the committee to amend the bylaws to require new evidence to be submitted in writing for a reconsideration.
- 2) A debate over the merits and utility of the "Origin Hypothetical" category itself was had, although little consensus was made. Opinions ranged from eliminating the category altogether to expanding the category, including Whooping Crane, Hooded Crane, Egyptian Goose, Barnacle Goose, Scaly-breasted Munia, European Goldfinch, Brown-headed/Pygmy Nuthatch, Audubon's Oriole, "western"/California Scrub-jay and perhaps others. There was also discussion regarding whether the category should be changed in name or definition. As this was seemingly a major, important, and unresolved topic, the Chair promised to research the treatment given the category in other states and report options to the committee – some time in 2017.

The important issue of the hard copies of past records was discussed at the 2016 IBRC Annual Meeting. The stewardship of these copies is not codified in the bylaws and it is the intent of the Chair to address this in the coming year. The hard copies are currently at the Purdue Forestry Building under the supervision of Barny Dunning. There are no members whose terms expire at the end of 2016.

Painted Bunting Record from Howard County: An Origin Mystery Solved

Amy Kearns,
greenpertplus@hotmail.com

On the evening of 6 June 2017, I was at home browsing the Birding in Indiana Facebook group when I came across a photo posted by Joni James. The bird in the photo had obviously been dead for some time and was lying face down in the dirt, but it was still identifiable as an adult male Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*). I and others were keenly interested to know the bird's location and if it was banded, as these clues could help shed light on whether the bird was of captive or wild origin. After many months and a long chain of email communications with bird banders and birders in the United States and Mexico, the origin of the bird was discovered and shared with me on 12 September 2017.



Figure 1. Adult male Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) found dead under powerlines in Howard County, Indiana, 1 June 2017. Photo by Josh Douglass.

Description and Location

After the initial Facebook post, Joni James kindly provided me with more information about the record. The bird's carcass was found 1 June 2017 by Josh Douglass, a utility forester working under powerlines in Howard County. Douglass recognized the bird as something unusual, photographed it, and sent the photo to his co-worker, Tim Bailey, who sent the photo to James on 6 June (*Figure 1*). After I asked through a Facebook comment if the bird was banded, Douglass went back to the location on 7 June, refound the bird, documented the exact location where it was found, and transported the carcass to James and Bailey. James and Bailey documented the bird's feather condition with excellent photos before disposing of the carcass (unfortunately, the bird was in such poor shape that it was not salvageable as a specimen).

Photos show that the bird was in good feather condition, with one broken tail feather, little overall feather wear, no abnormal or faded plumage, and no obvious signs of feather damage from captivity. A metal band on its right leg was inscribed with "SEMARNAT I 420901." The carcass was found underneath powerlines, 1.5 miles SSE of the town of Phlox, at 40.3999, -85.9113. The nearest public road was 0.38 miles to the west, and the nearest highway was 1 mile to the north.

Discussion on Origin

Migrating birds can get blown off-course, fly in the wrong direction, or overshoot their destination by many miles. Painted



Figure 2. Locations of Painted Bunting sightings outside normal range as shown in eBird 1 Jan. 2017 – 26 Sept. 2017 (eBird 2017. Accessed 26 Sept. 2017).

buntings are one of many wild bird species that have an established record of vagrancy to distant places where they aren't usually found. Indiana has three accepted records of this species, all adult males found in spring (Brock 2006). I searched eBird for other 2017 records of Painted Bunting and found sightings in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New York, Ontario, and many other locations far outside the normal range for Painted Bunting (eBird 2017) (Figure 2).

Painted Buntings are a popular cage bird in Mexico, thanks to its beautiful plumage and cheerful song. Although it is illegal to keep the species in captivity in the United States without special permits, the birds are sometimes smuggled into the country and kept illegally. This bird showed no obvious signs of being an escaped cage bird. It was in good feather condition, with one broken tail feather (the tip of R1) and intact flight feathers (Figures 3 and 4). In addition, James and Bailey's photos show no bill injuries, missing crown feathers, or faded plumage, all of which can be additional signs of a bird that had been recently held in a cage (Figure 5).

Based on the condition of the carcass, the bird appeared to have died around the last week of May, which fits right in with the majority of other vagrant Painted Bunting reports from the Mid-continent (Mlodinow and Hamilton 2005). Because the carcass was found underneath powerlines and away from a public roadway, the cause of death may have been from a collision with powerlines (a common cause of death for migratory birds) (USFWS 2016). The bird was found in a county with a low (3.3%) Hispanic or Latino population (U.S. Census Bureau 2016), which seems to indicate a lower likelihood that the bird had been kept as a pet locally. Thus, this bird showed every indication of being a vagrant of wild origin, which flew to Indiana under its own power. I was eager to see if the band results confirmed this.

The Band

On 7 June 2017, Joni James wrote to me that the band was imprinted with "SEMARNAT I 420901." I had never seen a band like this, and I shared the information with Indiana bird expert Don Gorney. Don quickly wrote back that SEMARNAT stands for Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. This is Mexico's environmental ministry, "charged with the mission of protecting, restoring, and conserving the ecosystems, natural resources, assets and environmental services of Mexico with the goal of fostering sustainable development" (Wikipedia 2017). I wrote to The North American Bird Banding Lab (BBL) for help, thinking they might assist me in contacting the appropriate person in SEMARNAT who takes the information from band recoveries and distributes it to the bander. In other words, I assumed the Mexican bird banding system worked in a similar way to our well-organized BBL. I was very disappointed when I received a response from the BBL that they could not help me and did not know who I could contact in Mexico to report a band (*pers. comm.* BBL 2017). Next, I searched online and found someone listed on the BBL website as a contact for bird banders interested in doing projects in



Figure 3. Tail of Painted Bunting specimen showing a single broken tail feather and no abnormal wear or other breakage. The broken feather is the tip of R1, one of two central rectrices. Photo by Joni James and Tim Bailey.



Figure 4. Wing of Painted Bunting specimen showing no abnormal wear or breakage. Photo by Joni James and Tim Bailey.

Mexico. I emailed him, asking if he could help me report a band recovery. For good measure, I looked on the SEMARNAT website and emailed a few people their site identified as scientists within the ministry. To my dismay, I received no response to any of those emails. Before giving up, I found a blog written in English by Mexican birder Manuel Grosselet. His blog discusses bird conservation and birding in Mexico (Grosselet 2017). It was a long shot, but I emailed him asking for help. I also emailed a few Indiana bird banders to see if they had any experience reporting Mexican bird bands. Amy Wilms replied, saying she had a contact in Mexico, and that he had already posted the Painted Bunting band on his Facebook page! Her contact was Manuel Grosselet, the birder with the blog whom I had emailed earlier that day. He had posted the band on Facebook asking any banders if it was their band. Grosselet later informed me through email that Mexico doesn't have a centralized reporting agency for bird bands, where band recovery information can be shared with the bander and banding information with the finder. Instead, if you recover a band you are on your own in tracking down the bander (*pers. comm.* Manuel Grosselet 2017). Grosselet did eventually track down the bander of the Painted Bunting, but he said it was very time consuming to do, which is why he did not get the information back to me until September.



Figure 5. Painted Bunting specimen showing no abnormal fading of plumage, missing crown feathers, or bill injuries. The band has been removed from the leg and placed next to the specimen. Photo by Joni James and Tim Bailey.

In the United States, most songbirds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It is illegal for anyone in the U.S. to keep a Painted Bunting as a pet (unless they have a valid permit, which is difficult to obtain) (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2015). In Mexico, the situation is different. Although Mexico is a signee of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, permits are given to private individuals allowing them to trap wild birds for subsistence use (Roldan-Clara et al 2017). These permitted individuals may use a designated number of wild birds for consumption or sale, but each bird must be marked with a bird band issued by SEMARNAT (Roldan-Clara et al 2017). According to Grosselet's results, the Howard County Painted Bunting wore such a band. Grosselet discovered that the band was issued to an individual in the Mexican state of Nayarit on 8 August 2016 (*pers. comm.* Manuel Grosselet 2017). The band was authorized for a Blue-black Grassquit, which isn't as showy of a bird as a male Painted Bunting. Since the two species do not look similar, it is likely that a Painted Bunting was banded with a band issued for another species because a Painted Bunting would sell for more money than a Blue-black Grassquit would. Grosselet shared James and Bailey's photo documentation of this bird with SEMARNAT employees, in case the Mexican government wants to take action against the bird seller for misusing his permit.



Figure 6. The metal band removed from the leg of the Painted Bunting specimen, reading "SEMARNAT I 420901." Photo by Joni James and Tim Bailey.

Conclusion

It is impossible to know what happened to the Howard County Painted Bunting in the period of time after it was captured from the wild in Nayarit, Mexico, and banded by an individual with the intent to sell it as a cage bird. Presumably, it was smuggled into the U.S. and at some point either escaped or was intentionally released back into the wild, eventually ending up dead beneath power lines in Howard County, Indiana. The bird's appearance was that of a wild vagrant that had traveled to Indiana under its own power. It was found during the time of year and in a location that suggested it was not transported by man. Even the apparent cause of death (by collision with powerlines) seemed to indicate a wild vagrant bird. Were it not for the information recovered from the band on its leg, this bird may have been accepted as Indiana's fourth record Painted Bunting.

Acknowledgments

I appreciate Manuel Grosselet's efforts to track down band information and share it with me. Thank you to Joni James and Tim Bailey for providing information and photographs of the specimen. Kudos to Josh Douglass for finding, photographing, and making a special trip back to collect the specimen. Thanks also to Don Gorney for editing an earlier version of this article.

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The 2017 Indiana Audubon Society Big May Day Count

Matt Kalwasinski, Munster, IN
mattkalwasinski@yahoo.com

Amy Wilms, Connersville, IN
wilmsab@indianaaudubon.org

The Big May Day Bird Count (BMDBC) was conducted state-wide on Saturday, May 13th, 2017. The objective of the BMDBC is to count the number of birds of each species that occurs in a participating county from midnight to midnight on the second Saturday in May. The data collected provides a valuable scientific record of the resident and migratory bird populations occurring each year in Indiana. Weather conditions were much better than they were in 2016 with the average high temperature of 74.8 F (versus only 51.9 F last year) and average low of 48.4 F across the state. Participating counties reported very minimal cloud cover, little wind, and only a few counties reported trace amounts of precipitation.

Gibson, Green, Lake, Porter, and Vigo each reported 150+ individual species seen with Porter County taking top honors this year with 165 species.

Forty Nine of the 92 Indiana counties (53%) participated in this year's count (*See Indiana Map below.*) This is slightly down from last year, but still above the average of 40.5 from 1991 through 2017. I would personally like to applaud everyone's dedication to this event, be it your first year or your fortieth. (*See the "Years of Participation" as well as "Participation List" for this year.*)

This year, 233 bird species totaling 120,301 individuals were recorded, which is below the average of 238 and 147,433 between 1991 and 2017. Thirteen species only had 1 individual reported, which included Trumpeter Swan (Lake), American Wigeon (Tippecanoe), Northern Pintail (Greene), Snowy Egret (Lake), Little Blue Heron (Wells), Merlin (Greene), Stilt Sandpiper (Porter), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Noble), Winter Wren (Porter), Golden-crowned Kinglet (Porter), Connecticut Warbler (Greene), Western Meadowlark (Newton), and Yellow-headed Blackbird (Lake).

Once again, Red-winged Blackbirds were the most numerous species found with 11,666 reported, followed by American Robin, European Starling, Canada Goose, and Blue Jay. Top honors for the most numerous Neotropical migrant was Barn Swallow (2,048) with Common Yellowthroat (2,035) close behind. (*See tables below.*)

Most Numerous Resident Bird Counts 2007-2017 (2014 NOT included)

Species	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017	Average
Red-winged Blackbird	12241	10583	12743	10232	9947	10010	9555	10786	10326	11666	10,809
American Robin	8532	8085	9990	11545	8987	9554	7765	7948	8524	7121	8,805
European Starling	9262	8517	10026	11594	8327	7198	7163	6950	9135	6724	8,490
Canada Goose	6747	6719	6896	6694	5413	7391	5613	6240	8501	6240	6,645
Common Grackle	7319	5938	5905	5894	5203	4871	3984	4066	4876	3612	5,167
House Sparrow	3393	3386	3560	3281	3435	3935	3232	3888	3252	3679	3,504
Northern Cardinal	3684	3595	3351	2914	3360	3312	3129	3386	2937	3460	3,313
Ring-billed Gull	3355	2534	3568	4941	2779	1823	2518	1980	4252	1570	2,932
Mourning Dove	3193	2915	2878	2459	2803	3181	2863	2309	2242	2193	2,704
American Goldfinch	3170	2946	3054	2441	2479	2398	2564	2165	1955	1963	2,514
Brown-headed Cowbird	2617	2449	2976	2421	2157	2384	2342	1936	1966	1974	2,322
Mallard	1997	2050	1817	2098	1830	1858	1724	1723	1900	1547	1,854
American Crow	1418	1472	1787	1806	1710	1701	1617	1694	2044	1599	1,685
Song Sparrow	1819	1864	1619	1340	1599	1872	1594	1439	1443	1986	1,658
Rock Pigeon	1092	1302	1278	1425	1006	825	1241	1246	1341	799	1,156

Most Numerous Neotropical Migrant Bird Counts 2007-2017 (2014 NOT included)

Species	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017	Average
Barn Swallow	2178	2087	3098	4854	3102	2400	3852	1915	5382	2048	3,092
Tree Swallow	2475	2421	3777	4294	2330	1883	4426	1925	4462	1926	2,992
Indigo Bunting	2234	2009	2295	1420	2358	2751	1573	1829	1439	1980	1,989
Gray Catbird	2009	2186	1994	1342	1725	1903	1687	1877	1585	1992	1,830
Common Yellowthroat	1485	1834	1659	1210	1749	2396	1765	1615	1364	2035	1,711
Chipping Sparrow	1792	1991	1930	1493	1610	1777	1249	1484	1432	1297	1,606
Cliff Swallow	2001	1202	1721	1893	1097	2387	1615	788	1959	1305	1,597
Chimney Swift	1619	1746	2264	1301	1397	1771	1540	1170	575	1254	1,464
Yellow Warbler	1375	1811	1480	1113	1426	1576	1439	1567	1038	1795	1,462
Baltimore Oriole	1424	1369	1508	1031	1286	1309	1212	1530	1258	1695	1,362
Purple Martin	1028	1537	1508	907	1738	1550	984	983	1051	845	1,213
Northern Rough-winged Sw.	877	992	1974	1878	858	633	1644	634	1504	730	1,172
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	653	863	1277	782	976	961	1022	1134	973	1255	990
House Wren	1052	1302	1225	789	747	900	714	781	654	1268	943
Bank Swallow	582	745	881	1847	505	709	832	388	1504	407	840

Thank you to all the compilers and observers for their participation, and on behalf of the Indiana Audubon Society, we look forward to your continued participation next year on Saturday, May 12, 2018.

<i>Years of Participation - After the 2017 May Count</i>			
<i>*If you see an error or an omission, please contact me at matkkalwasinski@yahoo.com</i>			
<i>40 years or more</i>	<i>30 years or more</i>	<i>20 years or more</i>	<i>10 years or more</i>
Chuck Mills	Dick Davis	Joan Tweedell	Shannon Lee
Vic Riemenschneider	Larry Parker	Susan Bagby	Linda Leliaert
Marge Riemenschneider	Joe Long	Mike Donnelly	Jan McGowan
Gene Coleman	Kathy Long	Mary Beth Eberwein	Steve Lima
Dick Fessenden	Joy Bower	Carole Riewe	Lynda McGinnis
Louise Fessenden	Kevin Carlson	Jo Borrer	Michael R. Brown
	John Bentley	Larry Beiberich	Bob Brodman
	Alice Bentley	John Cassady	Denise Sobieski
	Cindy Conway	Scottie Theiss	Kim Harmon
	Gordon Hug	Carol Hyatt	Dakin Polan
	Bill Poindexter	Carolyn Marsh	
	Stuart Jenkins	Jim Simon	
	Larry Lock	Margaret Tamar	
	Pat Lock	Christine Salberg	
	Rosemary Toepp	Jim Sweeney	
	Mary Ann Jenkins	Wendy Cassady	
	Kathy Fuller	Michael Topp	
	Laura Fuderer	Nancy Reiter	
	Ed Powers	Dan Collins	
	Bob Leliaert	Phil Snider	
	Dennis Richardson	Jenny Snider	
	Dave Reichlinger	Brian Taylor	
	Barb Dodge	Ken Tweedell	
		Dick Bonness	
		Kathy Strecker	

2017 Participant List

1. **Adams, Complier:** Terri Gorney **Observers:** Terri Gorney, David Reichlinger, Bill Hubbard, Sherry Hubbard, Randy Lehman, Larry Parker, Janet Parker,
2. **Allen, Complier:** Ed Powers **Observers:** Ed Powers, Cynthia Powers, David Ward, Mark Derloshon, Rodger Rang, Sandy Schacht, Valerie Pelz, Galen Yordy, Stephanie Wagner, Sue Zwierko, Phil Wixom, Gaeme Wright, Rubin Stark, Jim Seely
3. **Benton, Complier & Observer:** Carl Vogelwede
4. **Boone, Compiler & Observer:** Dwight Moser
5. **Brown, Compiler:** Marcia Walker **Observers:** Jennifer Schall, Marcia Walker
6. **Clark, Compiler:** Stuart Jenkins **Observers:** Stuart Jenkins, Larry Lock, Pat Lock, Del Streigle, Kathy Strecker,
7. **Crawford, Compiler:** Stuart Tower **Observer:** Stuart Tower
8. **Dearborn, Compiler:** Bob Decker **Observers:** Bob Decker
9. **Elkhart, Complier:** Lindsay Grossman **Observers:** Trice Berkely, John Davis, Rose Marie Tinder-O'Brien, Mary Kauffmann-Kennel, LouAnne Hostetler, Lindsay Grossmann, Robert Guth, Annie Aquirre, Ronda DeCaire, Marilyn Horvath, Carolyn Farrow, Russ Kremer, Joyce Weler, Leland Shaum, Carole Mitchel, Judy Ferrell, Elma Chapman, Kristen Sweinhart, Tanner Troyer, Brenda Tudor, Sylvia Steed, Michale Steed,
10. **Fayette, Compiler:** Carl Wilms **Observers:** Carl Wilms, Michael Hall, Amy Wilms, Alexandar Sharp, Sheri McCollough, Austin Boardwater
11. **Floyd, Compiler:** Joseph Caruso **Observers:** Joseph Caruso, Deborah Caruso
12. **Gibson, Compiler:** Charles Mills **Observers:** Dan Collins, Ben Fritz, Charles Mills, Chris Newman, Richard Vernier, Sue Vernier, Vicky Whitaker, Health Harlan, Logon Harlan, Gary Bowman, Lisa Bowman, Julie Farme, Liz Haig, Beth Hanson
13. **Grant, Compiler:** Kim Roll **Observers:** Kim Roll, Meg Roll, Shellie Goodlander
14. **Greene, Complier:** Jess Gwinn **Observers:** Ray Brumfiel, Jess Gwinn, Maureen Forrest, Donald Hall, Anne Roberts, Joan ten Hoor, Jim Brown, Lee Sterrenburg, Jerry Downs, Jim Hengeveld, Susan Hengeveld, Jeff Regiel, Sandy Belth, Jeff Belth, marsue Jackson, Heidi Ellis, Ann Maxwell
15. **Hamilton, Compiler:** Amanda Smith **Observers:** Kathryn Mascaro, Bruce Blackwell, Linda Downer, Kevin Cornell, Kevin Wycoff, Christy Brocken, Alee, Keith Starling, Marty Williams, Leslie Warner, Plooy Nicely, Lyn Berling, Gordon Chastin, Jeff Canada, June DeLong, Terry Ballenger, Becky Heck, Jay Park, Norm Eden, Richard Wiesler, Becky Summer
16. **Hancock, Compiler:** Gail McNierney **Observers:** Ben Hess, Gail McNierney
17. **Harrison Compiler:** Stuart Tower **Observer:** Stuart Tower
18. **Howard, Complier:** Samuel Morrow **Observers:** Samuel Morrow
19. **Hunnington Complier:** Angie Quinn **Observers:** Angie Quinn, Steve Nagy
20. **Jackson, Compiler:** Donna Stanley **Observers:** David Crouch, Darlena Graham, Gary Dorman, Becky Dorman, Gary Dorman Sr., Nancy Dorman
21. **Jasper, Compiler:** Tim Rice **Observers:** Tim Rice, Bob Brodman, Amber MacInnis

22. **Jefferson, Compiler:** Bill Poindexter **Observers:** Bill Poindexter, Dick Davis, Kevin Carlson, Andy Simpson, Kalya Simpson, Matt Demaree, Terry Bunton, Velma Simpson, Kim Kirschner
23. **Johnson, Compiler:** Tom Hougham **Observers:** Ann Deutch, Tom Hougham, Bob Carper, Tammy Carper, Paula Baldwin, Kim Charles, Karl Werner, Balir Beavers, Jay Bolden, Alley Muir, Chuck Lunsford, Karen Lunsford, Barbara Otte, Mike Clay, Kim Higdon
24. **Kuscusco, Compiler:** Gregory Clark **Observers:** Connie Doud, Steve Doud, Dave Hicks, Deb Hustin, Lila O'Connell, James Townsend, Jerry Sweeten, Suzanne Beyeler, Jason Martin, Steve Hammer, Andy Rich, Gregory Clark, Steve Naragon, Casey Jones, Jennifer Jones, Al Crist
25. **Lake, Compiler:** Lynda McGinnis **Observers:** Joy Bower, DeNay Cortez, Jose Cortez, Sarah de la Rue, Loyce Fandrei, Jolene Hanchar, Kim Harmon, David Homrich, Kathy Homrich, Carolyn Marsh, Gayle McBride, Lynda McGinnis, Christine Salberg, Jim Sweeney, Michael Topp, Rick Welton, Dave Koester, David Dornberg, Fran Bascom, Tim Sweeney, Alice Korblum, Christine Weatherby, Destinee Wolfe, Andy Bencur, Joann Palko
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27. **Lawrence, Compiler:** Amy Kearns **Observers:** Amy Kearns, Howard Detweiler, Gary Langell, Cathy Meyer, Bob Ball
28. **Madison, Compiler:** Jeff Timmons **Observers:** Jeff Timmons
29. **Marion, Compiler:** Don Gorney **Observers:** Mark Rhodes, Don Gorney
30. **Marshall, Compiler:** Lynn Vernon **Observers:** Lynn Vernon, Neal Miller, Jeremy Miller
31. **Martin, Compiler:** Grant Burcham **Observers:** Grant Burcham, Alisha Burcham
32. **Mongtgomery, Compiler:** Alice Bruner **Observer:** Alan Bruner, Rusty McIntyre, Kyle Rush, Clint Murry
33. **Morgan, Compiler:** Joni James **Observers:** Joni James, Tim Bailey, Doug Johns, Pat Clark
34. **Newton, Compiler:** Ed Hopkins **Observers:** Ed Hopkins
35. **Noble, Compiler:** John Winebrenner **Observers:** John Winebrenner, Lisa Silvey, Will Searer, Mary Helfrich, Eric Helfrich, Rod Strayer, Susan Beck, Larry Biebrich, Ron Korte, Joyce Gottschalk, Niel Case, Laura Case, Judy Strayer, Codispoti, Sue Skekloff, Sam Plew, Tiffany Crawford
36. **Orange, Compilers and Observers:** John Lindsey
37. **Perry, Compiler:** Harriet Neill **Observers:** Harriet Neill, Damin
38. **Porter, Compiler:** Randy Pals **Observers:** Patrick Krueger, Jeff McCoy, Kristin Stratton, Penny Starin, John Kendall, Susan Cohen, Dan Czilli, Matt Beatty, Madison Beatty, Maricela Aviles, Lynea Hinchman, Kathie Fritz, Jack Swelstad, Matt Kalwasinski, Brendan Grube, Pete Grube, Kristin Grube, Ken Brock, Dick Knutson, Cathy Anderson, Perry Cozza, Tim Cole, Nicole Haller Braner, Saj Braner, Bettie Haller, Bruce Haller, Robert Hatfield, Billy Sherrell, Bernie Konrady.
39. **Randolph, Compiler:** Connie Howell **Observers:** Connie Howell, Tom Howell, Nina Howell, Malinda Howell, Ben Shreves, Daniel McCord, Lora McCord

40. **St. Joseph, Compiler:** Louise Fessenden **Observers:** Bob Leliaert, Linda Leliaert, John Bentley, Alice Bentley, John Cassady, John Kaehr, Scott Namestnik, Jo Borrer, Vic Riemenschneider, Marge Riemenschneider, Carol Goodall, Richard Fessenden, Louise Fessenden, Robert Fessenden, Gordon Hug, Ken Tweedell, Jim Spier, Laura Fuderer, Michael Klingerman, Cindy Conway, Michael Donnelly, George Bernard, Jennifer Betz, Heidi Gray, Melissa Paar, Tai Gunter, Martha Kummerer, Kathy Maloney, Nancy Shephard, Kay Eason, Steve Sass, Jude Keltner, Dale Keltner, June Kohler, Dan Brazo, Kristen Sweinhart, Phil Sloan, Heather Downey
41. **Spencer, Compiler:** David Ayer **Observers:** David Ayer, John Meredig
42. **Starke, Compiler:** Kim Ehn **Observers:** Kim Ehn
43. **Tippecanoe, Compiler:** Barny Dunning **Observers:** Delano Arvin, Kevin Arvin, Joyce Brattian, Michael Brattian, Barny Dunning, John Skene, Becky Theller, Larry Theller, Marjorie Arvin, Kimberly Cheesman, Jean Herr, Amy Wetzel, Wes Homoya, George Kopka, Patrick Ruhl
44. **Vanderburgh, Compiler:** Stephen Heeger **Observers:** Sharon Giles, James Lodato, Vivian Ruff, Allan Langen, Chris Langen, Ron Giles, Carolyn Barron, Steve Heeger, Lisa Hoffman, Marilyn Swonder, Lois Schmidt, D. Litov, T. Hall, W. Hall, G. Hartman, S. Moore, T. Breidenbach, J. Giles, E. Giles, L. Giles, S. Karger, C. Pettys, D. Datema, D. Cissna
45. **Vigo, Compiler:** Peter E. Scott **Observers:** George Bakken, Laura Bakken, Dick Bonness, Nicholas Brown, Jane Chestnut, Mary Beth Eberwien, Marty Jones, Carissa Lovett, Ellen Lunsford, Bill Mitchell, Denise Sobieski, Ben Cvengos, Steve Lima, Margaret Moga, Dylan Nesty, Ann Black, Bruce Black, Kristal Burdick, Joe Dickson, Richard Burden, Joy Sacopulos, Jim Sullivan, Margaret Tamar, Paul Wassel, Dan Weber
46. **Warren, Compiler:** Susan H. Ulrich **Observers:** Susan Ulrich, Joanna Billiard, Ellen Tobias, Louise Decker, Shelly Foran, Brain Behelr, Amanda Beheler, Ohoebe Beheler, Liam Beheler, Callum Beheler
47. **Warrick, Compiler:** Jim Campell **Observers:** Jim Campbell, Mary Jo Campbell
48. **Wayne, Compiler:** Jim Seaney **Observers:** Jim Seaney, Ron Williams, Rose Marie Othmer
49. **Wells, Compiler:** Kathy Fuller **Observers:** Kathy Fuller, Carolyn Graham, Norma Lavanchy, Pam Olsen, Bob Spicer, Jerry Moser, Rose Moser, Pay Dyson, Jim Miller, Hayden Hammond, Scott Hammond, Rita Knowles, Tom Walker, Molly Walker, Esther Frauhiger, Tina Morris, Jody Heaston

2017 INDIANA COUNTY PARTICIPATION MAP – 49 OUT OF 92 COUNTIES

Yellow = a participating county



IAS BMDBC Annual Data

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
May Count Date	11	9	8	14	13	11	10	9	8	13
Total Counties	39	41	42	43	42	39	45	47	44	45
Total Species Observed	229	229	228	224	228	246	249	242	248	243
Total Birds Counted	149,990	169,504	154,130	154,343	158,533	166,232	191,971	178,202	167,902	160,214
Total Observers	537	576	554	533	537	630	637	656	585	577
Total Observer Hours	1,968	2,157	1,957	2,110	1,842	1,759	2,432	2,245	1,804	1,828
Birds Per Observer	279	294	278	290	295	264	301	272	287	278
Birds Per Observer Hour	76	79	79	73	86	95	79	79	93	88

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
May Count Date	12	11	10	8	14	13	12	10	9	8
Total Counties	47	41	42	40	40	39	36	36	42	34
Total Species Observed	234	241	240	238	236	241	239	243	251	233
Total Birds Counted	164,728	140,532	153,567	162,991	141,504	148,920	131,598	129,535	141,604	128,137
Total Observers	553	499	480	506	498	476	446	488	487	487
Total Observer Hours	1,817	1,390	1,516	1,904	1,808	1,637	1,761	1,676	1,701	1,745
Birds Per Observer	298	282	320	322	284	313	295	265	291	263
Birds Per Observer Hour	91	101	101	86	78	91	75	77	83	73

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
May Count Date	14	12	11	N/A	9	14	13
Total Counties	29	35	31	N/A	32	53	49
Total Species Observed	237	236	238	N/A	244	241	233
Total Birds Counted	119,710	132,737	120,694	N/A	116,729	128,958	120,301
Total Observers	461	476	414	N/A	376	403	365
Total Observer Hours	1,563	1,670	1,490	N/A	1449.00	1462.41	1445.57
Birds Per Observer	260	279	292	N/A	310.45	320.00	329.59
Birds Per Observer Hour	77	79	81	N/A	80.56	88.18	83.22

	mean	high	low
May Count Date	11	14	8
Total Counties (92 possible)	40.5	53	29
Total Species Observed	238.154	251	224
Total Birds Counted	147,433	191,971	119,710
Total Observers	509.115	656	414
Total Observer Hours	1,774	2432	1390
Birds Per Observer	290.848	322	260
Birds Per Observer Hour	83.537	101	73



Bald Eagle by Bob Brodman – Jasper



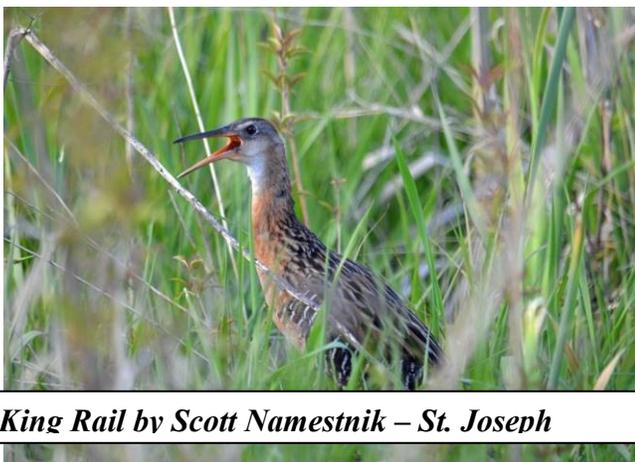
Northern Bobwhite by Ben Cvengos – Vigo



King Rail by Dan Kaiser – Jackson



Indigo Bunting by Dwight Moser – Boone



King Rail by Scott Namestnik – St. Joseph



Magnolia Warbler by Dwight Moser – Boone



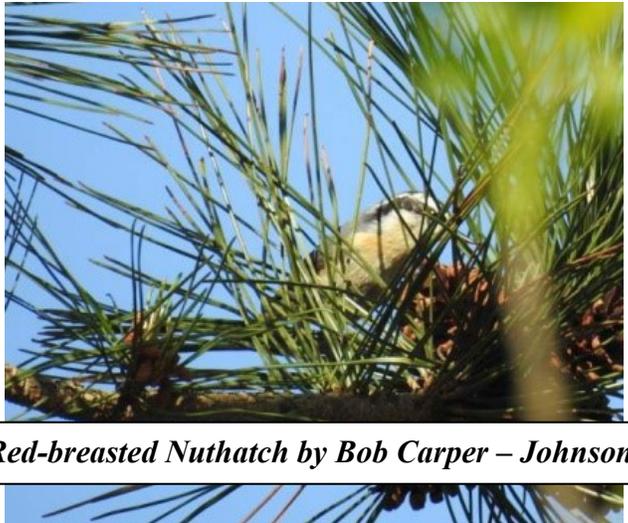
Black Vulture by Bob Carper – Johnson



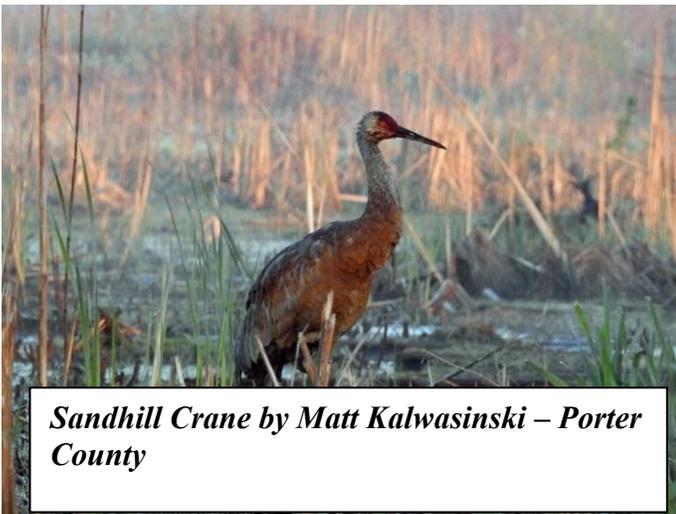
Gray-cheeked Thrush by Tim Rice – Jasper



American White Pelicans by Bob Brodman – Jasper



Red-breasted Nuthatch by Bob Carper – Johnson



Sandhill Crane by Matt Kalwasinski – Porter County



Black-necked Stilts by Steve Lima – Vigo County

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) in Indiana

Benjamin E. Leese, Mechanicsburg, PA

ben.leese@gmail.com

Abstract: Along with other states in the Ohio River valley, there is relatively little evidence of the past occurrence of the ivory-billed woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) in Indiana. There are imprecise references in the work of Audubon and Baird, and more specific references from Jennings, Franklin, Monroe, Posey, and Martin counties. This article reports evidence that merits considering the species on the official checklist of birds for the state, albeit as an extirpated one.

Introduction: A variety of early comments and records suggest the past occurrence of the ivorybill in Indiana. However, the state of the evidence leaves the issue incompletely resolved, and the species does not appear on the official state checklist (Indiana Bird Records Committee 2013), although the similarly extinct carolina parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) and passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) are present on that list. Records of historical occurrences of non-game bird species are not always easy to recover (see Leese 2006b for a full description of the various weights of evidence). In the case of Indiana, only records in neighboring states (Leese 2011, 2006a, b), vague state-wide references, and sight references (which lack the documentation necessary for modern sight record) exist for the ivory-bill. It is likely that archaeological evidence of the species' occurrence exists for the state (as in the case of neighboring Ohio), but it has not yet come to light. There is evidence to support the past occurrence of the ivory-bill in Jennings, Franklin, Monroe, Posey, and Martin counties.

Vague state-wide references: Audubon (1842) and Baird et al. (1874) make enigmatic reference to the ivory-bill nesting in Indiana. Audubon (1842) writes, "In Kentucky and Indiana the Ivory bills seldom raise more than one brood in the season." Audubon lived much of his life in Henderson, Kentucky on the Ohio River, and so he might have had some first hand knowledge of the ivory-bill in Indiana. Baird's reference is likely based on Audubon's observance, and so should not be admitted as independent evidence. In his review of the faunal changes in Indiana, A. W. Butler also notes the ivory-bill as a past resident of the state (1895:35) Besides these, more rarely, Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus* L.) and Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (*Campephilus principalis* L.) added their characteristic forms to the wild scenery. Like the previous reference, this reference without specific geography cannot be admitted as strong evidence, especially because it relies upon Butler's other published comments on the ivory-bill in Indiana (see below). There is also an entirely unsatisfying reference to Wilson having observed the species in the northernmost part of its range, possibly in Indiana. Butler (1897) writes: Undoubtedly, too, Wilson gained his knowledge from his trip down the Ohio River in 1810, to write the beautiful tribute to it, beginning, "Majestic bird the broad Ohio knows its presence well."

Although Wilson did travel down the Ohio that year, there does not appear to be other documentation of this quote that Butler attributes to Wilson. And Wilson's account of the species in American Ornithology (1828) doubts that the species could be found north of Virginia (but see Wilson in Hunter 1983:219-20). As a group, none of these vague references are substantial enough to admit the species to the state list.

Franklin and Monroe Counties: The fullest report of the species' status in these Indiana counties comes from Butler (1892): Dr. Haymond notes it as a former resident of Franklin County, but says "none have been seen for many years." ...He informed me they formerly were found in the swampy woodland in the eastern part of the county about what were called the 'Beaver Ponds.' Prof. Evermann informs me that they were formerly found in Monroe County, also having been identified many years ago by the late Louis Bollman. This record from Franklin County has a long history in the literature (Haymond 1869, Langdon 1879, Wheaton 1879, Butler 1885, Butler 1886, Hasbrouck 1891, Butler 1892, Dawson 1903, Jones 1903). Although vague by contemporary standards, it has the benefit of a number of observers with noted authority.

Posey and Martin Counties: Ridgway (1874), in a paper on the birds of Illinois, writes that the ivory-bill can be found on the "Ohio, lower Mississippi (?) [sic] and lower Wabash bottoms only." Ridgway (1889) also notes: The writer has a distinct recollection of what he believes to have been this species in White county, some forty miles south of Mount Carmel, but never observed it in the vicinity of the latter place. White County, Illinois is separated from Posey County, Indiana by the Wabash River, so the species could very well have been present on both sides of the river. However, Ridgway's authority on this issue is generally not accepted (Jackson 2006).

Another interesting reference comes from the work of Prince Maximilian von Wied, a famous naturalist who briefly resided in New Harmony, Indiana in the early 1830s. In a paper published in his native Germany, he writes:

Ich will hier schliesslich noch bemerken, dass auch der grosse weisschnäblige Specht (Picus principalis) zuweilen in den südlichsten von uns berührten Gegenden vorkommt, bei Natchez soll er schon vorkommen, mehr aber am unteren Mississippi [sic] und in den südlichen Staaten.

The above translates to: I want to conclude by remarking that the big white-beaked woodpecker (Picus principalis) occasionally appears in the southernmost areas from us; already it has appeared near Natchez; however there are more at the lower Mississippi and in the southern states.

While it seems clear that von Wied did not observe the bird himself, his writing indicates his confidence that it occurred in Natchez. The difficulty comes in determining whether he was referring to Natchez, Mississippi or Natchez, Indiana. Von Wied never visited Natchez, Mississippi, although his colleague artist, Karl Bodmer, did venture as far south as New Orleans during von Wied's illness at New Harmony in 1832 and painted scenes in Natchez, Mississippi where he stayed for about eight days when returning from New Orleans (Bodmer 1984, plate 98). von Wied is either mentioning Natchez, Mississippi as the northernmost point on the Mississippi River at which he is aware of the ivory-bill's occurrence, which seems remarkably far south compared to other observers such as Audubon (1842) who notes it as far north as the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi or he is mentioning a vagrant in Natchez, Indiana but indicating the south for the bulk of the species' range. It is possible that von Wied is writing from his own observations, as he travelled overland across southern Indiana during the eastward part of his journey, a route that would have taken him near Natchez, Indiana or he may have made a trip there during his convalescence at New Harmony. The answer to which Natchez von Wied references is unclear from his notes, but it is an intriguing note from a prominent naturalist in either case.

One should also note a reference to the ivory-bill from directly south of New Harmony, Posey County, but across the Ohio River into Kentucky. Charles J. O'Malley (1884) notes: The crimson-crested woodpecker (*picus principalis*) [sic] is there, too, nor is the glossy, black-coated woodcock wanting, although his species is rapidly passing away from our forests... The description of the two woodpecker species side by side, the other being the pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), makes it almost certain that O'Malley is recording an ivorybill. This reference just across the Ohio from Indiana, gives extra credence to the references from Indiana proper.

Jennings County: There is also a reference to the species from near Vernon in Jennings County, Indiana, southwest of Franklin County. This record was not noted until recently (Leese 2006). S. A. Ferrall (1832) writes that just before fording the Muscatatuck River: I was awoke [sic] at sunrise by a 'white-billed woodpecker,' which was making the woods ring by the rattling of its bill against a tree. This is a large handsome bird, (the *picus principalis* of Linnaeus), it is sometimes called here the woodcock. The names "white-billed woodpecker" and "wood-cock" are well represented in other early records (Catesby 1754, Filson 1784, Wilson 1828), suggesting the validity of this record. This reference also adds credence to those from Franklin County. It is notable in that it is the only sight record of the species recovered for the state that gives some description of the encounter.

Conclusions: While still lacking archaeological evidence, Indiana has multiple references and records to the past occurrence of the ivory-billed woodpecker in the state. Ferrall's observation is especially noteworthy in providing good evidence of its past occurrence. Good archaeological material from the Muskingum and Scioto Rivers of Ohio (Leese 2006) and sight reference from the Great Miami River in Ohio (Leese 2011) makes it extremely likely that the species once occurred in Indiana. This emerging evidence of the ivory-bill inhabiting the Ohio River in historic times supports the emerging hypotheses that the species was more mobile than is commonly accepted, could range widely to take advantage of a wide variety of food resources, and that hunting was the main contributing factor to its extinction (Snyder et al 2009, Snyder 2007). Based on the records assembled here, the Indiana Bird Records Committee may wish to reconsider the ivory-billed woodpecker's status on the state list and include it as an extinct species, or at least as an extinct-hypothetical.

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About the author: Ben Leese is a 2003 graduate of Valparaiso University. He is currently pastor of a cooperative of Lutheran churches in York Springs, Pennsylvania. He also volunteers as a collections assistant at the Oakes Museum of Natural History at Messiah College. This is his fifth article on the northern range of the ivory-billed woodpecker.

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