

# Stockbridge Audubon



---

*Representing Northeast Indiana*

P.O. Box 13131, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46864

## **President's Message: Big Changes in the Newsletter**

I mentioned last time that there could be changes on the horizon for our newsletter. So you probably aren't totally surprised by the different look of this edition. The board regretted parting with the familiar old format; however, the cost of printing that type of newsletter was becoming prohibitive. Stockbridge receives a stipend from National Audubon, but it doesn't provide enough income to cover the minimum four newsletters per year that our bylaws require, plus additional expenses the club incurs.

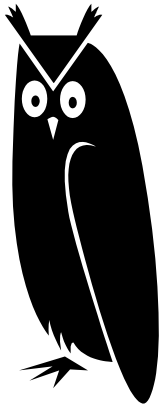
We considered mailing a paper newsletter only to those members who told us that they wanted one; everyone else would have been sent a reminder to visit the website each time a new newsletter was available for viewing. There was concern, though, that because a paper publication provides a tangible link between the membership and the organization, the lack of one might be detrimental to Stockbridge.

It was decided to continue with a paper letter if we could find a less-expensive way to produce it. We investigated several options, and the Third World Shoppe in Fort Wayne had the lowest quote of the groups we checked. We expect to save enough money to continue as is for the foreseeable future. An additional benefit is the support we'll provide to this worthwhile organization. (The Shoppe, located at 611 West Wayne St., stocks many unusual, socially-conscious, environmentally-friendly products.)

Have fun perusing the "new" newsletter!

From Julie Henricks

<p>Mark your calendar: Annual Meeting Sunday, April 23, 2 p.m. at Fox Island John Castrale, Indiana DNR Non-Game Biologist will speak (Topic to be announced)</p>
---



## Bird Notes By Jim Haw OCTOBER 1, 2005-FEBRUARY 1, 2006

The most remarkable story of the period came from Dave Yoder of Topeka, Lagrange County, transmitted through Joseph Bontrager. After all of Yoder's Purple Martins left last fall, a pair came back on Sept. 18. On Sept. 24, seven immatures joined them. The birds gradually left, except for one female, which was captured in an emaciated condition on Nov. 18. The bird was nursed back to health and released in Florida.

The mild fall resulted in a number of other late birds: three Least Sandpipers at Engle Rd. wetland, Ft. Wayne, Nov. 1 (Ed Powers); a Solitary Sandpiper at Salamonie Res. Oct. 15 (Stockbridge field trip), record late by 10 days; 5 Greater Yellowlegs in two Steuben Co. locations Nov. 17, record late by one day (Jim Haw, Sandy Schacht); a Pectoral Sandpiper at Fawn River Fish Hatchery Nov. 22 (Haw, Schacht); a Forster's Tern at Cedarville Reservoir Oct. 23-Nov. 1, record late by 7 days (Haw et al); a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Pokagon State Park Oct. 25 (Fred Wooley); Warbling Vireo at Fox Island Oct. 4 (Frannie Headings et al); White-eyed Vireo at Pigeon River Nov. 1, record late by 15 days (Haw, Headings, Schacht) and a Gray Catbird there the same day; Magnolia and Bay-breasted Warblers at Fox Is. Oct. 13 (Haw, Schacht), both tying record late dates. A Virginia Rail at Pigeon River Dec. 18 (Jeff McCoy) and Jan. 5 (Haw, Schacht) was attempting to winter.

It was a very good fall for rare gulls. A Sabine's Gull at Fawn River Fish Hatchery Oct. 6 (Haw, Schacht) was exceptional. The other two rarities were both at Salamonie: Franklin's Gull Nov. 3 (Haw, Schacht) and Lesser Black-backed Gull Nov. 19 (Haw, Schacht). Winter rarities were a Golden Eagle at Pigeon River Jan. 19-21 (Marisa Windell et al) and a Ross' Goose at Cedarville Reservoir Jan. 4 (Haw).

Among more expected species, two Snow Geese at Lake Clare, Huntington, Dec. 3 (Jeff Moore) were the only ones of the period. A White-winged Scoter was on Crooked Lake, Steuben Co. Nov. 1 (Haw, Headings, Schacht). Two Short-eared Owls were found near Spencerville Jan. 14 (John Winebrenner et al). Northern Shrike reports came from Huntington Res. Nov. 29 (Haw, Schacht) and Chain O' Lakes State Park Dec. 24 (McCoy). Eighty Lapland Longspurs and 5 Snow Buntings in Allen Co. Dec. 10 (Casey Ryan) was the biggest flock of two winter species that were scarce this year. Probably wintering E. Meadowlarks were in Allen Co. Dec. 11 (Rachel McNett) and in mid-January (Warren Mead). Remarkable for the number were 1200 Rusty Blackbirds at Fawn River Nov. 17 (Haw, Schacht). Few Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were reported. A Turkey Vulture in Allen Co. Jan. 29 (Mead) was probably a remarkably early spring migrant.

### Bird of the Month: the Black-Capped Chickadee By Warren Mead

There are several birds that are named after the songs or calls they make, and our featured bird—the black-capped chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)—falls within that category. The call of this sprightly bird is represented very accurately in field guides as “chick-a-dee-dee-dee”. In addition to that, the song of the black-capped chickadee is a very high-pitched “fee-bee” or “fee-bee-bee”. Although the chickadee will sound its call throughout the year, it is in late-winter/early spring, when they begin to sing. As a matter of fact, the woods around our house are now playing host to this most-welcome early sign of spring.

The black-capped chickadee reaches a length of about 5 \_ inches and sports a black “bib”, white cheeks and a mostly-gray upper body—in addition to its namesake black “cap”. It appears very similar in appearance to the Carolina chickadee, with the former having some white on its wings. Other than that, it is very difficult to tell the two species apart, visually. The best way to differentiate between the two is by their songs. As noted above, the black-capped sings “fee-bee” whereas the Carolina sings “fee-bee, fee-bay”.

**This is important, because Allen County is in a thin geographic band in which the two species co-exist.**

Those of you who participate in Project Feederwatch know that it is proper in this area to mark the box that lists both species, rather than the individual boxes for each species.

Black-capped chickadees are common visitors to backyard feeders in woodlands and wooded suburbs. They enjoy black-oil sunflower seeds, safflower, nut pieces and suet. In the wild, they eat insects, weed seeds, tree seeds and tree buds. Chickadees are cavity-nesting birds that will take over old woodpecker holes, use nest boxes or even excavate their own hole, if the tree is rotted and the wood is soft enough. They form monogamous pairs in spring and prepare their nest with grasses, fur, feathers and moss. Six to eight eggs are laid which are white with brown spots. The eggs are brooded by the female and hatch after about 12 days. Both parents feed the nestlings until they fledge about 16 days later.