



Stockbridge Audubon

<http://members.aol.com//StockbridgeAS>

Representing Northeast Indiana

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

President's Message:

Last summer I received an email from Taldi Walter, who is the Alaska Field Coordinator for National Audubon. She had sent the note to all chapter presidents, offering to speak to any group who wanted to hear her. At that time our fall meeting was set, but we asked whether she would consider coming to our spring gathering, and she agreed.

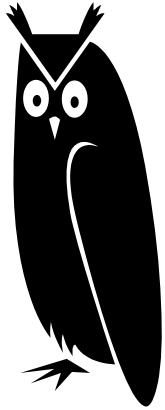
Taldi is going to travel all the way from Oregon, at no cost to Stockbridge, to present her program on Alaska. She'll be here on Sunday, **April 22 at 2:00 p.m. at the Fox Island Nature Center. Please plan to attend, and bring a friend or two if you like!** We want to have a big crowd to welcome her to Indiana (not to mention to make it worth her while to come all this way). There's no charge, except the **\$2 park admission**. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call one of the board members listed on the back of this newsletter, or email me at Julie.Henricks@ge.com.

Something else of which you should be aware is the fact that Stockbridge members always are welcome at our **board meetings**. The next one is scheduled for Monday, April 16, at 7:00 p.m. in room 34 of Achatz Hall at the University of St. Francis. Anyone who is interested in attending should call one of us beforehand, just to make sure that the meeting still is "on" – or email me.

This is the last President's message I'll be writing: after three years it's time for me to step aside and let someone else guide the organization. I've really enjoyed, and have been honored by, my time as president. Our new president, Gary Tieben, has led Stockbridge in the past; he's sure to do a terrific job in the future as well.

I hope to see you on April 22!

Julie Henricks



Bird Notes

By Jim Haw

February 6 to
March 25, 2007

Among wintering
birds of some note,
a Wood Duck was

in Steuben Co. Feb. 10 (Jim Haw, Sandy Schacht). Up to eight Short-eared Owls were in Lagrange Co. in Feb. (Joseph Bontrager, Ted Heemstra). Two Wilson's Snipe were in their usual winter microhabitat at Fawn River Fish Hatchery, Orland, Feb. 10 (Haw, Schacht). Red-breasted Nuthatches, scarce this winter, were found in Salamonie River State Forest Feb. 27 (Fran Headings et al); Rodger Rang's feeder in Ft. Wayne Mar. 6; and two in Steuben Co. Mar. 6 (Haw, Schacht). A Hermit Thrush visited Ted Heemstra's yard in Ft. Wayne from Jan. 30 through at least Feb. 12. An Eastern Towhee wintered in Fred Wooley's Steuben Co. yard. Five Eastern Meadowlarks were in Steuben Co. Feb. 10 (Haw, Schacht). A Fox Sparrow visited the Salamonie feeders Feb. 7 (Lynnanne Fager), and a Pine Siskin was at the Pokagon State Park feeders Feb. 14 (Wooley).

Spring migrants began to filter in as the weather warmed in March. The most notable were at Eagle Marsh on March 12: a Lesser Yellowlegs, northeast Indiana's earliest ever by 14 days (Ed & Cynthia Powers) and six Pectoral Sandpipers, record early by 7 days (Rang). Other, more expected early arrivals were a Cackling Goose in Allen Co. Mar. 11 (Haw); Turkey Vulture at Roanoke Feb. 24 (Jeff Moore); three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Ft. Wayne Mar. 22 (Rang); Eastern Phoebe at Salamonie Mar. 15 (Haw, Schacht); Tree Swallow in Allen Co. Mar. 13 (C. Powers); Eastern Towhee in Allen

Co. Mar. 14 (Powers); three Fox Sparrows in Salamonie River State Forest Mar. 15 (Haw, Schacht); Chipping Sparrow, Ft. Wayne, Mar. 22 (Rang); six Rusty Blackbirds at Pigeon River Mar. 20 (Marisa Windell et al); Purple Finch at Fox Island Mar. 21 (Powers).

Bird of the Month

By Warren Mead

GREAT BLUE HERON

Once legally hunted for its plumage and for its tendency to raid the fingerlings in fish hatcheries, the population of this month's featured bird, the Great Blue Heron, is once again stable, if not increasing.

This heron is the most widespread heron species in North America and is one of our largest wading birds as well. With a standing height of up to 52" and a wingspan of nearly six feet, this bird commands attention when it flies over your head. In flight, the Great Blue Heron holds its neck in an "s-curve" with its legs extended behind its body. (That's how you tell it from a Sandhill Crane.) The heron's slow, rhythmic wingbeats also make it easy to identify in flight.

Common in our area and even remaining during winter if there is open water (28 were tallied in the local 2006 Christmas Bird Count), the Great Blue Heron frequents marshes, swamps, retention ponds and water hazards on golf courses. Standing perfectly still, or slowly walking the shoreline, the Great Blue Heron stabs at its prey with a lightning-quick reflex of its large, dagger-like

bill. Small fish, crayfish, insects, frogs, snakes and even small mammals constitute the desired food of this heron.

Although very large birds, Great Blue Herons build big, rambling stick nests 20-60 feet high in trees. The same nest site may be used year after year, with new sticks added annually. A study of 44 nesting colonies in Indiana counted between 29 and 130 nests at each site.

Incubation of the young lasts 25-30 days and the fledglings stay in the nest for 65-90 days while being fed by both parents. One brood a year is raised by herons in our area.

The Great Blue Heron is not known for its singing voice, as it emits harsh croaks, usually in flight, as its only vocalization.

While in breeding plumage, these herons sport a black plume of feathers on the back of their heads, known as an occipital plume. Otherwise, they look the same year round with their blue-gray bodies, white head, and broken black stripe down their fore-neck.

And let's not overlook the fact that the Great Blue Heron serves as the "logo" for this chapter of the Audubon Society!



Big May Day Bird Count

On the second Saturday in May each year, Indiana Audubon Society sponsors the Big May Day Bird Count. Birders all over the state survey their respective counties and report the numbers of each species of bird they see that day. **This year the count is held on May 12.**

This day is chosen because it is normally close to the peak of spring migration; for example, there is a reasonable expectation that 30 species of warblers will be seen in Allen County that day. This is an excellent time to be out and learn more about our birds.

The count is conducted by a number of parties, each made up of two to four observers, at least one of them an experienced birder. Even if you can't tell a hawk from a heron, you can make a significant contribution, because the more eyes there are, the more birds will be seen. The more experienced birders will be on hand to help with identification.

For more information, or to volunteer for the count, contact the compiler listed below.

Allen County Ed Powers 260-638-4291 zzedpowers@aol.com
Noble County John Winebrenner 260- 373-2904 goshawk7@verizon.net



Volunteers Needed for Indiana Breeding Bird Atlas

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources conducted its first Breeding Bird Atlas in 1985-1990, to get data to produce accurate, up-to-date distribution maps for every species breeding in Indiana. Now the DNR is repeating the survey to document changes in the distribution of Indiana's breeding birds.

There are still a few blocks available to be surveyed in Allen County, each about 9.5 miles square. An atlaser will be assigned to each block. The atlaser should make several visits to the block during breeding season to collect evidence of breeding birds. Criteria for evidence are spelled out in the atlas instructions.

If you would like to help with this important project, or would like more information, contact the Allen County coordinator, Ed Powers, at (260)638-4291, or e-mail zzedpowers@aol.com.



This sounds like fun:

Stockbridge members might want to attend a lecture on Monarch Butterflies at **4 p.m. Sunday April 29 at Fox Island County Park.**

The speaker is **Ann Colbert**, who has been involved with studying Monarchs since childhood. She was still a child when she helped her father with the first tagging project which led to the discovery that Monarchs migrate to Mexico for the winter. Then three years ago Ann was able to travel to the wintering area and see it for herself.

She will also talk about how people can help the Monarchs in their migration.

Park admission of \$2 applies, unless you have a pass. (Fox Island Alliance members will stay for their annual dinner at 5.) If you're not a member of the Alliance, you're welcome to come to the lecture.

“Ask Audubon” from the Audubon newswire:

Q. “Fireplaces obviously use a lot of wood, so is it better to use manmade logs like Duraflame, or to use an electric fireplace?”

A: Artificial firelogs contain wood shavings and a waxy petroleum additive, plus many more volatile organic compounds. They also don't produce any heat. As for electric fireplaces, remember that most of the

electricity in the U. S. is produced by burning coal, which contributes to greenhouse gases and acid rain.

Bottom line: burning a few untreated logs from construction or landscaping has less impact on the environment than either Duraflames or electric fireplaces. Try to insure that no trees were cut down just to make firewood.



You might enjoy these:

Christine Goff's Birdwatcher Mysteries:

A Rant of Ravens

A Nest in the Ashes

Death Takes a Gander

Death Takes a Songbird

One involves raptor rehabilitators, one discusses shade grown coffee, and all describe the behaviors of birds and birders.

Her latest is **Death Shoots a Birdie**. It takes place on “Hyde Island” (think Jekyll) at a Bird and Nature Festival. Will a proposed golf course destroy the prime habitat for the painted bunting? Did a nationally renowned but obnoxious birder really murder his rival? And are ivory-billed woodpeckers really living in the Okefenokee Swamp?

Stranger than truth.....

On April 1, Jim Haw reported on IN-Bird that he'd seen a Roseate Spoonbill along the Rivergreenway in Fort Wayne! Hmmm.....

Stockbridge

Audubon invites you to join us!



Representing Northeast Indiana

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

SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2 P.M.

AT FOX ISLAND COUNTY PARK

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:

TALDI WALTER,

ALASKA FIELD COORDINATOR FOR NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

**“FROM THE BLACK OYSTERCATCHER TO BLACK GOLD:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ALASKA”**

Taldi will present an informative slide show showcasing some of the important natural areas and brilliant birds found in wild Alaska. She will explore some of Alaska's natural treasures set aside decades ago for the benefit of wildlife and the American public. Some have advocated vastly accelerating the extraction of oil, gas, and mineral deposits from this important ecological area. Audubon seeks a balance between resource extraction and protecting internationally critical habitat.



NO CHARGE EXCEPT FOR PARK ADMISSION

Refreshments and a short bird hike afterwards.

An opportunity to learn more about birds from an expert, ask questions and meet some of the best local bird watchers. Then we can all walk together and look at birds.

We welcome you to join us.



Stockbridge Directors & Officers

Don't forget!

Our annual meeting **Sunday April 22,**
2 p.m. at Fox Island County Park:
Taldi Walter on Alaska

Julie Henricks, President	638-4375
Gary Tieben, Vice President	493-7058
Warren Mead, Treasurer	637-9098
Dick Hurley, Secretary	484-8380
Art Eberhart, Director	260-665-2421
Valerie Pelz, Director	.493-1954
Sandy Schacht, Director	260-356-3681
Cynthia Powers, Director and Newsletter Editor	638-4291
Jim Haw, Rare Bird Alert & Field Trip Coordinator	485-7802
Ed Powers, Membership	638-4291
Dave Reichlinger, Director	432-9431
Roger McNett, Director and Webmaster	749-4987