

Stockbridge Audubon



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Representing Northeast Indiana

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

President's Message:

Perhaps you have heard the seasons listed as summer, fall, "locking," winter, "unlocking," spring, and summer. "Locking" refers to that time between the end of fall and real winter. "Unlocking," of course, is the time when apparent life is coming to the plants and animals around us. When you receive this newsletter, we will be in "unlocking." Not spring, but the willows will be green and the grass will be greening. The winter sleepers, such as the chipmunks will be up and busy. More and more of the migrants will be appearing. Ice will be out and ducks, grebes, herons and others will be back in numbers.

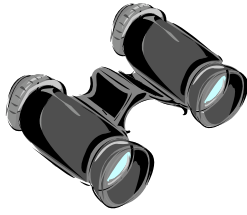
After a winter spent cooped up in your home it is time to get afield. Get out as much as you can to enjoy "unlocking" and then spring. Birding and hiking alone is great, but going with a group adds extra eyes and extra personalities to the mix. Check out the **Spring Field Trip schedule** later in the newsletter.

Don't forget to cast your ballot for the upcoming Stockbridge Board. This year it can be done in the traditional post office manner or by email. The email route should help save the trees and your pocketbook. Either way you choose to vote, please do so.

The annual Stockbridge spring meeting will be held on April 20th at 2:00 in the Achatz Hall of science on the campus of the University of St. Francis. You will be getting more information about the program in a later newsletter. I hope to see you at a spring fieldtrip as well as at the April meeting. Of course, these words are written well before "unlocking" so I had better go shovel a little snow and look forward to the greening of "unlocking."

Gary Tieben

If you're too busy to go birding, you're just too busy!



BIRD NOTES **By Jim Haw**

October 21, 2007 to January
31, 2008

Late fall migrants of note included single White-fronted Geese at the Woodburn sewage ponds, Allen Co., Oct. 22 (Jim Haw) and in Steuben Co. Dec. 4 (Holly Meyer). Twelve Tundra Swans were at Huntington Res. Nov. 22 (Jeff McCoy), others were heard over Salamonie Res. Nov. 23 (JH), and a late bird was at Clear Lake, Steuben Co. Dec. 18-20 (Haw, Sandy Schacht, Ryan Smith). An Eared Grebe was at Hurshtown Res., Allen Co. Oct. 28 and Nov. 11 (Stockbridge field trips). A Golden Eagle was a treat at Salamonie Nov. 29 (Lynnanne Fager), while a very late Osprey in DeKalb Co. Dec. 20 (Mike Becker) was a surprise. A Red-eyed Vireo in Mengerson Reserve, Ft. Wayne, Oct. 21 (Haw) was late, while two Blue-headed Vireos at Franke Park, Ft. Wayne (Doug Rood), and two more at Pigeon River (Haw, Fran Headings, Schacht), all on Oct. 24, were northeast Indiana's latest in fall by four days. Six late Tree Swallows were at the Woodburn sewage ponds Oct. 23 (Laurent

Fournier). The Am. Pipit migration peaked with two flocks totaling about 100 birds in Allen Co. Nov. 1 (Haw, Schacht, Marisa Windell).

One highlight of the winter was Allen County's first—and northeast Indiana's third—record of Eurasian Collared Dove, which put in a brief appearance in Steve Hossler's yard Jan. 20. Another highlight was the winter finch irruption. Purple Finch numbers peaked at 16 at Pigeon River Oct. 24 (Haw, Headings, Schacht); most had gone on south by November. The first Pine Siskins reported were six at Fox Island Oct. 28 (Rodger Rang); peak number was 45 in the Salamonie area Dec. 12 (Haw, Schacht), and most had gone through by January. Ryan Smith's Allen Co. feeder produced the first Common Redpoll of the fall Nov. 19 and the highest count (other than the Pokagon CBC) with 35 on Jan. 7 (Smith).

Also of note in winter were a White-winged Scoter on Clear L., Steuben Co. Jan. 12 (Haw, Schacht, Smith), a first January record for northeast Indiana, and a Killdeer at Salamonie Res. Jan. 17 (Haw, Schacht, Smith). Seldom reported in northeast Indiana, a Barn Owl was at Lagrange Jan. 19-21 (Dan Stoltzfus et al). Five or six Short-eared Owls

were in the usual wintering area near Spencerville, DeKalb Co. Jan. 5 (John Winebrenner, Lisa Silvey), and the species was also found in Huntington Co. Jan. 27 (Nancy Barker). A Long-eared Owl was in Allen Co. Jan. 7 (Paul McAfee). A wintering Northern Shrike was found at Salamonie Dec. 8, and two shrikes were seen in the same area Jan. 17 (Fager, Haw, Schacht, Smith). Snow Buntings were numerous with snow on the ground in mid December, peaking with a flock of 700 near Woodburn Dec. 18 (Haw). Among semi-hardy species that winter in very small numbers were a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Noble Co. Dec. 31 (Charis Snyder-Gilbert); an Eastern Towhee in Ft. Wayne from Jan. 14 on (Sr. Terry, Doug Rood); a Chipping Sparrow at Mongo Dec. 20 (Haw, Schacht, Smith); a Field Sparrow at Pigeon River Jan. 12 (Haw, Schacht, Smith); a high count of 36 Eastern Meadowlarks at Salamonie Dec. 8 (Haw, Schacht, Windell); and six Rusty Blackbirds at Payton Park, Allen Co. Jan. 7 (Smith).

2007 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Species	FW	POK	PR	Species	FW	POK	PR
Great Blue Heron	4	7		Brown Creeper	7		3
Turkey Vulture	1		4	Carolina Wren	14	15	1
Canada Goose	1710	1365	1658	Winter Wren		1	
Mute Swan		37	30	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	2	1
Gadwall		8		Eastern Bluebird	67	89	108
Am Black Duck			1	American Robin	13	2	3
Mallard	210	119	79	Northern Mockingbird	1		1
Canvasback		11		European Starling	1260	2840	579
Redhead	1	13		Cedar Waxwing	153	1	233
Ring-necked Duck		4		Yellow-rumped Warbler	7	4	
Greater Scaup		3		Amer. Tree Sparrow	71	432	346
Lesser Scaup		1	1	Chipping Sparrow		1	
Bufflehead		39		Field Sparrow	1		
Common Goldeneye		50	23	Fox Sparrow	2		
Hooded Merganser		25		Song Sparrow	18	34	21
Common Merganser		1		Swamp Sparrow	1	6	2
Ruddy Duck		8	2	White-throated Sparrow	5	1	
Bald Eagle		2		White-crowned Sparrow	5	6	15
Northern Harrier	3	7		Dark-eyed Junco	493	187	474
Cooper's Hawk	13	6	10	Lapland Longspur		270	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	1	4	Snow Bunting	10	178	454
Red-tailed Hawk	48	44	63	Northern Cardinal	361	127	129
Rough-legged Hawk		2	11	Red-winged Blackbird	2	25	1
American Kestrel	16	23	16	Eastern Meadowlark		2	
Ring-necked Pheasant	8		1	Rusty Blackbird			1
Wild Turkey		12	46	Common Grackle		1	
Virginia Rail			1	Brown-headed Cowbird	11	7	14
American Coot		201	26	House Finch	239	125	107
Sandhill Crane	12			Common Redpoll	2 cw*	63	17
Ring-billed Gull	58	96		Pine Siskin	3		2
Herring Gull		5		American Goldfinch	297	166	78
Rock Pigeon	92	75	301	House Sparrow	381	709	498
Mourning Dove	240	169	305				
Eastern Screech-Owl	5		2	Total species	56	70	60
Great Horned Owl	2	2					
Barred Owl	1		1	Total individuals	6669	8241	6747
Long-eared owl		1		*(cw means seen during Count Week)			
Belted Kingfisher	5	1	3				
Red-headed Woodpecker		4	2	Fort Wayne Participants	Jennifer Bowman, Margit Codispoti, Sr. Mary Joan Ginsterblum, Don Gorney, Jim Haw (compiler), Frannie Headings, Ted Heemstra, Valerie Pelz, Sam Plew, Ed Powers, Rodger Rang, Steve Sarratore, Sandy Schacht, Lisa Silvey, Carole Smith, Ryan Smith, James Toole, Sr. Angeline Walczyk, Ann Walton, Bob Walton, Tom Whaley, John Winebrenner, Tim Young.		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	51	29	37				
Downy Woodpecker	90	46	44	Pokagon Participants:	Andy Barrand, Michael Bultinck, Graham-Rowe Bultinck, Brad Bumgardner, Bob Cabik, John Cassady, Josh Christian, Jim Haw, Ted Heemstra, Dan Klopfenstein, Carole Koos, Lance Lothamer, Jacob Lothamer, Paul McAfee, Jeff McCoy, Holly Meyers, Kip Miller, Cynthia and Ed Powers, Sandy Schacht, John Schaust, Carole Smith, Larry Smith, Ryan Smith, John Winebrenner, Fred Wooley (compiler), Darci Zolman, Pokagon Nature Center Staff and Brad Stevens.		
Hairy Woodpecker	10	10	12				
Northern Flicker	16	10	17	Pigeon River Participants:	Matt Becher, Louis Harbor, Jim Haw, Ted Heemstra, Dick Hurley, Ben Miller, Ed and Cynthia Powers, Don and Casey Ryan, Sandy Schacht, Lisa Silvey, Gary Tieben (compiler), Mark Weldon, John Winebrenner		
Pileated Woodpecker	5		2				
Northern Shrike		2	1				
Blue Jay	138	54	83				
American Crow	266	140	347				
Horned Lark	35	120	413				
Blk-capped Chickadee	74	62	46				
Tufted Titmouse	51	53	24				
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12	8	2				
Wht-breasted Nuthatch	68	71	39				

FW means Fort Wayne; POK means Pokagon; PR means Pigeon River. This was the 108th annual Christmas Bird Count of the National Audubon Society. Each count area covers a 15-mile diameter circle and attempts to record every bird seen. Results are of interest to scientists in tracking bird populations and establishing ranges, and participation is a great way to interest people in birds.

Bird of the Month: Red-Breasted Nuthatch

By Warren Mead

Our featured bird this month has gone by the names of Canada Nuthatch and Redl-Bellied Nuthatch, but now is officially called the Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*.)

Although this bird usually stays well to our north, this fall/winter has been an exception, and many local residents have seen Red-breasted Nuthatches at their backyard feeders.

The reason for this is a very low seed crop in the coniferous forests of Canada. This crop failure has driven the Red-breasted Nuthatches south in search of food. This irregular type of migration is called an **irruption**.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is notably smaller and less stocky than its more common relative, the White-breasted Nuthatch. The Red-breasted also sports a black eye-line topped with white, as well as rust-colored sides. They also have a dark crown which is black, or nearly so, on the male but lighter on the female. Their back is the same blue-gray as the White-breasted Nuthatch.

The call of the Red-breasted Nuthatch is similar to the “toy horn” call of the White-breasted, but higher pitched. Like the White-breasted, they also orient themselves in a head-down position when searching tree trunks for food.

As with other cavity-nesting birds, the eggs of the Red-breasted Nuthatch are mostly white, but also have some speckles of dark red or reddish-brown. An average clutch is 5-6 and the young stay in the nest for 14-21 days, being fed by both parents all the while. One unique nesting habit of the Red-breasted

Nuthatch is spreading pine pitch around the nest hole, possibly to deter predators.

Recent data has suggested that the Red-breasted Nuthatch is expanding its range steadily southward and there has been documented nesting in Indiana, although it has been very spotty.

To attract the Red-breasted Nuthatch to your yard, offer them black oil sunflower seeds (plain, hulled, or pieces), peanut pieces, and suet. At my feeders, peanut pieces are the food of choice—and they are not at all bashful about visiting the feeder, either!

If you commonly have Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Chickadees, and Downy Woodpeckers at your feeders, keep a close look-out for this “bandit-masked” visitor too: the small and energetic Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Would you believe.....

Our own Jim Haw, according to Winging It, the newsletter of the American Birding Association, has seen his 750th life bird. And he has managed to do this not once, but twice! Hmmmm.....is this a case of “interesting, if true?” Here’s what happened: Jim saw a Little Stint in Kentucky in August 2006, which was #750. But then the Yellow-Chevroned Parakeet was removed from the official ABA list, so he was back down to 749. But then he saw the Green-breasted Mango in Beloit, Wisconsin, and was back up to 750 again.

Congratulations, Jim, and a warm thank you for sharing your birding skills with so many of us for so many years.