

# Stockbridge Audubon

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

*Representing Northeast Indiana*

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

## **The Bird Woman of Indiana By Terri Gorney**

The Bird Woman that I refer to is not a character in one of Gene Stratton Porter's novels. She was a real woman named Jane Brooks Hine who wrote about nature, especially the birds that frequented her farm. She was a nationally known writer and speaker at the time of her death in 1916, and was affectionately known as the Bird Woman of Indiana.

Jane was born in Erie County, Ohio in 1831. She attended Oberlin College in 1852/3. She married Horatio S. Hine in 1857. In 1861, they moved their family to DeKalb County, Indiana where they remained. The family eventually included six children and their home became known as Birdlawn.

Jane's article, "*Game and Land Birds of an Indiana Farm*" from

The Biennial Report of the Commissioner of Fish and Game for Indiana (1911) was placed in the cornerstone of the Courthouse in Auburn. In it, she writes, "In the spring of 1853 or 1854 the whole strip of country along the shore of Lake Erie from Erie to Cleveland was for two or three weeks alive with Passenger Pigeons. They produced a panic among the farmers. They swarmed in oat fields recently sown and took the seed from the ground. They came into barns for grain.....There were no passenger pigeons when we came here [DeKalb Co.] in 1861 but neighbors told us of immense flocks that, not very long before, would overshadow woods and farms like a cloud as they flew back and forth between their roost at the Haw Patch and their feeding grounds on the St. Joe River."

The cardinal is the state bird of both Indiana and Ohio. Today it

is common, but in the spring of 1885, Jane was excited to see her first one that was "free," as she had only seen them caged as pets prior to this time. She referred to it as the Cardinal Grosbeak. She marvels at the beauty of the bird and is happy in the next few years as their numbers increase around her farm especially in the winter months.

As a girl, Jane tells of her mother looking forward to spring and the call of the Meadowlark from the honey-locust tree behind their home.

One of her "most intimate friends" was the Savannah Sparrow. He would scratch on the ground outside her window where she often sat. "His nest in the berry patch is where the bushes stand thickest."

Jane's writings give us one of those rare glimpses into the past.

## President's Message By Gary Tieben

Our long mild fall has provided beautiful fall colors. We are quickly moving into the cooler part of fall and are sliding into winter. Remember, though, fall birding is not over. Our field trip leaders will provide trips until the 9<sup>th</sup> of November. These late trips are the place to see loons and other late migrants.

Another late fall or winter birding opportunity is the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (details elsewhere in this newsletter). The Christmas Bird Count is a multi-dimensional activity. Participants will be "citizen scientists" by providing information about birds a small area. The National Audubon Society will combine the information provided by each of the many Christmas Counts and the counts taken over many years to develop a picture of North American birds. Another aspect of the Christmas Bird Count is social. You may see some other Christmas Count participants every week, but there may be other participants in the Christmas Count that you see only see one time a year and that is at the count. It is always good to see old friends and it is even better to see them in the field. The final aspect is the fun of winter birding. Some people avoid the cold weather of winter, but will come out for the

Christmas Count. It is a great opportunity to get out and locate our winter birds. This is a good chance to see Snow Buntings, Rough-legged Hawks, Purple Finches, etc. It is also fun to find "leftover" summer birds such as American Robins or Yellow-rumped Warblers.

I hope that you will join in late fall field trips and/or one or more of the local Christmas Bird Counts.



## BIRD NOTES July 16-October 19 By Jim Haw

Late summer birds of note included ten young Hooded Mergansers at Fawn River Fish Hatchery, Steuben Co. Aug. 9 (Jim Haw), single Least Bitterns at Pigeon River and in Steuben Co. on the same date; eleven Common Moorhens at Pigeon River Sept. 4 (Jamie Toole et al); the summer resident Bell's Vireo at Fox Island through Sept. 16 (Marisa Windell et al), tying the latest fall date for the state; a locally very rare Marsh Wren at Fox Island July 23 (Haw); and northeast Indiana's latest fall Dickcissel by three days, at Eagle Marsh Aug. 12 (Haw).

Fall migrants of most species were in low numbers and unimpressive variety. An exception was Great Egret, with high counts of 22 on Engle Rd., Ft. Wayne Sept. 8 (Rodger Rang) and 14 at Pigeon River Aug. 16 (Haw, Ryan Smith). The few shorebirds of note were an Am. Golden Plover at Eagle Marsh Sept. 13 (Ed Powers), single Stilt Sandpipers on Griffin Rd., Allen Co. July 19 (Haw, Sandy Schacht) and Aug. 30 (Haw, Smith), and a Dunlin at Eagle Marsh Sept. 24 (Powers). An early Bonaparte's Gull was at Salamonie Res. Aug. 14 (Haw). The only Caspian Tern was at Huntington Res. Sept. 13 (Schacht). It was a good year for Olive-sided Flycatcher, with seven reports totaling eight birds, and for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, with at least six birds. Five Alder Flycatchers singing at Pigeon River July 24 (Haw, Schacht) was a high count for so late in the season and may have included southbound migrants.

Purple Martins staged as usual at Salamonie Res., peaking at about 1000 on Aug. 15 (Haw), while 800 were at Pigeon River Aug. 16 (Haw, Smith). Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared in modest numbers, the earliest being one at Pigeon River Sept. 30 (Haw) and the high count being six at Salamonie Oct. 4 (Stockbridge field trip). Late Blue-headed Vireos were at Fox Is. Oct. 14 (Smith) and Franke Park Oct. 16 (Jerry Brown).

Gray-cheeked Thrushes were in Franke Park Sept. 20 (Stockbridge) and Sept. 25 (Brown, Doug Rood et al). Franke also hosted the only Golden-winged Warblers of the fall, single birds on Aug. 18 and Sept. 10 (Brown). Orange-crowned Warblers were at Fox Is. Oct. 2 (Haw, Fran Headings, Rood) and Salamonie Oct. 4 (Stockbridge). Three Pine Warblers at Pigeon River Aug. 28 (Haw, Schacht, Smith) were very early if migrants, unusual if summering birds. Four Mourning Warblers but no Connecticuts were reported during the period. The lone Purple Finch report came from Allen Co. Oct. 5 (Rang).

#### AND FURTHERMORE.....

By Warren Mead, Treasurer (and board member since 1865)

Three of the most scary things one can hear are: 1) "You're being audited by the IRS", 2) "It's a small cavity, so I won't have to drill *that* much" and 3) "We'd love to have you serve on our board of directors!"

Either one of these phrases will send a jolt down the spine of most people—and perhaps with good reason---at least for the first two!

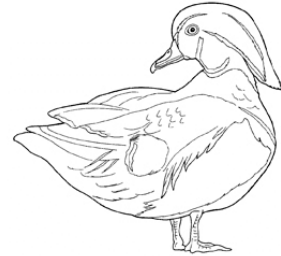
We are currently looking for people who are interested in serving on the board for the Stockbridge Audubon Society.

Now, before you drop this and go running out of the room, I can assure you that a position on our board is NOT something to avoid. We meet once a month, eight months out of the year (August – October and January – May) at Achatz Hall, at the University of St. Francis. The meetings start at 7:00 (p.m.) and are usually concluded by 8:15. Each meeting is casual in nature but has an agenda and therefore, a confirmed purpose, so they don't meander and waste anyone's time.

As much as the current board members like each other, we are quite frankly, getting tired of looking at the same faces year-in and year-out! Unlike politicians, we would love to be able to embrace the concept of term limits—but we don't have the necessary replacements—**and that is where you come in!** We need new ideas, fresh perspectives and new people, to keep the Stockbridge Audubon Society vibrant and effective. In other words, we need YOU!

Please consider offering your time, talent and ideas, by becoming a board member. We would warmly welcome your involvement and certainly appreciate your contribution to the Society and its membership. We will be **happy to accept nominations by mail or by**

**phone** (see the list of the director's phone numbers, in this newsletter).



#### Birding at Eagle Marsh

Did you notice all the Great Egrets along Engle Road this fall? As Little River Wetlands Project finishes the restoration phase of their prairies and wetlands just north of Fox Island County Park, we hope to see more and more birds there. This fall a young Sandhill Crane stayed briefly. Spring visitors were Black Terns, former Indiana nesters. Northern Harriers have been seen, and lots of Dickcissels sang all summer. Ed Powers has compiled a species list that now stands at 149!

More hiking trails are being planned, but you can always take a 2 mile loop trail from behind the Boy Scout office at I-69 and Engle Road. Who knows what you might discover!

Check out [www.lrw.org](http://www.lrw.org).



### Fort Wayne Christmas Bird Count

**When: Saturday, December 20, 2008**

The Fort Wayne count is held in a 15-mile diameter circle in northern Allen and southern DeKalb Counties. Participants divide into field parties of two to four, each with at least one experienced leader, to count all birds identified by sight or call in a designated section of the circle. Groups drive county roads slowly and walk where public lands or permission from landowners permits.

It is possible to participate in a field party for the day, or for half a day, morning or afternoon. All-day and morning participants meet inside **Hall's Restaurant**, corner of Coliseum Blvd. and Lima Rd., by **6:45 a.m.**

Some of us arrive in time to have breakfast at Hall's before 6:45. Parties depart by 7 a.m. to find owls at daybreak. Afternoon-only participants will join their parties at lunch (11-12) at locations designated by each party leader. Be sure to dress for the weather, including waterproof, warm boots for wet or snowy conditions. Pack a thermos and snacks. Some parties will need to bring a sack lunch. There is a participation fee (**\$5 per person** age nineteen and over as of 2006) which goes to National Audubon Society to help defray the cost of compiling and publishing the count data, which goes into a database along with the results of the other counts across the continent.

Persons who live in the count circle can also participate by counting birds at their feeders and in the yard. **There is no fee for feeder watchers.** Call Jim to see if you're in the count circle.

A chili supper follows the count at 6:15 p.m. at Franke Park Day Camp (Psi Ote Lodge). All participants are invited to eat, share the day's experiences, and join in compiling the day's list.

If you plan to join in the count, please contact the compiler, Jim Haw, by phone at 485-7802, or e-mail [jhawillet@aol.com](mailto:jhawillet@aol.com), by December 15. Jim will also take reservations for the chili supper, and he can answer questions or provide further information.

**(Hint: when you come in the door, don't reveal your rare sightings until the very last minute!)**



### Pigeon River Christmas Bird Count

**When: Sunday, December 21, 2008**

Participants in the Pigeon River count will meet inside Hall's Restaurant, corner of Coliseum Blvd. and Lima Rd., by 6:45 AM. Come early to enjoy a warm breakfast with good company. **If you plan on attending, please notify Gary Tieben at 493-7058, by December 15.** There is a \$5.00 participation fee which goes to the National Audubon Society to help defray the cost of publishing the data from the nationwide counts. Wear warm clothing and boots for wet or snowy conditions. Bring a sack lunch, thermos, and snacks, along with your birding gear. **Because the hunting season will be in progress, you need to wear an article of clothing of hunter orange.**



### Pokagon Christmas Bird Count

**When: Monday December 29, 2008**

Participants for the Pokagon count will meet at the Pokagon State Park Nature Center by 7:45 AM. **If you plan on attending, please notify the Park Nature Center during business hours at 260-833-2012.** Please register by **Dec. 26th**. Remember to bring warm clothes and boots for wet, snowy conditions, and of course, your lunch, drinks and snacks. Usually we meet back at the Nature Center at noon to eat and warm up. There is a \$5.00 participation fee, as in the other counts, and you will need to pay the park entrance fee or use your annual pass.

**Did you know.....the Christmas Bird Count started in 1900, so this year's will be the 109<sup>th</sup>.**

This would be a fun project for a snowy weekend, especially if you have internet-savvy children who can enter the data online. All you have to do is count for at least 15 minutes a day. You can count on

your own property, or go to a park or Grandma's house. Audubon is one of the sponsors; another is Wild Birds Unlimited.

## 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count



### Count for the Birds in America's Great Backyard: February 13-16, 2009

- No Fee or registration required
- All ages and skill levels welcome
- Track results in real time online
- Count in your backyard, balcony, schoolyard, park, wildlife refuge
- Be a part of the network

Join with thousands of others to find out how many birds are being seen in your area and across the continent this winter. By participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count, you help document where birds are, and track changes in their numbers compared to previous years, helping scientists paint a picture of the state of birds this winter. Imagine scientists 250 years from now comparing 2009's data with their own!

For more information, and to view results, go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>



### Indiana Audubon Winter Bird Feeder Count

**Here's an easy way to count from your own window. The count periods are Nov. 20-25, Dec. 20-25, Jan. 20-25, and Feb. 20-25. You record the highest number of each species seen at one time. The record form is available from DNR biologist John Castrale at [jcastrale@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:jcastrale@dnr.IN.gov). Last year there were only 3 counts recorded from Allen County.....we can do better than that!**

And don't forget Project FeederWatch, sponsored by Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It starts Nov. 8 and goes into April. Cost is \$15 (\$12 for Lab members.) Check out [feederwatch@cornell.edu](mailto:feederwatch@cornell.edu). It's fun! Involve your kids!