



# Audubon Leaves

*A Publication of the South Bend - Elkhart Audubon Society*

March 2024

Volume 76, Number 2

**Serving North-Central Indiana Since 1944**

## MARCH MEMBERSHIP MEETING

[Bruce Cates](#), Program Chair

Our March 2024 membership meeting will be held on Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the Elkhart Conservation Club at 5515 Riviera Drive in Elkhart, Indiana. Our speaker will be Ms. Whitney Yoerger, Communications and Outreach Manager for Indiana Audubon. Ms. Yoerger has a special interest in bird songs and will be doing a program exploring bird songs and how birders can incorporate sound into their birding adventures, including recording options and the ever-growing use of the Merlin app. She will also discuss Indiana Audubon's "Chasing Melody Wood Thrush" project, an effort to help keep that particular bird's renowned vocalizations in our woodlands for all to enjoy.

Ms. Yoerger will be traveling to Elkhart from Indianapolis to present her program. She is excited to share her love of bird songs, and Wood Thrushes, with our members! In advance of our membership meeting, one can find an excellent article online written by Whitney, titled "On Listening and Field Recordings," at [www.abrushwithbirds.com](http://www.abrushwithbirds.com), dated July 13, 2021.

As always, the general public is welcome to attend our membership meetings, so bring a friend and learn how to enhance your birding experiences as you listen to Ms. Yoerger's program all about bird songs. Hope to see you there!

## CHAPTER NAME CHANGE

[Tai Gunter](#), President

We continue to welcome your feedback regarding selecting our new name. As a reminder, the Board of Directors previously voted to recommend that we change our name to one that more accurately reflects our mission and goals, while moving away from the "Audubon" name. In a future edition of *Audubon Leaves*, we will include a mail ballot for the membership to vote on the new name. If you would like to submit your feedback on our new name, please visit [www.sbeaudubon.org/namechange](http://www.sbeaudubon.org/namechange). We look forward to this new and exciting chapter for our organization.

## MARCH FIELD TRIP

[Carol Goodall](#), Field Trip Chair

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> we will head to the Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area's Grande Marsh in LaPorte County. The Grande Marsh is host to large flocks of waterfowl.

For those of you wanting to carpool or caravan, meet at the north end of the Kohl's parking lot on Ireland Road at 7:45 a.m. It is about a half-hour drive to Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area from there.

For anyone wishing to meet at Kingsbury, we will be here: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/oss62RtBr8zjHtcJ7>, 41.509192, -86.581797.

We should arrive there from South Bend at approximately 8:15-8:30 a.m. (Eastern Time).

Dress for the weather. I will have a spotting scope, but if you have your own, you may want to bring it. I will also have binoculars but bring your own if you have them. There are no restroom facilities readily available at the Grande Marsh.

Any questions, contact Carol Goodall at [fieldtrips@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@sbeaudubon.org).

**Want to recycle your Styrofoam?**

**If you have excess polystyrene  
(the kind used in packaging, not for food),  
bring it to our meetings so our members can transport  
it to a company that will recycle it.**

## MARCH CALENDAR



- 8 Board Meeting at Home of Lindsay Grossmann, 7 PM
- 9 Sanctuary Work Day, 9 AM
- 10 Membership Meeting and Program at Elkhart Conservation Club, 2 PM
- 13 April *Audubon Leaves* Articles Due
- 23 Field Trip at Kingsbury FWA, 8:15 AM
- 27 Meet the Naturalist at the Sanctuary, 6 PM

Check [www.sbeaudubon.org](http://www.sbeaudubon.org) and our Facebook page for field trip announcements, updates, and cancellations.

---

## FROM THE MINUTES

John Bentley, Secretary

The February 11, 2024 SBEAS membership meeting at Rum Village Nature Center was called to order by President Tai Gunter at 2:06 p.m. Forty-four (44) members and guests were in attendance. Tai welcomed everyone to the meeting. He called for bird sightings, and we learned of a Peregrine Falcon in downtown Mishawaka.

Tai referenced the *Audubon Leaves* article about our potential name change, and also an article in the *South Bend Tribune* on the same subject. He reported that the Board had voted to recommend a name change to the membership, and said that a mailed ballot would be sent to the membership later in the year.

### **Treasurer's Report**

As of January 31<sup>st</sup>, the operating checking account had a balance of \$25,961.01 and the endowment checking account had a balance of \$19,287.21.

### **Committee Reports**

Conservation. Tai reported that two bills on wetlands were working their way through the Indiana legislature. House Bill 1383 rolls back protections from some Class 3 wetlands. The only prospect for preventing its enactment is a veto from Governor Holcomb. Senate Bill 246 introduces tax breaks for taxpayers who protect wetlands on their properties; its passage should be encouraged.

Education. Melissa Gunter reported that *Science Alive!* was a success, and she and Bruce Cates had spoken to hundreds of children and their parents there. Upcoming bird walks and talks will take place at Providence Nursing Home, Navarre Middle School, and the Kroc Center; specific times yet to be determined.

Programs. Bruce Cates reported that Whitney Yoerger of Indiana Audubon will be our speaker at the March membership meeting at the Elkhart Conservation Club. In April, Jan McGowan will present the program she was unable to give at the cancelled January meeting, on native plants for birds.

Sanctuary. Bradley Waelbroeck announced that new maps for the Sanctuary are being prepared, and a large-format map will be affixed to a building at the Sanctuary.

Big Red Barn Sale. Martha Kummerer announced that the sale will take place at St. Patrick's County Park on April 20<sup>th</sup>. She will need lots of volunteers, lots of donations, and a co-chair.

Hospitality. Alice Bentley thanked Dee Howard, Jude Keltner, and Bruce Cates for bringing refreshments for the meeting, and requested volunteers to assist with hospitality at the April meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

---

## **BIG RED BARN RUMMAGE SALE (OR, A REDISTRIBUTION OF TREASURES)**

Martha Kummerer, Red Barn Rummage Sale Chair

Easter is early this year, March 31<sup>st</sup>, and right after Easter along comes the date of our annual rummage sale at St. Patrick's County Park's Big Red Barn. The date of the sale is Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>; the time is 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This sale supports our operating account to provide funds for education programs, sanctuary maintenance, newsletter publication, and other ongoing expenses.

The ways you can help: (1) Donate. As you put away the holiday decorations and begin or continue your spring cleaning, set aside those unneeded, unused, unwanted items for our sale. Donations can be delivered to St. Patrick's County Park on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (April 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>). (2) Work on the setup. Volunteers are needed to help unload cars as donations arrive, carry items from the pricing area to sale tables, and tidy up as we go. One or two hours of energy by 30 people goes further than 30 hours by 2 people. No experience necessary – we train! (3) This way to help requires no energy... spread the word. Tell your friends, relatives, and neighbors; the more shoppers, the merrier! And, we welcome donations from nonmembers as well. (4) The Bake Sale. Alice Bentley runs a terrific bake sale with donations of breads, brownies, cookies, pies, and other pastries from our members.

More details will be in the April *Audubon Leaves*. For now, just plan, collect, and spread the word. If you need more information, email [treasurer@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@sbeaudubon.org).

---

**You are invited and encouraged to comment on the South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society name change discussion. Everyone's opinion is valued and will be taken into consideration.**

Please visit [www.sbeaudubon.org/namechange](http://www.sbeaudubon.org/namechange) to provide your feedback.

**For more information, see the article on this topic on page 1 of the February issue of the *Audubon Leaves*.**

## GO PAPERLESS!

E-subscribe to the *Audubon Leaves* at  
[Leaves@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:Leaves@sbeaudubon.org).

Include your present mailing address,  
and put "Leaves" in the subject line.

We'll do the rest!

## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

[Tai Gunter](#), *President*

At our April membership meeting, we will hold our annual election for the four SBEAS Board executive positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer), as well as two Director positions. The executive positions are a one-year term; the Director positions are a three-year term, with two Director positions opening each year. This year, our Treasurer, Martha Kummerer, has announced that she will not be seeking re-election and will be stepping down from her role. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Martha for her many years of service as our Treasurer and her dedication to helping our organization succeed. If you or anyone you know has experience with bookkeeping or accounting and would be interested in the Treasurer position, we would welcome you to join us. Our Board is a dedicated, active, and diverse group of people who are committed and passionate about birds and the mission of SBEAS. We welcome the contributions of anyone willing to volunteer their time on our Board - it's a rewarding and fulfilling experience that connects you with a great group of people. If you are interested in the Treasurer or one of the Director positions, please reach out to me at [tai.gunter@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:tai.gunter@sbeaudubon.org).

## MEET THE NATURALIST

[Carol Goodall](#), *Field Trip Chair*

We will resume our Wednesday evening walks at our wildlife sanctuary this month. Join me for a relaxing stroll on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. to see what interesting things we can find. Perhaps we will find some very early spring migrants or some winter hangers-on. Some spring ephemerals may be blooming. Wear sturdy shoes. The trails may be muddy. Dress for the weather. Our wildlife sanctuary is located at 59395 Clover Rd., Mishawaka, Indiana (dropped pin: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/ELfUApBeyhnjNzwC6>).



Watch for the diminutive harbinger-of-spring (aka pepper-and-salt), which may be in bloom at the Sanctuary during the Meet the Naturalist event. © Scott Namestnik

## REMINDER: SANCTUARY WORK DAY



SATURDAY,  
MARCH 9, 2024,  
9:00 A.M.



## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

[Jude Keltner](#), *Membership Chair*

We welcome the following new and returning members:

Randall Bjork, Barbara Bremigan, Diane Fox, Penny J Friend, Frederick Hall, Natasha Iuston, Megan Knobloch, Rosemary Kuerbitz, Stefanie Kundakjian, Geoffrey Landis, Paula Lester, Joe Long, Jeffrey Longenbaugh, Linda Myers, John Mynsberge, Taylor Nisley, Marianne Pletcher, Barbara Prusinski, La Mar Reichert, Bette Roe, Daniel Scherb, Craig VanOverberghe, and Charissa Warne.

We look forward to seeing you at an activity soon. See the calendar in this newsletter and check our Facebook page for updates.

Should you have any questions about your membership, please email us at [membership@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:membership@sbeaudubon.org). If you would like to renew your South Bend-Elkhart Audubon membership online, you can do so at [www.sbeaudubon.org](http://www.sbeaudubon.org).

---

## **AUDUBON DETERMINES METHOD FOR CHOOSING THE BEST PLACES FOR BIRD CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

**A new study proposes a conservation methodology that incorporates factors such as habitat type, migratory routes, and interest and capacity from local communities.**

From [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

Three years ago, the world of bird conservation was forever changed with the publication of a groundbreaking study in *Science* confirming the losses of nearly three billion birds in North America between 1970 and 2019. Nearly two and a half billion of those birds represented migratory species, which makes efforts to protect them complicated given the need to address threats they face on breeding and wintering grounds and on their migratory journeys in between. If we want to secure a future for bird life, our conservation efforts must stretch across the entire hemisphere in a coordinated fashion informed by the best-available conservation science.

Luckily, this summer, scientists from the National Audubon Society published a study in the journal *Conservation Science and Practice*, presenting a framework that uses hemisphere-scaled processes, like migration, that are necessary for bird conservation, and translates them to targeted, on-the-ground conservation actions.

"To complete their life cycles, migratory birds often move across continents or even hemispheres. This requires conservation plans be designed to stop their population declines as we consider these broad distances covered," said Bill DeLuca, PhD, senior manager of migration ecology for Audubon and lead author of the study.

"The tricky part is that conservation actions, like forest restoration or preservation, happen at very local scales. In this paper we layout a framework for translating conservation plans developed for migratory birds across the Western Hemisphere into localized conservation actions using two example landscapes, Colombia and coastal North and South Carolina."

The framework's basic idea is that it integrates tracking data, generously shared with Audubon by hundreds of scientists, band re-encounter data from the US Geological Survey Bird Banding Lab and Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird Status abundance data to identify broad landscapes across the hemisphere that are integral for protecting a connected network of habitat for migratory birds. Based on organizational capacity and interest, a subset of those regions can be selected for more detailed analysis that considers local conservation needs to select specific sites and the conservation actions to implement. In other words, we combine bird migration science at hemispheric and regional scales and on-the-ground practicality, for example, local partnerships and benefits to surrounding communities, to focus conservation efforts across the entire hemisphere, protecting the most important places where conserving birds is most possible and has the largest impact on slowing declining bird trends.

Ultimately, the most important ingredient to effective conservation is people. Regardless of what a scientific analysis may find, if people do not have the capacity or interest to implement the conservation action, its success is unlikely.

Gloria Lentijo, working lands strategy director for Audubon Americas, adds, "We have to work beyond the maps and analysis to make it real for birds. We need to get to those places and understand the local context. We need to consider what people need and what the necessary actions are to protect birds. Only then can we negotiate a workplan that is tailored for each site to achieve conservation together with local communities."

This approach, sometimes referred to as translational ecology, is the key to successful conservation of migratory birds. Together, conservation scientists and on-the-ground conservation practitioners work hand-in-hand during the entire process to ensure that the science aligns with possible conservation actions.

As Audubon begins to roll out a new strategic plan called Flight Plan, it will be incorporating this new framework to ensure that the full annual cycles of migratory birds are included in this hemispheric effort with the goal of reversing declining trends in bird populations documented over the past 50 years. The stakes are significant. There are billions of birds that are depending on Audubon and our partners making sure we are using the best-available science to inform our conservation efforts.

---

**For those of you not on Facebook,  
to view pictures of our recent events, you may visit our Facebook page via the internet at**

**<https://www.facebook.com/SouthBendElkhartAudubon/>.**

**For those of you on Facebook please like our page:  
South Bend Elkhart Audubon.**

**Follow us on Instagram [@sbeaudubon](https://www.instagram.com/sbeaudubon).**

---

## PHOTO QUIZ!

There were four correct responses to the February photo quiz. The winner was Bert Harrison, who correctly identified the bird in the February *Audubon Leaves* as an American Crow. Bert was awarded a \$20 gift card to the South Bend Farmer's Market. Congratulations, Bert! Read about the American Crow in the article to the right.



© Paula Savage

The March *Audubon Leaves* Photo Quiz is shown above. All correct answers will be entered in a drawing, and the winner will receive a \$20 gift card. Send responses along with your mailing address to [Leaves@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:Leaves@sbeaudubon.org) with PHOTO QUIZ in the subject line. You can also send a response in the mail to:

Lindsay and Scott Namestnik  
26568 SR 4  
North Liberty, Indiana 46554

Good luck!

## AMERICAN CROW (*CORVUS BRACHYRHINCOS*)

[Lindsay Grossmann](#)

Large, ubiquitous, and noisy, the American Crow is easily identifiable both visually and auditorily. A large all-black bird with a thick neck, thick bill, and fairly short tail, they can really only be confused with two related species that are rarely seen in our area, the Common Raven and Fish Crow. Ravens are larger, longer-winged, and have a longer wedge-shaped tail than American Crows. Fish Crows, once restricted to the coastal areas of the Southeastern part of the United States, are expanding their range northward and westward and are being found rather far from the ocean. They are slightly smaller than the American Crow, but by far the easiest way to tell them apart is by their voice: Fish Crows produce a nasally paired “cow-cow,” whereas American Crows give a full-throated “Caw!”

Highly social, you may see American Crows in a small flock flying over your neighborhood, perched together at the top of trees, or scavenging waste off a roadway. Opportunistic is the best way to describe their eating habits – they will literally eat anything and everything, including being a frequent nest predator and mouser, which tends to surprise some people. They are year-round residents, tending to nest high in evergreens around here. In winter, large flocks of crows can be seen streaming across the sky at dusk to gather in their large roosts in South Bend – and likewise in dawn as they are heading out and scattering for foraging for the day. Crows are one of the smartest and most adaptable species of birds on the planet, regularly using both natural and manmade environments to their advantage.

Source:

Cornell University, All About Birds, accessed online 8 February 2024.  
<[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American\\_Crow/](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Crow/)> .

### NEW OR RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP FORM: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY OR CHAPTER ONLY

(For a renewal, only include your address if it has changed)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
FULL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I want to join or renew my membership in National Audubon Society. I will receive the AUDUBON magazine plus membership in the South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society. Make check payable to National Audubon Society for \$20.00.

\_\_\_\_ I want to join or renew my membership in the South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society only. Make check payable to South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society for \$20.00 (all the money goes to our local Society). I will not receive the AUDUBON magazine.

All memberships will receive the South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society newsletter, *Audubon Leaves*. Please send the South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society newsletter by:  
\_\_\_\_ mail \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_ email address \_\_\_\_\_

Can we contact you via email when necessary (such as to notify you of meeting cancellations)? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

MAIL THIS FORM AND CHECK TO: SBEAS MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, PO BOX 581, MISHAWAKA, IN 46546.

*Audubon Leaves*

South Bend - Elkhart Audubon Society  
Membership Chair - Jude Keltner  
PO Box 581  
Mishawaka, Indiana 46546

Non Profit Org.  
US Postage  
Paid  
Mishawaka, IN  
Permit #154

Address Service Requested

**DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT DELAY**

**South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Officers**

President: Tai Gunter

(574) 453-6475

Vice President: Carol Goodall

(574) 276-7249

Editor: Lindsay and Scott Namestnik

(574) 656-3511

Membership: Jude Keltner

(574) 276-6348

**The South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society publishes the *Audubon Leaves***

nine times a year: February, March, April, May, Summer, September, October, November, and December-January. Comments and members' articles are welcome; deadline for the April issue is **March 13<sup>th</sup>**. Send comments or articles to:

Lindsay and Scott Namestnik  
26568 State Road 4  
North Liberty, Indiana 46554;

or email to: [Leaves@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:Leaves@sbeaudubon.org).

**IT'S YOUR TIME TO SHINE!**

[Tai Gunter](#), *President*

Did you know that South Bend - Elkhart Audubon Society is one of the most active Audubon chapters in the state? We thrive because of dedicated volunteers at all levels of the organization. We become a better Society through continuous growth and flourish as a result of diverse opinions. Right now, we are in immediate need of an Executive Board Director and a Treasurer. For more information, contact me at [tai.gunter@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:tai.gunter@sbeaudubon.org) to inquire how we might best put your skills and talents to use to better our Society.

The South Bend-Elkhart Audubon Society is on the web at [www.sbeaudubon.org](http://www.sbeaudubon.org)



Find us on  
**Facebook**

