



# Audubon Leaves

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

May 2023

Volume 75, Number 4

**Serving St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties Since 1944**

## MEMORIAL DAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST

[Doug and Heidi Gray](#), Sanctuary Co-Chairs

It's that time of year again. Memorial Day – the unofficial start of summer. And a great way to start the day is by having pancakes at the South Bend – Elkhart Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuary in the company of friends and nature. Starting at 7:30 to 10:00 a.m. we will be serving pancakes, along with syrup, butter, coffee, tea, and milk. As usual, you may have your choice of plain, blueberry, or pecan pancakes. Yum! Please bring your own table service. Your donations help provide the bird seed for our winter-feeding program and help with the maintenance of the Sanctuary. Our cook and helpers for the Memorial Day pancake breakfast are Doug Gray, Bruce Cates, and Heidi Gray. We definitely can use more help with this event. Please contact Heidi at (574) 339-2675 or [president@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:president@sbeaudubon.org).

## CONGRATULATIONS!

[Heidi Gray](#), President

Congratulations to the newly elected members of the SBEAS Board of Directors!

President: Tai Gunter  
Vice President: Carol Goodall  
Secretary: John Bentley  
Treasurer: Martha Kummerer  
Director to 2026: Mark Gidley  
Director to 2026: Lindsay Grossmann

We would like to thank those Board members that are stepping down or changing positions: Marty Stoner, Carol Goodall, Bruce Cates, and Heidi Gray. Your service is greatly appreciated!

## MEET THE NATURALIST

[Carol Goodall](#), Field Trip Chair

Take a mid-week nature break! Join me on May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. for a relaxing walk around our Wildlife Sanctuary. We should see a few neotropical migrants, but you never know what other interesting things we might find. Our Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 59395 Clover Rd., Mishawaka, Indiana.

## MAY FIELD TRIP

[Carol Goodall](#), Field Trip Chair

On May 20<sup>th</sup> we will go to Potato Creek State Park in search of neotropical migrants. The summer breeding birds will have arrived so it should be a good morning of birding. We will walk the bike trail from the West Lot to Potato Creek. This is a lengthy, somewhat hilly walk but the trail is paved so it makes the trekking easier.

Meet at the West Lot at 7:00 a.m. This is the lot at the west end of the lake near the west Osprey nest. It is located at: 41.547740, -86.381716 (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/eYcggKeVh9UBWvh7A>). Wear comfortable shoes. Bring binoculars, insect repellent, water, and snacks (if you wish). There is a gate fee to get into the park.

## SANCTUARY CHAIR PERSON(S) NEEDED

[Doug and Heidi Gray](#), Sanctuary Co-Chairs

We have decided to step down as co-chairs of the SBEAS Wildlife Sanctuary this year. The SBEAS Board of Directors is looking for a person (or a couple of people) to step in to take on this position. Requirements are: overseeing work days, maintaining the grounds with volunteer help (which includes mowing with the Ford tractor), maintaining tools and buildings, removing invasive plant species with volunteer help, keeping trees from growing under the power lines, and overseeing or delegating pancake breakfast preparations. Please contact Doug or Heidi at [sanctuary@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:sanctuary@sbeaudubon.org) with questions or if you are interested.

## MAY CALENDAR

- 6 Wild Ones Native Plant Sale at Pinhook Park, 9 AM
- 11-14 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival
- 13 Global Big Day
- 17 Meet the Naturalist at the Sanctuary, 6 PM
- 17 Summer *Audubon Leaves* Articles Due
- 20 Field Trip at Potato Creek State Park, 7 AM
- 27 Sanctuary Work Day, 8 AM
- 29 Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast at the Sanctuary, 7:30 AM



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

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## FROM THE MINUTES

*Jude Keltner, Membership Chair*

The April 16, 2023 SBEAS membership meeting at the Elkhart Conservation Club was called to order by President Heidi Gray at 2:05 p.m. Forty-eight (48) members and guests were in attendance. At Heidi's invitation new members Laurie Bednarek, Tim Clark, and Ellen Van Arsdale introduced themselves. Heidi welcomed everyone and called for bird sightings. People reported seeing Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, a Ross's Goose, a Brown Thrasher, Great Egrets, Ring-necked Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers. We were advised to watch for Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. It was reported that Osprey are building a nest on the WNDU studio tower, the Bald Eagle nest visible on the ND webcam will not have eggs this year, and the Peregrine Falcon nest downtown has 4 eggs.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Martha reported that the operating account stood at \$23,745.68 and the Endowment account (formerly called the WGM account) was at \$10,895.67 as of March 31<sup>st</sup>. The dedicated Sanctuary account stood at \$42,336.56.

### **Committee Reports**

Conservation. Jen provided an update on the St. Joseph County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. It is unclear when the plan will be presented again to the working groups and to the public. A best guess would be a public meeting sometime in May. She talked to Steve Slauson at St. Joseph County Parks about the proposed railroad overpass that could impact Ferrettie-Baugo County Park. It is still in the study phase, but three routes under consideration would impact the park. Until the study is complete there is not much to be done. She also reported that SB 414, which deals with residential sewage, was amended at the last minute in the House to narrow the definition of Class 3 wetlands, putting more wetlands at risk of development. The Senate filed a dissent from House amendments, which is a good thing, but since the language passed one chamber it is eligible to be added to bills in conference committees. Continued vigilance is required.

Education. Melissa Gunter reported that SBEAS will have a booth at the Wild Ones native plant sale at Pinhook Park from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Melissa also noted that videos for Mallards and Red-winged Blackbirds have been added to the collection on the SBEAS website.

Field Trips. Carol Goodall reported that the Woodcock Walk was lightly attended, likely due to the cold and windy weather, but those who attended were rewarded with repeated displays from a male that was close enough to observe with a flashlight.

Membership. Jude Keltner reported that there are currently 727 members, of which 108 have chosen to be members of SBEAS only. She explained that forgoing a National Audubon Society membership for an SBEAS only membership allows SBEAS to keep 100% of dues.

Publicity. Carol Goodall reported that we have 2300 followers on Facebook. Tai Gunter announced that SBEAS-branded wearables are now available. Melissa Gunter modeled a t-shirt. All items are print on demand, so no investment is required from SBEAS. Items will be available for purchase through a link that will be added to the SBEAS website soon. We will receive a small amount from each purchase.

Sanctuary. Doug Gray said trails are free of obstructions. He reminded us to pack all trash out. He has keys for those who need them. The next workday is May 27<sup>th</sup>, in preparation for the Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Endowment Fund (Formerly WGM Fund). Vicky Rydzynski reported that a new grant application has been received.

Other Business. Heidi presented the following previously published slate of candidates for Executive Board positions and two Director positions:

President: Tai Gunter

Vice President: Carol Goodall

Secretary: John Bentley

Treasurer: Martha Kummerer

Director to 2026: Mark Gidley

Director to 2026: Lindsay Grossmann

Heidi asked for nominations from the floor. No further nominations were offered, and the slate was elected by acclamation. The membership offered hearty applause in appreciation of outgoing officers and directors.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

## BENDIX MEADOWS MONITORING 2023

[Trice Berkley](#), *Bendix Meadows Monitoring Coordinator*

It is that time of year again! We plan to start monitoring Bendix Meadows bird species and numbers very soon. We can still use volunteers who enjoy birding and hiking in a mixed grassland habitat, which is an important birding area. You can pick a day to bird each week either alone or with a birding partner.

Some of the more interesting species we see are the Upland Sandpiper, Henslow's and Savannah Sparrows, Bobolink, American Woodcock, and occasionally Sedge Wren, as well as a healthy number of migrants during April and May. We generally count through July 20<sup>th</sup>.

If interested, please contact Trice Berkley by email at [Cellistharpsichordist@yahoo.CA](mailto:Cellistharpsichordist@yahoo.CA) or by phone or text at (574) 304-3551. Any assistance is always welcome! Thank you.

## GET YOUR SBEAS GEAR!

[Tai Gunter](#)

The South Bend – Elkhart Audubon Society is proud to announce the launch of its online store, where members can buy shirts, hoodies, bags, mugs, and more! This is a great way to show your support for the Society at meetings, your next birding expedition, or just around town. Each sale benefits the Society with a small cut of the sale.



We have partnered with a company called Threadless that manages the merchandise. Through their business model, each item is printed on-demand, once someone orders it. This allows us to offer a wide variety of products without having to carry a physical inventory.

Since we don't have an inventory, we can't make sales at the meetings or provide samples to our membership. Threadless does offer a satisfaction guarantee, so you can return anything to them if you need. However, we aren't able to accept returns at meetings or events.

If you have any idea for a different design or item that you'd like to see offered, please let us know, and we'll see if we can add it. Visit our shop today at [www.sbeaudubon.org/shop](http://www.sbeaudubon.org/shop).

## SANCTUARY REPORT

[Doug and Heidi Gray](#), *Sanctuary Co-Chairs*

April work days can be cold at the start, but that didn't stop several of us from getting out to the sanctuary for tasks that needed to be done. The floor of the summer quarters was swept out. The tables and benches were placed back in their 'pancake breakfast' locations. Trails were trimmed and fallen branches were moved to the sides of the trails. Gravel was added to the drive to level out areas that had seen wear from car tires. The bucket at the back of the tractor was removed and the mower was attached. The water pump was put back together for summer use. We thank Bruce Cates, Jude and Dale Keltner, and Merilee Britt for coming out to help. It was a little early for the spring ephemerals, but the birds were happy for the sunshine.

Prior to the work day, Doug and Heidi spent time on digging out snow drop plants from the old wildflower garden near the water pump. The Siberian squill will take more effort to remove.

In memory of Vic Riemenschneider, Doug ordered a steel sign that will be put on the small shed next to the summer quarters. The shed is one of the last things Vic built at the sanctuary. It is made from wood from his yard and houses the grill for pancake breakfasts and a grill for potluck use.

The next work day will be Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 a.m. until noon. We will be preparing for the Memorial Day pancake breakfast. Tasks to accomplish are: cleaning tables and benches, mowing the trails, checking pancake breakfast supplies, and pulling garlic mustard. As always, please dress for the weather, bring gloves and tools if you prefer to use your own, and refreshments will be provided. Hope to see you then!

## GLOBAL BIG DAY AND WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY - MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>

[Jude Keltner](#)

Grab your binoculars and head out on May 13<sup>th</sup> to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day by joining tens of thousands of birders worldwide in the 2023 Global Big Day collaborative event. Alternatively, you can participate by recording feeder counts on that day without even leaving home. Whether in the field or at home, simply record your observations for the day in eBird to contribute to this effort. Last year over 51,000 people from 201 countries submitted 132,000 checklists for a single day. If you have not yet used eBird, now would be the perfect time to become familiar with this free and easy-to-use app so you will be ready to roll on May 13<sup>th</sup>. More information on Global Big Day and eBird is available at [www.ebird.org/news/global-big-day-2023](http://www.ebird.org/news/global-big-day-2023).

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## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

*Jude Keltner, Membership Chair*

We welcome the following new and returning members:

Laurie Bednarek, Beryl Billings, David L. Boone, Timothy M. Clark II, Joanne A. Cobbum, Donna Hostetler, Janet Jenkins, Cindy A. Knaack, Linda Knapp, Thomas Porter, Tony Randles, Carolyn Roch, Cindy Skatvold, Steve Stull, Karen M. Troeger, and Ellen Van Arsdale.

We look forward to seeing you at an activity soon. See the calendar in this newsletter and also 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 Society membership online, you can do so at [www.sbeaudubon.org](http://www.sbeaudubon.org).

## **REMINDER:** **SANCTUARY WORK DAY**



**SATURDAY,  
MAY 27, 2023,  
8:00 A.M.**



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## A NOTE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

*Tai Gunter, Incoming President*

Greetings! I am thrilled to introduce myself as your incoming President. I have been involved with Audubon for several years now, serving previously as Membership Chair, then Conservation Chair. During this time, I've become familiar with the inner workings of Audubon at the local, state, and national levels. I have cultivated a strong working relationship with our regional office, Great Lakes Audubon, by participating in their lobbying events, state and regional level discussions, and meetings with legislators. I consider the relationship with our regional and national partners to be an important part of our Society's guidance and direction as a local chapter. As your President, I want to continue the rich traditions and values that have made our Society what it is today.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Heidi, our outgoing President, for her exemplary leadership over the past two years. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, she led our chapter with resilience and skill. Birding provided a much-needed outlet for many of us during this difficult time and allowed us to enjoy our shared hobby in a safe environment. Thanks to Heidi's leadership, we were able to resume our membership meetings and events as soon as it was safe to do so. Please join me in thanking her for her service to our Society.

I've been asked by a few members about the Audubon name change and how our Society will react to it. The National Audubon Society recently announced that it wouldn't be changing its name to separate itself from the controversial past of its namesake, John James Audubon. Audubon was a slave owner, racist, and likely a white supremacist. Additionally, there are allegations that he committed academic fraud to gain notoriety and recognition as a naturalist. He stole skulls from Mexican soldiers in Texas to support a researcher's theory that the brains of white people were larger and more intelligent than those of other races.

As an independent local chapter, we are free to choose a different name without affecting our affiliation or funding with the National Audubon Society. Several chapters, including those in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Portland, Seattle, and Madison, have announced plans to change their names. Other chapters in our region are also considering the possibility of changing their names.

As members of our Society, we must acknowledge the historical significance and transgressions of John James Audubon and reflect on how it affects our ability to provide an inclusive space for all to enjoy birds and promote conservation.

In the coming months, we will be discussing this topic as a Board. If we choose to pursue this issue further, we may send out formal surveys to gather the thoughts and opinions of our membership. If you have any thoughts today, please send them to me at [tai.gunter@sbeaudubon.org](mailto:tai.gunter@sbeaudubon.org).

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to working with all of you to advance our Society's mission.

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## PHOTO QUIZ!

There were six correct responses to the April photo quiz. The winner was Marlene Pratt, who correctly identified the bird in the April *Audubon Leaves* as a Trumpeter Swan. Marlene was awarded a \$20 gift card to the South Bend Farmer's Market. Congratulations, Marlene! Read about the Trumpeter Swan in the article to the right.



© Greg Lasley

The May *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!

## TRUMPETER SWAN (*CYGNUS BUCCINATOR*)

[Lindsay Grossmann](#)

Of the three swans that frequent our area, the Trumpeter Swan is by far the largest. Measuring 6 ft. in length and weighing in around 25 lbs., it is both the largest waterfowl species and heaviest flying bird in North America. Trumpeter Swans are mostly white with a black bill. Non-native resident Mute Swans, which have exploded in population locally, are smaller and have an orange bill. Tundra Swans, which visit during migration, are more similarly colored, but with key differences and are roughly half the size of a Trumpeter. The bill is where the differences lie. Viewed from the side, Tundras will have a small patch of yellow immediately in front of the eye. Viewed head-on, you will notice that where the bill meets the head, in Tundras a “U” shape is formed, whereas in Trumpeters a “V” shape is formed. Juveniles are also different between the two species, with Tundras having a mostly pink bill, whereas Trumpeters always have a black base.

Once endangered due primarily to hunting (their feathers were highly valued in hats and as quills), Trumpeter Swans are making a remarkable comeback. Although still uncommon residents in our area, there have been a couple breeding pairs seen. They prefer shallow water for nesting (they often nest on old muskrat or beaver dens) and feed in agricultural fields in winter. Mostly vegetarians, they do eat aquatic insects and fish on occasion. Like dabbling ducks, they often tip their rear ends up as they forage for aquatic plants. With their large size, they do require 100 yards of runway to get airborne from the water, so you might see them lumbering to take off.

Source:

Cornell University, All About Birds, accessed online 17 April 2023. [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Trumpeter\\_Swan/](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Trumpeter_Swan/).

### 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  
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Vice President: Bruce Cates  
(574) 335-9373

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 Summer issue is **May 17<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).

**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!

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



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