

# 2015

## Amos Butler Audubon

### BIRDATHON REPORT

## High Count Champs: Team Wild Birds Unlimited



Team members (l-r): John Schaust, Brian Cunningham, Rob Ripma, Amy Hodson

### Car Dealership Provides Shorebird Bonus

By John Schaust

The 2014 Birdathon was a record-breaking year on species count for many teams. As the defending high-count champs, we knew it would be a "big row to hoe" to beat that number this year, especially since we didn't have time to scout. So our goal was a respectable number of species and for all team members to have solicited respectable donations. Once again, our north-to-south route did not disappoint. In fact, there were some surprises along the way. Friday, May 22, started off with a bang at O'dark-thirty at Kingsbury FWA. Plenty of field and marsh birds calling (although the owls were ornery and made it tough to tally them), and Beverly Shores was fantastic for flycatchers, thrushes, warblers, and woodland birds. We could almost ask for a bird and it would present itself, as if they knew we were coming! Birds like Connecticut and Kentucky Warblers. Thanks to Indiana Dunes State Park, where we got a pen (since mine ran out of ink, and I was tallying) and our only Hairy Woodpecker. Grant Street Marsh turned up four terns (Caspian, Black, Common, and Forster's). Willow Slough FWA produced a Common Loon and Lesser Scaup. We decided that 160 was a real possibility as long as the birds continued to cooperate. Then we bonked. The afternoon doldrums hit with rates of about one new bird an hour. You know it's bad when you whip around on a busy two-lane state highway to confirm what might have been a bird not yet tallied. Ours turned out to be a Cooper's Hawk sitting on a bird at the edge of a ditch puddle. Yup, our only Coop of the day. It was Amy's cyber-scouting that helped us hit that last treasure trove at the Terry Lee Hyundai Pond in Noblesville, with all its shorebirds and Red-necked Phalaropes. We crested at 164 species and decided, "Well, it's 9 p.m. and we aren't far from home. You know, 164 is a respectable number. Let's call it a day." Who knew that 164 would be another winning species count! Thanks to our families for the sacrifices of time apart and for a place to crash up north.

A special thank you to all of our wonderful sponsors. We truly appreciate your support for our team and for the important projects being funded by the Amos Butler Audubon Birdathon. 🐦

## 2015 Amos Butler Audubon Birdathon Species List:

(geese, swans, ducks) Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck; (game birds) Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey; (loons) Common Loon; (grebes) Pied-billed Grebe; (cormorants) Double-crested Cormorant; (herons) American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron; (ibis) Plegadis Ibis; (vultures) Turkey Vulture; (hawks, kites, eagles) Osprey, Mississippi Kite, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle; (rails, gallinules) King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Moorhen, American Coot; (cranes) Sandhill Crane; (plovers) Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer; (sandpipers) Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, American Woodcock, Wilson's Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope; (gulls) Ring-billed Gull; Herring Gull; (terns) Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern; (pigeons, doves) Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, (cuckoos) Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo; (owls) Barn Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl; (nightjars) Common Nighthawk, Chick-will's-widow, Eastern Whip-poor-will; (swifts) Chimney Swift; (hummingbirds) Ruby-throated Hummingbird; (kingfishers) Belted Kingfisher; (woodpeckers) Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker; (falcons) American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon; (parrots) Monk Parakeet; (flycatchers) Eastern Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird; (vireos) White-eyed Vireo, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo; (crows, jays) Blue Jay, American Crow; (larks) Horned Lark; (swallows) Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow; (chickadees, titmice) Carolina Chickadee, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse; (nuthatches) Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch; (wrens) Carolina Wren, House Wren, Marsh Wren; (gnatcatchers) Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; (kinglets) Ruby-crowned Kinglet; (thrushes) Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin; (mimics) Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher; (starlings) European Starling; (pipits) American Pipit; (waxwings) Cedar Waxwing; (warblers) Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat; (sparrows) Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow; (Cardinals and allies) Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel; (blackbirds, orioles) Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole; (finches) House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch; (old world sparrows) House Sparrow.

### Official combined count total (all teams): 207 species

- 164 **Wild Birds Unlimited:** Brian Cunningham, Amy Hodson, Rob Ripma, John Schaust
- 143 **Noddy Little Gulls:** Wendy Kindig, Polly Nicely, April Sterling, Laurie Voss
- 140 **Bud & Carl's Legacy Team:** Amanda Smith, Keith Starling, Janet Tuten, Jerry and Marty Williams
- 137 **Uldy:** Don Gorney, Ryan Hamilton, Wes Homoya, Steve Nawrocki, Aidan Rominger, Ryan Sanderson
- 133 **DNR Team:** Lee Casebere, Roger and Cloyce Hedge
- 131 **Team Bishop:** Mike and Linda Bishop
- 126 **Carbon Neutral Team:** Dave and Chuck Benson, Wes Homoya, Maggie Jaicomo
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- 96 **Team Cool Ponds:** Kevin Carlsen, Maggie Jaicomo
- 81 **EcoLab Team:** Dave Benson, Paul Evans, Randy Patrick
- 73 **The KGB:** Karen LaMere, Tim Johnson, Betsy and George Wilson
- 43 **Wren's Warblers:** Drew Barriger, Charlie and Maddie Barry, Mali Guffy, Presley Hill, Maddison and Lilly Medley, Caroline and June Rickliff, Wren Upchurch

## Thank You for Sponsoring the 2015 Birdathon

We wondered if we would be able to fund a record number of 10 grants in 2015. We had to raise more money than ever to do so, and it loomed over us as a daunting task. Well, we are pleased to announce that your generosity has put us over the top! It took a combined effort to raise the \$38,680 needed for the grants — donations from generous donors like you, an unexpected gift from Geist Elementary students, and the graciousness of Whole Foods Market, who let us reallocate a 2013 grant. Having a whopping \$9,870 in carryover funds helped to push us over the top! Donations and carryover funds totaled a record \$38,770. The Whole Foods Market grant sealed the deal by funding one of our more expensive grants so that we could cover our expenses and have a kick start for 2016.

### Your Birdathon Bucks Benefit Birds!

Of course the purpose of the Birdathon is to put your money to work benefitting the birds of Central Indiana. We are so proud of the following projects we are supporting in 2015!

- We could not ask for a better partner for our international project than the American Bird Conservancy in our quest to protect high priority wintering habitat for Cerulean Warblers and other Neotropical migrants in Colombia.
- Whole Foods Market will make the Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center Interpretive Trail a reality. This self-guided trail will stimulate visitors' interest in bird life enticing them to learn more at the Center.
- Two wild bird rehab facilities have received much needed funds for their efforts to save injured and abandoned native birds. Both of the recipients— For the Birds of Indiana (Westfield) and the Indiana Raptor Center (Nashville) — have extensive outreach programs as well.
- Research data on native birds is so vital to planning more effective stewardship. Grants were awarded to Purdue University and Ball State University, both focused on gaining a better understanding of the needs of young birds after they leave the nest.
- Local habitat restoration projects with partners Keep Indianapolis Beautiful and the Marion University Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab will ensure that our native birds will have places to thrive.
- Central Indiana Land Trust's BioBlitz at their Hills of Gold Core Conservation Area hosted a team of scientists conducting a 48-hour inventory of all living organisms found on the property. Its purpose is to develop best management practices for forest-interior birds.
- Low-income students were able to participate in an environmental education field trip to the Indianapolis-based Jameson Camp.

### Our Teams Give Their All for Their Big Day

Of course, it wouldn't be a Birdathon without our teams of intrepid birders, 12 in all this year. They give up 24 hours and sleep to count the birds that your donations are helping to ensure will be around for the future. The accounts of their exploits are a must read.

*A sincere thank you to all of our Birdathon sponsors from Donna McCarty, Birdathon Chair; members of the Birdathon committee; and the board of directors of Amos Butler Audubon*

### Individual Contributors of \$100 or more:

Ellen Aiken & David Hunt	Robert & Mary Ellen	Elizabeth Mueller
Nila Armstrong	Gadski	John & Marcia
Sue Arnold	Carole Gall	Munshower
John Bacone	Geist Elementary	Polly Nicely
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### Volunteers who raised Birdathon donations of:

**\$1,000 or more:** **\$500 to \$999:** **\$100 to \$499:**

Lee Casebere	Wes Homoya	Andrew Barriger	Barbara Jablonski
Mary Ellen Gadski	John Munshower	David Benson	Randy & Deb
Cloyce Hedge	Polly Nicely	Mike & Linda	Patrick
Roger Hedge	Keith Starling	Bishop	Amanda Smith
Donna McCarty	April Sterling	Kevin Carlsen	Ryan Sanderson
Wren Upchurch	Naney Tikijian	Brian	John Schaust
	Janet Tuten	Cunningham	Jerry Williams
	Laurie Voss	Don Gomey	Betsy Wilson
	Marty Williams	Amy Hodson	

### Corporate Sponsors:

**\$2,500** Wild Birds Unlimited. 4040 East 82nd Street



**\$100** Cool Ponds Landscaping, Inc.

### Special Contributors:

Pete Drum: Birdathon Database Curator  
 Mary Ellen Gadski: International Projects Coordinator  
 Barbara Jablonski: Silent Auction Coordinator  
 Don McCarty: Birdathon Treasurer  
 Bill Murphy: Report Editor

## Fundraising Champs: The DNR Team



Team members (l-r): Cloyce Hedge, Lee Casebere, Roger Hedge

### Rarin' to Go Again Next May

by Lee Casebere

The DNR team picked Friday, May 8, as count day, staying in west-central Indiana all day. We started at Lake Waveland, where we tried for "night birds" with little success. Then it was on to Shades State Park, where we spent most of the morning. There we did well with resident passerines, but migrants were sorely lacking. Around midday, we went to reclaimed strip mines in Vermillion County, where we added many grass-land birds as well as several shorebirds. Next we went to Honey Creek Bottoms, south of Terre Haute, where we picked up more shorebirds, including our best bird of the day, a Baird's Sandpiper.

Finally we went to Turkey Run State Park for a final attempt at more warblers and other passerines, with little success. With daylight waning, we noted on smartphone radar that a big storm was approaching, so we cut our day short and headed back to Cloyce's home in Lebanon. We stayed just ahead of the storm, and as we parted company, a Common Nighthawk flew over, our last bird of the day. We ended with 133 species, our second-worst total ever.

Looking over our results, we did okay with warblers at 21 species, but we always hope for 25 or more. Given our mediocre success for the day, getting 11 shorebirds was one of the highlights. We had only three species of waterfowl, completely missing Wood Duck! We even missed Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers!

Although our results were far less than what we have come to expect of ourselves, getting 133 species of birds in one day is still quite an accomplishment. We hope that our team supporters think so, too. Your contributions to the DNR team are greatly appreciated, and we thank you for the continued support! You make our Big Day possible through your generous donations. We can't wait to do it again next May! 🐦



## Noddy Little Gulls A Best Birding Day Ever!

by Laurie Voss

**Team members (l-r): Polly Nicely, Wendy Kindig, April Sterling, Laurie Voss**

As we ruefully huddled around the Weatherbug app looking at the 80% rain prediction for all of northern Indiana, we tried to remain optimistic. Fortunately, weather predictions can be wrong. The weather turned out great, and we had our "Best Birding Day Ever!"

The "Noddy Little Gulls" team, this year consisting of April Sterling, Wendy Kindig, Polly Nicely, and Laurie Voss, set out into new territory in northern Indiana on May 16. We began at Odark30 listening to a faint Eastern Whip-poor-will at the edge of Beverly Shores in Porter County, only to hear a far louder one about 10 feet from us at our next stop, in the Indiana Dunes State Park. We had a glorious morning at the Dunes, getting most of our 27 warblers there as well as having our group photo taken by the "King of the Dunes," Brendan Grube.

Along the way we had a lot of laughs, livening up our birding adventure. A few of our highlights included "spot on" views of such birds as a Mourning Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. The "ringer" on our team, April, was able to spot an American Bittern in some reeds about 300 yards away. The elusive Northern Mockingbird that was nowhere to be found in northern Indiana was finally located at Kankakee Sands in the grassland area while we were looking for sparrows. Then, as we headed south towards Willow Slough, a dark blob in a cornfield turned out actually to be a Wild Turkey displaying.

One of our best stories was finding the last bird of the day, a Common Nighthawk at Bob Rohrman's Hundai dealership in Lafayette. Ask any of us and we will gladly share the details of the story with you. The NLG's ended up with 143 species, our best total to date.

We would like to thank all of the generous people who sponsored us. The Birdathon is a great day of birding for the "gulls." We know we are helping to support some wonderful programs that benefit the birds we love to see. 🐦

## Bud & Carl's Legacy Team A Spiritual Experience

by Amanda Smith

It all started with a life bird. Actually, that's not true. It all started with a group of people passionate about birds and friendship, brought together to commemorate two men who began a tradition in our state of documenting, studying, and rejoicing in the diversity and spectacle of birds. In every mile clocked, every hour that ticked by, every belly laugh, every birding hotspot that we visited lingered the importance of the symbolic journey we were taking as the Legacy Team.

This might be why that life bird was so impactful — so religious, if you will. It represented more than just a tick on the tally sheet to us; it was spiritual. Seeing a bird that fills us with awe, leaves us speechless, and will remain a lifelong memory is why we all do this. It's why those before us



**Team members (l-r): Marty Williams, Janet Tuten, Keith Starling, Amanda Smith, Jerry Williams**

did this, and it is why those after us will continue this tradition. Being able to share those memories with a group or, even better, with true friends, is nothing short of magical.

Awe-inspiring, too, is the support that our humble team received for our Big Day. The sharing of information by other Birdathon teams and other birders truly adds to the spirit of community and comradery of which our team is thankful to be a part. Donations from those who contributed on our team's behalf are greatly appreciated as well. Our families and friends not only sacrifice for us to get ready for and participate in our Big Day, but they suffer through sleep-deprived days as we recover and through stories, interrupted by long yawns, about bird sightings and "you had to be there" moments from the road, like where on his body Keith found a tick.

So how did it end? With not enough birds, not enough time, and not enough laughter! Our Big Day is over, but we aren't done! We can't wait for the next picnic to continue this tradition and to make more lifelong memories! We saw 140 species of birds, including the sighting of that one bird that none of us will ever forget, the state-endangered Barn Owl. 🐦



**Team members back (l-r): Charlie, Mali, Maddison, Lilly, Maddie, and Caroline  
Front: Drew, Wren, Presley, June**

of Eagle Creek Park for the second year in a row. The weather was a nice 75° with light wind. We had a surprise guest this year with bird expert Larry Peavler! The Warblers walked down through Warbler Alley, around Lilly Lake and Circle Drive, and then back to the Ornithology Center deck. It was a slow birding day, with 47 species counted. The group finished the day with a picnic at the Ornithology Center and a whole lot of laughs! Wren would like to thank her team of Warblers, with the new addition of Drew, along with returning girls Maddison, Charlie, Lilly, Maddie, Caroline, June, Mali, and Presley. They would like to send a big THANK YOU to all who donated to their team! We look forward to next year! 🐦

## Carbon Neutral Let No Good Deed Go Unpunished

by Dave Benson



**Team members (l-r): David Benson, Wes Homoya, Maggie Jaicamo, Chuck Benson**

The Carbon Neutral Birdathon started out great. With a team consisting of Dave Benson, Wes Homoya, Maggie Jaicamo, and Chuck Benson, our first stop, at 6:30 p.m., was right off a busy road at a Prairie Warbler site with scrubby young trees. We pulled our bikes to the side of the road and walked through the poison ivy-infested roadside to

listen for the warbler. No luck. Just then we looked up, and there, in the mulberry in front of us, was a Prairie Warbler—amazing!—followed by a Nashville Warbler and a White-eyed Vireo. We were off to a fantastic start!

The idea was to try to get as many woodland species as we could in the evening and then again the next morning, finishing with grassland and wetland species in the afternoon. So we continued on to Scott Starling Nature Preserve, where someone stole Dave Benson's bike.

At the Nature Preserve, Dave rode his bike down the trail and then off into the woods, where he laid the bike down, leaving his helmet next to it. It was well hidden, he thought—as well hidden as any time in the last several years of doing this. We used to bring bicycle locks, but with all the other optical and other gear we have to bring, we'd abandoned that practice. Besides, who's there to steal it? Other birders? No way.

We came back after amassing over 60 species, including Gray-cheeked Thrush, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Henslow's Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak. Dave's bike was gone. His helmet was there, but the bike wasn't. We looked around, thinking that maybe kids had played with it and dumped it elsewhere, but no luck.

So... we kept birding! The next morning at 4 a.m., with Dave on a borrowed bike, we cast off to Eagle Creek Park to find as many species as possible. It was tough going! Very few birds singing. But we kept running into more and more, including Mourning Warbler. We were over 100 when we left Eagle Creek. Then, after picking up as many species as we possibly could, we went out on the road to look for grassland and mudflat species in the fields. Time was running very short, so Chuck, who had joined us at 10 a.m., decided to take matters into his own hands: he rode off by himself to Scotty's Brewhouse to find a nice lunch while the rest of us continued birding. The last hour's surprises included Black-necked Stilts, Great Egret, Bobolinks, and a Dickcissel that flew in and perched on a wire above where we had officially called it quits, and began singing. Chuck, our hero, met us again on his bike at 6:30 p.m. with a growler of beer from Scotty's for our celebratory toast. We ended up with 126 species, very close to our Carbon Neutral record! Thanks to all who supported our attempt to see as many species as possible while limiting our climate impact. 🐦



**Team members: (inset) Randy Patrick (l-r) Paul Evans, Dave Benson**

## EcoLab Team We Love a Challenge

by Dave Benson

Amassing a great number of species is a real challenge when confined to such a small location, primarily the 55-acre Marian University Nina Mason Pulliam EcoLab near downtown Indianapolis. But Team EcoLab, consisting of Paul Evans, Randy Patrick, and David Benson, loves a challenge! And thanks in part to grants from the Birdathon for habitat restoration, the EcoLab habitat is astoundingly diverse for such a small

property. Trying a new tactic, Team EcoLab began birding the EcoLab at 6 p.m. in an attempt to catch some migrants before they left and were replaced by other migrants overnight. The evening was nice, decent weather and conditions, but try as we might, we found almost no non-resident species! We did, however get a good start, with 41 species before bed. The next morning we started at 4 a.m., looking for night birds. Our only successes were Common Nighthawk and American Woodcock. Then slowly over the day we continued to reel in one species after another, including several we didn't expect, such as Hooded Merganser, Blue-winged Teal, and Mourning Warbler. We identified 18 species of warblers and had great looks at a Kentucky Warbler in the deeper woods and a territorial Prairie Warbler displaying just feet from the Interstate. By 4 p.m. we had all but given up on our last target species, Pileated Woodpecker, when one flew right overhead! That was all the sign we needed to head out for wings and beer to celebrate the 81 species that we'd found. Thanks for the support of our sponsors and for the Birdathon's continued support of the EcoLab! 🐦



**Team members (l-r): Betsy Wilson, George Wilson, Karen LaMere, Tim Johnson**

## TKGB A Ducky Day

by Betsy Wilson

At 8 a.m. on May 9, TKGB boarded the Birdmobile in Eagle Creek Park and started a morning of slowly cruising the park looking and listening for the usual suspects—BIRDS! We heard quite a few warblers, saw a few, and had memorable views of groups of Wood

Ducks swimming and perched on logs in a flooded forest section. A flock of Baltimore Orioles was seen and heard at the skating pond. After lunch, we headed to Central Park in Hamilton County to walk the boardwalk. Showers delayed our start, but when we finally got moving, we had a splendid view of an Ovenbird. The last stop was West Park's boardwalk, where we were greeted by Swamp Sparrows. A Sora made our day by foraging in plain view on a mud bank for over 15 minutes. A huge downpour ended our quest to find a Rock Pigeon, but we did get a brief sighting of Peking, Mandarin, and Pressed Duck at a local eatery.

Tim Johnson, George Wilson, Karen La Mere, and Betsy Wilson want to thank our sponsors for allowing us to have a wonderful day searching for birds. We found 73 species. 🐦

## UIndy Team Big Hopes for a Record Next Year



**Team members (l-r): Ryan Sanderson, Wes Homoya, Don Gorney, Steve Nawrocki, Ryan Hamilton, Aidan Rominger**

by Ryan Sanderson

Anticipation for this year's run had been building since a great showing last year. UIndy's 2015 Birdathon team, made up of Ryan Sanderson, Ryan Hamilton, Steve Nawrocki, Wes Homoya, Aidan Rominger, and Don Gorney, had a great time in the field this year, save for an early ending in Lafayette when one of our members succumbed to food poisoning. Even without making it to Lake Michigan, we saw 137 species, highlighted by many shorebirds and marsh birds at Goose Pond, including our best two birds, Wilson's Phalarope and Great Egret. We even picked up singing nightjars in Sullivan County, including Aidan's lifer Eastern Whip-poor-will and hearing the always entertaining Chuck-will's-widow.

Our trip was about one week earlier than would have been ideal, as we had a poor showing of migrants this year, but sometimes schedules conflict and the run date is not ideal. Consolation birds did include a breeding pair of Lark Sparrows outside Lafayette and singing Cerulean Warblers at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis. This was the first year in which I've participated that our species count dropped from the prior year, but it gives us big hopes to break the all-time Birdathon record next year! We would like to thank all of our sponsors for helping in important bird conservation efforts here and abroad. 🐦

## Team Bishop What Kind of Ibis Was That?

by Mike Bishop

Team Bishop ventured forth on May 13 for our 2015 Birdathon. Beginning at the Eagle Creek Park marina, we ticked our first few species on the list—Black-and-white Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. At the skating pond we added a few more: Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and Warbling Vireo. We hiked a loop from the Ornithology Center around the coffer dam and back, picking up a few reliables like Willow Flycatcher, plus Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, but there was little activity. At Scott Starling Sanctuary we added Ovenbird and Yellow-throated Vireo. After lunch we headed southwest to Lieber State Recreation Area, where we encountered a couple of Forster's Terns, Hairy Woodpecker, and an impressive population of Cliff Swallows nesting under a shelter.



**Team members: Mike and Linda Bishop**

We finished up at Goose Pond FWA, seeing a nice variety of waders and shorebirds, several White Pelicans, a solitary Sandhill Crane, Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon. Our best sighting of the day was a group of three ibis at Goose Pond GP12 — but, even after three fly-bys, we couldn't determine whether they were Glossy or White-faced Ibis.

As the light faded away after a long day, we continued to add to our list, with Common Nighthawk, American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Barred Owl. When we tallied our list, we had managed 131 species.

A big THANK YOU to our generous sponsors for their continued support, and thanks to Amos Butler Audubon for their tremendous efforts for bird conservation! 🐦

## Team Cool Ponds Searching for Anything with Wings

by Maggie Jaicomo



**Team members: Kevin Carlsen, Maggie Jaicomo**

Due to Team Cool Ponds', aka Kevin Carlsen and Maggie Jaicomo, busy schedules (field trips, grant proposals, and day camp, oh my!), we decided to stay close to home and focused our energy on birding Eagle Creek Park.

The morning started off slowly, but we held out hope that things would pick up as the day went on. Whether it was the migration timing or the rather windy day we had chosen, the birds never did appear in the abundance we hoped for. Our first stop was the marina, where we found a whopping TWO species of

warblers! We convinced ourselves that the birds must just be waiting for us over at the skating pond. Well, they weren't there either, but one special guest did decide to make an appearance—an American Bittern. We spent the rest of the morning scouring the park, searching high and low for warblers, shorebirds, raptors, and anything else with wings.

While cruising the back roads of Brownsburg and turning up very few grassland or shorebird species, we agreed that we needed to expand our search if we wanted to boost our numbers. So we buckled up and headed over to Pine Creek Preserve in Benton County. Within five minutes of arriving, we heard the rusty croak of a Ring-Necked Pheasant and spotted our first (of many) Dickcissels singing from atop a thistle. After navigating our way through knee-high grasses (and finding a few ticks), we were rewarded with wonderful views of a pair of Great Horned Owls and the distant whistle of a Northern Bobwhite. Finally, things were looking up!

It wouldn't be Birdathon without a few "how the heck" misses. This year, try as we might, we were unable to turn up a Pied-Billed Grebe, a Northern Mockingbird, or even a Barred Owl. Our final tally: 96.

We would like to offer a huge THANK YOU to our sponsors for all of their support. We will be back to break 100 species in 2016! 🐦

## Community Hospital Team John Munshower, Doug Sherow, and Greg Steffen

Our Big Day was May 16 setting a team best record of 124.

We thank all of our Community Hospital team sponsors. 🐦