



Continuing Efforts To Save Crown Hill North Woods

By Mary Ellen Gadski

The National Cemetery Administration of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (the VA) purchased a 14.75-acre site in Crown Hill Cemetery in September 2015 with plans to build columbaria for veterans. Although this would be a good project for the city, it is in the wrong location. Building this facility would destroy the only old-growth forest in inner city Indianapolis.

In mid-January of this year, the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Indiana denied the request from Indiana Forest Alliance (IFA) and plaintiffs to halt the VA's project at Crown Hill Cemetery. A few weeks later during the settlement process, the VA rejected an offer from the Dr. Laura Hare Charitable Trust to pay for a land swap to spare the forest. A firm from Detroit has been contracted to take down the trees. As of mid-February work had not begun. We are not giving up trying to save the forest until all options are exhausted.

Three Ball State biologists, specialists in characterizing Indiana forests, assessed the Crown Hill North Woods in December 2016 and concluded: "All efforts should be made to conserve this example of Indiana's natural heritage." Dr. Kemuel Badger, Dr. Don Ruch and John Taylor found several trees greater than three feet in diameter that they conservatively estimate to be more than 200 years old. They discovered rare beechdrops, a plant that only grows in high-quality, mature forest. Dr. Ruch is a former member of the Indiana Natural Resources Commission and past President of the Indiana Academy of Science. Collectively, the three biologists have published over 25 scientific studies of Indiana forests.

The Floristic Quality Assessment, completed by Dr. Rebecca Dolan of Butler University, and Kevin Tunesvick, native plant specialist, shows that the vegetation in the Crown Hill North Woods ranks comparably to that of the highest-quality nature preserves in central Indiana. The Ball State team noted "a very diverse herbaceous flora with several species typical of high-quality, minimally disturbed plant communities."

The biologists' report concluded that Crown Hill Woods "is a high-quality remnant of a once extensive forest that



*Tree huggers young and old embrace a giant at the candlelight vigil in January.
Photo by Angela Herrmann courtesy of the Indiana Forest Alliance.*

covered most of central Indiana. Very few high-quality forest stands of this type remain in Central Indiana. This diverse site ranks among the most biologically diverse sites of this type that we have studied. We agree with the [2006] assessment of the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves that this site is of nature preserve quality."

Amos Butler Audubon Society (ABAS) has been playing an important role along with other environmental groups and community associations that are working to create awareness of the situation. ABAS was one of the first groups to send a letter of support to the IFA. ABAS has repeatedly urged its members to contact Mayor Joe Hogsett and their elected federal officials to urge them to intercede with the VA to consider alternative sites. Our chapter members have participated in the September march, the October tree inventory, and the January candlelight vigil. ABAS also donated to the legal fund to help defray expenses of the pro-bono team of lawyers who took on the challenge in federal court.

Thanks to everyone who has participated in this important campaign to try to prevent a tragic loss of habitat, for wildlife and people. If you have not already expressed your opinion, it is not too late to contact the mayor and your representatives in Congress. For the latest update and contact information, go to <https://indianaforestalliance.org/crownhillwoods/>

Upcoming Audubon Programs, Workshops, and Field Trips

All programs are held at the Holliday Park Nature Center, 6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted. They are free and open to the public. Time and place of field trips as noted.

March 14: Cloud Forest Orchids and Best Orchids for the Home

Presenter: Ron Giles

Orchids are one of the most fascinating plants on earth. Join the Amos Butler Audubon Society and Ron Giles for this amazing presentation that will introduce you to cloud forest orchids as well as the best and easiest orchids to grow at home. Ron has been growing orchids for more than 20 years and specializes in cloud forest orchids. In his private collection, Ron cares for more than 790 species of orchids! In addition to caring for this amazing collection, Ron enjoys birdwatching and nature photography.

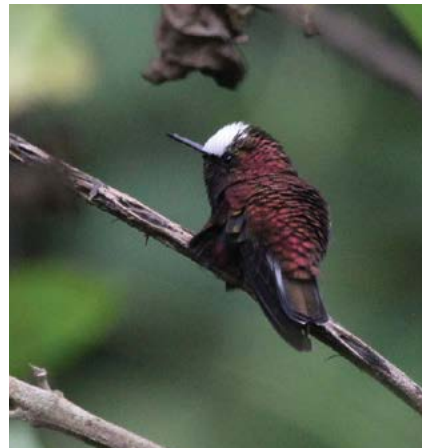


April 11: Birding Adventures in Latin America and the Caribbean

Presenter: John Velasquez

Join John Velasquez as he takes you along on his 10-year journey of birding and photography through Latin America and the Caribbean. Countries he has visited include Mexico, Ecuador, Trinidad, Honduras, and Panama.

John is president of the Mississinewa Audubon Club and Board Member of the Indiana Audubon Society. He and his family are actively involved in the Indiana Young Birders Club. John has enjoyed birds since middle school and continues to actively to share his passion with others.



*Snowcap Hummingbird found in Costa Rica.
Photo by John Velasquez.*

May 9: Savage Garden: The Demented World of Meat Eating Plants

Presenters: Chad and Evan Williams

Warbler Identification Workshop

April 15, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Cool Creek Nature Center
2000 East 51st Street, Carmel
Presented by Scott Enochs

Join Scott Enochs, warbler identification enthusiast and field trip chair for an ABAS crash course in warbler identification. For anyone who is interested, we will go out looking for warblers in the park following the workshop. Registration is encouraged for this free workshop. RSVP through the ABAS Facebook event page or contact Jessica Helmbold at jessica.helmbold@indy.gov or 317-773-9866.



Goose Pond Field Trip

Saturday, March 25, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

Join Mark Welter for a trip to Goose Pond FWA in search of waterfowl. Located in Greene County just south of the town of Linton, Goose Pond's 8000+ acres represent Indiana's largest and most successful habitat restoration project. Since its completion in 2008, Goose Pond has been a magnet for migrating waterfowl, waders, shorebirds and songbirds. Late March can be expected to produce an interesting mix of lingering winter birds and early Spring arrivals. Our primary focus will be on dabbling and diving ducks. Additionally geese, cranes, American White Pelicans and shorebird species may be possible.

We will primarily be birding from the roads and parking areas, and may take brief hikes along the levees if the situation warrants. Good water-resistant boots are advisable for this. Due to the distances that can be involved in surveying this property, bring a spotting scope if you have one. If you don't, there will be scopes to share. Additionally, small two-way radios to facilitate communication among vehicles while traveling would also be beneficial.

If time allows and there is interest, we may also visit the Beehunter Marsh units adjacent to Goose Pond, as well as the Dugger Unit of the Greene-Sullivan State Forest, located a few miles to the northwest.

We will meet at 7 a.m. in the Target parking lot at 10209 E. US 36 (Rockville Road) in Avon, just west of the Ronald Reagan Parkway. Participants should bring snacks and drinks if desired, as we will not be going into town for lunch. We can expect to be back around 3 p.m.

Contact Mark at mwelter521@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

Amos Butler Audubon Society Regional "Big Day" of Birding

Saturday, May 20, 2017

Ever wonder what birds are spending their days in ABAS's region? We're seeking to answer that question and need your help to do so. We are calling on birders of all skill levels in Boone, Marion, Hendricks, Hamilton, Hancock, Johnson, Shelby and northern Morgan counties to "count the birds". This can be as simple as counting the birds at your feeder, to spending a couple of hours walking your favorite park, or spending the entire day searching the entire region. On this day, we will be counting the different species and the number of individuals of each species. There are no organized groups at this point, but if you are interested in leading a walk or a group in your area on this day, please contact Scott Enochs so he could put people in touch with you. We will only be counting birds in the areas listed above. Scott can be reached at 317-850-4801, or by email at msenochs@comcast.net. Interested participants are requested to contact Scott to let him know the area(s) you are interested in birding. Once the day is complete, all participants will be requested to send to send their checklists to Scott for compilation. Have fun!



Woodcock Walks

**West Park, Friday,
March 10, 6:30 p.m.**
2700 West 116th Street
Carmel

Join Scott Enochs in a walk through West Park in search of American Woodcock. Woodcocks have a very acrobatic mating display that they perform

at dusk, and West Park offers an up-close view of this display. We will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the northwest corner of the West Park parking lot. Please contact Scott at 317-850-4801 or msenochs@comcast.net if you have any questions.

Daubenspeck Community Nature Park Thursday, March 23rd, 7 p.m.

8900 Ditch Road, Indianapolis

Join Amy Hodson for an evening walk at Daubenspeck Community Nature Park (DCNP), a great spot to view them. While waiting for sunset, we will check the prairie and nearby woods for birds that may be going to roost in the park for the evening. We will meet at 7 p.m. in the DCNP parking lot. The main trail of Daubenspeck is mowed, but the ground can be somewhat uneven.

Registration is not required, and both events are free and open to the public.

Smith's Longspur Field Trip to The Burn in April

Date and time TBA

Join ABAS this April at the Lye Creek Prairie Burn (aka "The Burn") in search of Smith's Longspurs. Please visit our web site or facebook for details as they become available.

Volunteer Opportunities for Earth Day and Z-Green Fest

This year Indy Earth Day will take place on April 22, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Military Park. Three to four volunteers are needed for half day shifts. Shifts are 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 1:30-4:30 p.m. Volunteers will help with set-up, and take down, educating visitors about ABAS and leading mini-activities for kids.

Zionsville's Z-Green Fest will be held on Sunday, April 23 at the Zionsville Library from 2-5 p.m. One or two volunteers are needed for this three hour event to help educate visitors about ABAS and do activities with kids.

To volunteer or get more information contact Jessica Helmbold at jessica.helmbold@indy.gov or 317-773-9866.

Indianapolis Christmas Bird Count Report

by Count Compiler, John Schaust

Last year marked the 117th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. On December 17 we also celebrated the 106th anniversary of the first official Indianapolis Christmas Bird Count (ININ), which was held in December of 1910.

Locality: The count area encompasses a 15-mile-diameter circle with the center being in Fort Harrison State Park, very near the intersection of Shafter Road and Boy Scout Road. The circle includes the northeast portion of Marion County and small portions of Hamilton and Hancock counties.

Weather and Snow/Ice Conditions: The temperature ranged from 30° to 35°F. The north winds varied from 6 to 20 mph. Skies were overcast all day. Lakes and ponds were partly open. Streams and rivers were partly frozen.

Count Observers: This year's count was conducted by 28 participants. The 25 field observers were divided into 13 field parties, plus three observers who exclusively watched feeders. The icy road conditions took a toll on our participation as nine observers were unable to make it to their assigned areas.

Count Totals: Our field and feeder observers combined for a total count of 70 species, which is three more than last year's total. The average total for the past 10 ININ counts is 65 species. There were 8,478 individual birds recorded for this year's count, down 5,617 from last year's count total of 14,095. One of the biggest factors for this year's lower count of individuals was the lack of the spectacular Sandhill Crane migration. Last year we tallied 4,836 cranes...this year, two!

Records: According to the National Audubon Society electronic archives, we did not add any new species to the ININ historical count record, which remains at 142 species across all years. We tallied a record high count for only one species: Canada Goose, at 2,152 individuals.

Trends:

- Winter finches were slim during this year's count. Only four Pine Siskins and four Red-breasted Nuthatches were tallied, with no sightings of Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, or either species of crossbill.
- Eleven species were represented by only one individual bird, and four species were represented by only two individual birds.

Beers with Birders

Thursday, March 2, 6 p.m.

Ash & Elm Cider Co.

2104 E Washington St., Indianapolis

Join the Amos Butler Audubon Society for an evening at Ash & Elm Cider Co. We will meet from 6-8 p.m. to collectively share our birding experiences and adventures at this informal gathering. This event is open to the public. Please email info@amosbutleraudubon.org if you plan to join us so we can be aware of how many will be attending.

2017 Christmas Bird Count for Kids

by Jessica Helmbold

Six kids braved the freezing rain and the birds didn't fail to show up at the first annual ABAS Christmas Bird Count for Kids. The January 14th event was held at Zion Nature Center in Zionsville.

We had a nice variety of songbirds and four species of woodpeckers: Downy, Red-bellied, Red-headed, and Northern Flicker. At one point there were six bluebirds at the feeders!

The half-day event included Bird ID 101, Binocular Use 101, lunch, hot cocoa, and awards. The kids presented their findings and received certificates of participation and a field guide. Thanks to Indiana Young Birders Club and Chad Williams for the field guide donations.

Everyone loved the event. Most had a prior interest in birding, and I was glad to further foster that interest. These will be our future Christmas Bird Count participants and bird conservationists. If you have or know a young person, continue to foster their interest in nature and birds.

As your Education Chair, I look forward to organizing this event again next year at Zion or maybe elsewhere. That will be my sixth Christmas Bird Count for Kids. I love being able to share this wonderful program with kids across the country. If you want to learn more about the Christmas Bird Count for Kids, you can read my previous newsletter article or visit http://www.sonomabirding.com/cbc4kids_history.html.



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SEABIRD RESTORATION PROGRAM

Register Today!
<http://hogisland.audubon.org>
843-340-8673

Audubon



Birds and Blossoms at the IMA

by Barbara Jablonski

Special Tour for ABAS Members, Thursday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.

Meet just outside the IMA gift shop by 7:25 p.m.

The “Audubon: Drawn to Nature” exhibit opens on April 1 (March 31 for IMA members). Come to see the stunning works of John James Audubon. The “Audubon: Drawn to Nature” exhibit will definitely be something most of our members won’t want to miss.

Just for ABAS members, one of the IMA docents is giving a special tour of the exhibit. There is plenty of free parking underground and in the parking lot at the 38th Street and Michigan Road location of the IMA. Even though parking is free, you need to pay for your visit to the IMA, already be an IMA member, or join. There is much to see and do there year-round.

The tour numbers will be comfortable at up to 20 persons, so please register by Monday, April 10 by e-mailing Barbara Jablonski at bpjablonski@gmail.com. If the response is overwhelming, an earlier tour may be added the same day.

Join the fun of viewing original works of the “Audubon “Drawn to Nature” exhibit with this special tour for ABA.

This spring the IMA grounds will be filled with blooms. Groups planted 250,000 bulbs last fall. So, come early to see a spectacular show of spring-blooming bulbs.

Creative Companion Events at the IMA

The Birds of Celeste Boursier-Maougenot, a film by Ariane Michel, opens March 3. The artist transforms his studio into an aviary of zebra finches with Gibson guitars, piano strings, and perches. The birds pluck on the strings to create an improvised soundscape.

Paula McCartney: *Bird Watching*—an exhibit based on one of her artsy photo books where she takes her own birds on trips to the woods and photographs them..

Regularly Scheduled Bird Hikes

Eagle Creek Park

6519 DeLong Road, Indianapolis

Every Sunday, 9 a.m.

Meet at the Ornithology Center

For more information call (317) 327-2473

Marian University EcoLab

3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis

Every Wednesday starting March 1, 8 a.m.

Meet at the St. Francis Colonnade

For more information contact David Benson

dbenson@marian.edu

Holliday Park

6363 Spring Mill Rd, Indianapolis

7:30-9 a.m on March 21, April 18, May 16

Meet in front of the nature center.

For more information call (317) 327-7180

Donations in Memory and Honor of

by Chris Carlson in memory of Bill Brink

by Mike Broome in memory of James Riley George

by Louise Haskett in memory of William F Steinmetz

by Mary Ann Stewart gift membership to

Kent & Debi Hall

Go Birding for Bucks with Your Own Birdathon Team

Want to have more fun birding and contribute to a worthy cause? Consider fielding your own Birdathon team. Get your friends and family to support your event with pledges to benefit the birds of central Indiana. Birdathon funds support research, education, local habitat restoration, protection of winter migratory habitat, and the Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center. For a copy of the Birdathon Team guidelines, contact Birdathon Chair Donna McCarty at donnaLmccarty@me.com.

Amos Butler Audubon Society Chapter Supporter Membership

Membership benefits:

- 100% of your dues support local Audubon educational programs and urban conservation projects
- *Audubon LifeLines*, the chapter newsletter
- Workshops and entertaining monthly program meetings

- One-year individual membership \$25
- Two-year individual membership \$45
- One-year household membership \$40
- Two-year household membership \$75
- Lifetime individual membership \$500

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (please include) _____

Make checks payable to: Amos Butler Audubon Society

Mail to: Susan Leo, ABAS Membership Chair

P.O. Box 80024

Indianapolis, IN 46280

e-mail questions to: info@amosbutleraudubon.org

Amos Butler Audubon Society

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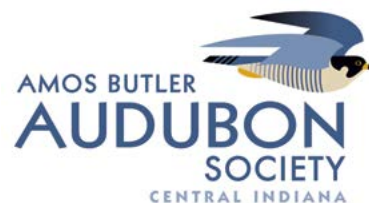
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*Our mission: To promote the enjoyment and
stewardship of the birds of Central Indiana*

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