



NATURE NEWS & NOTES

April/May 2013

Join Us April 17th for the WVAS Annual Meeting

The Wabash Valley Audubon Society's annual meeting and banquet will be held on Wednesday, April 17th at the MCL Cafeteria in the Meadows Shopping Center, 25th and Ohio St., Terre Haute. The featured speaker is Terre Haute native Brendan Kearns. Kearns became known worldwide when he posted a video of his Wabash River encounter with Asian Carp jumping in and over his motorboat. He has spent a great deal of time on the Wabash River and has seen many things from mussel-covered sandbars, rocky beaches, and a great deal of wildlife. Brendan will tell us about some of the amazing things he has seen and show some of the pictures he has taken on his adventures on the Wabash River. A social hour starts at 5:30 and the meal will be ordered off the regular MCL menu at 6:30. Members are encouraged to donate items for a "silent raffle". This is a Year of the

River event and non-members are welcome to attend. The banquet is \$25 per person and can be paid at the door, however advance reservations are required by April 15th by contacting Helen Vermillion at [\(812\)235-2901](tel:8122352901) or hvermillion62@yahoo.com.

Big May Day Count: Saturday May 11

The second biggest bird count event of the year comes on the second Saturday of May, when birders across Indiana try to find as many species as possible in a single county. Actually, the number of species seen (typically 150-170) far exceeds that on the Christmas count (about 80), because it occurs during the peak of spring migration. The WVAS has conducted a Vigo County May count since the 1960's, and this year will be the 45th effort. We have seen a total of 233 species over the years, and we usually place in the

state's top four counts. Last year we improved our effort in the rural southern townships of the county, and we will attempt a balanced geographic effort again this year. Please contact one of the compilers, Peter Scott or Dan Weber, if you wish to participate, especially if you have not done so before. We'll have an evening countdown somewhere.

Spotted Redshank Found at Goose Pond

A Spotted Redshank was present at Goose Pond in Greene County, Indiana from March 28 through April 1. Spotted Redshanks breed in Arctic areas of Northern Eurasia and winter from the Mediterranean region to Eastern China south to equatorial Africa and southeast Asia. This is one of the few inland sightings ever in North America. Visitors from all over the U.S. traveled here to see the rarity.

The Wabash Valley Audubon Society, local chapter of the National Audubon Society, would like to welcome the following new members:

Jennie Laroche

Lisa Duvall

John Halladay

Lavera Loveall

Nancy Tague

Amy McDonald

Jean Veach

D. Jackson

Cathy Gorby

Dan Coronell

Charles Fisher



Spring Has Arrived!



Photo's by Joe Dickson

Photo on the left shows the adult female sitting on her eggs at WVAS Box #32 in Roselawn Cemetery. Joe says this newborn bluebird in photo on the right was hatched on April, 29, 2012 and was his "youngest son". Joe monitors bluebird boxes north of Terre Haute.



Matt Williams



Diana Hews

WVAS Membership Meeting Presentations

The February and March meetings covered very interesting topics. In February, Dr. Diana Hews presented her June 2012 experience in Oaxaca, Mexico to study social behavior and physiology of a specific lizard species. In March, Matt Williams, The Nature Conservancy spoke about the efforts to improve water quality in the Wabash River. Contact WVAS if you have an environmentally related topic you would like to share during upcoming member meetings resuming next fall. Thanks to everyone that attended this season's informative meetings.

Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring

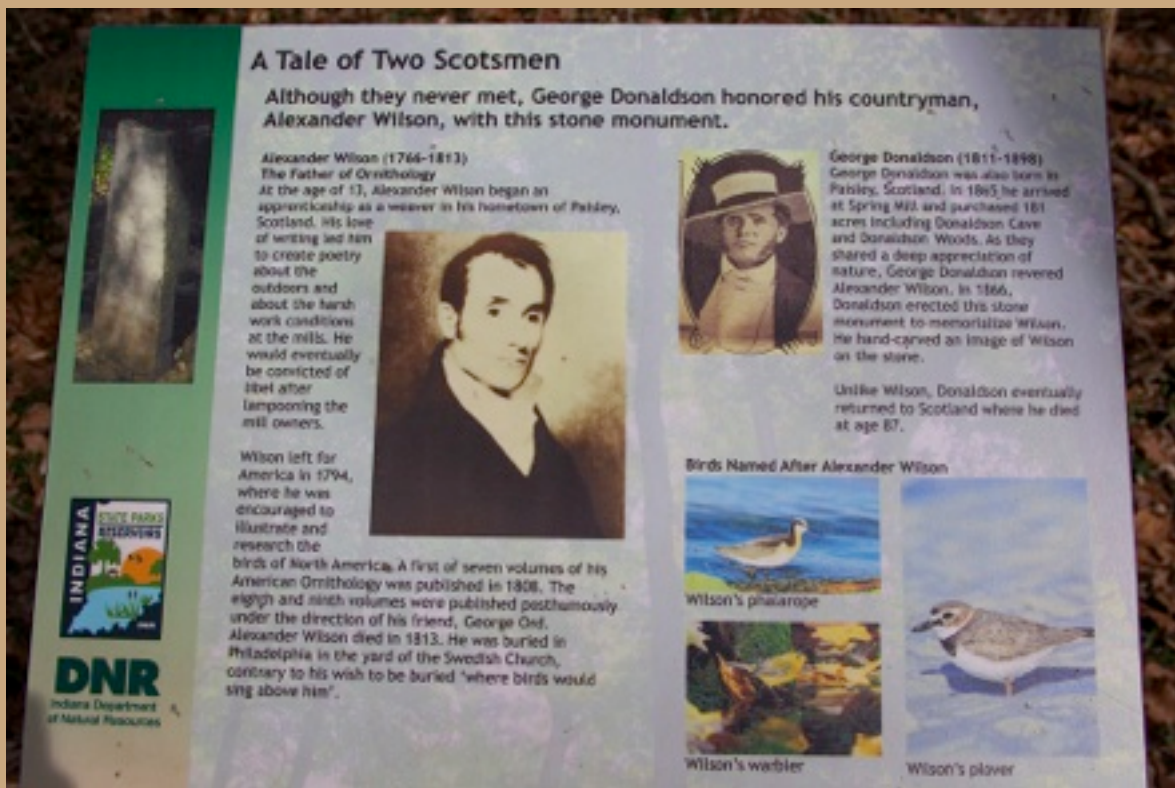
The WVAS is excited to begin it's fourth year of helping the local bluebird population. In 2012, 103 bluebirds were fledged from our bluebird box trail which currently covers much of Vigo and parts of northern Sullivan County. We now have over 30 bluebird boxes being monitored by helpful volunteers. This year we gained the volunteer support of Greg and Michelle Phegley as they begin monitoring boxes on the near east-side of Terre Haute. Thank you Greg and Michelle!

A Tribute to Alexander Wilson by Marty Jones

On a recent cold winter day, I visited Spring Mill State Park located in Lawrence County, Indiana. I began my hike not far from the four-story Inn and Nature Center on Trails #1 and #4. In the solitude of the forest along a small stream on Trail #4 I discovered a three-foot tall carved stone surrounded by an iron fence. I soon learned this stone was a memorial placed at this location in 1866 by George Donaldson, who at that time owned 181 acres in what is now part of Spring Mill State Park.

As explained on a nearby Indiana Department of Natural Resources Interpretive Sign, the stone was placed there by George Donaldson as a monument to memorialize a fellow Scotsman named Alexander Wilson, The Father of Ornithology. Alexander Wilson (July 6, 1766 - August 23, 1813) was a poet, ornithologist, naturalist, and illustrator. In May 1794, at the age of 27, Wilson and his 16 year old cousin left for a better life in America. They settled near Philadelphia, taught school and met William Bartram, a famous naturalist, who got Wilson interested in birds. In 1802, Wilson decided to publish a book illustrating all the North American birds. He traveled widely, observing and painting birds, and gathering subscribers for the book. His nine-volume work, American Ornithology published in 1808-1814, illustrated 268 species, including descriptions of 26 new species.

Wilson also conducted the first breeding bird census, in Bartram's garden, corrected errors of taxonomy, and published many observations of natural history.



Above: Photo of the DNR Interpretive Sign

Wilson is now regarded as the greatest American ornithologist prior to John James Audubon. It was his meeting with Audubon in Louisville, Kentucky in 1810 which probably inspired the younger man to produce a book of his own bird illustrations.

Several species of birds were named after Alexander Wilson, including Wilson's Storm-petrel, Wilson's Plover, Wilson's Phalarope, Wilson's Snipe and Wilson's Warbler. The warbler genus *Wilsonia* was also named for him by Charles Lucien Bonaparte.

Alexander Wilson died in 1813 in Philadelphia, where he is buried in the Gloria Dei (Old Swedes) Cemetery. Sadly he died while completing the eighth and ninth volumes of his work. These works appeared under the care of his friend and biographer, George Ord.

Coincidentally, Alexander Wilson and George Ord are buried next to each other in the Philadelphia cemetery. He is also honored in his home town of Paisley, Scotland with a memorial and a statue. It is inscribed "Remember Alexander Wilson 1766-1813. Here was his boyhood playground."



Above: Photo of the monument. A closer look at the stone reveals a hand carved piece of limestone with an inscribed likeness of Alexander Wilson with his date of his birth and death.



Wilson's Snipe



Wilson's Warbler photographed by Stephanie Taylor



Wilson's Phalarope

2013 Annual Banquet and The James Mason Award

This year's Wabash Valley Audubon Banquet will be held on Wednesday April 17th (see cover page for more information). As a reminder, the James Mason Award is awarded at our annual banquet dinner every spring to an individual or group that has demonstrated a commitment to bird conservation and/or environmental education in Indiana, particularly in the Wabash Valley.

Past winners of the award (and their affiliations) include:

- 1990 Jack Munsee, WVAS, ISU Life Sciences
- 1991 H. Samuel Phipps, Indiana DNR
- 1992 Keith Ruble, Vigo County Parks Dept.
- 1993 Terri Moore, Indiana Natural Resource Commission
- 1994 Marion Jackson, WVAS, ISU Life Sciences
- 1995 Paul Carmony, The Nature Conservancy
- 1996 Amy Mason, WVAS, Indiana Audubon Society, Indiana Garden Club
- 1997 James Gammon, DePauw University
- 1998 Marshall Parks, WVAS, ISU Life Sciences
- 1999 John Bacone, Indiana Dept of Natural Resources
- 2000 "Six from the Sixties", WVAS founders: Ruth Erickson, Betty Munsee, Ken & Pearl Eslinger, Henry & Margaret Tamar
- 2001 no award given
- 2002 Charles Keller, co-author of Birds of Indiana
- 2003 Alan Bruner, WVAS, Indiana Audubon Society
- 2004 Gene Muench, WVAS
- 2005 John Whitaker, ISU Center for NA Bat Research and Conservation
- 2006 James McDonald, Indiana landowner practicing conservation and stewardship of his land
- 2007 no award given
- 2008 TREES Inc., Terre Haute, Indiana
- 2009 Peter Scott, WVAS, ISU Biology
- 2010 Susie Dewey, WVAS
- 2011 Max Miller, Riverscape
- 2012 Phil and Brenda Milliren
- 2013 ??????????????



Events

All events are open to the public. If you have a topic you would like to present please contact WVAS. If additional information is needed call one of the officers listed below:

WVAS OFFICERS 2012**President:**

Phil Cox
philwcox@gmail.com

Vice-President:

Carissa Lovett
carissa.lovett@terrehaut.e.in.gov

Secretary:

Ellen Lunsford
mabel819@aol.com

Treasurer:

Phil Milliren
philiren@msn.com

Conservation:

Phil Cox

Education:

Carissa Lovett

Board member:

Lucinda Berry
Helen Vermillion
Joe Dickson
Shelley Arvin
Nicholas Brown

Social Chair:

Margaret Tamar,

Membership Chair

Brenda Milliren,
breniren@msn.com

Newsletter Editor:

Marty Jones
indth33@yahoo.com

Bird Count Compiler:

Peter Scott,
peter.scott@indstate.edu

April

13

Dobbs Park Birding with the Wabash Valley Audubon Society. Meet at Nature Center, 10 - noon.

13

Walk Through the Wildflowers, 1:30 p.m. Dobbs Park. Pre-registration Required. Call 812-877-1095.

17

ISU Earth Day, 10 - 1pm (between Condit House & Stalker Hall)

17

52nd Annual WVAS Banquet. See page one for details.

19

Union Hospital Earth Day, 10 - 2 p.m.

20

St. Mary-of-the-Woods College Earth Day, 11 - 3 p.m.

May

2

WVAS Board Mtg, 7:00 p.m. at the Grand Traverse Pie Company, 3rd & Cherry St.

11

Big May Day Bird Count, See article for details.

15

Wabash Valley Audubon Society Picnic at North Terre Haute's Forest Park, 5:30 p.m.

18

Dobbs Park Birding with the Wabash Valley Audubon Society. Meet at Nature Center, 10 - noon.

25

Invasive Species Removal Day at Dobbs Park from 9am - 12 noon.

June

8

32 Annual Kid's Fishing Rodeo at Dobbs Park from 9am - 11am. Free event. For more information call 812-877-1095

15

Dobbs Park Birding with the Wabash Valley Audubon Society. Meet at Nature Center, 10 - noon.

20

American Eagle Day,
www.eagles.org

Recent Bird Photographs

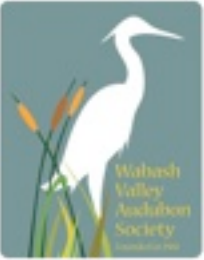
Snow Geese, An estimated 5,000 were seen at Universal Mine, Vermillion County, Indiana, Feb 4, 2013. Photographed by Ben Cvengros



Red-headed Woodpecker, Vigo County, Indiana March 10, 2013. Photographed by Marty Jones

Whooping Cranes, Bee Hunter Marsh Greene County, Indiana, February 2013. Photograph by Mike Hannum





Wabash Valley Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2338
Terre Haute IN 47802-2338

Audubon Help Needed

NOTICE

Wabash Valley Audubon currently has openings for the following positions: board member, newsletter editor, memorial fund. Some of the most valuable gifts that an organization can receive have no price tag on them. Only an hour or two of volunteer work each month can really make a difference. To learn more contact Marty Jones, 317-696-6246, indth33@yahoo.com

JOIN AUDUBON Wabash Valley Audubon Society Code No. C3ZH05OZ

Name: _____

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State: _____ **Zip:** _____

E-mail: _____

National Member.....\$20

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Audubon Society

Chapter Member.....\$15

Includes Chapter Membership and on-line

access to NNN.

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Mail to:

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