

THIS IS WHAT A BIRDER LOOKS LIKE



By Chris Collins, *Rogue Birders*

In May of this year, following the race-related incident in Central Park between a dog walker and Black birder, Christian Cooper, a group of Black STEM professionals and students launched an initiative called #BlackBirdersWeek. The week-long event was designed to highlight the activities of Black birders and their contributions to research and science.

As part of the event, my friend, Richard “Buster” Banish, shared a story about “his kids”: The East Clark Elementary School “Bird Nerds”. These young birders of color in Cleveland, Ohio had been looking forward to attending The Biggest Week in American Birding. The festival was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic leaving the kids disappointed.

Earlier in the year, the Rogue Birders had launched a #BirdOn t-shirt fundraiser for Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO), the hosts of the Biggest Week festival. After reading about the disappointment these kids were experiencing, we decided to launch a small fundraiser to get them their own custom #BirdOn BSBO shirts, and help pay for a trip to next year’s Biggest Week festival.

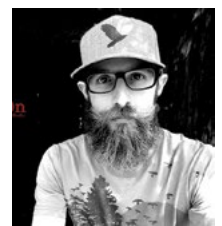
I spent a day birding with Buster and a few of the kids in early July. We had a great time and I captured some photos of the kids to share with our followers. The first photo I posted was of Isaiah. Buster shared it on Instagram (@birdnerdbuster) with the caption, “This Is What A Birder Looks Like”, and from that, the series was born.



Abbi Turner - Indianapolis, IN. Photo © Abbi Turner



Bird Nerd, Isaiah - Cleveland, OH. Photo © Christopher Collins



Adam Wilson - Greenfield, IN. Photo © Adam Wilson



Douglas Gray - Franklin, IN. Photo © Christopher Collins



Jining Han - Carmel, IN. Photo © Christopher Collins

My goal is to show the diversity that exists in birding that many people may be unaware of. The photo series includes birders that I have met via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and from my own circle of friends. It is a combination of people that I reached out to and those that contacted me wanting to participate and share their story. Original, unedited photos were submitted by the subjects, or if possible, I shot the photo myself. I decided to present the photos in black and white to put the focus on the faces, as well as to create a theme that demonstrates that we all share a common interest.

Every birder is different and each has their own story to tell. Black, Latino, Chicana, Asian, Gay, Trans, Non-Binary, Hippie, Metal, Female, Male, Old, and Young — all are part of the series. We are all very different people, but our love of birds brings us together.

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Upcoming Audubon Events and Field Trips

All are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, all of these events are subject to cancellation. Please check our website event calendar before attending an event to see if it might have been canceled. Once restrictions are softened, we might also schedule last-minute events.

Monthly Programs Canceled for Now

Unfortunately, our September and October programs are being canceled. We hope to continue programs in the near future.

Field Trips

Masks on Hikes and Limited Numbers

It is anticipated that masks will be required for the majority of all field trips and local hikes. There may be times when we can spread out and get a quick break from the masks. Many hikes will also have a limit to the number of participants and require registration. Please check the details of each hike and register as appropriate.

Fall Warblers at Strawtown Koteewi Park

Saturday, September 5, 8:30 am to 10:30 am
Strawtown Koteewi Park
12308 Strawtown Avenue, Noblesville, IN

Join well-respected birder and field trip leader, Terry Ballenger, as we look for migrating fall warblers as well as local resident birds in this 800-acre park. The fall migration should be well underway and we should expect to see several species of warblers. We'll meet at the Taylor Center of Natural History building parking lot at 8:30 am and bird on foot from there. The terrain is flat and the trails are well defined.

The Taylor Center opens at 10:00 am and has modern, well-maintained restrooms as well as great local cultural exhibits.

The field trip is open to all and there is no fee for the event. Pre-registration is not required. Please remember to dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring any water, hats, bug spray, and sunscreen you need. As always, bring your binoculars. If you have any questions, please email Chuck Anderson at chucka1999@aol.com.



Golden-winged Warbler courtesy of Amy Hodson

Conner Prairie Fall Migration Field Trip

Saturday, September 19, 8:00 am to 10:00 am
Conner Prairie

13400 Allisonville Road, Fishers, IN

Join accomplished birders, Becky Lomax-Sumner and Laurie Voss, for a morning of birding at Conner Prairie. It should be prime time viewing for fall warblers and other migrating birds as well as local, year-round residents.

The terrain is flat and the trails are well maintained. The hike will be approximately two miles. We'll meet in the parking lot at 8:00 am and start from there on foot. Make sure to bring your binoculars and wear comfortable walking shoes.

There is no fee for the field trip. However, the trip is limited to 10 participants, and registration is required. Email Chuck Anderson at chucka1999@aol.com or text Chuck at (317) 767-5438 to reserve your spot on the field trip. We expect the field trip to fill up quickly as this is the first ABAS outing to Connor Prairie in several years.



Cape May Warbler courtesy of Amy Hodson

Special Donations

*In memory of William F Steinmetz
by his daughter Louise Haskett*

All who give a little extra with their membership

Lifetime Memberships

All lifetime memberships go to the Permanent Fund. Lifetime individual membership is only \$500 and it is fitting that it goes to the long-run benefit of ABAS. The Permanent Fund can never be spent. Similar to an endowment, the goal is that investment proceeds can be spent as the Board of Directors determines. Any donation throughout the year can be directed towards the Permanent Fund as well.

Fall Birding at Muscatatuck NWR

Saturday, October 18, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm

Muscatatuck NWR

12985 East US Highway 50, Seymour, IN

Join ABAS Education Chair, Jessica Helmbold, for a day of celebrating the best of fall. Southern Indiana fall colors, fall waterfowl migration, and lunch after the outing. Duck migration should be well underway and many species are expected to be present in the refuge.

Meet at the Muscatatuck Visitors Center, 12985 East U.S. Highway 50, Seymour, Indiana, at 8:30 am. We'll bird until 12:30 pm or 1:00 pm. An optional lunch will be at a local eatery with the location to be determined. Participants will be responsible for paying for their own lunch.

There will be no fee for the field trip and it's open to the public. Registration is not required but greatly appreciated at info@amosbutleraudubon.org. Let us know in advance if you are planning to join the group for lunch so we can make reservations at the restaurant.

Please remember to dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring any water, hats, bug spray, and sunscreen you need. As always bring your binoculars. If you have any questions and to register for the field trip, email Jessica at jh_beagle@hotmail.com.

Celery Bog Nature Area Field Trip

Saturday, October 31, 8:00 am to 10:00 am

Celery Bog Nature Area

1620 Lindberg Road, West Lafayette, IN

Join ABAS Field Trip Chair, Chuck Anderson, for a field trip to Celery Bog Nature Area. This will be a great opportunity to view waterfowl and year-round resident birds. Target birds are waterfowl, including Northern Pintail, Redhead, and Canvasback ducks, with a possibility of spotting a Long-tailed Duck. Snow Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose also frequent the bog.

The terrain is flat and trails are well managed. The hike will be 2 to 2 1/2 miles. Restrooms are available at the Lilly Nature Center after 10:00 am. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Dress appropriately for the weather. We'll meet at 8:00 am in the first parking lot on the right inside the park.

There is no fee for the field trip. However, it is limited to 12 participants, and registration is required. Email Chuck at chucka1999@aol.com or text (317) 767-5438 to reserve your spot on the field trip.



Hooded Merganser courtesy of Chuck Anderson

Local Bird Hikes

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, all of these events are subject to cancellation. Please check our website event calendar before attending an event to see if it might have been canceled. Once restrictions are softened, we might also schedule last-minute events.

- Spring hikes at Southeastway Park have already been canceled.
- Eagle Creek Park hikes are canceled until further notice.

Masks on Hikes

It is anticipated that masks will be required for the majority of the local hikes. There may be times when we can spread out and get a quick break from the masks.

Holliday Park

6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis, IN

Third Tuesday of each month

Start times vary during the year

September 15, 8:00 am to 9:30 am

October 20, 8:30 am to 10:00 am

Meet in front of the Nature Center.

Thornwood Nature Preserve

1597 South Morristown Pike, Greenfield, IN

Second Saturday of each month

September 12, 8:00 am to 10:00 am

October 10, 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Join the Greenfield Birders for a bird hike. Beginners are welcome. All walks are weather pending. Stay up to date with any changes by searching "Greenfield Birders" on Facebook.

Beckenholdt Family Park

2770 North Franklin Street, Greenfield, IN

Fourth Saturday of each month

September 26, 8:00 to 10:00 am

October 24, 9:00 to 11:00 am

Join the Greenfield Birders for a bird hike. Beginners are welcome. All walks are weather pending. Stay up to date with any changes by searching "Greenfield Birders" on Facebook.

Newfields Bird Hike

1550 West 38th Street, Indianapolis, IN

Saturday, September 26, 8:00 am to 10:00 am

Join ABAS and Newfields for bird hikes on this beautiful property along the White River and Central Canal. Meet at Lake Terrace in the Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park: 100 Acres. Registration is requested by emailing us at info@amosbutleraudubon.org.

Fort Harrison State Park

6000 North Post Road, Indianapolis, IN

Sundays in September and October

September 6, 13, 20, 27

October 4, 11, 18, 25

8:00 am to 10:00 am

Meet in the northeast corner of the Delaware Lake parking lot.

Behind the Lens: Dan Miller

Note from the Editor: If you have ever read one of Dan Miller's photo captions, then you know why I had to ask this Indiana photographer to contribute as a featured artist. Witty, funny, and just overall "smiley", Dan is known for bringing his photos to life with wonderful pictures as well as words.

Editor: When did you know that you were going to pursue capturing photographs of birds?

Dan: I've always been fascinated by photography, but when I first saw a bird photo in a field guide, that was it for me. It was probably first or second grade. Thirty years later I fulfilled the dream. Digital photography was coming into its own right about the time I could afford it.

Editor: Is there a specific species that sparked your interest in photography?

Dan: It was early in my wildlife photography journey and I'm not sure which I knew less about, photography or birds, but I wasn't having much luck. That's when a Palm Warbler plopped down in front of me and patiently waited until I got the shot. It was the spark I needed to learn everything I could about warblers. Then everything else fell into place.

Editor: You tell some of the most fun stories and have the greatest comments to accompany your bird photos. Tell us a bit about how you write that story to make the birds come to life through your work.

Dan: I've always viewed the world through a cartoonist's eye. I'm constantly on the lookout for some interesting or humorous thing happening in nature and when there is none, my imagination takes over. I'm at my best when it feels like the woodland creatures are all friends performing for me.

Editor: Fall photography is right around the corner. What is your favorite aspect of taking photographs in the fall? What tips do you have?

Dan: After a long, boring summer, it's the anticipation of warblers arriving. It's the procession of birds coming through. The warblers are first. Then we have shorebirds, sparrows, waterfowl, and all the rest. The leaves turning colors and the change of seasons add to it. Fall warblers love sunlit, brushy wooded edges. They seem to be most cooperative at sunrise, though around sunset can also be great.

Editor: What was the most impactful tip you have learned about bird photography?

Dan: I've always used a monopod, starting with my little 400mm lens to the 1000mm big gun I'm lugging around now. Target acquisition is at least as fast as handheld and I'm able to work with slow shutter speeds. The feather detail my monopod allows on a cloudy day, deep in the woods is astounding. I always tell people, the film is cheap, blast away! Make more photos than you think you'll need because that's when you'll capture a little head tilt or a particular look that will set one of your photos apart from the rest. And finally, get the eye in focus. It's what viewers are drawn to. Your photos are basically ruined otherwise.

Editor: What photograph are you the proudest of, and why?

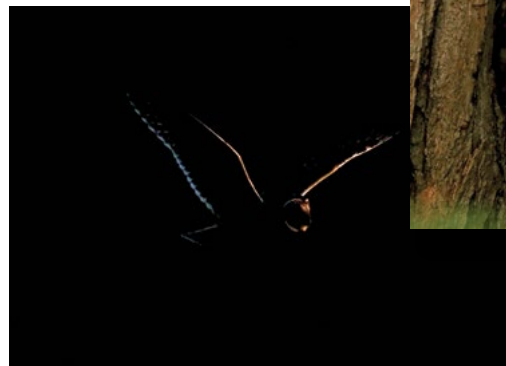
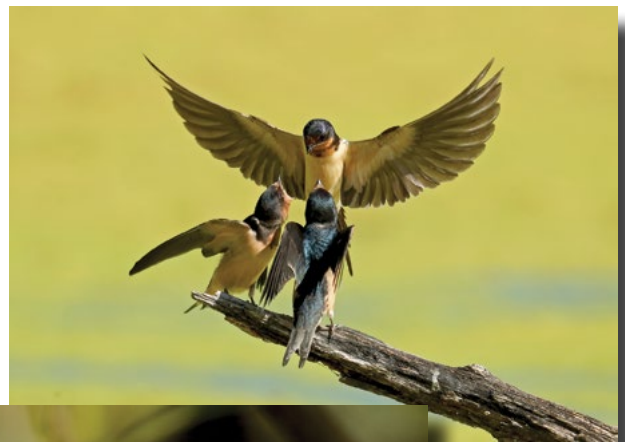
Dan: The Barn Swallows feeding is a special photo on its own, but the story behind it makes me proud. These Barn Swallows were feeding down by the water's edge one day though they were in no position to photograph. I remember thinking, with the sun and wind at my back, that log right there on the water would be a glorious place for you to feed those fledglings. The next morning I returned to the same spot and that's exactly where they were.

Editor: What is something you wish you had known as a beginning photographer that you know now?

Dan: I wasted a lot of time trying to photograph birds at the wrong time of year and wrong time of day. Noon in July is the worst possible time for bird photography. Now I shoot primarily during migration, early morning, late evening, and some overcast afternoons.

Editor: How are you planning your next adventure as a bird photographer in the midst of a global pandemic?

Dan: The pandemic hasn't slowed me down much but my preferred park, the Celery Bog, has become over-crowded with social distancers. It will be more of the same for me, though I'm starting to dabble in videos too. I haven't found it yet, but I'm looking for the formula that will result in entertaining birding videos. And can I do a little self-promotion here? My new book, *A Field Guide to Bird Butts of North America* is now printing.



Photos from top to bottom: Barn Swallows, Hooded Warbler, Eastern Screech Owl, Short-eared Owl. All photos courtesy of Dan Miller

An Unexpectedly Successful Birdathon

By Birdathon Chair, Donna McCarty

This has been a year like none of us has ever seen with uncertainty about our health, the economy, and a new normal that is anything but normal. At the beginning of the 2020 Birdathon campaign, the Birdathon Committee members and I just didn't know what to expect. The prediction was that donations would most likely be down and possibly down significantly. As it turned out, we were wrong. Thanks to our donors generous support, donations totaled \$25,888. Much to our surprise, this turned out to be slightly more than last year.

All six grant requests have been fully funded, benefiting the birds of Central Indiana. Projects included two local, bird-friendly habitat restorations, one at the Marian University Nina Mason Pullman EcoLab and the other at the Sarah T. Bolton Prairie of Poetry in Beech Grove. Donations supported enhanced care for birds of prey at the Indiana Raptor Center and the Eagle Creek Park Ornithology Center. Due to the pandemic, the Camp Utopia summer camp, which inspires youth to consider careers in conservation and wildlife, has been rescheduled for 2021.

This year we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of our collaboration with America Bird Conservancy in Latin America. We are particularly pleased to return to Colombia to help again with efforts to enhance habitat for the Cerulean and several other warbler species. The planting of 18,000 native trees will help create corridors of habitat and enrich forest fragments around coffee farms. The ultimate goal is to produce and plant 100,000 trees.

Birdathon Teams Cope with COVID

Stay-at-home orders, park closures, and social distancing wreaked havoc with Birdathon teams' Big Day events. Teams were forced to drive in separate cars, cover smaller geographic areas, and use bicycles to access some parks. Ultimately though, nothing could deter them from going out and counting birds. The Bud & Carl's Legacy team is once again the fundraising champs. The top species count team, Carbon Neutral, did their Big Day exclusively on pedal power with a total of 138.



Fundraising Champs Bud & Carl's Legacy team members (left to right) Marty Williams, Janet Tuten, and Keith Starling.



Species Count Champs Carbon Neutral team members Wes Homoya and Dave Benson

This Is What a Birder Looks Like

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Followers of the Rogue Birders page have responded very favorably to the posts. I have received messages from some of my closest friends and from complete strangers saying how much they enjoy learning about these amazing people. They say it's a "good thing" we are doing. My hope is that someone will see a bit of themselves in one of these photos and decide to join the birding community and that they also will become a birder, a conservationist, and an inspiration to others.

You can see more birders and read their stories on the Rogue Birders Facebook page – fb.com/rogueriders.

Birdathon Online Auction Coming September 22

Here's an opportunity for you to purchase some great items and experiences from the comfort of your home and benefit the birds of Central Indiana at the same time. On September 22, go to the ABAS website at www.amosbutleraudubon.org and follow the link to a Birdathon Auction Page. With a winning bid, you can get a week at a French Lick Springs Villa, a day of birding with ABAS President Rob Ripma, a wine and cheese pontoon boat tour on Eagle Creek reservoir, jewelry, bird feeders, binoculars, bird books, and many more desirable items. All proceeds help fund the 2021 Birdathon grants.

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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

Lifetime membership goes to Permanent Fund

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (required) _____

Make checks payable to: Amos Butler Audubon Society

Mail to: ABAS Membership Chair

P.O. Box 80024

Indianapolis, IN 46280

e-mail questions to: info@amosbutleraudubon.org

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

Amos Butler Audubon Society

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