

Indiana Audubon Society

CARDINAL

NEWSLETTER • AUG - SEPT 2021 • Vol.52 No.4



THE
URBAN BIRDING
ISSUE

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The *Cardinal* Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication of the Indiana Audubon Society. Its purpose is to share stories and conversations so that members and the birding community beyond can stay meaningfully connected both to birds and to the people dedicated to their protection.



On the cover:

Searching for the Peregrine Falcon nest in Monument Circle, Indianapolis by Wes Homoya

JOIN —OR— RENEW TODAY



MEMBERSHIP PERKS	Individual \$30	Family \$40	Contributing \$50	Cardinal Club \$100	Life \$675	Library \$100	Fledgling \$5	Student \$20
Access to bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mailed printed copies of bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Complete access to Birds of North America Database	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Discounted Field Trips & Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Special Access to Mary Gray Birding Sanctuary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
15% discount on all IAS online store merchandise				✓	✓			
Register a friend to any IAS field trip at member rate				✓				

➤ Be a part of Indiana Audubon Society! Sign up at: Indianaaudubon.org/membership



UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS

Join Indiana Audubon for an assortment of field trips and workshops being offered this summer. Visit indianaaudubon.org/events for more information or to register for any of these upcoming late summer and early fall activities. Additional events are listed on our website and many fill early!

AUGUST 7: Lakefront Shorebirds Field Trip, *#21in21 series* [Gary]

AUGUST 16: Hummingbirds of the Southwestern US Workshop [Virtual Zoom Program]

AUGUST 21: Birds & Butterflies Photography Field Trip, *#21in21 series* [Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, Connersville]

AUGUST 21: Southeast Arizona Birding Tour- FULL [Tucson, AZ]

SEPTEMBER 11: Celery Bog Fall Warblers Trip, *#21in21 series* [West Lafayette]

OCTOBER 1-3: IAS Fall Festival at McCormick's Creek State Park [Spencer]

Visit the Indiana Audubon Events Page at WWW.INDIANAAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS to see all the field trips and events now posted for registration. These trips will fill fast!

GLOBAL BIG DAY RESULTS

Global Big Day results have been piling in, and we are happy to share that we broke the top 20 states leaderboard... for the second year in a row! Here are some cool facts about Global Big Day in Indiana on May 8, 2021:



238 species recorded in the state- 2 more than 2020!

1,900+ individual checklists submitted - a new record!

86 out of 92 Indiana counties recorded species

50 out of 66 Indiana Birding Trail sites were represented!

Top Counties: Monroe- 168 species, Gibson- 161 species, Hamilton- 160 species

We are EXTREMELY proud of this increased effort and Indiana's results! While we may not have reached our goal of all counties and all Indiana Birding Trail sites, we are tremendously proud of the increased effort and turn out this year. Stay tuned for the October Big Day!

Global Big Day is hosted by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and 2021 was the 7th year. Over 700 species have been recorded in the US on this day! This event gives a snapshot of all the birds seen in the world on one day, and it is all through the individual checklists submitted by birders. Indiana Audubon members can find a more detailed summary in the upcoming Indiana Audubon Quarterly (IAQ).

To learn more about Global Big Day, visit
INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/GLOBALBIGDAYCOUNT

NOMINATE AN IAS MEMBER TODAY!

Indiana Audubon Society members are encouraged to nominate a member you know for one of two annual awards the society bestows each year. The Earl Brooks Award is given to an individual "for advancement of conservation of natural resources in Indiana." The award recipient does not have to be an Indiana Audubon Society member. The James H Mason Service Award is presented to a member of the Indiana Audubon Society who has dedicated themselves through service to the society. It serves as an inspiration and focus for others to work with such individuals.

Alan Bruner was honored at the IAS Spring Gathering at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary on May 1 for over 30 years of dedication to Indiana Audubon projects and initiatives. As a self-taught birder, Alan has kept extensive notes on his sightings near his home by Shades State Park. Alan has been involved with the Records Committee, Field Trip Committee, and has been a source of birding inspiration and mentorship over the years. IAS is proud to honor Alan as this year's Mason award winner.



VISIT INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/ABOUT-US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IAS AWARDS AND NOMINATE SOMEONE TODAY!

GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED THIS YEAR



The Indiana Audubon Society is pleased to announce several awards in the Mumford and Keller Grants/Scholarship Program in 2021. This program is for individuals and organizations that are seeking funding for activities related to Indiana's natural resources, particularly those related to Indiana's avifauna. This year's funding has been set aside for applicants in many categories, including, but not limited to research, bird preservation, workshop attendance, and youth birding activities. \$5,000 in funds will be awarded this fall.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, VISIT WWW.INDIANAUDUBON.ORG AND LOOK UNDER THE ACTIVITIES TAB

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Indiana Audubon Fall Gathering is BACK, October 1-3! We're at McCormick's Creek near Bloomington this year and are working on a jam packed schedule. You can expect lots of bird walks, in-person programs and workshops, socials, keynote speaker, and more. Stay tuned!

IAS FALL GATHERING TICKETS GO ON SALE IN AUGUST!



FEEDER RESTRICTION ADVISORY



Indiana Audubon is urging its members and bird enthusiasts to assist with the DNR's guidelines regarding the current unknown bird illness that is affecting birds statewide. Reports of sick and dying birds now include 69 counties, as of printing date.

Current guidance as of the latest update is to recommend all Hoosiers remove their songbird feeders and bird baths statewide, including hummingbird feeders.

Though many species of songbirds are being affected, corvids, such as blue jays and grackles seem to be the most prevalent reported species. Other species have included American Robin, Northern Cardinal, and European Starling. Symptoms include eye swelling, crusty eye and blindness, as well as neurological disorders, including defaulting standing or using muscles.

Find up to date information, report sick birds, and sign up for alerts at ON.IN.GOV/SONGBIRDDEATHS



meet a
MEMBER
PATTY STEFFEN

Q TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.
WHERE ARE YOU FROM? FAMILY?

I'm Patty Steffen and I live in Carmel. I have four adult children (three sons and a daughter) plus two grandchildren that live in and around central Indiana. I am the part-time Director of Investor Relations with OneZone Chamber of Commerce (chamber for the cities of Carmel and Fishers).

Q WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BIRDS AND BIRDING?

I became interested in birding seven years ago when I was completing my Indiana Master Naturalist class. I had always had a strong interest in the outdoors and nature but had never really done much birding or been a birder. Once I began birding in earnest though I was hooked!

The last several years I've been able to devote more time to my birding. I volunteer regularly through the Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation system as one of their bird monitors and I try to be outside birding as much as possible.

Q WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE BIRDING DESTINATION,
BOTH IN INDIANA AND OUTSIDE THE STATE?

My favorite birding destination in Indiana is Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife area in Linton. I have been there several times but hope that the future holds many more trips to that diverse area. I love the richness of that wetlands and the amazing story of their restoration. I haven't ventured too far yet outside the state of Indiana to bird since the pandemic (hopeful for more trips in 2022) but one of my favorite places to bird in Ohio is the Beaver Creek Wetlands area in Greene County, Ohio.

Q HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN IAS MEMBER AND
WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE FEATURES/
PROGRAMS?

I have been an IAS member since 2017 and have enjoyed many of the activities offered by Indiana Audubon. I love the variety of trips and have been on trips to Jasper-Pulaski, Goose Pond, and Lye Creek. I have taken several of the online birding classes and during the past year, I loved learning more about birding and meeting other birders throughout the state through the Pints and Passerines Facebook events. Pints and Passerines truly was a lifesaver when the country was at a standstill!

Q ANY CURRENT ISSUES OR THREATS YOU ARE
PASSIONATE ABOUT?

One of my biggest passions in birding though is to be proactive and involved in protecting our diverse natural areas – especially our wetland areas. Indiana is fortunate to have two outstanding areas in this state that allow migrating birds (i.e. sandhill and whooping cranes and other birds) a place to stop and rest and sometimes stay! As much as I enjoy birding, my biggest fear is that when my grandchildren reach my age they will not have such a diverse and beautiful state in which to enjoy our birds and wildlife. Whenever possible, I try to stay educated and active with promoting conservation in Indiana and the Midwest.

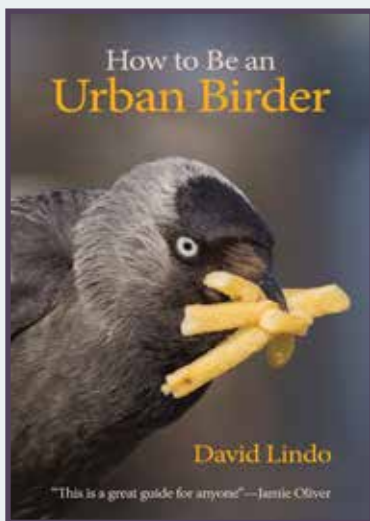


HOW TO BE AN URBAN BIRDER

AUTHOR: DAVID LINDO



David Lindo's most recent book, *How to Be an Urban Birder*, is perhaps a book of discovery for some and rediscovery for others. It has been said that urban birding is the new rock 'n' roll. In this book, Lindo provides a look at birding through the lens of a city birder in the UK and demonstrates how simple, rewarding, and cool urban birding can be. He reminds the reader that amazing birds are everywhere including often overlooked urban sites such as building rooftops, cemeteries, small urban gardens (that's the fancy British word for a yard or patio), and even the sky above. He encourages the reader to appreciate and conserve wildlife wherever it exists. He writes, "If we can learn about the importance of wildlife conservation in our cities then we will understand its connection in the general web of life on this planet, enabling us to reach out and strive to protect the rest of the world's fauna and flora and, ultimately, ourselves."



Lindo's relaxed style makes this book a quick, easy read that still manages to be loaded with useful information for the novice birder or bird-curious person. While the book does specifically describe places and birds in the UK, the vast majority of content applies to urban birding in general. Everything from clothing and gear, to habitat and seasonal migrations, to birding sites and personal safety, to observation and notetaking skills, to photography and backyard birding tips, to utilizing resources such as apps, field guides, and a network of other birders – *whew!*—you name it, Lindo covered it. But one should not be intimidated by this list. The most important tip Lindo shares is: "Just give it a go-and don't forget to look up!"

Though some readers may enjoy this book simply for the novelty of reading a bit about places and birds in another part of the world, for those people who are already experienced birders, the general birding 'how-to' concept isn't captivating. To be sure, much of the material in this book is geared toward the novice, but the book also serves to broaden the reader's traditional ideas of birding exploration and adventure. Maybe the book will inspire someone to start a list of birds seen while riding on the top deck of a city double decker bus. Or maybe it will inspire someone to take action for the protection of birds after noticing bird casualties near a tall building following a night of migration.

From the explorer with a love of travel and unexpected discovery, to the casual backyard birder, to the person who is just becoming curious about the birds around them, this book has something for everyone. Lindo explains that *How to Be an Urban Birder* sets out to "demystify the act of birding in cities and to expose it as a fun, modern and productive pastime."

If you would like to learn more about David Lindo, his personal journey as birder, and how he came to be known as the Urban Birder, be sure to check out his first book titled *The Urban Birder*. In his second book, *Tales from Concrete Jungles: Urban Birding Around the World*, Lindo chronicles his inspiring urban birding adventures in the UK and beyond. And of course, don't miss him at the 2022 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival where he will be the keynote speaker!



INDIANA BIRDING HIGHLIGHT

MILLER BEACH

By: Matt Kalwasinski

Miller Beach consists of two distinct sites on the southern shores of Lake Michigan; both are very popular with birders throughout the state. Lake Street Beach is most commonly birded July through August as birders scan the beach and water for migrating shorebirds, gulls, and terns. This site typically requires sedentary birding on the beach just north of the parking lot. Birders often bring chairs to sit on as they wait for migrating birds to fly by and often land on the beach. Another way

to bird the site is to walk the beach 1 mile west to the USX Steel breakwall searching for shorebirds on the beach. You can often find birds resting on the breakwall; although it does require climbing onto the large

concrete slabs. Primitive and sandy trails do exist to the south of the beach and can be productive for migrating passerines during spring and fall



migrations.

During late summer and through fall, birders typically head east to Marquette Park to scan for migrating waterfowl, gulls, and other specialty species including jaegers. For jaegers, the concession stand at Marquette Park is the go-to spot in Indiana. From Ken Brock's, Birds of the Indiana Dunes,

The beach parking area virtually marks the southernmost extent of Lake Michigan. Thus migrating birds

following both the eastern and western shorelines southward are ultimately funneled to this site. As a result, the fall season, August through November, provides the most interesting birds. The birding is usually best on days with a brisk northerly wind, which seems to stimulate the movement of birds along the lakefront. Over the years more jaegers have been seen at Miller Beach than at any other place in Indiana (and probably the highest number at any site in the entire Midwest).



TIMING

Typical Time to Bird

Site: 30 minutes - 4+ hours for lake birds

Best Time to Bird:

Typically July - November

Hours: Dawn to dusk daily

GETTING THERE

Address: Marquette Park : 1 North Grand Boulevard, Gary, IN 46403

Lake Street Beach: 860 N Lake St, Gary, IN 46403

Directions: The park is easily accessed 3 miles north of the town of Winamac on Highway 35.

Parking: Both sites have plenty of parking; although Lake Street Beach can get full during the summer months, which needs to be kept in mind when searching for shorebirds in July and August. However, most birders arrive early enough to avoid any parking issues.

SITE LOGISTICS

Admission: \$7/person

Ownership: City of Gary, IN

Restrictions: Please obey all posted rules and regulations for each site. This site also requires sedentary birding and because of the fall weather conditions along Lake Michigan, lots of layers of warm clothes.

Accessibility: Lake Street Beach is more primitive than Marquette Park. Although the

parking lot is paved, the only way to get to the shoreline is to walk across the sand. Marquette Park does contain a paved walking path away from the shoreline and the concession stand area is paved.

Nearby Amenities: During the summer, Marquette Beach includes a concession stand, vending areas, and restroom facilities. However, in the fall, the concession stand and restrooms are closed. At Lake Street

Beach, there are portable restrooms on site year-round, but no concession stand exists. Food and fuel is available just south in nearby Miller.

CONTACT INFO

Website: marquetteparkgary.org

Phone Number: (574) 946-3213

eBird Hotspot Link: Marquette Park: ebird.org/hotspot/L984779

Lake Street Beach: ebird.org/hotspot/L271446

LIGHTS OUT INDY

INITIATIVE AIMS TO MAKE INDIANAPOLIS BIRD-SAFE

BY AUSTIN BROADWATER



Birds being injured or killed as a result of window collisions has been commonplace for likely as long as windows have been around. According to the American Bird Conservancy, up to 1 billion birds die from running into glass every year in the US! In the last few decades, it has been discovered that another major factor results in even more of these types of fatalities: artificial night-time lighting.

Many avian species, in particular songbirds, are nocturnal migrants which use the stars as navigational aids when moving back and forth between their breeding and wintering grounds. As such, when birds fly over major metropolitan areas such as Indianapolis, they get confused by the bright lights and are then drawn into these unfamiliar urban jungles. There, the birds die from exhaustion, or by crashing into window glass which reflects the sky or surrounding trees, thereby not appearing as an obstacle. Due to these findings, multiple cities across the US and Canada have developed programs aimed to eliminate night-time lighting and reduce bird mortality from window collisions. The initiative in Canada is known as the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) which started in 1993, while the first Lights Out program in the US was founded by the National Audubon Society in Chicago in 1999.

The Amos Butler Audubon Society, which is the Indianapolis Chapter of the national organization, started the Lights Out Indy program in 2009. Since then, volunteers have been recruited to reach out to building owners and managers to encourage them to enact bird-friendly practices. Currently on board are the Indianapolis Zoo, the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, the Indianapolis City-County Building, and the Indianapolis Public Library. Each of these buildings has committed to the cause through either turning lights off at night, or, like the Museum of Art, treating their glass with grease pen lines to increase visibility to birds, which has been immensely successful! Legislators are also currently being spoken with, so hopefully some time in the near future, policies can be created which will enact more permanent practices in our city!

Along with these outreach opportunities, we have had several volunteers that continue to help us collect data on building strikes that occur in downtown Indianapolis, as well as help save injured birds that are found during these surveys. From 2009 to 2013, 1493 birds representing 93 species spread were found over 362 survey days. Imagine that extrapolated out to every possible day of surveying (April 1 to May 31 each spring and August 15 to November 15 each fall), and that is an astoundingly large number of birds! This doesn't even include all the birds that were due to



them falling into inaccessible locations or being picked up by scavengers before we found them.

This may come as a surprise to some, but almost none of the birds that are found are those common non-native urban species such as European Starlings, House Sparrows, or Rock Pigeons. Nearly all the birds we have found are those that light up our backyard feeders or light up birders' checklists as they migrate through the state. From hummingbirds, woodpeckers and sparrows to orioles, tanagers and thrushes, a wide variety of species are at risk. Our most commonly encountered species are Ovenbirds and Tennessee Warblers, but we have also found a fair amount of American Woodcocks and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. If a deceased bird is found in good condition, it is collected under the salvage permit of Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis and taken to their scientific collection for future taxidermy or educational purposes. Those birds found alive are taken to local wildlife rehabbers or the Avian and Exotic Animal Clinic in Indianapolis.



Of course, even if you live outside of the Indy metro area, you can prevent unnecessary bird deaths and injuries around your own home or place of business well. The Lights Out Indy website (www.amosbutleraudubon.org/conservation/lights-out-indy/) can provide you with excellent resources for bird-friendly glass options or window treatments, as well as links to research papers and examples of legislation that has been enacted in other cities across the US that we would like Indianapolis to model after. You can also follow the project on Facebook and Instagram under the name "Lights Out Indy."

Lastly, if you would like to get personally involved with the Lights Out Indy program, we are always looking for more volunteers! Whether you want to participate in our surveys, create educational opportunities, develop working relationships with business/building owners to join the cause, or initiate conversations with lawmakers, there is a place for you! Those who are interested can contact us on social media or email abroadwater1990@gmail.com.



LIGHTS OUT INDY

VISIT WWW.AMOSBUTLERAUDUBON.ORG/CONSERVATION/LIGHTS-OUT-INDY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE AND HELPING CITIES BECOME MORE BIRD FRIENDLY!

What can you do if you live outside the Indianapolis area? Make your home bird-friendly by installing Feather Friendly window tape! All proceeds go directly toward the Lights Out Indy project.

Purchase your kit at
INDIANAUDUBONSOCIETY.SQUARE.SITE
and start saving birds today!

Purchase
Feather Friendly®
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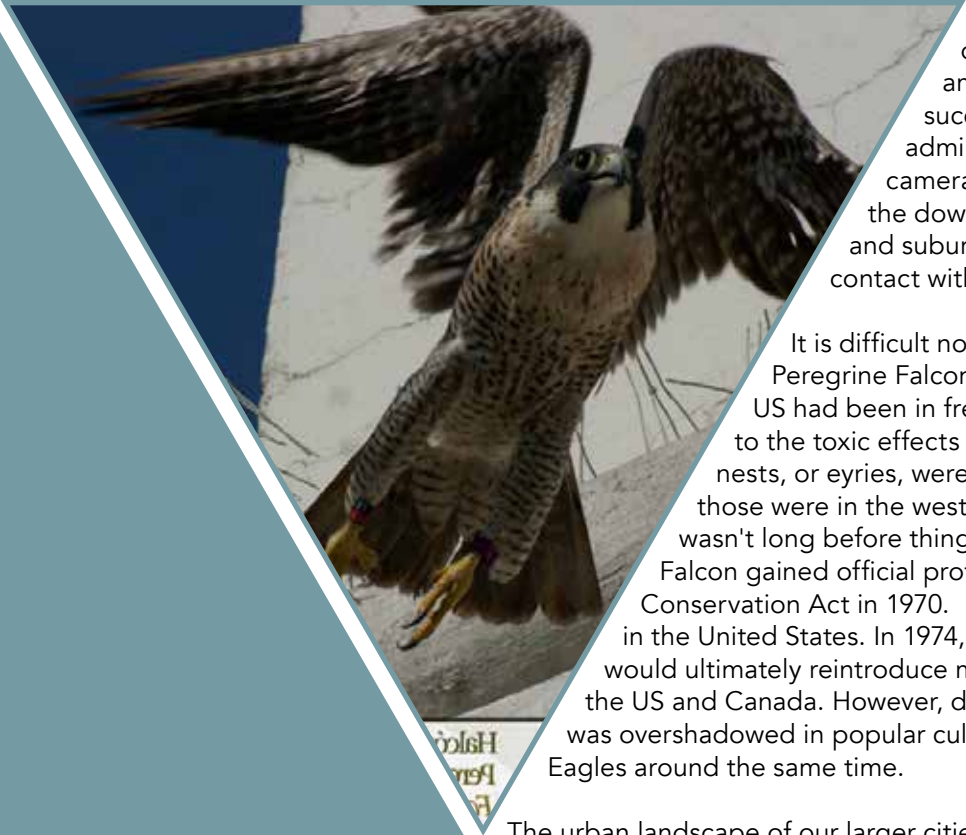


ULTIMATE URBAN BIRD



FALCONS CONTINUE TO THRIVE ALONG INDIANA'S URBAN LANDSCAPE

By: Brad Bumgardner



The Peregrine Falcon's return and delisting in Indiana is a lesser-known story among the state's many bird conservation successes. While a few diehard falcon fans admire and monitor urban peregrines via online cameras, and dedicated "falcon watchers" scan the downtown skylines, a large majority of rural and suburban birders simply don't have regular contact with Indiana's largest resident falcon species.

It is difficult now to envision how bad things were for the Peregrine Falcon in the late 1960s. Its population in the US had been in freefall for a couple of decades, due largely to the toxic effects of the pesticide DDT. Only a handful of nests, or eyries, were known to exist in the US, and most of those were in the western part of the country. Fortunately, it wasn't long before things starting looking up. The Peregrine Falcon gained official protection under the Endangered Species Conservation Act in 1970. In 1972, use of DDT was largely banned in the United States. In 1974, a captive-breeding program began that would ultimately reintroduce more than 7000 Peregrines throughout the US and Canada. However, despite its size and success, the program was overshadowed in popular culture by similar work being done for Bald Eagles around the same time.

The urban landscape of our larger cities and industrial areas mimics the cliffs, canyons, and mountaintops where wild falcons would historically nest and find food. Additionally, these environments host a variety of prey populations, including resident House Sparrows, Rock Pigeons and European Starlings, as well as migrant species that may also serve as falcon fodder. Skyscraper ledges, lakefront steel mill smokestacks, riverside power plants, and high bridge spans provide appealing nesting sites for a growing falcon population.

Today, nearly 500 Peregrine Falcon chicks are hatched each year in the Great Lakes region. Those birds at accessible sites are banded, and the Midwest Peregrine Society database (midwestperegrine.umn.edu) lists their names and tracks their life stories. In Indiana, volunteers, universities, government agencies, and non-profit organizations team together to continue the work of studying and growing our falcon population. Indiana falcon research begins each year just after March 1. Volunteers begin reporting when falcons have returned to their nesting sites and have begun showing signs that they're going to nest at that location. By April 1, the first eggs are being laid and the countdown begins to hatching, approximately 33 days later. When the spring migration is at its peak, hungry baby Peregrines are treated to a feast of Blue Jays, cuckoos, vireos and other songbirds. Growth happens fast, and within 4 weeks, Peregrine chicks are already losing their downy fuzz and developing their flight feathers, tail feathers, and more. It is during this short window that falcon researchers must quickly gather data and band the chicks - too young and their legs will not have developed sufficiently to take a band; too old and they might try to leave the nest prematurely.

No one will ever accuse Peregrine parents of being lazy; they are well-known for their territorial behavior and defense of their nest site. An angry Peregrine barreling in at 50+ miles per hour can cause even the most seasoned researcher to take cover! Getting hit with powerful talons is a frightening prospect, to say nothing of the dizzying heights one must endure to visit a falcon nest!

Once the chicks have fledged, they will hang around a short while to get fed by the parents, but will soon be on their own to migrate south and enjoy their "gap year" before it's time to find their own territory away from their birthplace. The name "Peregrine" means "traveler," and it is an apt one – in 2012, a falcon hatched in northern Indiana migrated all the way to Costa Rica, some 2200 miles away! Interestingly, Peregrines hatched in the Great Lakes region tend to re-settle there as adults, but may end up several hundred miles from where they were born.

If you are interested in learning more about our Indiana urban falcons, a quick Google search will turn up numerous nest site webcam links, including downtown Indianapolis, South Bend, Fort Wayne and AES Indiana (Indianapolis and Petersburg).

Also, please consider donating to Indiana Audubon and the Indiana DNR's Nongame Wildlife Fund to help support projects like Peregrine Falcon reintroduction, which will allow these amazing birds to soar the skies over the Hoosier state for generations to come.



Support Peregrine Falcon research and conservation by donating today at

WWW.INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/DONATE



Current Peregrine Falcon nest cameras are located in Indianapolis (Market Tower & IPL Plant), South Bend, Fort Wayne, and Petersburg. To find the live feeds, simply Google "Peregrine Falcon nest cam Indiana" or visit

MIDWESTPEREGRINE.UMN.EDU

and click the "Links" tab at the top for a full directory of falcon cameras!



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#21IN21 CHALLENGE!



To find your adventure and take the #21in21 challenge, visit
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