



Friends of the Limberlost

P.O. Box 571, Geneva, IN 46740

Phone: 260-368-7428, LimberlostSHS@embarqmail.com

www.Limberlost.weebly.com

Facebook: Friends of the Limberlost—Home of Gene Stratton-Porter

INSIDE

Page 2

► Summer Events—
Bluegrass is Back
► Poet in Residence
offers Workshops:
July through October
Page 3

► Swift Night Out
August 5, 7:30pm

► Homeschool
Event—August 24
Page 4

► Welcome Home to
a Lovely Artifact
Page 5

► GSP's Poem
Peter's Flowers

**LIMBERLOST
SWAMPER**

Page 6

► Update on Swamp
Repairs
Pages 7

► Invasive Plant
Management
Page 8

► Rainbow Bend
Management Plan
Page 9

► May Day Bird
Count Results
Page 10

► Chipping Sparrow
Page 11

► Join the Friends--It
makes a difference
Last Page

► IDNR Nature
Preserves Celebrates
50 Years

INDEPENDENCE DAY BIRDS OF PREY

Tuesday, July 4, from 2-3pm

Free (donations encouraged)

Celebrate America's birthday by joining the celebration at Limberlost State Historic Site featuring a live bald eagle, hawk, and owl. Learn about our national symbol on our nation's birthday. A live bald eagle, named "Jefferson", courtesy of Soarin' Hawk Raptor Rehab, Ft. Wayne, will be at Limberlost State Historic Site on July 4th. You'll also be able to watch an eagle program presented by our naturalist, Curt Burnette. Eagles are currently making great strides in Indiana, successfully nesting in many Indiana counties. Attend this free event, and become more knowledgeable. Thanks to the sponsorship of Berne Ready Mix, this program is free to the public.



Limberlost "Friends in Feathers" Summer Challenge

The birds listed below are all in Gene Stratton-Porter's book *Friends in Feathers*. She wrote most of this "nature study" book while living in Geneva, and it was published in 1917. The first eighteen birds Gene mentions in her book are all found residing in the Geneva area during the summer months. The king rail, yellow-billed cuckoo and eagle are here but not as common to see. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the book, we are challenging young bird-watchers, or any young people who might want to start birding, to locate fifteen of the birds listed below. Parents and grandparents: this is a great opportunity to spend time watching bird feeders with your "young naturalist" or perhaps you can go "birding" at one or more of the Limberlost Territories. Create your own list by using all the birds listed below. Put your name, age, address, email address (if available), & phone number on your list. Put the date you saw the bird, and the location where each bird was seen. Document that you have seen 15 or more birds on the list below, then come to the Limberlost Visitor Center to pick up your age-appropriate prize, or mail in your list, and we'll send you the prize. This contest ends on September 30. What can you win? See below:

Goldfinch
Bluebird
Indigo Bunting
Wood Thrush
Killdeer
Robin
Purple Martin
Cardinal
Kingfisher
Catbird

House Wren
Blue Heron
Kingbird
Mourning Dove
Hummingbird
Oriole
Blue Jay
Cowbird

Bonus birds:
King rail
Barred Owl
Scarlet Tanager
Kestrel
Red-Tailed Hawk
Eagle

Win one of the following prizes:

- Dover animal/flower sticker booklets
- Paperback book Freckles by Gene Stratton-Porter
- Hardback book Wings by GSP

LIMBERLOST BLUEGRASS JAMBOREES

Always the 3rd Sunday of the month beginning July 16, again on August 20, and the last Jamboree takes place on September 17. Always 2-4pm.

Jamborees are held on the grounds of Limberlost State Historic Site. Jamborees are FREE (donations encouraged). The event is designed for amateur musicians. There are no paid performers. Everyone donates his or her time and talent for the good of the cause. You never know what you'll hear—usually it's bluegrass, gospel, or folk music, and it could be good, bad, or even ugly, but everyone seems to have a great time. Bring your instrument. Bring your lawn chair. Sit awhile and enjoy life. Refreshments provided. Sponsored by these Geneva businesses: Limberlost Construction, Geneva Case & Quart, Downing & Glancy



“POET IN RESIDENCE” OFFERS POETRY WORKSHOPS

Let the Limberlost Inspire You!

Shari Wagner, Indiana's Poet Laureate (2016-2017), returns to the Limberlost four times this year to conduct three poetry workshops and to host a celebratory event. Some of you may remember when Shari visited the Limberlost at the end of September last year to be part of our Bicentennial Torch Celebrations. At that time she shared some of her poetry to an appreciative audience and did a book signing. The warm reception given to Shari and her parents on that day sparked a desire in Shari to return to the Limberlost. All workshop participants can share their creative work at a public reading scheduled in October. Read Shari's comments below for all the details.



“Gene Stratton-Porter was not only a novelist and non-fiction writer, she was also a poet who loved creating music and imagery through the crafting of language. I'm excited to be celebrating Gene's poetic spirit through a series of poetry workshops I'll be leading at the Limberlost State Historic Site. These workshops are part of the Arts in the Parks and Historic Sites program sponsored by the Indiana Arts Commission. Each workshop will include poetry prompts, models, collaborative exercises, onsite writing, and information about Gene's relationship to the Limberlost. All participants will be invited to share their poems at a celebratory event I will host at the Visitors Center on October 14, 7-8:30 PM.”

“To register for one of these workshops, please email me at sharimwagner@aol.com. Space is limited, but Friends of the Limberlost have the opportunity to register early. Previous experience in writing poetry is not necessary. Beginning poets, as well as experienced poets, are all welcome! After registration, I will send more detailed information about each workshop.”

Inside Gene Stratton-Porter's Cabin

Saturday, July 22; 10 AM-4PM

Age: Adults and High School Students

Early Registration for Friends: Now through June 21 / email: sharimwagner@aol.com

Regular Registration: June 22-Until Full

Cost: Free except for the normal cost of a cabin tour (\$6/Adults; \$5/Seniors, 60+; \$3/17 and under (no charge for members of Friends of the Limberlost)

Participants in this workshop will meet at the Visitors Center. They will find inspiration for poems by touring Gene's cabin and grounds and through a variety of interesting poetry prompts, models, and collaborative exercises.

In Gene Stratton-Porter's Footsteps

Saturday, August 26; 10 AM-4 PM

Age: Adults and High School Students

Early Registration for Friends: Now through July 25 / email: sharimwagner@aol.com

Regular Registration: July 26-Until Full

Cost: Free except for the normal cost of a guided hike (\$4/Adults; \$3/17 and under)

Workshop participants will meet at the Loblolly Marsh Shelter. The day's activities will include a nature hike through Loblolly Marsh guided by Limberlost naturalist, Curt Burnette, as well as collaborative writing exercises, poetry prompts, and a discussion of models.



Among Sights, Sounds, and Silences

Saturday, September 23; 10 AM-2 PM

Age: 1st-8th Grade; Each child must be accompanied by a parent or other adult

Early Registration for Friends: Now through August 22 / email: sharimwagner@aol.com

Regular Registration: August 23-Until Full

Cost: Free except for the normal cost of a guided hike (\$4/Adults; \$3/students)

Members of this poetry workshop will gather at the Loblolly Marsh Shelter. Activities will include a nature hike, collaborative writing exercises, a discussion of prompts and models, and time for sharing. Adults who accompany children are encouraged to take part in the poetry activities but not required to do so.

About Shari Wagner:

“When I was growing up, Gene Stratton-Porter’s writings inspired me to explore the wild places in Wells County where I lived. I still love trekking through fields and forests and have written poems about many parks and nature preserves throughout Indiana. Many of these poems appear in *The Harmonist at Nightfall: Poems of Indiana*. I am also the author of the poetry book, *Evening Chore*, and two books of non-fiction co-authored with my father. I teach for the Indiana Writers Center and for Butler University’s Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative. For information about my poet laureate activities, please visit my website www.throughthesycamores.com.”



SWIFT NIGHT OUT

Saturday, Aug. 5, 7:30pm

no charge for admission—

Sponsored by Bixler Insurance



Enjoy a presentation on chimney swifts by naturalist, Curt Burnette. The program begins at the Limberlost Visitor Center classroom where you’ll learn all about this often heard but often unnoticed bird. After the program everyone can walk or drive to downtown Geneva and watch swifts enter a chimney to roost for the night. *Please bring*

a lawn chair so you have comfortable seating while watching the action.



Before European settlers brought chimneys to North America, chimney swifts would nest in caves, cliff faces, and hollow trees. So thanks to human settlement, their numbers rose accordingly, but a recent shift in chimney designs toward covered, narrow flues are unsuitable for nesting and may be contributing to a decline in this species’ numbers. Even though chimney swifts do not seem to be a bird declining in numbers in this area, the Friends of the Limberlost are constructing and installing a chimney swift tower made specifically for nesting swifts, which we hope to showcase at this event.

DISCOVER THE LIMBERLOST THURSDAY, AUG. 24 ALL-DAY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

DESIGNED FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

Pre-registration required

Limited number of openings for this event

For more details contact Nicky Ball or Curt Burnette

Call 260-368-7428 , or email:

nball@indianamuseum.org

cburnette@indianamuseum.org

Planning a trip to the Limberlost? Remember to RENT-A-NATURALIST

Hire Curt Burnette, Certified Interpretive Guide, to take you on a guided nature hike at one or more of the Limberlost wetlands, or include a tour of historic downtown Geneva, or take the tour that highlights locations described in Gene Stratton-Porter’s books.

Cost is \$30 for 90 minutes. If interested, you must schedule your tour in advance of your visit. Curt is experienced at putting together a package that will meet your needs and your interests. Call or email Curt today and plan your adventure!

“Welcome Home” to a Lovely Artifact

by Nicky Ball

I have often heard people quote the title of the Thomas Wolfe novel, *You Can't Go Home Again*. While many might agree with Mr. Wolfe, this is certainly not the case when it comes to the Limberlost Cabin. Over the years, photographs, letters, and furniture have found their way back home to the Limberlost home of Gene Stratton-Porter.

This spring, we were happy to welcome home a swivel chair that once sat in the music room of the Cabin. Mrs. Porter photographed Jeannette seated at the piano, and we can see part of the chair in the right side of the photo (see arrow). In a letter written by Jeannette in 1964, she mentioned using the “adjustable chair” while practicing the banjo.



According to Indiana State Museum records, Mrs. Porter auctioned off some of her furniture when the cabin was sold in 1920. This included the music room chair. It is unknown who owned the chair after the Porter family and just how many places it has been. After being re-sold multiple times, the chair eventually made its way to a woman named Louise Hartley. Louise was a volunteer at the Indiana State Museum, and in 1994, donated the chair back to the Limberlost State Historic Site.

The chair—which after seven decades had fallen into disrepair—was stored in the upstairs of the Cabin. Its restoration was put on the back burner as larger and much more pressing needs were met at the site. In 2016, it was finally sent to the State Museum in Indianapolis for restoration. This past February, the restoration was complete, and the chair—neatly packed in bubble wrap—sat in the museum collections waiting to be brought home to the Limberlost.

That same month, I was eating lunch with my parents at the Palmer House restaurant in nearby Berne. We started talking to our waitress, Maxine Stalker. When she discovered I was the site manager, she mentioned that she once owned a little chair that had belonged to Gene Stratton-Porter.

As it turns out, she had been one of the owners of the music room chair! Maxine kindly agreed to meet

with me when the chair arrived so I could learn her chapter of the story.

On March 4, the chair was returned—after 97 years—to its original place in the music room. I will admit I had a few goosebumps at that moment! A few weeks later, Maxine came to the Limberlost Cabin with her daughter, Debbie Fike, and her granddaughter, Grace Stalker. These ladies, all Gene Stratton-Porter fans, were delighted to see the newly-restored chair that was once part of their family.



As we sat down to chat, Maxine explained how she purchased the chair around 1970 while she and her family lived in Geneva. Maxine had purchased the chair from a man named Waldo Neal, who is said to have also been a fan of Mrs. Porter.

Maxine placed the chair in her living room in front of a Queen Anne-style desk. Debbie told me the family did not use the chair for sitting, but she remembered that the seat of the chair showed some wear. In 1978, Maxine sold the chair to two men who owned an antique store in Bryant.

Maxine has many other interesting connections to Mrs. Porter and Limberlost. When she was eleven, her family moved into a home south of the Brushwood School, and she remembers spending time hunting for arrowheads in the Loblolly ditch. At the age of 13, Maxine's mother took her to the Limberlost Cabin, where she met Chloe Price, the second owner of the Cabin. Maxine recalled Mrs. Price showing them around the upstairs which housed the family's bedrooms.

It is no surprise that Maxine has collected many Gene Stratton-Porter books over the years, and the fondness for these stories has been passed down to family members like Debbie and Grace. What a pleasure it was to meet this family and learn of their many connections to the Limberlost!

Peter's Flowers: Gene Stratton-Porter's WWI Memorial Poem

by Adrienne Provenzano and Terri Gorney

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the United States entering World War I. At that time, Charles and Gene still owned their Limberlost Cabin in Geneva, Indiana, and also resided at times at her newer home, Wildflower Woods on Sylvan Lake in Northern Indiana. Continuing her nature studies, in 1917, she published Friends in Feathers, an expanded edition of her 1907 book What I Have Done With Birds, which included over 100 original photographs from the Limberlost area.



Gene had various connections with the war effort, including purchase of a \$5000 Liberty Bond from the Allen County Chapter of the Liberty Loan Club. She served on a committee for the National Red Cross, knit socks to be sent overseas to troops, and encouraged everyday citizens to support the war effort as they could.

She knew several men who served, including son-in-law G. Blaine Monroe, nephew Donald Wilson, nephew Dr. Miles Porter, Jr. and nephew Dr. Charles Porter Beall. A friend, Dr. Corwin Price, who bought the Limberlost Cabin in 1920, also served, as well as her driver, William “Bill” Thompson.

Gene reflected on the war in several ways in her writing. At the time of her death in 1924, she had written a manuscript for The Keeper of the Bees, published posthumously, which focuses on the recovery of an injured veteran who finds solace in nature. Perhaps one of Gene’s most under-appreciated novels, it tells the story of a veteran wounded both physically and emotionally and celebrates his recovery through an endearing set of circumstances.

A few years earlier, a now little known, poignant poem entitled “Peter's Flowers” was written by Gene and published after the war had ended in the April, 1919, Red Cross Magazine and illustrated by Thomas Fogarty. It was later republished on pg. 62 in Field o' My Dreams: The Poetry of Gene Stratton-Porter by Mary DeJong Obuchowski, an anthology of Gene Stratton-Porter’s poetry published in 2007 and for sale in the Limberlost gift shop.

It is quite likely that Gene was inspired by the poem “In Flanders Field,” written in 1915 by a Canadian doctor, Lt. Col. John McCrae to honor a fallen comrade. The opening stanza reads as follows:



In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

Due to the efforts of an American teacher, Moina Michael and a Frenchwoman, Anna Guerin, after the Great War, the red poppy, a flower said to be the first to spring from soil of a battlefield, became considered a living sign to “never forget” the sacrifices made by the fallen soldiers, and selling cloth poppies became a way to raise funds for war orphans.

“Peter's Flowers” is a poetic bouquet – connecting us to the diverse bounty of wildflowers that the main character of the poem, Peter, loves. Like Gene's character Freckles, Peter appreciates nature's beauty. As readers, we are drawn to Peter's connection with bluebells and violets, foxglove and trillium lilies. The poem relates Peter's story – a young man drawn to fight in a war, killed and buried, and in whose memory, the flowers he loves are to be planted “of white and gold, and most of all, the perfect blue.”

As a continuation of an ongoing effort to share Gene Stratton-Porter's work in multimedia presentations, Adrienne Provenzano and Bill Hubbard have prepared a slideshow with original music by Adrienne utilizing Gene’s poem “Peter's Flowers”. This original composition is soon to be posted on the Friends of the Limberlost website, www.limberlost.weebly.com.

THE LIMBERLOST SWAMPER

Published Quarterly by Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee

Limberlost Swamp Remembered

P.O. Box 571

Geneva, Indiana 46740



UPDATE ON LIMBERLOST SWAMP & LOBLOLLY REPAIRS AND ENHANCEMENTS

Editor's note: Last year, at this time, Ben Hess reported on plans to improve the hydrology of the wetlands by plugging 18 additional farm tiles that continue to remove water from our wetlands. In addition six water control structures or levees needed to be repaired, and 270 acres of wetlands needed high quality seed mixes and plant plugs to add plant diversity. One of the most common non-native invasive species on these properties is Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) which creates monoculture stands of one plant species, resulting in areas unused by wildlife. With financial and technical help from the United States Department of Agriculture—Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), Ben was hopeful that this work would begin last year and continue this year, but reviews of the project by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources have inevitably delayed implementation; however, Ben feels that this review process has resulted in a significantly better restoration plan, and Ben remains confident that these projects will start sometime this year, if the weather will cooperate, and if NRCS support continues to be available. Read Ben's update below:

It is hard to believe that it has been nearly a year since we started the process to secure funding and resources for much needed repairs and enhancements utilizing programs through the USDA-NRCS. We had hoped for work to start this past winter, however as further discussions continued, both IDNR and NRCS made a few adjustments that would benefit our wetland system and those that frequent the Limberlost Swamp.

We had plant plugs approved for areas that tend to hold water, areas

in need of species diversity; however, plant plugs are not typically done through this program, but after much inter-agency discussion, I'm happy to report that all agencies saw the benefit of this approach. In addition, there were slight adjustments to some engineered features resulting in better access for visitor as well as for staff for site management. This collaboration between IDNR and NRCS will also result in a more diverse habitat for those animals who migrate through the wetlands, or for those critters who choose to stay and make a new home, and it will benefit all those who visit these wetlands to scope out the elusive fauna of the Limberlost Swamp.

Another benefit to this slight delay has been a great head start in terms of pre-site management. Monoculture stands of reed canary (*Phalaris arundinacea*) have been managed to successional native species and are ready for the new diverse native seed mixes to be installed this coming dormant season.

The photo shown above taken in 2014 shows a nearly solid stand of reed canary grass that was cut down for a late October herbicide application. The 2015 picture (on the next page) shows Nature Preserves success eliminating reed canary, and staff continued to monitor and manage this site to increase diversity. The 2017 picture shows that the monoculture stand of reed canary grass is no longer present and the selective management has enabled multiple native species to flourish. Throughout the remainder of the growing season, Nature Preserves staff will monitor and manage areas where invasive species try to re-establish.



Photo taken October 2014. Nearly solid stands of reed canary grass were mown for herbicide application 4 weeks later.



Photo taken June 2015 after one management application in October 2014. Notice wall of reed canary grass. (This photo was taken next to the tree seen in the foreground of the 2017 photo to the right).



Photo taken May 2017 after two years of site specific management. Notice that monoculture stands of reed canary grass are not present.



Photo taken May 2017. The area was once nearly a monoculture stand of reed canary grass and is now a semi-diverse functioning wetland habitat. This area will also be seeded with more native species to help stop invasive species from re-establishing.

Rainbow Bend Seeding

By Ben Hess

The Friends of the Limberlost's Rainbow Bend property located near the Ceylon covered bridge is a flood plain of the Wabash River. Trees planted on this property several years ago have had difficulty getting established in large part due to flood waters and flood water depths caused by upstream infrastructure/drainage. This area is affected by excessive drainage that historically was not there in the past. It would be considered an early successional wetland area, which is a high soil disturbance habitat with unstable soil hydrology.

The Friends of the Limberlost are in discussion with the USDA-NRCS and IDNR-Division of Nature Preserves to over seed approximately 25 acres of this property. This alternative is recommended due to the current low success rate of the tree planting as described above. NRCS has funding available to cover the expense of site prep and a seed mix.

This site is in need of a herbaceous native plant base that can tolerate the current full sun exposure and tolerate eight or more feet of inundation each spring/early summer, and then slowly transition, as years go by, to the more historically based partial shade of open forested floodplain. The situation is similar to Friend's Rainbow Bottom property directly south of Rainbow Bend.

Currently there is reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) establishing strong across the site, and giant ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*) in the disturbed areas when soils dry out and soil temperatures rise. Both prevent long term site goals, and make management difficult within the tree planting. The Friends of the Limberlost, the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, and NRCS are working together to come up with a solution that meets NRCS standards for a seed mix while maintaining the integrity of the long term habitat goal for this site—an open forested floodplain.

Allowing thick rhizomatous mats of reed canary grass to establish will prevent any chance for a tree canopy to develop or tree saplings to grow above its tall rhizomatous growth habit during ideal growth years. Tree saplings also cannot grow to their fullest potential if shaded out by the tall giant ragweed. The ideal situation is to create a seed mix with native species that tend to be shorter in

stature and/or bunch type growth, which will allow saplings to grow up through their vegetation. Plant species are being selected by IDNR Nature Preserves that would fill a niche where we are removing the invasive species.

The species selected are those early successional species that would tolerate inundation and dry hot summer soils. Long term they are species that tolerate full sun to partial/full shade. Hopefully trees begin to establish from the tree planting or as volunteers, and the seed mix species that tend to favor full sun habitat like dark green bulrush (*Scirpus atrovirens*) and woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*) also do well. As the site develops these would be replaced by more shade tolerant species within the mix, which include blunt broom sedge (*Carex tribuloides*), fox sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*), fowl manna grass (*Glyceria striata*), and Virginia wild rye (*Elymus virginicus*).

The current plan calls for this seeding to take place this coming dormant season of November through February. Site management will continue throughout this year to prepare the area for the seeding. Continued financial support of the Friends of the Limberlost, particularly the Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee, provides the financial support required to keep proper site management moving forward so that this floodplain can return to its former glory.



Indiana Audubon Society's Big May Day Bird Count in Adams County

by Terri Gorney

The Big May Day Bird Count was held on Saturday, May 13. Bird-watchers in Adams County have participated in this count for over forty years. It was a day of mild temperatures, sunny to partly cloudy. This year 86 species were counted. Last year was cool, rainy and windy, and 96 species were counted. Lesson one for a birder—weather conditions do not always predict how many different birds you will see on a given day! We had six counters (aka “Birders”) around the county helping with this survey. Last year we had 19! Where was everybody this year?

The count provides valuable data of the bird populations within a defined area—in this case the boundaries of Adams County. The total number of birds in each species is also tallied. All the information gathered by the counters was tabulated by me and then sent to the Indiana Audubon Society (IAS) for their records. Count data from almost all counties in Indiana provides the IAS with valuable information that can show population trends over time and provide other useful data.

Highlights of the day were 11 red-headed woodpeckers and 4 mocking birds in the Geneva area, a high number of white-crowned sparrows, and it was nice to get night hawks again in Decatur.



Dave Reichlinger and I started “birding” in the pre-dawn hours. Dave is very skilled at identifying birds “by ear”. All bird species make very specific vocalizations, and Dave’s ability to recognize those sounds, an ability he has developed over many years of birding, was helpful identifying small woodland birds, easily heard but not necessarily easily seen.

We began at a spot that Gene Stratton-Porter called “Paradise on the Wabash”. The morning was alive with bird songs and the movement of wings. I wondered if Gene could have imagined that one hundred years later, this place would still be an incredible habitat for her “Friends in Feathers”.

This is my fourth year as a compiler for Adams County. Variety in bird species is determined by the different types of habitat available to our “feathered friends”, and it is amazing the difference that the restored wetlands are making. Other good habitat for birds, provided by many landowners in the area, is acres of mature and immature woods. Gene would smile to know that bald eagles, great blue heron, and green heron are on the 2017 list, and she’d be pleased that her favorite birds, chimney swifts and purple martins, are still thriving in Adams County.

Larry Parker of rural Decatur, the Adams County compiler before me, has participated for 38 years in the Adams County May Day count. He knows the birds and their habitats in the northern part of the county very well, and I thank Larry for reporting the night hawks. Thank you to all of our bird counters – every list is important.

If anyone is interested in helping with the May Day count next year, please let me know your contact information: email bandtgorney@aol.com. This count is a perfect activity for parents and grandparents with youngsters who might enjoy participating as bird feeder counters. Your participation can provide good numbers for this survey. Spending as little time as 30 minutes counting birds on count day, or taking a walk in your neighborhood and counting birds can provide important data. You don’t have to be an expert!

For future reference, please put this date on your calendar.....the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is scheduled for January 1, 2018. Following guidelines established by the National Audubon Society, the CBC requires a 15 mile circle that delineates the area to be surveyed by birders. Our circle, known as SANJO, covers most of southern Adams County (SA) and northern Jay County (NJ) and Ouabache State Park in Wells County (O). I would like to encourage anyone who has an interest in birds to think about joining us. You don’t have to be an expert, and you’ll learn a lot by hanging out with more experienced birders who love to share their expertise. We have a lot of fun on New Year’s Day, and we meet for a free lunch at the Limberlost Visitor Center. It is a great way to start the new year!

Chipping Sparrow

by Ken Brunswick

The chipping sparrow is a common summer resident of Indiana. It has adapted quite well to our backyards with all the many shrubs and bushes we plant.

Family: Emberizidae (towhees, sparrows, longspurs, buntings)

Order: Passeriformes

Genus and Specie: *Spizella passerine*

This small sparrow is streaked, rusty brown, and gray in the upper parts and all gray below. Their most identifying characteristics are the bright rufous cap and the black stripe through the eye. Adult non-breeding birds have streaked rufous caps.



Originally, it was a bird of open pine woods and edges. During Gene Stratton-Porter's time, it was much more common in the cities. It is another victim of house sparrows introduced from Europe. During my farming years, house sparrows were common on my farm because of all the food and shelter available. I'm happy to say that the house sparrows have decreased, and the chipping sparrows have increased. They have a somewhat annoying nonmusical "chipping" of the same note in rapid succession.

They nest in pine trees, shrubs, and even rose bushes. The nest is made of dead grasses and weeds. 3-5 light blue eggs are incubated by the female. It takes 11 to 14 days for the eggs to hatch, and during that time, the male feeds the female on the nest. Both parents feed the nestlings, and

the young leave the nest in 8 to 12 days. Two broods per year are generally raised.

Their diet differs with the season. In the summer



they feed mostly on insects including caterpillars and leaf hoppers. During the fall and winter, their diet includes the seeds of grasses and weeds.

They have adapted quite well to our backyards and birdfeeders, but they forage mostly on the ground, in shrubs, and low trees. They often feed in small groups during the non-brooding time. I see them flying to the tops of our pine trees to sing their one note, the chipping sound.

During the winter, they tend to migrate to southern United States and Mexico. They migrate far enough south so the snow cover does not impede their search for food.



FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST

NEW MEMBERSHIP & MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Friends of the Limberlost, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation, supports both Limberlost State Historic Site and the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves. Nature Preserves manages the restored wetlands in the Limberlost Territories. Your membership dues and extra donations are vital and support the many projects honoring the memory and legacy of Gene Stratton-Porter.

You decide how your annual dues will be spent. You direct your donation to one of the following:

- Limberlost State Historic Site to support projects & public programs at the site and at the restored wetlands.
- Limberlost Swamp Remembered, a committee of the Friends of the Limberlost, primarily focused on the Limberlost Swamp restoration projects.
- Or donate to both groups.

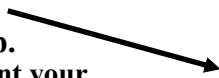
Your annual dues to Limberlost Historic Site Friends or Limberlost Swamp Remembered include admission to Limberlost State Historic Site, a subscription to the quarterly newsletter, and a 10% discount on purchases at the Limberlost Gift Shop. A description of additional membership benefits will be mailed to you with your membership card. Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please fill out the form below to renew your membership or to sign up as a new member. If you have any questions regarding your membership in the Friends Group, call Limberlost State Historic Site. (260)368-7428.

Please make checks payable to: **FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST** and mail both your check and completed Membership form to **PO Box 571, Geneva, IN 46740**.

Step One:

Select your desired Friends membership.
Choose where you want your Donation to go.



Limberlost Historic Site Friends—dues and any additional donation you make supports Limberlost State Historic Site and associated events, projects, and programs

Limberlost Swamp Remembered Friends—dues and any additional donation you make supports Limberlost wetland restoration projects managed by the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves

Combination Limberlost Historic Site and Swamp Remembered Friends—dues and any additional donation are equally shared by both groups

Step Two:

Choose the cost of the membership you want by checking the appropriate box below.



- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen/Limited Income—\$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business—\$50 (please enter contact name below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual—\$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family—\$35.00 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime—\$1,000 |

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Check the box if you want to get the newsletter mailed to you via the U.S. Postal Service. We are happy to mail you a “paper copy” of the newsletter rather than the electronic version of the newsletter, if that is what you prefer—just check the box. When you get the digital version of the newsletter via email, it saves us money on postage, it also saves us time, you get it faster, and the “e-newsletter” is in color!

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (Additional donation appreciated): \$ _____

COMMENTS: _____



Indiana's Nature Preserve System Celebrates 50th Anniversary

by John A. Bacone, Director, Division of Nature Preserves

The Indiana Legislature passed the Nature Preserves Act in 1967, creating the Division of Nature Preserves. The Division is charged with working with partners to set aside and preserve areas of unusual natural significance for the benefit of present and future generations, to benefit from the scientific, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values they possess. Since the Division was established, staff has worked with partners throughout Indiana, to catalogue Indiana's flora, fauna, and natural areas, striving to set up a system of nature preserves that includes examples of all the natural areas and rare species habitat that occur in Indiana. At least one example of almost every type of the 61 natural communities found in Indiana at the time of settlement is included in Indiana's nature preserve system. Ninety percent of the 416 plants considered endangered, threatened, or rare have viable populations in Indiana nature preserves.

Nature Preserves are the most widely and evenly distributed system of state significant public properties in Indiana. There are nature preserves in 70 of Indiana's 92 counties. As of May 2017, there are 279 dedicated nature preserves, protecting over 52,000 acres. A dedicated nature preserve has the highest level of protection of any land in Indiana, as it is intended to remain in its natural ecological condition in perpetuity. These nature preserves are owned by 46 different entities, including DNR Divisions of Nature Preserves, Forestry, State Parks, and Fish and Wildlife, Land Trusts, City and County Park Departments, and colleges and universities.

The Division of Nature Preserves (DNP) has had a significant conservation partnership with the Friends of the Limberlost (FOL) for many years. Together, FOL and DNP have partnered on acquisitions of many natural areas, utilizing funding from the Indiana Heritage Trust, which has just been replaced by the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust.

Many of FOL's and DNP's acquisitions became part of the Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve, which former Governor Mitch Daniels dedicated as Indiana's 250th dedicated state nature preserve. There is a wonderful trail which enables visitors to get into the heart of this wetland complex. Other lands in the area are managed by FOL and DNP as part of the Limberlost Remembered wetland restoration project. And the Division of Nature Preserves also manages two old growth remnants which are open for visitation: Bell-Croft Woods in Jay County, and Baltzell Woods in Adams County.

During 2017, and in the years to come, I hope you will visit as many of these special places as possible, and enjoy these remnants of the "original Indiana" that have been protected for your enjoyment. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Friends of the Limberlost, protecting more special places as dedicated Indiana nature preserves.

LOBLOLLY WILDFLOWER SAFARI:

Saturday, June 3, 10am-Noon, Cost \$4/person

The public is invited to the Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve to join, Curt Burnette, Limberlost naturalist, for a leisurely stroll along the Loblolly trails to discover what spring wildflowers and plants are growing and to learn how man and animal have put these plants to use. Discover which plants have been introduced and which are native and which might be harmful or even deadly.

Participants should gather in the Loblolly parking lot, located a half mile north of State Highway 18 on Jay County Road 250 W, about 3 1/2 miles west of Bryant.



For more information on this event, contact Curt Burnette, Limberlost Naturalist and Program Developer, or contact Nicky Ball, Limberlost Site Manager, at 260-368-7428.

Also email: cburnette@indianamuseum.org or email: nball@indianamuseum.org

Limberlost State Historic Site, Geneva, IN

Open Hours: 9am-5pm
Tuesday thru Saturday
Last tour begins at 4pm
Open Sunday: 1-5pm
Closed on Mondays
Closed on most holidays

If you can only be in the Geneva area on a Monday or a holiday, call in advance of your visit, and if possible an appointment can be made to have the site open just for you!

