



Friends of the Limberlost

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Join the Friends
It does make a
difference



Levi Coffin and the Underground Railroad

March 27, Wednesday, 7:00pm – 8:00pm

\$3/members of the Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites or \$4/adult non-member

►Joanna Hahn, Site Manager of the Levi and Catharine Coffin State Historic Site, Fountain City, IN, presents a program on Levi Coffin and the Underground Railroad. The program will take place at the Limberlost State Historic Site visitor center classroom. Levi Coffin is often credited with the title of President of the Underground Railroad.

Coffin was instrumental in leading efforts to resist the Fugitive Slave Laws by assisting freedom seekers, or runaway slaves, on their journey to Canada. Learn why the Underground Railroad developed in states like Indiana and Ohio and why some historians see it as our nation's first civil rights movement.



LIMBERLOST GOLDEN EASTER EGG HUNT

April 20, Saturday, egg hunt begins "eggsactly" at 11am

Cost \$2.00/child for members of the Indiana State Museum and \$2.50/child for non-members. Ages 12 & under welcome.

Grounds of Limberlost are divided into 3 search areas for three age groups. All children can find a lot of eggs. Children won't go away disappointed! Find a golden egg & win a special prize.



• **Before the hunt**...enjoy the petting zoo provided by Roll Farms; check out Professor Curt's egg display case and his "Joke Board"; and say "hello" to the Easter Bunny.

• **After the hunt**...attend Professor Curt's "Bunny Class" and graduate as an official "Limberlost Harebrain". Also, participate in yard games and win more candy.

WE SINCERELY THANK OUR SPONSORS
FOR DONATING CASH AND PRIZES
(please thank them by shopping local)

Crossroads Pantry in Geneva
Berne CVS Pharmacy



ENJOY SPRING AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS AT LIMBERLOST

Join us for a night-time program at the Loblolly Marsh or hike Rainbow Bottom

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT, April 26, Friday Night,

Starts at 8:30 pm at the Loblolly Marsh Pavilion

\$4/adult for members of ISMHS; \$3/ child member;

\$5/adult non-member, \$4/child non-member

Discover what creatures lurk around the marsh in the darkness

- Participate in our critter ID game—*bring your flashlights*—and search for the *glowing eyes*.
- Hear night sounds using *bionic ears*. Identify frog calls. See better in the dark with *night vision*.
- Enjoy nighttime dip-netting for aquatic creatures living in the water of the marsh.
- Using a digital microscope, Curt will project images of aquatic creatures on the big screen at the pavilion.
- Dare to discover what is hidden in the Mystery Boxes.
- Finish off the evening with a campfire and toasted marshmallows.

You'll be greeted at the Loblolly Marsh parking lot by volunteers who will direct you to the Pavilion. How do you get to the Loblolly Marsh parking lot? Travel 3 miles west of Bryant, IN (Jay County) on State Highway 18, then turn north on County Road 250W. The parking lot is about 1/2 mile up CR 250 W.

Address: 8323N 250W, Bryant, IN 47326. Some hiking in the dark is required, so bring a flashlight and wear appropriate clothing and shoes.



GUIDED TOUR OF RAINBOW BOTTOM

May 4, Saturday, 9 am to Noon

\$4/ for members of ISMHS, \$5 non-member



[Tour begins at the Limberlost Visitor Center](#)

Follow Curt Burnette, Limberlost Naturalist, as he leads a hike through Rainbow Bottom, a 270 acre portion of the Wabash River bottomland owned by the Friends of the Limberlost. Learn about the history and ecology of the area, how Gene Stratton-Porter used it as the setting for two of her novels, also see local wildlife, beaver-chewed trees and giant sycamore trees (see photos). This a great opportunity to see a more secluded part of the Limberlost.



The guided tour of Rainbow Bottom is no less than a two-mile hike. *Participants should dress appropriately and not wear open-toed shoes.* This hike will take place rain or shine, although storms that include lightning or significant flooding of the Wabash River can cause this hike to be cancelled. When in doubt, you can call Limberlost State Historic Site to confirm that this hike will take place (260-368-7428). Mark your calendar. Curt has planned an informative and entertaining outing. Hope you can join us on May 4 !

SPRING BRINGS SOMETHING NEW TO THE LIMBERLOST

May 19, Sunday, An Afternoon with Gene Stratton-Porter
2:00pm – 3:00pm
\$4/member ISMHS, \$5 for non-members

Enjoy a visit with Gene Stratton-Porter as interpreted by historian, professional narrator and performer, Glory-June Greiff. Mrs. Porter (ca. 1921) will tell of her life and read from some of her poetry and essays. This event will be held in the classroom at the Limberlost State Historic Site Visitor Center.

This activity is made possible with support by the Indiana Arts Commission and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.



June 1, Saturday, Loblolly Wildflower Safari, 10:00am to noon, \$4/member ISMHS, \$5/non-member. Walk begins at Loblolly Marsh parking lot on Jay Co. Road 250 W

Join Curt Burnette, Limberlost naturalist, for a stroll along the Loblolly Marsh trails focusing on the beautiful and varied spring wildflowers – what they are and how man and animal use them.



►In the picture Curt is leading a wildflower hike. His leisurely hikes along paved and unpaved trails are very informative and educational. You'll see a wide variety of "native" and "introduced" spring wildflowers. Some of the plants you are likely to see and learn about are white false indigo (next to Curt in the picture), poison hemlock, prairie-clover, yarrow, and many more.

"Almost every person, from childhood, has been touched by the untamed beauty of wildflowers."—Lady Bird Johnson



A POLICY CHANGE IN THE WAY ADMISSION FEES ARE COLLECTED FOR LIMBERLOST EVENTS & PROGRAMS

You may have noticed that the events in this newsletter show a lower admission price for members of the Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites (ISMHS). Starting in 2019 all events and programs that involve Limberlost personnel will offer this member and non-member pricing.

There is no discount or special event pricing offered to members of the Friends of the Limberlost. If you wish to purchase an ISMHS membership and enjoy all of the ISMHS membership privileges, you can join in person at the Limberlost guest/gift shop counter, or you can join online at:

www.indianamuseum.org/membership

WANT TO WORK OR VOLUNTEER FOR ISMHS?

- Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site, Rome City, IN, needs a full-time Site Manager—job will be posted soon. To see a job descriptions & salary, or to apply for any state job, go online to Indiana's Job Bank: <https://secure.in.gov//spd/2333.htm>
- Limberlost State Historic Site, Geneva, IN, is also looking for "Volunteer" tour guides. Training provided. Inquire at Limberlost State Historic Site, or call 260-368-7428, or email irodden@indianamuseum.org



The Friends' Friend

by Jeanne Akins

Gene Stratton-Porter brought world-wide attention to the patch of Indiana swampland known as The Limberlost by her writings and photographs. Her voice was among other noted conservationists of her day who were warning about the importance of preserving forests, meadows, wetlands and swamps that were rapidly disappearing as our nation grew.

Like so many naturalists, the time she spent alone in nature held a wonder and joy for her. She wrote of her experiences with nature in a way that encouraged a desire in her readers to preserve it. She believed that being close to nature could bring out the good in people as well.

In her nature studies and novels she delivers the sights and sounds of the Limberlost, and like time-travelers, we are transported back page by page to Gene Stratton-Porter's world. Through her nature books we are introduced to the swamp, the wildflowers, the birds, the butterflies and the moths. The characters in her novels take us on their adventures, where we see them discover the beauty of nature and watch them 4

become stronger and better people from their experience with nature and with each other.

Gene wrote with purpose and she states her creed in the biography, *Gene Stratton-Porter, A Little Story of the Life and Work and Ideals of "The Bird Woman,"* compiled by S.F. Ewart:

"I have taught 45,000,000 men and women and children to expect from me a story of men and women who for the most part are living up to their highest ideals, or are being punished because they are not. I am neither blind nor lacking in perception as to the waywardness and complication of human nature. It is merely that my call has been to reproduce the lives of clean, moral men and women, who make the world a better place for themselves and their children."

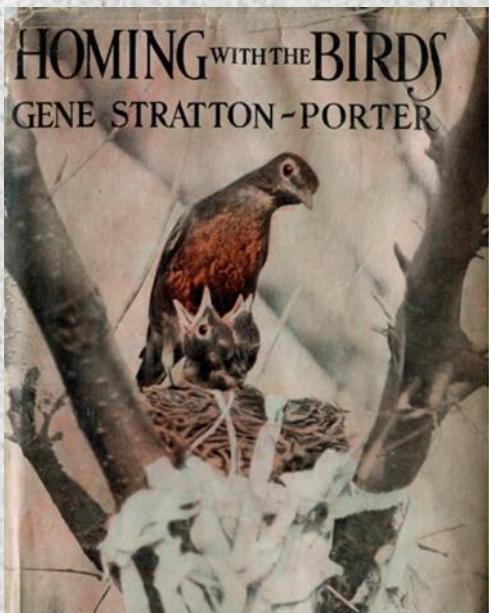
For Gene Stratton-Porter, taking care of our environment and its inhabitants was her way of making the world a better place. She believed those who knew right from wrong would persevere in that effort.

Her works allow us to visit the Limberlost on her terms and in her times. Although written for the audience of her day, we can learn a thing or two about life in the Limberlost as she knew it, and may be surprised to learn a little more about ourselves as well.

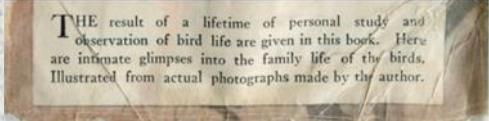
She was a young wife and mother when she first came to Geneva, Indiana. How many of us would venture into the swamp as she did? Would we see its beauty and value? And find a way to share what we saw? Gene wrote herself onto the world stage from her Cabin in the little town of Geneva. During her time, she witnessed the swamp's destruction. It was ditched and drained for agriculture purposes, and for oil & gas exploration, and all the valuable timber was harvested.

Despite years of effort to drain the swamp, some areas continued to flood, and years later, her books helped to inspire others to bring the Limberlost back! When we share her story and read her books we continue her work, the work of the very first...and perhaps, the very best Friend of the Limberlost – Gene Stratton-Porter.

HOMING WITH THE BIRDS—the Centennial Year 2019



100th Anniversary Edition By Kenneth Brunswick



This year marks the centennial of Gene Stratton Porter's book, *Homing with the Birds*, first published in 1919. This book was described by some reviewers of the time as her best nature book. Christopher Morley, American journalist, novelist, essayist, and poet (1890-1957) made the following comment about *Homing with the Birds* in a letter he wrote to Frank Nelson Doubleday, the publisher of Gene's books:

"It is a book to be proud of, and I can hardly tell you how deep and complex a pleasure it has given me—something of the breathless satisfaction one feels on those rare occasions when one knows one's self following along some path toward the magic of truth. Mrs. Porter's beautiful stories of her bird friends, some of them pathetic, some of them humorous, are a kind of education in the art of wondering at the fullness of life. They refresh the sense of amazement. What could be more touching than the story of the robin that stayed in her nest during ninety hours of rain? Or more entertaining than the anecdote of the wastrel waxwing so gloriously drunk on pokeberry wine".

Unfortunately, today's reader is not going to find nicely hard-bound modern examples of this book for sale. The used book market can still be a place to purchase a first, or early edition, but many have condition issues. There are also a number of reprints available online, but be forewarned, the quality of the photographs in these reprints can leave a lot to be desired.

So what's a person to do? You could wait until the summer of this year and purchase Ken Brunswick's *100th Anniversary Edition of Homing With The Birds*. Ken Brunswick, retired DNR Limberlost ecologist, will soon publish his own reprint of *Homing with the Birds*. It's similar to the way he republished GSP's *What I Have Done With Birds*, in 2017. Ken's version of *Homing with the Birds* will include good quality photographs and all the text from GSP's original book, plus his own commentary and updates. Although the retail price has not yet been determined, it will probably be similarly priced.

If all goes as planned, we should be advertising this next book of Ken's in the summer newsletter which comes out in early June 2019. To give you an early look at Ken's reprint and update of *Homing With The Birds*, here's the preface to his book▼

Ken's preface to his *Homing With The Birds*

I've always been interested in how my life started out just like Gene Stratton-Porter's life. Mrs. Porter was interested in birds when she was young and my life mimics this part of her life.

In 1873, Gene's father sold the farm in Wabash County, and Gene moved to the city of Wabash. All of Gene's birds were caged pets at this time. It wasn't until her marriage to Charles Porter in 1886, that she was one step closer in Decatur, Indiana to wild birds entering her life again. She made another move to Geneva about fifteen miles south of Decatur in 1888. After building the Limberlost Cabin in 1895, Gene Stratton-Porter began her prolific writing career. In essence, she had a twenty three-year period in her life when wild birds had little influence.

In 1913 she moved to Sylvan Lake in Noble County, Indiana where she wrote *Homing with the Birds* in 1919. This book discusses many events with birds which took place at Limberlost in Geneva and Wildflower Woods in Rome City. The last two chapters discuss her philosophy on life and what humanity should do to protect the birds.

I mainly focus on Gene Stratton-Porter's work and the places she lived in this book. This is my third book about the Limberlost. My first book, *The Limberlost "Born Again,"* covers the events that led up to the Limberlost and Loblolly restoration. My second book, *What I Have Done with Birds and Friends in Feathers* is a re-write of Gene Stratton-Porter's book plus current updates more than a century later on the areas and the birds contained in the book.

This book delves into her early beginnings and how she developed her philosophy on life. It compliments my first two books very well. It contains aerial photos of the farm in Wabash County and gives a history of her early years. Then, it covers nearly twenty years of her experience as she calls it, *Homing with the Birds*.



THE LIMBERLOST SWAMPER

Published Quarterly by Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee

"The Limberlost Swamp Remembered Project was started by Ken Brunswick in 1992. Today, Ken is the chairperson of Limberlost Swamp Remembered, a committee of the Friends of the Limberlost."



YOU ARE INVITED TO CREEK RUN'S FUNDRAISER

Creek Run L.L.C. Environmental Engineering of Montpelier, Indiana is busy planning the 13th annual James Peterson Memorial Fish Fry and Cornhole Tournament! This year's event is August 9, and the Friends summer newsletter will have a segment about the many ways you can participate in this special fundraiser for Limberlost Swamp Remembered.



WHAT DO TURKEY BUZZARDS AND THE GROUND NESTS OF KILLDEERS HAVE IN COMMON? THEY BOTH SHOW UP IN THE SPRING.



KEN BRUNSWICK DECLARED RIVER FRIENDLY FARMER

Since 1999, key conservation and agricultural organizations have sponsored the River Friendly Farmer (RFF) Program. The statewide initiative recognizes farmers, who through good production management practices help keep Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams clean.

Annually, each county Soil and Water Conservation District may nominate up to two farmers who do an outstanding job of protecting their rivers, lakes and streams through their every day conservation management practices on the farm. Watershed organizations also may nominate farmers for the award by submitting an application to a county SWCD.



Ken and Ann Brunswick's farm is located in the Upper Wabash Watershed where they produce corn and soybeans and have several acres in CRP. On their highly erodible ground, purchased in 1976, they have warm season grasses. The land is recovering and includes pollinator habitat, wild flowers, and native plantings. Wildlife continues to increase annually. A riparian corridor along Wolf Creek has been maintained and filter strips have been added to the cropland side. Their conservation practices have helped to hold the soil in its place.

Ken is involved in several conservation organizations, is a past SWCD Supervisor, active in his church, and is the Limberlost Swamp Remembered chairperson for Friends of the Limberlost.

Cecropia Moths and Promethea Moths Decline – Blame it on the Fly



by Willy DeSmet, President, Friends of the Limberlost

As you probably know, Gene studied, photographed and wrote about the Giant Silkworm Moths from this area. With a wingspan of up to six inches, Cecropia is our largest native moth. Gene called it “the Robin Moth” in Moths of the Limberlost because “*The Cecropia moth resembles the robin among birds; not alone because he is gray with red markings, but also because he haunts the same localities. The robin is the bird of the eaves, the back door, the yard and the orchard. Cecropia is the moth.*” She gave the title “Pride of the Lilacs” to Promethea.

In her time, Cecropia (*Hyalophora cecropia*) and Promethea (*Callosamia promethea*) moths were quite abundant. She describes an incident in which around a hundred Cecropia showed up at her back door one time. Not so today. Their numbers have dramatically declined (especially after 1980.) Several reasons or theories have been proposed. One of them is that the decline is due to there being fewer trees that the larvae, caterpillars, feed on. However, while in New England the area in agricultural use has decreased, and the area covered by forest has increased from 20-40% in 1830-1890 to 65- 85% in 1995, Cecropia and Promethea populations sharply declined. Studies indicate that a certain (imported) fly is largely to blame. Here’s (part of) that story.

The Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*) is not native to the U.S.; it was brought over from Europe for experiments relating to commercial silk production. In 1869 some of them escaped from a laboratory in Medford (near Boston) Massachusetts. The escaped population grew rapidly because the natural enemies and pathogens that keep its numbers in check in Europe and Asia do not occur in the U.S. It spread quickly and became a seriously destructive pest of trees, including fruit trees.



The caterpillars can quickly defoliate a tree (take off all the leaves). Some trees, like pines, can die after just one complete defoliation,

others can survive a few successive years of defoliation. Partial defoliation stunts the growth and reduces fruiting causing potentially substantial damage to lumber and fruit production.

Physical and chemical methods were used to try to eradicate or control this pest, with varying results. (The chemicals on fruit created their own problems, but that's another story.)

Around 1905 they tried a different approach, called “biological control”. The idea is to find natural enemies (parasites, predators and pathogens) of the pest insect in its country of origin, import and breed those in numbers and then release them. One of the natural enemies of Gypsy Moths in Europe is *Compsilura concinnata*, a certain parasitic fly in the Tachinidae genus. It looks somewhat similar to our familiar house fly, except the face is white and the thorax has four black stripes.



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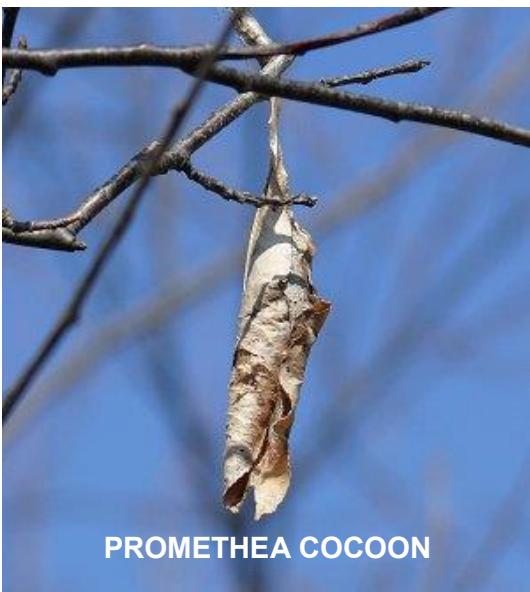
From 1906 to 1986 the Department of Agriculture repeatedly released this parasitic fly in North America (along with some 45 other species.) The main purpose was to control the Gypsy Moth but also some 12 other pests.

How is this supposed to work? The female fly injects her larva into a Gypsy moth caterpillar, the larva lives and grows within the caterpillar and/or pupa and eventually kills it. Sounds kind of nasty, but it should do the trick, don't you think? Unfortunately, there are a couple of problems...



- First, this fly is not "host specific." It also attacks other (native) caterpillars (over 200 species of them, including Black Swallowtail and Spicebush Swallowtail butterflies), even when Gypsy Moth caterpillars are also present at that time and place.

- Furthermore, Gypsy Moths have only one generation per year and survive the winter as eggs, while this fly has several (up to 4) generations per year and overwinters as a larva inside a caterpillar or pupa. That means that this fly has to spend several of these generations as a larva in a caterpillar (or pupa) of a species other than Gypsy Moths, because during a large part of the year there are no Gypsy Moth caterpillars available for the fly larvae to grow (and overwinter) in. Promethea is considered to be an important host for overwintering *Compsilura*.



- On top of that, (except during outbreaks) the infection rate of Gypsy moths by this fly is generally quite low (5% during outbreaks) and the effect on Gypsy Moth populations by this fly is fairly limited. Unfortunately, the opposite is true for Giant Silkmoths, especially *Cecropia* and *Promethea*. In one experiment 81% of *Cecropia* and 68% of *Promethea* caterpillars that were placed in an area known to contain this fly, became infected by it and all of those died from the infection. *Promethea* and *Cecropia* populations are much more affected by *Compsilura* than Gypsy Moths.

Nature is a complicated and interconnected system. When we influence one part, some other seemingly unrelated parts may start moving. In this case, attempts to eradicate an invasive pest (the Gypsy Moth) has led to a sharp decline in some native species, including *Promethea* and *Cecropia*.

As early as 1919 J. J. Culver observed in a USDA publication that *Promethea* was getting quite rare in areas where *Compsilura* had been released, while it was still thriving outside the release areas. There was no legal requirement to study the effect of "pest treatment" on non-targeted species at the time, so no systematic studies were done.

As J. S. Elkinton and G. H. Boettner put it in a 2004 study:

"The overall approach of biological control remains the most important weapon we have against many invasive species. We must develop protocols and guide-lines that allow us to use this tool more wisely than we have in the past."

CORRECTION OF THE AUTO-CORRECT!

In my article "Predator Pounces on Predator", in the Fall 2018 issue about the Robber Fly, the "auto-correct" on our system corrected an error that was not actually an error. It replaced "mystax" with "mystics" by mistake. The correct sentence should read:

"Notice the bunch of stiff bristles (called mystax) at the front of the head."

Technology can be a bit too "helpful" at times.
My apologies for the belated correction.



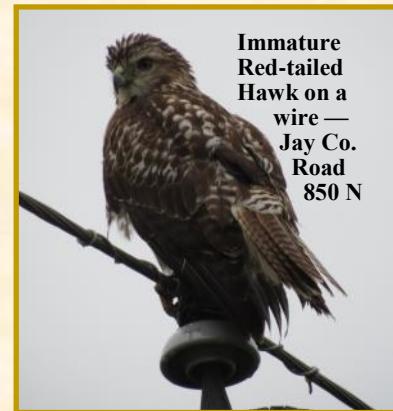
RESULTS OF THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (CBC)

On Tuesday, Jan. 1, Limberlost State Historic Site hosted the annual CBC. This was the 119th National Audubon Christmas Bird Count. In Adams County, volunteers have been participating in this survey for many years. This was Limberlost's 6th year to host the event. Terri Gorney, on the board of directors of both the Stockbridge Audubon Society (Ft. Wayne) and the Friends of the Limberlost, organized the Limberlost CBC and reported the results of our survey to the National Audubon Society. See the results below.



This year we had 23 field counters (27 counters last year) and 45 species (47 species last year). Some species we only had 1, 2 or 3. Birds species seen were somewhat similar to last year, but the quantity of birds seen was way down. This year the weather was very rainy with above average temps. Last year the day started out at 9 below zero, and topped out at 5 degrees above zero. Rain storms with cool conditions usually keep the numbers down—birds are less active in wet, cold weather as they try to stay dry and conserve energy.

	Number seen this CBC	Number seen last year	Number seen the previous year
Greater white-fronted Goose	0	5	11
Canada Goose	805	475	1566
Mallard	402	34	82
Horned lark	0	238	1
Tufted titmouse	7	3	15
Brown creeper	0	1	2
Lapland longspur	0	11	0
Snow bunting	0	49	0
American tree sparrow	38	281	124
Dark-eyed Junco	31	99	21
Slate-colored Junco	1	2	2
White-crowned sparrow	3	48	17
Northern cardinal	68	47	69
Wild Turkey	0	12	Red-breasted nuthatch
Blue Heron	7	1	White-breasted nuthatch
Northern Harrier	3	5	Winter wren
Northern Pintail	1	0	Carolina wren
Cooper's Hawk	4	3	Eastern bluebird
Bald Eagle	16	2	American Robin
Red-tailed Hawk	12	9	Northern Mockingbird
Rough-legged hawk	0	2	Starlings
Sandhill Crane	1	0	Cedar Waxwing
Rock Pigeon	12	16	White-throated sparrow
Ring-billed gull	2	0	Song sparrow
Mourning Doves	178	105	Swamp Sparrow
Eastern Screech-owl	1	1	Cardinal
Short-eared owl	0	5	Common Grackle
Great Horned Owl	1	0	House Finch
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	American goldfinch
Red-headed woodpecker	3	10	House sparrow
Red-bellied woodpecker	10	17	
Yellow-bellied sapsucker	0	1	
Downy woodpecker	20	23	
Hairy woodpecker	2	7	
Northern flicker	10	8	
Pileated woodpecker	2	2	
American kestrel	12	3	
Blue Jay	57	66	
American crow	6	15	
Carolina chickadee	17	16	



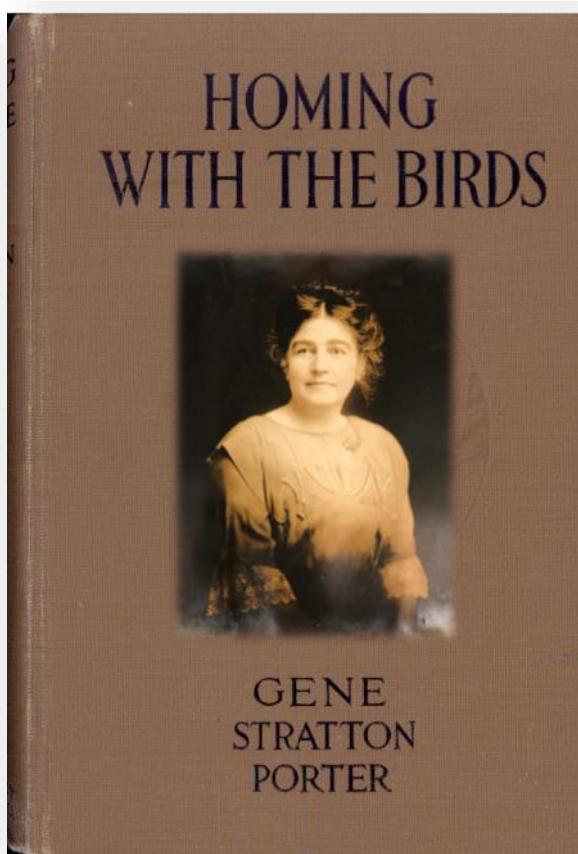
	Number seen this CBC	Number seen last year
Red-breasted nuthatch	2	0
White-breasted nuthatch	25	13
Winter wren	2	0
Carolina wren	3	2
Eastern bluebird	1	11
American Robin	42	3
Northern Mockingbird	2	2
Starlings	201	168
Cedar Waxwing	19	0
White-throated sparrow	0	5
Song sparrow	57	20
Swamp Sparrow	6	0
Cardinal	68	47
Common Grackle	4	6
House Finch	42	24
American goldfinch	23	76
House sparrow	305	218



The CBC has provided the National Audubon Society with decades of bird data. Audubon scientists will tell you about remarkable studies that result from using 119 years of data. The other nice thing the CBC does for participants (the expert, the amateur, the young & old) is to create a community of volunteers who work together to do something special for bird life everywhere.

WHY GENE DECIDED TO WRITE THIS BOOK

By Adrienne Provenzano



In 1919, Gene Stratton-Porter published a nature study entitled Homing With The Birds, in which she shares a variety of stories of her birding experiences around both Indiana houses she designed – Limberlost Cabin in Geneva, and Limberlost North (also known as Wildflower Woods) on Sylvan Lake. At that point in her life, Gene was spending more and more time in California, where she would eventually move permanently. However, she was still a Hoosier at heart, and this book reflects her appreciation of the varied flora and fauna of the state.

Gene's nature studies such as this one were not nearly as popular as her fiction books. However, she cleverly made a deal with Doubleday, Page & Company to alternately publish a fiction bestseller, such as The Harvester, and then a non-fiction special interest work, such as Moths of the Limberlost. Reading her non-fiction works in the 21st century provides important insight into the challenges she faced to take photographs and then incorporate her observations into her novels.

Homing With The Birds was inspired by Gene's friend, Neltje De Graff Doubleday, herself an author of eleven books including several on wildflowers and birds, using the name Neltje Blanchan. As Gene explains in the introduction, during a visit in the fall of 1916 with the couple Neltje and Frank Nelson Doubleday (her publisher), she was asked about experiences in the field. As Gene notes, “In the course of that intimate

conversation, Mrs. Doubleday conceived and planned this book, feeling – I hope not mistakenly – that these intimate personal experiences with birds, which so intensely interested her, would not fail to be of equal interest to other bird lovers and protectors. She felt that these records faithfully and simply set down would add very largely to the sum of human achievement in a scientific estimate of the habits and characteristics of birds. So, I have written for any one who is interested, these sketches of personal experience, as I outlined them to such a devoted lover and champion of the birds as Neltje Blanchan.”

Neltje was a contemporary of Gene's, born in 1865. She had married Frank Nelson Doubleday in 1886 and they had three children. Neltje died suddenly in 1918 while on a Red Cross humanitarian trip in Canton, China. As with many of Gene's other works, writing this book was a way for her to honor the friendship and positive influence of a fellow appreciator of nature's wonders.

Among anecdotes included, Gene shares the story of how she received “A Gift of the Birds” from her father when growing up on Hopewell Farm, details the discovery and photography of “Little Chicken,” the charismatic Turkey Vulture celebrated in Freckles, and shares many other “unusual experiences afield.” Included are more than fifty of Gene's photographs illustrating the work with scenes of Indiana's countryside and its winged inhabitants. However, often, these stories are unaccompanied by photographs, because they occurred when she did not have her camera equipment with her and was just going about her daily activities and taking note of her natural surroundings, observing, studying, and sometimes rescuing wildlife.

Her conversational writing style and use of detail help the reader feel that they are alongside Gene whether in fields, woods, swamp, or lakeside. Ever the music lover, she extensively explores the language, calls and songs of birds in addition to sharing observations of courtship, nest building, and migration.

Given the wide range of species that travel through and reside in Gene's former observation areas, I think she would be pleased that it is still possible to home with the birds in Indiana where she did.

Editor's note: Adrienne Provenzano is an Indiana Advanced Master Naturalist, Friend of the Limberlost, and Certified Interpretive Guide. Nicknamed “The Songstress of the Limberlost”, she continues to find the life and work of Gene Stratton-Porter inspiring. She extends a hearty “Thank You!” to Terri Gorney for research materials that contributed to this article. Also, the photo on the book above was added by the editor. No such book cover actually exists.

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.

Step Two:

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

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

Senior Citizen/Limited Income—\$10

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Check the box if you want to get the newsletter mailed to you via the U.S. Postal Service. We'd like to email the newsletter to you because it saves us money on postage, and it also saves us time, and the "e-newsletter" is in color! However, 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.

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (Additional donation appreciated): \$ _____



SUNSET AT THE LOBLOLLY MARSH

LIMBERLOST STATE HISTORIC SITE HOURS:

Open Tuesday through Sunday , 10 AM to 5 PM
Last tour begins at 4:00 PM.

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YOU DESERVE ALL THE PRAISE !

The Friends of the Limberlost currently have 200 memberships. These memberships include individuals, couples, families, and businesses. Many have been members for as long as the organization was first founded in 1994 (25 YEARS AGO). The confidence that all members have in the Friends of the Limberlost is greatly appreciated and never taken for granted. Although no donation is too small, we'd like to thank a few members who have recently made generous contributions.

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