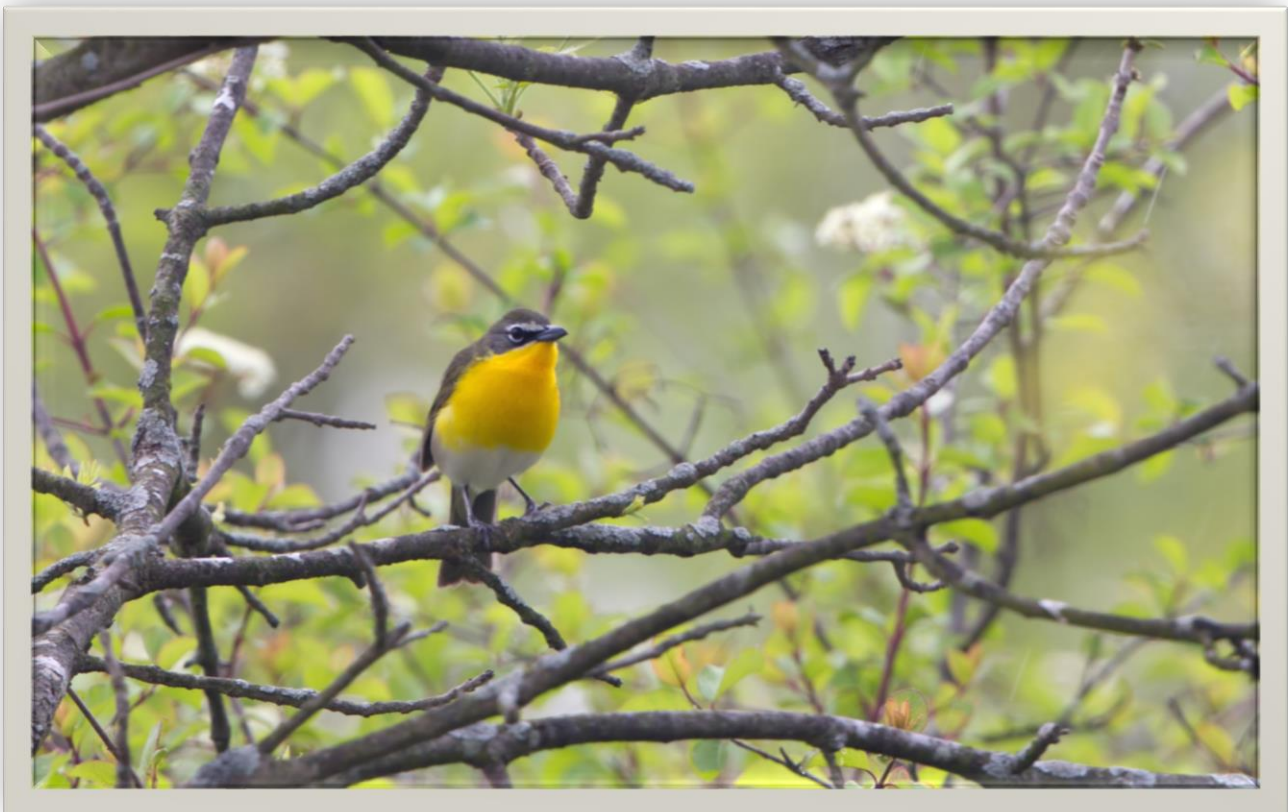
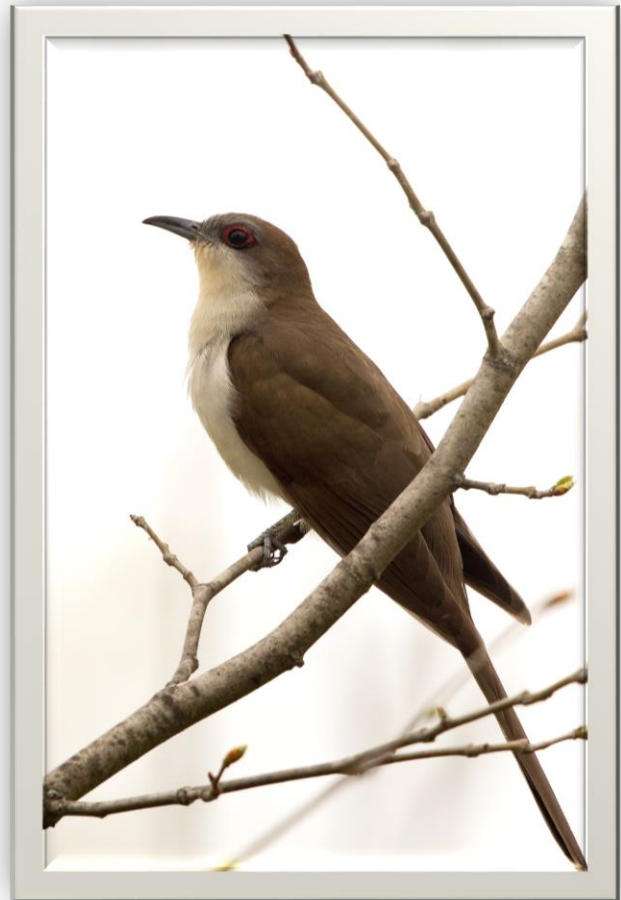


# Birding in Indiana May 2015

*A trip in  
conjunction with a  
business trip to see  
the newly arrived  
Warblers and  
migrating birds in  
Indiana*



**Dag 1:** Lämnar Göteborg med ett tidigt flyg över till Bryssel för vidare transport till Washington DC, därefter ett flyg till Indianapolis, Indy 500 hemstad. Anländer Drury Inn & Suites när solen går ner.

**Dag 2:** Tar bilen till Harrison State park för att möta upp mästern Don Gorney och därefter skåda en hel dag i denna park. Parken är stor och har många naturtyper.

**Dag 3:** Åker tillsammans med Don Gorney till Sodal's Nature Park för skådning med Cachina, innan kollegan landar på seneftermiddagen. Därefter åker vi mot Kokomo.

**Dag 4-Dag 5:** Arbete med endast några korta observationer av exempelvis Kalkongam.

**Dag 6:** Ut till Grissom Airport för att hitta några skammisar, dvs Dickcissel, Bobolink och Upland Sandpiper. Lyckad träff.

**Dag 7:** Släpper kollegan på morgonen vid flygplatsen. Sedan Sodal's Nature park på eget bevåg för att försöka se arterna jag missade för några dagar sedan. Hemfärd över Washington på eftermiddagen.

**Dag 8:** Hemkomst till Göteborg från Bryssel

## BIRD REPORT INDIANAPOLIS – MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> TO MAY 9<sup>TH</sup> 2015

### SUMMARY

As the travel coincided with a business trip, right when the Warblers migrate to northern North America, I decided to plan some birding. I hope this short trip report can push you to just look for some metro parks if you are in USA inland around the time when Warblers migrate. It is a marvelous time.

On the target list was of course Cerulean Warbler as together with its cousins. I also had hopes for Upland Sandpiper in the Kokomo area as this was the first time I was in Kokomo during the breeding season. I was successful on these two targets.

In total I saw 96 different species and around 35 new to add to my USA/Canada list consisting of 383 species after this trip. The most unexpected was the Cape Mae Warbler. The trip would never have been such success without Mr. Don Gorney's excellent guiding and good ears.

## BACKGROUND



*Sodalis Nature Park with Don and Cachina*

Me and my colleague Jens had to go to our head quarter in Kokomo, Indiana for a Joint review with a customer. As my trip was approved a little later, I had to search harder to find cheap enough ticket. This said, I looked for tickets and found a ticket with departure from Sweden Saturday morning while Jens would arrive Monday afternoon. Additionally, Jens trip back was early Friday morning while mine was on Friday afternoon. So my bird-tuned brain figured out that this would mean at least two full days of birding! Additionally, I knew that the company doing the review would leave Thursday afternoon so that also meant at least a few hours of birdwatching in Kokomo, namely Grissom Airport.

So where to start? I sent some emails to one colleague whose son had been a keen birdwatcher, this gave nothing really exciting. I also checked the Audubon

society for good spots. Remember, Indiana and Indianapolis is not really well-known by Swedish birdwatchers. Anyway I found a site where it was announced that a Mr. Don Gorney had Sunday birdwatching tours. I thus sent a few emails and got immediate response. Yes, the tour was on and I was welcome.

So at least some birding was arranged and a tough week looked to become a little more exciting.

## BIRDING ITINERARY

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>– Harrison State Nature Park, guided by Mr. Don Gorney. Nice for many Warblers.

Monday 4<sup>th</sup>– Sodalis Nature Park in Hendricks County – guided by Don Gorney and Cachina. A wonderful area!

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> Work, work, work...

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> – Grissom Airport, Kokomo in the afternoon, to see Upland Sandpiper.

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> – Leaving colleague at Airport. Return visit to Sodalis Nature Park on my own.

## PLANNING AND CONTACT

Håkan Sivencrona; [j.sivencrona@gmail.com](mailto:j.sivencrona@gmail.com), 0760-065001

## DAY TO DAY SCHEDULE AND REPORT

### SATURDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> OF MAY

I took a morning flight from Gothenburg to Brussel for further travel to Washington DC and then to Indianapolis. I arrived at a fairly ok time and had an Avis car pre-booked. It took me some time to get out of the airport but other than that it was a fairly easy city to travel in the city outskirts.

I had booked a room in the Area of Harrison State Park, or rather at Drury Inn & Suites, located in the crossing between Highway 69 and 82<sup>nd</sup> street. As I booked it quite late the price was over 120 dollars a night, but with a free “breakfast” and “dinner”, making it feel less expensive . Well, breakfast, rather some cereals and the dinner in the evening was Taco style but with two beers included.

The hotel was a very busy hotel, with youths from everywhere around USA so I really did not get any sleep that night. In Kokomo I stayed at Marriot Courtyard as last time. A restyled Marriot where the good old breakfast was now changed to something that I did not like. The staff is however wonderful.

### SUNDAY 3<sup>RD</sup>

In the morning I was among the first to be in the breakfast room. I entered it at the same time their milk machine (not cow) broke down and at least 4 gallons flooded the floor.

After the breakfast I drove south until reaching road 465 S and then I took left at East 56<sup>th</sup> Street. On this street you will not need further information about the park, just keep an eye for the “brown signs”, and/or the country club.



*Eastern Kingbird in the first morning light*

Notice that the park is a multi-user park with vast areas for many types of sports such as Golf.

The park is located around the *Fall Creek River* which connects to White river just some miles to the southwest.





*The first photo of a male Cerulean Warbler*

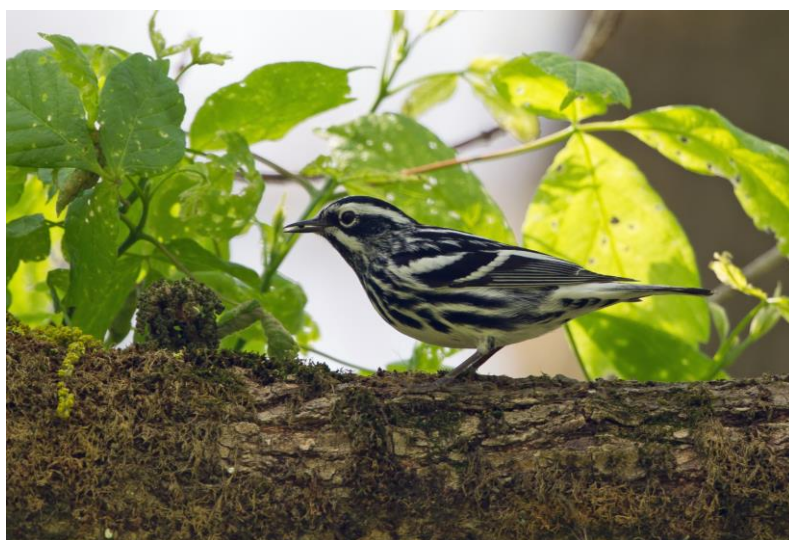
The entrance fee to the park is quite okay and with that you will get a park map as there are many “meeting points” and trails sig-sagging the area. Our meeting point were up at Fort Benjamin. Just follow Clark road.

As I was there around one hour earlier than the others I had some time for myself. Some Kingbirds, Woodpeckers as well as Sparrows found their way to my checklist.

At 8, I think, a lot of people arrived. Some very fresh while others were quite seasoned in the birdwatching guild. Anyway Mr. Don, a very timid man, humble as well, welcomed us. And at the very first time we started to talk we came back to my questions of one specific bird that I wanted to see, the **Cerulean Warbler**. And yes, that was also among the first bird he showed me.

The park has a lot of trails and many interesting areas. Also, remember that it was early spring, or rather early summer, as the leaves had yet not started to shadow the ground nor hide the birds while they searched for food.

The first tour was to go north and follow Fall creak to Fort Branch where meanders have made many interesting thickets that hosted a lot of birds. After coming up to Harrison Trace we went back to the small lake.



*Black and White Warbler*

After this we decided to walk down to Shafter road and follow the Lawrence Creek, a very interesting area. We pretty much followed the open area but going inside the “forest. Then in the end we came to the “cotton wood” plantation where we again went down to Shafter road for returning back to where we started.

Along this route we saw several Warblers such as.

After people had left me and Don spoke a little and he decided to show me a place where he had had a Northern Parula singing the other day. And this spot is located on Glen road, the first parking lot. Here we indeed saw this and many other Warblers. Just about when he was to leave Don offers me to accompany him and a friend to another area the coming day. I agreed.

Especially since it was just a few miles away from the airport where Jens would arrive later on Monday. The park was Sodalis Nature Park, in Hendricks county.

After this Don had to leave and I went back to my car, slept some and then continued bird watching on my own. This was great and the camera really had to work hard. I again saw the Cerulean Warbler, many Vireos as well as Woodpeckers.

In the afternoon, tired and happy about all the sightings I headed back to the hotel.

## MONDAY THE 4<sup>TH</sup>

Early in the morning Don came to get me at the hotel and I drove behind him for half an hour or so until we came to Sodalis Nature park.

It is fairly easy to find the Park. Drive on Highway 70 until you have passed the airport on your right side. Then take left for road 267 for a few hundred yards, then turn right on E County road 750 S. Then when this road “ends” take right and then just a few hundred yards from this crossing is the parking lot. Here we met up with Cachina a very skilled and interested young lady. The parking lot is in direct conjunction with a small fishing pond and barbeque site.



*White-eyed Vireo*



*Prairie Warbler*

Sodalis Nature park is basically “old” airport land and the nature has really started to reclaim lost land, old farms. The are consist of some old forest as well as scrub land but also some ponds and swamps.

We decided to walk basically all trails within the park and this was really interesting. We saw so many new Warblers, Kinglets, Vireos etc. that for

some time I almost got nausea looking up the trees (beside the neck ache). Also we heard and saw an Acadian Flycatcher.



The first extra interesting bird for me was when I found a Cape Mae Warbler, a new Twitcher. Not long after this we heard the spooky sound of a Black-billed Cuckoo, also a new Twitcher, and so it continued for a few hours.

After reaching an area approximately ½ a mile straight west from the parking lot we saw a Yellow-breasted Chat, Wow!, a wonderful bird with a strange relation to other birds. Anyway it was great. And it sang intensively for the entire time we were there. At the same spot a Brown Thrasher flew by. Marvelous.



*Black-billed Cuckoo*



*Yellow-breasted Chat*

no less than five different Vireos, namely Red-eyed, White-eyed, Warbling, Philadelphia and Yellow-throated Vireo.

After a few hours of intensive bird watching Cachina and Don had to leave. Now the jet lag hit me and I slept in the car and waited a few hours and to go for Jens at the airport. But right at the parking lot there were a

After the “Chat-stop” we turned off the trail into the forest, fairly much in the most northern part of the park. The forest here is really mature and we followed a ravine. Here we saw many interesting birds, from Tanagers to Flycatchers as well as many Warblers, including a very nice male Nashville Warbler that must have thought we were his friends.

On the way back we encountered



*Nashville Warbler*

bird feeder so I actually woke up once in a while to see wood peckers of three species, cow birds, Titmouse.

In the evening Jens arrived right on time and I picked him up without any problems. Now it was time for us to travel north, to Kokomo, driving along road 31. Kokomo is really a strange city, maybe most known for “hosting” one scene in the Blues Brother movie, when they play at the Kokomo City Bunker.

For a few days we should now work. Tuesday-Thursday afternoon. Don had told me to that Kokomo actually do host quite a lot of birds and that he knew a keen bird watcher up there. He gave me his number and email and after some exchanges we decided to meet right after my work on Thursday afternoon at Grisham airport, some 10 miles nort of Kokomo.

#### THURSDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY

The time was probably around 4 pm when the customer left and I took the car up to Grissom airport.

This airport is co-located with a prison /penitentiary center so it really offers some dramatic setup.

The birdwatcher and I met at the gas station right south of the Miami Correctional Facility. Don Gorney had recommended this young man and he had really a good eye for birds and a lot of knowledge.



*Savannah Sparrow at Grissom Airport*

He told me that we would probably be stopped and questioned by the police after some time as photographers with huge cameras attract attention. But nothing really happened. We were allowed to bird watch for an hour or so, without any interruption.



*Eastern Kingbird*

The airport is of course an open space but since the grass had started to grow it also is a perfect area for many grassland birds, such as Dickcissel, Bobolink. They day before he had also seen a Grasshopper Sparrow.



After some minutes we spot the first lifer, the Dickcissel, then not long after this species such as Meadowlark, many Sparrows. Now we just have to find the target species, the Upland Sandpiper. This is usually roaming an area in the west part of the airport and we follow the road that runs along the vast grassland. Harvested Corn fields on the left side of the road and the airport on right side.



*Dickcissel right outside the prison*



*Horned Lark*

Then corn field holds many species and I see one species I recognize from home the beautiful Horned Lark which is quite common around Kokomo and seem to suffice with farmland something I doubt the Swedish would. Then suddenly we spot the Upland Sandpiper, or rather three birds where two are fairly occupied by convincing the Lady Sandpiper to team up. They do not really offer and clear “shorts” except one behind the fence.

After seeing the Upland Sandpiper, we make one final stop to check for the Bobolink, and yes it is there, in the middle of a field, on the other side of the fence.

Unfortunately, we do not see the Grasshopper sparrow from the day before.

After this recognition tour I drive Mr. back to the gas station and thank him deeply and then I spend one more hour around the airport. Nothing really new except that I get at least one decent picture of the Sandpiper flying over the road.



*Upland Sandpiper at Grissom Airport*

Then I call it a day. I am a little surprised that no one stopped me.

FRIDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY

As Jens flight is leaving quite early and that he wishes to be at the airport well before check in time I dropped him of around 9.

My flight was not until 2:40 pm so I estimated that I could do some birding for at least three hours. And I did. I immediately drove to Sodalis Nature park again.

This time without map or guide. No problem to find, just follow the exits from the airport to the southwest.

This time I had better luck with the birds. They were more numerous as well as not so shy. First I get a nice Northern Parula, then I hear the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, the more common of the two Cuckoos in Indiana. Not long after this I see a nice male Blue-winged Warbler as well as many Sparrows.

Back at the lot I am quite tired and decide to just relax on some of the porches. Doing so I get a few more species such as Cowbird. The last bird at the Sodalis park is a Carolina Wren.

Then I leave to fill up the gas, doing so I get the final Twitcher, number 96 at the gas station, a Rose finch.



*Northern Parula, Sodalis*



*Blue-winged Warbler*



*Red-eyed Vireo*

## CHECKLIST

This is the checklist of the 94 species that I noted during the short birding trip in Indiana. I may have missed some more common birds. As a matter of fact, I missed the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo in Sodalis the last day 😊.

No	Name	Scientific Name	Location and numbers etc
1	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus /cincinatus</i>	Harrison State Park, flying over 2
2	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Harrison State Park, flying over
3	Cackling Goose		Harrison State Park, flying over
4	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Harrison State Park, 1
5	<b>Wood Duck</b>	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	Harrison State Park, 2
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Harrison State Park
7	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	A pair building nest in Sodalis
8	<b>American Hen Harrier</b>	<i>Circus hudsonicus</i>	Over the road
9	<b>Sharp-shinned Hawk</b>	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Harrison State
10	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Road side
11	<b>Osprey</b>	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Harrison State Park
12	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Harrison State Park
13	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	Grissom airport
14	Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	Harrison State Park
15	<b>Upland Sandpiper</b>	<i>Batramia longicauda</i>	Grissom airport
16	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Grissom airport
17	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Kokomo
18	Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>	Sodalis
19	Ruby-throated Hummingbird		Harrison State Park
20	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	Indianapolis
21	Red-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	Sodalis
22	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	Harrison State Park
23	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	Sodalis
24	Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	Harrison State Park



25	Acadian Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax vireescens</i>	Sodalis
26	Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	Harrison State Park
27	<b>Great Crested Flycatcher</b>	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	Sodalis
28	<b>Eastern Kingbird</b>		Grissom airport
29	Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	Harrison State Park
30	Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	Harrison State Park
31	Philadelphia Vireo	<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>	Harrison State Park
32	<b>White-eyed Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo griseus</i>	Sodalis
33	<b>Yellow-throated Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	Sodalis
34	<b>Blue-headed Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	Harrison State Park
35	<b>Blue Jay</b>		Kokomo
36	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	
37	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Grissom airport
38	Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>	Harrison State Park
39	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	Sodalis
40	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Harrison State Park
41	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Harrison State Park
42	<b>Tufted Titmouse</b>		Sodalis
43	Carolina Chickadee	<i>Poecile carolinensus</i>	Harrison State Park
44	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	Harrison State Park
45	Carolina Wren		Sodalis
46	House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	Harrison State Park
47	<b>Winter Wren</b>		Harrison State Park
48	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	Sodalis
49	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	Harrison State Park
50	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	Harrison State Park
51	Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	Sodalis
52	Gray Catbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Sodalis
53	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Harrison State Park
54	Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	Sodalis

55	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Grissom airport
56	<b>Cedar Waxwing</b>		Harrison State Park
57	Northern Parula	<i>Setophada americana</i>	Harrison State Park, Sodalis
58	Tennessee Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis peregrina</i>	Harrison State Park
59	Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora cyanoptera</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
60	Nashville Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
61	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	Harrison State Park, Sodalis
62	Cape May Warbler	<i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
63	Cerulean Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis cerulea</i>	Harrison State Park
64	Blackburnian Warbler	<i>Setophaga fusca</i>	Harrison State Park
65	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	Harrison State Park, Sodalis
66	Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
67	Prairie Warbler	<i>Setophaga discolor</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
68	Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>	Harrison State Park, Sodalis
69	Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	Harrison State Park
70	Black and White Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	Harrison State Park
71	Kentucky Warbler	<i>Geothlypis formosa</i>	Harrison State Park, Sodalis
72	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	Harrison State Park, Sodalis
73	Hooded Warbler	<i>Setophaga citrina</i>	Harrison State Park
74	Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icterina virens</i>	Harrison State Park
75	<b>Summer Tanager</b>	<i>Piranga rubra</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
76	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
77	<b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b>	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
78	<b>Indigo Bunting</b>	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
79	Dickcissel	<i>Spiza americana</i>	Grissom airport
80	Eastern Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	Sodalis Nature Park
81	Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	Harrison State Park
82	Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>	Sodalis
83	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Grissom Airport
84	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Sodalis

85	Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	<i>Kokomo</i>
86	<b>Eastern Meadowlark</b>	<i>Sturnella magma</i>	<i>Grissom airport</i>
87	<b>Bobolink</b>	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	<i>Grissom airport</i>
88	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	<i>Sodalis parking lot</i>
89	<b>Bronzed Cowbird</b>	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	<i>Sodalis parking lot</i>
90	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	<i>Harrison State Park</i>
91	<b>Common Grackle</b>		<i>Harrison State Park</i>
92	<b>Baltimore Oriole</b>		<i>Harrison State Park</i>
93	<b>Orchard Oriole</b>	<i>Icterus spurius</i>	<i>Harrison State Park, female 1</i>
94	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	<i>Grissom</i>
95	<b>American Goldfinch</b>		<i>Harrison State Park</i>
96	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	<i>Grissom airport</i>

THE END