

# The Chat



Newsletter of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society, serving East Central Indiana

Volume 36, No. 1 Jan./Feb. 2010

## Jan. 11: **Bat Conservation and Emerging Threats in Indiana**

Bat populations have taken a hard hit in the last few years, thanks in large part to white nose syndrome (WNS). WNS was first recorded in New York in the winter of 2006-07 and has spread rapidly in our direction, killing bats in record numbers. It's a timely subject for our January program, as WNS takes its greatest toll in winter months, sending bats out into sub-freezing temperatures when they should be hibernating.

Dr. Tim Carter, assistant professor of biology at Ball State, specializes in bats and will tell us about WNS and other threats to bats in Indiana, but he'll also tell us about his innovative efforts to help conserve bat populations. Since 1998, for example, Tim has been working to convert abandoned mines into bat hibernacula (habitat for hibernating bats), an effort that brought him a Community Partner of the Year from the Wildlife Habitat Council.

Join us on Monday, January 11, at Minnetrista to learn more about the good and bad news regarding bats in Indiana. Refreshments and time to socialize will start at 7 pm, followed by chapter business at 7:15. Tim's program will begin around 7:30.

This and all chapter programs are free and open to the public. Bring a friend or two!

## Feb. 8: **Rain Gardens in East Central Indiana**

This month's program will introduce the concept of rain gardens and give attendees some basic information needed for establishing one. A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff from roofs, driveways, walkways, and compacted lawn areas the opportunity to be absorbed. Rain gardens can significantly cut down on the amount of pollution reaching creeks and streams.

We will hear about the native plants recommended for rain gardens—a selection of wetland edge vegetation, such as wildflowers, sedges, rushes, ferns, shrubs and small trees that take up excess water flowing into the rain garden. We will see examples of successful rain gardens in the area.

Join us at Minnetrista for refreshments and socializing at 7 p.m., with the chapter meeting beginning at 7:15, followed by the rain gardens' program at 7:30.

---

# Peregrine Falcon: January/February Bird of the Month

---

*Peregrine Falcon:*  
*Falco peregrines*  
By Helen Twibell



The peregrine falcon is distributed across the world, found on every inhabited continent and is renowned for its speed, power and grace in the air. In North America this species was once called the ‘Duck Hawk’. Fully capable of taking ducks and other water birds, it is an extremely fast flier, one individual having been clocked in a dive, or stoop, at 275 miles an hour. Frequently the peregrine engages in spectacular aerial evolutions in what seem to be a spirit of play, harrying flocks of small birds, badgering other hawks, or forcing herons and

other large birds to earth without any attempt to do more than scare them. An individual peregrine has been seen to come out of nowhere to strike a blue-winger teal, causing it to plummet into a clump of cattails. The hawk made no attempt to retrieve this kill, but shot up into the air and stooped on a black duck---sending it tumbling end over end---quite dead---to the ground. Again neglecting to retrieve its prey, it swiftly flew out of sight, having satisfied its desire for amusement. The peregrine feeds primarily on birds taken in flight. The large hind talons on the bird are anchored by heavy tendons, allowing him to use the force of the dive to kill prey on contact, thus the species has been occasionally called ‘Great-footed Hawk’.

There are some basic char-

acteristics which identify a peregrine falcon. The first might be the head, which is a dark slate colored hood with dark “moustache” and white cheek. One source describes the head color arrangement as a distinct helmet which covers the crown and nape. The eye ring and cere are yellow. The cere is a waxy protuberance on the base of the upper jaw which is present on many birds of prey whose nostrils open to give them the ability to withstand high-speed dives. The upper parts of the bird are dark gray, under parts are whitish, with clear breast and barring on belly and flanks. Being a raptor, the peregrine is described as a large robust falcon which can be 15”-21” in length with a 40” wing spread. The female is larger than the male in this species.

*Continued in the March/April Chat*

---

## Help us put ECI on the IBA map!

Did you know that Indiana now has 44 Important Bird Areas (IBAs)? These are sites that have been officially recognized for providing essential habitat for one or more species of birds, as part of a worldwide effort that’s partially sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Identifying IBAs helps ensure that these important habitats are properly managed and conserved.

But here’s the bad news: not one of those IBAs is in East Central Indiana. It’s time to change that!

We’re looking for an RCAS member or friend to lead the effort to nominate two regional sites that certainly should become Important Bird Areas: Summit Lake State Park and the Loblolly Marsh Preserve.

The nomination process doesn’t require an expert birder. Instead, it requires someone who’s detail-oriented, who can gather and organize lots of data about birds and habitats, fill out pages of nomination paperwork, and submit everything to the proper offices and in the proper format.

Would you be that “someone”? You’d get plenty of help and guidance from Indiana’s IBA Coordinator and from Jeff Ray, a member of our Conservation Committee. If you’re one of the nearly 500 members who’ve lurked on the sidelines but never really gotten involved in our chapter activities, this is a great place to start! And your efforts will have a lasting impact on bird populations.

Read more about the IBA program at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/>. And if you’d like to explore possibilities, contact Jeff Ray ([jaray56@gmail.com](mailto:jaray56@gmail.com)) and Barb Stedman ([bastedman@gmail.com](mailto:bastedman@gmail.com)).

## 2009 RCAS Conservation Award Winners

Our annual awards banquet, held on Nov. 16 at Minnetrista, honored the following individuals and organizations for their conservation efforts and accomplishments.

The Robert H. and Esther (Munro) Cooper Conservation Award, the chapter's highest honor, went to the Muncie Sanitary District for going above and beyond the call of duty in developing initiatives that help protect the environment in Muncie and educate the public on such issues. Notable projects included "Do the Blue" recycling bags; reusable, insulated shopping bags; rain barrels; grease-catchers; an experimental beet-based ice melt for Muncie streets; and long-term efforts to eliminate combined sewers in Muncie (begun long before these efforts were mandated by law).

The MSD was also honored for its wide range of education programs on such topics as non-point source pollution, rain garden construction, the use of leaves for mulch, safe disposal of household hazardous waste, energy-saving compact fluorescent lights, and other educational information for children and teachers at the MSD website.

Cassandra and Madeline Grosh, of Muncie, won the Charles D. Wise Youth Conservation Award for their work on the 2009 White River clean-up, sponsored by Muncie Delaware Clean and Beautiful. Cassi, 14, and Madi, 12, initiated a campaign to recruit clean-up volunteers, especially students, which included publicity in schools, businesses, libraries, and churches around Muncie and on Facebook, as well as the design

Kathy & Don Stone,  
Jason Donati  
(accepting for Camp  
Prairie Creek), Cassandra  
and Madeline Grosh,  
Scott Cooper & Judy  
Elton (accepting for  
Delaware County Triad),  
and Steve Murphy  
(accepting for Muncie  
Sanitary District).



and distribution of T-shirts for student volunteers. They funded their efforts with a \$1,200 grant from the Community Foundation of Muncie & Delaware County. As part of their award, each girl received a \$300 scholarship from the Audubon Society to attend Audubon ecology camp or to fund a conservation project that they have designed or want to participate in.

Camp Prairie Creek, a combined effort of Muncie/Delaware County Stormwater Management and Prairie Creek Reservoir, won the Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award. The summer program helps children learn about conservation, recycling, fishing, and "living green" during a free, week-long camp at Prairie Creek Reservoir. The camp was honored for its creative strategies for engaging children with nature and teaching them principles of sustainable living.

The Phyllis Yuhus Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award was presented to Kathy and Don Stone, of Montpelier, for preserving 98 acres of mid-succession forest along the Salamonie River in Blackford County. The Stones donated the land to ACRES Land Trust and named it the Kenneth Goble Nature Pre-

serve in honor of Kathy's father, who originally owned the land. Kathy has viewed stewardship of the property according to her father's words: "Nobody 'owns' the land. We belong to the land. If you take care of it, it will take care of you. If you destroy it, you will be destroyed along with it." She has documented an impressive range of plant and animal life on the property, including queen snake, massasauga rattlesnake, whip-poor-will, prothonotary warblers, and other uncommon species.

Delaware County Triad, an education and advocacy group for seniors, received the Richard Greene Public Service Award for its Elimination of Expired Drugs Environmentally program (the "Drug Drop" program.) Over the last 4½ years, Triad has collected more than 7,000 pounds of expired and unused pharmaceuticals in Delaware County, ensuring that those drugs stay out of the White River and out of Muncie's drinking water. Triad works with the Muncie Sanitary District and law enforcement officials to collect and incinerate the drugs.

For photos of the evening's events, visit [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).

# Robert Cooper Audubon Society



Robert Cooper Audubon Society.  
Nona Nunnelly  
1302 N. Alden Rd.  
Muncie, IN 47304

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 544  
Muncie, IN

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Dated Material- Please Deliver Promptly

*The Chat* is published 7 times a year by the Robert Cooper Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, serving Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Madison and Randolph counties.

## Dates for Your Calendar

**Jan. 11** Bat conservation program  
**Feb. 8** Rain Gardens program  
**Feb. 12** Articles due to Beth Simmons for  
March/April Chat: basimmons2@bsu.edu

**Chapter Website:** [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)  
**Email:** [cooperaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cooperaudubon@gmail.com)

## Meetings

Program meetings are held on the **second Monday** of each month (except July & August)  
at Minnetrista Cultural Center  
1200 N. Minnetrista Parkway  
Muncie, IN

**7:00 p.m.:** Coffee & Gathering  
**7:15 p.m.:** Chapter Business  
**7:30 p.m.:** Scheduled Program



Printed on  
recycled  
paper 25%  
post-con-  
sumer fiber

## Officers

President:	Barb Stedman	288-2890
Vice President:	Jon Creek	348-4019
Recording Sec.:	Barb Hesselgrave	228-9673
Treasurer	Nona Nunnelly	284-0751

## Directors

2009-10	Dave Cramer	260-726-9492
	Frank Meeker	289-5635
2009-2011	Joel Jeffcoat	286-2896
	Phil Tuttle	289-4251

## Committee Chairs

Conservation:	Charlie Mason	288-9937
Education:	Pam Kistler	284-0946
Field trip:	Sarah McKillip	287-8464
Hospitality:	Cynda Turner	289-9390
Membership:	Laurie Lindberg	282-7516
Newsletter ed.:	Beth Simmons	812-343-8927
Program:	Lois Rockhill	287-8698
Publicity:		