

# The Chat



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

Volume 38, No. 1

Jan./Feb. 2012

## Conservation Award Winners Honored

Our annual conservation awards banquet was a wonderful evening, as five awards were presented and the winners told and showed a bit about the work that they – or the individuals or organizations they represented – had done to win their respective awards.

The **Robert H. and Esther (Munro) Cooper Conservation Award**, the chapter's highest honor, was given to the **John M. Craddock Wetland Nature Preserve**. The 27-acre reserve, located next to former industrial sites and the White River in Muncie, is being developed as wildlife habitat, as an outdoor education facility and as point of interest for Cardinal Greenway users. FlatLand Resources (Phil Tevis, project manager) has overseen habitat development of the site since 2007, and students from Ball State's Dept. of Landscape Arch. (led by Prof. Les Smith) designed and built an overlook and boardwalk. *(cont. on pg. 4)*



(L-R) Chance Hart, Savannah Brunk, & Dakotah Craig (all Southside MCJROTC cadets); Larry King (MITS general manager); Les Smith (Ball State Landscape Architecture Dept.); Phil Tevis (FlatLand Resources); Barry Banks (accepting on behalf of Josie and Geoff Fox); & Angie Manuel

**January 9, 7:00 p.m.**

### Invasive Plant Management



According to the USDA, "invasive plants are introduced species that can thrive in areas beyond their natural range of dispersal. These plants are characteristically adaptable, aggressive, and have a high reproductive capacity." Therefore, controlling and monitoring invasive plants are extremely important tasks in maintaining healthy, natural ecosystems.

John Taylor, Land Manager for the Field Station & Environmental Education Center at BSU, will discuss common invasive exotic plants he manages, including identification, monitoring and control methods.

Chapter business will begin at 7 p.m. at **Kennedy Library**. John's program will get underway at 7:15.

**February 13, 7:00 p.m.**

### Bats in Indiana & Bat Research

Did you know that a single bat can consume one-third of its body weight in insects each night? This adds up to several hundred insects in a few hours! This is only one of the ways that bats are important components in our ecosystem.



Come learn about the 12 bat species in Indiana – two of which are endangered – from Dr. Tim Carter, Asst. Professor of Wildlife Biology and Mammalogy, along with some of the current research taking place in his bat research lab at Ball State University. Live (tame) bats will be in attendance, so be sure to bring your cameras!

Chapter business and refreshments will begin at 7 p.m. at **Kennedy Library**, with Tim's program at 7:15.

# Upcoming Local/National Events & Trips

February 18

## Winter tree identification field trip

Interested in learning about winter trees? Unsure about which is which? Join us on **February 18 at 11 a.m.** as we travel to Camp Adventure, on the outskirts of Muncie, to learn all about winter tree identification. We will be guided and instructed by Dr. Kemuel Badger, Chair of the Biology Department at Ball State University.

*Carpoolers* should meet at the Cooper Science parking lot, on the Ball State campus. We will leave from the lot at **10:40 a.m.**

*To get to Camp Adventure on your own:* From Muncie, starting at the intersection of Tillotson and Kilgore, head west on Kilgore Rd. Directly opposite Elm Ridge Cemetery (and next to the old Delco-Remy plant), turn south (left) onto Proctor Rd. Go 2.2 miles. Camp Adventure is at **4881 S. Proctor Rd.**, on the right. For a map of the location, visit [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).



## 2012 summer Audubon camps - registration open!

The National Audubon Society has opened registration for its summer camps and birding programs for adults, teens and families (<http://education.audubon.org/nature-camps>), including popular programs in Maine and Wisconsin:

### Hog Island, Maine

Located in a 330-acre wildlife sanctuary on Muscongus Bay, Hog Island Camp is run by Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program (Project Puffin). All summer programs include field trips to nearby Eastern Egg Rock, where biologists have successfully restored an island colony of Atlantic Puffins and Roseate, Arctic and Common Terns.

A long list of expert ornithologists, naturalists, educators and authors will lead workshops, lively evening presentations, saltwater birding tours and trips to diverse habitats on the Maine coast. Participants live in restored wooden buildings dating back to the early 1900s and are treated to three fabulous meals each day.

Registrations received by Jan. 15th get a \$25 discount (for all programs except Maine Seabird Biology & Conservation). Most programs sell out months in advance, so register early! More information & enrollment are available at <http://projectpuffin.org/OrnithCamps.html>, 607-257-7308, or [hogisland@audubon.org](mailto:hogisland@audubon.org).

### 2012 Hog Island programs:

- Maine Seabird Biology & Conservation: June 3-8 & Sept 9-14
- Joy of Birding: June 10-15 & June 24-29
- Field Ornithology: June 17-22
- Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens: June 17-22 & June 24-29
- Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week: July 19-24
- Family Camp: Aug. 19-24
- Audubon Chapter Leadership Program: Aug. 26-31
- Living on the Wind: Fall Migration and Monhegan Island: Sept. 16-21

### Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary, Wisconsin

Located in northwestern Wisconsin, Hunt Hill boasts 400 acres of forests, meadows, bogs and pristine glacial lakes. Visit <http://hunthill.org/experience-hunt-hill/> for details and registration information. (Register early!)

The focal summer event is **Northwoods Birding Camp, June 15-22**. This adult camp provides opportunities to hike, bird, learn from locally and nationally known birding experts, and participate in optional field trips to Crex Meadows (30,000 acres featuring sedge marsh, brush prairie habitat, and pine barrens – a globally endangered ecosystem – with 270 species of birds and 750 species of plants) and Dory's Bog (a unique and protected open-eye bog environment featuring specialized plants and animals).

The **Teen Adventure Camp, June 22-24**, gives 12- to 15-year-olds lots of outdoors adventures that culminate in a canoeing and camping trip along the country's first National Scenic Waterway.

# January/February Bird of the Month: Common Loon

Common Loon:

*Gavia immer*

By Helen Twibell



and fall. Usually only Hoosiers living near or visiting larger bodies of water, typically in northern Indiana, have a chance to observe the loon.

Many of us are familiar with the weird, mournful and loud resonant calls varying from a tremulous ha-ha-ha-ha to long, drawn-out yodeling howls that rise, then fall and fade away. We hear the loon call in movies and TV shows whose stories take place near lakes, but probably can never recall having seen one. The common loon does not nest in Indiana, and the eerie call of the male during the summer breeding period will not be heard since it is usually quiet during other seasons of the year. Its unique call suggests the laughter of a deranged person and has led to the phrase “crazy as a loon.”

The common loon is depicted in bird book drawings and photographs as a beautiful black and white water bird with checkerboard back and white necklace, black head and deep red eye. The long, pointed bill is black in the summer only, however, and is entirely gray, along with its body, in fall and winter. The gorgeous black and white summer plumage makes one want to see the bird in its breeding habitat!

The common loon is said to be a symbol of the wildness of our lakes. It

The common loon, while listed among birds of Indiana, is probably not one very many Hoosiers have seen since perhaps the 1890s. The common loon is, in our state, now basically a migrant bird, of spring

may live up to 30 years. The bird prefers clear lakes since it fishes by eyesight, but may also be found on rivers, ponds and other small water areas. It is known as the Great Northern Diver because it is a strong swimmer and superb diver. There are a number of records of loons being caught in fishing nets 180 and 200 feet in depth below the surface of large lakes.

The common loon, although a great swimmer, can hardly walk on land because its feet are set so far back. In fact, the name “loon” comes from the Swedish word *lom*, meaning “lame,” for the awkward way it walks on land. Because its legs cannot support its body in a walking position, it must propel itself along by pushing both feet and lunging forward, often with its belly bumping along on the ground. It can’t take flight from land, either, which explains how loons are sometimes found stranded ashore after bad storms. Even taking off from the water requires great effort for the bird. It may have to do a great deal of flailing of wings and running along the water’s surface before it can get enough speed just to rise off the lake into the wind.

According to Audubon, the common loon breeds from Iceland, Greenland, the Arctic Islands, northwest Alaska, south to Massachusetts, northern Indiana (large, clear lakes), northern Iowa, Montana and northern California. It winters from Nova Scotia, the Great Lakes, southern Alaska south to Florida, the Gulf Coast, Mexico and Lower California. Those who stay inland rather than on the salt-water coast may travel no farther south than forced by ice.

As the loons migrate back north and come through Indiana on the way, they begin to arrive in March, reach their peak in April, and are gone by May. They migrate singly or in small groups up to 5 or 6, but may gather in

considerable numbers in favorable feeding areas.

The fall is the largest gathering period of the birds on their way south for the winter. One report described at least 300 loons spread out over an Indiana lake in an area about one-half mile square. Within this loose group were more compact groups. One such group contained about 120 birds and resembled a similar gathering of geese. Other smaller separate groups made up the remainder of the space. The next morning only 15 birds remained while the larger group of migrants moved on together as a flock.

A friend told of sighting a common loon flying over Little Barbee Lake in northern Indiana in October or November. He mistook it for a goose because of its length, but a game warden informed him it was a loon. The warden also stated that it was an endangered species. The only conservation rating found, however, rated its danger as of least concern (LC). The decrease in population appears to be because of water pollution. Loons seem to be very susceptible to waste products of human civilization.

## REMINDER: WE’RE MOVING!

Beginning in January 2012, our regular monthly programs will be held at Muncie Public Library’s Kennedy Branch, 1700 W. McGalliard Rd.

Meeting dates and times will remain the same (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month, 7 p.m.).

## Coming soon: the **Tweet!**

Do you know any children who would be interested in receiving their very own version of the *Chat*? If so, please send their names and email addresses to Education Chair Deborah (Debbie) Brown at ladyhwk17@aol.com.

The *Tweet* will come out on a trial basis alongside our regular March/April issue of the *Chat*. It will be geared toward children under 12 and will include puzzles, information on upcoming kid-friendly field trips, and fun wildlife facts relevant to children of this age group. The child need not be a member of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society.

**Please contact Deborah by Feb. 1**, to ensure your child receives his or her *Tweet*. Please put "The Tweet" in the Subject line.

## LeBlanc Prints and Note Card Art



Cheryl LeBlanc, a local biological illustrator, has begun taking orders for her original prints and note card artwork. They make wonderful gifts for any nature lover!

Each set of seven cards contains six original illustrations (with one duplicate in each set). Included is a short natural history description of the subject on the back of each card.

To purchase cards or other artwork, visit Cheryl's Etsy store ([www.etsy.com/shop/CherylLeBlanc](http://www.etsy.com/shop/CherylLeBlanc)) or contact her at [cmvleblanc@gmail.com](mailto:cmvleblanc@gmail.com) or 730-3052. You can also download an order form from our website ([www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)).

## **Conservation Award Winners**, *cont. from page 1*

Named in honor of John Craddock's work in reviving the White River, the project has received several other awards, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service's 2010 National Earth Team Volunteer Group Award. Other collaborators in the project are the City of Muncie, Ball Brothers Foundation, the Delaware the Delaware County Soil and Water District, Red-tail Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, Cardinal Greenway and the Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management.

**Angie Manuel**, Interpretive Naturalist at Mounds State Park, won the **Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award** for her enthusiastic commitment to educating children and adults about nature, natural history and wildlife and habitat conservation. Angie runs Mounds' nature center and leads a wide range of public programs, including nature hikes, campfire programs, live animal programs, educational field trips for schools and seasonal day camps.

She also coordinates Mounds' volunteer program, the Friends of Mounds State Park group and partnerships with Ball State University for archaeological research and historic preservation.

The **Phyllis Yuhás Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award** was presented to **Josie and Geoff Fox**, of San Jose, Calif., for their commitment to habitat preservation in Muncie, especially for their key role in protecting Munsee Woods, site of the former Camp Munsee. The Foxes, both Muncie natives, have been active supporters of Red-tail Conservancy for several years, helping plant trees and assess properties. In 2010, when Camp Munsee was sold, their financial support made it possible for Red-tail to pur-

chase the 40-acre wooded parcel, located between Prairie Creek Reservoir and the Cardinal Greenway.

**MITS, the Muncie Indiana Transit System**, received the **Richard Greene Public Service Award** for its many green initiatives and efforts to make public transportation accessible and affordable to Muncie residents.

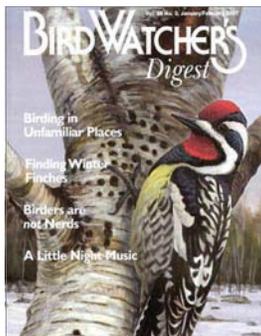
Most notable are MITS's five hybrid electric-diesel buses, which improve fuel economy by 30% and dramatically reduce emissions of particulates, hydrocarbons and nitrous oxide; its use of soy bio-diesel fuel; its purchase of hybrid staff vehicles; and a long list of other energy-conserving efforts. MITS has also successfully encouraged greater use of public transportation and expanded its scope through such programs as Bike n' Ride and MITS Plus.

The **Charles Wise Youth Conservation Award** was given to **Southside High School's MCJROTC** (Marine Corps Junior ROTC) for its participation in the last three White River clean-ups, bush honeysuckle eradication on a Red-tail Conservancy property, clean-up of school and neighborhood properties and many other community service projects. Led by Master Sergeant Bob Harber, dozens of MCJROTC's 112 members participated in more than 40 community service events last year and this year that number will approach 60. As part of its award, MCJROTC received a \$400 scholarship from the Audubon Society, to use in funding a conservation project that the members design or want to participate in.

**For photos of award winners' activities and of the evening's festivities, visit [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).**

# Thanks to Our Supporters!

Many thanks go to **Doris Cheney, Diana Godish** and the following businesses that generously donated door prizes for our Conservation Awards Banquet. When you're shopping for bird supplies, birding information, nature art, or appliance repair, we hope you'll remember these local and online businesses!



## Bird Watcher's Digest

([www.birdwatchersdigest.com](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com)) offers valuable articles about birds and birding for birders of all skill levels. Published six times a year, *BWD's* convenient field-guide size makes it easy to take into the field or store on a bookshelf for quick reference. Individual copies can be bought at any Tractor Supply Company store, and the online version is available to subscribers. Bird Watcher's Digest also publishes *The Backyard Birds Newsletter*, *BirdWire*, and other birding resources.

## Duncraft Wild Bird Superstore

([www.duncraft.com](http://www.duncraft.com)) has a massive array of bird feeders, houses, baths, food, and other products to help you enjoy the birds in your back yard. Duncraft feeders have long been known as some of the very best in the business!



## Carol Blakney Designs

([www.artandresearch.com](http://www.artandresearch.com)) – Muncie artist and environmental activist Carol Blakney discovered that one of the best places to learn about the wonders of nature is her own backyard, and she started a greeting card business to prove it. You can purchase her cards online or at the Downtown Farm Stand, in Muncie.

**Hi-Way 3 Hardware**, located at the intersection of Old State Rd. 3 and Riggin Rd. in Muncie, carries a variety of bird feeders, shepherd's hooks, birdseed, and other birding supplies. In the spring and summer you'll find everything you need for your garden. Year-round you'll find the best customer service in Muncie!



## Joel's Appliance Service

(Muncie) – RCAS board member Joel Jeffcoat has over 30 years' experience servicing all makes and models of appliances. Contact Joel at [fixitman614@comcast.net](mailto:fixitman614@comcast.net) or 765-286-2896.

# JOEL'S



## Seedy Sally's

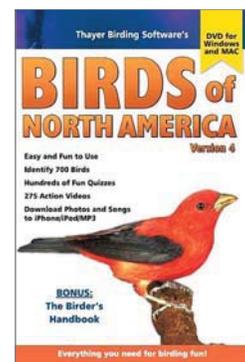
(Pendleton) – Owned and operated by long-time RCAS member and friend, Scott Anderson, Seedy Sally's is known for fine cus-

tomer service and high-quality products for birds and pets. Seedy Sally's is also providing the birdseed we're selling for our youth scholarship fund. Call 765-778-7347 for directions and hours.

*Birds of North America*, created by

## Thayer Birding Software

([www.thayerbirding.com](http://www.thayerbirding.com)), features 700 bird species, with 2,500 color photos, 700 range maps and songs, and 275 video clips of bird behavior. Select the color, size, habitat, location, or sound, and the ID Wizard shows you everything that matches your description. The DVD also includes 700 bird quizzes and the 700-page *Birder's Handbook* in electronic format. The Gold Edition of the DVD offers even more features, and *Birds of My State or Province* allows you to download bird information specifically for Indiana. You can also download bird photos and songs to your iPhone, iPod, or MP3 player.



## Tractor Supply

**Company**, located on East McGalliard near the Muncie bypass, carries a wide variety of

birdfeeders, birdhouses, birdseed, and other birding supplies. You can also browse TSC's online catalogue by searching for "wild birds" at [www.tractorsupply.com](http://www.tractorsupply.com).

## Robert Cooper Audubon Society

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



*The Chat* is published 5 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. 9:** “Invasive Plant” program *at new location: Kennedy Library*  
**Jan. 15:** Hog Island early reg. deadline  
**Feb. 1:** Submit names of children for *Tweet*  
**Feb. 13:** “Bat Research” program  
**Feb. 18:** Winter Tree ID Field Trip

**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 the

**Muncie Public Library Kennedy Branch**  
1700 W. McGalliard Rd.  
Muncie, IN

**7:00 p.m.:** Chapter Business

**7:15 p.m.:** Scheduled Program

### **Officers**

Co-Presidents:	Sarah McKillip	287-8464
	Jon Creek	348-4019
Recording Sec.:	Jennifer Wagner	845-536-3285
Treasurer:	Nona Nunnely	284-0751

### **Directors**

2010-2012:	Dave Cramer	260-726-9492
	Willy DeSmet	260-726-6693
2011-2013:	Joel Jeffcoat	286-2896
	Phil Tuttle	289-4251

### **Committee Chairs**

Conservation:	Charlie Mason	288-9937
Education:	Deborah Brown	747-9332
Field Trip:	Rose Jeffery	716-0299
Hospitality:	Doris Cheney	288-0981
Membership:	Phyllis DeSmet-Howard	260-726-6693
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