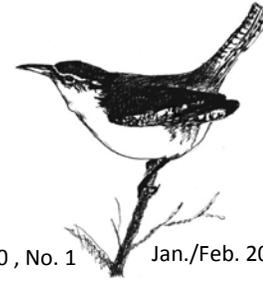


The Chat



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

Volume 40, No. 1

Jan./Feb. 2014

Chapter meetings now on WEDNESDAYS!

Because of changes in room availability at the Kennedy Library, our chapter's regular program meetings will now be held on the **SECOND WEDNESDAY**, rather than the second Monday, of each month. The change goes into effect on **January 8**. Meetings will still begin at **7 pm** at **Kennedy Library** in Muncie.

January 8

Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment

Are logging and conservation compatible?

On Jan. 8, Andy Meier of Purdue University will be speaking about the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment (HEE), which is one of the largest ecological experiments in Indiana. HEE researchers are determining the effects of different logging methods on various taxa (i.e., birds, bats, small mammals, salamanders, arthropods, vegetation, etc.).

The HEE is a collaborative long-term experiment, with many universities and state agencies taking part in the 100-year-long study.

Andy will speak about how the experiment is being conducted and some of the results thus far, with an emphasis on birds.

Join us on **Wednesday, Jan. 8**, at **Kennedy Library**. Chapter business will begin at **7 pm**. Andy's program will get underway at **7:15**.



Andy Meier giving a talk in an HEE forest

February 12

Deciphering loon calls

Do you know what a common loon is saying when it yodels? Dr. Jay Mager does!

Dr. Mager, an associate professor of biological

sciences at Ohio Northern University, has studied common loon behavior for many years and has unveiled some of the mysteries of loon calls.

Please join us on **Wednesday, Feb. 12**, to hear what Dr. Mager has learned. Maybe you'll become a loonatic too!

Chapter business will begin at **7 pm** at **Kennedy Library**. Jay's program will get underway at **7:15**.



Chapter-only membership renewals due Jan. 1

You still have time to renew your RCAS membership! Renew online at www.cooperaudubon.org or send your dues (basic membership is \$20/year), to Sandy Ho, RCAS's new Membership Chair, at 4113 West Kings Row St., Muncie, IN 47304. Include your address, phone number, and email address.

If you are a National Audubon Society member, you are automatically given membership in our chapter, but only very a small portion of your dues supports local chapter activities. Chapter-only membership uses your dues in East Central Indiana!

News & Upcoming Events

Early CBC results

Despite the winter storm, 18 volunteers turned out for the 2013 Muncie Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 14!

Preliminary results show that 2,132 individual birds, representing 43 species, were tallied. Among the highlights were golden-crowned kinglets, Wilson's snipe, and a bald eagle. Full results will be posted at www.cooperaudubon.org in the coming weeks.

Right: Luke Nelson and Malachi Brown, who participated in the Kids' Christmas Bird Count at Cooper Farm, along with Sarah McKillip (RCAS President) and Deborah Brown (RCAS Children's Committee Chair).



Great Backyard Bird Count: Feb. 14-17

Help Cornell University & the National Audubon Society create a snapshot of the nation's bird populations! It's fun, free, and easy, and you can count for as little as 15 minutes. For details, visit <http://birds.audubon.org/great-backyard-bird-count>.

Chapter book sale a success!

A big thank you goes out to everyone who donated books, volunteered, or shopped at our December book sale. The Robert Cooper Audubon Society made \$350! According to our treasurer, Robert Williams, that's a 35% increase over last year's profits.

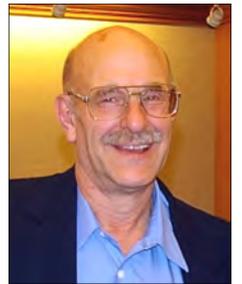
Loss of chapter leader

Joel Jeffcoat, who served as a Director of our Audubon board from 2009-2013, passed away on November 5. He was 62.

Even before joining the board, Joel was an active and enthusiastic participant in chapter field trips and program meetings, and he donated generously to chapter conservation activities and door prizes for our annual awards banquet. At our fall picnic, he was often our expert grillmaster.

Joel was well known in Muncie for Joel's Fix-It Shop and Appliance Repair, located years ago on Broadway Ave. and then later out of his home on Tillotson Ave. Customers who took advantage of his ability to fix nearly anything know that the local NPR radio station was inevitably playing in the background as he worked his magic.

Joel will be greatly missed by the community and by our chapter.



2013 RCAS conservation activities in review by Jon Creek, Conservation Chair

The past year has seen some familiar projects and a branching out from past history.

In the first category is the work of Jeff Ray in Henry County, where he is organizing the Osborne Park Woods habitat restoration project. The twelve-acre parcel was earlier a farm woods that now is owned by the city of New Castle and adjoins more typical park-like grounds that include sports areas and lawn-like open space with picnic shelters, etc.

The goal is to replace the fescue grass with native grasses (using seed from local genotypes) and plant 400 trees to supplement the scattered array that now exists. The preliminary work has been completed, and the planting will take place in late winter and early spring. Jeff

also planted 50 trees this year in the developed part of the park.

Charlie Mason (Conservation Committee member) continued his mission of providing seedlings for planting in many areas of Delaware County, as he has for several years. Targets included schools, city parks, Second Harvest Food Bank, Craddock Wetlands, and many other natural areas.

In the "branching out" category, Charlie is working with a new sustainability-focused student group at Ball State that is enthusiastically planning permaculture projects in Muncie and surrounding areas. They will begin their first on-the-ground project at Minnetrista when the weather breaks and envision *(Continued on page 4)*

RCAS conservation award winners honored

At our conservation awards banquet on Nov. 11, our chapter recognized the work and impact of five inspiring individuals and organizations in Indiana.

The **Robert H. and Esther (Munro) Cooper Conservation Award**, the chapter's highest honor, was given to **Healthy Communities of Henry County**. Healthy Communities is a not-for-profit organization that works to promote physical, social, economic and environmental health in Henry County. One of its major projects has been creating trails.

Its newest trail – the Wilbur Wright Trail, opened in September 2013 – is a two-mile trail from New Castle's YMCA to the Wilbur Wright Fish and Wildlife Area. Jeff Ray, a Healthy Communities board member, worked on creation of the Wilbur Wright Trail for nearly a decade, acquiring land rights and railroad permissions, securing funding through grants and donations, organizing volunteers, and putting in many hours of his own labor.

Curt Burnette, Naturalist and Program Specialist for Limberlost State Historic Site and Limberlost Swamp, won the **Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award**. A committed educator, he tirelessly pursues outreach efforts, better ways of using existing resources, and enhanced displays and signage at the Limberlost Visitors' Center.

During Curt's two years at the Limberlost, his interactive presentations for visitors have covered a wide range of topics, from alligators and water snakes to urban wildlife. His twilight swamp tours educate visitors about night sounds, frogs, owls, and other nocturnal wildlife.

The **Phyllis Yuhas Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award** was presented to **ACRES Land Trust**, based in Huntertown, Ind., for its work in protecting and preserving habitats in northeastern Indiana and adjacent areas of Michigan and Ohio.

Now in its 54th year, ACRES has acquired and preserved more than 5,000 acres of natural areas, including forests, wetlands, native grasslands, and riparian (river) corridors. Among its 86 nature preserves are three in East Central Indiana – one in Blackford County and two in Jay County – as well as the Munro Nature Preserve in nearby Adams County.

The **Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity's ReStore**, Muncie, received the **Richard Greene Public**



Front row: Alexandra Forsythe, Jeff Ray (Healthy Communities of Henry County). Back row: Curt Burnette, Casey Jones (ACRES), Kirk Miller (Habitat ReStore).

Service Award for serving the public's environmental interests and concerns. ReStore accepts donations of new or nearly new building supplies, hardware, tools, and furniture, which it sells to the public to support Habitat for Humanity in building and rehabilitating homes in Delaware County.

Each year the ReStore receives nearly 1,000 donations of leftover or used materials. Since opening in 2007, it has kept 650 tons of recyclable and reusable materials out of landfills.

The **Charles Wise Youth Conservation Award** was given to **Alexandra Forsythe**, age 14, of Bippus, Ind., for her tremendous commitment to educating youth (and adults) about nature, as well as her volunteer efforts with a variety of conservation organizations.

Alex has given many presentations and volunteered widely at nature organizations throughout northern Indiana, and she created and maintains two websites: MidwestBirdWatching.com and YoungConservationists.org (and its sister Facebook page).

She has also written booklets and created pamphlets on owls and created two YouTube videos about birding apps. All are available through MidwestBirdWatching.com, under "Resources."

The RCAS thanks Seedy Sally's (Pendleton) for its generous donations to the evening's door prizes.

More from our award winners:

Curt Burnette was recognized recently through articles in two ECI newspapers: the *Berne Tri-Weekly News* and the *Portland Commercial Review*. The Robert Cooper Audubon Society was featured prominently as the sponsor of the award.

On Sunday, **March 2**, from 2-3 pm at the Limberlost Visitors' Center, **Alex Forsythe** will give a presentation on "Superheroes of the Bird World" – owls – and the adaptations that make them masters of the night. A live owl and children's owl craft will also be part of the program.

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

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Conservation activities, continued from p. 2

supporting other groups or individuals in their own permaculture projects.

A rain garden project at Muncie Central High School was organized by Jon Creek (RCAS), Jason Donati (Stormwater Educator for the Muncie Sanitary District), Dustin Stillinger (Minnetrista), and Lauren McCabe (an English teacher at the school) to inform students and faculty about the merits of native plants and natural systems.

The school’s Recycling Club provided key assistance in installing plants and mulch on the second planting day. These were the same folks who received our chapter’s Youth Conservation award in 2012, so it was rewarding to work together on a shared project. The long-term vision is to install a variety of gardens for education and to landscape the grounds with native plants, shrubs, and trees.

These projects will remain part of our chapter’s conservation mission in 2014.

Dates for Your Calendar

- Jan. 1:** Chapter-only membership renewals due
- Jan. 8:** Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment
- Feb. 12:** Deciphering loon calls
- Feb. 14-18:** Great Backyard Bird Count
- March 2:** Alex Forsythe at the Limberlost

Officers

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Vice-President:	Willy De Smet	260-726-6693
Recording Sec.:	Carol Islam	765-284-9872
Treasurer:	Robert Williams	765-730-8427

Directors

2012-2014:	Dave Cramer Diane Kallmeyer	260-726-9492
2013-2015:	Kamal Islam Jim Jeffery	765-284-9872 765-747-9699

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org

Email: cooperaudubon@gmail.com

Program meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except July, August, & September) at

Muncie Public Library Kennedy Branch

1700 W. McGalliard Rd., Muncie, IN



7:00 pm: chapter business

7:15 pm: scheduled program

Committee chairs

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Education:	Deborah Brown	765-747-9332
Field Trip:	Rose Jeffery	765-716-0299
Hospitality:	Doris Cheney	765-288-0981
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