March 9:
**Limberlost Update and Loblolly BioBlitz preview**

“I am always so happy and content to be merely a nature-lover, satisfied with what I can see, hear, and record with my cameras.” - Gene Stratton-Porter

The Limberlost Swamp in northeastern Indiana was a favorite spot of naturalist and author Gene Stratton-Porter. She spent years studying its flora and fauna, including much of what she learned in her writings. It was a great sadness to her when the area was cleared for farming and oil drilling.

The Limberlost has become a favorite spot of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society as well. We think Gene Stratton-Porter would be sharing in our excitement at the restoration of the habitat there.

Limberlost Program Developer Jamie Faller will be our guest speaker on March 9 to share with us recent developments at Limberlost and give us a preview of the upcoming Loblolly BioBlitz to take place June 19-20. Our chapter has been invited to participate in this 24 hour assessment of the Loblolly Marsh Wetland Preserve in Bryant IN.

Join us on March 9 at 7:00 PM for refreshments and social time at the Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie. Our program will commence at 7:30 PM.

---

April 13:
**Spring Birdwatching**

Local birding enthusiast Morris Gevirtz will be on hand at our April 13 meeting to get us off to a great spring birdwatching experience. Morris will be discussing the ecology of Indiana and what birds we should look for, challenging us with the importance of birdwatching. Spring is the perfect time to be an observer in the field – not just at the feeder. Morris will share his five not to be missed one-day birding destinations.

Join us at Minnetrista Cultural Center at 7:00 PM for refreshments and be ready to experience some birdwatching. Morris’s program will begin at 7:30 PM and will conclude with details of our upcoming field trip to Goose Pond FWA.

---

**Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area Fieldtrip**

After our February visit from Lee Sterrenburg, who isn’t anxious to make a trip to Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County? Morris Gevirtz will be leading a field trip there on Saturday, April 18. To ride share, plan to meet at Minnetrista no later than 4:00 AM in order to arrive for dawn “early birds”. For anyone wishing to overnight and meet us at Goose Pond, time and meeting place will be announced at the April meeting, or you may contact Morris Gevirtz at 765-288-1605 or mgevirtz@gmail.com. We should see a high number of shorebirds as well as spring warblers moving into the area. The day begins early but the trip will be suitable for everyone, with short walks on easy surfaces.
Also known as Acadian Owl, the saw-whet owl is a very small owl, being only 7”-8” in length, with a short body and short tail. It has a round head and is not “eared” as some other owls. The color of the saw-whet’s plumage is brownish red streaked with white. The facial disk is graviash, and the white eyebrows connect in a “Y” over the black beak. The owl’s eyes are big and yellow. Its feet are a light buff and heavily feathered. The owl looks small in the tree or resting place, but when flying in the air appears much larger because of the wide-wing span.

Saw-whet owls usually live in wooded swamps and bogs. The most favored tree habitat is a pine plantation. But because the range of these owls is so large, they have learned to survive in different types of trees (deciduous). In many areas of the country this species of owls does not migrate, proving that this owl may survive in many different climates and temperatures. The time it leaves home seasonally is when there is deep snow and severe winter weather that makes it impossible for the owl to find food. The owl feeds on frogs, small mammals and other birds. It has also been known to eat rats and squirrels much larger than itself. However, the principal food consists of white mice, deer mice, shrews and voles.

Look for part II in the next Chat.
**Conservation update from Charlie Mason**

As your conservation chair I began a conversation at the Feb. 9 meeting about what we might do as RCAS for local conservation. I took notes as members made suggestions:

- Buy up cheap land locally (to prevent urban sprawl and preserve habitat)
- Plant trees and build bird houses
- Recycle, pick up trash
- Provide food for birds in winter and heat bird baths
- Keep water in local parks for birds
- Encourage BSU to stop mowing along Cardinal Creek
- Several people offered to help plant trees this April

Not a bad beginning, especially since we only had 5 minutes. I am sure we would have come up with many more far-reaching suggestions if we had been able to continue. Let me tell you what I have been doing lately:

- I am talking to: 2 Muncie elementary schools about planting trees, the Chamber of Commerce about letting us plant at the Industrial Park, the Huffer Memorial Children’s Center about planting.
- I have convinced Christian Ministries to let me offer tree starts to every Church in Delaware County
- I have ordered 420 tree starts from the DNR nursery: 40-50 cents each!
- I have taken the Tree Steward course which DNR puts on twice a year to learn about the urban forest. (2 Saturdays, $20 and half a day of public work)
- I have taken to reading books about trees.
- I hope to lobby the Urban Forestry Board of Muncie to develop a list of local sites where interested citizens might plant trees.
- I have helped several RCAS members plant trees in their own back yards.

Now this isn’t really about me – it’s about what we can do for the local bird habitat. So let’s keep the conversation going. What do you think our chapter could do, might do, ought to do? WHAT MIGHT YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING FOR THE BIRDS? Opportunities include: send an RCAS representative to the Urban Forestry board meetings, the soil and water conservation board meetings, the Water and Sewer board meetings, or the Planning board.

Please refer to our Web site, www.cooperaudubon.org, to continue the conversation.

---

**Field Trip Opportunity**

Local Muncie birdwatcher is now organizing a non-profit group field trip to see a large number of the eastern migrants this May. The trip is slated to begin on or before May 14th and will last from 5-8 days. The bird list for the trip includes 250 birds including Kirtland’s Warbler as well as most of the Eastern Warblers. Dates and destinations will be decided on democratically by field trip members. Contact Morris A. Gevirtz for more details. - 765-288-1605 - http://us.mc1107.mail.yahoo.com/mc/compose?to=mgevirtz@gmail.com

---

**New Board Positions**

Election of a new board will be held at our June 8 meeting. If you are interested in serving the chapter as an officer or board member, please contact Bonnie Nicholson (765-238-0543 or nickrb69@yahoo.com) or any board member for more information on how to help.

We have a number of positions to fill and encourage members to consider serving the chapter in this way.

---

**109th Christmas Bird Count** by Bill Grummer

The Muncie Christmas Bird Count was held on Dec. 27, 2008 as part of the 109th Christmas Bird Count. The weather, both before and on count day, had the greatest influence on the results followed by the small number of field participants. Most still water was frozen before count day and broke up on the reservoir due to the unseasonably warm air and high winds, with gusts to 45 mph. The warm air contacting the ice created heat distortion, which made scope usage nearly impossible. This led to only eight species of ducks being seen during count week. Northern Shoveler and Canvasback were seen during count week for the first time on any local CBC. Two species new to the count were one Cackling Goose and eight Mute Swans. Northern Pintail (43) were seen for just the second time; four were seen in 1979. The wind caused most small birds to head for shelter, so overall, feeder watchers had more success than field participants. Canada Geese were the most numerous with a count of 2,490, the highest ever. The Mallard count of 1083 was also the highest ever. The two previous species and European Starlings made up about 70% of the birds counted. The high number of species seen during count week shows that there were definitely limiting factors on count day. For more information, please visit www.cooperaudubon.org.
Officers

President: Bonnie Nicholson 886-5099
Vice President: Jon Creek 348-4019
Recording Sec.: Barb Butler 284-5661
Treasurer: Nona Nunnelly 284-0751

Directors

2006-08
Dave Cramer 260-726-9492
Jane Duckworth 282-2161
2007-2009
Marcia Johnson 288-5629
Phil Tuttle 289-4251

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Charlie Mason 288-9937
Education: Pam Kistler 284-0946
Field trip: Cynda Turner 289-9390
Hospitality: Jane Duckworth 282-2161
Membership: Lis Mitchell 289-0513
Newsletter ed.: Beth Simmons 812-343-8927
Program: Bonnie Nicholson 886-5099
Publicity: Barb Stedman 288-2890

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org
Email: cooperaudubon@gmail.com

Dates for Your Calendar

March 9 Meeting @ Minnetrista – Limberlost & Loblolly March w/ Jamie Faller
April 13 Meeting @ Minnetrista - Birding in Indiana w/ Morris Gevirtz
April 18 Field Trip to Goose Pond FWA w/ Morris Gevirtz Meet at Minnetrista @ 4:00 to carpool
May 11 Meeting @ Minnetrista – program to be announced

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

The Chat is published 10 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.