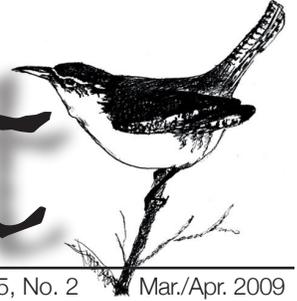


# The Chat



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

Volume 35, No. 2 Mar./Apr. 2009

## 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.

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## 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 up coming 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.

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# Northern Sawwhet Owl: March & April Bird of the Month

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*Northern Sawwhet Owl--Aegolius acadicus*  
By Helen Twibell



Also known as Acadian Owl, the sawwhet 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 sawwhet's plumage is brownish red streaked with white. The facial disk is grayish, 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.*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**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

**June 6-7** Garden Fair @ Minnetrista ###

**June 8** Member Photo/Slide Show & Election of Officers @ Minnetrista

**June 19-20** Loblolly BioBlitz @ Limberlost Swamp, Bryant, IN

**Volunteers needed for these events- contact a board member to volunteer**

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## Participate in Our Member Slideshow on June 8

Have you snapped a great shot at the backyard feeder or maybe captured some wonderful scenes during your travels? We want you to share them with us. Our June 8 meeting at Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie will be a Member's Forum. Submit up to ten images in digital format for our member slideshow. Everyone will have opportunity to share a brief explanation of each image. Following the slideshow, we will hear from our conservation and education committees about current projects and hold an open discussion about our visions for the chapter. Refreshments will be available starting at 7 p.m. and our slide show will commence at 7:30. Invite a friend, and join us for this fun, informal evening. Barb Stedman will be compiling our slideshow. We look forward to enjoying some great nature shots...but if you want to include your new puppy or a favorite grandchild, we will enjoy them as well. It's your show!

### How to submit images for June 8 member slideshow:

Submit up to 10 images. Number them in order of priority in case we get too many for our time allotment and need to limit each participant to a smaller number. Images need to be at least 150 dpi (300 dpi is preferred). JPEGs are best. E-mail images to our chapter e-mail address: [cooperaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cooperaudubon@gmail.com) to attention of Barb Stedman

You may submit your pictures on CD by mail to Barb Stedman at:  
5425 N County Road 500  
Albany IN 47320.

Provide your contact information, name, phone and e-mail. Deadline for submissions is June 1,

## 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](http://www.cooperaudubon.org), to continue the conversation.

<b>Field Trip Opportunity</b>	<b>New Board Positions</b>
<p>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 - <a href="http://us.mc1107.mail.yahoo.com/mc/compose?to=mgevirtz@gmail.com">http://us.mc1107.mail.yahoo.com/mc/compose?to=mgevirtz@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>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 <a href="mailto:nickrb69@yahoo.com">nickrb69@yahoo.com</a>) or any board member for more information on how to help.</p> <p>We have a number of positions to fill and encourage members to consider serving the chapter in this way.</p>

## 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](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).

# Robert Cooper Audubon Society



Robert Cooper Audubon Society  
Lis Mitchell  
2700 S. Cecil Rd.  
Muncie, IN 47302

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**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



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