

The Chat



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

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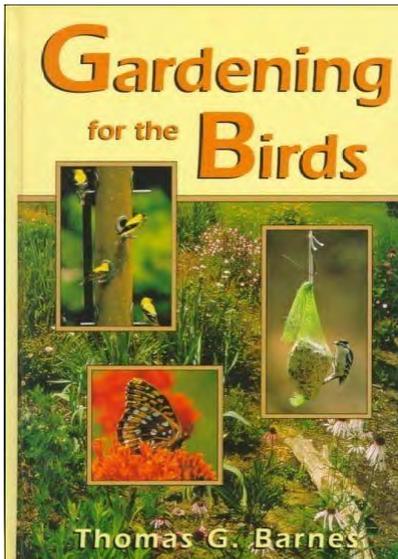
March/April 2014

March 12

Gardening for the Birds

Let the birds come to you! On **Wednesday, March 12**, Dr. Thomas Barnes will share his ideas on how to maximize the wildlife in your own backyard.

Dr. Barnes is an extension professor in the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky. He is an award-winning author and photographer and has penned such books as *Gardening for the Birds* and *Kentucky's Last Great Places*.



For our March program, he will share his ideas on how to create a backyard that is most appealing to birds. He will teach people which seeds and feeders attract the most birds, how to deter pests, and which species to plant.

Chapter business will begin at **7 pm at Kennedy Library**. Dr. Barnes's program will begin at **7:15**.

April 9

Exotic Birds

On **Wednesday, April 9**, John Velasquez, an avid local birder, will share stories of exotic birds from far-away places.

John is an active member of Indiana Audubon Society, serving on the board for IAS and the Indiana Young Birders Club. He has accumulated a life list of 781 birds and has been traveling the world photographing birds for the last 13 years. He will share stories and photographs of his trips to Mexico, Panama, and Trinidad. He'll also share some photos of birds in Arizona and discuss birding in the Midwest.

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



Photo by John Velasquez

RCAS Stance on the Mounds Reservoir Project

The Robert Cooper Audubon Society, which strives on behalf of its members to encourage the conservation of natural resources in East Central Indiana, unequivocally opposes the Mounds Reservoir Project, an initiative to construct a dam and reservoir in Anderson, Indiana.

The proposed reservoir would exact a heavy cost on the natural environment by inundating at least one-third of Mounds State Park. Among the consequences would be *loss*, as shaded hiking trails along the White River are submerged; *risk*, as the Adena-Hopewell mounds are subjected to greater threats of flooding and erosion; and *destruction* – complete and permanent – of the Mounds Fen State Nature Preserve.

Designated a state nature preserve in 1980, the fen is remarkable not only for its “clean water” but also its “high biodiversity,” qualities highlighted in Mounds State Park's *Interpretive Master Plan*, which further notes the profusion of wildflowers, “indicating a high quality woods with minimal disturbance.” The park also contains numerous critically important animal and plant species native to Indiana.

Such qualities create a unique cultural and natural resource, which not only serves to educate students and reinforce state-supported curricula on Indiana natural history, but also provides a respite for the people of

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Upcoming Field Trips

Saturday, March 15

Prairie Creek Reservoir

RCAS Treasurer Robert Williams will lead us as we explore the reservoir and then look to see if a Bald Eagle pair are back at their nest. We will meet at the **Red-Tail Preserve parking lot at 8:30 am**. Carpoolers will leave from the Cooper Science Parking lot at **8:10 am**.

To get there on your own: Take the Muncie bypass to State Rd.35 and head south. Turn left (east) on County Rd. 650 S. Go to the stop sign and turn left onto County Rd. 461 E. The entrance to the Red-Tail Nature Preserve parking lot is on your left.

Saturday, March 29

Bibler ACRES Preserve & Bell-Croft (DNR)

RCAS Vice-President Willy De Smet will lead us on an exploration of these sites in Jay County. We will look for birds and for early spring wildflowers. The ACRES land trust was awarded the Phyllis Yuhas Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award this year. We will meet at **Bell-Croft at 8:30**. Carpoolers will leave from the Cooper Science lot by **7:45**.

To get there on your own: Take IN 67 north past Redkey. About 5 miles past Redkey you will come to the very small town of Como. About a mile after Como, look for County Rd. 300 S. Make a sharp left turn onto 300, which is a gravel road. Proceed about one mile, and Bell-Croft Preserve will be on your right. We will caravan to Bibler, which Willy says is a little harder to find!



The Magee Marsh boardwalk, which literally provides a bird's-eye view of warblers and other birds that stop over in the area on their migration north each year.

Saturday, April 5

Wilbur Wright Trail and Fish & Wildlife Preserve

Jeff Ray, who accepted the 2013 Robert and Esther (Munro) Cooper Conservation Award on behalf of Healthy Communities of Henry County, will lead us along a portion of the Wilbur Wright Trail and into the Wilbur Wright Fish & Wildlife Preserve. We will learn about the development of the trail as well as look for birds and plants. We will meet at the Wilbur Wright Fish & Wildlife Area parking lot at **9 am**. We plan on taking a few hikes through the preserve to look for early flowers and birds. If there is time and interest we will swing by Summit Lake afterwards.

Carpooling is encouraged as the preserve has limited parking. Carpoolers will leave from the **Cooper Science lot at 8:20 am**. To get there on your own: Head south on State Rd. 3. Turn left (east) on State Rd. 36 toward Summit Lake. Take 36 to State Rd. 103 and turn right (south) and look for signs for the Wilbur Wright Preserve.

Friday & Saturday, May 2 & 3

Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary Spring Festival

Save the dates! Little information about the festival is currently available, but judging from prior years the weekend should be informative and a lot of fun. Watch for more details by email, our website, and our Facebook page in April.

Saturday & Sunday, May 10 & 11

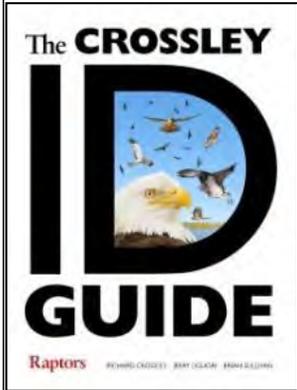
Magee Marsh & Maumee Bay State Park: "Biggest Week in American Birding"

We'll travel to Maumee Bay State Park and Magee Marsh in northern Ohio. The annual festival offers various events and great birding at several sites in the area, which is considered one of the top ten birding sites in all of North America!

Advanced reservations lodging with our group have sold out, but others interested in the weekend should contact Rose Jeffery (rosemariejeffery@gmail.com), Field Trip Chair, for tips on other lodging options in the area.

Those who attended last year will attest to the loveliness of Maumee Bay State Park, the excitement of the festival, and the amazing birding along the Magee Marsh boardwalk.

Book Review: *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors*



by Willy De Smet

Raptors usually impress even non-birders. There is something special about them. But they can be hard to identify. Is that a Cooper's or Sharp-shinned Hawk? Light morph, dark morph, juvenile, adult...it's confusing! Even with a standard field guide in hand it can be a problem.

Several specialized guides for raptors have been around for years. In April last year (2013), a new one came out: *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors* (286 pages).

For this book Richard Crossley collaborated with Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan, both experts on North American raptors. At first glance it looks similar to the *Crossley ID Guide: Northeastern Birds*. Photographs of a typical habitat form the background for a collection of photographs of the birds of different ages and genders, at different distances, in different natural poses as you would observe them in the field.

The species accounts are extensive: common species get double-page coverage or more. However, this guide goes way beyond giving species accounts. As Richard

Crossley explains in the preface, the book is designed as a self-study guide. He also tells how to use it and how to get the most out of the book.

Large panoramic views allow you to compare features of similar species in similar situations – for instance, “perched accipiters” or “accipiters in flight.”

Many different aspects of raptor observation are beautifully illustrated, such as identifying them when they are flying away from you – “Going Away!” – and the effects of different lighting conditions – “Sunrise on the East Coast” and “Into the Sun!”

Different situations require that you concentrate on characteristics. Shape and patterns are illustrated with black and white photographs, for instance.

Included are several “Mystery Photo Images” showing different raptors identified only by numbers. The authors suggest that you learn the species first and carefully consider, explain, and write down your answers to the “test.” Your challenge is not just to identify the species (also age and gender when possible), but also to justify why and how you made that determination. The correct answers are in the back of the book and provide not just the correct ID, but also what characteristics in the photo would lead you to that ID.

It looks like a very useful (as well as beautiful) book to me. This guide covers both Eastern and Western species.

Diana Shaffer named Sagamore of the Wabash

Diana Shaffer – founder and director of the Wildlife Resqu Haus, as well as a charter board member of our Audubon chapter in 1974 – was recently named a Sagamore of the Wabash. The award, bestowed by Gov. Mike Pence and presented on his behalf by Rep. Sue Errington, is the highest honor that can be given to an Indiana citizen for “distinguished service to the State.”

In her 50-year career as a wildlife rehabilitator, Diana cared for more than 13,000 injured, ill, or orphaned wild animals, restoring them to health whenever possible and returning them to the wild.

In tandem with her rehabilitation work, Diana typically gave 30-50 educational programs each year, and for several years she hosted a monthly television show, *Animal Talk*.

Her many awards include our chapter's Cooper Conservation Award (our highest honor) and the 2009 NWRA (National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association) Lifetime Achievement Award.

On December 31, however, health concerns forced Diana to close the doors of the Wildlife Resqu Haus and begin a much-deserved retirement.

“I'm sure that the governor was overwhelmed by what you have done for the wildlife of our state,” said Rep. Errington in her presentation of the Sagamore of the Wabash certificate.



Rep. Sue Errington with Diana and John Shaffer and the Sagamore of the Wabash certificate

“You are among a very rarified group of Hoosiers, because this is Indiana's highest award to our citizens.”

“Never in my lifetime did I ever think of this happening to me,” said Diana in her acceptance of the award.

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

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Mounds Reservoir Project, continued from from p. 1

Indiana and their out-of-state guests, over 360,000 of whom visited the park last year.

In order to preserve the unique cultural and natural resources of Mounds State Park, and its contribution to local quality of life, which helps keep families living and working in East Central Indiana, RCAS urges others to join us in opposing the Mounds Reservoir Project, thereby ensuring, as the centennial of the state park system approaches, the continued legacy of this extraordinary place.

Dates for Your Calendar

Mar. 12: Gardening for the Birds program
Mar. 15: Prairie Creek Reservoir field trip
Mar. 29: Bibler Preserve & Bell-Croft field trip
Apr. 5: Wilbur Wright FWP field trip
Apr. 9: Exotic Birds program
May 2 & 3: Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary festival
May 10 & 11: Magee Marsh & Maumee Bay SP

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org

Find us on **Facebook!**

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 & refreshments

7:15 pm: scheduled program

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.

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