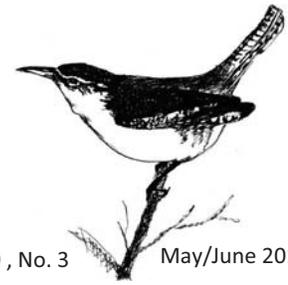


The Chat



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

Volume 40, No. 3

May/June 2014



May 14

Kirk Roth's Big Year

What's a Big Year? Some might say it's when you get married, buy a house, and have a kid, but to birders it's all about trying to see the greatest number of species you possibly can in a defined area.

On **Wednesday, May 14**, Kirk Roth will give a presentation about his Big Year in Indiana for 2013. He'll tell tales of the birds he chased and discovered, and will give us his final tally for the year – setting the new record for Indiana birders to strive for in 2014!

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

June 11

Crab Spider Ecology

You may not have known it at the time, but that striking spider, sitting exposed on a flower head, may have been a crab spider. These small spiders are harmless to humans but adept at capturing insect prey larger than themselves – and all without a web! They are also one of the rare animals that change color to match their background.

On **Wednesday, June 11**, Dr. Gary Dodson will discuss these crab spider phenomena as well as their fascinating mating system. A professor of biology at Ball State University, Gary specializes in researching the behavioral ecology of insects and arachnids. He is the curator for the university's insect collection and teaches entomology and evolution courses.

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



Chapter board elections

The following elections will take place at our June 11 meeting:

- **Treasurer:** Robert Williams, who currently serves in that position, has 2 years' experience as treasurer and has been an RCAS member for 4½ years.
- **Recording secretary:** Carol Islam, who currently serves in that position, has 1 year of experience as treasurer and is a long-time RCAS member.
- **Directors, 2014-2016:** TBD. Nominations will be taken from the floor at the June meeting. This is a great way to become more involved in our chapter! If you'd like to run for one of the two director

positions, please contact Sarah McKillip, chapter president, at sarahrmckillip@gmail.com or 765-287-8464. The two-year term begins July 1.

The board thanks Dave Cramer and Diane Kallmeyer, whose terms as directors will end on June 30, for their service and leadership. Dave was on the board for two consecutive terms, from 2010-14, and he helped enhance our collaboration with the Limberlost State Historic Site and Friends of the Limberlost. Diane kindly stepped in to fill the board vacancy created upon the death of Joel Jeffcoat.

Upcoming Field Trips

Friday to Sunday, May 2-4

Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary Spring Festival

The Spring Birding Festival, at the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, is set for May 2-4. Highlights will include presentations from expert birders as well as 7:30 am bird walks on Saturday and Sunday on some of the sanctuary's 700 acres. Last year more than 100 different species were identified each day!

The schedule and information about registration and fees are available at www.indianaudubon.org. You can attend some or all events.

The sanctuary (3499 S. Bird Sanctuary Rd., Connersville) is a 1-hour, 20-minute drive from Muncie. Hotel information is provided on the festival site, and primitive camping is available at the sanctuary.

If you're interested in attending and possibly carpooling, please contact Rose Jeffery, field trip chair (rosemariejeffery@gmail.com, 765-747-9699).

Saturday & Sunday, May 10 & 11

Magee Marsh & Maumee Bay State Park

We'll travel to Maumee Bay State Park and Magee Marsh in northern Ohio for "the Biggest Week in American Birding." The annual festival offers various events and great birding at several sites in the area, which is one of the top ten birding sites in 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.

Saturday, May 17

Bell-Croft and Bibler Nature Preserves

RCAS vice-president Willy De Smet will lead us on an exploration of these two Jay County sites to look for birds and wildflowers.

Those traveling from Muncie are encouraged to carpool from the Cooper Science lot, as parking is very limited at the preserves. (See parking information below.) *Carpoolers* will leave from Ball State at **7:45**.

We'll rendezvous with Willy at **8:30** in Redkey at the Wills Market IGA parking lot and caravan from there. Wills Market is located at 9064 State Rd. 67, just west of the intersection of State Rds. 67 and 1.

We'll explore Bell-Croft Preserve first and then caravan to Bibler ACRES Preserve.

Starting Sunday, May 25

Monthly bird hikes at Mounds State Park

We are beginning a new venture: a monthly bird hike and survey at Mounds State Park! We'll meet at the parking lot near the visitors center on the **last Sunday of each month at 9 am**.

We'll bird from 9-11, with at least one RCAS board member leading the walk each month. If there are enough participants, we may divide up and then meet back at 11 am at the visitors center to compare notes and share a snack. We'll keep a record of each month's count.

Join us for our first survey on Sunday, May 25!

Saturday, June 14

Limberlost Insect Exploration

Dr. Gary Dodson will lead us on a Loblolly / Limberlost hike to look for insects. This will be a very nice extension of his presentation to our group on June 11.

Carpoolers will leave from the Cooper Science lot on the Ball State campus at **8:15**.

To get there on your own: From Muncie head north on Broadway and continue north on State Rd. 67. Follow 67 through Albany to Portland. In Portland, 67 takes a left. Continue on 67 into Bryant, where you should continue straight onto north 27 at the traffic light. (State Rd. 67 turns right at this point; don't turn there or you'll end up in Ohio!) Once in Geneva, turn right into the Visitor Center parking lot. The address is 200 E. 6th Street.

We'll meet at the Visitor Center at **9:30**.

What you missed:

March and April field trip reports

March 15: Prairie Creek Reservoir: Ten of us gathered at Prairie Creek. Fortunately enough, ice had melted to allow open water that enticed some migrating waterfowl. We saw wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, lesser scaups, one pintail duck, two ruddy ducks, common mergansers, and various songbirds. We also stopped by the eagle's nest for a view of the female bald eagle on the nest.

April 5: Wilbur Wright Fish & Wildlife Area and the Wilbur Wright Trail: Nine of us gathered to explore the recently completed Wilbur... *(continued on p. 3)*

Parking information for carpoolers: Our usual meeting place at the Cooper Science parking lot may not be accessible this summer due to construction. If the lot is closed, we'll gather along Riverside Ave. near the Cooper Science building. There is usually adequate "standing" room there and free parking in the quad (accessible from McKinley Ave.).

Saying good-bye to the Bird of the Month

In October 1999, our chapter newsletter editor issued a call for someone to write a regular column about the “Bird of the Month.” Helen Twibell, a long-time Audubon member and bird-lover, responded to that call and submitted her first article, on the indigo bunting.

“Bird of the Month” quickly became one of the most popular features of our newsletter, which was a monthly publication at the time. In each installment, Helen shared her love of Indiana birds, both resident and migratory, working her way through backyard birds that Audubon readers might not have known much about or given a second thought to – until they read her column.

“When I ran out of songbirds, I started writing about water birds,” Helen recalls of the 80 or so articles she has written.

In each column, Helen combined extensive research with a “human interest” approach, intertwining details of anatomy, plumage, breeding and nesting habits, and other distinguishing traits and behaviors with her own observations of the bird.

Now, at 86, Helen decided it’s time to put down her pen and enjoy a second retirement. (Her first came after she retired from more than 30 years as a teacher in Blackford County, most of those years teaching fourth graders.)

This doesn’t mean that Helen will spend any less time watching and enjoying birds. Her favorite bird is the

eastern blue-bird, and she has a bluebird box situated a few feet from her home, ready to welcome tenants.

Helen’s final article, on the snow goose, appeared in the Nov./Dec. 2013 issue, exactly 14 years after she happily took on the role of “Bird of the Month” columnist.

“I’ve loved doing it,” she said, but probably not as much as we’ve all loved reading her column.

On behalf of RCAS members and friends – and all those birds – we offer a grateful thanks to Helen for her many years of dedicated service.

To read Helen’s very first column, visit our website, at www.cooperaudubon.org.



Thank you to our chapter supporters!

Karen Blank	Jean Gadziola	Sarah & John McKillip	Phil Tuttle
Deborah Brown	Max & Julie Gentry	Julia Meyers	Sheryl Vance
Ken Brunswick	Diana Godish	Lis & Paul Mitchell	Jen Wagner
John Buckingham	Jim Griffis	Nona Nunnally	Jim & Wanda
Curtis Burnette	Robert G. Hall, II	Robert Perkins	Walters
Joseph Carney	Reg & Barb Hesselgrave	Annette Rose	Sherry Ware
Elizabeth Champlin	Bob & Sonda Hill	Jon Shaffer	Carol Watkins
John & Doris Cheney	Taiping & Sandy Ho	Peggy Shaffer	Stanley West
Charles & Carolyn Clark	Aileen Howard	Ann Siverly	Robert Williams
Patricia Cronk	Clara Howard	Les Smith & Marla	Stacy Wright
Willy De Smet & Phyllis	Marcia Johnson	Boatwright	Lois Wright
De Smet-Howard	David & Sheila Kamens	Larry Souders	John Wilkins
B.J. Deering & Jay	Linda Kennedy	Norm Stalbaum	
Gillette	Amy Mansfield	Marc & Karen Sullivan	<i>And several</i>
Jane Duckworth	Marilyn Marks	Sally Torke	<i>anonymous</i>
Josie & Geoff Fox	Susan McConnell	Blanche Townsend	<i>supporters</i>
Ted & Connie Fullhart	Kevin & Lori McKenney	Cynda & Craig Turner	

When you become a “chapter-only member” of the RCAS, your dues go *entirely* to the support of our activities. Chapter-only memberships may supplement or replace membership in the National Audubon Society. For more information, visit our website at www.cooperaudubon.org. It takes only a few minutes to sign up online and pay with PayPal! Basic membership is \$20.

What you missed (cont. from p. 2)

Wright Trail. In addition to the beautiful vistas along the Big Blue River, we saw many of our year-round resident songbirds and also “first of season” eastern towhee and

eastern phoebes. We enjoyed watching nesting behaviors of white-breasted nuthatches and downy woodpeckers. We also got good looks at a pair of wood ducks and a brown creeper. The woods were lovely, but we were too early for wildflowers.

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

Robert Cooper Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1635
Muncie, IN 47308-1635



See you in the fall!

The *Chat* is going on summer vacation but will resume with the Sept./Oct. issue. Likewise, our chapter meetings will be on hiatus during July and August but will be back in action for the fall **picnic** on **September 14**.

To stay informed about Audubon activities over the summer, remember to visit our chapter website for information, at www.cooperaudubon.org, or find us on our Facebook page (search for "Robert Cooper Audubon Society").

Garden Fair volunteers needed!

We're looking for volunteers to help staff our Audubon table at this year's Garden Fair at Minnetrista. The fair runs from 8 am to 4 pm on Saturday, **June 7**, and 10 am to 3 p.m. on Sunday, **June 8**.

Please contact Sarah McKillip at sarahmckillip@gmail.com or 765-287-8464 if you're willing to help for a two-hour shift either day. And be sure to visit our booth to guess the number of sunflower seeds and win a birdfeeder! To learn all about the weekend's events, visit www.minnetrista.net.

Dates for Your Calendar

- May 2-4:** Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary festival
- May 10-11:** Magee Marsh & Maumee Bay fld. trip
- May 14:** Kirk Roth's Big Year program
- May 17:** Bell-Croft & Bilber Nature Preserves
- May 25:** Mounds State Park monthly bird hike
- June 7-8:** Minnetrista Garden Fair
- June 11:** Crab spider ecology program
- June 14:** Limberlost insect field trip

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.

Officers

President:	Sarah McKillip	765-287-8464
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	260-726-9492
	Diane Kallmeyer	765-216-6048
2013-2015:	Kamal Islam	765-284-9872
	Jim Jeffery	765-747-9699

Committee chairs

Conservation:	Jon Creek	765-348-4019
Education:	Deborah Brown	765-747-9332
Field Trip:	Rose Jeffery	765-716-0299
Hospitality:	Doris Cheney	765-288-0981
Membership:	Sandy Ho	765-215-4361
Newsletter Ed.:	Barb Stedman	765-288-2890
Program & Publicity:	Kevin Barnes & Sasha Auer	660-864-5024 508-221-7963