

The Chat

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

Volume 35, No. 4 Sept./Oct. 2009

Sept. 13: Picnic at Summit Lake

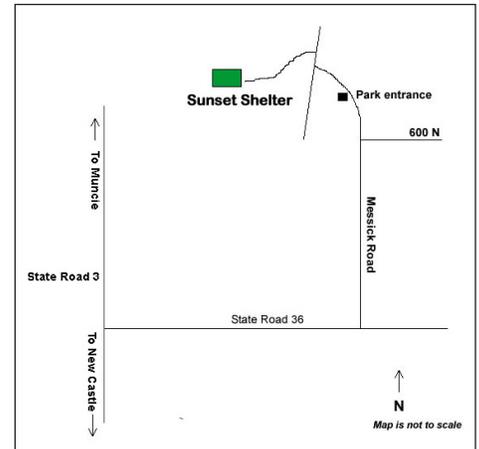
We'll kick off our 2009-10 program season with a picnic at Summit Lake State Park, in Henry County, on Sunday, September 13. The picnic will begin around 1:00 p.m. at the Sunset Shelter, where you'll have a beautiful view of the lake as you eat and catch up with old friends and meet new members of the chapter.

Please bring a hot or cold dish, salad, or dessert to share and your own table service. Audubon will supply hamburgers and veggie burgers, buns, condiments, cold drinks, and marshmallows for roasting. (The beef will come from locally raised, free-range cattle who've received no hormones or antibiotics.) Binoculars are recommended, too, if you want to do any birding while you're there.

After the picnic, you'll have a chance to see and learn a bit

more about the work that our Conservation Committee has done at Summit Lake over the past two years: osprey nesting platforms, invasive plant species eradication, and a prairie planting. And of course you'll be free to explore the park on your own, look for early fall migratory birds, do some fishing, or simply sit and relax. Please note that Summit Lake charges an entrance fee of \$5 per car (money that's well used to maintain this wonderful amenity to East Central Indiana), so you have a better reason than ever to carpool or bring friends!

This is a wonderful event to kick off our chapter's activities for the year, socialize, and enjoy the sights of Summit Lake. It's also a great chance to introduce friends to Audubon, so bring plenty along!



Driving directions: From State Road 3 (south of Muncie), head east on U.S. 36 about 3.5 miles. Turn left (north) on Messick Road, which will take you to the entrance of Summit Lake State Park (5993 N. Messick Rd., New Castle). Visit our website (www.cooperaudubon.org) for a map of the area.

Oct. 12: How Sweet It Is: The Value of the Honey Bee”



Honey bees have been all the buzz in the media lately, thanks to the global problem of colony collapse disorder. But the silver lining to this problem is that more and more people are aware of the vital role that bees play in our daily life.

On Monday, October 12, you'll have the chance to learn more, when Carolyn Walker gives a fascinating presentation on the honey bee, pollination, and the importance of the honeybee in the ecosystem.

Carolyn will discuss colony collapse disorder, including possible causes and implications to nature and food sources, and she'll also draw upon a bee expert at Purdue to provide answers to questions that you've submitted ahead of time. (Send your

questions to her, at cawalker@bsu.edu, no later than October 2.)

Dr. Walker teaches literacy education at Ball State University. During spring 2009 she led a group of students in a semester-long project to develop and install an interactive museum exhibit for children that was devoted to the honey bee.

Time for refreshments and socializing will begin at Minnetrista at 7:00 p.m., with the chapter meeting beginning at 7:15. Carolyn's program will get underway by 7:30.

This program will dovetail nicely with the September 26 field trip to a beekeeper's home (see p. 3). Bring the entire family to both events!

Letter from the President

September is an exciting time for the Robert Cooper Audubon Society.

The annual fall picnic is our first activity for our chapter calendar, after taking a two-month summer vacation, and this year we're returning to one of our favorite locations, Summit Lake, not only to enjoy the beautiful lakefront picnic shelter but also to get a firsthand look at some of the work that our Conservation Committee has been carrying out at a breakneck pace over the last two years.

September is also the first month that the year's new board starts carrying out its plans and goals for the coming year. But none of that is possible without the strong foundation built by the past year's board, including those members who finished their terms of dedicated service to the RCAS board on June 30: Jane Duckworth, Lis Mitchell, Marcia Johnson, and, most of all, Bonnie Nicholson, who served as president for more than two

years, often under challenging circumstances.

I'm grateful to the board members who've agreed to stay on the board for another year—Jon Creek, Barb Hesselgrave, Nona Nunnally, Dave Cramer, Phil Tuttle, Charlie Mason, Pam Kistler, Cynda Turner, and Beth Simmons—and I'm very happy to welcome new board members Sarah McKillip, Lois Rockhill, Laurie Lindberg, Frank Meeker, and Joel Jeffcoat. You'll find everyone's titles and phone numbers listed on the back of the Chat, and their email addresses are provided on our website.

As the new board looks ahead to the coming year, we have exciting goals for chapter activities and new ways to engage the community. We want to reinvigorate our chapter's love of birding, which brought many of us to Audubon in the first place. We want to find creative ways to bring birding education and activities to casual backyard birders; at the same time, we want to get more of them

out onto the trails and preserves where some of Indiana's best birding is to be found.

While doing all of this, we want to have more activities that will attract entire families. We want to continue the outstanding record of habitat preservation and restoration that our chapter's Conservation Committee has established over the last two years.

Most of all, we want to see more of you participate in our monthly program meetings, field trips, habitat workdays, and special activities. If you're one of the 450 RCAS members who have lurked on the sidelines, reading the Chat each month but never participating in a chapter activity, we hope you'll do more than lurk. Start with the picnic at Summit Lake on September 12 or the bee-keeping field trip on September 26. Tell us what activities and programs you'd like to come to. Give us a try. We think you'll like what you find.

Barb Stedman

Living Lightly Fair

Living Lightly, a resource fair for sustainable lifestyles, will soon be here! This year's fair will take place on Saturday, September 19, at Minnetrista, in Muncie. You'll have the chance to hear nearly a dozen speakers offer inspiring ideas and practical tips for saving resources, energy, and money!

Featured speaker Mike McGrath, host of NPR's "You Bet Your Garden," will let listeners in on his secrets for successful organic gardening and composting. Mike will be speaking at 10:00 a.m. and then again at 1:30. The rest of the day will be filled with music, activities for kids and families, great food, and dozens of vendors and exhibitors of products and services that help support a sustainable lifestyle. Best of all, admission—including speakers and music—is free! See page 4 for the fair schedule, or visit www.livinglightlyfair.org for complete information about the day's activities.

Audubon Adventures

We are looking for groups who would be interested in using Audubon Adventures, which is a program used to promote wildlife and environmental activities.

We are interested in groups such as scouts, schools or church groups that might be able to integrate these fun and interesting activities. If you are interested please contact Pam Kistler at 765-284-0946.

Canada Warbler: September/October Bird of the Month

Canada Warbler:
Wilsonia-Canadensis
By Helen Twibell



Each season brings its own special treat, it seems, to the hungry eyes of bird watchers and other nature lovers. This spring during the first of June or last of May, I noticed a small bird I had never seen before, about five inches long, coming to our dooryard, flipping its tail while foraging in the grass for insects. This little bird visited us for perhaps a week or two, always in the same place at the end of the walk. It was, no doubt; in migration to the breeding grounds. I paid special attention to the bird because of the unique design on its breast around the neck. Its body was gray on the upper parts and pale yellow on the under parts, and around its neck was a faint brownish dotted design resembling a delicate necklace. When I finally located it in my bird books, I found I had seen the female Canada warbler. Some non-birders might have asked me how I knew it was a female. I knew it was female because of the faintness of the “necklace”. Much darker and distinctive black-spotted “necklace” circling its breast at the neck. The male also has more distinctive yellow spectacles around the eyes, and the same coloring as the female, except with a little brilliance.

I did not realize what a rarity the tiny visitor had been until I began researching the Canada warbler. The warbler breeds from southern Canada, where it was first discovered, to the northern United States east of the Rock-

ies, in the Appalachian region to northern Georgia and in the upper east coast. It is a migrant bird in the eastern half of the whole of the United States on its way to and from wintering in the South American tropics where insects, the principle food, abound.

In Indiana we may usually only see the warbler in migration. The Field Checklist of the Birds of Indiana (2002) lists the Canada warbler as a rare breeder in the state; uncommon: although present and not certain to be observed in spring and fall; and in summer rare: seen every two to five years. Mumford and Keller in Birds of Indiana say that in the northern part of the state a few may be found, especially around the The Dunes. The birds can be heard singing, but nests are not easily found, if there are any. Nests of the Canada warbler are of a cup shape, made of leaves and grass against a stump or in a fern clump. Nesting is carried on in a moist wooded swampy area where there is almost impenetrable vegetation and sometimes knee-deep muck. For this reason, there is little known about nesting or breeding habits of this warbler. The Canada warbler has been seen in various parts of Indiana, but only one nest has been positively identified, according to Mumford and Keller.

The Canada warbler population has decreased in the last few years. The cutting down of forests in the wintering places is noted as one problem. So it is believed that the main reason for the decline has been a loss of proper habitat. The forest land where they breed needs to be properly maintained to encourage popula-

tion. Proper forestry methods and maintenance of moisture which the warblers prefer is of utmost importance. Suitable nesting cover is needed, as is planned logging, restriction of all-terrain vehicles and controlled browsing of moose and deer are among some measures needed for Canada warbler protection.

The conservation status is not clear, but appears to be on the Least Concern level, although the species does seem to be threatened. It does not seem to be near the endangered list as yet.

Sept. Field Trip Tour a local beekeeper's hives

What Local beekeeper Eldon Morehouse will be giving an inside look at his beehives and how the bees work together to produce honey and maintain a healthy hive. His new apprentice will also be there to tell us what she has learned from Eldon, and why she recently became interested in learning bee-keeping.

When Sat. Sept. 26th, 10 a.m.

Where Morehouse Honey, 7501 W. Bethel Ave.

Why This 1 hr. field trip will allow for a new appreciation of what exactly honeybees do, how their fascinating social system works, and why they are so vital to the health of our environment and our crops.

How Please feel free to carpool with the field trip coordinator from the BSU Cooper Science parking lot at 9:40 AM. My vehicle seats 3-4.

Please check out the Robert Cooper Audubon Society website for the soon-to-be posted October fieldtrip: www.cooperaudubon.org

Living Lightly Schedule

For details of all events, visit www.livinglightlyfair.org

Saturday, September 19

8 a.m.—3 p.m.

All Day	Speakers <i>Inside the Minnetrista center</i>	Art, Music, and Vendor Talks <i>In the Green Marketplace</i>	Children's Activities <i>Green Marketplace & Rose Garden</i>
8:00	WORKSHOP: "Wind and Solar Power for the Home" 8:00 - 9:50 <i>Cantina, Speaker: Eric Cotton</i> To pre-register, call 765-282-4848	All Day: 8 a.m. - 3p.m. Building a River of Fish - community sculpture <i>Green Marketplace, Facilitator: Sally Myers</i>	All Day: 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Green City Challenge <i>In front of the Green Marketplace</i>
9:00	"Everything You Need to Know about Food Preservation" 9:00-9:50 <i>Large Conference Room, Speaker: Gary Prater</i>	String quartet concert, <i>Music Tent</i>	
10:00	KEYNOTE: "The Seven Secrets of Successful Organic Gardeners" 10:00-11:15 <i>Speaker: Mike McGrath</i> <i>Indiana Room</i>		
10:30	<i>Book-signing follows after Mike's talk</i>	Vendor talks, <i>Music Tent</i>	"The Creature at the Edge of Town" <i>Puppet Theater, near the Rose Garden</i>
11:00		Yurtfolk concert, <i>Music Tent</i>	
11:30	"Is 'Green' Really Green?" 11:30—12:20 <i>Indiana Room, Speaker: Kerry LaPrees</i>		
12:00	"Green Building from the Ground Up" 11:30-12:20 <i>Large Conference Room, Speaker: Phil Seybold</i>	Vendor talks, <i>Music Tent</i>	"The Creature at the Edge of Town" <i>Puppet Theater, near the Rose Garden</i>
12:30	"Renewable Energies in the Community" 12:30-1:20 <i>Indiana Room, Speakers: Patrick Jones, Connie Trout, and Joyce Wilkerson</i> "Conserving Energy and Resources in the Home: How to Do It Yourself...and Save Money!" 12:30-1:20 <i>Large Conference Room, Speaker: Fred Siewert</i>	The Great Divide concert <i>Music Tent</i>	
1:30	"Everything You Know about Compost Is Wrong!" 1:30-2:20 <i>Indiana Room, Speaker: Mike McGrath</i> "Giving New Life to Salvaged Materials" 1:30-2:20 <i>Large Conference Room, Speaker: Brook Linton</i>	Vendor talks <i>Music Tent</i>	"The Creature at the Edge of Town" <i>Puppet Theater, near the Rose Garden</i>
2:00		Grey Larsen & Cindy Kallet concert, <i>Music Tent</i>	
2:30	"The Dangers of Not Going Organic" 2:30-3:20 <i>Large Conference Room, Speaker: Dave Ring</i> WORKSHOP: "How to Reduce Your Home Heating Bills: Separating Fact from Fiction" 2:30-4:00 <i>Cantina, Speaker: Bill Hill</i> To pre-register, call 765-282-4848		

Sad farewell for two former chapter leaders

Dr. Charlie Wise



This summer our chapter lost two major figures in the history of our Audubon chapter.

Dr. Thad Godish



Dr. Thad Godish, Professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Management at Ball State University, was a nationally known expert on indoor air quality. He served as our chapter president

three times, most recently from 2001-2003, and he was the creator and leader of our chapter's campaign in the 1980s to protect several acres of rain forest in Costa Rica.

Thad also initiated the change of our chapter name to the Robert Cooper Audubon Society, as well as the purchase of a three-

acre fen that was donated to the Red-tail Conservancy in 2003. He passed away on June 20, 2009, at the age of 67.

Dr. Charles Wise, Professor of Biology at Ball State for 30 years, passed away on July 31 at the age of 83. Charlie founded our chapter in 1974, when he led a move to transform the Delaware County Audubon Society (a local birding club) into the East Central Indiana Audubon Society (a National Audubon Society chapter), which expanded to include the six surrounding counties. In that same effort Charlie led a membership drive that swelled our membership ranks to 500.

He went on to serve as president for four full or partial terms, and he was also very active in the Indiana Audubon Society, serving as its president for one term. In 2008 our chapter renamed our Youth Conservation Award in Charlie's honor,

to recognize his dedication to educating youth and to serving our chapter.

The Robert Cooper Audubon Society owes an enormous debt of gratitude to these two men, who provided tremendous leadership and vision for our organization for 15 of our 35 years as an Audubon chapter.

If you would like to make a donation in Thad's or Charlie's memory which will be used, respectively, for RCAS conservation activities or our annual Youth Conservation Scholarship you may send your gift to:

Nona Nunnally, RCAS Treasurer
1302 N. Alden Rd.
Muncie, IN 47304

Checks should be made out to the Robert Cooper Audubon Society. Please indicate if your gift is given in memory of Thad or Charlie, and please let us know if we may acknowledge your name, among other donors, in a future issue of the Chat.

Send us your nominations!

Our November 9 program will honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions to the environment in our region, perhaps even the state, in these categories:

* Robert H. and Esther (Munro) Cooper Conservation Award: the chapter's highest honor, for overall contributions to, conservation of, and appreciation for, the natural environment

* Phyllis Yuhas Wildlife Habitat Preservation: for development or preservation of habitat that contains significant wildlife and/or native plant life populations

* Richard Greene Public Service: for active involvement in serving the public's environmental interests and concerns

* Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award: for excellence in educating the area's children, youth, and /or adults on conservation issues and

practices

* Charles Wise Youth Conservation Award: for excellence in conservation practices by a youth under the age of 18

To make the event a success, we need your help. If you know of an individual or organization that deserves recognition for its service to the natural environment in any of the above categories, please send your nomination, along with a description of the nominee and his or her contact information, to Barb Stedman, at bastedman@gmail.com, or at the following address: 5424 N County Road 500 E. Be sure to include your own name, phone number, address, and email address

Award nominees need not reside in our chapter's seven-county region and they need no affiliation with the Audubon Society. Nominations must be received by October 2.

Robert Cooper Audubon Society



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Dated Material- Please Deliver Promptly

The Chat is published 7 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.

Dates for Your Calendar

Sept. 13 Picnic
Sept. 19 Living Lightly Fair
Sept. 26 Field Trip
Oct. 2 Award nomination deadline
Oct. 12 Honey Bee program
Oct. 16 Articles due to Beth Simmons for
Sept./Oct. Chat: basimmons2@bsu.edu

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org
Email: 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
7:30 p.m.: Scheduled Program



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Vice President:	Jon Creek	348-4019
Recording Sec.:	Barb Hesselgrave	284-5661
Treasurer	Nona Nunnely	284-0751

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	Frank Meeker	289-5635
2009-2011	Joel Jeffcoat	286-2896
	Phil Tuttle	289-4251

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Education:	Pam Kistler	284-0946
Field trip:	Sarah McKillip	287-8464
Hospitality:	Cynda Turner	289-9390
Membership:	Laurie Lindberg	282-7516
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