



# Cooper's Talk

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

## Who Was Charles Stockbridge?

By Terri Gorney



Snowy Owl from the Charles Stockbridge Collection. Photo taken in the 1950s. Learn about the owl's history!

Who was the man for whom the Stockbridge Audubon Society was named? Charles was born in Fort Wayne in 1856. His father, Nathaniel, owned one of the first book stores in the town. From childhood, Charles Stockbridge was interested in birds.

In April 1899, one year after the Indiana Audubon Society was formed, the Allen County Audubon Society was designated the first Audubon chapter in the state. A group of dedicated bird watchers in Fort Wayne wanted to beat the Indianapolis group to be the first chapter. The Indianapolis Audubon Society was formed about 9 months later (in 1937 the name was changed to the Amos Butler Audubon Society).

In 1934 after the death of Charles Stockbridge, the Allen County Audubon

Society changed its name to honor Charles, who was a leader for over 30 years in the chapter. He gave many talks and encouraged young people to learn and appreciate birds. He led field trips and helped with the Christmas Bird Count and the May Day Count. Where were the first field trips and early bird counts held?

Stockbridge was a taxidermist. At one of his early talks, he gave everyone who attended one of his mounted birds. His personal collection contained over 200 bird specimens. What happened to this collection? Where is it today?

Learn about the man, his collection, and the beginnings of the oldest Audubon chapter in Indiana by attending Terri Gorney's presentation at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, October 14, at the Ball State University Alumni Center in Muncie.

*We are scheduling events for this fall, but will cancel if conditions warrant.  
Please see the note on page 2.*

## We the People: Raise Your Voice and Vote

By Mary Annette Rose, President, Robert Cooper Audubon Society

We of Robert Cooper Audubon Society strive "to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment." Over the past 3.5 years, our mission has become more urgent as some 100 environmental regulations and rules have been attacked by the Trump administration. With like-minded organizations, National Audubon Society filed a lawsuit to fight against the rollback of the **Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)** which would eliminate a provision that holds businesses accountable for predictable and preventable bird deaths. On August 11, a U.S. district judge ruled that the rollback

"runs counter to the purpose of the MBTA to protect migratory bird populations".

Alas, this and many other legal battles are still raging. A primary example involves the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**. Since 1970, this act requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of a project, inform the public, solicit comments, and consider other options. Under the new rules, many federal projects will be exempt from review, and for those that are reviewed, cumulative and indirect impacts will no longer be considered. This eliminates transparency and *(continued on page 3)*

## Field Trips

*Everyone is welcome at field trips and programs. Binoculars are available upon request. For additional information, contact Field Trip Coordinator Catherine Kubo, at 703-352-1238.*

**Fall migration, cooler temperatures, and autumn colors—a great time of year to go birding!**

August 29, September 26, and October 31, 9 -11 am: 4306 Mounds Road, Anderson, IN

### **Mounds State Park**

Join our monthly field trips at Mounds State Park. Meet at the feeder viewing station inside the Visitors Center. Please be prepared to wear a mask indoors.

October 4, 1:00 pm: 5993 N. Messick Road, New Castle, IN 47362

### **Summit Lake State Park**

Let's greet fall with an afternoon stroll through the prairie and woods of Summit Lake State Park. We'll meet at the Beach House Parking Lot at 1:00 pm, then explore the Prairie Trail.

October 10, 9:00 am: Pefly Road, Lagro, IN, 46941

### **Salamonie River State Forest**

This beautiful forest should be a great place to see some fall color, and some fall migrants. The reservoir hosts a variety of waterfowl.

We will meet at the Hominy Ridge Picnic Area in the Salamonie River State Forest at about 9 am. We will bird in the morning and then picnic, weather permitting. After lunch we will explore areas around the reservoir. Bring a sack lunch.

***RCAS is scheduling field trips, programs and events for this fall. Participants should follow current guidelines on face masks and social distancing. Monthly program meetings have been moved to a larger room to enable social distancing. Please monitor the RCAS website—[www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)—for cancellations and updates.***

## Programs and Events

September 20, 2020, 12:30-3:00 pm: Friends Shelter, Mounds State Park

### **RCAS Annual Picnic**

Join us for the annual fall picnic! Bring your own lunch or bring a dish to share. Entertainment and drinks will be provided. Entrance fee is \$7 per car or \$2 for pedestrian or bicycle.

October 14, 2020, 7:00 pm: Ball State University Alumni Center

### **Program: Who was Charles Stockbridge?**

Historian and author Terri Gorney will present informative details about the history of Stockbridge Audubon Society and the man for whom the Society was named.

November 11, 2020, 7:00 pm: Location to be announced

### **Program: To be announced**

## RCAS Award Nominations Due September 25

Each November, Robert Cooper Audubon celebrates individuals and organizations who make noteworthy contributions to conservation and environmental education in our region. Help us celebrate an unsung conservation hero by submitting a nomination to Annette Rose at [rosenflowers@hughes.net](mailto:rosenflowers@hughes.net)

When submitting a nomination, please describe the nominee's contributions and provide contact information. Nominations must be received by September 25. Award nominees need not reside in our chapter's seven-county region or be affiliated with the Audubon Society.

A list of past recipients is linked from the RCAS website at the bottom of the "Monthly Programs" page. Categories for this year's awards are as follows:

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

the natural environment;

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

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

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

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

In lieu of our traditional Awards Banquet, this year's awards will be announced by email and press release. Look for the announcement in November!

*Submit nominations to [rosenflowers@hughes.net](mailto:rosenflowers@hughes.net)*

## New Officers and Open Positions

We are pleased to announce that Rose Jeffery will serve as the next vice President of Robert Cooper Audubon Society. Rose replaces Robert Williams who will continue as Treasurer. We thank Robert for his years of service as vice president. Also, Jim Schowe and Catherine Kubo have agreed to continue in their roles as directors.

This still leaves us with some open positions. There's never been a better time to become more active in our Audubon chapter! We're looking for people to fill three key roles:

- **Program Chair:** Line up speakers for our monthly meetings
- **Web Manager:** Maintain up-to-date content on our website
- **Website Designer:** Redesign our website and put it on a mobile-friendly platform. This position can be folded into the Web Manager role or be a one-time donation of skills

If you're interested or simply want to learn more, contact Annette Rose, at [rosenflowers@hughes.net](mailto:rosenflowers@hughes.net).



Singing Dicksissel, Prophetstown State Park, photo by Rose Jeffery

## We the People...continued from page 1

drastically reduces opportunities for democratic decision-making. See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/07/16/2020-15179/update-to-the-regulations-implementing-the-procedural-provisions-of-the-national-environmental>

These are just two of the numerous anti-environmental actions that will result in the decline of bird populations and biodiversity, and will squelch our

rights to participate in tax-funded infrastructure project decisions.

Please join me in raising your voice:

• **Email, tweet, and phone** your federal and state legislators requesting that "environmental stewardship" be a principle that guides their decisions.

• **Vote** in the November 3, 2020 presidential election and help others do the same.

***URGE Congress to strengthen the Migratory Bird Treaty Act***



# Birding in the Limberlost Conservation Area

By Terri Gorney

The saying “build it and they will come” is true when it comes to habitat restoration for the birds. The Friends of the Limberlost have been pleased to be part of the restoration of some of the original 13,000 acre Limberlost Swamp. Today, 1800 acres of wetlands, grassland, meadows, and uplands have been



Short-eared Owl, photo by Kimberley Roll

restored and are now collectively called the Limberlost Conservation Area. It is located in northern Jay County and southern Adams County and includes: Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve, Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve (formerly called Limberlost Wetland Preserve), Rainbow Bend Park, Music of the Wild, and the Bird Sanctuary. Our mission is to see this area

continue to improve as birding habitat and to expand the area.

In Gene Stratton-Porter’s first book, “The Song of the Cardinal,” she introduced a wide audience to the Limberlost Swamp. She wrote, “The swamp resembles a big dining table for

impressive list. Rarities have included a Whooping Crane, Glossy Ibis, Willet, American Avocet, Short-billed Dowitcher, Black-necked Stilt, King Rail, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

The Bald Eagle, extirpated here for over 100 years, has made a stunning comeback. It was on Stratton-Porter’s bucket list to photograph the eagle and she was never able to do so. Now we have six bald eagle nests, of which at least four were active this year. From the first pair about a dozen years ago, the population has steadily increased.

In his book “Endangered and Disappearing Birds of the Midwest,” Matt Williams lists forty bird species. Twenty-three of these either migrate through, spend part of the year at Limberlost, or are here year round. In 2019, a female Northern Bobwhite (bird #1 on Williams’s list) was observed with young at Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve. On June 26 of this year, I heard at least one bobwhite calling close to this same area. I was glad that Curt Burnette and Randy Lehman also heard the calls. On June 20, Willy De Smet heard a Prairie Warbler (bird #38) at the Loblolly Marsh.

The Semi-palmated Sandpiper (bird #11), Dunlin (bird #9), Pectoral Sandpiper (bird #10) and Lesser Yellowlegs (bird #13) make a yearly migration through Limberlost.

Short-eared Owls (bird #17) were first spotted by Jim Haw in November 2011. He knew that the habitat was good for the owls at Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve. Since then, they arrive each year around the middle of November.

The Red-headed Woodpecker (bird #18) and the Horned Lark (bird #20) are found in good numbers year round. The numbers of both these birds seem to be increasing. Field Sparrows (bird #26) and Eastern Meadowlarks (bird #30) nest here in good numbers in the summer.

This year while conducting a Frog Watch at Rainbow Bend/Bottom, several American Woodcocks (bird #12) were heard over the uplands as well as at Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve.

It is our goal that Limberlost will continue to improve for the coming generations.



Woodie’s Retreat, photo by Terri Gorney

the birds.” That statement is as true today as it was one hundred seventeen years ago. The number of bird species that migrate or nest in this area is an

# Loblolly Marsh Is Growing . . . With Your Help

By Willy De Smet

As you probably know, Friends of the Limberlost (FOL) is a non-profit organization that has been instrumental in restoring the Loblolly Marsh and the Limberlost wetlands in general. We were honored to receive the Robert H. and Esther L. Cooper Conservation Award in 2019.

Many of you have visited and birded the Limberlost and Loblolly nature areas in Adams and Jay counties. I think you'll agree that this is a great natural habitat.

Very recently 10.43 acres of unproductive, flood-prone, agricultural land came on the market. It was part of Loblolly Marsh in Gene Stratton-Porter's time. We bought it and will restore it to its natural (wetland) state.

It is a great location (A on map). It borders Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve in the south and an existing wetland in the east. North of it is the White Oak pioneer cemetery property. Thus it will provide wildlife corridors between Loblolly Marsh and White Oak, as well as with the existing wetland east of it. There is also potential for putting in a trail connection between the Loblolly Marsh and the White Oak property in the future.

The total cost of acquiring this property (referred to as the Royer Property) is about \$100,000. This includes the purchase price, legal and survey fees, soil tests, restoration, etc. We have received many contributions and donations so far, including from RCAS (thank you again!), but we still need to raise about \$25,000. We want to pay off this purchase quickly because another rare opportunity is on the horizon. Indiana DNR-Nature Preserves is in the early stages of negotiation with the landowner of another property (B on map) bordering Loblolly Marsh, on the east side. It contains a wooded area as well as a repeatedly flooding low agricultural section. This project is still in an earlier stage, but the purchase could

happen next year. We really want to help DNR to acquire this high priority acreage.

Two large land purchases in such a short time is a serious financial challenge. But such opportunities do not happen often, so we need to take them.

So please won't you consider making a donation to help with the purchase of the Royer property? If you can help, make your check payable to the Friends of the Limberlost. Write on your check that it is a donation for the Royer Property.

Mail your check to Friends of the Limberlost, PO Box 571, Geneva, IN 46740. Donations can be tax deductible.

Thank you on behalf of all who enjoy the Loblolly Marsh!

If you have any questions, you can email

Randy Lehman, Treasurer, at [randylehman@comcast.net](mailto:randylehman@comcast.net)  
or Willy De Smet, President, at [desmet38@hotmail.com](mailto:desmet38@hotmail.com).

***Want to help? Mail donations to Friends of the Limberlost, P.O. Box 571, Geneva, IN 46740***



The Royer Property (A) borders Loblolly Marsh, an existing wetlands, and White Oak Pioneer Cemetery. Parcel B is a potential future acquisition. The Friends of the Limberlost (FOL) Pavilion and Parking area/trailhead (P) are also marked.



P.O. Box 1635  
 Muncie, IN 47308-1635  
[cooperaudubon.org](http://cooperaudubon.org)  
[cooperaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cooperaudubon@gmail.com)

## About RCAS

### Membership

Robert Cooper Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Madison, and Randolph counties. To join, visit the RCAS web site.

### Officers

President:	Mary Annette Rose	765-774-3134
Vice-President:	Rose Jeffery	
Treasurer:	Robert Williams	

### Directors

2019-2021	Kamal Islam	Kim McKenzie
2020-2022	Catherine Kubo	Jim Schowe

### Programs and Field Trips

Most programs and field trips of the Society are free and open to the public. Programs are generally scheduled from October through June on the second Wednesday of the month. For updates on the schedule and meeting locations, refer to our website.

### Contact us

Chapter Website: [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)  
 Find us on Facebook!  
 Email: [admin@cooperaudubon.org](mailto:admin@cooperaudubon.org)

## Falcon Nest Update—Success!

The Peregrine Falcon pair in downtown Anderson, Indiana, has had a successful nesting season! Two chicks hatched in late May and took their first flights on July 3. Since then they have been mastering the skills they will need to fend for themselves.

Lois Rockhill and Jeff Timmons have acted as nest monitors for the Department of Natural Resources and have spent countless hours watching and photographing this charismatic family. Look for Lois's photo essay chronicling the excitement in the next issue of Cooper's Talk.



## About Cooper's Talk

### © 2020

Cooper's Talk is published four times per year for members of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society.

### Submissions

All are invited to submit photos, articles, and events for publication by emailing items to [admin@cooperaudubon.org](mailto:admin@cooperaudubon.org)