



Cooper's Talk

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

Nature Play Day: You're Never too Young

by Robert Williams & Sarah McKillip

Where's the best place to play? Outside, of course! Preschool children, accompanied by their parents and teachers, joined volunteers from the Robert Cooper Audubon Society (RCAS) on June 11 for Nature Play Day.

Originating with the Indiana Children & Nature Network, the Nature Play Day initiative is intended "to get kids outside and remind families that nature play is important and can happen close to home." With local coordination from BY5, a nonprofit supporting early-childhood development, RCAS partnered with the Apple Tree Child Development Center for a bird program in Apple Tree's half-acre outdoor education area, the Early Learning Forest.

The program began with a reading of *About Birds*, a children's book that introduces concepts of avian form and behavior. Study specimens were then distributed, permitting each child to hold and examine a real bird. And finally, a bird walk was held in the Early Learning Forest, where the children observed living examples of specimens they had just held in their own hands, such as robins and red-winged blackbirds.

When Savannah Lundgren, RCAS's new education chair, introduced the topic of flight by urging the children to try it themselves, they began to flap their arms enthusiastically. "Why aren't you flying?" she asked, pointedly holding up a flight feather. "Do birds have something you don't?" "Feathers!" they replied.

Two weeks before the program, RCAS set up bird feeders, filled them with seed, and provided bird-identification posters. Copies of *About Birds* were later distributed to five classrooms. According to Emma Drago, who teaches at Apple Tree, her colleagues appreciated the free educational materials and have readily used them to help children identify birds at the classroom window.

Whether encountered through RCAS's educational programs, or monthly bird walks, a natural world capable of engaging a child's sense of wonder is close to home and accessible to everyone. Where can one find it? Outside, of course!

RCAS wishes to thank its volunteers—Savannah Lundgren, Sarah McKillip, Annette Rose, and Robert Williams—as well as Dr. Kamal Islam, who provided the study specimens; Emma Drago, Apple Tree's outdoor educator; and BY5's Marissa Rose.

**RCAS
in
ACTION**



Savannah Lundgren captivates children with curious facts about the great horned owl during Nature Play Days. Photo by Robert Williams.

Awards

Nominate a Conservation & Education Leader

Each November, our chapter honors individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions to the environment in our region over the past year. Help us celebrate an unsung conservation hero by submitting a nomination to Annette Rose at rosenflowers@hughes.net. Please include a description of the

nominee's contributions, and his or her contact information. Nominations must be received by September 24. 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 available from the RCAS website. Award categories include:

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, 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 Yuhás 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.



2017 Recipients of Conservation Awards. Left to Right: Josie & Geoff Fox, Micayla Jones, Julie Borgmann, Logan carter, and Loretta Parson, representing Soup Kitchen of Muncie. Photo by Robert Williams.

The concerned lend their talents. Will you help?

Can you HELP?

RCAS needs a ...

Newsletter Editor

Publicity Chair

It was a significant occasion! I reached the magic age of 60 in March and, as in no other year, the continuing war on all things wild and beautiful seemed beyond my capacity for battle.

Yet, the spring brought blossoms from marsh marigolds and hepatica, the osprey fished for nigh on three weeks before moving north, and the orioles, wood thrush, and Acadian flycatchers took up residence in the woods and fringes of home. Life cycles persisted, nay thrived, regardless of the political strife, policy roll-backs, and environmental threats--invasive species, pollutants, and habitat loss--that are signatures of our technological society.

The kind words and *can-do* spirit of birding allies and RCAS board members helped renew my spirit and strengthen my resolve to make a difference in East Central Indiana. So on June 20, I accepted the Board's nomination to serve as president and the RCAS membership approved.

Several other willing souls also stepped-up to new or continuing leadership roles:

- Robert Williams, Vice-President & Treasurer

- Catherine Pauls Kubo, Director

- Jim Schowe, Director

- Savannah Lundgren, Education Chair

And, thanks to the recruitment efforts of Kamal Islam, Director, two new committee chairs have joined our ranks, including:

- Alexander Sharp, Program Chair

- Brandon Connare, Advocacy Chair

Needs and opportunities still exist in RCAS leadership. If you are concerned about protecting birds and their habitat, please consider lending your talents as newsletter editor or publicity chair. You'll find great rewards for your efforts.

Striving for a verdant tomorrow,

Annette Rose, President of RCAS
rosenflowers@hughes.net

October 17, 7 pm, Kennedy Library, Muncie

Undergraduate Wildlife Biology Adventures: Indiana Owls and Argentine Conservation

At our October 17 meeting, come learn about the inspiring work of Kaitlin Gavenda and Kalee Snorden, two undergraduate students in Ball State’s wildlife biology and conservation major.

Kaitlin Gavenda will present her research on northern saw-whet owls (NSWOs) in Indiana. These owls were once an understudied species, but Project Owl-net sought to change that by bringing together researchers nationwide to combine knowledge of the owls’ migration patterns.

Kaitlin introduced this project to East Central Indiana by creating NSWOW banding stations in Delaware and Henry Counties. Under the mentorship of RCAS’s own Dr. Kamal Islam, she developed a study to determine if NSWOWs showed a preference between old-growth deciduous forest and a coniferous tree farm.

Kaitlin will share her findings thus far and tell attendees how they can volunteer for the study’s second season in the coming weeks.

Kalee Snorden will share her experiences as a summer intern with Aves Argentinas, part of BirdLife International, which has launched a multi-faceted environmen-

tal education effort that emphasizes the connection of environmental issues and biological processes to everyday life.

In the wake of unsuccessful sustainability-focused legislation in Argentina, Aves Argentinas has begun to form an effective system of environmental education that captures the attention of the public, educates them, and ultimately impresses upon them the relevance of environmental concerns to their own lives.

For her internship, Kalee helped coordinate volunteers for Aves Argentinas’ environmental education program in Buenos Aires, which included museum tours, birding outings, bird censuses to monitor species populations, and coordination with other conservation efforts.

At our October 17 meeting, refreshments and chapter business will begin at 7 p.m. Kaitlin and Kalee’s program will get underway at 7:15.



Kaitlin Gavenda holds a northern sawwhet owl during a capture and banding session.

June 20: A recap

19 Species of Owls! The Year of the Owl

How many species of owls can you name? Barred, great horned, eastern screech, short-eared, barn, saw-whet, snowy, burrowing ... But if you are willing to brave a January night in Minnesota, the searing July heat of Arizona, or drive non-stop to and from the gulf coast of Texas, you just might get a glimpse of the boreal owl, see an elf owl poking its head from a saguaro cactus, or hear the monotonous “poip” of the ferruginous pygmy-owl.

It’s very few among us that set a goal to see all 19 owl species indigenous to the lower 48 states, but Kevin Cornell and Allee Forsberg declared 2018 the “Year of the Owl” and successfully completed their list with months to spare.

Kevin and Allee shared pictures and stories of their great adventure during the June 20th RCAS program meeting. Did you know that the tiniest of North American owls is the elf owl, standing about 5” tall (that’s the size of a sparrow)?

Birding with Kevin and Allee must be a real hoot. Consider joining Kevin on an Indiana Audubon Society birding excursion; unfortunately his IAS Winter Owl Tour 2018 is full.

Want to learn more?

- Read Leigh Calvez’s *The Hidden Lives of Owls: The Science and Spirit of Nature’s Most Elusive Birds*.

Congrats!!

Kevin & Allee

Field Trips & Events

September 8, 9 am, Indianapolis Zoo, Indianapolis **Indianapolis Zoo Aviary**

This field trip to the Indianapolis Zoo Aviary and the Flights of Fancy exhibit offers an informative opportunity to learn about bird behavior, care of exotic birds from around the world, and local conservation efforts. Preregistration is required.



White River Clean-up volunteers: Micayla Jones, Sarah McKillip, Rose Jeffery, and Kim McKenzie.

September 15, 8:30 -11:30 am, Westside Park, Muncie

White River Clean-up

Water is the nectar of life on planet earth. Protecting streams and groundwater from pollution and solid waste is a prerequisite for protecting healthy habitats for birds, other wildlife, and human health. Over the years, the cleanup has resulted in the removal of over 98,000 pounds of solid waste and about 650 tires. This single event is the largest public service event in Delaware County.

Join volunteers from RCAS in the annual White River Clean-up by contacting Savannah Lundgren at smlundgren@bsu.edu.

September 22, 11:00 am, Canoe Country, Daleville, Indiana

Ride for the Mounds

Join the Hoosier Environmental Council for a bicycling adventure along the free flowing West Fork of the White River. There are 3 routes for all skill levels. Check in begins at 11:00 am. As a sponsor, volunteers are needed to share the important work of Robert Cooper Audubon Society. To volunteer, contact Kim McKenzie at kimkenzie34@gmail.com.

September 23, 1:00 - 3 pm, Mounds State Park

RCAS Fall Picnic

It's a tradition! Members of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society launch the fall migration with an annual picnic at Mounds State Park. Bring a friend and gather at the Friends Shelter by 1:00 pm to share a potluck picnic and spend the afternoon sharing an appreciation for birds and nature. Please bring a dish or dessert to share, as well as your own reusable place setting (plate, utensils, and cup). Drinks and entertainment will be provided. Entrance fee is \$7 per vehicle for in-state plates and \$2 for pedestrians and bicyclists.



September 29, 9 am - 4 pm, Delaware Cty Fair Grounds, Muncie **Living Lightly Fair**

Living Lightly Fair is a free resource fair offering opportunities to learn about products, services and practices that support sustainable lifestyles, save money and protect resources for future generations. This, the eleventh Living Lightly Fair, will be held on the Delaware County Fair Grounds with presentations, a green marketplace, art, music, children's activities, and local, organic food. See livinglightlyfair.org for details.

Contact Annette Rose, rosenflowers@hughes.net, to assist in staffing the booth for Robert Cooper Audubon Society at the fair.

Field Trips & Events

September 29, 9 -11 am: 4306 Mounds Road, Anderson, Indiana

Birding at Mounds State Park

This monthly field trip to Mounds State Park promises views of owls and woodland species. Meet at the parking lot near the visitors center. Binoculars will be provided.

October 6, 9-11 am: 5993 N. Messick Road, New Castle, Indiana

Birding at Summit Lake State Park

This field trip to Summit State Park promises sightings of waterfowl, loons, and other migrants on their journey. We will meet at the Beach House parking lot at 9 am. Binoculars will be provided.

October 13, 8:30 -11:00am: McVey Memorial Forest

Birding at McVey Memorial Forest, a Red-tail Preserve

We will meet at the preserve at 8:30 am. Carpoolers from Muncie will meet at the Cooper Science parking lot at 7:50 am. Directions: From Muncie take IN-32 W (Jackson St.) to N 900 W and turn left. Continue north on IN 1 (Purple Heart Memorial Hwy). The preserve is on the east side of IN 1, about 5.5 miles north of IN-32.

October 19-21, 9 am: Pokagon State Park

Indiana Fall Festival

The Indiana Audubon Society sponsors this fall festival at Pokagon State Park. The schedule will include an owl prowl; morning birding tours to Pokagon SP, Trine SRA, Pigeon River FWA; as well as presentations and young birder activities at the Nature Center. Learn more at indianaaudubon.org/event/ias-fall-festival-2018

October 27, 9 -11 am: 4306 Mounds Road, Anderson, Indiana

Birding at Mounds State Park

This monthly field trip to Mounds State Park promises views of owls and woodland species. Meet at the parking lot near the visitor's center. Binoculars will be provided.

October 28, 1:30-3:30 pm: 200 E 6th Street, Geneva, Indiana

Birding at Limberlost/Loblolly

Limberlost is a jewel for birding at any time of year, but fall is of special delight for short-eared owls and waterfowl. We will meet at the Limberlost Visitor Center in Geneva at 1:30 pm. Carpoolers leave from the Cooper Science lot on the Ball State campus at 12:20. Directions from Muncie: take N. Broadway and continue north on SR 67. Follow 67 through Albany to Portland. In Portland, turn left on SR 67, continue north through

**Learn,
Serve,
& Enjoy**

Advocacy

Rules, Regulations, Statutes, & Codes

The list of proposed changes to environmental policies seems to have reached a fevered pitch. The National Audubon Society reports that a suite of bills in the U.S. House or Representative could significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a critical tool to help threatened populations of birds regain a sustainable population size. The time is now to tell our representatives to uphold the ESA. Learn more at Audubon Advisory: www.audubon.org/section/audubon-advisory

There are reasons to be optimistic closer to home. Thanks to the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society (INPAWS), progress in prohibiting the sale and transport of 44 invasive plant species is in process, including the amur honeysuckle, common buckthorn. These culprits overtake native species of plants, reducing quality forage and shelter for native wildlife. Learn more about invasive plant species and the Terrestrial Invasive Plant Rule: www.inpaws.org/biodiversity.

**Keep an
Eye on Policy**



Robert Cooper Audubon Society

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Society Leadership

Officers

President:	Mary Annette Rose	765-774-3134
Vice-President:	Robert Williams	765-730-8427
Treasurer:	Robert Williams	765-730-8427
Secretary:	Kim Lee	765-215-0576

Directors

2017-2019	Kamal Islam Kim McKenzie
2018-2020	Catherine Pauls Kubo Jim Schowe

Committees

Past President:	Sarah McKillip
Advocacy (ad hoc):	Brandon Connare
Conservation:	Jon Creek
Education:	Savannah Lundgren
Field Trip:	Rose Jeffery
Hospitality:	Doris Cheney
Membership:	Sandy Ho
Newsletter:	Vacant
Program:	Alexander Sharp
Publicity (Writer):	Vacant
Publicity:	Kim McKenzie
Website Manager:	Barb Stedman

About Cooper's Talk

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Cooper's Talk is published five times for members of Robert Cooper Audubon Society.

Submissions

All are invited to submit photos, articles, and events for publication by emailing items to admin@cooperaudubon.org.

Membership

Robert Cooper Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Madison, and Randolph counties.

Programs and Field Trips

Most programs and field trips of the Society are free and open to the public. Programs are scheduled from October through June on the third Wednesday of the month and, typically, held at Kennedy Library at 7:00 pm. For a schedule of field trips, refer to the Society website at www.cooperaudubon.org.

Contact Us

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org
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