

# The Chat



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

Volume 33, No. 9 Dec. 2007

December 10:

## The Future of the Environmental Movement

Anyone paying attention these days has noticed an increased discussion in the media about the environment. Over the last century and a half, the environmental movement has grown and changed many times – and it appears to be changing again. These changes can be seen in the types and emphases of organizations that focus on environmental issues, such as the Audubon Society, and how professionals, such as city planners, go about protecting natural systems and wildlife.

In a presentation to our chapter for our December meeting, David Keuhl, Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at Ball State University, will briefly discuss these trends over the years and then focus on how today's youth are viewing and participating in the protection of the environment. From this we may be able to envision the kinds of organizations and activities that will make up the future of this important movement.

Please join us for this important discussion (it affects how Audubon chapters like ours should envision our own future!) at Minnetrista on December 10. Refreshments and time to socialize will begin at 7:00. The meeting will begin at 7:15, and Dave's presentation will get underway by 7:30.

As always, we hope you'll bring a friend with you!

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## December Meeting Elections

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At our regular program meeting on December 10, we'll be voting on candidates for the following nominations for officers and other board members:

Vice-president: Jon Creek

Treasurer: Suzanne Groshong

Secretary: Barb Butler

Directors, 2008-09: Blanche Townsend and Phil Tuttle

Conservation Chair: Charlie Mason

We still have no volunteers for Field Trip Chair. But it's not too late to get your name on the slate! If you're interested in learning more, contact Bonnie Nicholson, at [nickrb69@yahoo.com](mailto:nickrb69@yahoo.com).

Thanks to Diana Shaffer and Kamal Islam, who are completing their terms as directors for the last 30-month period!

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## Change to New Member Procedures

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To simplify membership record-keeping, chapter-only memberships will now follow the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. Individuals who join the chapter or renew their membership after May of any given year will have their membership run through December of the following year.

In case you didn't know, you can join our chapter two different ways: 1) by joining the National Audubon Society, which automatically makes you a member of our local chapter, or 2) by opting for chapter-only membership separate from or addition to your National Audubon Society (NAS) membership. Chapter-only membership sends every penny of your membership dues to local chapter activities, while your NAS membership gives us only \$2.50 per person.

Please NOTE: Chapter-only members do not receive the Audubon magazine, published bimonthly.

To become a new member of our Audubon chapter or renew your chapter-only membership, please send the form below, along with your check made payable to the Robert Cooper Audubon Society, to:

Jane Duckworth, Membership Co-Chair  
806 N. Briar Rd.  
Muncie, IN 47304

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I want to become a chapter-only member at the following level (please check your choice):

- Student \$15
- Basic \$20
- Supporting \$50
- Partner \$100

I want to maintain my membership in the National Audubon Society, but here is my gift for the local chapter: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I want to receive The Chat newsletter in print form , via the U.S. Postal Service, or in electronic form , as an email attachment. (Please check box of your preference.)

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## Christmas Bird Count

On Dec. 22, local birders are invited to participate in the 108th annual Christmas Bird Count. Each year more than 50,000 birders participate in the event, which is the oldest, largest citizen science in the world. Every group's results are submitted to an enormous database that is used by researchers in studying bird populations and migration patterns across North America.

Anyone interested in being a CBC counter should contact Bill Grummer, event coordinator, at 765-254-1943 or billcarolee@comcast.net. You can spend a couple hours or the entire day counting. This year's count will be centered in downtown Muncie, extending in a 15-mile radius. While our chapter has conducted Christmas bird counts in the past, we haven't had one in Muncie since 1940! You can count from your feeder or out in the field. You don't have to be an experienced birder to participate! For more info about the Christmas Bird Count, visit [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/).

## 2007 Conservation Award Winners



Award winners from left to right: Adam Winters, Barb Stedman, Dwight Shelton. Not pictured: Loretta Heiniger.

Approximately 50 members, guests, and friends of Audubon attended this year's award ceremony, which included a program by Rich Fields, photographer for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Outdoor Indiana magazine, and presentation of this year's conservation awards.

**Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award** Mooreland resident and Wapahani High School teacher Adam Winters was the winner of the Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award. Adam has challenged students in his environmental science classes to find solutions to environmental problems through class projects such as Raider Recycling, which kept more than eight tons of solid waste out of landfills last year alone; Wapahani Can Fund and Project Bright Idea, through which

students collect and recycle aluminum cans, then use the money to purchase high-compact fluorescent light bulbs and distribute them to the community at no cost; and Project Orchard, which has converted portions of unused school property into a community orchard and garden. Classes write grant applications each year and use money from recycling projects to fund their projects.

**Phyllis Yuhás Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award** The Phyllis Yuhás Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award was presented to Loretta Heiniger, of Anderson, for her work in protecting and propagating Monarch Butterflies. Her property is registered as a National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat and serves as an official Monarch waystation through the national Monarch Watch project. Thanks to Loretta, thousands of Monarch eggs that otherwise could have been a meal for predators have, instead, survived and been released as butterflies. In 2006 alone, she raised more than 500 Monarchs. As an educational speaker, she has informed audiences about the life cycle of Monarchs and the many threats their populations now face. Besides turning her own garden into a haven for Monarchs, she recently designed and helped install a butterfly garden at Mounds State Park, now the largest Monarch waystation in any Indiana state park.

**Richard Greene Public Service Award** Winner of the Richard Greene Public Service Award was Dwight Shelton, Farmland resident, for his role in orchestrating a cooperative effort of various conservation-minded organizations and individuals. Under Dwight's leadership, the group has made substantial habitat improvements at the 400+ acres of the Randolph County Wildlife Management Area. They created and implemented a plan that included various plantings (1300 oak trees, sunflowers and millet, a six-acre perennial food plot, a ten-acre annual food plot, and wildflowers). They also improved habitat for rabbits, quail, and other small species, with thick stands of native grasses and brush piles. In addition to this latest effort, Dwight has served on the Indiana Heritage Trust Board of Directors for many years and instituted conservation efforts on his own properties.

**Robert H. and Esther L. Cooper Conservation Award** The Robert H. and Esther L. Cooper Conservation Award, the chapter's highest honor, went to Barb Stedman, of Desoto, in recognition of her various leadership roles in the Robert Cooper Audubon Society over the last 15 years; her work as co-creator of the Living Lightly Fair, a resource fair for sustainable lifestyles in East Central Indiana; her efforts in leading Ball State students to create a website of Indiana's environmental literature and participate in wetlands restoration projects at the Limberlost Swamp and Loblolly Marsh Wetland Preserve; and her volunteer service to the Wildlife Resqu Haus and other conservation organizations and initiatives in East Central Indiana.

*No Youth Conservation Award was presented this year because no nominations were received. For more information and photographs of the evening's events, visit [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).*

# Conservation Update

## Weed Warriors vs. Honeysuckle

The challenging side of habitat restoration is getting rid of the invasive species that have displaced wildlife supporting native species. In some cases it's as simple as cutting willows and other woody plants from wetland areas allowing the suppressed natives to emerge. The RCAS conservation group has assisted that transition at the Memorial Park Seep in New Castle and the Summit Lake Sandhill wetland area.

When confronting dense honeysuckle stands, it's not enough to cut and treat the honeysuckle stumps, because no native plants have been able to survive under the canopy to regenerate. Follow-up planting of trees or prairie grasses is necessary to establish a desirable wildlife habitat.

West View School was a good example of a dense honeysuckle stand. The entire understory was solid honeysuckle and the overstory was mostly black locust, another invasive. Charlie Mason led the RCAS Weed Warriors in cutting all the honeysuckle and many of the black locusts. The school maintenance personnel then used their chipper and truck to remove all the cut material from the site, leaving relatively bare ground. Plans are being formulated for spring planting of desirable species to replace all the removed invasives. The goal is to transform this nature area into an asset for the school, the community, and the wildlife. Contact Charlie to help at 288-9937

The RCAS conservation group is also currently engaged in eradicating honeysuckle at Prairie Creek reservoir and on adjacent property owned by Bill Cummings, a long time Audubon supporter. All of this area was formerly farm fields and pastures before the city of Muncie bought it for the reservoir. Since then the pasture and cattle lots have grown up in honeysuckle. Our goal is to eliminate all the larger, seed producing plants, at least, and then to plant trees, primarily oaks.

## How you can help remove honeysuckle in your own area

1. Identification. Right now honeysuckle is easiest to identify because it still has green leaves after most other shrubs have lost theirs. If the green shrubs have red berries you know it's honeysuckle. Multistems and striated bark are the other key features. Check <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/loni1.htm> for further identification tips and pictures.

2. Removal. Cut the stems as low as possible with loppers, hand saw or chain saw, depending on the size of the plant. Then the most important step is to spray the cut stump immediately with 20% Roundup (glyphosate) solution from a spray bottle or brush it on. This mix is available at garden supply stores ready to use in the 20% concentration, but be sure to read the label. Roundup is sold in a number of strengths including 48% and 52% which we use and mix roughly 50/50 with water. Generic glyphosate is available at Rural King at budget prices compared to Roundup. Do not delay treatment because the cut stump will very quickly harden over and the glyphosate mix will not penetrate and be effective.

Keep in mind that every honeysuckle plant you remove helps stop the invasion. One less honeysuckle is a good thing and many less is the best. Especially in areas where there are only a few plants, it's possible to completely eliminate the problem before it gets out of hand. There are other areas like Miller Woods and Hughes Woods where no control has ever been done, and the properties are almost completely overrun by very mature honeysuckle, and the restoration challenge is huge.

If you have questions about identification or any other invasive issues we'll be happy to talk with you by phone or in person. We make site visits. We also welcome your help on our larger projects. Cutting is the harder work but we can always use stump treatment specialists, which most anyone can do. Contact Jon Creek at 765-348-4019.

# The Summer Tanager: December Bird of the Month

Summer Tanager:  
*Piranga rubra*  
By Helen Twibell



If you should happen to live in territory where the summer tanager finds its habitat, you might know it as the summer redbird, red bee-bird or even rose tanager. The species is dramatically sexually dimorphic; adult males are some of N. America's most intensely colored birds, while females are drab, varying from dull yellow to olive. The summer tanager male is a solid rose-red with a pale yellow bill, and the female is pale olive green above, dull yellow below. The identifying length of this bird is roughly 7 ½ inches.

While the summer tanager is found basically in the more southern section of the country, it is a common summer resident and migrant in the southern third of this state. The open, drier southern woodlands of pine, oak and hickory are preferred as habitat. The birds frequently nest in the outskirts of southern towns. It is a very rare and irregular migrant and summer resident in the northern third of Indiana. Since the summer tanager spends a great amount of time in dense foliage of the upper canopy, he may not be seen easily, regardless of his brilliant red color.

On the breeding grounds the birds are easily located by

their calls, which they utter quite persistently throughout the day. Their song is similar to the scarlet tanager, but less harsh and more melodious. Some liken it to a robin's song. It is interpreted as chick-tucky-tuck or as pee-I-tucky--tuck.

Nests of summer tanagers are often on horizontal tree branches, over a road or opening in the forest or in small trees or bushes. Distance from the ground varies from six to forty feet, averaging about sixteen. The nest itself is shallow and often loosely built of stalks, bark, leaves and like material, the center lined with fine grasses. The nest is often so loosely made that the eggs are visible from below or through the sides. The three or four eggs deposited in the nest are a beautiful bluish or greenish color, speckled with brown.

Flying insects are important in its diet, and it is expert at catching them on the wing. The summer tanager has earned one of its nicknames from its habit of eating wasps, bees and hornets. One birder has seen a female taking honeybees, rapidly--one by one, as they flew near their nest in a tall forest tree. A male was seen holding a large wasp in its beak and singing at the same time. A tanager has been known to fly back to a branch with a bee or wasp in its mouth for the purpose of removing the stinger from the insect before consuming it. In northern areas if summer tan-

agers are slow in withdrawing as colder weather comes on, they may have to resort to feeders for food to make it through winter. They like suet, orange halves, sunflower seeds, peanut butter mixed with cornmeal, bread, doughnuts, mealworms or chopped bananas. Tanagers also like fruit, so plant mulberries, cherries, grapes, serviceberries, Va.. Creeper and dogwood to attract them.

The summer tanager winters in the tropics, Mexico and Central America. It leaves for the south not later than October 15, and returns in the spring in later April and early May.

## Thanks!

MANY thanks go to the following individuals and businesses that helped us put together a great banquet:

- Richard Fields, from the IDNR & Outdoor Indiana magazine, for his program
- Cintas and Tim Tuhey, for donating table linens.
- Seedy Sally's (Pendleton), Wildlife ResquHaus (aka Diana Shaffer), Meijers (Muncie), and Lowe's (Muncie), for donating door prizes
- Bella Avanti (Muncie) for great food and service
- Minnetrista, for use of its facilities
- RCAS board members who worked to put together a successful banquet



# Robert Cooper Audubon Society



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## Dates for Your Calendar

**Dec. 10, 7 p.m.:** Future of the Environmental Movement Speaker

**Dec. 14:** Articles due for November *Chat*. Send to Beth Simmons at [basimmons2@bsu.edu](mailto:basimmons2@bsu.edu)

**Chapter Website:** [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)  
**Email:** [cooperaudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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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