karst \ noun : an irregular limestone region with sinks, underground streams, and caverns

Webster’s Dictionary defines the word karst as being of Chinese origin, having found its way into English usage about 1902. It was first used to describe a region of Yugoslavia but now refers to such regions worldwide.

Indiana is home to one of these unique systems, which are rich with geological, biological and archaeological significance. The Indiana Karst Conservancy is dedicated to the preservation and conservation of our states karst features.

Join us on January 14, 2008 as we welcome Nick Noe from the Indiana Karst Conservancy (IKC) as guest speaker for our monthly program meeting at Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie. Mr. Noe will present a video presentation of “Caves: Life Beneath the Forest” and spend a few minutes telling us about the work of the Indiana Karst Conservancy.

For more information about IKC and karst systems, visit their website at www.caves.org/conservancy/ikc.

As always, the meeting begins with fellowship, refreshments and announcements at 7:00 PM with our program commencing at 7:30 PM. Guests are always welcome.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Board Changes</th>
<th>New Member Procedures</th>
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<td>We welcome new and continuing board members to the 2008-09 RCAS board. After experiencing a number of board vacancies during 2007, it is great to have a full board. We look forward to providing great programs and field trips. Our active conservation committee will be offering opportunities to get members involved. 2008 should be a good year for RCAS.</td>
<td>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. If you would be interested in becoming a member, speak with a board member, or download the form from the December Chat, available online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie Nicholson, President</td>
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January 14: **Karst Conservancy**
The paint-
ed bunting
has been
called the
most dis-
tinctively
and most
spectacularly
colored of
all the songbirds of N. Amer-
ica, and up to this point it has
been a mystery bird to most
bird fanciers of Indiana. The
painted bunting has tradi-
tionally been a resident of the
southern states from Missis-
sippi down through Florida.
Recently, however, discoveries
have been made which lead
bird experts to believe that
these tropically-colored birds
may be in the process of en-
larging their territory.

In the book, The Birds of In-
diana, by Mumford and Keller,
we read in a very brief painted
bunting article that an adult
male specimen was taken in In-
dianapolis in April of 1866 and
placed in the California Acad-
emy of Science. It is also stated
in this book that a dead male
was found next to the City-
County Building in Indianapo-
is in May of 1983. This speci-
men was prepared and placed
in the Joseph Moore Museum
at Earlham College. We quote
verbatim: “Recently there have
been a number of extra-limital
records of the painted bunting
in the Midwest; this gorgeous
bird may be expanding its ter-
ritory.”

In November of this year
2007, an appliance repairman
happened to espy a copy of one
of my bird books on my kitch-
en table. He commented that
he enjoys birds and went on to
describe an unusual neon-col-
ored bird he has seen on his
way to work. His home is in
the rural area around Upland,
Indiana, and in the spring on
driving to and from his work
in Muncie, he passes a large
woods where he sees this bird
in great numbers, near the road
in a swampy area where the
undergrowth is tangle and
bushy. He said that the small-
like, sparrow-sized bird is col-
orful with feathers of red, blue
and green and shows up brilli-
antly, even in the shadowy for-
est edge. He also said that the
songs of the birds, sung from
the treetops, paired with the
din of so many croaking frogs
in the swamp is almost deafen-
ing in its intensity. I found this
multicolored species in the
Audubon Guide which estab-
lished that our mystery bird is
indeed the painted bunting.

The adult male has a deep
blue head, red underparts, a
green back and a red rump. The
female has an overall greenish
plumage which is more darkly
above than below. The buntings
eat seeds primarily, and insects
during breeding season. Fox-
tail seed is a favorite. The nest
is an open cup, woven of roots
and animal hair.

The population of the paint-
ed bunting in the southern
states has declined in the past
few decades. This may be due
to loss of habitat, parasitism by
cowbirds and trapping for pet
trade on the wintering grounds
of Mexico. In 2001 Audubon
worked with the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service and the Mexi-
can government to establish
an endangered species status
for the painted bunting. Au-
dubon also recommended to
the Mexican government that
the painted bunting be removed
from local trade since they are
popular as cage birds, and in
Mexico thousands are taken to
export to bird dealers in Eu-
rope.

If you have happed to spot
any of these wonderfully col-
ored painted buntings in Indi-
ana, you are indeed fortunate.
If this be so, please let us hear
about it at: bandhtwibell@pc-
doctors1.com.

Field Trip
Indiana Audubon Society will
have its annual eagle watch
field trip on Saturday, Janu-
ary 26, 2008. RCAS mem-
bers are invited to join the
group. The Cayuga Duke
Energy Power Plant will be
open that week-end as well
for the public to enter the sta-
tion property to view winter-
ing eagles. The IAS trip is an
all day auto tour. If you are
in interested, contact Bonnie
Nicholson at nickrb69@ya-
hoo.com or 765-238-0543
or visit the IAS website at
The 2007 Audubon WatchList

A Call to Action
Audubon and the America Bird Conservancy have joined forces to rally conservationists around America’s most imperiled birds. WatchList 2007, a new analysis from these leading bird conservation organizations, uses the latest available research from the bird conservation community along with citizen science data from the Christmas Bird Count and the annual Breeding Bird Survey to identify 176 species in the continental U.S. and 38 in Hawaii that are in need of immediate conservation help. It is a call to action to save species fighting for survival amid a convergence of environmental challenges, including habitat loss, invasive species and global warming.

A Tool for Conservation
Identifying the species at greatest risk is the first step toward saving them. It helps target public policies, funding support, conservation initiatives and public commitment on the species and habitats that need it most. The newest chapter in Audubon’s ongoing State of the Birds Reports, WatchList 2007 lays the groundwork for an “industry standard” to guide conservation priorities among conservation organizations and government agencies. By dividing imperiled birds into 59 continental and 38 Hawaiian “red” species, and 117 “yellow” species, WatchList 2007 helps focus highest attention on the species of greatest concern (red), while also highlighting “yellow” species while there is still time to keep them off the red list. The names of these species may be less familiar than those on Audubon’s roster of Common Birds in Decline, but WatchList birds need even more urgent attention. In many cases, by helping them we can also help many of the other birds at risk.

Which Species? Why?
Birds that rely on virtually every kind of habitat found in the U.S. are found on WatchList. Global warming threatens feeding grounds for seabirds like Xantus’ Murrelet and breeding grounds for songbirds like the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Drought is having devastating consequences for grassland birds like Gunnison’s Sage-Grouse and the Lesser Prairie-Chicken. Hawaiian species are losing ground to invasive, non-native species of animals and plants. Meanwhile, coastal development, industrialized farming practices, pollution, energy development and suburban sprawl are eliminating and degrading the places many of these species need to feed, rest and breed.

Together We Can Make a Difference
WatchList is about the power of concerned people to make a difference for birds and for tomorrow. The citizen scientist volunteers who report their observations in Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count and/or the U.S.G.S Breeding Bird Survey provided the data needed for this comprehensive analysis. Now, the same commitment and dedication that produced the findings is essential to addressing their cause. Only citizen action can fuel the changes that will improve the outlook for WatchList species.

Information from: http://web1.audubon.org/science/species/watchlist/
To view more information about the WatchList, please visit the above Web site.
Robert Cooper Audubon Society

Robert Cooper Audubon Society
Lis Mitchell
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Publicity: Barb Stedman 288-2890
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Dates for Your Calendar
Jan. 14: Karst Conservancy Program
Jan. 18: Articles due for February Chat. Send to Beth Simmons at basimmons2@bsu.edu
Jan. 26: Annual Indiana Audubon Society Field Trip

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

Dated Material- Please Deliver Promptly