

# The Chat

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

Volume 34, No. 5 May 2008

May 12:

## The Land of the Limberlost

Join us in May as we explore Indiana's Limberlost area. Our May 12 program meeting will feature photographer and Geneva IN resident Bill Hubbard. Bill will introduce us to the birds of the Limberlost, including their songs. His presentation will also include a brief history of the Limberlost and author Gene Stratton-Porter. For many of us the works of this Hoosier author provided some of our first glimpses into the natural world and helped form our love of the environment.

Refreshments and chapter announcements will begin at 7:00 PM with our program commencing at 7:30. As always, guests are welcome.

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### Limberlost Field Trip



On a previous trip to the Limberlost, Barb Stedman snapped pictures of Egrets resting in a nearby pond. Many natural sights are able to be enjoyed on the Limberlost field trip.

On Saturday, May 17, we hope you'll join us for Nature Day at the Limberlost. Ornithologist Ron Weiss (from the Chipperwoods Observatory in Indianapolis) will lead us on a morning of birding through the Loblolly Marsh Wetland Preserve, which is the most significantly restored portion of the Limberlost wetlands.

We'll have at least two spotting scopes with us, to give us great views of the typically wonderful birding we find at the Loblolly. (Highlights of one of our most recent May field trips included an American bittern, a dunlin, several green herons, semi-palmated plovers, wood ducks, northern shovelers, blue-winged teals, lots of great egrets and great blue herons, Baltimore orioles, and indigo buntings.)

Meet at the Minnetrista parking lot at 7:30 a.m. if you want to carpool, or rendezvous with us at the Loblolly Marsh at 8:45. Remember to bring your binoculars and field guide, and wear shoes that you aren't afraid to get muddy!

Directions, if you go on your own: Loblolly Marsh is located west of the small town of Bryant, in Jay Co. Take State Road 18 three miles west from Bryant to County Road 250W, and look for signs pointing to the right. Go north on 250W just a short distance, and you'll see the parking lot on the left. If you need further information, call Barb Stedman at 765-288-2890 or email her at [bastedman@gmail.com](mailto:bastedman@gmail.com). If you have any questions on the day of the field trip, call 765-212-6873.

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# The American Redstart: May Bird of the Month

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*American Redstart:*  
*Setophaga ruticilla*  
By Helen Twibell



It seems not to afford even a glimpse of its unique beauty at our own feeders in our own back yards, at least not at my place. It is one of the most numerous warblers in N. America, because its favored habitat, second-growth woodland, covers such extensive areas of the continent. Despite the fact that the species is described as being numerous, its time spent in southern Canada and the eastern U.S.A. for breeding purposes is a short time span, considering the fact that the greatest number migrate here from the West Indies, Central America and northern S. America to be present by April--mostly May. The migration back to the neo-tropics may begin in July and peaks in September, and as many of the males are polygamous and start a second brood in a new territory as soon as the first female begins incubating the clutch, it would seem there would be little time to wander from the chosen nesting area, except during spring and fall

The American redstart, a warbler, is one of those birds that either you see it or you don't.

It seems not to afford even a glimpse of its unique beauty at our own feeders in our own back yards, at least not at my place. It is one of the most numerous warblers in N. America, because its favored habitat, second-growth woodland, covers such extensive areas of the continent. Despite the fact that the species is described as being numerous, its time spent in southern Canada and the eastern U.S.A. for breeding purposes is a short time span, considering the fact that the greatest number migrate here from the West Indies, Central America and northern S. America to be present by April--mostly May. The migration back to the neo-tropics may begin in July and peaks in September, and as many of the males are polygamous and start a second brood in a new territory as soon as the first female begins incubating the clutch, it would seem there would be little time to wander from the chosen nesting area, except during spring and fall

migration. Authors agree that Indiana is blessed with the presence of the American redstart in all parts of the state, but say that it is found in a great many locations, predominantly in the north in such places as Tippecanoe County, Kosciusko County, Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area, Pine Hills Nature Preserve and Shades State Park.

The American redstart is, in appearance, rather like the Baltimore oriole, but on a much smaller scale. The redstart male is a small songbird, being four to five inches in length with a black hood, back, wings, tail and chest. The chest has orange on the sides, in the wings and in sides and base of the tail. Its belly is white. The female has a light gray head, gray to light green back and yellow patches on the side of the breast with yellow patches in the wings and a yellow base of the outer tail feathers. An appropriate nickname might be "little fantail" or "red tail". The redstart is also known as the butterfly of the bird world because of its quick flutter motions and bright orange wings and tail. The bird also feeds on insects caught by fly catching, or dropping down suddenly in pursuit of a flying insect, then fanning its tail from side to side. The redstart is often

found near openings, like trails, or swampy spots. The song is thin and not very loud with a high-pitched sibilant quality. It sounds something like: wee-see, wee-see, or more characteristically tsee, tsee, tsway. The nest is a round cup-like structure made of bark shreds and grass, bound with plant fibers and spider webs. The lining is of fine grass, rootlets and hair and holds up to five eggs.

This New World warbler got its name from early settlers who remembered a similar looking bird-----a thrush-----from back home in Europe or England. We can see from this that the American redstart is not particularly related to the painted redstart and other redstart warblers of the neo-tropics or those of the Old World. It is interesting to know that it derives its name from the male's red tail, 'start' being an old word for tail.

The migration of the American redstart is almost always at night. This might account for collisions with TV towers which is a migration hazard. This may help account for the somewhat declining population, along with some forestry management factors. However, the conservation rating of the American redstart is now at 'the least concern' level.

## IAS Big May Bird Count

The Indiana Audubon Society Big May Day Count will be conducted on Saturday, May 10, 2008. The IAS BMDBC is always held on the second Saturday in May which is also International Migratory Bird Day. The count is statewide on a county-by-county basis. Participants may count both in the field and at feeders.

If you are interested in participating in Delaware County, please contact county coordinator, Bill Grummer, at [billcarolee@comcast.net](mailto:billcarolee@comcast.net) or 765.254.1943 by May 5.

## Purple Martin Fans Flock to April Meeting

Our April program on purple martins, with speaker Tom Jonker, may have set a new record for our chapter: We had 106 eager listeners on hand to learn about martin housing, martin adversaries, and much more!

### May 31 field trip to purple martin colony

On May 31, we will accept Tom's invitation to visit his Coatsville Indiana home and see his purple martin colony. We can do nest checks and get some hints from Tom about managing for purple martins. The Jonker's lakeside property is home to swallows, bluebirds, osprey, eagles and other wildlife. If you need a ride or are able to give rides, meet at Minnetrista at 8:30am. Specific directions to the Jonker residence may be found on our website sometime before May 31. Please take lawnchairs and provide your own food and beverages for this long trip. If you missed the program but are interested in becoming a purple martin landlord or want to learn more about expanding an existing colony, we'd like to hear from you. RCAS member Frank Garinger, of Hartford City, is an experienced martin landlord who's willing to share his expertise with new landlords and swap secrets with long-time landlords.

If you're interested, contact Frank at 765-348-4246. Frank also welcomes RCAS members to drive by his home and view his colony, at 2776E State Road 26 in Hartford City.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our field trip to Tom Jonker's place, as well, to see his martin colony, on May 31. (Details available elsewhere in the Chat.)

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## Understanding Global Warming: **How do we know it's real?**

### *Part 4 of a 6-part series on the facts about Global Warming*

How do we know global warming is really happening?

Over the last several decades, scientists have carefully studied patterns of climate change around the world. In its most recent assessment, the IPCC reviewed hundreds of these studies on such topics as past climate changes, observations of retreating ice, warming and rising seas, and other changes, as well as a wide array of supercomputer simulations to model how the planet has and will be affected by increasing amounts of greenhouse gases. Together these studies offer a stark portrait of a rapidly changing world:

- Temperatures have risen about 1.3 degrees F since the late 19th century. Greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere have increased by 18% (nitrous oxide), 35% (carbon dioxide), and 148% (methane).
- Mountain glaciers and snow cover are declining in most parts of the world.
- The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are melting and breaking up.
- The area covered by Arctic sea ice in winter has shrunk about 2.7% each decade since 1978, with even greater summertime reductions.
- Global sea levels rose between 5 and 9 inches during the 20th century.
- The North Atlantic has shown increased hurricane intensity since 1970.
- Precipitation amounts have increased in northern Europe, the eastern Americas, and parts of Asia. Elsewhere, droughts have become longer and more severe. *Information from: <http://www.audubon.org/global-Warming/GetTheFacts.php#real>*

# Robert Cooper Audubon Society



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*The Chat* is published 10 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

- May 12:** Limberlost Program  
**May 17:** Limberlost field trip  
**May 23:** Articles due for June *Chat*. Send to Beth Simmons at basimmons2@bsu.edu  
**May 31:** Purple martin field trip

**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



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- 7:00 p.m.:** Coffee & Gathering  
**7:15 p.m.:** Chapter Business  
**7:30 p.m.:** Scheduled Program

## Officers

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