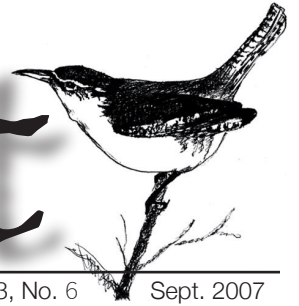


The Chat



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

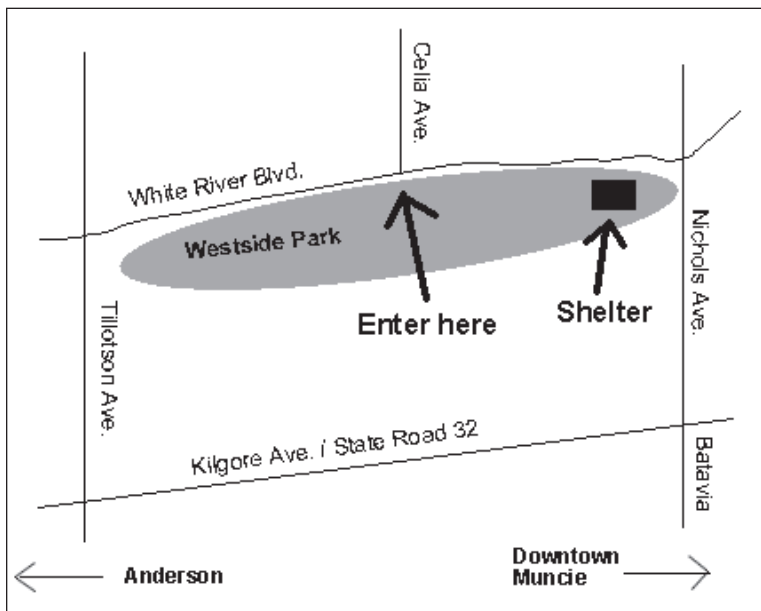
Volume 33, No. 6 Sept. 2007

September 10: Fall Picnic at Westside Park

It's time for one of our favorite chapter events of the year: our annual September picnic, this year at Westside Park, along the White River in Muncie, on Monday, Sept. 10. Plan to arrive soon after 6:00, to set out your food on the potluck table and to find your spot at a picnic table, and by 6:30 we'll be ready to eat.

Please bring a hot or cold dish, salad, or dessert to share and your own table service. Hot dog forks would be appreciated, too. Audubon will supply hot dogs, buns, condiments, cold drinks, and marshmallows for roasting. (A small number of vegetarian hamburgers or hot dogs will be available.)

The park is accessible from White River Blvd., directly across from Celia Ave., between Tillotson and Nichols Aves. Once you enter the park, follow the drive to the left and go to the farthest shelter (near the bridge over Nichols Ave.). See the map for directions. For an interactive map, go



to www.infosports.com/parks/IN/592792.html.

This is a wonderful event to kick off our chapter's activities for the year, relax with one another, and enjoy the sights of the White River. It's also a great chance to introduce friends to Audubon, so bring plenty with you!

A Note from the President

My summer on Hatteras Island is winding up and I look forward to returning to Indiana in time to see the fall leaf show. One of the highlights of the summer was taking my first pelagic birding trip out into the Atlantic Gulfstream. The water is the most amazing cobalt blue and I was able to add several species of shearwaters and petrels to my bird list. I spent many of my days off exploring the Wildlife Refuges and State Parks of North Carolina.

I am anxious to get busy actively serving as chapter president. Filling board vacancies will be my first big challenge. If you are willing to serve the chapter by filling a spot on the board, please contact me or any board member.

See you in October.

Bonnie

Living Lightly Fair a Success



The Living Lightly Fair on June 2 & 3 was a great success, with attendance of more than 1,000 visitors over the course of the two days!

As RCAS members know, Living Lightly was conceived last year by leaders of our Audubon chapter, the Sierra Club, and Cope Environmental Center, with the support of Minnetrista. The weekend was aimed at helping fair-goers discover learn about strategies for living simpler and healthier lives, alternative and renewable energy sources, construction and remodeling tips for saving energy and materials, approaches to sustainable community improvement, organic gardening, rain gardens, landscaping with sustainable materials, and much more.

Thankfully, speakers' presentations, kids' activities, and musical performances all went off without any major hitches, and even the weather cooperated for the most part, with only a couple short downpours. The Delaware County Fairgrounds bustled with activity both days, with nearly three dozen booths for vendors, exhibitors, and food vendors. Feedback from visitors was extremely positive, with many comments about how much we've needed something like this in East Central Indiana.

The fair was such a success, in fact, that plans are already underway to have the second Living Lightly Fair in September 2008. If you'd like to help plan that fair, please send your name and contact information to sustainablelivingfair@gmail.com.

Nominations Sought for Environmentalism Awards

Our annual award banquet is scheduled for Monday, November 12. Be sure to mark your calendars! This event, which is always one of the highlights of the year for our chapter, honors individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions to the environment in our region, perhaps even the state, in these categories:

- **Robert H. and Esther (Munro) Cooper Conservation Award:** the chapter's highest honor, for overall contributions to, conservation of, and appreciation for, the natural environment
- **Phyllis Yugas Wildlife Habitat Preservation:** for development or preservation of habitat that contains significant wildlife and/or native plant life populations
- **Richard Greene Public Service:** for active involvement in serving the public's environmental interests and concerns
- **Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award:** for excellence in educating the area's children, youth, and /or adults on conservation issues and practices
- **Youth Conservation Award:** for excellence in conservation practices by a youth under the age of 18

To make the event a success, we need your help. If you know of an individual or organization that deserves recognition for its service to the natural environment in any of the above categories, please send your nomination, along with a description of the nominee, to Bonnie Nicholson, at nickrb69@yahoo.com, or at the following address: 9898 College Corner Rd., Greens Fork, IN 47345. Be sure to include your own name, phone number, address, and email address.

Award nominees need not reside in our chapter's seven-county region and they need no affiliation with the Audubon Society. Nominations must be received by October 9.

Continuing RCAS Conservation

Osprey nesting platforms

On June 12th the platforms were installed: two at Summit Lake State Park and one at Province Pond Wetland Area by Henry County REMC and RCAS. RCAS is continuing efforts to get the other two platforms planted at Prairie Creek Reservoir.

Sandhill Crane Nesting Habitat

In June, RCAS volunteers planted an additional 100 tussock sedge plugs at the Summit Lake nature area, then in July planted additional wetland plants at Bonham Pond and at Summit Lake nature area. At Westwood Lake, the cattails have been treated and in April 2008 we will plant our fourth sandhill crane nesting area. RCAS has leveraged the \$800 National Audubon Society grant into \$3,800 worth of plants that will benefit the sandhill cranes, as well as many other wetland species.

Prairie Plantings

Mark and Robin Scott 18-acre prairie planting has continued to progress. In July, RCAS volunteers cut invasive shrubs and larger trees, and then the area was mowed. In August the area was herbicide treated. This November, the planting of Henry County genotype grasses and forbs will take place. The DeHart project in northern Delaware County has had invasive shrubs and trees cut, herbicide treatment and this fall a 10-acre prairie planting will happen.

Invasive species

This fall and winter RCAS volunteers hope to treat invasive species of autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, white mulberry and locust in areas such as Summit Lake Nature Ponds area, Wilbur Wright FWA and Westwood Park. This work is being done to help offset the common and endangered bird species declines. There are many areas in east central Indiana which need our help in eradicating these invasive species as well as others. For additional information you can contact: www.mipn.org

We're embarrassed

The Robert Cooper Audubon Society is largely about birds, but we haven't had a field trip for more than a year, because we still have no Field Trip Chair!

This is one of the most enjoyable positions on the board: Not only do you get to go birding in places you've always wanted to go to, but you get to have other birders help you decide what you're seeing. An added perk: The Field Trip Chair also gets to be the keeper of our chapter spotting scope, a nice Nikon scope that magnifies birds up to 60 times!

You don't need to be an expert birder to lead field trips. But if you're already an experienced birder, we especially hope that you'll step forward and give back to the chapter in this fun, easy, and vital role.

To volunteer or learn more about being Field Trip Chair, contact Barb Stedman at bastedman@gmail.com or 288-2890.



This cardinal isn't the only one who's a little red!

Robert Cooper Audubon Society



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Dated Material- Please Deliver Promptly

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

Sept. 10, 6 p.m.: Annual RCAS Picnic
Sept. 14: Articles due for October *Chat*. Send to Beth Simmons at basimmons2@bsu.edu
Nov. 12: Annual Awards Banquet

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



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