



Cooper's Talk

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

New Spaces—Introducing the Rinard Orchid Greenhouse Expansion and the New Nature Lab

October 19 RCAS Program

Starting in October, regular RCAS monthly meetings will move to the new Nature Lab of the Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Orchid Greenhouse (ROGH) and Environmental Education Center at Ball State University (BSU). The lab is part of a

Nature Lab: Supporting Environmental Education

Beginning at 6:30 pm on October 19, Erica Oliver, environmental education program coordinator and greenhouse assistant, will offer a tour of the Nature Lab. The Lab hosts a number of ambassadors from our natural environment, including Beaker, an eastern box turtle; a sampling of native frogs; and, as of July, an active hive of honeybees. The north wall overlooks a meadow planting and can be opened to the outdoors.

An Introduction to the World of Orchid Pollination

Our meeting will start at 7:00 pm with a short business meeting followed by a presentation by Carol Day, orchid curator of ROGH and the Wheeler-Thanhauser Orchid Collection and Species Bank. Carol will introduce us to the strategies

that orchids use to entice hummingbirds, butterflies, and other insects to transfer pollen from one plant to another. The program will conclude with a tour of the expanded Rinard Conservatory which hosts several orchids in bloom and other tropical plants.

The Nature Lab is located at 2500 W. University Ave on the BSU campus within Christy Woods. Parking is available on the south side of the greenhouse, and is free after 5 pm. The building is handicap accessible.



The new Nature Lab, a classroom space attached to the Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Orchid Greenhouse
Photo from [BSU on-line blog](#)

recent ROGH expansion project that was funded by donations from Dr. Joe Rinard, American Electric Power Foundation, Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County, Friends of the Rinard Orchid Greenhouse, Josie and Geoff Fox, and numerous community members. RCAS is proud to have contributed to this project and the environmental education programming that it will support.

The October 19 RCAS meeting will include a tour of the new facilities and an informative presentation.

Field Trips

Everyone is welcome at field trips and programs. Binoculars are available on request.

September 24, October 29, and November 12, 9 am to 11 am: 4306 Mounds Road, Anderson, IN

Mounds State Park

Monthly walks at Mounds State Park continue, but with a change. **Starting in November of this year, our Mounds walks will move from the last Saturday to the second Saturday of the month.** Double check the date and join us!

Meet at the Visitor's Center at 9 am. State Park fees apply.



The Hayes Arboretum pollinator field in bloom in July
Photo from [Hayes Arboretum Facebook page](#)

Saturday, September 10, 9 to 11:30 am: 801 Elks Rd, Richmond, IN

Hayes Arboretum, Richmond

Not sure how to tell a white oak from a bur oak? On Saturday, September 10, we'll explore both trees and flowers—and perhaps even some birds!—at Hayes Arboretum, in Richmond. We'll gather at the Nature Center at 9 am. The arboretum's naturalist will take us on a tour of some of the properties 52 specimen trees and provide tips on identifying trees by their shape, leaves, and bark.

Afterward, we'll visit the butterfly garden and pollinator field (to look for prairie forbs that might still be in bloom) and walk the forest trails. With 466 acres to explore, we'll find plenty to keep us busy for the morning! Be sure to bring binoculars, water, and perhaps a snack.

A fee of \$2 per person covers our tour.

Saturday, September 17, 9 to noon: 335 S Main St, Geneva, IN

Limberlost Swamp Conservation Area, Geneva

Meet at the visitor center of the Limberlost State Historic Site located on the east side of S. Main Street in Geneva at 9 am. We plan to bird for 2 to 3 hours, exploring favorite trails and, perhaps, less traveled terrain.

October 15, 9 am to 11 am: Intersection of Messick Rd and CR 300N, New Castle, IN

Birding at Wilbur Wright Trail Project

Last year we had a great mid-October walk on this fairly new section of the Wilbur Wright trail. Come see if our luck holds this year. We will meet at the intersection of Messick Road and CR 300N at 9 am. Park in the grass parking area on the west side of Messick Road just south of the intersection.

Saturday, November 19, 1 to 3 pm: 5993 N. Messick Road, New Castle, IN

Summit Lake State Park

Late fall brings back the ducks. We will meet in the boat ramp parking lot at the north end of the park road to see what we can spot. Bring a scope if you have one. If not, we will have enough to share. State Park fees apply.

Programs and Events

October 1, Noon to 2 pm: The Locust Grove Shelter at Mounds State Park

RCAS Fall Picnic

We'll gather at the Locust Grove Shelter at noon. Bring a favorite dish to share and your own place settings and drinking containers. Come for the food, fun, and fellowship!

October 19, 7 pm preceded by a Nature Lab Tour at 6:30 pm: Ball State University Nature Lab

An Introduction to the World of Orchid Pollination

Join us at the Nature Lab adjacent to the Rinard Orchid Greenhouse for our first meeting in this new space. At 6:30 pm, Erica Oliver, environmental education program coordinator, will offer a tour of the Nature Lab. This will be followed at 7 pm by our regular meeting where speaker Carol Day, curator of the Rinard Greenhouse, will introduce us to the fascinating world of orchid pollination. The program will conclude with a tour of the expanded Rinard Conservatory.

November 16, 7 pm: Ball State University Nature Lab

Famous Bird Observatories and Migration Spectacles in Eastern North America

BSU graduate student Julian Grudens will share firsthand experiences and perspectives from long-term migration counts and research stations including Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, MN, and Cape May Bird Observatory, NJ.

*Monthly programs
are moving to the*

*Third
Wednesday*

*of the month. Be
sure to mark your
calendars!*



RCAS Awards Nominations Due September 18

Each November, Robert Cooper Audubon celebrates individuals and organizations who make noteworthy contributions to conservation and environmental education in our region. Help us celebrate an unsung conservation hero by submitting a nomination to Annette Rose at rosenflowers@hughes.net

When submitting a nomination, please describe the nominee's contributions and provide contact information. Nominations are due by September 18. 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 linked from the RCAS website at the bottom of the "Monthly Programs" page. Categories for this year's awards are as follows:

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, and /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 Yuhus 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.

*Know of a local unsung
conservation
hero?... Submit
nominations to
rosenflowers@hughes.net*

*Plan to join us for our December program
when we will feature this year's winners—
date and venue to be announced*

What's Your Bird Love Story?

Story and illustrations provided by Barb Stedman

Valentine's Day may be more than five months away, but for those of us in the Robert Cooper Audubon Society, every day we see a bird is filled with love!

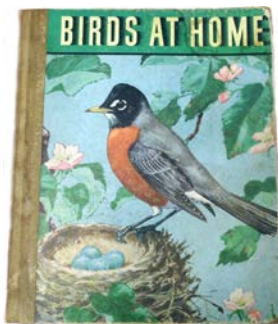
In the coming issues of Cooper's Talk and on our website, we want to tell your love story with birds. When did you first fall in love with birds? How old were you, and where were you? What first made your heart beat a little faster when you saw a bird? Was it a parent who taught you to appreciate their beauty? Was it a book you read? Was it an injured bird that you helped rescue? Or something else altogether?

Whatever your story, we'd love to hear it—and, even more important, we want to see it. So write up a few paragraphs and send them, along with a photo or two or three, to Barb Stedman, at bastedman@gmail.com. Your story will likely appear in either our newsletter or website, or perhaps in both.

Here is Barb's own love story with birds:



I cheated in drawing a Scarlet Tanager by starting with red construction paper!



Before I could read, I was spending hours each week poring over *Birds at Home*, a large 1942 National Wildlife Federation book written by Marguerite Henry (best known for her horse books) and gorgeously illustrated by Jacob Abbott. Eventually I learned to love the natural history discussions in this



full-color photos and drawings of birds! The encyclopedia was kept on a low shelf in my family's living room, so I could pull out the "B" volume, turn to page 288, and review, almost daily, the many illustrations.

Those two books set the foundation for a lifetime of loving birds. I incessantly asked my brothers which birds said things like "birdie birdie" and "cherry cherry." In fourth grade, when



The World Book Encyclopedia's two-page spread on "Favorite Songbirds" obviously got a lot of wear and tear, as evidenced by the now-yellowed cellophane tape!

Birds at Home highlighted adults feeding their babies—like this chapter on Baltimore Orioles

"lively and accurate book on the family life of common birds," but it was the drawings, especially the full-page color drawings, that I

could never get enough of.

Likewise, the "Bird" entry in our 1959 World Book Encyclopedia captivated me. Full-color illustrations were rare in this encyclopedia, but the extensive 28-page bird entry, which begins, "Bird is an animal with feathers," had 19 pages of

instructed to draw a picture of my favorite bird, I didn't

hesitate in picking the Scarlet Tanager, even though I had never seen one in person. In college, in the 1970s, I finally took my dream class, Ornithology, and bought the 1947 edition of Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds. It would become my first of more than two dozen bird field guides that I'd eventually use for birding in North America and other parts of the world.

That's my bird love story. What's yours?

See our website, www.cooperaudubon.org, for full-sized photos.

My Thoughts: Stewardship 2022

By Jim Schowe

As many of you know I have taken upon myself the task of attempting to keep my little corner of the globe as natural as possible. Each year during the early spring and late fall I yank up, cut off, cuss out, and generally rid the property of noxious invasive plants. At those times of the year it is easiest to identify the offending flora in that the Autumn Olive and Asian Honeysuckle are still viable, green, and easy to find. Out they go, leaving only their potential successors as seeds in the soil waiting to test my vigilance.

Of course, there are many other rooted pests to contend with, but why list them all when it is high summer and I want to talk about a different form of stewardship.

A while ago I wrote about placing a Purple Martin pole with twelve attached gourds not far from the one-acre pond we own. This year brought quite a surprise: Not only did we have martins wanting to nest here, but we had too few gourds to house all the feathered visitors. Quick! Time to order another pole with a dozen gourds. Will we be too late in the migration and have an empty unused martin complex? No way! Thanks to Amazon and UPS we received the new pole/gourd combination in just a few days. I dug a hole deep enough to anchor the pole and set it in a couple bags of concrete. In less than a week the new nesting gourds were almost to capacity with Purple Martins. Success! I honestly can't count all the purple martins cruising my land.

A few weeks ago, with the help of my mentor, Linda B., I took an inventory of the martins' 2022 progress. We counted more than 35 eggs and about a dozen hatchlings. I was quite thrilled to say the least.

Two days ago, urged on by Linda, I checked the gourds again for the little ones' progress. Happily I found no dead young ones, and only six of the gourds did not have an active nest inside. As usual, though, there was a snag. In two of the gourds I found mites. Not five, ten, or even thirty, but several hundred. The blood sucking critters are so small that if

they didn't swarm by the hundreds I would have missed them. Small gray dots less than ten thousands of an inch in diameter are easily missed. A call to Linda gave me the information needed to help fend off the infestation. (Mites can kill young birds and even adults.) The attack plan was simple: remove the young birds, remove the bedding, dust the inside of the gourd with Sevin powder, replace the bedding and put the young back in the newly cleaned gourd. Sound easy? Not too hard? Have you ever tried to round up baby martins as they escaped from the temporary storage box? Dang! They sure can squawk! Once the task was completed I picked up the area only to find that one of the young birds decided to hide in the corner of the box and now had to be reunited with its siblings. Perhaps I was lucky and correctly guessed to which gourd the hide-away belonged. No real concern though if not with the parents. The unintended indentured foster parents should care for the little one as if it were their own.

Now I must make careful inspections every three days for mites until the end of the nesting season when the mature and adolescent birds will make their steady way south to Brazil to spend the remainder of the year. On their next trip north they will find twenty-four cleaned gourds with fresh white pine needles so they can start the cycle all over again.

On July 30, after this article was written, Jim provided this update:

Just in the last two weeks the young birds took wing, and we must have had a hundred Purple Martins in the air at one time. But now I guess the migration for the martins has begun because, as I put
(continued on page 7)



Photo by Leslie Scopes Anderson
Audubon Photography Awards
<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/purple-martin#photo3>

Birdhouses, Books, and Backpacks

By Terri Gorney Lehman

This past June, twelve young people and their parents met in the Education Room of the Limberlost Carriage House for a program titled Birdhouses, Books, and Backpacks. Led by Limberlost naturalist Curt Burnette, participants explored the collection of bird skulls, feathers, and nests assembled by Curt; built bird houses; and learned more about what it is like to be a bird. Each participant received a backpack, a bird guide, and a birdhouse to take home.



Birdhouse construction is underway
Photo by Terri Gorney Lehman

Developing this program was a multistep process and involved several individuals and organizations. It started in 2019, when I worked with then director of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Michael Baer, to obtain a Mumford-Keller grant from the Indiana Audubon Society for a birding program for young



Everlee (front) and her sister, Janie, at the workshop's end
Photo by Terri Gorney Lehman

people. Then Covid happened and Michael left his position. Fast forward to 2021 when the Friends of the Limberlost board took over the grant and contributed some additional funds. The program was revised and Curt Burnette agreed to present.

We assembled materials for the program from various sources. Several years ago, I had donated National Audubon backpacks to the Limberlost State Historic Site. Each backpack included a small pair of binoculars. This was a perfect opportunity to put them into the hands of young people. Some of our grant money went towards purchasing copies of the *Young Birder's Guide* by Bill Thompson III from Bird Watcher's Digest. And we were also able to purchase birdhouse kits from an enterprising 12-year-old named Malachi who has his own business on Etsy. He builds birdhouses and offers them ready to assemble. He was excited by the order.

Part of the program was created by Alexandra "Alex" Forsythe after she won the RCAS Charles D. Wise Youth Conservation Award in 2013. Several of Alex's photographs of birds were enlarged and used to discuss commonly seen birds. Alex also created "bird eyes" so participants could try to find seeds on a plate and see how difficult it is to have one eye on the food and one eye on the sky so as not to become someone else's dinner. We also used her series of 21 clear plastic eggs with color photos to illustrate the development of a chicken.

Cheers to Indiana Audubon Society, Robert Cooper Audubon Society, and Friends of the Limberlost for educating today's youth about our feathered friends.

Peregrine Update

By Catherine Kubo

For the third year in a row, Peregrine Falcons have successfully nested in Anderson. In 2020 the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) installed a nesting box on the balcony of one of the tallest buildings in the city after local birders reported peregrine activity there. Peenie, an eight-year-old male banded in Ohio, and Raptorette, a first-year female banded in Toronto, made immediate use of the box and fledged two young that year. It is somewhat unusual for a female to have a successful brood her first season, but thanks in part to Peenie's excellent skills as a provider, both young were flying and hunting on their own by August when they dispersed. Peenie also left for the winter, but Raptorette hung around and even attracted another suitor. After Peenie came back in the spring we saw no more of that fellow and the proven parents went on to raise and fledge three young last year.

This spring, which would have been Peenie's tenth, we did not see him return. A new, unbanded male, dubbed P2, took his place. Raptorette laid four eggs, and all four chicks hatched. Banding day, on June 15, was the usual cacophony of squawking chicks and screeching parents. Retired DNR naturalist John Castrale was again on hand to do the banding. Just a few weeks after banding, the chicks had grown in their flight feathers and lost most of their downy coats. The balcony where they were raised provides an



Young falcon with food just delivered by adult
Photo by Jeff Timmons

excellent location for running back and forth, wing flapping, railing perching, sky watching, and all the other activities that young falcons engage in to prepare them for first flight.

Fledging day for three of the chicks came on July 6. Jeff Timmons and I were both out of town, so Lois Rockhill enlisted additional help, including Andrea Smith, to monitor the fledglings' progress and intervene if needed. Happily no interventions were required. The only sad part of the story is that two days prior to that, the fourth chick was discovered dead on the sidewalk. Did it attempt to fly too soon and hit a building? Lose its footing on the rail? Or get lifted by a gust and fail to keep its perch? We will never know.

Now it is early August and getting harder to spot the falcons although all three youngsters were observed just a couple evenings ago. They are flying further and further afield, acquiring their hunting skills, and soon they will be gone.



John Castrale, assisted by Kamal Islam, bands a chick
Photo by Lois Rockhill

My Thoughts...continued from page 5

our chickens up for the night this evening, there were only six martins to count. The one in particular that likes to dive bomb me and utter a guttural squawk is still here doing his fly-by stunt. Funny, I can follow him in flight and admire his moves as he lines me up for another squawking run. We especially enjoyed the displays the birds put



on this year and will miss them so much when they are gone for the year. I learned from Linda that I should expect to see several juveniles and some 'scout' martins between now and the end of August sizing up new places to nest next year. Maybe if I see enough potential nesters this fall, we will erect another pole and offer a total of thirty-six gourds next nesting season.



Robert Cooper Audubon Society

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About RCAS

Membership

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

Officers

President:	Mary Annette Rose	765-774-3134
Vice-President:	Rose Jeffery	
Treasurer:	Jim Jeffery	

Directors

2022-2024	Catherine Kubo	Jim Schowe
2021-2023	Kamal Islam	Kim McKenzie

Programs and Field Trips

Most RCAS programs and field trips are free and open to the public. Programs are generally scheduled from October through June on the third Wednesday of the month. For updates and reminders on the schedule and meeting locations, refer to our website or join our distribution list by sending a request to admin@cooperaudubon.org.

Contact us

Chapter Website: www.cooperaudubon.org
Find us on Facebook!
Email: admin@cooperaudubon.org
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From the Gallery



Eastern Wood Peewee, June 2022
Photo by Lois Rockhill

About Cooper's Talk

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Cooper's Talk is published four times per year for members of the Robert Cooper Audubon Society. All are invited to submit photos, articles, and events for publication by emailing items to admin@cooperaudubon.org