

# The Chat



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

Volume 40, number 4 | September/October 2014

## Fall picnic!

This year's annual picnic will take place on **Sunday, Sept. 14**, from **1-4 pm**, at the Locust Grove Picnic Shelter in Mounds State Park. After entering the park, turn right and look for signs to the shelter. (Mounds charges a \$5 entry fee per in-state vehicle.)

We'll provide free-range, all-natural hamburgers, veggie burgers, buns, and toppings. Please bring a dish to share and your own tableware.

After lunch, we'll have all of our chapter's brand new optical equipment on display for everyone to try out: a spotting scope and three pairs of binoculars. Hopefully, some fall migrants will stop by and give us something to look at!

We'll also have information and flyers about the proposed Mounds Reservoir Project and hope to provide "Don't Dam It!" yard signs free for chapter members.

This event is in lieu of our regular monthly meeting. Bring your family and friends!



## Film: *From Billions to None*

The planet's last passenger pigeon died in September 1914, even though the species numbered in the billions just a few decades earlier.

On **Wednesday, Oct. 8**, we'll show *From Billions to None*, a newly released film that "recreates the glory of passenger pigeons in majestic flight using cutting edge animation" and "depicts the ruthless ways in which our 19th-century ancestors utterly destroyed them."

Chapter business and refreshments will begin at **7 pm at Kennedy Library**, followed by the film by **7:15**. Invite your friends!



This film is part of Project Passenger Pigeon ([www.passengerpigeon.org](http://www.passengerpigeon.org)), a nationwide effort to educate audiences about species extinction. It's also the first of several local events dedicated to the 100-year anniversary of the passenger pigeon's extinction.

On November 10, our chapter will partner with Minnetrista to host an appearance of Joel Greenberg, author of *The Feathered River: A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction*. Details will follow in the next issue of the *Chat*.

## RCAS receives special funding from members Josie & Geoff Fox

The Robert Cooper Audubon Society is pleased to announce that our monthly program allowance has significantly increased, due to a generous donation from Josie and Geoff Fox. This money will allow the RCAS to bring in researchers and educators from greater distances and also speakers with educational animals. (These types of presentations were cost-prohibitive in years past.)

The funding from the Foxes will also cover sponsorship of this year's Charles Wise Youth Conservation Award winner and a new conservation project being spearheaded by our Conservation Committee, the details of which will soon be available.

We are looking forward to a productive year in education, sponsorship, and conservation initiatives, and we thank the Foxes for their support.

# Upcoming field trips

## Salamonie Lake & Forest

Saturday, September 13

We'll meet at Hominy Ridge Picnic Area in the Salamonie River State Forest at about **8:15 am**. We'll bird in the forest during the morning and then picnic at Hominy Ridge, so bring a sack lunch and something to drink. After lunch we'll check out other areas around the lake/reservoir and the Nature Center.

*Carpoolers* will leave from the Cooper Science parking lot, on Ball State's campus, at **7 am**.

*To get there on your own:* Take I-69 north to SR 218. Turn left (west) onto 218 and follow it to SR 105. Turn right (north) on 105, then left (west) on SR 124. Go 3 miles and turn right (north) onto CR 600 E. Go 3.5 miles and turn left (west) onto CR 250 S. Go .5 mile and turn right at Dam Rd. At the fork in the road, take the left fork – Pefley Road into the Salamonie River State Forest. Follow signs to the Hominy Ridge Picnic Area. This rather convoluted route (just over 60 miles from Muncie) often has nice birding along the county roads. You can download a site map from the Salamonie Lake DNR website.

## Eagle Creek Park

Sunday, September 21

We'll join in the weekly Eagle Creek bird hike, which occurs year-round from **9-11 am**. The hike is led by members of Amos W. Butler Audubon Society and usually brings out many excellent birders. We'll begin at the park's Ornithology Center at 9 am. The park entry fee is \$5 per car.

*Carpoolers* will leave the Cooper Science parking lot, on Ball State's campus, at **7:30 am**.

*To get there on your own:* Take I-69 south to Indianapolis and exit onto I-465 west (the north loop). Take exit 21 and turn right onto westbound 71st St. After junctions with Lafayette Rd. and I-65, 71st St. turns into Eagle Creek Parkway. The park will be on the right, at 6515 Delong Rd. After entering, follow signs for the Ornithology Center.

## Mounds State Park bird hikes

Sundays, September 28 & October 26

Our regular monthly bird hikes continue at Mounds State Park in Anderson. We'll meet at the visitors center at **9 am** and bird for about two hours.

## Limberlost

Saturday, October 4

We'll meet at the Limberlost Visitor Center in Geneva at **9 am**, then look for waterfowl and other migrating birds. Bring a picnic lunch or snack.

*Carpoolers* will leave from the Cooper Science lot on Ball State's campus at 8 am.

*To get there on your own:* From Muncie, take N. Broadway and continue north on SR 67. Follow 67 through Albany to Portland. (In Portland SR 67 takes a left.) Continue on 67 into Bryant where you should continue straight onto north 27 at the traffic light. (SR 67 turns right at this point; don't turn there or you'll end up in Ohio!) Once in Geneva, turn right into the Visitor Center parking lot. The address is 200 E 6th Street.

## Summit Lake

Saturday, November 1

We'll meet along CR 500 south of CR750 at **9 am** and bird at Summit Lake. If the weather is good, we may check out Prairie Creek on the way back toward Muncie.



A great blue heron at the Indiana Dunes Lakeshore

## Indiana Dunes Lakeshore - Saturday & Sunday, September 27 & 28

Leaving the Muncie area at **7 am** on Saturday, we'll travel about 3 hours to the Kingsbury Fish and Wildlife Area. We'll gather in the parking area at the corner of East Hupp Rd. and South Hupp/Stillwell Rd., where there are public restrooms. We'll bird in some of the marsh areas at the east side of the area, have lunch – bring a picnic lunch with you! – then head to the dunes.

After checking in at our hotel, we'll bird the Lakeshore, which has a multitude of birding sites, then have dinner together. On Sunday we'll continue birding through early to mid-afternoon, ending up near I-65.

If you plan to attend, email Rose Jeffery, Field Trip Chair, at [rosemariejeffery@gmail.com](mailto:rosemariejeffery@gmail.com). Provide a cell  
*(Continued on page 3)*

# Living Lightly Fair

Sept. 20, 9 am - 5 pm, Minnetrista

Living Lightly, a resource fair for sustainable lifestyles, will soon be here! This year's fair will take place on **Saturday, Sept. 20**, at Minnetrista.

The **featured speaker**, from 10:30-11:45 am, will be **Jim Poyser**, Executive Director of both Earth Charter Indiana and Youth Power Indiana, as well as Hoosier Environmental Council's Environmentalist of the Year for 2013.

Jim's presentation, "Living Lightly in Heavy Times," will bring lively energy and humor to ecological challenges that may seem, at times, insurmountable. But as suggested by Jim's game show, "It Ain't Too Late," we can indeed address these challenges, with a mixture of commitment, ingenuity, and wonder. Engaging youth is key to this, and Jim will share many stories of what Indiana young people are doing to lead us to a more mindful – and heart-filled – relationship with nature.

The rest of the day's **speakers** will cover a wide range of topics: aquaculture (production of aquatic plants and/or animals for food), energy reduction in your home, toxins in personal care and cleaning products, beekeeping, landscaping with native plants, wind and solar energy, green

**Volunteers are needed** to help staff our booth for the day! Contact Sarah McKillip, at [sarahmckillip@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmckillip@gmail.com), if you can give two hours of your time on Sept. 20.

business practices, and Farmished, a new organization committed to local, sustainable food production.

**Children** will find plenty to do all day to, with hands-on activities to learn about recycling, erosion, and pollution. Both children and adults will be able to make a fish to contribute to the **River of Fish**, and artists from **Beyond I CAN** will be selling pottery they've created and demonstrating how the pottery is made.

Throughout the day, fair-goers can browse the vendors and exhibitors in the **Green Marketplace** and see what local **educators** have been doing to help children and teens learn more about sustainability.

A bit before noon, you can grab a bite to eat from **Payne's Restaurant**, enjoy the music of **Bootleg**, or tour the **Permaculture Initiative's** garden plot at Minnetrista.

Wrap up the day from **3:45-5:00**



with the **music of Krista Deter**, a Bloomington singer and songwriter whose repertoire spans many styles and eras. She was part of *Wilderness Plots*, an ensemble CD and performance inspired by Scott Russell Sanders' narratives about the settling of the Midwest. An avid supporter of education, animal welfare, and sustainability, Deter released her latest album, *Flat Earth Diary*, in January 2014, to great acclaim.

Admission to the entire day's events – including speakers and music – is **FREE!** The Robert Cooper Audubon Society remains a proud sponsor of the fair. Come visit our booth!

Visit [www.livinglightlyfair.org](http://www.livinglightlyfair.org) for complete information and a schedule of the day's activities.

## **Indiana Dunes Lakeshore, continued from p. 2**

phone number, if available, and let her know if you'll join the group for dinner on Saturday. Rose will share the list of attendees and their email addresses to help members arrange carpooling.

We have a block of rooms reserved for Saturday night at the Hilton Garden Inn in Chesterton, just south of the Lakeshore. If you missed the deadline for reserving one of these rooms, there are many other hotels in the area.

Questions? Email Rose or call her at 765-747-9699 (home) or 765-716-0299 (cell).

*To get to the Kingsbury Fish and Wildlife Area:* Go north on I-69 to SR 26 and turn left (west). At SR 9, turn right (north). At US 35/SR 22, turn left (west) toward Kokomo. Get on US 31 north toward Plymouth,

then US 30 west toward Valparaiso. Turn right (north) onto US 35, then right (east) on US 6. Go a couple miles and turn left (north) onto CR 600 E. This will take you into the Kingsbury FWA. Turn left on E. Hupp Rd. and find our meeting place at E. Hupp and S. Hupp Roads.

*To get to Hilton Garden Inn from the Kingsbury FWA:* From Kingsbury head south to US 6 and take it west. It will merge with US 35 for a bit, then merge with US 421 and meander north toward Westville for a mile or so before continuing west. Follow US 6 to SR 49 and turn right (north) toward Chesterton and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The Hilton Garden Inn is off SR 49 just north of Indiana Toll Rd./I-80. The address is 501 Gateway Blvd., Chesterton.

# Birds throughout History: Edward Jenner and His Cuckoos

This month we're introducing a new column, "Birds throughout History," written by **John McKillip**, Assoc. Professor of Biology at Ball State University. His email address is [jmckillip@bsu.edu](mailto:jmckillip@bsu.edu).

Some readers may recall from science classes years ago that Edward Jenner (1749-1823), the well-known English physician and scientist, developed the smallpox vaccine. Some may recall the true account of Jenner inoculating a young boy in 1796 with material from the crusty sores of milkmaids with cowpox, a much less severe form of a similar virus. This bold experiment and primitive vaccine protected the child from smallpox and likely saved the boy's life.

Subsequently, Jenner went on to be appreciated by both commoners and royalty alike, including King George IV in 1821. Today, Jenner is recognized by biologists as the "Father of Immunology" and is thought by many scholars to have saved more lives than any other scientist known.

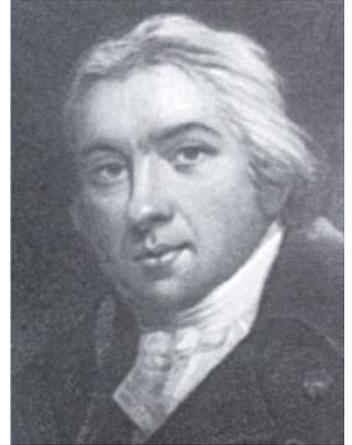
However, what many birders may not realize is that Jenner also had a keen interest in natural history. Specifically, his fascination with the nesting habits of the

common (Old World) cuckoo resulted in multiple publications and a well-respected reputation by scientists outside of the medical field as well – so much so that Jenner eventually was elected to the prestigious Royal Society in 1788.

Jenner's studies disproved the widespread belief that *adult* cuckoos displaced the eggs and hatchlings from the nest of their hosts. Through meticulous observation and help from his nephew, Jenner showed that *newly hatched cuckoos* possess an anatomical cleft in their dorsal side for only the first several days of life. This depression was ideally suited for spooning the unhatched host eggs, or the host chicks, over the side of the nest.

In fact, Jenner's observations and conclusions also confirmed that when hosts are expelled by these brood parasite hatchlings, adult cuckoos had already permanently left the nest, leaving the cuckoo hatchlings to fend for themselves.

Jenner's findings were published in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 1788. Photographic evidence of Jenner's conclusions would have to wait until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Top right:** Jenner at about the time of his studies on cuckoo nesting behavior (from *Vaccines*, 3rd ed., Plotkin & Orenstein, 1999)

**Left:** Cuckoo hatchling ridding the nest of host eggs (from *Ornithology*, 2nd ed., F. Gill, 1994.)

**Right:** Juvenile cuckoo being attended by the host warbler species (from *Birds of Europe*, J. Gould, 1966)



## Those Mysterious Raptors (just for kids!)

Who-o-o likes raptors? Who-o-o would like to meet some live owls and a red-tailed hawk up close and learn about mysterious creatures of the night?

Children and their parents are invited to join us on Saturday, **October 25**, at **10:30 am** at the **Kennedy**

**Branch Library** to meet wildlife biologist Tom Sproat and some of his feathered friends. It'll be a hoot! (Parents, please accompany children.)

Bring cameras and don't forget your curiosity caps!

# Why I Loved a Giant Rat: Adventures of an Animal Man

Book review by Willy De Smet

Many of us have met Curt Burnette, the naturalist/program developer at the Limberlost State Historic Site, and listened spellbound during one of his presentations. He was recognized for his educational achievements with the Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award from our chapter last year.

Curt is not only a first-rate educator but also a first-rate story teller. More than three decades of working with animals – as a naturalist, nature guide, zookeeper and more – has provided him with lots of fascinating experiences and anecdotes.

He has been saying for a long time that he was going to write some of these stories down. He even read us one of these stories at the awards ceremony.

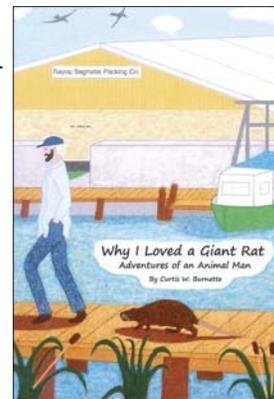
Well, he did it and put a bunch of these stories in a book and got it published. These stories are sometimes funny, sometimes sad, sometimes educational and

thought-provoking.

Not all stories are appropriate for young or sensitive people. A particularly gruesome story is marked as such at the beginning of the story.

Curt usually mixes some entertainment in while educating. In his book he mixes some education in with the entertainment. You'll find out how to tell a boy alligator from a girl alligator, for instance, while reading his adventures with them.

If you want to read about "the snake that caused a party" don't go online; you can't find his stories there. Curt's book is only available at the Limberlost Visitors' Center in Geneva. There is some good birding in the area, too!



## Send us your nominations!

Our November 13 awards banquet will honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions to the environment in our region 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 Yuhas Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award: for development or preservation of habitat that contains significant wildlife and/or native plant life populations

- Richard Greene Public Service Award: 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
- Charles Wise Youth Conservation Award: for excellence in conservation practices by a youth under age 18

To make the event a success, *we need your help*. If you know of an organization or individual who deserves recognition for his or her ser-

vice in any of the above categories, please *send your nomination*, along with a description of the nominee and his or her contact information, to Sarah McKillip at [sarahrmckillip@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrmckillip@gmail.com) or at 2804 W. Sun Valley Pkwy. Muncie, IN 47303.

**Nominations must be received by Oct. 30.** *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 or be affiliated with the Audubon Society. A list of past recipients is linked from [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org), at the bottom of the "Monthly Programs" page.

## Thank you to our chapter supporters!

Bill & Lois Altman  
Karen Blank  
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John Wilkins

*And other anonymous donors*

## **Robert Cooper Audubon Society**

Robert Cooper Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1635  
Muncie, IN 47308-1635



**Become a “chapter-only member” of the RCAS for only \$20**, and your dues will go *entirely* to the support of our activities. (Chapter-only memberships may supplement or replace membership in the National Audubon Society.)

To join or learn more, visit our website at [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).

### **Dates for Your Calendar**

- Sept. 13:** Salamonie Reservoir field trip
- Sept. 14:** Picnic at Mounds SP
- Sept. 20:** Living Lightly Fair
- Sept. 21:** Eagle Creek Park field trip
- Sept. 27-28:** Dunes Lakeshore field trip
- Sept. 28:** Mounds SP bird hike
- Oct. 4:** Limberlost field trip
- Oct. 8:** *From Billions to None* film & monthly mtg.
- Oct. 25:** Mysterious Raptors
- Oct. 26:** Mounds SP bird hike
- Oct. 30:** Conservation award nominations due
- Nov. 1:** Summit Lake field trip

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**Chapter Website:** [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)

Find us on **Facebook!**

**Email:** [cooperaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:cooperaudubon@gmail.com)

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Program meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except July, August, & September) at

**Muncie Public Library Kennedy Branch**

1700 W. McGalliard Rd., Muncie, IN

7:00 pm: chapter business & refreshments

7:15 pm: scheduled program

*The Chat* is published 5 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.

## **How Do Wolves Change Rivers?**

Can the presence of wolves change a river’s behavior?

In his TED Talk, George Monbiot explains how reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone National Park after a 70-year absence set off a “trophic cascade” that altered the movement of deer, sent trees soaring

to new heights, attracted scores of new animals, and stabilized river banks.

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/how-wolves-can-alter> for a short video that showcases this trophic cascade. You can also find the link there for Monbiot’s full TED Talk.

### **Officers**

|                 |                 |              |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| President:      | Sarah McKillip  | 765-287-8464 |
| Vice-President: | Willy De Smet   | 260-726-6693 |
| Recording Sec.: | Carol Islam     | 765-284-9872 |
| Treasurer:      | Robert Williams | 765-730-8427 |

### **Directors**

|            |                  |              |
|------------|------------------|--------------|
| 2013-2015: | Kamal Islam      | 765-284-9872 |
|            | Jim Jeffery      | 765-747-9699 |
| 2014-2016: | Annette Rose     | 765-741-8376 |
|            | Kevin Tungesvick | 765-354-2775 |

### **Committee chairs**

|                 |               |              |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Conservation:   | Jon Creek     | 765-348-4019 |
| Education:      | Deborah Brown | 765-747-9332 |
| Field Trip:     | Rose Jeffery  | 765-716-0299 |
| Hospitality:    | Doris Cheney  | 765-288-0981 |
| Membership:     | Sandy Ho      | 765-215-4361 |
| Program         | Claire Nemes  | 301-775-6528 |
| Publicity       | Danny Pirtle  | 920-917-4293 |
| Newsletter Ed.: | Barb Stedman  | 765-288-2890 |