



Cooper's Talk

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

Let's Celebrate the Contributions of Our 2020 Conservation Awardees



Conserving habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife is a primary goal of Robert Cooper Audubon Society. Since 1983, our Society has honored over 150 individuals who conserve and restore habitat or educate the public about the importance of protecting wildlife and maintaining biodiversity. In 2020, we celebrate the contributions of four individuals who have long been champions of the environment.

The chapter's highest honor, the **Robert H. and Esther L. Cooper Award**, is bestowed upon **Doug Spence**, owner and operator of Spence Restoration Nursery. For over 20 years, Doug has propagated native wildflowers, sedges, rushes, and grasses for restoration projects across the region. The seeds of these 140-plus species of plants originated from the remnant prairies, wetlands, and woodlands of Indiana.

Stretching across 240 acres in Delaware County, this wholesale nursery supplies seeds and plugs for conservation projects across the Great Lakes region. The nursery produces more than 50,000 milkweed plugs a year to use in restoration projects like the Maumee and Cuyahoga river wetlands to protect Lake Erie from pollution runoff. Doug also supported a pioneering effort to develop a milkweed gin that separates the milkweed floss from the seed. The floss is then sold as a hypoallergenic filling for pillows, comforters, and coat linings.

The **Phyllis Yuhás Wildlife Habitat Preservation Award** recognizes individuals and organizations for "development or preservation of habitat that contains significant wildlife and/or native plant life populations." This year

we honor **Julie Borgmann**. As Executive Director of Red-tail Land Conservancy, her vision and leadership have been instrumental in protecting and nurturing native trees, forbs, and ephemerals of our wetland, prairie, and woodland habitats.

Recognizing the threats of urbanization and a warming world, Julie has led an ecological assessment of the landscape of East Central Indiana for the purpose of identifying the most vulnerable habitats for supporting biodiversity. This analysis informed a Strategic Land Conservation Plan that will focus the work of Red-tail in protecting habitat that provides critical food and shelter for birds and other wildlife in our region.

For their work to monitor and educate the public about the Peregrine Falcons we award the **Clyde W. Hibbs Conservation Education Award** to **Lois Rockhill** and **Jeff Timmons**.

For over a year, Lois and Jeff have monitored a pair of falcons that successfully nested in downtown Anderson, Indiana. Jeff worked with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the building manager to have a nest box installed on the falcons' preferred building. As monitors, Lois and Jeff spent many hours observing and photographing the nesting, hatching, banding, and fledging progress. Lois created a Facebook site to publish their results and to encourage the community to share its own sightings.

Please join us on a Zoom call on December 9 at 7 pm to celebrate these awardees during the monthly program meeting. Listen to them tell their own stories in a series of video clips filmed at the sites of their efforts.



Top to bottom, Doug Spence, Julie Borgmann, and Lois Rockhill
Photos by Rachel Replogle

Field Trips

Everyone is welcome at field trips and programs. Binoculars are available upon request. For more information, contact Field Trip Coordinator Catherine Kubo, at 703-352-1238.

CANCELLED due to COVID-19

November 28 and December 26:
4306 Mounds Road, Anderson, IN

The winter of 2020 is proving to be a banner year for irruptive species: Pine Siskin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Evening Grosbeak, and more. What species will you see?

Mounds State Park

Our monthly walks at Mounds State Park are cancelled for the months of November and December. Please check the website in January for future information.

December 20, 9 am-noon: 2111 W. Riverside Ave., Muncie, IN 47306

Delaware County Christmas Bird Count

Join us for a socially distanced 2020 Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 20. Those counting by car will meet at 8:45 am in the parking lot of the Charles W. Brown Planetarium on the Ball State University campus. You can also count from home or from a stationary blind or bird feeding station. To participate, please contact Jim Schowe at jim.schowe@gmail.com. We will have to forgo carpooling and the traditional after-count luncheon this year, but the birds will still be here, and we can still count them!

February 14, 2:00 to 3:00 pm: the comfort of your own home :-)

Virtual Great Backyard Bird Count

Cornell University will be sponsoring its annual Great Backyard Bird Count on Valentine's Day in 2021. We won't gather at a host's feeders as in past years, but fill your own feeders, grab your favorite winter drink and your mobile device, and participate virtually. Check our website for further details in February.

For in-person events, please follow current guidelines on face masks and social distancing. Monthly program meetings will either be held virtually or in a larger room to enable social distancing. Please monitor the RCAS website—www.cooperaudubon.org—for cancellations, updates, and log-on information.

Programs and Events

December 9, 7 pm: via Zoom

Program: 2020 RCAS Conservation Awards Celebration

Join us to see and hear our 2020 RCAS Awards recipients tell their own stories in a series of video clips filmed at the sites of their efforts. Check the website prior to the event for log-on details.

January 13, 7 pm: via Zoom

Program: A Celebration of Our Natural Heritage and Birds that Depend Upon It

Please join Dawn Slack from The Nature Conservancy in Indiana for a review of grassroots work that is exploding across Indiana, work that is truly celebrating our birds, our insects, and our lands and waters. Check the website prior to the event for log-on details.

February 10, 7 pm

Program and location to be announced

Charles Stockbridge: The Man and His Collection

By Terri Gorney

The Stockbridge Collection consisted of 235 specimens representing 173 species. It is still exhibited and studied today.

Charles Stockbridge created one of the finest collections of bird mounts in the Midwest. It is still exhibited and studied today.

He was born in Fort Wayne in 1856. His father, Nathaniel Stockbridge, owned one of the first book stores in the town. At age four, he was given a nature book with bird illustrations. It began a lifelong interest in birds. He was a frail child and spent little time in school. He liked roaming the fields and woods and learning about nature. He began collecting birds at the age of twelve. He went on from there to become a distinguished Hoosier ornithologist.

Charles was most likely one of the founders of the Allen County Audubon Society. He was very active in its early years with planning meetings and field trips. He spoke of the benefits of birds to school children and Boy Scouts and helped launch Junior Audubon Clubs in Fort Wayne.

Over a fifty-year period, he collected bird specimens and became a taxidermist. At an early Allen County Audubon meeting, he gave everyone who attended his lecture one of his mounted birds.

His collection of birds, eggs, and nests was loaned to the Fort Wayne Public

Library from 1909 to 1933. In 1933, the collection became part of the Allen County – Fort Wayne Historical Society Museum. It would remain there until 1968 when Charles's daughter Alatheia Stockbridge wanted to find a permanent home for her father's collection.

In September 1968, the Stockbridge Collection was given to the Joseph Moore Museum of Earlham College. James Cope, director of the museum and educational director of the Hayes Arboretum, accepted the collection from Alatheia.

The Stockbridge Collection consisted of 235 specimens representing 173 species. Included in the collection were 13 species of warblers and 15 species of geese and ducks. Among the most valuable specimens are a Passenger Pigeon, a Whooping Crane, and a Common Raven found in the state of Ohio.

Charles served as president and in other positions on the Allen County Audubon Society's board for over thirty years. After his death in 1934, the society was named the Stockbridge Audubon Society in his honor.

He is buried at Lindenwood Cemetery in Fort Wayne by the large pine trees that in some years attract wintering crossbills.

Set Sail! The Halcyon Days Commence, December 15

By Abby Molino



Belted Kingfisher
Photo by Randy Lehman

Roman poet Ovid (43 BCE—17CE) tells the ancient story of Greek goddess

Alcyone, often associated with the kingfisher. Daughter of minor Greek god Aeolus, who ruled the winds, Alcyone married Ceyx, king of Thessaly, who then tragically drowned in stormy seas. Grief-stricken, Alcyone ran to the sea, and leapt into the rough waves to join her husband in death. But instead of drowning, she was transformed by the gods into a kingfisher and carried on the wind to her deceased husband. At her touch, Ceyx also metamorphosed into a kingfisher. And thus, they continued their love as Halcyons.

In the 14th century, John Trevisa translated the story from Latin into Middle English:

“In the cliffe of a ponde of ocean,

Alcion, a see foule, in wynter maketh her neste and layeth egges in vii days and sittyth on brood ... seuen days.”

The belief was that Alcyon had the power to calm the waves while brooding her eggs on her floating nest in the Aegean Sea. In time, a fortnight of calm weather became expected around the winter solstice, beginning the 14th or 15th of December. These fourteen days were called the Halcyon days.

Two centuries later in 1592, absent the kingfisher connection, Shakespeare wrote of “halcyon days” in *Henry VI, Part 1* to describe calm days. In *King Lear*, Shakespeare did, however, refer to the medieval belief that kingfishers' dried carcasses hung in the wind would always “turn their halcyon beaks with every gale” in the true direction of the wind.

Carl Linnaeus is father of our modern
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Peregrine Falcons of Anderson, Indiana, 2020

A photo essay by Lois Rockhill

Introducing Freya and Blaze!

The pair of Peregrine Falcons that took up residence in Anderson this year, Peenie and Raptorette, had a successful nesting season. They produced two eggs that hatched two chicks, sister and brother, who were banded June 15 and fledged July 3, 2020!

Jeff Timmons and I have been fortunate to volunteer with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as on-site monitors and we observed the falcons as they settled into their nesting site atop the First Savings Tower in downtown Anderson. Here are a selection of the many photographs we took.



Eggs were laid around April 21, 2020. DNR asked Jeff to check on status and he, amid much ruckus from our male, Peenie, and more from Raptorette, took this quick photo. We were very excited to see that our very young female had produced eggs. Only a small percentage of females that young do. She was hatched and banded in Toronto, Canada, in 2019. We continued to wonder if the eggs would hatch.



At a second quick check, requested by the DNR, Jeff found this surprise! A tiny bundle of two chicks! Both eggs had hatched around May 24, 2020! Again, both parents took to the air to voice their alarm.



Can you believe the size of these babies! Jeff is holding Blaze and I have Freya. We had the privilege of naming them! Freya is much larger than her brother. They are 22 days old. The photo was taken by John Castrale who bands Peregrines throughout the state for the DNR.

Peregrine Falcons...continued from page 4



Raptorette was not happy about us near the chicks during the banding.



It is hard to imagine how fast the chicks grew! They were nearly as large as adults when this photo was taken on June 26, 2020, eleven days after banding! Freya is on the left and Blaze, who of the two appears to be the less cautious, is on the right.



Freya on the right and Blaze on the left, both fledged July 3, 2020, at 40 days old. They spent July learning to maneuver the ups and downs of flying. By the end of the month, they had both gained the skills and confidence to venture further and stay away longer. At that point, they seemed to continue to depend on their father to bring in prey but would grab it forcefully from him and defeather the birds themselves.

Juveniles leave the hatch area within a couple of months of fledging. By mid-August, ours were gone, never to return, leaving us with memories of an amazing experience.



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 web site.

Officers

President:	Mary Annette Rose	765-774-3134
Vice-President:	Rose Jeffery	
Treasurer:	Robert Williams	
Recording Secretary:	Beth Darby	

Directors

2019-2021	Kamal Islam	Kim McKenzie
2020-2022	Catherine Kubo	Jim Schowe

Programs and Field Trips

Most programs and field trips of the Society are free and open to the public. Programs are generally scheduled from October through June on the second Wednesday of the month. For updates on the schedule and meeting locations, refer to our website.

Contact us

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

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taxonomy. In 1758, he used *Alcedo alcyon* to describe the belted kingfisher. Subsequent usages include Subfamily Halcyoninae, the tree kingfishers, and the genus *Ceyx* within the river kingfisher family.

Now, the term halcyon days is most often used to refer to nostalgic recollections of the past. “Oh, how I long for the halcyon days before COVID-19!” But not all the original usage and meaning is lost.

Greek myth used metamorphosis into birds to reward merit, in this case the merit of *Ceyx* and *Alcyone*’s true love. Halcyon Days occur just prior to New Year when people often review the merit of the passing year and set new goals for the next. Perhaps we can use these days of mythological calm weather to find our true direction. Then—Set Sail into the New Year! And may the ancients smile upon us, and give us times of balance and peace, as we fledge our new plans.

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