



# Cooper's Talk

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

## Hummingbirds of Indiana: A Research Project at the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary

Hummingbirds are amazing! In Indiana, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is our only breeding species, but, not much is known about them. The Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, owned and operated by the Indiana Audubon Society, is trying to find out more about these jewels of the sky. For instance, we know when the first birds in spring arrive to our feeders, but we seek answers to other questions, such as:

- How long do our first birds stay and are they in migration or local birds who breed here?
- When do the first breeding females arrive and when do they start showing signs of egg production?

- How many broods do our Central Indiana Ruby-throated Hummingbirds raise?

Through our banding research, we are hoping to answer some of these questions!

Join Carl and Amy Wilms for their presentation at 7:00 pm on November 14, at the Ball State Alumni Center. Carl and Amy will share their adventures of learning more about hummingbirds. During this fun and informative program, they will share insights into the banding process and the results of what they have learned so far.

**November 14**

**Program  
at the  
Ball State  
Alumni Center**

### About the Presenters

Carl and Amy Wilms are the resident managers at the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, located near Connersville, Indiana.

Carl is a retired middle school teacher and received his PhD in education the same year he retired. He focuses a lot of his time eradicating invasive plant species from the property to ensure a quality habitat for bird species for the future.

Amy is a master bird bander and bands songbirds, Northern Saw-whet Owls, and hummingbirds. She is one of less than 110 master banders with a permit to band hummingbirds in the U.S. She loves teaching others how to band and develop their research projects, and enjoys learning more every chance she gets.

Learn more about Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary at [indianaudubon.org/places/united-states/indiana/connersville/birding-guide/mary-gray-bird-sanctuary/](http://indianaudubon.org/places/united-states/indiana/connersville/birding-guide/mary-gray-bird-sanctuary/)



Ruby-throated Hummingbird.  
Courtesy of Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary.

## Field Trips & Events

### October 28, 3:00-5:00 pm: All Seasons Banquet Facility, Albany, IN **Conservation Awards Reception & Silent Auction**

Every fall, Robert Cooper Audubon Society recognizes those who work tirelessly to conserve and protect habitat for birds and indigenous plants or to educate others about conservation issues and practices. Help us celebrate this year's conservation awards winners at the All Seasons Banquet Facility, located at 141 West State Street in Albany, Indiana.

While celebrating the achievements of our award winners, we'll nibble desserts prepared by chef Lois Altman, sip bird-friendly coffee, and place bids in a silent auction, where guests will find a wide range of bird-related items. All proceeds fund conservation and education projects of Robert Cooper Audubon Society.

### November 10, 5:30-10:00 pm: Whitetail Tree Farm **Night of the Owls: Saw-whet Banding**

The Indiana Audubon Society and organizations across Indiana are co-hosting "Night of the Owls" at several locations across the state. The closest site is at the Whitetail Tree Farm, located at 8650 North County Road 100 East, Springport, IN.

The event highlights the amazing migration of our smallest owl—the Northern Saw-whet Owl—by enabling visitors to observe the banding process. There is no registration fee, but attendance is limited! Please register by navigating to [indianaudubon.org/event/night-of-the-owls-saw-whet-banding-demo-night/](http://indianaudubon.org/event/night-of-the-owls-saw-whet-banding-demo-night/)

### November 24, 9-11 am: Anderson, IN **Birding at Mounds State Park**

Celebrate the Thanksgiving season by joining our monthly field trip at Mounds State Park, 4306 Mounds Road, in Anderson. A representative from Robert Cooper Audubon will meet you at the parking lot near the visitors center. Binoculars will be provided.

### December 12, 7-8:30 pm: Ball State University Alumni Center **Hoosier Whooping Cranes**

Danielle Williams will discuss how the Whooping Crane made its amazing comeback from fewer than 20 individuals in the 1940s to over 800 today. Chapter business will begin at 7 pm at the Ball State University Alumni Center located at 2800 W. Bethel Avenue in Muncie.

### December 16, 9 am - Noon: Delaware County **Christmas Bird Count**

Join the fun by counting birds from the comfort of your own home or with a group of RCAS members. Those counting by car, will comb a 15 mile-wide diameter circle around Muncie, tallying every avian species and bird. To join, contact Jim Schowe at [jim.schowe@gmail.com](mailto:jim.schowe@gmail.com)

### December 29, 9-11 am: Anderson, IN **Birding at Mounds State Park**

Join a representative from Robert Cooper Audubon for a winter bird walk. Juncos, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Barred Owls may brighten your day. We meet at the visitors center of Mounds State Park, located at 4306 Mounds Road in Anderson. Binoculars will be provided.

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PLATE. CXCIX.



*Little Owl*  
STRIX ACADICA.  
Male. Pennsylv.

Little Owl, Plate 199, John James Audubon. Source: National Audubon Society, [www.audubon.org/birds-of-america/little-owl/#](http://www.audubon.org/birds-of-america/little-owl/#).

## In Memory of Helen Twibell

In October of 1999, Helen Twibell, an educator and long-time Audubon member, began writing a regular column in our newsletter called “Bird of the Month.” Her first column described the indigo bunting, a favorite summer-time songster.

“Bird of the Month” quickly became one of the most popular features of our newsletter, which was a monthly publication at the time. In each installment, Helen shared her love of Indiana birds, both resident and migratory, working her way through backyard birds that Audubon readers might not have known much about or given a second thought to – until they read her column.

“When I ran out of songbirds, I started writing about water birds,” Helen recalled of the more than 100 articles she had written over nearly 14 years. Helen’s final article, on the snow goose, appeared in the Nov./Dec. 2013 issues, exactly 14 years after she happily took on the role of “Bird of the Month” columnist. “I’ve loved doing it,” she said.

On August 19, 2018, Helen E. Twibell, 92, passed away. On behalf of the members of Robert Cooper Audubon Society – and all those birds – we celebrate a woman whose life blessed us all.



Helen Twibell, fellow birder and dedicated contributor to the “Bird of the Month” column.

## Conservation

### Citizen Science: How We Can All Contribute to Avian Conservation

by Brandon Connare, RCAS Advocacy Chair & Graduate Student at Ball State

There are many ways to support our avian neighbors, and few are as impactful as the contributions of birders to scientific research. Public engagement in science, commonly referred to as “citizen science,” has been growing exponentially over the last few decades, in large part due to our ability to share data over the internet. These data provide a valuable tool for researchers to assess the health of bird populations, identify migration patterns, and guide conservation efforts.

One of the world’s largest citizen science projects is eBird, a free online checklist program managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. eBird users can submit personal checklists of their birding observations, which are then added to eBird’s massive and ever-growing database. These data are presented in a variety of ways for the public to view on eBird’s interactive website ([ebird.org](http://ebird.org)), playing an increasingly significant role in avian conservation.

To become an eBird member, all you need to do is create an account on ebird’s website, where you can then submit and maintain your birding checklists. There is

also a handy eBird app for smartphones if you want to submit checklists on the go!

Every winter, bird census surveys, such as the [Christmas Bird Count](#) and [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), are conducted by volunteers throughout the country. Also taking place throughout the winter is the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s [Project FeederWatch](#). If you have a bird feeder at your home, this is a simple way to be involved in citizen science. Feeder watchers periodically record the number and species of birds at their feeders throughout the winter months and send their observations to Project FeederWatch, which helps scientists track the movements and distribution of wintering birds.

#### Christmas Bird Count

If you are interested in the biology and conservation of birds, you too can be a citizen scientist. Participation requires no professional training. Plan now to participate in the Christmas Bird Count on December 16. To join, contact Jim Schowe at [jim.schowe@gmail.com](mailto:jim.schowe@gmail.com).

**Learn,  
Serve,  
& Enjoy**



# Robert Cooper Audubon Society

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## Can you HELP?

*Cooper's Talk* is an important service provided to members of Robert Cooper Audubon Society. This newsletter alerts the entire community about opportunities to join field excursions, attend program meetings, advocate for the birds, participate in conservation activities, or simply keep in touch with others who strive to protect and enhance the quality of our natural environment.

Could you help sustain this newsletter as an important service of our Society? Please consider lending your skills in writing, photography, or graphic layout to prepare and distribute future newsletters to our membership.

To join the RCAS newsletter team, contact Annette Rose, President of RCAS, at [rosenflowers@hughes.net](mailto:rosenflowers@hughes.net).

## Society Leadership

### Officers

President:	Mary Annette Rose	765-774-3134
Vice-President:	Robert Williams	765-730-8427
Treasurer:	Robert Williams	765-730-8427
Secretary:	Kim Lee	765-215-0576

### Directors

2017-2019	Kamal Islam Kim McKenzie
2018-2020	Catherine Pauls Kubo Jim Schowe

### Committees

Past President:	Sarah McKillip
Advocacy (ad hoc):	Brandon Connare
Conservation:	Jon Creek
Education:	Savannah Lundgren
Field Trip:	Rose Jeffery
Hospitality:	Doris Cheney
Membership:	Sandy Ho
Newsletter:	Vacant
Program:	Alexander Sharp
Publicity:	Kim McKenzie Jim Schowe
Website Manager:	Barb Stedman
Revised: November 3, 2018	

## About Cooper's Talk

### ©2018

Cooper's Talk is published five times per year for members of Robert Cooper Audubon Society.

### Submissions

All are invited to submit photos, articles, and events for publication by emailing items to [admin@cooperaudubon.org](mailto:admin@cooperaudubon.org).

### Membership

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

### Programs and Field Trips

Most programs and field trips of the Society are free and open to the public. Programs are scheduled from October through June on the third Wednesday of the month and, typically, held at Kennedy Library at 7:00 pm. For a schedule of field trips, refer to the Society website at [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org).

### Contact Us

Chapter Website: [www.cooperaudubon.org](http://www.cooperaudubon.org)  
Find us on Facebook!  
Email: [admin@cooperaudubon.org](mailto:admin@cooperaudubon.org)