



Cooper's Talk

Robert Cooper Audubon Society

Red-tail Land Conservancy: Updates from Your Local Land Trust

June 19 RCAS Program



Blooming Trout Lily,
above

Dutro-Ernst Woods,
right

Photos from Red-tail
Land Conservancy's
website,
www.fortheland.org

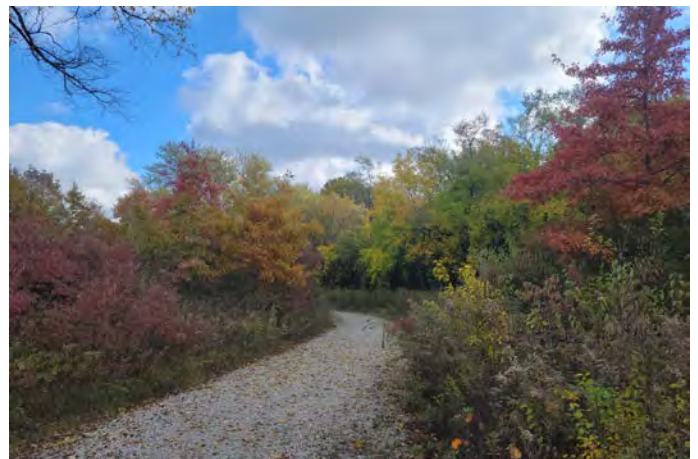
Join us on June 19 when Julie Borgmann, executive director of Red-tail Land Conservancy (RLC), will share information about Red-tail's recent land acquisitions, restoration projects, and outreach programs. Red-tail protects nearly 3,000

acres in east-central Indiana, including ten nature preserves that are open to the public. Join us to learn more about these important conservation areas and the work of your local land trust.

Julie Borgmann joined the staff of RLC in 2015 following a 25-year career as a pharmacist. Starting out as a volunteer, Borgmann served as the education and

outreach director and then as development director before becoming the executive director in 2018.

The program will start at 7 pm at the Ball State University Nature Lab at 2500 West University Avenue on the BSU Campus. Parking is available in front of the greenhouse and is free after 5 pm. The building is handicap accessible.



Dutro-Ernst Woods Stewardship

**Volunteer at
Dutro-Ernst!
Contact Rose
Jeffery at
Rosemariejeffery@gmail.com**

And while we are on the subject of Red-tail Land Conservancy, here is a reminder that RCAS has agreed to be a steward at Dutro-Ernst Woods, a Red-tail nature preserve located in Muncie, on Kilgore Avenue. RCAS recently installed new bluebird houses on the preserve. Thanks to Jim Flowers for constructing them, and to Jim, Annette Rose and Jim and Rose Jeffery for the installation!

In addition to maintaining the bluebird houses, RCAS has promised to regularly walk the trails, pick up any accessible

trash, and report any disturbances to Red-tail staff. The preserve is small. The entire trail is just a little more than a mile long. Fortunately, there is usually very little litter. We pick up what we see from the trail and the parking lot.

Please contact Rosemariejeffery@gmail.com if you are able to help. Perhaps you already walk at Dutro-Ernst, in which case, please let Rose know each time you go so she can log our participation. Or if you eBird, just send her your eBird reports.

Field Trips

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



Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Davis Purdue Ag Center
Photo by Rose Jeffery

Saturday, June 1, 8:30 am: 3499 S. Bird Sanctuary Rd., Connersville, IN

Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary

The Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary is owned and operated by the Indiana Audubon Society and is located south of Connersville in Fayette County. The sanctuary consists of over 700 acres of mixed habitats. For our walk, meet at the main parking area at the end of the drive at 8:30 am. Bring a picnic lunch!

June 8, July 13, and August 10, 9 am to 11 am: 4306 Mounds Rd., Anderson, IN

Mounds State Park

Second Saturday walks at Mounds State Park continue. Join us for a summer morning walk and see what our local breeding birds are up to.

Meet at the Visitor Center at 9 am.

Programs and Events

June 19, 7 pm to 9 pm: BSU Nature Lab, 2500 W. University Ave., Muncie, IN

Red-tail Land Conservancy: Updates from Your Local Land Trust

Julie Borgmann, executive director of Red-tail Land Conservancy, will share information about Red-tail's recent land acquisitions, restoration projects, and outreach programs. Attend in person or register in advance for the webcast at:

[bsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUvf-2qpzouGtzVRjxOCNkREUD1SJHVmPBk](https://bsu.zoom.us/j/9448123456)

Save the Date

**RCAS Fall Picnic
Mounds State Park
September 14, 2024,
Noon to 3 pm**

June marks our final monthly program meeting for the 2023-2024 cycle. Program meetings will resume in October. Prior to that, on September 14, we will have our annual RCAS picnic at Mounds State Park, from noon to 3 pm. The fall newsletter will have more detail, but mark your calendars now to save the date for an enjoyable gathering filled with food, friends, and fun!

Election of Officers at the June RCAS Meeting

Also on the agenda for the June 19 RCAS meeting is the election of chapter officers and directors for terms beginning July 1. The slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee follows, but nominations will also be accepted from the floor. If you are interested in taking a role on the RCAS leadership team, please contact Annette Rose at rosenflowers@hughes.net. There are numerous ways to serve. See page 3 for a summary of what our dedicated volunteers achieved in 2023.

For two-year terms, ending on June 30, 2026

President..... Rose Jeffery
Vice President..... Catherine Kubo
Treasurer..... Jim Flowers
Director..... Jim Schowe *
Director..... Kristy Tuttle

For a partial term, ending on June 30, 2025

Director..... Julie Bruner

For a one-year term, ending on June 30, 2025

Recording Secretary...Elizabeth Ploog

*Indicates incumbent

RCAS in 2023 and Committee Chairs for 2024-2025

In 2023, Robert Cooper Audubon Society planned and implemented a variety of events for members and citizens of East Central Indiana. The board of directors and chairs of standing committees dedicated countless hours toward our mission to enjoy, learn, educate, and protect our natural environment and wildlife.

In addition to the elected positions to be filled in June, RCAS has a number of appointed positions, some of which will be changing in July. We are pleased that **Abby Shaw** has agreed to be our new education chair, a position she has been filling for the last few months. **Kamal Islam** is stepping down from many years' service as director and will now be the co-chair for programs, alongside BSU graduate student **Ashley Fitch**. **Catherine Kubo** will continue as newsletter editor and **Barb Stedman** has signed on as the field trip chair. **Jeff Ray** & **Jim Schowe** continue as conservation co-chairs, as does **Sandy Ho** as membership chair. Publicity is being handled by **Jim Jeffery**, who takes care of our email messages; **Kim McKenzie** and **Lois Rockhill**, who manage our Facebook page; and **Barb Stedman**, our website manager. **Doris**

2023 RCAS Accomplishments	
Conservation Projects	Dutro-Ernst Woods (9 participants, 34 hours) Chasing Melody (sponsored monitoring for 2 Wood Thrushes)
Programs & Picnic	11 programs (338 attendees)
Fox Graduate Student Research Grant	2 recipients received a combined \$2,167
Conservation Awards	Conservation Award: Scott Feters Education Award: Stacey Allred and leaders of Summer Learning at Camp Adventure Habitat Preservation Award: John Huber Public Service Award: Whitely Community Council
Education	4 Events (179 participants)
Field Trips	20 events (185 participants)
Christmas Bird Count	1 in Muncie Circle (15 participants, 54 species)
Cooper's Talk Newsletter	4 editions (reaching > 350 households)
Advocating for Indiana Wetlands	3 Actions

and **John Cheney** will continue their stellar service as hospitality co-chairs.

Brian Wolfe is advocacy chair, and **Barb Stedman** is now our official historian.

Finally, we offer our sincere thanks to **Annette Rose**, who has served as our club president for the last seven years. Annette's leadership has been instrumental in our accomplishments. She has given us direction, ensured each voice is heard in our decision-making, and energized us with her drive and enthusiasm. We are grateful for her leadership, and we will continue to rely on her wise counsel and support in other capacities.

*Furthering our mission to
Enjoy,
Learn,
Educate, and
Protect
our natural environment*

My Thoughts: Old Adages

By Jim Schowe

As usual at this time of year, I spend much time in the woods trying to control invasives, especially garlic mustard and honeysuckle. It is to the point that I can identify those critters from forty yards away. And it occurred to me that some of the sayings I learned from a wonderfully wise woman, Bertha Grugel, apply to my attempts to control the unwanted weeds.

Bertha was born before the turn of the twentieth century on a farm in White County, Indiana. She loved nature and learned that if you take care of your environment it will take care of you. Seems like she always had a phrase or saying to fit a particular situation. When she turned 80, her favorite was, "At my age my forgetter works best." Here are a

couple that apply to the battle against invasives.

The first adage is, "The hurrier I am the hinder I get." This fits perfectly. Try as I do, I can't win the race against the spread of the unwanted growth. It is never ending, but still I try.

The second adage is, "Smile, things can only get worse; I did, and sure enough they did." Well this year, yeah, they are worse than last year—but hopefully next year will be better. I just need to keep focused on my goal of eradicating, on my property, those ugly weeds.

There are several people I have met in my life that made a great, positive impression on me, and I thank my stars that I met Bertha. She is high on that list.



Bloodroot emerging in a spot reclaimed from honeysuckle overgrowth
Photo by Catherine Kubo

RCAS Turns 50!

By Barb Stedman, photos by Martha Hunt

Our chapter's 50th anniversary celebration, on April 6, at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Muncie, was a wonderful event! It brought together more than 100 past and present members and leaders, community partners, artists, and others who are as committed as we are to enjoying and protecting nature in East Central Indiana. Thank you to all who attended and all who made it a memorable celebration of our chapter's history!

If you couldn't join us, here's a glimpse of the festivities:



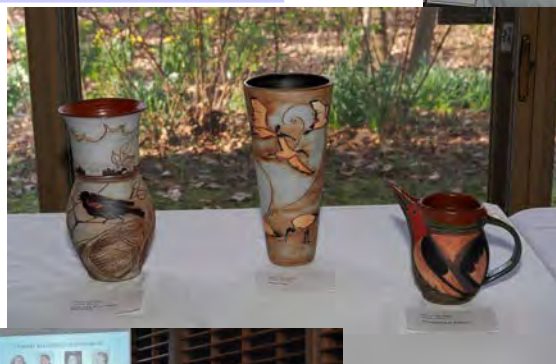
Newspaper clippings and other memorabilia of our chapter's activities were on display.



Mark Booth, founder of Take Flight! Wildlife Education, launched the evening's program with a bird of prey presentation.



Ten talented nature artists from across East Central Indiana shared their artwork.



We shared a PowerPoint slide show of our chapter's founding and its many activities through the years, including monthly programs, field trips, conservation causes, education activities, and much more!

RCAS Turns 50!...continued from page 4

More photos will soon be available on our website (www.cooperaudubon.org)



Josie and Geoff Fox were honored for their generous support of chapter activities through the years with a lifetime chapter membership and a nature-themed giclée print created by Marion artist Anne Maddox.



Several past presidents were on hand, including Thom Brinduse, our chapter's second president (1976-78), pictured here with fellow past president Barb Stedman.



We ended the evening with birthday cake and the singing of "Happy Birthday"!



Most of all, it was a chance to reconnect with others and celebrate our common bonds!

With appreciation to the planning committee: Barb Stedman, Sarah Williams, Rose Jeffery, Barb Hesselgrave, and Catherine Kubo

Winners Announced from Student Design Competition

By Abby Shaw

Competition Winners

Team Design Winner: "Cardinal Community," by Hannah Ruhe and Julia Campbell, Architecture

Individual Design Winner: "Charlie's Roost," by Keagan Powell, Urban Planning

Student Choice Winner: "The Roost," by Marius Igitangaza Ngabo and Josh Gee, Landscape Architecture

Honorable Mention: "Clarity," by Tristan Kosschuk, Architecture

On March 13, 2024, graduate student Abby Shaw from the Ball State University (BSU) Department of Landscape Architecture hosted a presentation on bird mortality from collisions with the

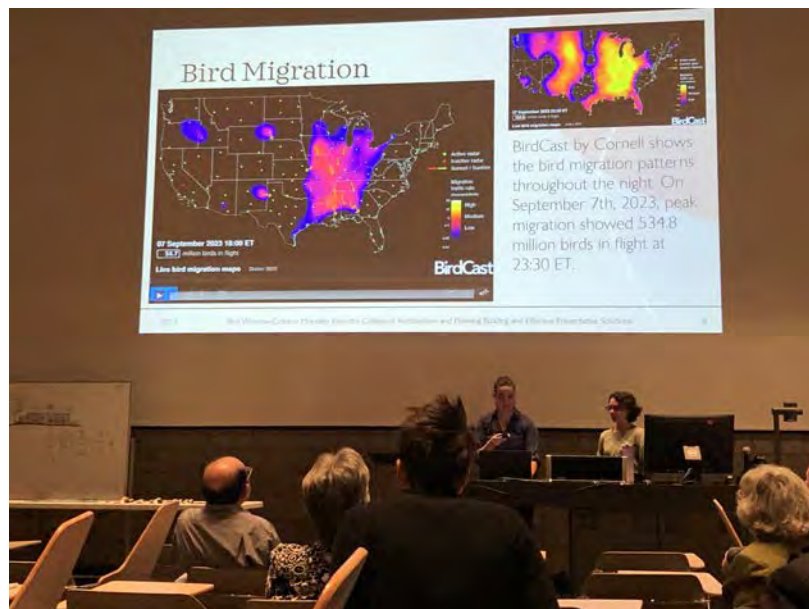
BSU Architecture Building. Ashley Fitch and Emily Peterson from the Department of Biology shared their research on campus bird window collisions, and John Just, an architectural manager from Walker Glass Company, discussed bird-friendly window glazing options. Twenty-five people were in attendance for the presentation. A competition for College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) students to redesign the south side of the Architecture Building ended on March 29. Four designs were submitted, and award winners were selected through a

judging panel and a CAP student survey. The next initiative is to get bird-friendly materials implemented in the upcoming Architecture Building renovation with design inspiration from the student competition submissions.

The competition was judged by a panel comprising

- Dr. Annette Rose, Associate Professor of Educational Studies at BSU and president of RCAS
- Dr. Kamal Islam, Professor of Biology at BSU and RCAS board member
- Andrea Swartz, Associate Dean of the College of Architecture and Planning and Professor of Architecture at BSU
- Timothy Gray, Professor of Architecture at BSU
- John Just, Architectural Manager of Walker Glass Company, and
- Abby Shaw, Master of Landscape Architecture student at BSU and education chair for RCAS.

Check our website, cooperaudubon.org, in a few weeks, when we plan to have the award-winning designs posted.



Above, left to right, Ashley Fitch, Emily Peterson, and Abby Shaw

Left, presentation in progress

Photos by Nancy Shaw

Notes from the Field

By Catherine Kubo

Here are just a couple of the notable sightings that RCAS members photographed this past winter. Terri Gorney Lehman reported that on February 4 she and Randy Lehman saw four Brewer's Blackbirds at Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve—their first ever wintertime sighting of the species at the preserve. According to Peterson's guide, Brewer's Blackbirds keep their plumage all year, whereas Rusty blackbirds change



Brewer's Blackbird
Photo by Randy Lehman

plumage. Randy's photo does a great job of capturing the purple and green sheens that these birds exhibit when the lighting is just right. Randy and Terri had also recently enjoyed seeing Rough-legged Hawk, Snow Goose, four Northern Harriers, and Rusty Blackbirds at the preserve.

Then a month later, Kurt Emmert photographed Short-eared Owls at the Academy of Model Aeronautics on the east side of Muncie. Lois and Erv Rockhill and I refound these birds a couple days later and were able to watch them hunting over one of the Academy's fields, along with a pair of Northern Harriers that entertained us with their interactive acrobatics.



Short-eared Owl
Photo by Kurt Emmert

Invasive Plant Removal at Mounds State Park

Not all RCAS field trips are birding trips. On March 23, eight RCAS members gathered at Mounds State Park to spend the morning removing invasive Burning Bush. In consultation with park staff we selected a sight on the trail that runs along the river, just below the hanging fen. It has been a good spot for bird sightings in the past. But the Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*) is threatening to take it over and choke out the mixed undergrowth that provides habitat that birds need. After a couple of hours of hard work we could see the difference. At that time of year few native plants have leafed

out. The light green haze on the right side of the photo below is yet-to-be-removed Burning Bush. On the left, the open woodland shows the results of our work.

Many thanks to volunteers Annette Rose and Jim Flowers, Jim and Rose Jeffery, Julie Bruner, Lori Lawson, Lois Rockhill, and Catherine Kubo. There is plenty left to do next spring—please join us.



Volunteers standing in front of a long pile of removed brush, which the Mounds ground crew was set to cart away
Photo by Catherine Kubo



Burning Bush (the haze of green) on the right, cleared woodland on the left
Photo by Jim Jeffery



P.O. Box 1635
Muncie, IN 47308-1635
cooperaudubon.org
cooperaudubon@gmail.com

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
2023-2025	Kamal Islam	Brian Wolfe

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
Page 8

From the Gallery



Great-crested Flycatcher, at McVey Memorial Forest, seen on the April 27 RCAS field trip
Photo by Rose Jeffery

About Cooper's Talk

© 2024

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