

# Newsletter for the Indiana Audubon Society CARDINAL

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## Upcoming Events

**Goose Pond Field Trip**  
June 26, 7:00 a.m.

**Butterfly Count**  
July 24, 10:00 a.m.

**Fall Birding Festival**  
October 1-3

**For more information, go  
to [IndianaAudubon.org](http://IndianaAudubon.org)**

### *Photos from the Spring Birding Festival*

Cover: Bill Cummings explains  
the importance of air flow while  
creating the perfect campfire.

*Photo by Scott Arvin*

Inset photo: Markle Barn is an  
excellent place to view wildlife  
and the pond area is the  
starting point of many trails.

*Photo by Scott Arvin*



## Wind and Rain Didn't Stop Spring Festival Success



### Owls and Hikes

Friday night started off with a hoot! After an interesting educational program on the owls of Indiana by Ross Brittan, attendees attempted to catch and band some Eastern Screech-Owls. Two nets were set up in different locations by the ponds while the blaring sounds of the Eastern Screech-Owl sounds were played. Ross talked about how to properly set up the nets while educating our group about banding techniques. Although we spent about an hour in the woods, we did not get a bird in hand.

A quick check of the radar Friday night drew frowns on our faces as we anticipated a soggy, grey morning. Despite the anticipated thunderstorms overnight and rainy conditions, the hike started at 7AM. We were not expecting to be able to identify very many birds.

Unfortunately we were correct for the first hour's effort and we retired to breakfast somewhat disappointed. While we were eating the rain let up and we decided to head back out and try our luck again. This time the birds came through and we had a great morning with many of us hiking until lunchtime. Some of the highlights included Chestnut-sided, Blue-winged, Prairie, Cerulean, Hooded, and Kentucky Warblers.

As we again checked the radar on Saturday night, we were not very hopeful for dry hike the next morning. However, the weather gave us a break and the skies "cleared" to provide good birding conditions. Our hike on Sunday was much shorter than Saturday's morning hike, but we identified almost as many species as we did on Saturday. This included all of the warblers spotted earlier as well as Acadian Flycatcher and a Black-billed Cuckoo!

Robert Ripma

### Fire Building Basics

After a crashing Friday night thunderstorm, one might think that a campfire demonstration/workshop for the younger crowd would be tough to pull off. But the rain stopped for the event and was successful. With lots of attentive

onlookers, some good huffin' and puffin', and a little help from some beeswax, a nice, warm, low-smoke fire came to life. A few of the children who had never struck a match before, now have that experience under their belts. We discussed how firewood should not be brought to Mary Gray or other distant campsites because doing so can transport unwanted insects.

Bill Cummings

### Honey of a bee meeting

Saturday night brought on another round of lightning, this time with even more rain. All the bees on site may have been slow to rouse themselves on Sunday morning, but that didn't keep us from having a good chat about the gentle craft of beekeeping and some of the fascinating aspects of honeybees. A few points discussed during the presentation were that:

- bees cluster around the queen through the cold winter months, keeping her at a balmy 94 degrees
- drones have no stinger...you can hold them in your hands
- a queen will lay 1200-2000 eggs every day during the spring and summer. That is one busy bee!

It was a special spring weekend at Mary Gray with nature's fireworks by night and great programs by day. Who knows what wonders await us in 2011!

Bill Cummings

### Over Two Dozen Young Birders Attend Spring Festival

There were times at the 2010 IAS Spring Festival that you would have thought it was primarily a Young Birders Event! It was so exciting to



see so many youth attend the festival and participate in the many programs and events that were held throughout the weekend. Although there were events that were specific to young outdoor enthusiasts, it appeared that most of the kids were interested in all of the events and were very involved with the variety of programs that were offered.

From Broad-winged Hawks and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks to Red-backed Salamanders and Bats, the kids were spotting things all over the place. I was absolutely amazed by the knowledge that some of these children had! A couple of these young naturalists were actually talking about building their life list and were working very hard to add to it over the weekend! Wow!

At the end of the weekend, there is nothing better than to have our events attended by a large group composed of a wide spectrum of age groups. Since the late 1800's the IAS has been working very hard to protect Indiana's birds and wildlife and the only way our hard work will be sustained is by the hard work that will soon be performed by the very kids that are attending our festivals!

Chad Williams



photo by Scott Arvin

### Geology of Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary

Jack Berninger presented a well researched and interesting program regarding the geology of the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary. Using colorful maps generated by the Indiana Geological Survey, Mr. Berninger shared two aspects of the regions past. First to be outlined was the theory of continental drift which relocated the Earth from we now call Indiana from south of the equator to its present location. This history is responsible for many of the fossils we find at Mary Gray. Additionally, there is ample evidence that the surface we now call home was covered by substantial rock layers that have now weathered and eroded away producing what is now known as the Cincinnati Arch which possesses some of the oldest fossils found in the world (200 million years older than the dinosaurs).

The second phase is the more recent Holocene period which has experienced several glacial events that produced much of the surface materials that we now find in the area. Erratic rocks (rocks that were "imported" by glacial action) came from Canadian mountains and are composed of granite (volcanic origin) and other metamorphic rocks (made from intense heat and pressure) such as gneiss and slate. Past human habitations are also evident as artifacts such as arrowheads can be found as stones were employed as tools.

The session then turned to a creek walk that found the children in the cool waters as most of the parents supervised from the Creek Trail that follows the creek's course. Many bags were loaded with souvenirs of the walk and shoes and boots were full as well.

By Jack Berninger and Carl Wilms

### Crawfish Frog Research

Mike Lanoo shared with the festival attendees his work on the endangered crawfish frog that uses the burrow built by a crayfish to live in the majority of its life. While this species of frog is rare in Indiana, it appears to have found a suitable ecological niche in some of the reclaimed strip mines of western Indiana. His presentation informed the audience of the trials and tribulations inherent in science but rarely acknowledged when scientific findings are released in the news. For example, the use of radio transmitters has been an established practice for years and Dr. Lanoo's team utilized this practice only to discover that it was not suitable for the crawfish frog due to its muscular calling. The contractions of the abdomen caused the frog's organs to be displaced in the animal. This unfortunate development was discovered quickly and corrected. While some

may object to this type of intrusion into the frogs' lives, it is important to recognize the value of better understanding the habits of these animals in order to better protect their survival.

By Carl Wilms

### Archaeology At The Yellow Brick House Site

We continued to excavate the pit nearest the back door of the house as we have not yet reached virgin soil. Scarlett, Cypress, Sevi Arvin and friends completed their third session at this location. They found one of the better pieces from this dig, a large portion of pottery which had the shape of a sugar bowl or candy dish. It was a rim shard that suggested the bowl had a lid. A handle of the same type of pottery seemed a good match. Other than that the finds were metal fragments such as nails and a large nut.

We actually had very limited time to work as there were other programs going at the same time. The site is worth more investigation. If small groups would like to continue the work, contact Allen King at [aphotophiend@netzero.com](mailto:aphotophiend@netzero.com) and we will set up a time.

By Allen King

### Help Connect Birding to our Youth

Indiana Audubon Society (IAS) members have a unique opportunity to bring our youth into birding and to enjoy all the benefits of being an IAS member. Between now and July 30, when you renew your IAS membership you can gift a free youth membership. The Indiana Young Birders Club offers its own newsletter and membership perks. The club is a perfect way to get children into birding, or to further support a young birder already in the field. Renew today to take part in this special promotion! Renewal forms with this promotion can be found on the IAS website. Renew online or use a printable form.

### Award Nominations Sought

Indiana Audubon Society members are encouraged to nominate a member you know for one of two annual awards the society bestows each year. The Earl Brooks Award is given to an individual "for advancement of conservation of natural resources in Indiana." The award recipient does not have to be an Indiana Audubon Society member. The James H Mason Service Award is present to a member of the Indiana Society who has dedicated themselves through service to the society. It serves as an inspiration and focus for others to work with such individuals. More information on each award can be found at: <http://www.indianaaudubon.org/AboutIAS/>

[AwardsOverview/tabid/75/Default.aspx](http://www.indianaaudubon.org/AwardsOverview/tabid/75/Default.aspx). Deadline for 2010 nominations is September 1, 2010. Awards will be presented at the Fall Birding Festival at McCormick's Creek State Park.

### New Grants/Scholarships Program Announced

The Indiana Audubon Society is pleased to announce the Mumford and Keller Grants/Scholarship Program in 2010. This program is for individuals and organizations that are seeking funding for activities related to Indiana's natural resources, particularly those related to Indiana's avifauna. In 2010, \$2,500 has been set aside for applicants in many categories, including, but not limited to: research, bird preservation, workshop attendance, and youth birding activities.

Applications for fall funding are due by September 1, 2010, and are announced at the Fall Birding Festival at McCormick's Creek State Park. Applications and more information are on the Indiana Audubon Society website ([www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org)).



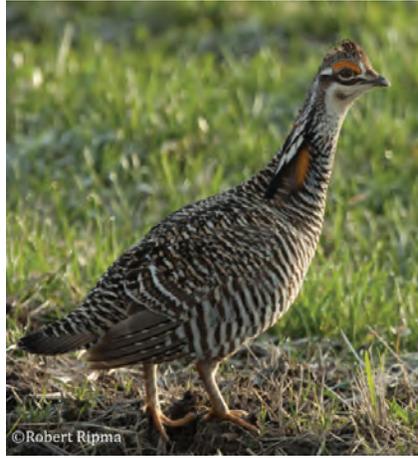
### IAS Fall Birding Festival Fast Approaching

Fall birding in Indiana can be a wonderful time. The leaves are changing to orange and gold, quiet chip notes rustle amongst the tree tops, and best of all... no mosquitoes! Join fellow Hoosier birders for a full weekend of birding fun. This year's festival is being held in Indiana's oldest state park, McCormick's Creek from October 1-3, 2010. The Canyon Inn will serve as the beautiful backdrop, amongst the big trees and waterfalls of this amazing state park.

The keynote speaker Saturday night will be renowned bird humorist Al Batt. Al Batt is a writer, storyteller, speaker, and humorist who entertained folks at last year's Midwest Birding Symposium. His articles and cartoons are syndicated nationally and has written jokes for a former President of the United States. You won't want to miss this program!

Other great programs are being lined up, including birding tours to Goose Pond, Lake Monroe, and of course, McCormick's Creek. Bring the kids, as an assortment of birding activities will be on hand for them as well. For a complete list of programs and to register, visit the Indiana Audubon Society website ([www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org)).

**A special room rate is being held at the Canyon Inn. Ask for the IAS group rate when calling (877-LODGES-1). We hope to see you this October!**



©Robert Ripma

photo by Robert Ripma



May 7th, 2010 Connersville Middle School students from IAS member Carl Wilms's Lions Team came to Mary Gray for a bird banding demonstration by Tim Tolford (rose-breasted grosbeak, catbird, red-winged blackbird, cowbirds & titmouse were banded and held by students), hiking, games and a service project. These students are standing behind bags of the invasive garlic mustard that were pulled from the area during their service project.

Return Service Requested

[www.indianadudbon.org](http://www.indianadudbon.org)

3499 S. Bird Sanctuary Rd.  
Connersville, IN 47331

**The Cardinal**

