



QUARTERLY

SPRING • 1980

Vol. XIX, No. 2



Erythronium dens canis

ACRES SPRING CALENDAR 1980

THURSDAY

APRIL MARSH MEANDER Field Trip

10 FOX ISLAND NATURE CENTER - Yohne Rd., Ft. Wayne
7:00 PM BRING: Flashlight, boots, clothing change.
IN-CHARGE: Pat Bolman, Park Naturalist

WEDNESDAY

APRIL AREA MANAGEMENT MEETING

16 OLIN LAKE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Ed Shenk home, N. side Oliver Lake, #5C
7:30 PM OLIN LAKE NATURE PRESERVE MANAGEMENT
IN-CHARGE: John Bacone, Lee Casebere, Div.
of Nature Preserves, Indiana

SATURDAY

APRIL BIRDING Field Trip

19 BIRD WALK - FOX ISLAND NATURE CENTER
7:00 AM BRING: Sack lunch, boots, binoculars.
IN-CHARGE: Jeff Moore, Jim Haw, Stockbridge
Audubon ornithologists.

SATURDAY FUN • LEARN • HIKE • WORK

May 3 ACRES WORK DAY - ACRES WORK DAY
(See details on back page)

SATURDAY

MAY PIGEON RIVER WILDLIFE AREA

17 WATERFOWL AND MIGRATORY OBSERVATIONS
7:00 AM Harley Hotel parking lot-I69 & Rt. 3
7:45 AM Pigeon River Headquarters Bldg., Mongo.
BRING: Sack lunch, boots, binoculars.
IN-CHARGE: Jeff Moore, Jim Haw, Stockbridge
Audubon ornithologists.

SUNDAY

MAY LONIDAW

18 LONIDAW WOODS WALK
3 - 5 PM Lonidaw Nature Preserve, Road 1000E
north from Rt. 6, east of Kendallville
IN-CHARGE: LONIDAW PURCHASE PROJECT
COMMITTEE Kay Hough, Chairman.

ALL EVENTS - RAIN OR SHINE!

SPRING

- ACRES MEMBERSHIP TIME

RENEW

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Your membership card is attached.
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You fill in the membership card
and keep it. Return the address
portion with your remittance in
the return envelope provided.

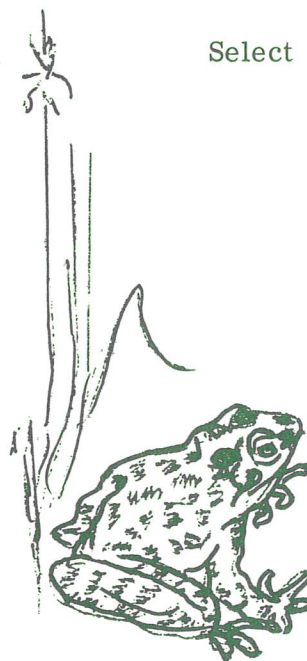
Patron \$100; Sustaining \$50;
Share-the-Expense \$25; Family
\$10; Regular \$5; Senior Citizen
\$2; Student \$1.

Add your support to acquiring and
preserving natural areas in north-
eastern Indiana. JOIN NOW

Celebrate ACRES 20th year

COVER ART - These Dog's Tooth Violets, or Trout Lillies, were copied from "Early Floral Engravings" 1612 "Florilegium" by Emanuel Sweerts who was born in the Netherlands in 1552. The original flower plates were printed by copperplate. Sweerts was purveyor of novelties to the wealthy of Europe dealing in stuffed birds, crystals, sea shells, mineral specimens, ethnographics and floral stock. His early floral prints carried a secondary note of being nursery catalogues.

Ethyle Bloch



SPARROW WAR

I have a bird feeder and feed wild birds. Many of you probably do too, especially in winter. I enjoy seeing titmice and chickadees and nuthatches and other birds taking my hand-outs. But I don't enjoy house sparrows. In fact, I dislike house sparrows or English sparrows.

And to think, just one hundred thirty years ago there were none in North America! But they were common in cities and urban areas of Europe. They fed, to some extent, on the larvae of various insects. European immigrants, living in cities of the "New World", remembered the perky house sparrows and thought of them nostalgically as reminders of their homeland. Travelers abroad remembered them and thought of the insects they devoured. Together these groups convinced others that house sparrows would be a valuable addition to the birds of the United States. And so they were imported.

The importation was popular -- at first. It was said house sparrows would rid American urban centers of "caterpillars, cankerworms, and other pestiferous insect larvae." In case there were doubts, several well educated men wrote favorable articles about house sparrows. One of the most vocal champions of house sparrows as Thomas Mayo Brewer, a Boston physician, journalist and ornithologist. Among other things Dr. Brewer claimed, "The house sparrow will ere long become one of our most common and familiar favorites."

Dissent, however, was forming. House sparrows were noisy. Their nests, packed into crannies of buildings and signs, were large, messy and unsightly. Where house sparrows became numerous several native birds declined or disappeared altogether. What's worse, the "pestiferous insect larvae" that sparrows were supposed to conquer persisted, as numerous as ever. In 1874, Dr. Elliott Coues became the leader of the anti-sparrow forces by writing a dissenting article for American Naturalist. Dr. Coues accused English sparrows of driving away robins, bluebirds, and native sparrows. "There is no occasion for them in this country," he wrote, "The good they do in destroying certain insects has been overstated. I foresee the time when it will be deemed advisable to take measures to get rid of the birds, or at least check their increase."

Dr. Brewer immediately rose to the defense of house sparrows and what came to be known as the "sparrow war" was on!

Dr. Coues' opening was mild compared to subsequent volleys. He described house sparrows as "pugnacious, irascible, irritable creatures." In writing of them in Washington, D.C., he stated, "These rowdy little gamins squeak and fight all through the city, to our great disgust." He called them "those wretched interlopers," "thoroughly undesirable birds," and finally, "animated manure machines."

Dr. Brewer continued to defend house sparrows. He condemned Coues' name calling campaign while maintaining the value of the birds. His arguments were largely repetitious, however. They drew the comment from Coues that they consisted of "Bostonese idiocy."

When Brewer insisted that house sparrows do not drive other birds away, Coues responded, "Those sparrows do molest, harass, drive off, and otherwise maltreat and forcibly eject and attempt to destroy various kinds of native birds, which are thereby de-

prived of certain inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness after their own rights." What worse condemnation can there be in our democracy?

Dr. Brewer died in 1880. His death left the pro-sparrow forces without a leader. But it made no difference. By then Elliott Coues' attacks and the habits of the sparrows themselves were molding public opinion against them. The sparrows, however, were widely established, numerous, and increasing. Even Coues admitted eradication was unfeasible. The best that could be hoped for was to prevent further increase.

Elliott Coues won the verbal battles but he lost the war. House sparrows simply reproduced too successfully and too rapidly. Coues recognized this and wrote, "the sturdy little foreign vulgarians breed during the greater part of the year -- breed at a year old -- keep breeding -- breed mercilessly." Finally Coues admitted defeat. As he stated it, "I had proved my case to the satisfaction of the public, and the sparrow had proven his case -- which was, that he had come to stay. I could whip all my featherless foes, but the sparrows proved too many for me."

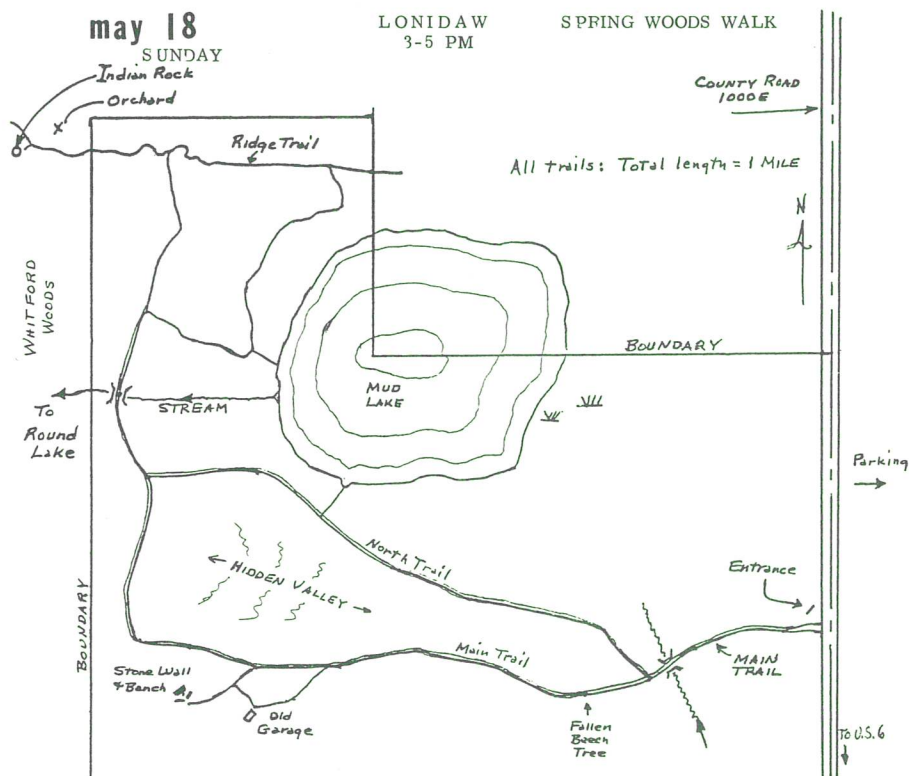
There are too many for me, too. If you feed birds, you had better resign yourself to house sparrows getting part of your feed.



NOTES: Lee A. Casebere is now Assistant Director, Division of Nature Preserves, Indiana Department of Natural Resources. ACRES' naturalist, program Vice President and Quarterly writer/photographer, Lee remains an ACRES Board Member. John Bacone is Director of Nature Preserves.

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE POLICY ACT -- A National Heritage Program has grown out of the need to preserve special places of natural, historic, cultural, and scientific value across America. The proposed National Heritage Policy Act seeks to create a national system for identification of significant natural and cultural resources; registration of these resources; better protection by identifying, reviewing requirements, and by providing acquisition and/or development funding.

'Tis always morning somewhere and above
The wakening continents, from shore to shore
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.
Longfellow



LONIDAW's display of trillium, celandine poppy, and columbine should be spectacular. Come and enjoy!! LONIDAW, northeast of Kendallville, Indiana, will host a SPRING WOODS WALK on May 18 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM in the afternoon. The arrangements for this visit to LONIDAW are made by the ACRES Purchase Project Committee to celebrate reaching 2/3rds of the fund raising goal to save the Nature Preserve. The Committee reports they have met the "community contribution" goal by raising \$5,000 from individual gifts from the Kendall - ville area and other ACRES friends.

* NIGHT HIKES *

The fields and woodlands become different worlds after the sun has set, and an atmosphere of mystery surrounds those who are participating in such an activity for the first time. Although walking through any natural area after dark is an interesting experience in itself, there also are many fascinating phenomena worth pointing out. Hold on just a second, here's a few words of caution:

Don't go into areas you are not familiar with. Don't go along trails which are near cliffs, ledges or other potentially dangerous places!

Now! Get your flashlights - But keep them off until you really need them. If you should need a flashlight to see where you are walking, keep it pointed towards the ground and not up into the trees or over the fields.

As it starts to warm up this Spring, seek out a spot near a stream or pond or down in low moist areas, stand awhile with ALL lights out and look for little green dots to appear on the ground. They are the color of radium on a wrist watch dial.

Sometimes, hundreds of them, sometimes only one - then as if someone threw a switch, they all go out. This is repeated many times. While they are glowing close-in on a "dot", turn your light on and meet the Glowworm!

The next time you are around a pond at night, hold your flashlight on the end of your nose and look down the beam of light as you slowly scan the shore. You probably will see some rather bright glowing objects - they might be the eyes of frogs. (ups! or beer cans)

Note: Take flashlight off nose before going out in public.

You can search for spider eyes in leaves and on logs and in tree trunks. Look down the beam of light until you see some bright dots. Close-in and surprise!! It's a spider - or, April Fool, they might be dew drops. But spider eyes usually look a little different. Children consider it a great accomplishment when they can tell the two apart. Especially when they are more than a hundred feet away.

A mixture of brown sugar, old banana, stale beer, and a cake of yeast can be smeared on trees about an hour before dark. About an hour after dark, go out and check your "baited" trees. They should be host to moths, ants and all sorts of other night time critters.

Spring is a fine time to start your night hikes. I like doing mine during a full moon. It will pay you to keep records of the things you have seen on your night hikes and soon you'll have a wealth of information not to be found in any book.

Pat Bolman

may 3 work day

Where?

ACRES ALONG THE WABASH and
HANGING ROCK (Wells & Wabash Counties)

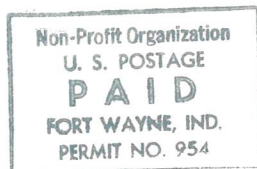
BEECHWOOD NATURE PRESERVE and
ROPCHAN MEMORIAL NATURE PRESERVE
(Steuben County)

Meet: 8:30 AM for Share-the-Ride at
Peoples Trust Gold Dome Bank, Northcrest.
9:30 AM be at the Nature Preserve closest
to you or where you would most like to work.
Bring: Work gloves, sack lunch and the following
tools if you have them: loppers, rake, shovel,
post-hole digger, wire cutters.

Lunch soup and drinks provided. Bring your mug.

IN-CHARGE: Ted Heemstra 484-4385 or 637-6264

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Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sauder
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