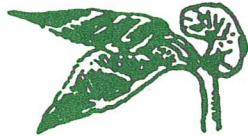


A C R E S

QUARTERLY

SPRING • 1986
Vol. XXV No. 2





This spring sow a different kind of seed. Plant ACRES in the hands of a friend and watch a growing awareness take root.



ACRES MEMBERSHIP TIME

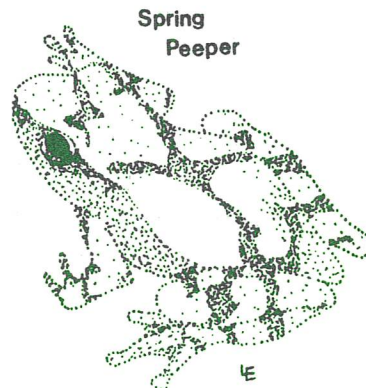
Membership year is July 1 to June 30. The number in the upper left corner of your address label tells you when your membership expires. EXAMPLE: an 86 indicates your membership expires June 30, 1986. If no number appears, JOIN TODAY!

You fill in the membership card and keep it. Return the address portion with your remittance in the return envelope provided, marked for the membership category you select. Indicate new member suggestions on the back. Tell us if you'd like a brochure.

LISTEN

When we think of the sounds of spring, we often think of birds, but frogs such as the Spring Peeper represent some of the earliest noises of the season. The Spring Peeper is only an inch long and is noted for the dark cross on its back (hence its Latin name Hyla Crucifer, crucifer meaning cross-bearer).

Though few see the Spring Peeper, many will hear its chorus which reminds one of sleigh bells jingling. The sound often begins when ponds are still frozen, and signals the beginning of the breeding season. The male Spring Peeper produces the noise by taking a gulp of air, closing its mouth, and sealing its nostrils. It then inflates its vocal sac and drives the air back and forth from lungs to vocal sac, vibrating the vocal chords found in the floor of its mouth.



Spring
Peeper

It's Spring for Acres-'86

- April 26 -- Work Day at BEECHWOOD NATURE PRESERVE and Hike in area
Meet: 8:30 a.m., Golden Dome Bank on Coliseum Blvd.
Bring: Sack lunch, drink, gloves, boots, shovel, rake
In Charge: Ted Heemstra
- May 3 -- NATURAL AREAS CONFERENCE sponsored by IDNR. See details.
- May 10 -- LINDENWOOD NATURE PRESERVE and ACRES ALONG THE WABASH.
Meet: 9:00 a.m. at Lindenwood Center On Lindenwood Avenue
Bring: Sack lunch, drink, hot dogs to cook outdoors.
After lunch, share rides to Acres Along the Wabash to view the shooting stars
Guide: Larry Bieberich

REMEMBER: Every first Sunday of the month is open house at Acres' lovely WING HAVEN from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Come and enjoy beautiful spring at Wing Haven.

There will be two summer trips and a celebration. Details about them later; just remember dates:

June 14 - Hike at Olin Lake Nature Preserve
July 19 - Trip to Fernwood Woods, Niles, MI
July 24, 25 - Wabash Canal Days with special celebration for Hanging Rock



QUARTERLY COVER ARTIST is Jeanne Cassady, The Studio Gallery, W. Seventh St., Auburn, Indiana. Jeanne works in oils, water color; studied at Chicago Art Institute and Univ. of Georgia but says self-taught and has operated The Studio Gallery since 1972.



At dusk, Nighthawks can be seen flying silently and erratically over the roofs of cities, open water and fields. The nocturnal Nighthawks are hinting for flying insects, which they scoop up with their enormous mouths. In Indiana, Nighthawks are a common summer resident and an abundant spring and fall migrant.

People confuse the Common Nighthawk with its close relative, the Whip-Poor-Will, or some type of hawk, or a big bat. The Nighthawk is a member of the Order Caprimulgiformes, or the Goatsuckers. The order includes the Pauraque, Whip-Poor-Will, and Chuck-Will's - Widow. All the Goatsuckers, except the Nighthawk, are named for their call. Fortunately, the Nighthawks are not named after their call, which is a nasal "peent". Nighthawks are not half as vocal as their relatives, the Whip-Poor-Will's, who have been known to call hundreds of times a night. The Nighthawks use their loud, far-carrying calls for communication or to help establish territories during the fall mating season. The Nighthawks also differ from the other Goatsuckers in appearance.

Whip-Poor-Will's have rounded wings, brown and reddish plumage, and rounded tails. In contrast, Nighthawks have long, pointed wings, slightly forked tails, and a broad white patch across their wings. All of the order have small bills, tiny feet, and large flat heads. Their eyes are slits during the day, but huge and round at night. One of the biggest differences between the Nighthawks and the other Goatsuckers is coloration.

The Nighthawks have gray and black plumage and are well-camouflaged when they rest on the ground. But as they have become adapted to man's presence, Nighthawks can be seen in the day resting on the crossarm of telephone poles, roofs, or on telephone wires. They are so adapted to man, Nighthawks have left the rural areas and now nest on the graveled roofs of flat-topped buildings.

The dull gray and brown plumage of the Goatsucker family is common among nocturnal birds. Nocturnal birds have a preponderance of rods in their retinas, and few cones. Consequently, they have no use for colors, either for food selection, attraction to mates, or courtship displays. For these reasons, the true nocturnal birds have drab coloration.

The number of nocturnal birds are few. Although many birds are nocturnally active at some time of the year, particularly during migration, only the owls, petrels, kiwis, and goatsuckers are specifically adapted. As with all nocturnal birds, the Nighthawks sometime hunt during the day. But they are especially active at dusk when there is a light drizzle, or around parking lots at night. Depending on the atmospheric conditions, Nighthawks can be seen skimming the ground on nights when the air is heavy and the insects are flying close to the ground.

If you were to see the Nighthawk hunting in the summer, usually it would be alone. In spring and fall is when the birds gather in large flocks. The Nighthawks winter in South America and are one of the longest distance migrators.

In the fall, before they begin their migration, the male Nighthawk puts on a spectacular courtship display. The male climbs up into the sky, and then folds his wings and drops earthward. Like a dive-bomber, he pulls out at the last moment and the air rushing through his wing and tail feathers make a deep "booming" sound.

The flocks begin to gather to head south in August and September. The largest flocks, up to 2,000 individuals, have been seen winging southward before a storm front. After wintering in South America, the Nighthawks return to the cities in March.

The Nighthawk is a welcome Indiana resident, as an insect controller and as an interesting bird. It is hoped that more people will become aware of this quiet relative of the Whip-Poor-Will.

Carolyn McNaghy

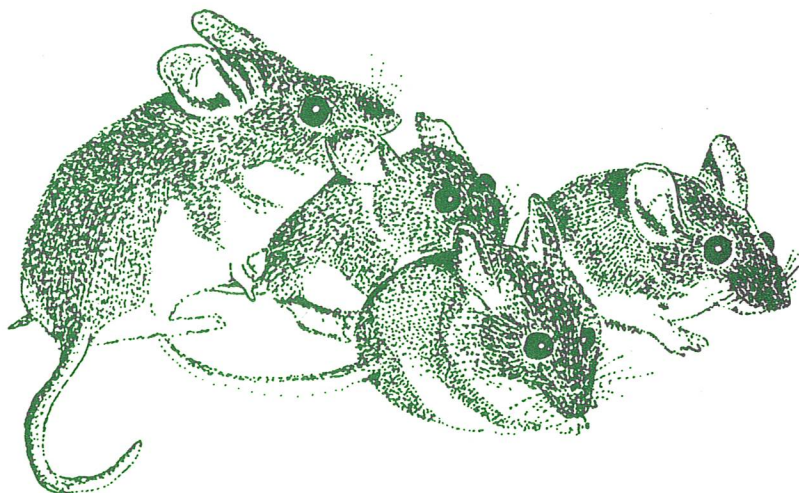
ROBERT C. WEBER FOX ISLAND RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

OF THE

FOX ISLAND ALLIANCE

This Spring, the Fox Island Alliance initiated a \$500 annual scholarship award for research topics in biology, chemistry, geology, outdoor education or other fields related to the environment of Fox Island Park and Nature Preserve.

The scholarship award provides a lump sum for a qualifying student to earn University credits while working with a professor on a research project in their specific major. Scholarship awards are screened by Dr. James D. Haddock, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Dr. Jack A. Sunderman, Dept. of Earth & Space Sciences, IPFW and Robert C. Weber, Biology, South Side High School, Fort Wayne. Awards are made by the Fox Island Alliance, who requires interim and final reports from the student on the scholarship topic. Applications are taken in early Spring, with work conducted fall or spring semester.



White-footed Mice

FOW

WING HAVEN WANDERINGS

Fred J. Wooley
Caretaker/Naturalist

There are many naturalists who have developed not only a keen sense of awareness and observation, but also the wonderful gifts of capturing what they experience, putting it into words, and sharing it through their writings. We all have our favorites -- John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Ernest Thompson Seton, Sigurd Olson the list goes on.

It seems that many of these naturalists have written from a simple and quiet setting. These sites may be right where they live, or a special place they often visit. Henry David Thoreau wrote from his cabin in the woods near Walden Pond. Aldo Leopold had his "shack" on the old farm of his Central Wisconsin Sand/Sauk County. On his farm in upper, rural Connecticut, Edwin Way Teale retreated to a small writing cabin nestled in the woods along the "Azalea Shores" of his little pond. We, in ACRES, have found our own little areas for observing and recording the natural world during 25 years of procuring precious gems of natural areas in northeast Indiana.

A site most similar to the ones described above occurs at the Wing Haven Nature Preserve near Angola, Indiana. Here, the simple and quiet setting prevails. Here, an old farm is woven artistically into a fabric of wooded ravines, creeks, open meadow, marshes, and small pristine lakes. And here, during a span covering six decades, another special naturalist, Helen Swenson, found respite from a busy world, and a place to observe nature, to be inspired, and to share her creativity with others.

Today, the Wing Haven Nature Preserve is a place where all ACRES members and friends can observe, enjoy, relax, be refreshed, and find inspiration. It is springtime now, and that is the time for new beginnings! Why not visit Wing Haven soon and begin your observations of this unique natural landscape and rustic farmstead. A peaceful world awaits, but excitement abounds as the

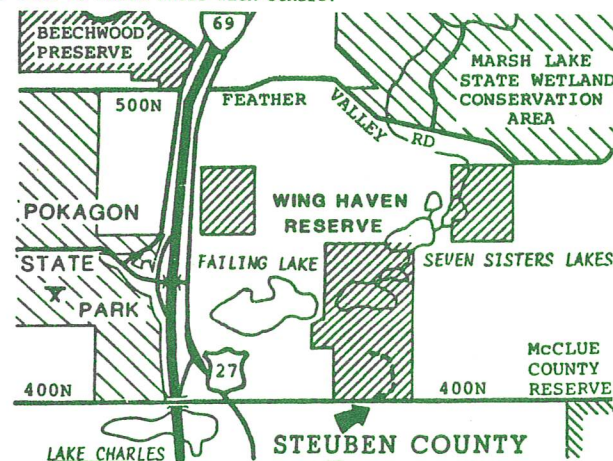
As caretaker/naturalist of Wing Haven, I have the good fortune to observe the land and many times, see the events that occur. On March 14, I awoke to a beautiful, sunny, yet crisp morning. This morning's hot coffee felt good, but the warming sun drew me outdoors. It was one of those typical late-winter, mid-March days where the temperatures warm quickly, the breezes feel gentle, and the ground seems to bubble as the thaw seeps through the soil. I was tempted to grab my notebook and try to capture these feelings in my journal. Instead, I headed to the barn and grabbed a rake. It seemed like the natural, springtime thing to do. I spent the morning raking willow branches and picking up downed limbs that fell throughout the long winter.

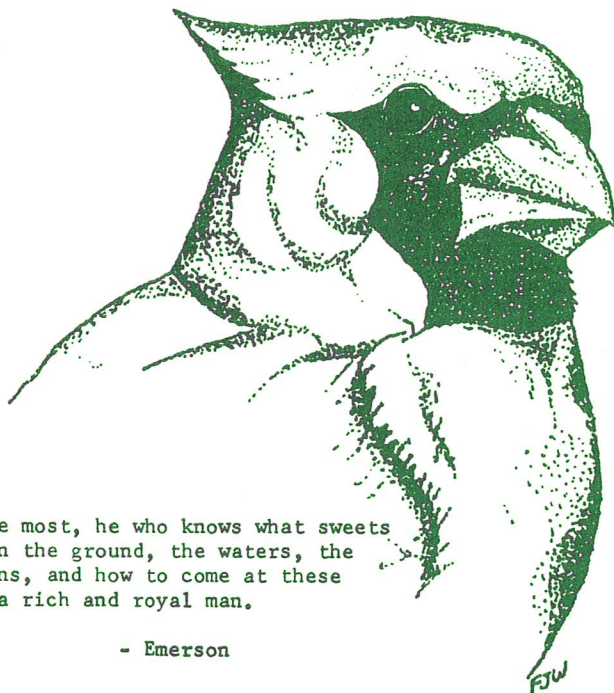
That may sound like work, but it really was not. I had company that helped. My company did not actually work, but provided encouragement through their presence. I had noticed a few passing through in recent days, but today a whole group came to seemingly stay -- Robins! They were everywhere! Their cheerful caroling chirped down from the trees above me. Other sounds of the season lifted me up and nudged me along in my work. The season's first Killdeer shrieked out their name as they winged over, too high to even be seen. And of course there were the occasional flocks of geese heading north, providing the familiar "goose music" that filled the air over Leopold's old farm and eventually some pages in his Sand County Almanac.

A beautiful "spring" morning and the vernal equinox had not yet officially arrived! It has now though, and now is the time to come out to Wing Haven! A small parking area on County Road 400N will start you off on your Wing Haven walking. The trails are open daily, sunrise to sunset. Don't forget too, that on the first Sunday of every month, the two-story, log studio building is open to the public from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. An ACRES member will be on hand to answer questions and alert you to the latest Wing Haven happenings.

And happenings there will be! Frogs will soon be singing in full force, flowers will be blooming up a storm, and resident birds will be setting up housekeeping. We are looking forward to another successful year for our nest box program. Last year, members Susan and Greg Mauk and Norma Wiesner built and donated 12 Bluebird and 2 Wood Duck boxes. It's now time for the field mice to move out so the birds can move back in.

For work or play, join us at Wing Haven this season. Enjoy the spring! Record your observations -- on paper, on film, and certainly in your memories. And be sure to share these with others!



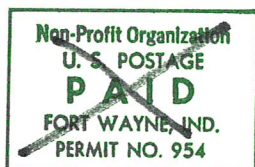


He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets
and virtues are in the ground, the waters, the
plants, the heavens, and how to come at these
enchancements, is a rich and royal man.

- Emerson

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Address Correction Requested



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