

A C R E S

QUARTERLY

WINTER - 1989
Volume XXVIII No. 1



EAGLES, BACK HOME AGAIN!



Yes the majestic Bald Eagle is back home again in Indiana! Since 1985, the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program has been reintroducing Bald Eagles to Indiana. Eagles have always graced Indiana skies, but since the late 1890s, none have nested on hoosier soils. Up until this reintroduction program, only lucky birders would spot eagles during migration, or possibly on wintering grounds in southern Indiana.

The IDNR hopes to change that. Beginning in 1985, eagles have been raised, or "hacked" as the term is, at an artificial nest tower on Lake Monroe, near Bloomington, Indiana. For hacking programs, young eagles are taken from nests in states where they are more abundant and raised and released in other suitable areas. Good eagle habitats are forested areas near large lakes and rivers, the types of habitats surrounding Lake Monroe.

Most birds released usually disperse, but once they mature in 4 to 5 years, and if all goes well, they will return to nest near the site where they were raised. The actual success of the Indiana program depends on several factors: the quality of habitat near the tower, the hacking tower itself, and the age of the eagles. Indiana nongame biologists are making adjustments to increase the chance

of success.

To date, 52 eagles have been released. It is hoped that another 20 to 25 birds can be released in 1989. Biologists feel that to reach the project goal of having five nesting pair of bald eagles by the year 2000, about 70 birds must be released.

The Bald Eagle project has been made possible by the generous contributions of Indiana citizens who donate to the Nongame Wildlife Fund on their state tax forms. These donations help other nongame programs and projects as well.

Citizens can also help in the study by reporting any eagles that have been released. The eagles can be recognized by their bright orange wing markers. Each marker will have a code in big black printing, such as C-6. Please try to read this code, the eagle's name, and report it to any DNR office, or to the Division of Fish and Wildlife, 317-232-4080. Remember, Indiana eagles will not display the characteristic white head and tail until they reach maturity at about 4 years of age.

Watch for the eagles, back home again in Indiana!

Information excerpted from **Outdoor INDIANA Magazine**, March 1988 and December 1988.

Field Trips & Special Events

February 4 Wing Haven Open House

The studio building will be open and staffed by an ACRES member.
When: 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

Meet: Drive down lane to parking area. (**Note:** Wing Haven trails are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Parking available in lot out on C.R. 400N.

February 11 Goll Woods Field Day

A visit to one of Ohio's finest remnant, virgin woodlands. See some huge trees! After a good walk through the woods, we'll go to the nearby Barn Restaurant at Sauder Village for a hearty dinner!

When Meet at 12:30 at Grandma's Restaurant (in the parking lot) & at the intersection of I69 and S.R. 6. From there, we'll

Where: carpool to Goll Woods, near Archbold, Ohio.

Bring: Hiking clothes, binoculars, money for dinner.

Contact Person: Jane Dustin (219-637-6264)

March 5 Wing Haven Open House

(See February 4 above for details)

March 11 Yoder Farm Sugar Bush Camp

A visit to a working sugar bush operation. See Maple trees tapped and the maple syrup making process. Then enjoy a hot pancake and sausage brunch!

When: 10:00am to Noon.

Where: Directions to Yoder Farm - from I69 take C.R. 11-A west to Coldwater Road. Turn left (south) and go to Chapman Road, turn left (east) and go 1½ miles. Yoder farm is on left (north) and is 2427 Chapman Rd. Watch for fence with white posts. Pull into barnyard.

Bring: Clothes for outdoors, and pancake mix and sausage. Our hosts will provide the rest and do the cooking!

Contact Person: Jane Dustin (219-637-6264)

April 1 Field Trip to the Moon

Join us for a space flight to our planet's only moon!

Meet: Glenbrook Mall Parking Lot, then carpool to Cape Canaveral.

Bring: Basic space suit.

Contact Person: April Fools

April 2 Wing Haven Open House

(See February 4 above for details)

April 15 Picture Wing Haven

Co-sponsored by ACRES and the Ft. Wayne Coed Camera Club. A "show-n-tell" of Wing Haven Pictures taken last year, plus tips on photography, plus more picture taking, plus refreshments!

When: 1:30pm

Where: Wing Haven Nature Preserve in Steuben County.

Bring: Camera gear. **Contact Person:** Judy Esterline (219-432-8455)

PAW PRINTS in the SNOW

Winter is a peaceful, quiet time in the woods. The frantic activity of fall has ended and a blanket of snow covers the burrows of the animals that will hibernate through the dark, cold months ahead. But some brave souls will continue to roam through the woods, although these animals will rarely be seen because they are nocturnal or wary of humans. The best way to know what animals are in your area is to look for their tracks and other marks. Once you learn some basic tracking skills you can follow their trails and begin to put together stories in the snow.

There are four good surfaces that register tracks: snow, sand, mud, and dust. Snow a few inches deep and slightly moist leaves the best pattern. Once you see tracks, the first thing to do is to look for a clean, simple track. Then you can study the trail -- which is a long line of tracks showing an animal's movements and behavior. You can even pick up some of the animal's "personality" by its trail.

Striped Skunk



Speed and agility are not needed by the Striped Skunk for obvious reasons. A skunk's tracks are close set and tend to wander over the snow. Since they feed on insects and grubs, skunks often root around in the dirt and fallen logs. If you find an underground Yellow Jackets' or Hornets' nest excavated, the culprit can be a skunk as the animal is fond of the larvae. Tracks often end at a rock crevice, hollow log, or building. Striped Skunks do not hibernate, so enjoy tracking them at a distance!

Raccoon



The Raccoon's prints look like miniature human hands with long, finger-like toes. The print closely resembles a Muskrat, except the Muskrat's tail drags along leaving a mark. Since most Raccoons are roly-poly, they often travel with a waddling gait. A good place to look for a Raccoon's trail is along a stream since they eat frogs, fish, and crayfish. During cold spells, the Raccoon may sleep for several days or even weeks, but it does not hibernate. On sunny winter days, the Raccoon's tracks can often be seen leading away from its den tree.

Virginia Opossum



The Virginia Opossum's track is very distinctive, with a large "big toe" slanting inward on the hind foot. The long, naked tail leaves a steady drag mark as the animal slowly goes about its business. During very cold weather, a hungry opossum will risk frostbite on its naked ears and tail to seek food. If threatened, the opossum can roll over, shut its eyes, and plays dead -- which will leave an imprint on the snow.

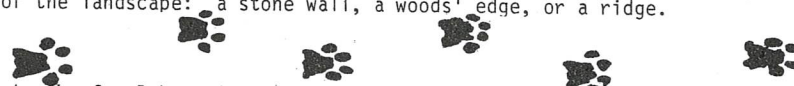
Grey Fox



Grey Fox tracks travel in a straight line, similar to those of a cat, except that the nonretractile claws show. To tell a fox's tracks from those of the domestic dog, you need to look at the entire trail. A dog's trail wanders all over the place, since he is not concerned with finding food or

surprising prey. A fox's trail is very purposeful and warily circles an animal before it attacks. The Grey Fox can easily climb trees and the trail will often lead up fallen logs. A fox's trail is commonly found along prominent aspects of the landscape: a stone wall, a woods' edge, or a ridge.

Bobcat



The track of a Bobcat is a larger version of the house cat, with four round toe pads of each foot and showing no claws. Bobcats use their claws for hunting and retract them into their feet to keep the claws sharp. Bobcats are our only predator in the East to regularly kill deer. Their tracks can be found around deer bedding areas. When the Bobcat is stalking its prey, it often practices "perfect stepping" where it places its hind feet directly in the track of its front feet.

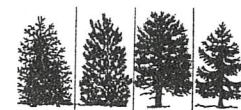
When we cross paths with wild animals, we miss the secrets of their lives since the animals have invariably seen us first and are reacting to our presence. But an animal's tracks through the snow records the animal when it was alone in nature and following its normal routine. Hiking through the woods in winter can become an exciting challenge of playing detective. And you never know beforehand whose tracks you may discover.

Carolyn McNagny

Carolyn McNagny is a frequent contributor of artwork and articles to the **Quarterly**, and is presently on the naturalist staff at the Turkey Run State Park Nature Center.



TREE SALES PROGRAM



Once again Kosciusko County Soil and Water Conservation District will be offering trees for sale at very reasonable prices. Species include evergreens, deciduous trees, and deciduous shrubs. Orders must be placed by **March 1, 1989**. For a brochure and order blank, write to them at 153 Bell Road, Warsaw, Indiana, 46580-9350, or call at 219-267-5726.

BLUEBIRD FESTIVAL

AND WILDLIFE ART SHOW

Sponsored By:
The Dahlem Environmental
Education Center

March 11 and 12, 1989
Jackson Community College
Jackson, Michigan

This year's annual Bluebird Festival will feature programs on Waterbird Colonies in a Toxic Environment, Bats, Great Blue Herons, Peregrine Falcons, Landscaping for Wildlife, Black Bears, and of course, Bluebirds. Special events will include performances by singer/musician Douglas Wood and professional storyteller, Susan Strauss. For your free brochure, call 1-517-782-3453.

In Memoriam

On November 21, 1988, the natural world and ACRES lost a very dear friend as Helen Skelton, 64, of Fremont, Indiana, passed away. Helen was a long-time ACRES member and very active in local conservation and environmental issues.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, Helen was a seasonal naturalist at Pokagon State Park in Angola, Indiana. It was a short stint of a formal interpretive naturalist position in an entire lifetime devoted to the natural world. Her interests began in insects, an unlikely topic possibly for a lady back then. Later it was seashells, geology, fossils, reptiles, birds, and all of nature. She would often take in orphaned or injured hawks and owls to care for or find appropriate homes.

In recent years, she kept two snakes, a rainbow boa and a reticulated python. Both of these, she would take into area schools to give lessons to children; lessons not only about snakes, but about the need to preserve all things wild and free. When the snakes passed on, a cat from the animal shelter became the new house guest.

Most of her knowledge was gained through experiences or learned through books and magazines. Helen was a lover of books and over the years, she built a tremendous library. A walk through her home was like a walk through a nature center or a natural history museum with her collections of shells, fossils, geodes, minerals, artwork, and books.

Helen was a member of many national, natural history and environmental organizations, and active in many local groups. She was an early member of ACRES, Inc. and offered some of her land for sale to become the Ropchan Wildlife Refuge. She rarely, if ever, missed an annual meeting. Helen was also instrumental in forming the Charles McClue Nature Reserve Board which administers over this very precious 80-acre nature preserve in Steuben County.

Helen attended all naturalist meetings and outdoor activities until failing health made that impossible. A constant battle with asthma in her later years prevented her from getting out to enjoy the natural world she loved so much, but it did not dampen her spirit or quiet her devotion to nature and the environment. Her body now rests in the Lakeside Cemetery, which is surrounded by the Ropchan Wildlife Refuge, land she once owned. The grave site is on a sandy hill, between a huge oak and towering spruce and pines, and overlooking the small lake. Helen will be missed by all who knew her.



POKAGON STATE PARK and the
POTAWATOMI INN invite you to

"A MARCH MADNESS NATURE GETAWAY!"

March 22, 23 and 24, 1989



Enjoy 2½ days at the Pokagon State Park Potawatomi Inn. There will be numerous choices of both indoor and outdoor programs. Package prices include lodging, meals, refreshments and programs. For a full brochure, call the Inn at 219-833-1077.

***** Preliminary Announcement *****

SOUTHEASTERN INDIANA NATURAL AREAS CONFERENCE

April 22, 1989

**Location: Clifty Inn at Clifty Falls State Park
Madison, Indiana**

The Division of Nature Preserves of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has organized the annual spring Indiana Natural Areas Conference. Wildlife, rare plants, flatwoods, geology, and other natural features of the southeastern Indiana area will be the main focus of this year's meeting.

For a final schedule of speakers and field trips, as well as overnight accommodations information, call the Division of Nature Preserves at 317-232-4052.

Election Results - Election Results - Election Results

In December 1988, the annual election of ACRES board members was held. Re-elected to the board are: Jane H. Dustin, John Ellenwood, Judy Esterline, and James L. Shearer. Newly elected to a first term is Sam Schwartz. ACRES expresses thank yous to John Edgerton and David J. Miller, who also agreed to be nominated. We look forward to their continued support and involvement in ACRES. And many thanks to all of you who returned your ballots!

Introducing Sam Schwartz.... Our newest board member is from Ft. Wayne and an Allen County native. Sam has a degree from Purdue University in Microbiology and a degree from Indiana University in Geology. He is a charter member of ACRES, is past president of both the Foragers' Society and the Stockbridge Audubon Society. He is also active with the Fox Island Alliance, Sierra Club, and the Izaak Walton League. For thirty-one years, he has served as supervisor of Microbiology at Parkview Hospital in Ft. Wayne. Welcome aboard Sam!

ACRES EDUCATION COMMITTEE AT WORK!

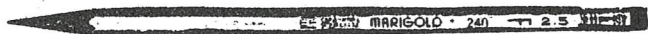
In an effort to better utilize our ACRES properties and to spread the word about ACRES and the important work that we do, an education committee has been formed. If anyone has any activities that they would like to lead, or field trips or activities you would like to see done, please contact one of the following board members on the committee: Art Eberhardt, Judy Esterline, Tim McNitt, Tom Kimbrough, or Bob Weber.

Editorship Changes.....

It was a cold, dark, December night when I received a phone call from ACRES Secretary and **Quarterly** Editor Jane Dustin. One of her questions to me was, would I like to edit the **Quarterly**. I knew it was a big job and I knew it was a weak moment for me and if I gave her my answer right then it would be yes. So, I thought it over. A few days later, the weakness subsided, but either guilt or the challenge of it all sunk in and my response to Jane was still yes! In all seriousness though, it was the challenge and the opportunity that made the decision clear. Many thanks to Jane and her faithful group of volunteers for all of the years of putting together the **Quarterly**. I hope I can do as well.

You may have noticed some changes in this newsletter. There may be more to come. I do want it to be your newsletter, so please feel free to submit articles on nature, stories of experiences in ACRES preserves, notes on other natural areas, requests for help on workdays or projects, artwork, black and white photographs, etc... **The deadline for the next Quarterly is March 15, 1989.** Send any materials to me by then. I will take anything typed or neatly hand-written. I will try not to edit out too much for fear of not hearing from you again. And if you have everything spelled correctly, don't worry, I'll probably mess up a few words for you so we look more human.

Fred J. Wooley, Rt. 2, Box 108, Angola, Indiana, 46703.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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