

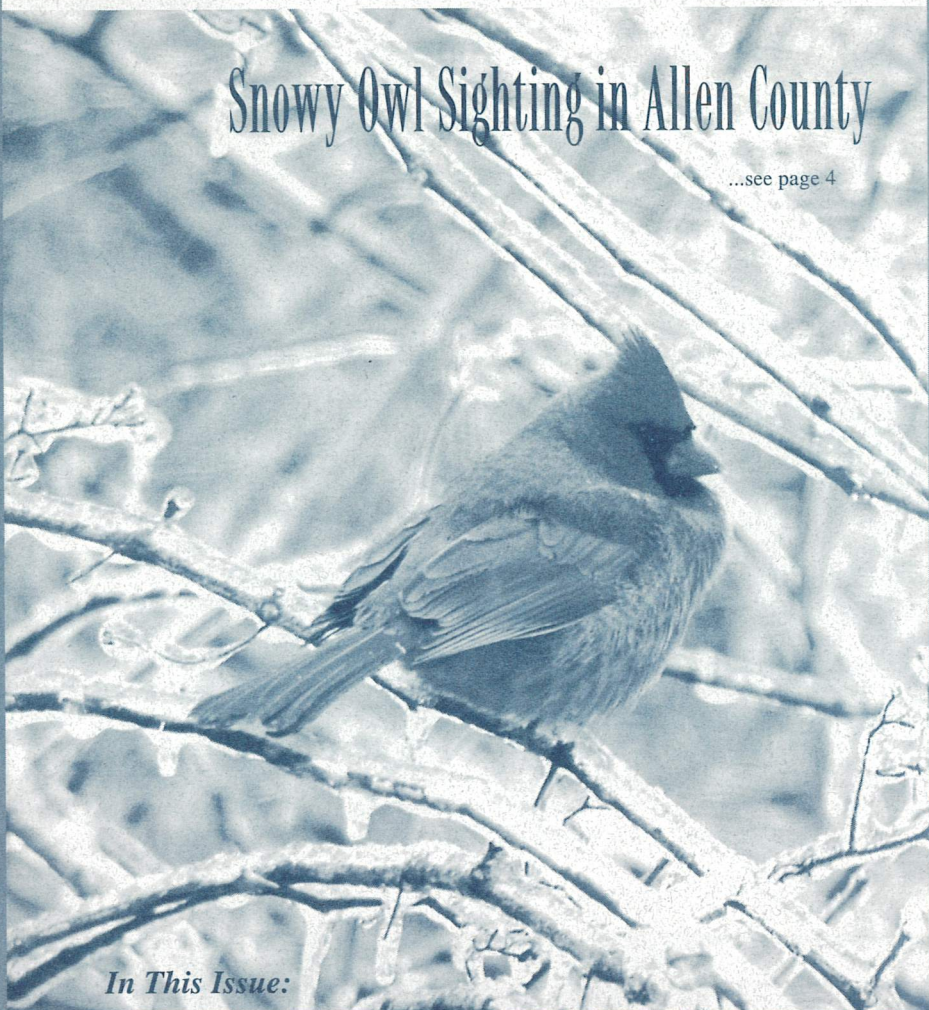


QUARTERLY

Winter—1997
Volume 36—Number 1

Snowy Owl Sighting in Allen County

...see page 4



In This Issue:

- Acquisition Updates
- Members & Memorials
- Tel-Hy Program
- Snowy Owl
- Field Trips & Events
- Wing Haven Memorial
- ACRES Steward
- Public Announcement
- Acres Along the Wabash Trail
- Sponsor an Otter!
- Wildlife Watch
- The Back Page

UPDATE ON LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS

By Carolyn McNagny, ACRES Executive Director

THE LIMBERLOST SWAMP RESTORATION PROJECT, led by Ken Brunswick, received happy news this winter when one of the farms involved in the project was accepted into the Wetland Conservation Reserve program. The additional WCR funds will allow the purchase of 460 acres in 1996-1997.

Limberlost Swamp Remembered would like to thank David Rezits, Dessie Arnold, Gordon Collins, Anne Devine, Eloise Guy and Cindy Greider for presenting a benefit concert this fall. The musicians, members of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, gave a wonderful evening of music to raise funds for restoration of the Limberlost.

Please remember that you can purchase

- A foot of swamp (\$10)
- A personalized foot of swamp (\$25)
- A golden foot of swamp (\$100)
- A quarter acre of swamp (\$500)
- Or a golden acre of swamp (\$1,000).

All contributors of \$25 or more receive a certificate.

Please mail donations and make checks payable to:

Limberlost Swamp Remembered
P.O. Box 603
Geneva IN 46740



Photo of Polyphemus moths by Gene Stratton Porter

The acquisition of the 138-acre Fawn River Nature Preserve and the 40-acre E.M. Popp Nature Preserve is proceeding well. The Indiana Heritage Trust Program has pledged \$50,000 to the E.M. Popp Nature Preserve. Thanks to Dave Gall for all of his work on the preserves.

To the members: Your support is invaluable in making these projects possible. Thanks to everyone who has given.

ACRES Welcomes New Members!

Barbara L. Boerger
Robin Brown
Jeff Brunson
Daniel J. Buehrer
Wendy Crider
Ann and George Donner
Josie Fox
Robert and Alice Frantz
Catherine A. Ginther
Karen Goldner
Gary Grotrain
Carl and Gerda Heyer
George and Becky Kibe
Jeffrey and Alice Krull
Valerie Lankenau
Kim Marsh
Ronald E. Mills
Robert and Gwendolyn Moberg
Tamzon and Kevin O' Malley

David Pettit
Billy and Judy Regadanz
Barron Renkenberger
Jim and Beth Rohrer
Joseph and Kathy Schenkel
Dr. James A. Segedy
Thomas and Vickie Sims
Josh Simerman
James Smith and Sharon Pool-Smith
Kent and Rebecca Sprunger
Carol Thomas
Ted Wehrenberg
Lorraine H. Weier
Marge White

Cedar Creek Wildlife Project
Hoosier Rails to Trails Council
Norfolk Southern Foundation

Dr. Larry Wiedman's program at Tel-Hy Nature Preserve

Dr. Larry Wiedman, Director of Environmental Studies at Saint Francis College, presented a program on Miami Indians and their tools. Over 25 people came to the program at Tel-Hy Nature Preserve, a gift from Hy and Lorry Goldenberg in 1995. The Goldenbergs and their son and daughter, Sherman Goldenberg and Nan Plasterer, came to the program along with several of their grandchildren.

Dr. Wiedman talked about the glaciers that covered northeastern Indiana and the native Americans who settled the area. He brought along fascinating Indian artifacts, arrowheads, and mastadon bones. Thank you to Dr. Larry Wiedman for his excellent program!



In Memory

Richard C. Menge
James and Patricia Barrett
Tom and Jane Dustin

Thelma Vae Schannen
Bette A. Butcher



A SNOWY WINTER

by Don Gorney

Many people believe that birdwatching is finished for the year after the last warblers fly further south by early October. Hardcore birders, however, realize that the real action is yet to take place. In just a few years of birding (the term for addicted birdwatchers), I have

come to appreciate the chilly north winds that blow during November.

In November, 1995, the first state records for Ross Gull and Townsend's Solitaire occurred. The Ross Gull has been termed Indiana's bird of the decade, as this species is rarely seen in the lower 48 states. November also brings a number of interesting waterfowl and seabirds. This past November provided some excellent birds in Allen County to captivate both avid birders and armchair birdwatchers alike. On November 8, while scouting for a

Stockbridge Audubon field trip the following day, two rare grebes were seen at Hurshtown Reservoir, near Grabill, Indiana. While circling the reservoir by car, our group of four spotted an Eared Grebe. Only a few Eared Grebes are seen in a good year in northeast Indiana, and each sighting is cause for excitement. Just a few minutes later we came upon a rarer Red necked Grebe. This species has been seen only three other times during the Fall in northeast Indiana since records have been kept. This was cause for jubilation and turned the next day's field trip into an exciting morning for many people. On November 16, while conducting a hawk census count, I encountered a pleasant

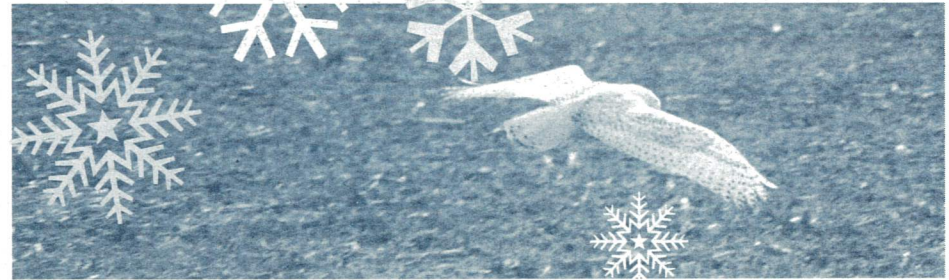


surprise. While on Felger Road, approximately one third mile south of Fisher Road in western Allen County, I saw a large whitish object in a harvested corn field. Muttered under my breath were the words, "oh please, let it be", or some other silly incantation. As my car neared closer and I raised my binoculars to my eyes, I realized I had encountered a special bird—a Snowy Owl. Even for people not interested in birds, a Snowy Owl sighting is memorable. These birds nest in the arctic tundra, usually above the tree line, and fly south in the winter due both to normal migration and when their favorite food lemmings, is in short supply. Snowy Owls can be anywhere from almost pure white to very dark with little pale coloring. As the owls age, they become whiter, and males are

whiter than females. Being used to the tundra, these owls seem to be content roosting in a farmer's field. Only two other Snowy Owls had been seen in the state since January 1, 1995. An almost pure white male was seen in eastern Allen County in February, 1996, and a dark female bird was seen at Michigan City harbor the day before on November 15, 1996. After completing my hawk census count, I headed for home to grab my camera. When I returned to the site, the owl was sitting inches from the road! I readied my camera and began taking pictures out my window as I inched my car up to the bird. Seeing a fast-moving truck coming in the opposite direction, I knew I had to

move up to the bird quickly. I moved my car closer and took a few photos before the truck whooshed by and sent the owl flying. Over the next few hours I called many people to let them know about the bird. In all, upwards of 40 people were able to see the owl. From the

species has been seen in Indiana less than 15 times in 100 years of record keeping. Incredibly, the Eared Grebe and Red necked Grebe were still present at the reservoir. To have a Red-necked Grebe, an Eared Grebe, and Pacific Loon at the same reservoir is beyond comprehension. So,



Photos by Don Gorney

photographs taken, the owl is believed to be a young male. But wait, it gets better. On November 17, 1996, while birding Hurshtown Reservoir, a Pacific Loon was spotted. This

maybe you can understand why I look forward to those cold fronts moving out of Canada in November. To me, it means that the good birding is about to begin.

SNOWY OWL FACTS

- Latin name is *Nyctea nyctea*.
- They awake shortly before sundown.
- Prefer grassy strips when in U.S. because of the similarity to the arctic tundra.
- Black ducks are a favorite food.
- 2 feet tall, 5 foot wing span, powerful, take prey on the wing.
- One owl was seen capturing, then dining on, a Great Blue Heron.
- Roost out in the open; alert to predators.
- Most are speckled but a few are snowy white; eyes are a mesmerizing yellow.
- Owls don't flock.
- In light, their heavy build, round head and broad white wings are distinctive.
- Flight is jerky as the upbeat of the wings is faster than the downstroke, frequently interrupted by a short sail.
- Spends much of its time on lookouts such as banks, boulders, or knolls when in tundra. The owl near Fort Wayne sat on telephone poles and posts.
- Downward cycles in the lemming populations account for the great southward flights, which happen every 4 years or so.
- Voice is a deep, vibrant hoarse croaking, not unlike a raven's croak; also a shrill whistle.
- Nest on the ground in the tundra; nest is of moss and feathers on the higher ground. 5-8 eggs.
- Known to come down from the tundra as far as So. Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas & Calif.

Field Trips & Special Events

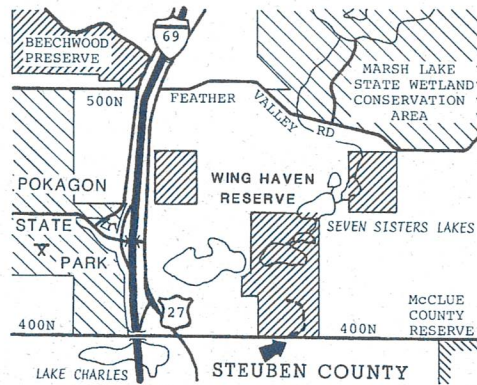
Division of Nature Preserves 1997 Field Days (Free Tours)

- April 26—Shrader-Weaver: Hike an old growth forest. (Hiking difficulty: easy)
 May 17—Twin Swamps: Cottonwood & bald cypress swamps; optional wading trip into the overcup oak swamp (Hiking difficulty: easy)
 July 12—Mongoquinong: Visit a fen located within the Pigeon River State Fish & Wildlife Area (hiking difficulty: very difficult; no trails through muck and sedge hummocks.)
 August 16—Stoutsburg Savanna: Hike a black oak savanna where the glaciation is evident in rolling sand ridges & open vegetation (Hiking difficulty: moderate; no trails)
 Two Hikes each day, one from 9:30-11:00am, and one from 1:30-3:00pm.

To reserve your space on any of the hikes call: (317) 232-4052

Sunday, February 2nd Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House

When: (1 p.m. to 5 p.m.)
 Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County, on CR 400 North, just east of SR 127.
 Contact: ACRES office at (219) 422-1004.



Sunday, February 9th. A one-man portrayal of John James Audubon by Scott Beam



Local historian and naturalist Scott Beam will be performing as John James Audubon at the local Audubon Society's February meeting. The program will focus on Audubon's passion of depicting every known bird species in his book, *The Birds of America*.

When: 2:00 p.m.
 Where: Achatz Hall, St. Francis College, 2701 Spring Street, Fort Wayne.
 Sponsored by Stockbridge Audubon Society

Field Trips & Special Events

Sunday, March 2nd.

Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House

When: (1 p.m. to 5 p.m.)

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County, on CR 400 North, just east of SR 127.

Contact: ACRES office at (219) 422-1004.

Sunday, April 6th.

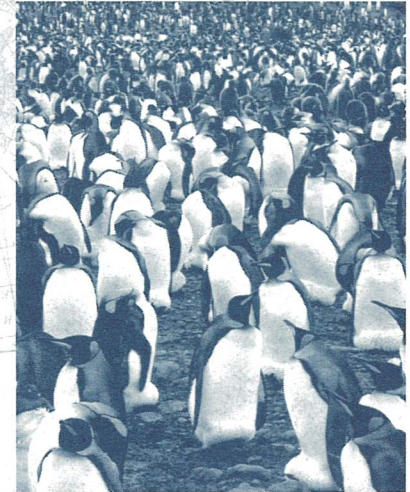
Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House (1 p.m. to 5 p.m.) Special Event: Ted's Excellent Adventure.

Ted Heemstra, President of ACRES, past president of the Stockbridge (Fort Wayne) Audubon Society and the Indiana Audubon Society, will give a slide presentation of his trip to Antarctica. Visit a continent few ever see and learn about the birds that inhabit this unspoiled wilderness!

When: 2:00

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County, on CR 400 North, just east of SR 127.

Contact: ACRES office at (219) 422-1004.



Saturday, April 19. Eighth Annual Adopt-A-Tree Festival

After the long winter, greet spring at the Wing Haven Nature Preserve!

Take home a native tree to plant, build your own bird house or feeder, follow a tricky treasure trail, and enjoy the outdoors. Mark your calendar for this yearly event!

When: 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County, on CR 400 North, just east of SR 127.

Bring: Family and Friends!

Contact Person: Art Eberhardt, ACRES Board Member, at (219) 665-2421.





Wing Haven Wanderings "The Circle of Life"

by Fred Wooley,
Caretaker,
Wing Haven Preserve

Lucy died yesterday.

For those of you who have visited the Wing Haven Nature Preserve since acquired by ACRES Land Trust in 1984, you may have very well met our English Springer Spaniel, Lucy. Put simply, and typically by anyone who speaks of a family-member canine of many years, "she was a great dog..." She lived all but a few months of her 13 years here at Wing Haven.

Jubilant is an understatement. She loved people. She never needed to be leashed or tied up as she never wandered. She would just lay outside, eye and earshot from the front door. Every half of a minute or so (while not sleeping) she would look up towards the door in hope that someone was emerging to play.

If you drove up, she would give a bark and be off and running to greet you as your car rolled to a stop. Sometimes she would jump up, but only for a closer look, or a smell, or a lick. If it was anytime from early summer to late fall, she would often present you with an apple from one of the trees near the house.

The dog was obsessed with chasing objects, retrieving them, and returning the for another toss. There were only two kinds of objects with which she could do this: ordinary, spherical objects of any kind, and apples. Lucy loved apples. Nose to the ground, quartering back and forth, she would always find it. After a few tosses and returns, the apple became a semi-solid mass of applesauce and saliva. No matter how you would "trick" her with a fake-out in one direction and a toss to the other, she would eventually find and return it. Many liked to throw it in the tall plants of the meadows. That is where she came into her own with those classic, straight-up, vertical leaps typical to the "Springer" breed. At the peak of mid-air, she would survey the surroundings and come down running.

Sometimes she might have visited with you at the studio, hoping for a treat (always getting one from her best friend, Bob Weber). Sometimes she would join you for a walk on the trails, only to leave you once in view of her beloved home and apple source. In our home, she was the consummate companion. She would eagerly let us know when a visitor arrived and greet each one with the utmost enthusiasm.

And she was good for me. Sometimes my schedule is so crazy and hectic, I lose track of where I live, if you can believe that. How can anyone take for granted this beautiful place we call Wing Haven? I admit, with life's trappings we all face, I do. With just a look, Lucy

would seem to say "just forget it all, let's go for a walk." A simple walk up the lane to get the mail, became a pure joy—a respite from the noise, the phone, the schedule and a time to get caught up with what the natural world around me was saying. Lucy helped me stop and see that. A trip to the mail box often became a loop over the meadow trails. She would jump ahead and lead the way. If I stopped to take in something more closely, she would come back to within 20 feet, stop, sit, and wait for me to catch up. When I smiled and looked her way, she would nod approvingly, jerk her head to the side, spin and be off down the trail.

It was sad to watch her slow up in the recent year and we were sort of preparing for the inevitable. It never comes easy, though, pets are with you such a short time. Her heart gave out last night and she died without pain and on her own terms.

Today, we buried her in a fence row between a meadow and forest. Only discerning hikers will notice the disturbed soil and pile of stones this winter. Next spring, we will plant a dogwood in the spot. By next summer, grasses, grapevines, and brambles will grow over the site and it will be known only to us. In future years, the dogwood will pull nutrients from her and life will go on as it always has here at Wing Haven. I am told that Helen Swenson, who bequeathed this beautiful land to ACRES, had a special palomino horse of 27 years. When it died, its bones were also laid to rest in the glacial till of Wing Haven. Such was the case, no doubt, for other pets and farm animals of Helen's. Such is the case for countless forms of wildlife. The characters change quickly, the stage more slowly, and the circle of life keeps forever moving. Every creature adds a bit of color and personality and spirit to the landscape for just a short time. Lucy added greatly for 13 years. She was a great dog.



DON MCCORMACK, ACRES STEWARD



Thanks to Don McCormack for his work on Wing Haven and other ACRES Nature Preserves! Don stands next to the beautifully made screen doors at the Wing Haven Studio. Don created doors of white oak for the front and back of the Studio. Don also worked on a railing up the stairway and around the balcony, making the Studio safer for children. Thank you, Don, for your very professional work!

Greg Craighead and the ACRES Public Service Announcement



Thanks to Greg Craighead and the American Association of University Women, ACRES has a Public Service Announcement on television. The 30-second spot will air on the local television stations over the next few months. Greg Craighead, ACRES Board Member and Education Committee Member, gave many hours of time to the project. He wrote the script, organized the filming and helped with the editing at The Production Studio. Here Greg Craighead, Don McCormack, Phil Clark and Joseph Wooley work on a bridge at Wing Haven for The Production Studio's cameraman. An added bonus to the filming was that the foot bridge was repaired.

New Trail at ACRES Along the Wabash

By Robert C. Weber

On a fine day in October of this year when a pleasant combination of blue skies, low humidity, mild temperatures and few, if any, pesky mosquitoes greeted Eagle Scout candidate Greg Osborne and his helpers, a splendid trail was established for our visitors at Acres Along the Wabash between Bluffton and Markle. There some of Greg's fellow scouts from Bluffton's Troop 148, along with loyal and experienced helpers from his own family, gathered to construct a well-defined hiking trail along the mile or so of the narrow wooded border along the Wabash River.

By the time the sun was low in the west on October 13th, an easily traversed, strategically placed and well graded pathway had been fashioned along the long, skinny woods bordering the Wabash. Also, the segments of rusting old fencing from days past had been taken from the trail side, and some discarded bricks and concrete rubble had been used to shore up a trail portion along a ditch. Then a new bridge had been constructed across a stream, and encroaching limbs and tree falls had been removed with pruners and a chain saw used by Greg's Grandfather, Tom Kahn, as a finishing touch. Greg's father, Craig, used his wheel horse (see



photograph) to scrape and grade the trail clear of irregularities.

One may now enjoy a pleasant hike and see Wabash River vistas along this trail where impressive sycamores, soft maples, hackberry trees and old oaks have reigned for many years. Using this trail and the loop trail which circles the main body of the woods, in springtime you will see abundant wildflowers,

including two, the shooting star and wild hyacinth, which are not known in any of the other ACRES preserves.

Greg's Mother, Peggy, and her mother Trolus Kahn, had set up a folding table or two near the pull-off area along State Road 116. There they happily provided food and drinks along with plenty of encouragement to the 16 or 17 trail builders.

One can hardly say enough in praise of such generous, freely offered and expertly given work. The Scout program has sent its members and leaders to several of our preserves where they have accomplished a variety of land management tasks. Almost always a very interested and helpful contingent of relatives accompanies these boys. As Chairman of the Land Management program for ACRES, I feel a strong debt of gratitude is due to these unselfish people who want to make a difference for us all. Without

their help it would be much more difficult to have our most heavily visited preserves ready for you.



Sponsor an Otter!



The total cost for one otter and its upkeep is \$500. Sponsors will receive an official River Otter Sponsor Certificate. Additional awards for individual sponsorship include:

- \$25 - \$249—Pewter River Otter Pin
- \$250 - \$499.00—Pewter River Otter Pin and framed certificate
- \$500 and up—Framed otter photograph with a brass plate acknowledging your sponsorship.

If you have questions or if you would like more information on the Indiana River Otter Reintroduction project, please contact Kathy Quimbach, nongame information specialist, at 317-232-7535.

To enroll as an otter sponsor,
Send your name, address,
and phone number to:

Otter Sponsorship Program
Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife
Atterbury Fish & Wildlife Area
Edinburg, IN 46124

WILDLIFE WATCH

The purpose of this column is to introduce members to the wonderful variety of animals that the ACRES preserves shelter and protect. Send your reports into the ACRES office.

☒ **Vandolah-Jeff and Sue Britton**
six hooded mergansers

☒ **Art Hammer Wetlands-Bob Moberg**
mink and white egret

☒ **Munro Nature Preserve-Robert Dirig, L.H. Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University**
Mr. Dirig mailed the following sign-in sheet on Munro Nature Preserve:

"The woodland is superb—very rich herb layer, with many calciphilic plants, pawpaw, silver-spotted skippers, prickly ash, dragon arum! Many mosquitoes! A lovely preserve!"

Trees & Shrubs: white ash, elm, basswood, pawpaw, shagbark hickory, beech, sugar maple, prickly ash, spicebush

Herbaceous plants: wood nettle, water beech, toadshade, spiny gooseberry, bellwort, greek valerian, sensitive fern, smartweed, virginia waterleaf, wild blue phlox, carrionflower, false solomon's seal, blood root, fragile bladder fern, wild geranium, golden ragwort, mayapple, poison ivy, virginia creeper, wild ginger, field buttercup, swamp buttercup, black snakeroot, bedstraws, rue anemone, dragon arum, jack-in-the-pulpit, white lettuce, cut-leaved toothwort, sweet cicely, wild sunflower, moonseed, star-flowered false solomon's seal

scarlet cup fungus

2 giant ichneumon wasps laying eggs in sugar maple.



The Back Page...

As I write this back page, the midwest is coming out of a "deep freeze". Some birds and people fly south for the winter, and when it's -20 degrees, I think I'd like to go with them.

But...yesterday..., I paused to step outside... just to *feel* the cold, *listen* to the birds echo, and *smell* the real world outside instead of just looking at it through a window. The air was definitely crisp and it smelled fresh. The snow had put its usual muffler on everything in sight which gave a soft, quiet edge to the coldness.

It's great to be able to see through the trees this time of year, when the shape of the hills and ravines are quite defined. It's almost disappointing when the leaves come back out in April and block the outlines of the landscape. A pair of great horned owls were sitting in a nearby oak tree, one branch above the

other, all puffed out, trying to keep warm. I think its the pair that usually live over in the giant old sycamore, we call the "owl tree". It has a magnificent hole (home), where they nest in the spring. Spring...hmmm, that's an exciting thought.

It's so quiet and so cold, not even a squirrel in sight today. As I look around almost everything seems to be in its long winter's sleep except for a tough little mink that jumps in and out of dark holes along the riverbank. The frosted beauty of winter is unsurpassed, yet harsh. It makes spring all the more thrilling in its soft and colorful contrast. With warm thoughts of spring on my mind, I find courage to walk further out into the cold, white woods, and enjoy its distinctive beauty. I guess a "winter wander" is good for balance.

Susan Britton, Editor

The ACRES Quarterly welcomes letters, articles, artwork, photos, and anything else of interest to our readers. Send any and all items to Susan Britton, Editor, ACRES Quarterly, 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808. Deadline for Spring issue is March 1, 1996

ACRES Land Trust
2000 North Wells Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46808-2474
Address Correction Requested

Directors: Ted Heemstra, President; Robert C. Weber, VP; David Gall, VP; James D. Haddock, VP; David C. VanGilder, Secretary; Mary Anna Entwisle, Treasurer; Tony Acosta, David P. Deimling, Ben Roush, Arthur Eberhardt, Sam Schwartz, Greg Craghead, Paulette Bremer, Jane Dustin, David J. Miller, Janel A. Rogers, Dennis Schoff, Richard Walker, Carolyn McNagny, Executive Director. National Advisory Board: Howard Michaud, Alton Lindsey, M. Graham Netting, Richard H. Pough, Durward Allen, Lynton K. Caldwell, Frank Kirschner. ACRES Quarterly is published by ACRES, Inc. at 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana for the interest of its members, friends, and others similarly dedicated to the preservation of natural lands in northeast Indiana. ACRES, Inc. is a non-profit corporation, incorporated under the laws of Indiana. Contributions are deductible for tax purposes. Susan Britton, Editor. MEMBERSHIP: Benefactor, \$500.00; Patron, \$100.00; Organization/Club, \$50.00; Share-the-Expense, \$50.00; Family, \$25.00; Individual, \$15.00; Senior Citizen, \$10.00; and Student (through High School), \$10.00. Payable Annually. Membership year is July 1 to June 30.



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER