

# Newsletter

December 2025

## Friends of Goose Pond



# MARSH MADNESS





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SEVENTEENTH  
SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

# MARSH MADNESS



February 20 & 21, 2026  
LINTON, INDIANA

Presented by Friends of Goose Pond  
In Partnership with Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area

Featured Artist Bruce Buck Neckar

Birds of Prey - Arts and Craft Fair

Herpetological Society

**MARSH MADNESS HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!**

- Guided bus tours - Self-guided tours
- Kids activities - Presentations

[www.friendsofgoosepond.org](http://www.friendsofgoosepond.org) Find us on 812-890-3673

**DNR**

Indiana Department  
of Natural Resources



## MARSH MADNESS

### SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

February 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026



Bruce Neckar, an American fine artist was born and raised in Noblesville, Indiana. Neckar was an Honors Graduate, and earned his B.A. from Ball State University in 1971. While at Ball State, Neckar was a Graduate Teaching Assistant to Thomas Minkler. Minkler was a well-known artist and printmaker, and served as the Chair of the Art Department and a Master Printer. Minkler served as an inspiration and mentor to Neckar.

Neckar is the recipient of multiple local and national awards, including Best Publication National Design Award from the Kansas Graphic Guild, Special Contribution to Graphic Design, Indiana Society of Architects, Evansville Regional Fine Arts Best of Show, Central States Regional Premium Award, Best Drawing Category; Swope Gallery, National Exhibition, Terre Haute, Indiana, and many more. He also has had several pieces of work purchased for private and museum collections internationally and has been involved in numerous group, and one-man exhibitions.

For many years, he was the Creative Director, Art Director, and Senior Designer for a large Mid-western print firm. Neckar has also developed and assisted in workshops and lectures. He opened the Neckar Gallery in 1980, located in his hometown, Noblesville, Indiana.

Edward Hopper, Winslow Homer, and Jasper Johns are artists that Neckar sights as influences, but his greatest influence is nature itself, and is most often the subject of his work—though he does not consider himself to be a “nature artist.” Neckar has a strong affinity for nature conservancy and belongs to many nature-oriented organizations. Active in local and national environmental issues, Neckar also serves as the Artist in Residence for Casting For Recovery Indiana, a not-for-profit organization devoted to the physical therapy and support of breast cancer survivors.

A lifelong musician, Neckar is also a founding member of the Poison River Boys, a bluegrass group that has performed all over central Indiana. He lives in Noblesville, Indiana, with his wife, Karen, also an artist, along with his dogs.



# 2026 Marsh Madness Gear

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**Shop For Gear and Tickets Here**



# Least Terns

By Kalli Dunn

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The beautiful bird on this year's Marsh Madness T-shirt is the Least Tern. The Least Tern is a state endangered species that visits Goose Pond every spring. We actually have a special area on Goose Pond called Tern Island that is carefully managed for this species. Least Terns depend on gravel islands in rivers and other water bodies for nesting. Each spring, we prepare the Tern Island for their arrival by spraying and raking the gravel. The marsh bird program in the Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Nature Preserves then places decoys to attract the birds to the island and monitors for nesting. Nest shelters are placed and nest success and fledglings are carefully monitored throughout the summer. During this time, public access to the area is restricted to encourage ethical wildlife watching and limit disturbance to these birds and their fledglings.

# Critter Corner No. 32

## Gray Fox

### By George Sly

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Now that we've introduced the red fox, it's only fair to spotlight its close relative—the gray fox. Weighing 10–12 pounds and measuring about three feet long, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus* is a small canid that favors brushy or wooded habitats over the more open areas preferred by the red fox.

Given this habitat preference, it is perhaps unsurprising to learn that the gray fox is a capable tree-climber. This adaptation enhances their ability to escape predators. Their search for arboreal food such as bird eggs, fledglings, and fruit is also augmented by being scansorial (having the ability to climb). Unlike other canids, gray foxes have semi-retractable claws which allow them to grip tree bark and climb vertically, much like a cat.

J.O. Whitaker Jr., in his *Mammals of Indiana: A Field Guide*, notes that the gray fox occurs statewide but has undergone a population decline even more significant than the red fox. He cites data showing that in the mid-1970's, 0.58% of 692 road kills analyzed were gray foxes. By 2001, only four were recorded from among 2,913 road kills (0.14%). Whitaker hypothesizes that increased coyote numbers and subsequent competition for den sites and habitat may be causes of the gray fox's decline. Habitat loss and fragmentation have likely impacted gray fox numbers in our state as well. The Indiana DNR website lists Patoka Lake and Harrison-Crawford State Forests as locales where one might see a gray fox, especially at night.

# Critter Corner No. 32

## Gray Fox

### By George Sly

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Foods eaten by gray foxes include mice, songbirds, cottontails, and corn. This species usually mates in January or February and three to four young are born about seven weeks after copulation.

An interesting sidenote is the presence of the gray fox in Native American folklore and mythology. In fact, many species of Indiana mammals play a role in the rich oral traditions of the First Peoples of the Eastern woodlands. Furthermore, one might logically ask, why do animal stories appear nearly universally among the aboriginal peoples of the world?

First, such societies commonly practice animistic religions. In such belief systems, animals are viewed as spiritual beings who also possess wisdom and the capacity to act independently in the world.

Additionally, aboriginal people live in close connection with the land. Relationships with the plants and animals around them are constant and intimate. As a result, observations about animal behaviors are commonly integrated into cultural teachings through oral traditions

Moral instruction is another common function of this blending of animals into culture. Through animal stories society members are taught the value of wisdom, the meaning of courage, patience and perseverance, and an underlying respect for nature.

The role of the gray fox varies among tribes and regions but has been seen by Native Americans as a trickster who uses stealth and wit to outsmart threats. In other instances, this fox was seen as a shapeshifter, a spirit guide, or a problem solver.

# Critter Corner No. 32

## Gray Fox

### By George Sly

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Within the Lenape tribe, originally prevalent in the northeastern U.S., it was said that the gray fox taught humans the art of moving silently through the forest. Their story relates how a young hunter struggled to stalk deer without success. The gray fox, seeing the youth's frustration, offered to help. The fox then demonstrated how to walk softly, avoid snapping twigs, and use wind direction to conceal an approach. By mimicking the actions of the fox, the hunter harvested a deer. The tribe honored the fox afterwards by initiating a ritual dance which imitated its movements.

Such ubiquitous aboriginal stories emphasize respect for the animals with whom these people shared their world. Central to this mythology is the practice of humility in learning from nature. Here is a story of ecological responsibility that modern humans would do well to remember. It is an object lesson as vital in the 21st century as it was in the 14th.



# Friends of Goose Pond 2026 Calendar

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**Shop For 2026 Calendar Here**

# Big Sit 2025

## By Jim Brown

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The 2025 Goose Pond Big Sit! Event was held on Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at the Visitor Center.

Twenty-one people joined us for at least part of the day as we found 52 species of birds from our circle near the outside binoculars. American White Pelicans gave us a good show by hanging around GP8 all day for us to view.

Look for the 2026 event in mid-October next year.



Early morning Big Sit photograph courtesy of Jim Brown

# Whooping Cranes

## By Jim Brown

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A pair of our regular Whooping Cranes arrived for the wintering season in early November. There should be several more coming through on their migration soon. Check for info about Whooper Wednesday to improve your chances of seeing one.

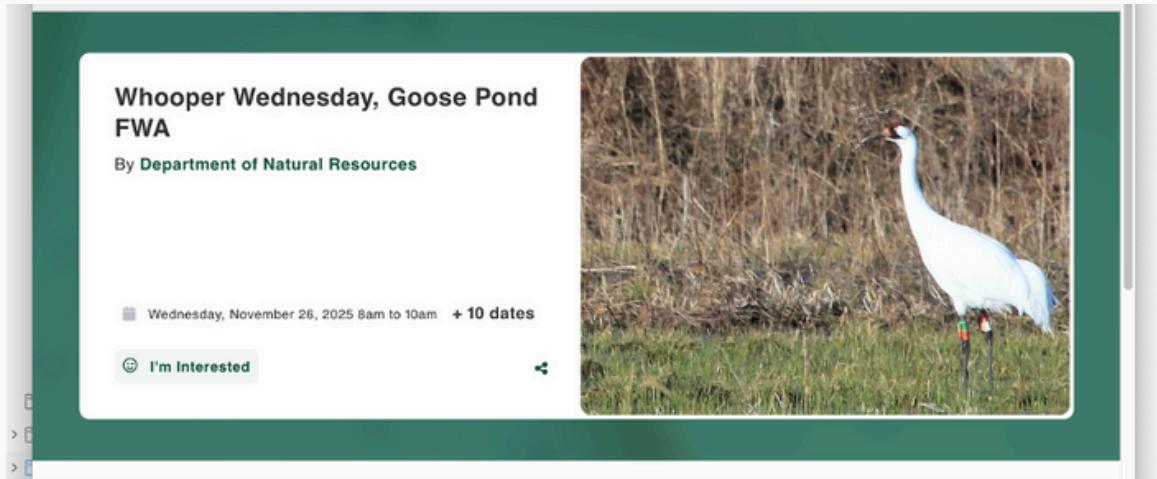
See [LINK](#) on next page.



W1-25 (U) and parents W1-19 and 1-17 traveled from Portage County, Wisconsin, to Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County, Indiana. They have been associating with seven other Whooping Cranes.

Reference: Nicki Gordon Whooping Crane Biologist  
International Crane Foundation

# Whooping Cranes


 A screenshot of a Facebook event page. The event is titled "Whooper Wednesday, Goose Pond FWA" and is organized by the "Department of Natural Resources". The event is scheduled for Wednesday, November 26, 2025, from 8am to 10am, with an option to view "+ 10 dates". A button labeled "I'm Interested" is present. To the right of the event details is a photograph of a white Whooping Crane standing in a field of tall grass.

Join us for a morning bird walk at Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area! We will meet at the Visitors Center at 8 a.m. ET on Wednesday mornings from Nov. 19 through Feb. 25 (excluding Christmas and New Years Eve) to walk around the property and see if we can spot some of our resident winter birds, including the endangered Whooping Crane! These weekly bird walks will be led by staff from the International Crane Foundation. Dress for the weather, tie on your walking shoes, and join us for Whooper Wednesdays! Walks will be cancelled if temperatures are below 20° F (-7° C) on morning of walk.

DNR values access for all participants and will provide reasonable accommodation for this event.

Please contact Ethan Plumier at [eplumier@dnri.in.gov](mailto:eplumier@dnri.in.gov) or 812-512-9185 to request an accommodation or discuss any questions and concerns. Requests must be submitted at least one week before the event. Also you might contact Kalli DNR Property Manager at 812-512-9148.



# Sandhill Crane Quiz

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## **Quiz: How sharp are you when it comes to sandhill cranes?**

It's that time of year when you'll likely hear sandhill cranes overhead, and possibly see them. But do you know anything about them?

 Accelerator

[TAKE QUIZ](#)

Link used with permission of Forest Preserve District  
Marketing and Communication



### **Reconnect With Nature**

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is a government organization in Illinois focusing on land preservation and restoration, outdoor recreation,...

 Accelerator

# Covey Counts

By Kalli Dunn, DNR

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Quail management is a big part of the habitat management goals at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area. We use prescribed fire, disking, and pollinator plantings to encourage the habitat conditions to benefit Northern Bobwhite Quail and other wildlife species. To assess the success or needs of our quail population at Goose Pond we do covey counts every fall.

A group of volunteers are assembled to cover the 17 sampling points across the property in mid-October each year. These volunteers are staff from other Fish and Wildlife properties, biologists, property visitors, and members of the Friends of Goose Pond.

We start the count before sunrise and listen for the covey call that signifies a group of quail tucked in the brush. By counting the number of coveys across the property, we can estimate our population and then set harvest quotas for hunting season. Covey counts are an essential piece of the science-based management we do at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area.

Kalli reports they detected 30 coveys which is up from the last 2 years.

## FoGP 2025 DNR Donations

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The Friends of Goose Pond have contributed \$4979.45 in donations to Goose Pond and associated properties. This includes:

- \$1387.50 for seed for wildlife food plots
- \$1200 in materials for building sign in booths
- \$325 dumpster rental for clean up at Busseron Creek FWA
- \$94.95 for supplies for our Frog Gigging Event
- \$920 towards barn owl boxes (and mounting hardware)
- \$1052 for wheat seed for wildlife food plots

Additionally, the Friends have contributed over 50 hours in volunteer work helping with various events, field trips, and monitoring and maintaining the barn owl box at the Visitor's Center.

Kalli Dunn  
Property Manager  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area  
Hillenbrand Fish & Wildlife Area  
Busseron Creek Fish & Wildlife Area  
13540 W 400 S  
Linton, IN 47441  
(812)512-9148  
[www.dnr.IN.gov](http://www.dnr.IN.gov)

Thank you for all you do for Goose Pond!





# Membership

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Renew your membership or invite a friend to join.

Friends of Goose Pond have initiated a membership program. Members will receive quarterly electronic newsletter as well as timely electronic notification of happenings at Goose Pond. To join via Paypal or Credit Card please see the **link** below.

If you would like to pay by check please see the information on the following page.

[Membership Link](#)



# Membership

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We support wildlife conservation  
and habitat restoration at  
Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area  
in Greene County Indiana  
through environmental education,  
scientific research and  
recreational activities and programs.

## Membership Annual Dues

Individual.....	\$20.00
Family.....	\$30.00
Senior (65) .....	\$15.00
Youth.....	\$10.00

Membership Type: Please Circle One

Individual Family Senior Youth

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Friends of Goose Pond

Mail to:

Friends of Goose Pond  
PO Box 56  
Linton IN 47441

# Invasive Species Alert

## By Cassandra Arthur

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### **Invasive Species Alert: Autumn Olive & Mimosa in Indiana**

Indiana's natural areas continue to face pressure from invasive plants that spread rapidly and displace native vegetation. Two species of particular concern are Autumn Olive and Mimosa. Locally, the Greene Invasive Species Initiative has been taking action to combat these threats through hands-on community involvement.

◆ **Autumn Olive (Elaeagnus umbellata)**

A fast-growing shrub originally introduced for erosion control.  
Environmental Impacts:

- Forms dense thickets that outcompete native plants
- Alters soil by adding excess nitrogen
- Spreads quickly through bird-dispersed berries

◆ **Mimosa (Albizia julibrissin)**

Also known as the silk tree, this ornamental species escapes into natural areas.

Environmental Impacts:

- Establishes dense stands along forest edges and streambanks
- Shades out native understory vegetation
- Produces long-lived seeds that make control challenging



# Invasive Species Alert

## By Cassandra Arthur

### • Local Action: Greene Invasive Species Initiative

This fall, the Greene Invasive Species Initiative completed two Weed Wrangle events at Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area in Greene County, focusing on the removal of Autumn Olive and Mimosa. These volunteer workdays help restore critical habitat, protect native plant communities, and raise awareness about the spread of invasive species throughout the region.

### How You Can Help

Choosing native plants, learning to identify invasive species, and taking part in local workdays are powerful ways to support Indiana's natural environments



Your District Coordinator GCSWCD  
812-384-4634 ext. 3  
812-798-6530  
[cassandra-arthur@iaswcd.org](mailto:cassandra-arthur@iaswcd.org)  
104 70 E. Suite B  
Bloomfield, IN. 47424

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Hayden Sater, Casey Arthur, Amber Slaughterbeck, Barb Simpson



# Informative Links

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[\*\*Friends Of Goose Pond \(FoGP\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*FoGP Facebook\*\*](#)

[\*\*FoGP email\*\*](#)

[\*\*Indiana Department of Natural Resources\*\*](#)

[\*\*Indiana Department of Natural Resources Goose Pond\*\*](#)

[\*\*Aldo Leopold Foundation\*\*](#)

[\*\*State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management \(SICIM\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Indiana Audubon Society\*\*](#)

#### About Us

Friends of Goose Pond (FoGP)  
supports wildlife conservation and  
habitat restoration at Goose Pond Fish  
and Wildlife Area in Greene County  
Indiana through environmental  
education, scientific research and  
recreational activities and programs.

Contact us  
Friends of Goose Pond  
PO Box 56  
Linton, Indiana 47441

