

**INSIDE** | The Wisconsin Fishing Report 2014

# WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

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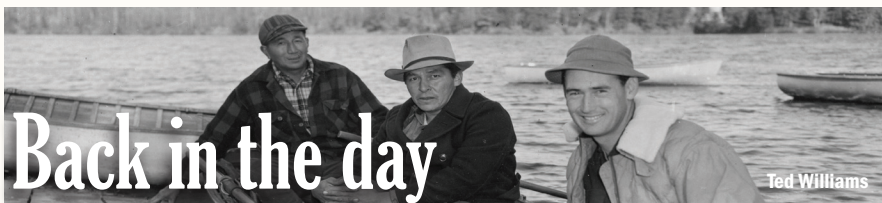
2014  
**FIELD  
TRIPS**  
take flight

**Pining for passenger pigeons**

**Wisconsin Walleye Initiative**

**It's turtle time**





# Back in the day

## Celebrity anglers who wet a line in Wisconsin waters.



General Dwight D. Eisenhower (second from left)

Kathryn A. Kahler

**Northern Wisconsin's remote lakes have long been a draw for vacationers from the Midwest and beyond. It's no wonder that celebrities — politicians, sports figures and TV personalities — were attracted to these out-of-the-way respites from urban life.**

Some of the notables included General Dwight D. Eisenhower shown in this photo (July 17, 1946) above with four of his brothers fishing on Pine Lake in Iron County. According to records in the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, the general (elected 34th president of the United States in 1952), his wife Mamie and five brothers, were personal friends of Howard Young who owned a lodge near Minocqua. Young was a philanthropic New York City art dealer, active in the Republican Party, whose legacy includes construction in 1977 of the Howard Young Medical Center in Woodruff. This photo was taken two years after Eisenhower led U.S. and Allied forces to charge the coast of Normandy in Operation Overlord, liberating Western Europe from Hitler's rule and setting up the fall of Nazi Germany.




Edward R. Murrow



Just two days before that photo was snapped and about 20 miles to the southeast, a celebrity of a different sort was endorsing fishing for the Wisconsin Conservation Department on Little Cap Henry Lake in Iron County. "Gypsy" Rose Lee (above), of burlesque fame, was an avid angler who was voted *Fishing* magazine's "Fisher-man of the Year" in 1957. A June 6, 1949 *Life* magazine article said that "Gypsy, who loves to fish, carries an elaborate anglers' kit, and whenever the show plays near a river, goes out and hooks fish as ably as she does customers."

Just as ardent a fishing fan and another advocate for Wisconsin fishing was Hall of Fame baseball star Ted Williams. This photo (top left) shows him and well-known Chippewa fishing guide, Louis St. Germaine (left). The September 1949 issue of this magazine's predecessor, the *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin*, reported "the visiting celebrity landed a 21-pound musky on Lake Pokegama, Vilas County, the day the picture was taken (October 23, 1948). Williams' party fished four days in Lac du Flambeau waters and other Vilas County lakes, and three days in the Hayward area, getting 'keeper' muskies each day."

Williams joined the Boston Red Sox in 1939 and over a 22-year span with the team, won the American League home run and RBI championship four times, won the triple crown (batting average, home runs and RBI) twice, all while missing most of five seasons (1943-45, 52-53) for active military service in WWII and the Korean War.

In 1957, famed radio and TV broadcaster Edward R. Murrow, fished the waters of Belle Lake in Vilas County. The photo on the left (July 1957) was taken three years after the telecast of Murrow's CBS TV news series that led to the censure of Wisconsin's Senator Joseph McCarthy. Murrow gained fame for his radio coverage of Hitler's advances across Europe and the lead up to the outbreak of World War II. 

Kathryn A. Kahler is an editorial writer for Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.





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April 2014 | Volume 38, Number 2



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CATHERINE KHALAR



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Art Walaszek

**BACK COVER: Blue River Sand Barrens State Natural Area in Grant County. INSET: Prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia macrorhiza*). For more information, or to order a guidebook to State Natural Areas for \$18.00 (postage paid), contact the State Natural Areas Program, Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation, DNR, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "SNA."**

Thomas A. Meyer, DNR

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EXPLORE A FIELD  
TRIP WITH THE  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
FOUNDATION OF  
WISCONSIN.

# Take it outside

Search streams for hidden  
freshwater mussels on trip 95.

J GINN RICH

*Christine Tanzer and Maria Sadowski*

**T**hink you know Wisconsin? The Natural Resources Foundation bets it can show you places and experiences you never knew existed.

From our State Parks to our State Natural Areas, to our wetlands, grasslands, forests and streams, Wisconsin is full of natural treasures that make our state a beautifully diverse place to live. And, as the saying goes, you have to know something in order to cherish it — and want to care for it.

That's what the field trips are all about: Getting to know Wisconsin. Appreciating our lands, waters and wildlife. Helping to make sure that our children and grandchildren can enjoy these places, now and forever.

The Foundation offers 150 field trips this year — that's 30 more than last year, with space for an additional 500 participants. The adventures run April through November and offer opportunities to hike, become a citizen scientist, paddle a stream, band a bird or tag a butterfly and discover species from bats to mussels to sturgeons.

Visit [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org) for field trip details and bring a friend along as you explore — and better appreciate — the state we call home.



RYAN BRADY

Spy new birds on Birding Blitz field trips 15, 16, 25 and 37.





### 1. Pick your field trips

A complete list of trips is available at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org). Only a few trips are highlighted here. Trips are color-coded to provide information about physical demands, from easy to extreme. Each trip has a registration fee listed; some trips are fundraisers to support conservation or have an additional fee for rental equipment. Trips fill up quickly, so check the Foundation's website ([WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org)) for current availability.

### 2. Become a member of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

Field trips are only open to members of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and their guests. Your membership fee supports conservation projects across the state. You can become a member at a discounted rate of \$15 per family as part of your online field trip registration. Or become a member online anytime at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org).

### 3. Register for your trips at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org) starting April 1.

Click on the "Register for Field Trips" link. Enter the passcode **JoinNRF** to receive your discounted membership. You may register for up to four trips and bring up to five guests. The online registration system is quick and secure. After registering, you will receive an email confirming your trip selection.

**The Foundation does not accept phone or email registrations.**

Approximately two weeks before each of your trips, you will receive an email with details and driving directions. Then it's time to get outdoors and get to know Wisconsin. Trips will fill fast, so sign up in April for best availability.

# Registration opens April 1.



J. ASSMUS

Get up close to critters like kestrels this year in field trips around the state.



DAVE EDWARDS

Explore State Natural Areas like Parfrey's Glen.

Caring for Our Corner of the Earth

Natural Resources  
FOUNDATION

of Wisconsin

### The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

The Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 1986; it secures private funding for our state's highest conservation priorities. To date, the Foundation has provided more than \$4.6 million for conservation in Wisconsin.

The Foundation also manages the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment, through which individuals and groups can create permanent funding for the places, species or conservation issues of most concern to them. The Wisconsin Conservation Endowment currently comprises 62 funds with a value of \$3.6 million.

The Foundation's newest initiative, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, is the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund, where individuals and businesses can give now so that our State Fisheries, State Parks, State Wildlife Areas and State Natural Areas can be cared for, now and forever. Learn more at [CherishWisconsin.org](http://CherishWisconsin.org).

Offering field trips is central to the Foundation's mission to connect generations to the wonders of Wisconsin's lands, waters and wildlife through conservation, education, engagement and giving. Thanks to expert leaders in a multitude of disciplines, the Foundation has led more than 1,500 field trips for more than 32,000 people. The field trips are often an important opportunity for children and adults to learn to care for and contribute toward conservation efforts in the state. And, of course, the field trips are a whole lot of fun!

Become a member or donate to the Foundation at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org) or call (866) 264-4096 for more information.

## Sign up for trips at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org)

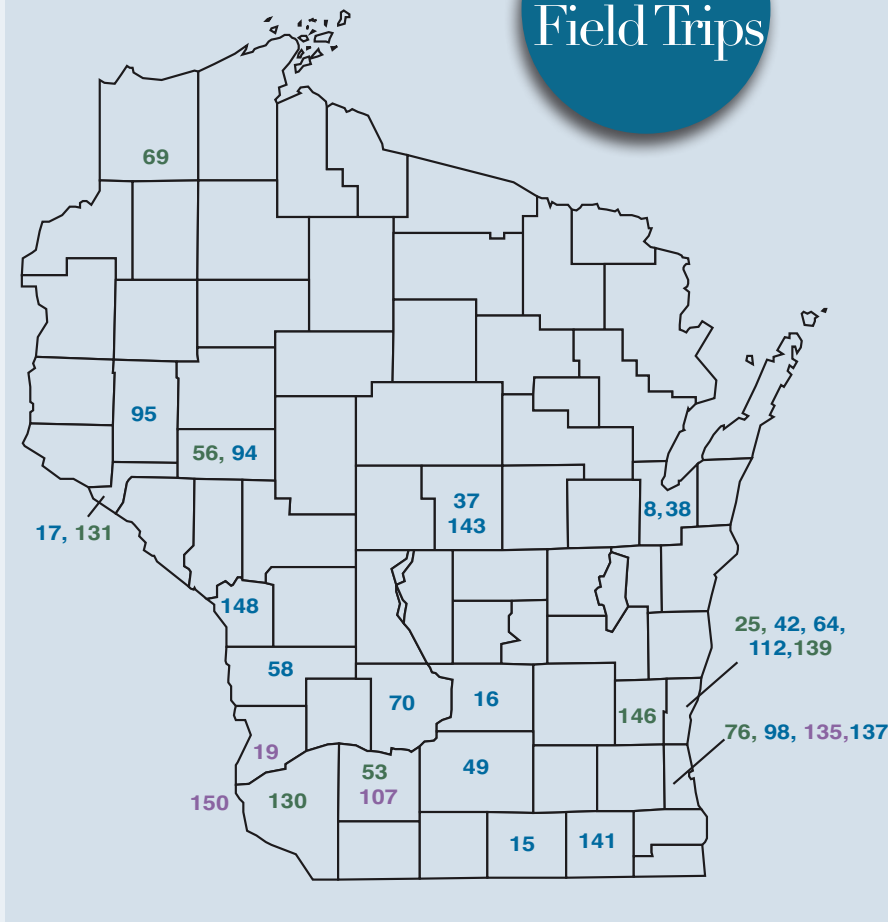
Enter the passcode: **JoinNRF**. Trips will fill fast, so sign up starting April 1 for best availability.

### Questions?

Visit the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's website at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org), call toll-free (866) 264-4096 or email [fieldtrips@wisconservation.org](mailto:fieldtrips@wisconservation.org).




# 2014 Field Trips



For a complete list of trips, visit [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org).

The color of the trip title indicates the physical demand level of the trip.

- 1** Accessible to people with walking disabilities
- 2** Easy short hike on level terrain
- 3** Average hike with some hills
- 4** Steeper terrain, long hike or challenging hike
- 5** More extreme conditions, off trail and very steep or long hike

**Child-friendly** trips are identified with this symbol:  Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Questions?** Call toll-free (866) 264-4096; or email: [fieldtrips@wisconservation.org](mailto:fieldtrips@wisconservation.org).

## 8. WATERFOWL AND PIKE AT SENSIBA

Discover the rich amount of wildlife living in restored wetlands of the Sensiba Unit-Green Bay West Shores Wildlife Area. See northern pike making their spring spawning run. Enjoy peak waterfowl migration. Discover how biologists control water to optimize fish and wildlife habitat.

Time: Both sessions 8 a.m. to noon  
Choose one session to attend:  
**8-A.** Friday, April 25  
**8-B.** Friday, May 2  
Green Bay, Brown Co.  
Leaders: James Harbaugh and Brian Glenzinski  
Limit: 20  
Cost: \$12 per person

## 15. BIRDING BLITZ: AVON BOTTOMS STATE NATURAL AREA

Explore the Avon Bottoms Important Bird Area along the Lower Sugar River. Hike diverse habitats of grasslands, wetlands and bottomland hardwood forests. Expect to see more than 100 species of birds. Participants become a team for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon supporting bird conservation statewide. \$75 of this trip fee benefits your team. Fundraise more if you'd like.  
Friday, May 9, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Brodhead, Rock Co.  
Leaders: Andy Paulios and Mike Foy  
Limit: 12  
Cost: \$87 per person

## 16. BIRDING BLITZ: NORTH EMPIRE PRAIRIE

Experience bird diversity in the vast network of wetland and grassland habitats in the North Empire Prairie Wetlands Important Bird Area. Carpool to four prime birding sites: Goose Pond, Schoenberg's Marsh, Mud Lake and Grassy Lake. Participants will automatically become a team for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon supporting bird conservation statewide. \$75 of this trip fee benefits your team. Fundraise more if you'd like.  
Saturday, May 10, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Arlington, Columbia Co.  
Leaders: Mark Martin and Susan Foote-Martin  
Limit: 12  
Cost: \$87 per person

## 17. TRAIN RIDE AND BIRDS OF TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA

All aboard! Ride atop an antique open-air train with stops along the way for bird watching and short hikes into blooming prairies, hardwood forests, wetlands and sloughs near the mouth of the Chippewa River. This is a fundraiser to support conservation efforts along the Lower Chippewa River.  
Saturday, May 10, 7 a.m. to noon  
Durand, Pepin Co.  
Leaders: Dave Linderud, Steve Betchkal and Anne Geraghty  
Limit: 64  
Cost: \$35 per person



## 19. MISSISSIPPI RIVER EAGLE NEST AND WARBLERS BOAT CRUISE

Experience the mighty Mississippi during peak spring migration. Spy warblers, neotropical migrants, otters



and other wildlife of the backwater byways. Visit eagle nests. Enjoy it all from the deck of a semi-enclosed pontoon cruiser. Ages 8+  
 Saturday, May 10, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.  
 Prairie du Chien, Crawford Co.  
 Leader: Captain Annie  
 Limit: 55  
 Cost: \$32 adult / \$26 child, per person

## 25. BIRDING BLITZ: CEDARBURG BOG STATE NATURAL AREA

Enjoy birding the wilds of Cedarburg Bog SNA and nearby hotspots to spy breeding and migrating birds. Participants become a team for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon supporting bird conservation statewide. \$75 of this trip fee benefits your team. Fundraise more if you'd like.  
 Saturday, May 17, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
 Saukville, Ozaukee Co.  
 Leaders: Owen Boyle and Tim Vargo  
 Limit: 12  
 Cost: \$87 per person

## 37. BIRDING BLITZ: BUENA VISTA GRASSLANDS

Take in the springtime beauty and enjoy the expanse of the Buena Vista Grasslands — one of the best grassland habitats in the state. A chance to spy greater prairie-chickens, upland sandpipers and Western meadowlarks. Participants become a team for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon supporting bird conservation statewide. \$75 of this trip fee benefits your team. Fundraise more if you'd like.  
 Saturday, May 24, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
 Bancroft, Portage Co.  
 Leaders: Gerry Janz and Maureen Brocken  
 Limit: 12  
 Cost: \$87 per person

## 38. BIRDING HOTSPOTS OF GREEN BAY BIRD CITY

Explore Green Bay's birding hotspots. Tour the projects that define Green Bay as one of the premier Bird Cities in the state. See "Landscaping for Birds" demonstration plots, birds of the bay and Fox River, chimney swift towers and more.  
 Saturday, May 24, 7 to 11 a.m.  
 Green Bay, Brown Co.  
 Leaders: Mike Reed and Nancy Nabak  
 Limit: 20  
 Cost: \$12 per person



Take a train ride through Tiffany Wildlife Area to see birds on trips 17 and 131.

D. LINDERUD

## 42. GET HOOKED: FLY FISHING FOR BEGINNERS

Tackle your curiosity about fly fishing. Experts will demystify the equipment and teach the basics. Then venture outside to learn some casts and fish the ponds. Cost includes use of rods, reels, lines and flies.  
 Saturday, May 24, 12:30 to 3 p.m.  
 Newburg, Ozaukee Co.  
 Leaders: Jerry Kiesow, Diane Kiesow and Chris Vollmer  
 Limit: 12  
 Cost: \$42 per person



## 49. STREAM ECOLOGY AT BLACK EARTH CREEK

Be a stream ecologist for a day. Get hands-on and feet-wet to learn about stream ecology and explore the waters of a beloved trout stream. Collect aquatic insects and fish. Great fun and learning for the whole family! Ages 7+  
 Saturday, May 31, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
 Black Earth, Dane Co.  
 Leader: Mike Miller  
 Limit: 20  
 Cost: \$12 adult / \$6 child, per person



## 53. BLUEBIRD TRAIL HIKE

Learn about bluebird ecology as you hike an established bluebird nest-box trail. Peer into houses to see young hatchlings. Ages 6+  
 Friday, June 6, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
 Muscoda, Iowa Co.  
 Leaders: Dale, Doris and Russell Moody  
 Limit: 30  
 Cost: \$22 adult / \$16 child, per person



## 56. TREE AND SHRUB IDENTIFICATION

Can't tell an oak from an elm, or a birch from a beech? Here's a great chance to



Learn about stream ecology on trips 49 and 58.

B. GUNDRUM

hone those ID skills. Hike Beaver Creek Reserve with an expert to learn many species of trees by their leaf, twig or bark — plus tricks to remember them. Ages 12+  
 Saturday, June 7, 9:30 a.m. to noon  
 Fall Creek, Eau Claire Co.  
 Leader: James Schwiebert  
 Limit: 18  
 Cost: \$20 adult / \$14 child, per person



## 58. ECO-LOGIC FLY FISHING WORKSHOP

Understanding the ecology of trout streams makes for a richer angling experience and may even help you catch (and release) more fish. Learn how to "read the water," and get to know trout prey and the fly patterns that imitate them. This workshop is for beginning through advanced fly fishers. Loaner fly rods available. Ages 12+  
 Saturday, June 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
 Avalanche, Vernon Co.  
 Leader: Mike Miller  
 Limit: 20  
 Cost: \$22 adult / \$16 child, per person



## 64. FISH PASSAGE ALONG THE MILWAUKEE RIVER

It's taken years of hard work, but it's well worth it. Over 100 miles of streams, rivers and habitat are now reconnected to the Milwaukee River watershed, allowing native fish access to spawn in its waters. Visit dam removals and a fish passage via an underwater camera. Ages 10+  
 Friday, June 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
 Thiensville, Ozaukee Co.  
 Leaders: Matt Aho, Andrew Struck and Luke Roffler  
 Limit: 20  
 Cost: \$12 adult / \$6 child, per person





Discover urban prairies on trip 98.

J. KRANIJAK

### 69. SAND PINE BARRENS OF THE NORTHWEST

Explore the rare pine barrens of northwest Wisconsin including a renewed barrens in the path of the Germann Road Fire and a mature wooded barrens just off the fire line. Compare firsthand the differences while discovering unique plants, birds and wildlife in this scenic landscape. Saturday, June 14, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Gordon, Douglas Co.  
Leader: Bob Hanson  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$12 per person



### 70. WONDROUS WORMS, AMAZING ARTHROPODS AND FASCINATING FLORA

How well-versed are you in the creepy and crawly of Wisconsin? Search for bugs, worms and problematic plants while learning how they impact our forests. Entertaining, interactive and great for kids. Ages 6+  
Saturday, June 14, 9:30 a.m. to noon  
Baraboo, Sauk Co.  
Leaders: Nisa Karimi, Bernie Williams and Mike Hillstrom  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$12 adult / \$6 child, per person

### 76. KINNICKINNIC RIVER REVITALIZED: NEW URBAN TRAIL

Enjoy a hike on the newly opened Kinnickinnic River Trail. See the transformation from concrete to green space.  
Friday, June 20, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co.  
Leaders: Nadia Bogue and Iris Gonzalez  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$12 per person



Learn more about bats on trips 107 and 137, and find more field trip options online at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org).

HEATHER KAARAKKA



### 107. BREAKFAST WITH THE BATS — FOR KIDS

Meet just before sunrise to marvel as nearly 1,000 bats swarm around their roost after a night out foraging. Enjoy a simple breakfast (provided) and interactive program to meet live fruit bats. Fees include a donation for bat conservation. Best enjoyed by kids and their families. Ages 8+  
Saturday, August 2, 5 to 7:30 a.m.  
Blanchardville, Iowa Co.  
Leaders: Jennifer Redell, J. Paul White and Heather Kaarakka  
Limit: 35  
Cost: \$52 adult / \$27 child, per person



### 94. FLUTTER, FLY AND WADE INTO CITIZEN SCIENCE

Explore Beaver Creek Reserve to band birds, wade for freshwater mussels, observe butterflies and net aquatic invertebrates. Become a citizen scientist, where fun and science meet. Ages 10+  
Wednesday, July 16, 8 a.m. to noon  
Fall Creek, Eau Claire Co.  
Leaders: Jeanette Kelly and Anna Mares  
Limit: 20  
Cost: \$20 adult / \$9 child, per person



### 95. TREASURES OF THE CHIPPEWA RIVER: NATIVE MUSSELS

Wade in the cool waters of the Chippewa River to search for one of our state's most diverse, yet hidden treasures: freshwater mussels (clams). Learn about our 52 native species, their life cycle and their contributions to Wisconsin's history. Great fun for kids and adults. Ages 5+  
Saturday, July 19, 9 a.m. to noon  
Meridian, Dunn Co.  
Leader: Lisie Kitchel  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$12 adult / \$6 child, per person

### 98. LAKESHORE STATE PARK: URBAN OASIS

Lakeshore is one of the newest and most urban of Wisconsin's State Parks. Located on a peninsula in Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, it sports spectacular views of the city and lake with a surprising diversity of wildlife.  
Wednesday, July 23, 10 a.m. to noon  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co.  
Leader: Tom Kroeger  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$12 per person



### 112. AMAZING RESTORATION: FARM FIELD TO RESPLENDENT PRAIRIE

Enjoy this extraordinary example of the 30-year restoration of 20 acres from a farm field to a tall-grass prairie. See how the hard work of a caring landowner provided habitat to many birds, insects and animals. Two sessions offered, each with various blooming plants. Ages 6+  
Time: Both sessions 12:30 to 3 p.m.  
Choose one session to attend:  
**112-A.** Saturday, August 2  
**112-B.** Saturday, August 30  
Cedarburg, Ozaukee Co.  
Leaders: Benjamin Arnold and Marjie Tomter  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$14 adult / \$8 child, per person

### 130. OAK REGENERATION IN SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN

Explore silviculture at the Douglas Hallock Demonstration Forest to learn about the forestry techniques used in managing for oak regeneration and songbird habitat. If you own forestland, this trip is for you.  
Saturday, September 13, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Millville, Grant Co.  
Leaders: Allen King and Brad Hutnik  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$12 per person

### 131. TRAIN RIDE AND BLUFF PRAIRIE HIKE AT TIFFANY WILDLIFE AREA

Begin with a hike in Five-Mile Bluff State Natural Area for amazing vistas of the Mississippi and Chippewa Rivers. Learn about goat-prairie ecology and wildlife. Then ride atop an antique open-air train through famed Tiffany Wildlife Area. Enjoy stops along the way for short hikes. This fundraiser supports conservation along the Lower



Chippewa River.  
Saturday, September 13, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Pepin, Pepin Co.  
Leaders: Dave Linderud and Gary Wolf  
Limit: 64  
Cost: \$45 per person



### **135. BEHIND THE SCENES: WILDLIFE REHAB CENTER**

Tour behind the scenes at the Wisconsin Humane Society's Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Milwaukee, which admits over 5,000 injured, sick and orphaned wild animals each year. Visit with a resident peregrine falcon, Eastern screech owl, big brown bats and more. Ages 12+  
Thursday, September 18, 2 to 4 p.m.  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co.  
Leader: Scott Diehl  
Limit: 40  
Cost: \$17 adult / \$11 child, per person



### **137. BIRD AND BAT MIGRATION IN MILWAUKEE**

Learn the importance of urban natural areas for bats, migratory birds and other wildlife species. Observe a bird banding station, mist nets and acoustic bat monitoring demos in Riverside Park. Enjoy a rare opportunity to see songbirds in the hand. Ages 10+  
Saturday, September 20, 8 to 11 a.m.  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Co.  
Leaders: Owen Boyle, Tim Vargo and Jennifer Callaghan  
Limit: 30  
Cost: \$12 adult / \$6 child, per person



### **139. LAKE STURGEON REINTRODUCTION**

Learn about sturgeon biology, tour a

rearing facility and get hands-on to explore the river from the standpoint of this ancient fish. This fundraiser supports sturgeon reintroduction. Ages 8+  
Saturday, September 20  
Choose one session time to attend:  
**139-A.** 9 a.m. to noon  
**139-B.** 1 to 4 p.m.  
Newburg, Ozaukee Co.  
Leader: Mary Holleback  
Limit: 20  
Cost: \$17 adult / \$11 child, per person



### **141. PRAIRIE PLANTS: DIVERSITY AND SEED COLLECTION**

Enjoy the beauty of the 20 acres of prairies that surround the Seno Woodland Education Center. Learn about prairie plant diversity and get hands-on for seed harvesting. Ages 10+  
Saturday, October 4, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Burlington, Walworth Co.  
Leaders: Nan Calvert and Ron Rasmussen  
Limit: 25  
Cost: \$17 adult / \$11 child, per person



### **143. SAW-WHET AND LONG-EARED OWL BANDING**

Have your own close encounter with Wisconsin's smallest owl. Experience how the experts mist net and band these adorable birds at Linwood Springs Research Station. A chance to see long-eared owls, too. Ages 7+  
Time: All sessions 7:30 to 10 p.m.  
Choose one session to attend:  
**143-A.** Friday, October 10  
**143-B.** Saturday, October 11

**143-C.** Friday, October 17  
**143-D.** Thursday, October 23  
**143-E.** Friday, October 24  
Stevens Point, Portage Co.  
Leaders: Gene Jacobs and Lorraine Jacobs  
Limit: 35  
Cost: \$27 adult / \$21 child, per person



### **146. RESTORING THE NATIVE PAST FOR OUR FUTURE**

Explore the Germantown Wilderness Enhancement Project to see the amazing transformation of 125 acres of farmland to native prairie, wetland and forests. Learn firsthand from the experts how this property came to be and the importance it holds for the local landscape. Ages 10+  
Friday, October 17, 9 a.m. to noon  
Germantown, Washington Co.  
Leaders: Stephen McCarthy, Bill Graffin and David Grusznski  
Limit: 50  
Cost: \$12 adult / \$6 child, per person



### **148. WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION ON THE MISSISSIPPI**

Get to know your ducks, geese and swans of the Mississippi River flyway. Learn tips and tricks for waterfowl identification in an indoor classroom. Then venture to the field in Pools 8 and 9 to practice your skills during peak waterfowl migration. Ages 12+  
Time: Both sessions 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Choose one session to attend:  
**148-A.** Saturday, October 25  
**148-B.** Friday, November 7  
La Crosse, La Crosse Co.  
Leaders: Brenda Kelly and Scott Kelly  
Limit: 30  
Cost: \$17 adult / \$11 child, per person



### **150. BOAT CRUISE THE MISSISSIPPI MIGRATION**

Revel in the miracle of migration. Enjoy your perch on the deck of a heated pontoon cruiser on this exclusive tour of the famous Pool 9 in the Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge. Chance to see otters, minks and other wildlife too. Ages 10+  
Saturday, November 15, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Lansing, Iowa  
Leader: Captain Annie  
Limit: 55  
Cost: \$52 adult / \$46 child, per person

*Christine Tanzer is the field trips coordinator and Maria Sadowski is the communications director for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.*



Learn more about prairies on trips 112 and 146.

R. ZEHNER



See saw-whet owls close up on trip 143.

A. WALASZEK





Camp Coots, one of several Madison Audubon groups in the 2013 Great Wisconsin Birdathon, raised more than \$300 for Wisconsin birds.

Watch for egrets!



THIS MAY, FLOCK TO THE ACTION AND SUPPORT OUR STATE BIRDS AT [WIBIRDATHON.ORG](http://WIBIRDATHON.ORG).

# 2014 Great Wisconsin Birdathon

D. Z. JOHNSON

*Alyson Douglas*

**Bird-a-thon:** Helping Wisconsin's birds by spending any portion of a 24-hour period in May observing birds and asking for pledges per species seen.

Last year, 155 birders and 850 pledgers raised \$56,000 through the Great Wisconsin Birdathon! This year, the event is soaring even higher, aiming to raise \$75,000 for our state's birds.

Whether you're a backyard birder, a serious bird watcher or you simply love birds, there are plenty of ways to get involved as a birder or pledger. Donations and pledges are tax deductible and are handled simply and securely online.

## Support a Signature Team

Signature Teams are made up of well-recognized birding experts. They will bird at their favorite regional hotspots and update their supporters via their team web pages at [WIBirdathon.org](http://WIBirdathon.org). Our 2014 Signature Teams are:

- Cutright's Old Coots (Carl Schwartz, Tom Uttech, Marilyn Bontly and Joan Sommer)
- Door County Team (Mike Grimm and Kari Hagenow)
- Horicon Marsh Team (Bill Volkert)
- Lake Superior Team (Ryan Brady and Nick Anich)
- Lower Chippewa River Titmouse-keepers (Bill Hogseth, Steve Betchkal and Anne Geraghty)



- Madison Green Team (Sumner Matteson and Tod Highsmith)
- Northern Highlands Team (Anna Pidgeon, Jess Gorzo and UW-Madison Forest Resources Practicum Students)

## Start a Great Wisconsin Birdathon Team or fly solo as a birder

Individuals can bird on their own or create a team and bird with coworkers, friends or relatives. Set up your own web page, share your team's photos and news there and point people to your team's page to pledge or donate. All you have to do is go birding!

## Join a Birding Blitz Field Trip

New to birding or want to learn how an official Birdathon is conducted? Spend a memorable and educational day with experts at birding hotspots during a Birding Blitz Field Trip. Your \$87 registration fee includes a \$75 tax-deductible donation to support the Bird Protection Fund. Register online through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's Field Trip Program at [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org). (See pages 4-9 in this issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources*.)

## Take a long walk for birds

Last year, Milwaukee's Bill Mueller

walked 246 miles from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River and raised \$10,000 for the Birdathon. This year, Mueller has doubled his goal to \$20,000 and he needs extra hands and feet. Volunteers can sign up to walk any part of the route that goes from the Illinois state line in Kenosha County to the Michigan state line in Marinette County. Walk any time during May, alone or with friends. To learn more click on the "Long Walk" tab at [WIBirdathon.org](http://WIBirdathon.org).

## Conduct an oriole count (perfect for schools, scouts and other youth groups)

Provide jelly or fresh fruit and attract bright orange Baltimore orioles to your schoolyard, playground or park. Create an Oriole Count Team and compete for great prizes. As an option, compete to raise money for birds. The first 60 teams to register will receive fruit and jelly feeders, donated by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and Mequon's Wild Birds Unlimited. Two teams will win a birdwatchers' bonanza worth \$1,100 each: five pairs of binoculars, a spotting scope, and a tripod — all donated by Eagle Optics. One prize will go to the school/group that raises the most money for the Bird Protection Fund; a second winner will be selected in a drawing among all teams who participate.


## Making a better place for birds

Funds raised through the 2014 Great Wisconsin Birdathon will support the Bird Protection Fund, a partnership of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Bird Conser-



vation Initiative (WBCI) and the Department of Natural Resources.

Nonprofit conservation organizations that are endorsers of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative can use the Birdathon to raise money for their bird conservation projects and grow their membership. Participating organizations keep half of the funds they raise while using the event to attract new donors.

The Bird Protection Fund supports projects that benefit the full life-cycle needs of Wisconsin's birds for breeding, migrating and wintering. Proceeds from this year's Birdathon will support eight projects and programs: the 2nd Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, Bird City Wisconsin, Important Bird Areas, Wisconsin Stopover Initiative, reforestation in Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula, Wisconsin's bird monitoring program and the recovery of whooping cranes and Kirtland's warblers in the state. 

*Alyson Douglas is the Great Wisconsin Birdathon coordinator for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.*



MADISON GREEN TEAM

**Bird any way you like — even by bike — for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon.**

## Young birder flies high

At age 14, Lydia Martin of Mount Horeb organized a 24-hour Birdathon event with friends and family, put together a Birdathon presentation for the 4-H competition at the Dane County Fair — and was one of the event's top individual fundraisers. Intimidated? Don't be. Lydia shares her ideas and experiences to inspire other birders, no matter what their age.



Lydia Martin

### Why birds? What is it about them that makes you curious or excited?

When I was little I thought birds were amazing because they could go wherever they wanted. They were adorable, too, and kids love cute things. I was in a seventh grade science competition (Science Olympiad) and one of my events was ornithology. I took it because I love animals and it looked interesting. That's probably when I got hooked on identifying birds and wanted it to be a hobby. Now that I am older, I love learning more about them and seeing birds I have never seen before.

Wisconsin has so many interesting habitats to explore for a large variety of birds. It also is pretty neat to be able to follow birds throughout the seasons — we listen for the sandhill cranes to return in the spring and look forward to watching birds in the yard during the summer. I like to spot the killdeer and bobolinks in our pasture, too. In the fall, I've been lucky to watch the whooping cranes leave Green County with Operation Migration. Last winter (early 2013) was a fun one for seeing a variety of owls, including the northern hawk owl, great gray owl and snowy owl.

### What did you most enjoy about doing your Birdathon last year? Did anything about it surprise you or challenge you?

The year before, I had made a Birding Weekend that went for two days for me and my family. In 2013, I lined it up with the Birdathon so my sightings would count towards both. I also made a scrapbook for the fair about it.

I was asked to speak at the Madison Audubon Society about my Birdathon. The Natural Resources Foundation also wanted to meet with me. I found that challenging because I have a hard time speaking in front of people. I am glad I had the experience, though.

### Did doing the Birdathon make you want to do another one this year? If so, what is your goal for this year?

Yes. My goal is to reach at least 80 species for the 2014 Great Wisconsin Birdathon. I would like to see more kids doing a birdathon, too.

### Is there a birder you'd like to meet, or a Wisconsin bird you haven't seen yet that you'd love to add to your list?

I would like to meet someone who blends art with birds since I love both those things — maybe Sam Timm, he's from Wisconsin. I also want to see a peregrine falcon. I have never seen one in the wild and they look so cool. I would love to watch while it's hunting.

### What advice would you give to other teens or adults who might be intimidated by the idea of doing a Birdathon?

You might be surprised how many people share interests in birding. My family is really supportive of my hobby and if you love birding, I'm sure others would support you, too. There's no harm in just trying it. I enjoy it and you might, as well.

**The 2014 Great Wisconsin Birdathon is supported by:**



Derse Foundation, John J. Frautschi Family Foundation, Wild Birds Unlimited-Mequon and Havegard Farms



A monument to the passenger pigeon was built in 1947 at Wyalusing State Park. You can visit the monument and learn more on a Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin field trip this year. Visit [WisConservation.org](http://WisConservation.org) to learn more and sign-up for the trip.

IT'S BEEN 100 YEARS SINCE THE  
PASSENGER PIGEON BECAME EXTINCT.

# Remembering a lost bird

DNR FILE

*Stanley Temple*

As a precocious young birdwatcher paging through my nature books, I discovered fascinating birds that I would never see because they had gone extinct before I was born. Passenger pigeons, Carolina parakeets, ivory-billed woodpeckers and many other species would never make it onto my life list, and I felt saddened and cheated. Why had previous generations let these species disappear, and why hadn't they done more to prevent these irreversible losses?

I later learned that I was not alone in mourning the demise of a species we had carelessly pushed over the brink. In 1947 members of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology made a very public display of their grief when they erected a monument to commemorate the 1899 death of the last passenger pigeon in Wisconsin and the 1914 extinction of the entire species.

Many visitors to Wyalusing State Park have stopped at the Passenger Pigeon Monument, but the story of the monument and the lost bird it commemorates has faded with time. In 2014 that story needs to be retold for it still has an important lesson for our time.

In the mid-19th century several billion passenger pigeons roamed the East and Midwest in huge flocks that were once a spectacular feature of the Wisconsin landscape. Early Wisconsin naturalists, such as John Muir, described flocks darkening the state's sky.

Pigeons nested in huge colonies wherever they found an abundance of "mast," the nuts produced by forest trees such as oak, beech and chestnut. The largest nesting ever documented was in Wisconsin in 1871. It numbered

in the hundreds of millions of birds and covered 850 square miles with pigeon nests in almost every tree. Today, Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area, centrally located within the 1871 nesting area, still has oak woodlands that look much as they did when passenger pigeons nested there.

How could such an abundant bird have gone extinct in just a few decades? The simple answer is: We killed them and ate them. Because they congregated in such large numbers it was easy to kill them en masse. An expanded telegraph system alerted market hunters to when and where the birds were nesting, and railroads allowed the birds they killed to be transported to growing urban populations hungry for pigeons. Market hunters descended on the breeding colonies year after year, slaughtering the birds

by the millions and preventing them from nesting. Killed in such large numbers and unable to reproduce, the passenger pigeon was doomed.

John James Audubon, James Fenimore Cooper and other 19th century naturalists deplored the unregulated massacre of the birds, but few efforts were made to save the passenger pigeon until it was too late.

Although the pigeon was gone forever, it was not forgotten. After the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) formed in 1939, the group named its



Passenger pigeons feeding on acorns.





DNR FILE

The bronze plaque reads "Dedicated to the last Wisconsin passenger pigeon shot at Babcock, Sept. 1899. This species became extinct through the avarice and thoughtlessness of man."

quarterly journal *The Passenger Pigeon* and an image of a pigeon graces the society's logo. In 1945 a group of WSO members decided to do even more to keep the passenger pigeon memory alive in Wisconsin. They would erect a public monument to the bird.

A bronze plaque featuring a passenger pigeon drawn by Wisconsin bird artist Owen Gromme was designed and A.W. [Bill] Schorger, one of Wisconsin's best natural historians, composed the inscription. At the WSO convention in 1946 the plaque was unveiled, and Aldo Leopold gave a stirring dedication speech. Future Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Famer Phil Sander designed a stone monument that the State agreed to construct on a panoramic bluff in Wyalusing State Park overlooking the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. A century earlier passenger pigeons would have winged past the site by the millions on their way to and from nesting areas in central Wisconsin's oak woodlands. Park Superintendent Paul Lawrence oversaw construction of the monument, which was completed in time for a dedication ceremony on May 11, 1947.

For the dedication, WSO published a now-classic booklet, *Silent Wings*, which contained two significant essays. One by Bill Schorger described in horrific detail the slaughter of birds during the great nesting in 1871. The other was Aldo Leopold's revision of his 1946 dedication speech, "On a Monument to the Pigeon." A year later, in 1948, Leopold would revise his essay once again and include it in his classic book, *A Sand County Almanac*. Here is an excerpt:

"We have erected a monument to commemorate the funeral of a species. It symbolizes our sorrow. We grieve because no living man will see again the onrushing phalanx of victorious birds, sweeping a path for spring across the March skies, chasing the defeated winter from all the woods and prairies of Wisconsin.

"Men still live who, in their youth, remember pigeons. Trees still live who, in their youth, were shaken by a living wind. But a decade hence only the oldest oaks will remember, and at long last only the hills will know.

"There will always be pigeons in books and in museums, but these are effigies and images, dead to all hardships and to all delights. Book-pigeons cannot dive out of a cloud to make the deer run for cover, or clap their wings in thunderous applause of mast-laden woods. Book-pigeons cannot breakfast on new-mown wheat in Minnesota, and dine on blueberries in Canada. They know no urge of seasons; they feel no kiss of sun, no lash of wind and weather. They live forever by not living at all...

"This monument, perched like a duckhawk on this cliff, will scan this wide valley, watching through the days and years. For many a March it will watch the geese go by, telling the river about clearer, colder, lonelier waters on the tundra. For many an April it will see the redbuds come and go, and for many a May the flush of oak-blooms on a thousand hills. Questing wood ducks will search these basswoods for hollow limbs; golden prothonotaries will shake golden pollen from the river willows, egrets will pose on these sloughs in August; plovers will whistle from September skies. Hickory nuts will plop into October leaves, and hail will rattle in November woods. But no pigeons will pass, for there are no pigeons, save only this flightless one, graven in bronze on this rock. Tourists will read this inscription, but their thoughts will not take wing..."

Bill Schorger would spend 15 years meticulously searching historical documents for accounts of passenger pigeons

and then literally "wrote the book" on the species. His 1955 book, *The Passenger Pigeon: Its Natural History and Extinction*, still stands as the definitive account of the pigeon's life history and extinction.

Although the passenger pigeon's extinction was one of the prime catalysts for the emergence of the 20th century conservation movement, since 1914 many more birds have gone extinct, and the rapidly growing list of endangered birds suggests that we have yet to heed the lesson of the passenger pigeon. Today, 12 percent of the world's birds, over 1,200 species, are threatened with extinction. Now, 100 years later, Wisconsin will again reflect on the passenger pigeon and its tragic demise.

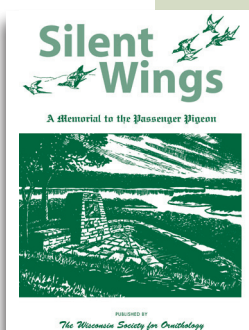
Awareness, knowledge and reflection about the passenger pigeon will only make a difference if it leads to a better understanding of the current extinction crisis, the need for more effective conservation efforts in the 21st century and hope for positive change in the future. And that will only happen if the 2014 centennial can stimulate citizens and organizations to act.



Stanley Temple retired recently from the Beers-Bascom Professor in Conservation position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison once held by Aldo Leopold and he is now a Senior Fellow at the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Baraboo. He says he still feels saddened and cheated when another species goes extinct.

#### Commemorative events

- This year there will be several commemorative events around the state. At its annual convention, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will hold a rededication ceremony at the Passenger Pigeon Monument on May 17 ([wsobirds.org](http://wsobirds.org)).
- *Silent Wings* has been reprinted. Visit [wsobirds.org](http://wsobirds.org) to order.
- The Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau will have a special exhibit of passenger pigeon artwork during fall ([lywam.org](http://lywam.org)).
- The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters will host a series of special passenger pigeon events Oct. 31 through Nov. 2 ([wisconsinacademy.org](http://wisconsinacademy.org)).
- Other commemorative activities in Wisconsin will be listed on the Project Passenger Pigeon website ([passengerpigeon.org](http://passengerpigeon.org)).



*Silent Wings* has been reprinted for the 2014 centennial and can be purchased from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology ([wsobirds.org](http://wsobirds.org)).



In Wisconsin, every year from mid-May to early July female turtles, such as this snapping turtle, leave their aquatic habitats for dry upland nesting grounds to deposit their eggs. Many of these seasonal expeditions require treacherous passages over roads more than once.



# Wisconsin turtle populations at a crossing

HOW THE PUBLIC IS HELPING THEM FIND A SAFE PATH TO PROTECTION.

Karely Mendez

Turtles are ancient creatures, so ancient that they predate dinosaurs. They've survived the mass extinction of other species. They've been slowly trekking to and from their nesting sites for thousands of years without human help.

Until now.

Unfortunately, turtle populations today are declining. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), reports 75 percent of all turtle species in the world are threatened, endangered or critically endangered.

The main threat to turtles in Wisconsin is habitat fragmentation. In some areas, predators such as raccoons and skunks are the culprits when they raid turtle nests. Other threats include pollution, disease, and exploitation for use in



The 2014 state park sticker pays tribute to turtles.

global food markets and pet trades.

In Wisconsin, road mortality is a major cause of the decline in local turtle populations. Traffic on even lightly travelled roads causes significant road mortality of adult turtles.

To reverse the trend and assist turtles in making safe crossings, the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources launched the Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program. Key to the program's



success are the volunteers who identify the deadliest roads for turtles and educate drivers to slow down and look out for turtles, especially from April to October when they are most active. Volunteers also have a large influence on local governments and road maintenance agencies, and getting them to install turtle road crossing signs and make road crossings safer for both humans and turtles, says Andrew Badje, a DNR conservation biologist.

From late May to early July, female turtles migrate to upland areas to nest. In too many instances, they have to cross





HEATHER KAARAKKA



A. B. SHELDON

Citizens are the key to protecting and conserving Wisconsin's turtles, like the Ouachita map turtle. The Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program seeks to get more people involved.

roads to lay eggs in suitable habitat.

Volunteer assistance can be as easy as observing and reporting live turtle road crossings and road crossing mortalities, turtle nesting areas and local population occurrences. "This data can be used to determine ideal places to construct wildlife friendly underpasses, place turtle crossing signs to warn motorists, or they can be used to improve knowledge of species distribution and migration across Wisconsin," explains Badje.

Badje adds that reaching out to public and private road maintenance agencies, such as the Wisconsin Department

## Use caution on crossing guard duty

If you see a turtle crossing the road, take caution when pulling over and again when reentering the roadway. Before dashing into the street make sure there are no cars coming. Use extreme caution if the road has blind corners or is on a busier stretch of roadway. Once you determine it is safe, carefully, but quickly, move the turtle off the street. Help the turtle cross by putting it on the side they were facing and walking toward.

Badje warns that "spiny softshells and snapping turtles do bite and it's best to use good judgment when ushering these species across roads." He advises to use "long objects for them to bite down on such as sticks" then to gently drag them across the road.

If you pick up a turtle and move it, especially young turtles, wash your hands well after handling.

## Hidden throughout the rivers, wetlands and uplands of Wisconsin are 11 turtle species:

### Softshell turtles (2)

- Smooth softshell (*Apalone mutica*)
- Spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifer*)

### Mud and musk turtles (1)

- Eastern musk turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*)

### Snapping turtles (1)

- Snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)

### Semi-aquatic pond and marsh turtles (7)

- Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)
- False map turtle (*Graptemys pseudogeographica*)
- Northern map turtle (*Graptemys geographica*)
- Ornate box turtle (*Terrapene ornata*)
- Ouachita map turtle (*Graptemys ouachitensis*)
- Painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)
- Wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)

**Email your questions** about the Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program to [DNRHerptiles@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRHerptiles@wisconsin.gov).

To learn more about turtles and see a video on the program, visit <http://wiatri.net/inventory/witurtles/>

## An introduction to the endangered ornate box turtle

### How do I identify an ornate box turtle?

- The ornate box turtle is four to five inches long on average.
- It has a hand painted look to it; has eye-catching yellow dashes, bars and spots on its dark brown or black carapace (upper shell).
- The limbs and head of the turtles can also be spotted.
- A characteristic that distinguishes ornate box turtles from all other box turtles is that their plastron (lower shell) is dark brown with radiating yellow lines.
- In Wisconsin, this species is limited to the south central and southwestern part of the state, located primarily in areas with deep sand deposits, dry prairies or oak savannas.
- They prefer places where temperatures are higher and soils are drier.
- In the winter, these turtles require deep sandy soil to burrow into for overwintering.
- In the summer, to avoid excessively warm temperatures, they prefer oak savannas and the edges of oak woods.

### What do ornate box turtles eat?

- They are omnivorous; they eat a variety of animal and plant foods found in their environment.
- Beetles, grasshoppers, berries and prickly pear cactus are among the things they eat.
- They do not need water often because of their efficient system for metabolizing liquid from the plants and animals they eat.

### Why are ornate box turtles listed as an endangered species?

- Humans have played a major role in the ornate box turtles' population decline.
- The numbers of deaths due to automobiles running turtles over and human pet collection are extremely high.
- These turtles have also been affected by road construction and other human development.

### What can I do to help ornate box turtles?

- You can help them most by not taking them as pets and by leaving them in their natural habitat.
- Educate yourself about this endangered species and its habitat.
- Stop for turtles on the road or help them cross if it's safe to do so.
- Help a citizen-based conservation program like the Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program.
- Help restore native prairies that turtles use.

For more information visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "ornate box turtle."



of Transportation that fix and build roads is a good start to implement these measures.

"It can make a huge difference, but it is not going to be an overnight fix," says Badje.

Although there are other reasons in Wisconsin for the decline of turtle populations, such as loss of habitat and illegal pet trade, road mortality is something volunteers can help significantly reduce.

"It takes people who care to make this work. And there are a lot of people who care," says Badje.

The Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program depends on citizens reporting where and when they see turtles and making sure that all their data is being submitted to the Department of Natural Resources. Citizen monitors can go online to record turtle crossing points ([wiatri.net/inventory/WIturtles](http://wiatri.net/inventory/WIturtles)), or they can print out the online form (Road Crossing Mortality and Turtle Sighting Form) and mail it in with their recorded observations.

Badje says the goal is to identify all turtle nesting or crossing "hotspots" in the state, regardless of whether or not turtles are being killed there.


Badje also says that reporting — or even better, photographing — turtle crossing points or even just turtles in ponds is important.

"It's important because it gives the DNR extra knowledge on the whereabouts of rare and common species and the types of habitats they are using," explains Badje.

Wisconsin has 11 species of turtles and Badje explains that any kind of turtle should be reported because they are all important.

Of the 11 species of turtles in Wisconsin, one is endangered (ornate box turtle), one is threatened (wood turtle), and three are of special concern (Blanding's turtle, smooth softshell turtle and false map turtle).

And so, the age-old question, "Why did the turtle cross the road?" may finally be answered: because someone cared enough to make sure that they could safely make it to the other side.

If you want to be that someone, consider taking part in The Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program. 

*Karely Mendez is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and former editorial intern with Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.*

John Rucker's "turtle dogs" are adept at finding turtles and gentle when they pick one up.

## Four-legged turtle trackers

One June day in 1999, John Rucker went for a walk near his home in North Carolina with his dog, a Boykin spaniel named Buster.

"While on the walk, Buster spontaneously picked up a turtle and brought it to me," says Rucker.

Buster was a trained bird dog, but had no turtle training. Rucker attributes the spontaneous event that day to the fact that he pointed out an Eastern box turtle to Buster once before.

"I pointed it out and he [Buster] thought I was interested in it and brought the first one. After that I encouraged him to find them, and he did," says Rucker.

As a result of Buster's unique interest in turtles, Rucker got a second Boykin spaniel to train and has been training dogs since. Boykin spaniels do not discriminate among turtle species, "they can find any turtle...they all smell the same to the dogs," says Rucker.

Rucker's dogs can find turtles in a fraction of the time it would take humans to find them. They have helped many organizations, including the Department of Natural Resources, find turtles like the ornate box turtle for research and conservation efforts.

In fact, Rucker is a pioneer behind turtle-finding dogs.

Not every dog can be trained to find turtles, says Rucker. He believes that retriever breed dogs could be trained to find turtles, but emphasizes that the dogs "have to have the right breeding and inclination to pick things up."

Rucker's Boykin spaniels are good turtle-finding dogs because they are gentler with turtles and they have never seriously injured a turtle.

Rucker says he is not aware of anyone else training dogs to find turtles. The method he uses to train his dogs is to take them out all summer long as puppies and work with them to find turtles.

"Hopefully at the end of the summer they are really good at it," he explains. Rucker adds that once the dogs know what they are doing they don't need a refresher.

"If they got it that summer, then they got it for good," he assures.

Although turtle finding can be fun, Rucker does not encourage people to do this on their own.

He cautions that people could start using dogs to find turtles for illegal trade.

"I think turtles should be left in the wild," says Rucker.

Additionally, if someone uses the wrong breed of dog, the dog could actually injure a turtle, and thus defeat the purpose of finding turtles in order to protect them. And in places like Wisconsin, some turtles are endangered and should be left alone.

"I do not encourage or want people to do this on their own," Rucker says. "I only use this to research and to help turtles."

Rucker is passionate about using his trained dogs to help find turtles, and to help facilitate research and conservation efforts for organizations like the Department of Natural Resources.

"We are trying to protect the remaining turtles that Wisconsin has and we are trying to find and help the last breeding populations," adds Rucker.

Visit [turtledogs.org](http://turtledogs.org) for more information.




SUBMITTED BY JOHN RUCKER



SUBMITTED BY JOHN RUCKER

Puppies are trained all summer to become turtle dogs.





# Your fish wish answered

WISCONSIN WALLEYE INITIATIVE SEEKS TO ENHANCE A WISCONSIN WAY OF LIFE BY STOCKING LARGER WALLEYE.

Fish hatchery upgrades and the ability to produce larger fish that survive better are a key part of the initiative. Wisconsin Walleye Initiative funding let the Governor Tommy G. Thompson Fish Hatchery (pictured here) put 20 ponds into production in 2013 raising larger walleye for stocking, compared to four to six ponds in a normal year.

MICHAEL KIENTZ

*Lisa Gaumnitz*

For hundreds of years, the Native Americans living in what is now Wisconsin speared walleye to feed their families and use in feasts and community gatherings.

Bing Crosby came to Wisconsin and sang for his supper, literally, taking guide Louis St. Germaine's advice and singing one stanza of "Auld Lang Syne" to properly set the hook on a walleye.

And Kurt Justice, now a bait shop owner and fishing guide in Minocqua, would speed north after work on Fridays 20-some years ago, sleep in his car, and wake up first thing to fish hard for walleye until returning Sunday night to his Illinois home.

Walleye have long been part of the fabric of life for the people who have lived in Wisconsin and a lure bringing visitors to the shores of its lakes and rivers. Musky may be the state's official symbol, but angler surveys show that walleye own our hearts.

Now, a \$13-million, two-year funding package developed by Gov. Scott Walker and the Department of Natural Resources, and unanimously approved in June 2013 by legislators, aims to put more walleye on people's plates and more money in local businesses' cash registers.

The plan, called the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative, is stocking more larger walleye in waters where walleye populations have decreased in recent years. A growing body of research looking at de-

clines in walleye populations in the Upper Midwest is finding a bunch of contributing factors, but points to drought and long-term environmental changes unfavorable to walleye as the main culprits. The belief is that stocking larger walleye, and more of them, will increase their chance of surviving and one day successfully reproducing in the wild before winding up on the end of a line.

"The more fish, the better for everyone," says Justice, now entering his twenty-third year as a guide in the area. "I was excited to see we got some attention. People want to enjoy some fish they can eat. A good fishing trip is important not just for the bait shops and the guides, but for the resorts, the motels, the restaurants and the gas stations. All benefit from these anglers coming up."

"The initiative," says Cheryl Treland, co-owner of Treland Resorts in Hayward and a dynamo who has presided over a long list of local tourism organizations, "was a shock. It was an amazement. It just gave us a level of confidence the Department of Natural Resources really does care."

"We've been behind it 1,000 percent to promote it and get information out. The more people are in the know, the better," she says, describing a full-court press to

pass on, or produce their own materials, to let local citizens and decision makers know about the initiative.

The heart of the plan is to significantly increase stocking of the larger walleye that research shows can survive better, often at rates up to 30 times that of their smaller brethren, says Mike Staggs, retiring DNR fisheries director.

To do that, the \$13-million package includes more operating money for DNR hatcheries to raise more of the larger fish, and invests in upgrading infrastructure at state fish hatcheries so they can increase their production capacity for the larger walleye. The initiative also delivers a one-time \$2-million competitive grant program aimed at helping tribal, municipal and private fish hatcheries increase their capacity to produce more fish, and provides money for the Department of Natural Resources to contract with these hatcheries to stock the larger walleye.

When all's said and done after two years, the state expects to stock up to eight times as many larger fish as otherwise, reaching hundreds of lakes, and to finish much needed hatchery upgrades identified in a 2011 comprehensive study of the hatchery system.

"Northern Wisconsin is an important beneficiary of this, but there are other parts of the state that will absolutely benefit from this," Staggs says. "Southern lakes, which aren't known to have a lot of natural reproduction, will get more of the fish they need to sustain good walleye fishing. I think people are going to



notice that there's better walleye fishing if we're able to stock over several years."

As soon as the ink dried on the state budget June 30, 2013, DNR hatcheries, biologists and propagation staff mobilized to ramp up production of the larger walleyes. Rather than shipping fish out of the hatcheries after a few months as what are known as "small fingerlings," fish 1.5 to 2 inches long, the hatcheries now had the operating funds to keep the fish at the hatchery longer.

Growing fish to the larger size — 6 to 8 inches — a size often referred to as "extended growth," "EG" or "large fingerlings," is significantly more expensive because the food is more expensive. After hatching, the younger walleye live in ponds that are fertilized and feed on the plankton and other organisms that grow in the pond.

Walleye destined for EG status are fed minnows purchased from private fish farmers and are kept at lower densities in more ponds, which makes them more labor intensive.

By the time the last state stocking truck delivered its load of walleye, DNR hatcheries had produced a record 416,506 extended growth walleye for stocking. The department bought another 23,975 from private fish farmers using initiative funds.

Altogether, 100 lakes were stocked, up from 35 in a typical year. Most of the fish were stocked in northern Wisconsin because the department filled the stocking requests submitted by biologists when they thought the state was limited in how many larger fish it could produce. The Department of Natural Resources will use feedback from public meetings and an online survey on the kinds of factors people want the department to use in 2014 and 2015 in helping to decide which waters should get stocked across the state.

"The increased funding provided by the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative allows us to significantly increase stocking of the larger extended growth walleye but we think the demand will exceed the supply," says Steve Avelallemant, long-time DNR fisheries supervisor in northern Wisconsin and one of the leaders of the initiative effort. "We need to prioritize to make the most effective and efficient use of the fish able to be produced under the initiative."

The stocking guidelines the department will use call for setting up a priority system for stocking waters with

public access. The qualifying candidate waters would be divided into four categories based on fisheries management priorities, Avelallemant says.

Lakes will be stocked at different rates and every other year to help the department hone in on the stocking rate and kinds of lakes that produce the best survival.

"If stocking five walleye per acre is more effective than stocking 10 or 15 per acre, we'll reduce that rate in subsequent years and be able to stock more lakes," Avelallemant says.

Likewise, the reverse is true. Avelallemant and other managers say the stocking is needed in some lakes to boost natural reproduction, particularly as a prolonged drought in northern Wisconsin and other parts of the Midwest grinds on and as climate trends result in less runoff, clearer water and more plants.

"Walleye lay a boatload of eggs, but even in the best of situations, the number of young fish hatched that survive to their first year fluctuates widely," Avelallemant says. "They are strong every three to four years. The problem is, they haven't had a strong year class for up to a decade in some lakes."

Newly hatched walleye like a lot of water and stable spring conditions — neither of which Wisconsin has had for a long time. Just in the last two years we've had some of the earliest and the latest ice outs on record, he says.

"The walleye initiative helps us keep enough walleye in there so when all the planets align, they are there to do their thing," he says.

Justice knows that the fish stocked under the initiative will take several years to grow.

"I don't expect the initiative to fill every hole," he says. "But it can take the pressure off the lakes that have good reproduction now. I look at this as a seed to get things started. Hopefully in a couple of years people see fishing is good and realize it didn't happen by itself and will work to make sure it keeps going."

In addition to providing the operating funds necessary to produce a large number of extended growth walleye, Justice wants more fish biologists and conservation wardens to protect the investment in stocked fish — and is willing to back a fee increase or walleye stamp to do it.

In the Hayward area, Ireland says a partnership of the Lake Chippewa



KURT'S ISLAND SPORTS SHOP

Fishing guide Kurt Justice (left) is excited by hopes of improved walleye fishing.



MICHAEL KIENTZ

A DNR fisheries staff member introduces hatchery-raised walleye to a lake.



DNR FILE

DNR creel clerk Donna Sorenson with a walleye from Connors Lake during a 2013 spring survey.





Greg Gauger, walleye pond foreman at Governor Tommy G. Thompson Fish Hatchery in Spooner, collects large fingerling walleye to be stocked into state waters. See which waters get stocked and learn more about the initiative at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), search "Walleye."

Flowage Resort Association, Chippewa Flowage Property Owners Association, Walleyes for Northwest Wisconsin, and the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Conservation Department have been buying extended growth walleyes for several years now to stock into the flowage. She is excited for the additional stocking and the chance to build on some of the partnerships strengthened through the initiative.


Already, their local partnership group has been meeting with the local DNR biologist, Max Wolter, and other stakeholders to brainstorm actions they can take to help better promote what they have now, to meet the changed vacation market, and to capitalize on the influx of anglers who no longer go to Canada because of tighter entrance requirements into the country and more restrictive bag limits.

The bulk of vacationers to most northern Wisconsin resorts are families who have been coming for generations, says Treland. They have changed their habits and aren't necessarily looking for walleye fishing 24/7, but want it to be part of the mix.

"When I was 15 everyone was up at the crack of dawn to go fishing and came in around 10:30 to 11 a.m. and by 5:30, 6 p.m., they were out on the water again until dark," Treland says. "Now we have them bringing as many golf clubs as fishing rods. It's one more of those things you can do from bird-watching, to gambling, to driving and looking at the elk."

Treland wants to see the funding continue beyond two years and says, "you either have to build it into the rate or set up a walleye stamp. It's going to have to be an ongoing thing until you can prove we have natural reproduction going."

Staggs is cheered by the support for the initiative.

"We've got the opportunity to try something on a large scale in the face of changing environmental conditions," he says. "We think that over the next few years the tribes and resorts, guides, bait dealers, marinas and all of the other local businesses that depend on good fishing will benefit and Wisconsin becomes the destination for walleye fishing in the Midwest." 

*Lisa Gaumnitz is a public affairs manager in the DNR's Office of Communication and reports on fisheries management.*



From fishing line to lunch.



DNR FILE

WISCONSIN FISH  
BRING BENEFICIAL  
OMEGA-3 FATTY  
ACIDS TO THE TABLE.

# A healthy dose of flavor

*Meghan Williams and Candy Schrank*

**Omega-3 fatty acids are all over the news, on food packaging and in dietary supplements. But if you eat Wisconsin sport fish, could these healthy fats also be on your plate? You bet!**

By now, you've likely heard about the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids. Two of these essential nutrients — eicosapentaenoic acid (known as EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (known as DHA) — are found in highest concentrations in fish.

EPA contributes to the prevention of cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, and DHA is a vital component of fetal brain and eye development. And while people who eat marine or farmed fish can visit the Food and Drug Administration or U.S. Department of Agriculture websites to find information about their meal's fatty acid content, the same information for wild freshwater sport fish is largely absent.

Do fish caught in Wisconsin waters also contain these beneficial fatty acids?

Do different types of sport fish contain different amounts of fatty acids? We asked these and other questions as part of our roles as the DNR toxicologists responsible for coordinating Wisconsin's contaminant monitoring program and working with the Department of Health Services to issue fish consumption advisories.

To begin answering these questions, we sent samples of nearly 200 sport fish, representing 15 species, to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and the Minnesota Health Department to be analyzed for several types of fatty acids, including five types of omega-3's.

Samples included fish from a broad range of water types (inland waters, streams/ rivers, Great Lakes) and represented many parts of the food web, from

benthivorous fish (those that eat bottom-dwelling organisms, like insect larvae and crayfish) to top predators (those that only eat other fish).

What was discovered is that fish caught in Wisconsin waters contain omega-3 fatty acids in varying amounts, depending on the species. Salmonids (trout, salmon, cisco/ lake herring and whitefish) generally contain much higher concentrations of omega-3 fatty acids than bass, walleye, pike, crappie or perch.

Furthermore, we learned that fatty acid content of Wisconsin sport fish is comparable to fatty acid content in similar freshwater fish species from other parts of the world. This is probably no surprise to Wisconsin anglers who know that salmon are fattier than perch no matter where you cast your line.

We also found that the most abundant types of omega-3's in most species were EPA and DHA. In fact, an 8-oz meal of all species tested provided 250 mg of EPA+DHA, the daily intake level recommended for healthy adults for the pre-



STEVE APPS



vention of cardiovascular disease by the Harvard School of Public Health.

### Does this mean that a fish a day keeps the doctor away?

Not necessarily. Even though a serving of Wisconsin fish will fulfill your daily fatty acid requirements, Wisconsin issues recommendations about how much fish can be safely eaten from all surface waters due to contamination by mercury, PCBs or other pollutants. Most of the fish analyzed as part of this study contained some amount of mercury, and some fish (mostly from the Great Lakes and their tributaries) also contained PCBs.

But the good news is that Wisconsin sport fish contain high enough concentrations of beneficial fatty acids that they don't need to be eaten every day. In fact, eating one or two meals per month of some species (like brown trout, lean lake trout and cisco) allows you to consume the recommended amount of omega-3 fatty acids while minimizing your risk of contaminant exposure. Check the consumption advice that applies to your fishing spot and practice safe cooking techniques.

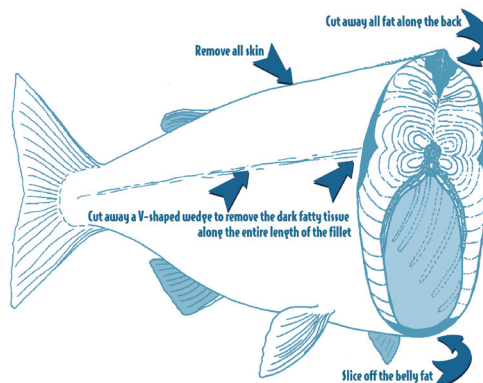
Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "eating your catch" or use the QR code below to access more information.

Wisconsin sport fish can do you a "fat lot of good."

Meghan Williams and Candy Schrank are environmental toxicologists in the DNR's fisheries management program.

### Five simple steps you can take to reduce your contaminant intake:

- Eat smaller, younger fish — keep trophies on the wall and off your plate!
- Space out your fish meals to allow your body to get rid of some mercury.
- Remove fatty parts of the fish before cooking (see diagram on the right).
- Use a cooking method that allows fat to drip away (like broiling or grilling).
- Don't use drippings to prepare sauces or gravies.



DNR FILE

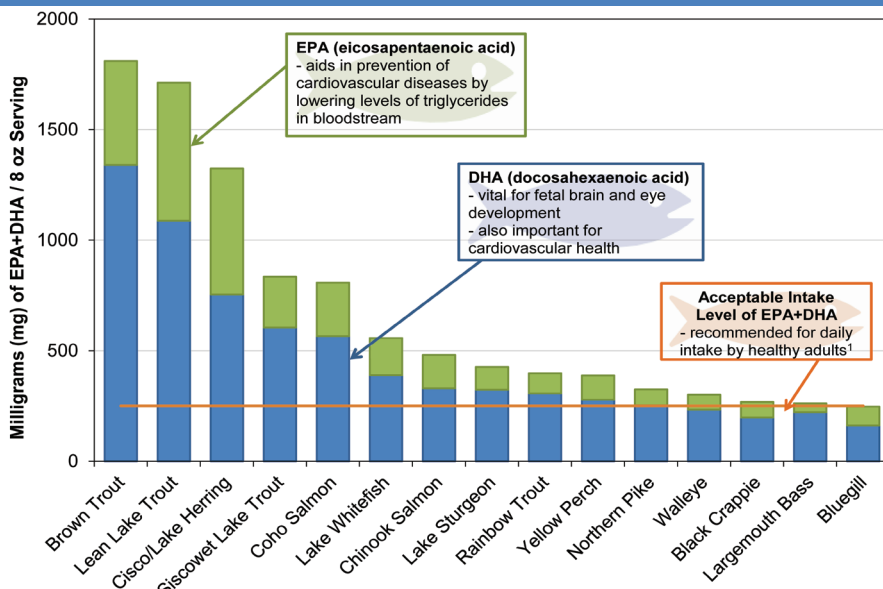
### Mercury and PCB Concentrations

- Higher concentrations of mercury found in fish
- Higher concentrations of PCBs found in fish
- Waters where safe-eating guidelines apply



DNR FILE

### EPA and DHA Levels



For more information about mercury in marine or farmed fish, visit [fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm110591.htm](http://fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm110591.htm).

To go to the DNR fish consumption advisory website, scan this code with a smartphone or visit: <http://dnr.wi.gov/u/?q=69>.



MEGHAN WILLIAMS

<sup>1</sup> Mozaffarian, D. 2009. Fish, mercury, selenium and cardiovascular risk: current evidence and unanswered questions. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 6, 1894-1916. This research was supported in part by the Great Lakes restoration Initiative Assistance #GL-00E00452-0.





Each year, volunteers from across the state and beyond flock to MSC trail building events at different points along the Ice Age Trail.

ICE AGE TRAIL  
ALLIANCE MOBILE  
SKILLS CREW  
VOLUNTEERS ARE AS  
UNIQUE AS THE TRAIL.

## Building a path along Wisconsin's “Gift of the Glaciers”

*Story and photos by Dave Caliebe*

Seventy people stand in a large circle on a cool morning, bending, stretching and warming up, each person's breath visible as small puffs of frosted air. Volunteer Heidi Johnsen of Wausau laughs at a joke someone tells to those nearby. Jackie Treanor calls out her favorite stretch and demonstrates it for everyone to follow. Jerry Sazama of Chippewa Falls scribbles furiously to make last-minute changes as he organizes fellow volunteers into work crews for the day. Someone in the circle demonstrates a pretzel-like yoga position, and West Bend native Rich Propp — whose limbs don't move like they did in his youth — lets out a laugh.

The now-limber volunteers are preparing for a day at a Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) project, an event hosted by the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The four-day project brought volunteers to Gibraltar Rock in southern Columbia County to build a new section of the Ice Age Trail at the iconic landmark.

The Ice Age Trail, one of 11 National Scenic Trails, passes through varied

landscapes of Wisconsin — the shores of Lake Michigan, the streets of Janesville, and the deep Northwoods, among others. Those who volunteer to build the trail are as unique as the landscapes. Some are veterans, and others are here for the first time. MSC events bring them together to spend some days outside and advance the trail. Today's gathering is no exception.

### **The traveler**

Each MSC project has a Crew Leader Manager charged with making sure volunteers are registered and have a crew to work with. Rachel Roberts, manager for this event, looks up from a name-covered sheet on her clipboard to a view of Lake Wisconsin.

“It's kind of cool to know you are a part of something so beautiful,” she says.

The Middleton resident attended a trail building event in 2008 and has been coming back ever since.

“Having your camping spot and meals pre-arranged really takes the hard part out of camping,” she says of the free meals and camping the Alliance provides to volunteers who attend the events.

Roberts, who goes by “Fluff Tater” on the trail, also relishes the hidden-away places she finds at MSC events.

“I'm a sucker for any odd fungus or plant that you won't see walking down the sidewalk every day. Volunteering for the MSC projects has taken me to areas of the state I probably would not even know about, let alone ever see.”





MSC events typically start on a Thursday morning and conclude the following Sunday at noon. Volunteers can help with all or part of a project, whatever time period their schedule allows. Meals are provided, along with a place to pitch your tent. Advance registration is highly encouraged to help plan food and crew needs.



Students run through a corridor of high fives at Gibraltar Rock for their help removing invasive plants as part of the project's land stewardship effort. MSC projects provide a multitude of outdoor learning opportunities, allowing students and volunteers to experience hands-on all the work that goes into building a trail.

Roberts took time off of work to volunteer at this weekend's project — a common theme for her and others.

"It's some of the hardest, most fun, and rewarding work I've ever done," she says. "We all seem to have a common bond when it comes to building trail and protecting our natural areas. That was the first thing I learned at my first project."

### The chameleon

Bob Funk wears many hats on the Ice Age Trail. The Wheaton, Ill. resident shifts from crew leader to crew member to board member and even burger flipper.

"I truly enjoy the variety of doing whatever is needed at the time," he says.

Today Funk has his crew leader hat on. Because his crew of volunteer trail builders consists of veterans and newbies, Funk takes time to CUSS each of the tools. In Ice Age Trail parlance, CUSS stands for Carry, Use, Storage and Safety. After the safety demonstration, Funk sets about giving crew members tasks and then jumps in himself. This sense of togetherness, he says, is what keeps him coming back.

"I keep returning because of all the great people," says Funk. "MSC participants are a very friendly and open group. We work as a team, building skills in trail construction along with building relationships."

### The craftsman

Wendell Holl of Lodi watches as a crew of four moves a large rock, everyone holding a handle of the Feldman — a specialized sling designed by Ice Age Trail volunteers — taking the rock from where it settled into the landscape to a spot in a retaining wall.

Holl is a rock guy. He says that working on the Ice Age Trail gives him "the chance to work with others, both physically — some of the boulders we use are really big! — and creatively in order to help make for enjoyable hiking through even the most difficult terrain."

He began taking dry stonework seminars in 2011 and has traveled from Kentucky to Newfoundland working on historic sites. Stonework is a chess game and does not happen quickly. "You work on your section and for the longest time it doesn't look like much is happening, and all of a sudden this trail appears."

As they place the rock, the crew shifts it an inch to the front and then another to the side until the rock tightens up. Holl says he enjoys working with rock, but the people are what make the experience.

"I have met some wonderful, dedicated volunteers who keep coming back event after event," Holl says. "I am making friends with a lot of great people who share the enthusiasm for this remarkable undertaking."

### The trail guru

Tim Malzhan is walking ahead of the crews. He follows pin flags that delineate the future trail's route, making notes and planning for the following day.

Quality hiking trails don't just appear — they take months, and often years of planning before a tool touches the ground. As Director of Trail Operations for the Ice Age Trail Alliance, Malzhan knows this process intimately.

In 1991, Malzhan was the third person to thru-hike the Ice Age Trail. That means he hiked the trail from beginning to end in one season. And since 2000, he has overseen the transformation of the trail, bringing industry standards and sustainability to the trail's construction.

"What makes this trail sustainable is its shape, because the trail will shed water and resist the natural, ongoing forces of erosion; its quality of construction, which utilizes native materials; and its support from the community, because people care for what they believe brings them value," Malzhan says.

Malzhan is glad the time has finally come to add Gibraltar Rock to the story of the Ice Age Trail and he's happy that volunteers are playing a role in telling it.

"The Ice Age Trail happens to be a truly great story," Malzhan says. "It's a story of culture and change, of time and pressure, of perseverance and of people





**Tom Teeples (foreground) finds that mornings are “a good time to latch on to a positive attitude.”**

— the kind of people who teach without words and become like family.”

### The jack-of-all-trades

Earlier in the day, before morning stretches and even before the sun rose, coffee percolated as folks filtered into the dining tent. The crew of kitchen volunteers was hard at work in the darkness of dawn, flipping pancakes and scrambling eggs. Among the egg scramblers was Tom Teeples of Black River Falls.

Teeples began attending MSC events in 2012, a year after he thru-hiked the Ice Age Trail. Teeples reported that some sections were not as well-maintained as he expected, and that motivated him to volunteer.

“I didn’t think I had the right to complain, as I had not in any capacity helped to build the trail or maintain it,” Teeples says. “I told myself that I would volunteer at one of the projects.”

After gaining an understanding of trail building, Teeples completed the Alliance’s Crew Leadership and Skills Training where he learned how to manage a crew of volunteers and instruct them in safely crafting sustainable trails. At events, Teeples pitches in wherever needed, from helping in the kitchen to leading a crew.

It’s the volunteers who keep him coming back.

“Yes, there is great food, free camping, beautiful locations and all of that. But to

me it is the people, all coming together with much the same motives,” he says.

Later in the day, Teeples directs a crew of 20 elementary school kids clearing brush and constructing trail. Leading kids can be quite different than leading adults, he says, but he’ll lead any crew, “so long as the adults still maintain the heart of a kid.”

### The teacher

Chris McNeill, who teaches at the Ouisconsin School of Collaboration (OSC), observes 165 kids as they take part in the project’s land stewardship effort to remove invasive and aggressive plants. Laughter and cheers keep the air abuzz as the students, who represent grade levels 3 through 5 from OSC and Lodi Elementary, and high school students from the Gibraltar School, clear honeysuckle and prickly ash by the armload.

In 18 years of teaching, McNeill says he has seen the amazing tasks kids can accomplish. This shows during their time on the trail, he says, and it’s another reason why he’s here with the kids today.

“The students love learning how to use the different tools and feel very proud that they are helping build the trail.”

As a co-founder of Saunters, an Alliance program that brings students onto the Ice Age Trail during their summer break, McNeill recognizes the multitude of learning opportunities the trail offers. Building community is another one that tops the list.

“I also want my students to realize that they can learn from people other than their teachers and parents,” McNeill says.

### The hiker

Gibraltar Rock rises behind volunteer Sharon Dziengel of Racine as she carefully scrapes away duff, the top layer of leaves and loose dirt on the ground. Dziengel is at home here — she first found inspiration at Gibraltar Rock during her thru-hike of the Ice Age Trail a decade ago.

“I took a break on one of the overlook ledges,” she says. “It was a perfect, warm spring day. Sitting there looking out over the landscape below, I had one of those hiking moments where you feel a special connection with the place you are at that stirs the soul. Every time you are there, those feelings are awakened.”

Dziengel has visited some of the most

beautiful places in the United States, having hiked five of the 11 National Scenic Trails. She’s also played a big role in the MSC program since its inception.

“I keep coming back to MSC events to build new trail in these amazing hidden landscapes that were unknown or inaccessible until now,” she says.

Dziengel says Gibraltar Rock will be a highlight of the Ice Age Trail, an “exclamation point” on its National Scenic Trail status. “Gibraltar gives that huge view, unseen at other places along the trail.”

The MSC volunteers will finish the trail by the end of the weekend, leaving it ready for the steps of hikers.

The path of the Ice Age Trail has stories built into it; they’re the stories of the volunteers who created it. Funk, Holl, Teeples, McNeill, Roberts, Malzhan and Dziengel are just a few of the faces that make a Mobile Skills Crew project a fun and enthusiastic place to be. The Ice Age Trail Alliance’s 2014 trail building season will be starting soon — add your story to the trail. 

*Dave Caliebe is Trail Program Specialist with the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Before joining the Alliance staff, Caliebe had volunteered at many MSC projects and thru-hiked the Ice Age Trail in 2010.*

### 2014 Mobile Skills Crew projects

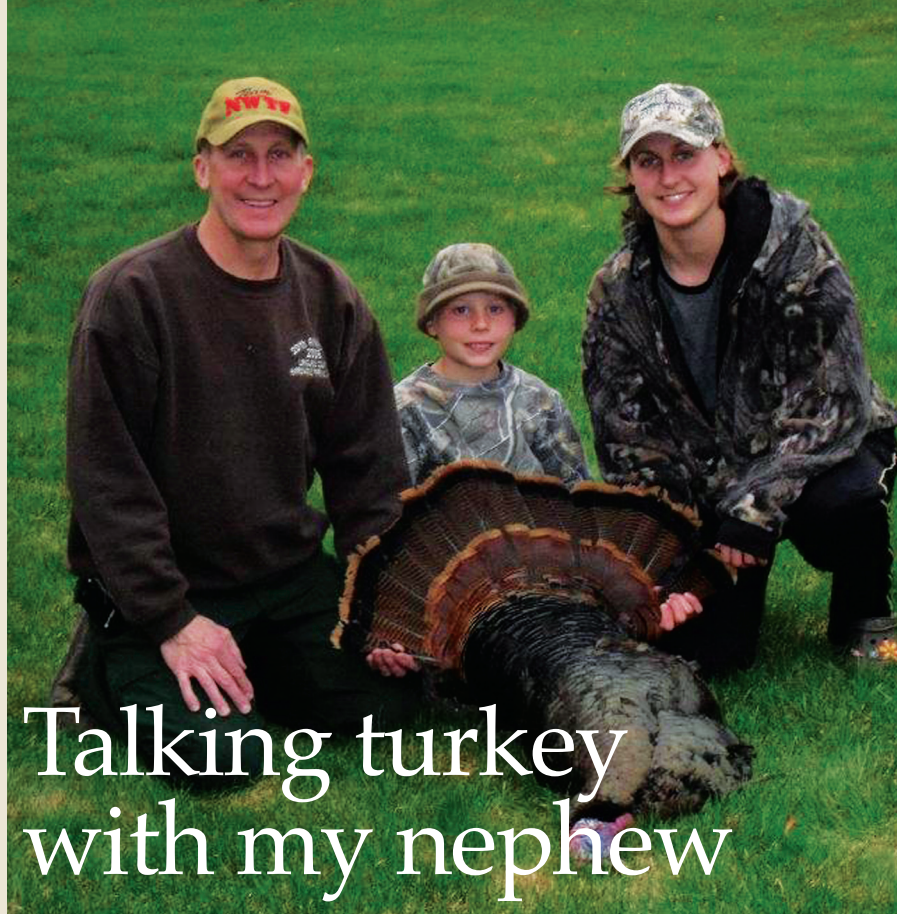
- April 24-27, Gibraltar Rock segment, Columbia County
- May 13-18, Jerry Lake and Rib Lake segments, Taylor County
- June 19-28, Blue Hills and Hemlock Creek segments, Rusk County
- July 23-27, East Twin River segment, Manitowoc County
- Aug. 19-24, St. Croix Falls segment, Polk County
- Sept. 16-21, Harwood Lakes and Chippewa River segments, Chippewa County
- Oct. 22-26, Springfield Hill segment, Dane County

### Volunteering on the Ice Age Trail

The Ice Age Trail Alliance has many opportunities for volunteers of all ages and abilities. From MSC events to chapter workdays there’s something for everyone. Whether you like to wield a chainsaw or prepping lunch is more your style, your help is welcome as the crews continue to build and upgrade the Ice Age Trail.

To learn more about the Ice Age Trail or to sign up for an MSC project, call (800) 227-0046 or visit [iceagetrail.org/mobile-skills-crew-program](http://iceagetrail.org/mobile-skills-crew-program).





The author (right), with her nephew Conner (center), and her father after a successful mentored turkey hunt.

# Talking turkey with my nephew

BETH LINDNER

QUALITY TIME TOGETHER MAKES THE “LEARN TO HUNT TURKEY” PROGRAM ALL THE MORE MEMORABLE.

*Alison Lindner*

Growing up in northern Wisconsin, I knew there was no better feeling than harvesting a tom on a warm spring morning. To some, the first sign of spring is the receding snow or twitters of songbirds. But to me, a shotgun blast after sunrise in April ushers winter out the door.

Last year, I also realized that when the person holding the gun is not me, but a bright-eyed 10-year-old boy letting that early April morning shot ring out, that mountain top experience becomes exponentially greater.

I have been hunting with my dad since I was born. Every hunt has been memorable and a learning experience. Last spring turkey season was no different. With nine years of hunts under my belt, my dad decided I would guide my nephew, Conner, on his “Learn to Hunt Turkey” program. This was my chance to put all those learning experiences to the test and call in a tom. I was very excited but also nervous. Conner and I were used to hunting with dad and grandpa, who could sweet talk any tom into coming within shooting range. I prayed I could live up to that standard


as Conner and I set out for the afternoon.

We decided to set up a blind along the wood’s edge and catch the turkeys on their way to a snack before they flew up to the roost. Loaded with a blind, decoys and a 12-gauge, we trekked out to set up our spot. I dug into my memory to bring back all the hunting tips my dad had given me. Conner, who is never at a loss for words, gave me his advice as well. He let me know where the blind and decoys should be placed. After we had set up, we crawled inside the blind and waited for the birds to begin their evening stroll.

Though it was a beautiful April afternoon, there wasn’t too much excitement happening in our neck of the woods. After calling every 15 minutes waiting for any response, 45 minutes into our hunt came the iconic “gobble gobble!”

Conner’s eyes lit up and a smile spread across his face. The adrenaline began to pump through both of us while we waited for the bird to show himself.

With the adrenaline also came something no diaphragm caller ever wants: I felt my mouth go dry and my throat tighten. My next “putt” was choppy and squeaky but the tom still responded and was closing in fast. I spotted him out of the corner of my eye marching proudly through the woods to our decoy. I told Conner to get his gun up and be ready. We could both see him now, puffed up and showing off in full strut. I whispered to Conner, “Shoot when you’re...!” BAM!

Before I could finish my sentence he had shot. I looked over to where he had been sitting and saw a gun on an empty chair. He was already out of the blind running to his bird! I followed after him, watching him struggle to pick up his first tom — a nice 23-pound bird. Seeing him holding his bird, smiling from ear to ear, is when I knew that there is one greater feeling than letting a shot ring out on an April morning. The hunting experience becomes more meaningful and enjoyable when you can pass it on to the next generation. 

*Alison Lindner is a “Learn to Hunt” mentor and works in wildlife ecology research and management at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.*



HANS SCHABEL

To learn more about DNR’s Learn to Hunt programs visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “Learn to hunt.”





# Public Access Lands Atlas opens the doors to the outdoors.

THE DNR DEBUTS SEARCH-FRIENDLY  
MAPS AND SO MUCH MORE.

*Dana Kampa*

To improve public awareness and make it easier to find public lands in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources now has a Public Access Lands Atlas (PAL Atlas) available online and in print. The PAL Atlas contains 441 maps, multiple indexes and other supporting information designed to help users find and explore public access lands in Wisconsin.

A new DNR Public Access Lands Atlas is available online and in a printable format. The atlas highlights the significant increase in public access to Wisconsin lands made possible through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, as well as other lands open to the public for outdoor recreation.

"The Department of Natural Resources, local governments and nonprofit conservation organizations own and manage over six million acres of land, most of which is available to the general public for outdoor recreation purposes," says DNR Bureau of Facilities and Lands Deputy Director Douglas Haag. "This atlas is a way to connect people who might use those lands with the people who actually own and manage the land. The hope is that the atlas will encourage people to explore more of Wisconsin's public land and spend more time outside enjoying Wisconsin's diverse natural and recreational resources."

Have you ever wanted to explore an area but were unsure what to expect? The PAL Atlas can help you with that.

The 465-page print version of the atlas allows readers to flip through maps across the state, making it easy to search a general area for planning outdoor trips. Legislation requires the Department of Natural Resources to print an updated version of the atlas every two years, but the department hopes to update the atlas more frequently.

Each map in the PAL Atlas displays information including major roads, villages, cities, township boundaries, section lines and water bodies. In addition, map users can find ramp and carry-in boat access sites, parking areas, state trails, local parks and federal and county forests. The maps also depict whether a parcel was purchased with funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

"The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program has been instrumental in setting aside valuable natural resources, state and local parks and providing places for people to hunt, trap, fish, ski and hike all across the state," says Bureau of Facilities and Lands Director Steve Miller. "The land acquisition component of the Stewardship program has been the backbone of Wisconsin's public lands program for 25 years and the new PAL Atlas will help people easily identify lands purchased with Stewardship funds and get out and enjoy them."

The PAL Atlas also is broken into printable county maps. These county maps allow users to download and print specific portions without having to purchase the entire document. According to Haag, people are already commenting on the usefulness of these county maps.

In addition, the PAL Atlas contains a handy index of public agencies and

DNR FILE



## Public Access Lands

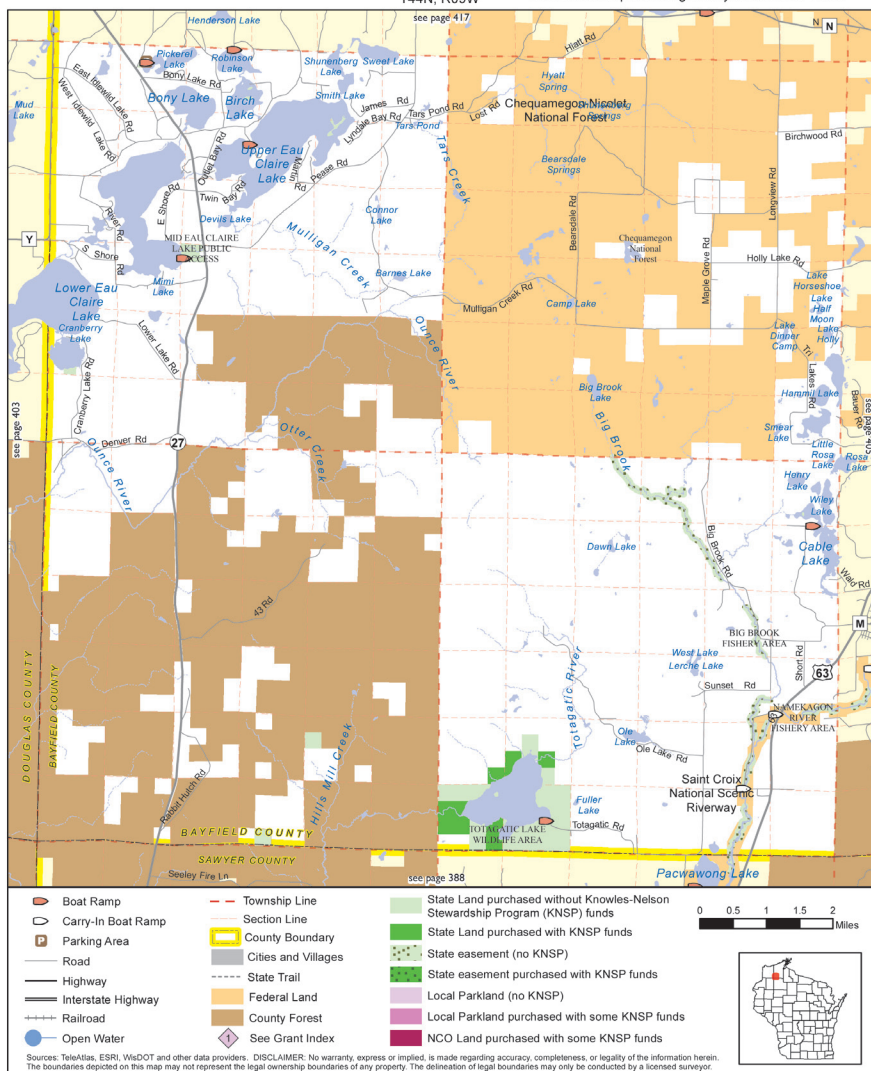
### Part of Bayfield County

page 404

Township/Range  
T43N, R08W  
T43N, R09W  
T44N, R08W  
T44N, R09W

12/12/2013

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
more info at <http://dnr.wi.gov> keyword search "atlas"



#### Example of a map found in the atlas.

nonprofit conservation organizations that own land depicted in the atlas. This index will allow users to contact these organizations directly or go to their websites to gain more information about a specific property.

"It is important that anyone using the atlas checks with the government agency or conservation organization that owns the land for allowable uses and any regulations that might apply on the property," Haag says.

The PAL Atlas is also available to users online as an interactive mapping application on the department's website. The online version allows users to search areas across the state and create their own custom maps. When browsing a general area, online viewers can zoom in and out to a scale that is most useful to them, or use various features on the toolbar to

create useful maps that can be printed on your home computer. Experiment with the online mapping tool and its many features to develop custom maps that reflect your own personal recreational interests, then print them and off you go!

Are you looking for a specific park, lake or hunting ground? You find these features by using a search bar located at the top of the page. The results of your search will show up on the "results" screen. Click on the "Zoom to Feature" link to go directly to the highlighted area. For more specific searching, users can click on the "Find Location" button and enter the name of a city, lake or other feature or use this tool to search by town, range and section.

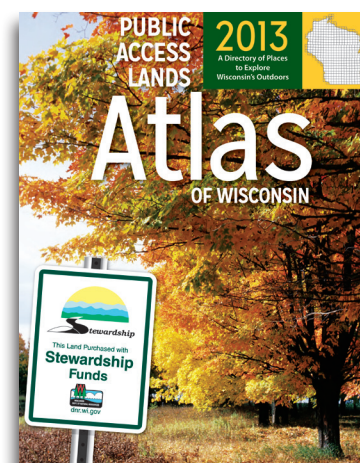
Maybe you are looking for a new place to hunt or a place to go cross-country skiing for the weekend. Online users of the

PAL Atlas can click on the "DNR Explore Outdoors" button on the tool bar at the top of the web map. This takes you to a searchable database to find lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources that offer the activities you are searching for. Explore Outdoors allows you to conduct searches for specific activities within 25, 50 or 100 miles of any Wisconsin city. The list of searchable activities includes ATV riding, fishing, hunting, trapping, camping and wildlife viewing to name just a few.

"The PAL Atlas and Explore Outdoor work well together," Haag says. "The department will continue to build its database of activities which will lead to more ways to share information about Wisconsin's public lands in the future."

"I am proud to offer this extensive directory of 441 maps to help you find and enjoy Wisconsin's diverse public lands," DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp says. "I hope you create many new outdoor memories with friends and family through the use of this atlas."

Dana Kampa is a communications specialist in the DNR's Office of Communication and studies journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



The PAL Atlas is available on the DNR website. Go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "atlas" or go directly to [dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/PAL/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/PAL/). Here you can create your own online map, download individual county PDF maps for free and search for places based on outdoor activities. You can also find a link to buy the 465-page print version of the PAL Atlas. The complete print version, titled "Public Access Lands Atlas of Wisconsin" is available for \$89.95, or on a CD for \$5.95 and can be purchased through The University Book Store at [uwbookstore.com/MerchList.aspx?ID=15893](http://uwbookstore.com/MerchList.aspx?ID=15893).





## SQUIRREL POPULATIONS DEPEND ON AVAILABLE MAST

Thank you for your magazine. I have been a reader for many years. I have a couple questions: first, when bow-hunting, I and other hunters I know have not seen many squirrels this year and wondered if others were aware of this? Second, every year we have thousands of box elder bugs on the south side of our house. Do they really come or hatch from box elder trees? What is their life span? Was wondering if you have any information on them.

Glen Batwek  
Arcadia

Box elder bugs (*Boisea trivittata*) feed on the seeds of species from the *Acer* (or maple) family, of which the box elder tree is a member. Since you see them sunning in large numbers on your house, it's likely you have a maple tree close by. It's also likely they will overwinter under the siding or inside the walls, and you may find a few inside on a sunny winter day. In spring, they feed and lay their eggs on maple or ash trees.

DNR Upland Wildlife Ecologist Scott Walter replies to your squirrel question: Your observation that there were relatively few squirrels in the woods this fall isn't surprising, and shouldn't cause concern that your local squirrel population is in trouble. Gray and fox squirrel populations, like those of many other small mammals, rise and decline according to the abundance of acorns, hickory nuts and other "hard mast" each fall. Large crops of acorns, for example, are not produced each year; in fact, "bumper" crops may only occur every three to five years with relatively few falling to the forest floor during intervening autumns. As these nuts provide a very energy- and protein-rich food source throughout the fall and winter, bumper crops allow many squirrels to survive until the following spring, and be in good shape to produce lots of young. As a result, squirrels will appear to be everywhere for some time afterwards, but populations will decline if subsequent nut crops are small. By paying attention to these mast crops while you're out bowhunting, you may be able to tie current squirrel numbers to the abundance of hard mast in recent years. On my farm, it's been three

or four years since we've had a good crop of acorns and, as expected, I currently see relatively few squirrels while in the woods. Acorn production varies a lot between trees as well: even during poor acorn years, individual trees may be loaded with acorns. So try to get a good feel for acorn production throughout your woods. In some years, white oaks will produce bumper crops, but red oaks will not; if the area you hunt is dominated by red oaks, you may fail to detect the impacts of bumper white oak acorn crops on the wildlife community.

Very interesting, as well, is the fact that producing bumper acorn crops may be part of a sneaky evolutionary strategy that oaks use to give their acorns a fighting chance to avoid being eaten by squirrels. Since squirrel populations will tend to be low following a few years of poor acorn production, the acorns produced during a bumper year "swamp" the few squirrels present and hence each acorn has a good chance of surviving to germinate. If oaks were to produce lots of acorns annually, stable and high squirrel populations might destroy nearly all acorns each year. The periodic nature of acorn mast also has implications for forest management, as habitat work done to favor oak regeneration will be much more effective if done so as to coincide with a bumper acorn crop.

Though I mentioned that observing few squirrels this fall is not cause for concern, there is currently significant concern over the long-term fate of the oak-hickory forests in the eastern United States. Oak seedlings require sunlight, and don't do well in the shaded conditions that typify the understory of many current closed-canopy forests. As a result, oaks are being replaced in many areas by tree species better adapted to shaded conditions, such as sugar maple. You can pretty easily determine if this transition is taking place in the woods you bow-hunt, as you'd see few oak seedlings, but lots of maple, on the ground underneath the large oak trees present. Preserving our oak forests will require educating landowners about the incredible value that oaks hold for the wildlife community and the specific forest management practices that can give them the upper hand and allow them to persist. A chat with a local forester would be a great step toward determining if special

forest management work might be beneficial in the woods you hunt. There sure is a lot to ponder while in a bow stand.

## WHY NO MENTION OF WOLF PREDATION?

Let me start by saying as a long time Conservation Patron license buyer I look forward to receiving Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine during the year. I read every issue cover to cover and enjoy the variety of stories that you print. That being said I found it interesting that in the article "Wisconsin's dedication to deer research," more specifically the chapter "Growing the herd," the pie graphs did not show any wolf predation. Is it safe to say that the "unknown predators" in the graphs are wolf kills and if so why is it not listed as such. I find it hard to believe that our talented DNR technicians and biologists can determine whether a bobcat, bear or coyote killed a fawn, but they can't determine if a wolf killed it? In the northern region it appears as though "unknown predators" killed approximately 30 percent of the fawns, considerably more than the other predators. By failing to separate out the wolf killed fawns seems like pandering to the pro wolf people instead of

reporting the truth. In the future please be truthful and straight forward with the sports men and women and all the citizens that read your magazine.

Dave Kohlbeck  
Rhinelanders

DNR deer researcher Dan Storm replies: The "unknown predators" pieces of the pie charts in the "Growing the herd" section represent exactly what they say. They are instances where we were certain a predator consumed the fawn, but uncertain which predator it was.

The evidence we find at the mortality site is usually sufficient to determine the cause of mortality of the deer. This evidence includes footprints, scat, and hair left at the scene as well as the characteristic ways that predators kill and consume deer. Unfortunately, the situation sometimes arises where it is simply impossible to determine which predator was responsible for the death of the fawn. We typically classify mortalities as "unknown predator" when there is evidence that the deer has been eaten (bone fragments, blood on the collar, etc.), but the evidence we use to identify which predator (footprints, scat, etc.) isn't there. This usually arises when nearly all of the fawn was consumed. Wolves, of course, could easily consume an entire fawn, but so can coyotes and black bears. The fact that we didn't classify any fawns as being predated by wolves doesn't mean that wolves didn't kill any fawns. It simply means that we never found evidence for it.

The numbers and figures presented in the Wisconsin Natural



## PHOTOS ARE A GOOD ALTERNATIVE TO CASTS

I have been teaching children how to read tracks and make plaster casting for years and [to use] the digital camera to photograph the tracks. I have found that with the camera the children take a lot more interest. They can take pictures in any condition. I have them lay a ruler alongside for comparison. Pictures are a lot easier to store. I have over 60 different bird and animal casts that I display at various doings. The casts are on display most of the summer at Lake Wissota State Park.

Jim Hansen  
Bloomer



Resources magazine represent the data we collected; nothing more, nothing less. The data we collected resulted from an enormous investment by DNR and UW-Madison personnel and legions of volunteers. None of the data was manipulated to pander to an interest group and we were entirely truthful in the presentation of our data.

We understand our results are counter to some people's expectations. Some of our results have been counter to our own expectations as well.

#### NEW LOVE, THANKS TO A LITTLE OWL

I really enjoyed your article from Dave Wilson about saw-whet owls in the October 2013 issue ("Whooh's in my woods?").

Beautiful cover picture too. It brought back memories, but not about owls. After my wife Agnes died 12 years ago, I eventually searched for a companion who would enjoy camping, bicycling, canoeing, fishing, target shooting, hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing up in Wisconsin like Agnes and I did for over 30 years. After a few stray casts, no keepers, I answered an ad from a woman who liked long distance bicycling, and who "would" camp. But what caught my interest was that her on-line pseudonym was "Saw-Whet." Now I had never seen or heard one, but I knew what it was, and that the person using that name, was not the run-of-the-mill lady who likes to take "long romantic walks" or "dine out." So I got in touch with her, found out she grew up in Wisconsin...and the rest is history. I have since taught Norine how to fish, paddle and portage a canoe, to make campfires, and she has taught me how to call owls at night, how to identify various birds, how to use a two-man crosscut saw, how to laugh again, and to love. Thanks to a little owl. And thank you Dave for the article.

Paul Bolton  
Riverwoods, Ill.



#### TECHY TEEN LEARNS TO "LIKE" NATURE

Last January, I took my 14-year-old daughter to Goose Island, a La Crosse County park located on the shores of the Mississippi River. I wanted her to enjoy the beauty of nature as much as I do and to enjoy the experience of feeding birds out of your hand. At first, she was reluctant because of plans she had made with friends, but after a few texts and chats, the mall plans were postponed and off to Goose Island we went.

Snowing, windy and cold, the temperatures had been dropping all day when we parked near a bird feeding area loaded with black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, dark-eyed juncos, downy, hairy and red-bellied woodpeckers, white-breasted nuthatches, cardinals, blue jays and even some goldfinches and song sparrows. I pointed out each species and instructed Brooke to open her hand. I poured a liberal amount of nut pieces in it and said, "Keep your hand flat, stand still, don't make any big movements and be quiet," all tremendously difficult tasks for a teenager who would rather be doing something else!

It wasn't long until the first visitors — the black-capped chickadees — arrived just overhead and began vocalizing *dee-dee-dee*. Warily these beautiful little black and grey creatures would sit in the trees above or in front of us to check us out before approaching closer. Sometimes we'd get a flyby from them or the more elusive tufted titmouse. The female downy woodpeckers would land on the sign post just below our arms and walk their way up to our hand, periodically pecking at our fingernails before cresting our fingers for some easy nut pieces.

On the way home my mind wondered, "Was it worth it? Did she enjoy that experience? Will it make a difference to her?" When we got home Brooke said, "Mom can you send me some of those photos you took, I want to post them."

I smiled because I knew that even though she probably wouldn't admit this was fun, it must have been or she wouldn't be posting the pictures. Later that evening she mentioned that even a couple of her friends commented how neat that was and how they would like to go next time! So, to all you nature loving parents with children who love their iPods, iPads, iPhones and anything techy, and resist anytime you mention doing something outdoors, keep trying to give them a new outdoor experience. It worked for me and who knows, maybe my tech savvy kid will reverse the roles and teach me how to use the technology to learn more about the birds I love.

*Editor's Note: to see more of Lisa's photos, visit the Department of Natural Resources' Flickr site at Flickr.com/photos/widnr and enter "Lisa Hodge Richardson" in the search box.*

Lisa A. Hodge Richardson  
La Crosse

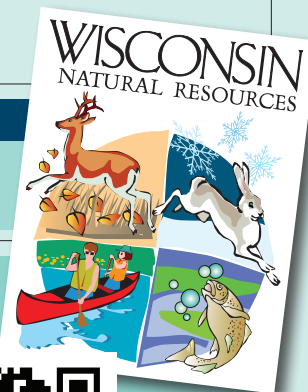
#### COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7191, Madison, WI 53707. Or email letters to [dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov). Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

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Don't have access to a link we mention in a story? Let us know when you want to follow a link we list. We'll do what we can to get you a copy of the material if it is available free of charge and is relatively short in length.



## Traveler

### The Clearing comes with a vision and view.

Amy C. Laundrie

Where else could you be escorted into a retreat center by a pileated woodpecker who takes you past birch, maple and cedars toward a friendly lodge with a stunning view of the shimmering waters of Green Bay? Where else but Door County's The Clearing.

As soon as I entered The Clearing's 128 acres, I breathed easier. The Clearing is named for the school's purpose, to clear away the mind in order to find renewal and enlightenment. I witnessed the miraculous. As the week progressed, guests gladly abandoned cell phones, the internet and TV shows to spend time in the natural world.

The Clearing is the vision of Danish-born naturalist and landscape architect, Jens Jensen, who established it in



Several historic stone and log buildings surround The Clearing's main lodge and serve as living quarters for students.

SUSAN LATHROP



The Clearing is a place where people, like the author here, can learn, reflect and wonder.

SUSAN LATHROP

1935 when he was 75 years old. He was also influential in designing numerous parks and neighborhood playgrounds in Chicago, Racine, Lake Geneva, Madison, Dubuque and Springfield, Ill.

Made from native stone and wood, The Clearing's buildings include the Jens Jensen visitor center, the main lodge, schoolhouse, workshop

and housing. Visitors revel in hidden spaces such as a stargazing mound where viewers comfortably lay back for a spectacular view, a labyrinth, and even a dance ring.

Classes ranging in length from one day to week-long and offer instruction in arts, fine crafts, humanities, and natural sciences. Imagine quilting, making fine furniture, journal or memoir writing, bird watching, glass fusing, photography, weaving, wood carving, hiking, rug hooking, yoga, or participating in a class called "Touch the

Earth; Love the Earth."

I was one of the 11 students lucky enough to attend Marion Moran's environmental class last year. Night walks, stargazing, discussions, readings and field trips comprised the week. The highlight was an evening stroll on a remote beach where, under a full moon, Moran read inspirational quotes. We then sang, lit sparklers, and pranced about on the beach like joyous children.

Guests can stay in cottages for single or double occupancy or in the large dorm which



The Clearing is situated on the Niagara Escarpment, a limestone cliff that rises out of Lake Michigan's Green Bay and defines the western edge of Door County.

AMY C. LAUNDRIE

Amy C. Laundrie is the published author of seven books, numerous articles and newspaper columns. Her "Slice of Life" columns contain insights on family, aging and more. Some are humorous confessions or attempts to interpret life's mysteries. Laundrie also has been an educator in the Wisconsin Dells School District for over 30 years. To learn more about her writings visit her author page at [laundrie.com](http://laundrie.com) or her Amazon author page at <http://amzn.to/16pfX7k>.



accommodates five. When the cook rings the bell, people head to the lodge to enjoy the conversation of like-minded people and the cuisine worthy of any five-star restaurant. Beautifully presented, served family style, guests feast on such dishes as huge French toast slices stuffed with cream cheese and cherries, buttery white fish, or the superb butternut squash enchiladas. Favorite treats included chewy chocolate-oat-chip cookies and perfectly ripe strawberries dipped in creamy chocolate.

As an added adventure, I signed up to stay in The Cliffhouse, a rustic shelter tucked into the limestone rocks. Without running water or a toilet, and with a tiny unseen roommate who squeaked, it took some courage on my part. The bat or mouse stopped its squeaking once it knew it wasn't going to scare me off, and together we welcomed the night.

Thunder and wind serenaded us. Lightning lit up the rocky shore of the waters of Green Bay far below. I lit candles, made a fire in the fireplace, and threw sprigs of cedar on the flames to enjoy their crackle and aroma.

Inspired, I wrote until sleep overtook me and then arose before 4 a.m. to write until breakfast. It was during a conversation with director Michael Schneider later that day that I learned Jens Jensen had built The Cliffhouse for himself so he could have a private place to write.

My stay over, I slowly drove away. I paused before pulling onto the paved road, Jens Jensen's words echoing in the woods. "A mighty oak, a motherly elm, a poetic birch, a friendly maple all speak to man's finer senses and help awaken him to his noble heritage."

Thank you, Jens Jensen, for creating a place that heightened my sense of responsibility to the natural world and a connection to all living things.

For more information, call (920) 854-4088 or visit [theclearing.org](http://theclearing.org). Please note that since this is a retreat center, visitors are asked to view the facilities on the weekends from May through October.

## What's cooking?

Welcome to our recipe corner. This issue we feature sauces to get you fired up about barbecuing again. And if you'd like to find more, visit the Department of Natural Resources' Pinterest Wild Game Recipes board (<http://www.pinterest.com/wdnr/wild-game-recipes/>).

These recipes come from Tim Lawhern, retired DNR conservation warden. His recipes were a regular feature in DNR's Warden Wire newsletter. Chef Tim says that when it comes to barbecue sauces, there are three types that you'd find on his dishes. You could call them basic — but he says that they always seem to bring out the best of what he's got cooking on the grill.

His three favorites start with a basic ingredient — tomato, vinegar or mustard. But feel free to experiment with the recipes. Once you are satisfied with the basic sauce recipe, by all means, alter it to your liking.

Please note: These sauces contain a lot of tomato or sugar. That means they are not good for use during the cooking stage of barbecuing as they burn too easily. Chef Tim suggests these are best used as a marinade or just to finish off the meat before taking it off the grill.

Here they are:

### TOMATO-BASED BBQ SAUCE

- 1 can of regular tomato sauce
- 1 can of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of vinegar
- >2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves crushed garlic
- 4 tablespoons minced onion
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon cayenne (optional)
- Fresh ground pepper to taste (coarsely ground)

Get a pan and cook the garlic and onion in the oil until soft — then add everything else. Simmer on low for about 20 minutes. Stir frequently, then cool by refrigerating a few days before use. Now, taste it and give it a minute to settle into your taste buds. You might find altering the amounts of the ingredients will suit you better. Experiment!

### VINEGAR-BASED BBQ SAUCE

- 1 and 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup hot water
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon paprika (optional)
- 1 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper (coarsely ground)

Put the brown sugar in the hot water and mix well until the sugar is dissolved. Add the rest of the ingredients and heat on low for a few minutes. This is just to get everything mixed and at the same temperature. Note: Don't wear a white shirt or blouse while eating this one!

### MUSTARD-BASED BBQ SAUCE (Chef Tim's all-time favorite!)

- 1 cup yellow mustard
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional and lime would also work)
- 1 teaspoon cayenne (optional)

Mix everything in a sauce pan and simmer on low heat for 30 minutes. This is the one Chef Tim grew up on.

Finally, if you don't have anything else in the kitchen you can make do with just a couple of ingredients. One simple one is honey and ketchup; another is honey and mustard.



DREAMSTIME/PHOTO MONTAGE TOM SENSATORI





## Wisconsin, naturally

### BLUE RIVER SAND BARRENS STATE NATURAL AREA

*Thomas A. Meyer*  
State Natural Areas Program

**Notable:** Visit Blue River Sand Barrens to discover “Wisconsin’s Desert” and the plants and animals adapted to its hot, arid conditions. “Sand barrens” is a term ecologists use to describe a stunted plant community that evolved on nutrient-poor, droughty soils — in this case, the sandy terraces along the lower Wisconsin River near the village of Blue River. It’s not uncommon for the surface temperature of the barrens on a hot, sunny, July day to exceed more than 150 degrees. Prickly pear cactus, false heather, rock spikemoss, sand cress, earthstar fungus and a host of lichens are among the interesting species found here and adapted to the challenging growing conditions. In late spring, the masses of blooming prickly-pear cacti (yes, they’re native!) with their 3-inch wide, papery yellow flowers, are a wonderful sight. Six-lined racerunner lizards, hognose snakes, wolf spiders, tiger beetles, and ground-dwelling, parasitic sand wasps are regular visitors while turtles from the adjacent Wisconsin River wetlands nest in the dunes.



#### How to get there:

Within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. From the intersection of State Highway 133 and County Highway T in Blue River (Grant County), go east on 133 for 1.9 miles, then north on Wightman Road 0.25 miles to the southeast corner of the area. Park along the road and walk west into the natural area. The site is owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “Blue River Sand Barrens” for a map and more information.

