

# The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2004

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

[www.scottcountyowa.com/conservation/wapsi.htm](http://www.scottcountyowa.com/conservation/wapsi.htm)

The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board with programming and development assistance from the Clinton County Conservation Board.

## Wapsi Center Happenings

by Bob Bryant, Director

### Quad City Bald Eagle Days

Bald Eagle Days were held at the QCCA Expo Center on January 9-11. The temperature was warmer than past years and there were plenty of eagles in the area, but attendance was down again this year. The Wapsi River Center participated by helping with school programs on Friday and by having a booth. We had 8,803 visit the Center's booth on Saturday and Sunday.



This was approximately 1,000 more than last year. Our booth's theme this year was "Animal Winter Adaptation". Kids loved following the animal tracks we had stuck on the floor of our booth.

### School Field Trips

From September-February of this school year, 3,873 students, teachers and parents participated in 58 field trips at the Wapsi River Center. As expected, there was an increase in both attendance and number of field trips over last year at this time. This increase was largely due to 2 large schools which alternate coming to the Wapsi River Center every other year.

We had three overnight field trips that used the dormitory. There were 14 winter field trips, one more than last year. We had one cancellation, due to a school scheduling conflict.



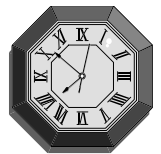
## Congratulations!

Glen Wooldridge, Davenport, won the Michael Blaser print "The Painted River". Raffle proceeds benefit the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

As in past years, we still have quite a few days open in April, but May is filling up fast. If you are a teacher who wants to schedule a field trip or take advantage of our new dormitory and schedule an overnight field trip, give us a call at (563) 328-3286.

### Eco Center Hours Change

The Eagle View Eco Center and its interpretive displays will be open (free of charge) Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 - 5:00 P.M., April 3 - October 31.



### Need A Guest Speaker?

The Scott County Conservation Board now has its own PowerPoint projector. The projector and the accompanying laptop computer will be kept at the Wapsi River Center. PowerPoint will enable us to update and develop new presentations, in ways not easily done with 35mm slides.



If you are looking for a speaker for a club, business, civic organization, school in-service, banquet, etc., in Scott or Clinton Counties, give the Wapsi River Center a call at (563) 328-3286. We do not charge for speaking engagements, but are more than happy to accept donations on behalf

of the Wapsi River Center.

PowerPoint presentations currently available: *The Wapsi River Center and Activities*, *Ferns of the Quad City Area*, *Nocturnal Imagery*, *Greener Schools*, *Environmental Education in Clinton County*, *Trumpeter Swan Restoration*, *Roadside Management and Butterflies of Iowa*. All presentations work well in a 30- to 45-minute time frame.

## Hours of Operation Change

Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village

9:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.

7 days a week


April through October



## In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

Connie & Dave Huber  
Wilfred Juckem  
Ellen Helmond  
Carol Rogers  
Mary Taylor  
Nancy Dean  
Jeanne Bryant  
Carlene Erikson  
Mr. & Mrs. Varcho  
Ingrid Bogdanowicz  
Dottie & Jerry Wala  
Danielle Schaffert  
Cecilia Braum  
K.J. Rebarcak  
Becky Birks  
Mark Cleve  
Carl Gerwulf  
Deb Storjohann  
Erma Wiszmann  
Pete & Mary Tofilon  
Robert Vens - in memoriam





### Becoming an Iowa Junior Naturalist

The Junior Naturalist Program promotes awareness of natural and cultural resources of Iowa through a variety of conservation programs aimed at children ages 6-12. This program is offered each calendar year and encourages children to attend programs offered by local county conservation boards, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) state park units, local libraries, YMCA camps, 4-H and nature centers. In addition, the program encourages participants to work on independent activities.

When all requirements are completed, the participants will receive an official Iowa Junior Naturalist patch and certificate of achievement.

The year has just begun, so it's not too late to get started. Contact the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center for your program flyer, (563) 328-3286.

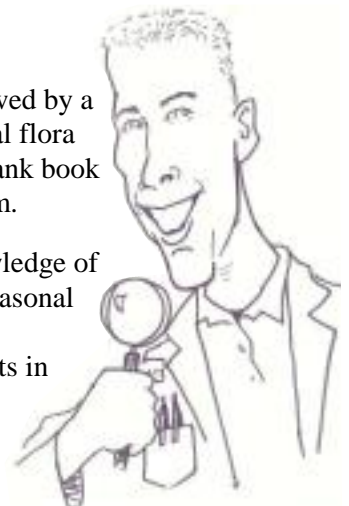
## NATURE IDENTIFICATION SERIES PLANNED

The world of nature is full of beauty. One merely has to go outside, for any length of time, to be filled and inspired by the living organisms in our region. Would being able to identify local plant and animal species increase your enjoyment of the natural world? Then let me introduce you to a new public program series being planned through the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

During a typical program, attendees will receive illustrations to begin making a personal identification guide. Each program will involve a period of instruction, oftentimes followed by a hike. Attendees will be using the guide to take notes, doodle sketches, etc. about the local flora or fauna being discussed. Those interested in attending are asked to bring any type of blank book (i.e., spiral notebook, sketch book, 3-ring binder, etc.) and writing utensil to each program.

A variety of topics will be focused on throughout the year to help you grow in your knowledge of the natural world. Some program topics will include: seasonal woodland wildflowers, seasonal prairie wildflowers, herpetiles, birds of prey, butterflies, trees and many more. Several agencies will be participating in providing these programs, so watch the calendar of events in both *The W.R.E.N.* (Scott County newsletter) and *Prairie Whispers* (Clinton County newsletter). A small picture of a notebook (& ) will designate the nature identification series programs.

An individual may attend as many programs as he or she wishes. It all depends on how big of an identification guide you wish to create. If you have any questions, would like to suggest a particular topic, or would like to present a program, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



## Living Green ... by Renne Leitz

It may be snowy and cold outside, but the garden catalogs arriving in the mail are making us think spring! This year, as you are planning flowerbeds and vegetable gardens, there are several things you can do to help keep our environment healthy at the same time.

On a large scale, many farmers are conscientious about the overuse of pesticides and finding more efficient farming methods, such as minimum tillage. Home gardeners can apply some of these same practices on a smaller scale, such as using mulch and learning which plants are best suited to your personal landscape. Did you know that organic pesticides are now available, and pest-repellent plantings, plus insects, such as ladybird beetles, can be introduced to control harmful bugs? Have you considered starting a compost pile to create wonderful fertilizer for your gardening projects?

If you would like to learn more about keeping your own personal "farm" more environmentally safe, join me at the Wapsi River Center on Tuesday, April 20, at 6:30 P.M. We will discuss how to keep your green spaces truly "green"!



### Scott County Park Pool

Open: Memorial Day Weekend

Re-open: Early June - Late August

Weekdays: Noon - 8 PM & Weekends: 10 AM - 8 PM

Open: Labor Day Weekend

Scott County Park Pool Learn-to-Swim Program

Registration: Will start in mid-April and continue after pool opens ~ Call (563) 328-3282



### West Lake Park Beach & Concessions

Food and beverages will be available at the beach and the boathouse. A variety of aquatic equipment is available for rent. Bait is also available at the boathouse.

Beach/Concession:

Open: Memorial Day - Labor Day ~ 11 AM - 8 PM

Boathouse/Concession:

May 1 (weather permitting) - Memorial Day:

Weekends: 10 AM - 8 PM

After Mem. Day: Weekdays & Weekends: 10 AM - 8 PM

## *Women in the Wild*

*Saturday, June 26 - Sunday, June 27*

Another great opportunity to experience a Women in the Wild workshop has arrived. The goal of the workshop is to introduce a variety of seasonal activities and topics to women. The two-day, overnight workshop will be held from 7:30 A.M. Saturday, June 26, through 4:30 P.M. Sunday, June 27. The workshop will take place at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and several satellite areas. Women of all ages are welcome to attend, but must be at least 12 years old by the workshop date.



This summer's workshop has a variety of interesting topics and activities to explore. Some events taking place during the workshop include: canoeing, fishing, tour of pearl button museum, orienteering, night hike, eco-tourism, packing light and preserving memories. Many more exciting events are being planned, so check your calendars and consider registering early. Call (563) 328-3286 for further information ~ ask for Lisa.

## March

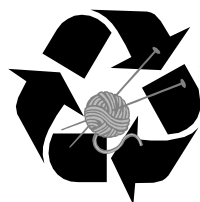
**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Ernest Oberholtzer: Environmentalist and Explorer ~ 10:30 A.M. ~ Nahant Marsh** ~ The life and legacy of this Davenport native will be presented by Ober's first biographer,



Joe Paddock and writer, Bill Holm. Visitors are invited to hike the one-mile interpretive trail before or after the presentation. Light refreshments will be served. Nahant Marsh is located at 4220 Wapello Avenue, off Interstate 280 and Highway 22, at the west end of Davenport.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park** ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Recycled Stitches ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Was one of your New Year's resolutions to do something to protect the environment, or perhaps learn a new craft? If so, then this program is exactly what you've been waiting for. Come join naturalist Lisa Gerwulf as she shows you how to create a versatile "shopping" bag with recycled shopping bags. Participants will spend an afternoon in the relaxing atmosphere of Redtail Lodge creating plastic "yarn" out of recycled shopping/grocery bags. Then you'll see how to create a



lightweight, durable bag using simple knitting and crocheting techniques. You don't have to be a knitting or crocheting expert, but a cursory knowledge of these skills would help. Each participant needs to bring the following items: 5 plastic, shopping/grocery bags, pair of sharp scissors, size 11 knitting needles or

size 9N crochet hook, metal ruler and fine-tipped permanent marker. If you have access to a quilting tool called a rotary cutter and mat, consider bringing these, too. Pre-registration is required, so call (563) 328-3286 to reserve your spot.

**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Looking for a cure for cabin fever? A little spring cleaning at the Wapsi River Center is sure to do the trick! The Wapsi Center staff will have a variety of tasks to suit all talents and skill levels. Tools and lunch will be provided. Please call (563) 328-3286 to volunteer.

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ & ~ Waterfowl Migration ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Goose Lake Wildlife Area** ~ The marsh is a resting and feeding point along the spring migration route for many species of wetland birds. Join Clinton County naturalists for a glimpse of migrating ducks, geese and other waterfowl inhabiting Goose Lake. Participants are asked to bring binoculars, field guides, and meet in the west-central parking lot for viewing.



**31<sup>st</sup> ~ Iowa Wildlife Conservation ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center** ~ Iowa DNR Wildlife Biologist Bob Sheets presents a topic to be announced.

## April

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Nahant Marsh Cleanup Day ~ 8:30 - 11:30 A.M. ~ Nahant Marsh** ~ Join the seasonal volunteer effort to beautify

# Spring

Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots.

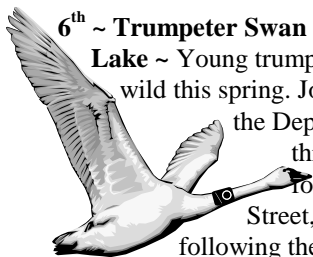
**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Season Opener ~ 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead** ~ Today is the season opener for the Cody Homestead. The homestead is open 7 days a week from 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Admission fee is \$2.00 for adults and free to those 16 years old and younger. The homestead, 28050 230<sup>th</sup> Ave., is located west of Princeton, IA, off County Road F33.

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Woodcock Watch ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Sherman Park** ~ Come watch the dynamic display of the American woodcock at Sherman Park's north entrance. This is our 19<sup>th</sup> year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they have always treated us to a good show.



**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Kite Flying 101 ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park, Gate #1 - Rolling Hills Shelter** ~ "Up, up and away!" Nothing can make your spirits soar like building and flying your very own kite. Using sticks, string, paper and glue, create a traditional diamond bow kite. After construction, participants will launch their creations on a test flight. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by March 26, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$2.00 per kite.

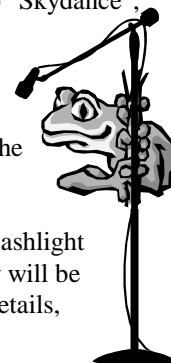
**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Trumpeter Swan Release ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Crystal Lake** ~ Young trumpeter swans will be released into the wild this spring. Join Clinton County naturalists and the Department of Natural Resources for this special event. Crystal Lake can be found 2 miles west of DeWitt on 252<sup>nd</sup> Street, then north on 262<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, following the signs.



**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ (April 8 is rain/wind date)** ~ Roadside biologist Walt Wickham will light up the night sky during this educational program. Fire is a natural part of a prairie's life cycle. Along with a spectacular show, Walt will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Woodcock Watch ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center** ~ Come watch the dynamic display of the American woodcock at the Soaring Eagle Nature Center. It's always a good show watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", so plan to attend.

**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Frog Chorus ~ Dusk ~ Nahant Marsh** ~ Nahant Marsh is the location for this musical performance. Participants will be helping with the frog and toad survey that is being used to determine the population inventory of Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring a small flashlight and be sure to dress for the weather. The survey will be held every other week until July 16. For more details, call Jody at (563) 323-5196.



# Events

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ (April 22 is rain/wind date) ~** Once again join roadside biologist Walt Wickham for another lesson on using fire for prairie management. The Soaring Eagle Nature Center is located off Highway 67 on the north end of Clinton, Iowa. Please call (563) 847-7202 for more details.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Beginning Digital Nature Photography ~ 9:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Digital cameras are not just for the usual



family, landscape and vacation photos. Nature photography with a digital camera is not quite as simple as with a standard 35mm single lens reflex camera, but has advantages over the standard point-and-shoot camera. Bob Bryant will share his experiences taking nature photos with a digital camera. Items covered will be: digital camera's advantages and disadvantages, camera types, megapixel size, accessories, image resolution and compression, exposure, close-up photography, tips and tricks. Participants are encouraged to bring their cameras. This will be a three-part series (other dates to be agreed upon by participants); pre-registration is required, limit of 10 participants. To register, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Papermaking 101 ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Ever wanted to do more with your waste paper than just dropping it in a recycling bin or garbage can? How about making your own inspired stationary? Learn the basics of home papermaking, plus, have the opportunity to make your own paper and experiment with creative embellishments. Participants should bring soft, absorbent cloth or felt squares approximately 9"x11", one for each sheet of paper desired. Pre-register by April 9, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$2.00 per participant.



**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Opener ~ 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~** The Nature Center will be open from 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. on Saturdays, now through October. A wildflower hike will be held at 1:30 P.M. to explore the spring colors of the woods. As always, we are looking for volunteers to open the Nature Center on Saturdays. No experience is necessary. Call the Clinton County Conservation Board at (563) 847-7202 for information.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~** Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

**17<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> ~ Earth Week ~** Find your personal way to show the earth you care and celebrate the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Week. This year several local agencies are planning activities during this week.

Check local media for events or contact Jody Patterson at (563) 323-5196 for a brochure of events. Ideas for celebrating Earth Week can also be found at the National Wildlife Federation's website: [www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek/index.html](http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek/index.html). Earth



Day is April 22.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Keeping Your Green Spaces Truly "Green" ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Renne Lietz, author of *Living Green*, will present a program on the environmentally friendly home garden. See *Living Green* article for a preview of program.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Environmental Education in Clinton County ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~** Clinton County EE Coordinator Mark Roberts will present a program on the scope of EE efforts in Clinton County. Learn about the CCCB's role in the Wapsi River Center, Eden Valley, Soaring Eagle and Rock Creek.

**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ & ~ Wildflower Walk ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join Bob Bryant on a walk to appreciate the spring woodland wildflowers of the area. Participants should meet at the Eagle View Eco Center.



**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Spelunking ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~** Take a wild cave tour at Werden's Cave with the Clinton County naturalists. Meet at Eden Valley Nature Center; pre-registration is required, (563) 847-7202.

**24<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Pheasant Festival ~ 4:30 P.M. ~ Wheatland Community Center ~** The Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever is planning a family night of fun at the Wheatland Community Center. They will have lots of games, door prizes, an auction and a butterfly chop dinner. Cost is \$15.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids under 16; people need not be members to attend. Call Dan at (563) 659-9876 for tickets.

**24<sup>th</sup> ~ & ~ Moonlight Frog Chorus ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Experience the sounds of the season, in search of the frogs and toads which inhabit the Wapsi River Center. Please bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear.

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ Arbor Day ~** Planting a tree shows faith in the future! It's also a great way to commemorate a birth, death, anniversary or other special event.



May

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Blue Heron Eco Cruises ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground ~** Every Saturday evening through October, the Clinton County Conservation Board will be offering naturalist-guided Eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River in the Rock Creek Area. Please call (563) 847-7202 to reserve a spot, as space is limited to 20 people. Cost for the excursion is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children under 16 and free for children under 5. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ & ~ Moth Hike ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Come and discover some of the amazing nocturnal insects of the Wapsi River Center. Join Michael Granger, Naturalist, for a lesson on lepidopterans. Lights, bed sheets and bait will be used to attract moths for observation and identification. Bring a flashlight and dress appropriately for the weather.

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Lock & Dam Eco Cruises ~ 5:30 P.M. ~ Ninth Avenue Boat Ramp in Clinton ~** Every Thursday evening through

October, the Clinton County Conservation Board will be offering naturalist-guided Eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River up to, and sometimes through, Lock & Dam 13. Call (563) 847-7202 to reserve your seat on the Blue Heron pontoon boat today (20 spots available). Cost for the excursion is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children under 16 and free for children under 5. Meet at the Ninth Avenue boat ramp in Clinton.



**6<sup>th</sup> ~ & ~ The Night Shift ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center**  
~ The Wapsi Center is home to Iowa's three most-common owls – the great horned, screech and barred owls. Learn more about Mother Nature's night shift with us as we call the raptors. Participants should bring a small flashlight.

**8<sup>th</sup> ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center Open House ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center** ~ The interpretive center will be open to visitors who will find interesting new displays. Refreshments and guided tours of the barn, schoolhouse and trails will be offered throughout the day.

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ & ~ Wildflower Walk ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Manikowski Preserve** ~ The beautiful pale pink, purple and white hues of the shooting star are in abundance during this time of year. This shortgrass, limestone prairie provides an excellent opportunity to explore part of Iowa's heritage. Manikowski Prairie can be found by turning north from Highway 136 at Goose Lake onto A34 and proceeding north 1 mile, then taking 137<sup>th</sup> Street (gravel) ¼ mile east.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ & ~ Investigating Insects ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come explore the miniature world of insects with naturalist Mike Granger. Learn how having 6 legs, three body parts, compound eyes and antennae make insects one of the most dominating groups on the earth. Participants will have the opportunity to create and decorate a make-n-take insect "hotel". Interested participants are asked to pre-register by May 7, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$1.00 per "hotel".



**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Mockridge Nature Hike ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Mockridge Preserve** ~ Mockridge Preserve is a unique area for discovering wildflowers, birds and other interesting natural features. Take Y44 north of Calamus, then take 215<sup>th</sup> Street west to 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue and turn north. Mockridge Preserve will be ¼ of a mile on the left.

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park** ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Roadside Management ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center** ~ The Clinton CCB's Roadside Manager Walt Wickham will present a program explaining the philosophy behind Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management and its practical application in Clinton County.

**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Night Hike ~ 8:30 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge** ~ Ranger Chip Brown will lead participants on an after-dark tour of the refuge's murkiest corners. Meet at the Eden Valley Nature Center and bring a small flashlight.



**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Backwater Canoeing ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground** ~ Longtime canoeist and CCCB

Naturalist Chuck Jacobsen will lead paddlers of all skill levels through a maze of hidden lakes in the backwaters of the Mississippi River.

**29<sup>th</sup> ~ Rock Creek Marina Spring Celebration ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground** ~ To celebrate a new season at the Rock Creek Marina & Campground, a variety of activities will be taking place. There will be free canoeing for campers and park visitors. Blue Heron Eco cruises will also be available, starting at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday. Please call (563) 847-7202 to sign up for the Eco cruises. The camp store will have 25-cent hot dogs and chips available. Free movies will be held at dusk, at the pavilion, wrapping up this fun family event!

**30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> ~ Heritage Days ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** ~ Enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of yesteryear! The past will come to life at the Village as interpreters and actors recreate pioneer life. There will be pioneer craft demonstrations, folk music and a gun show performed by the Wapsi Wranglers. Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village is located on the north side of Scott County Park. Admission is \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children.



## June

**4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> ~ Free Fishing Days** ~ Let's go fishing! During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish without a fishing license.

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Fishing Clinic ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park, Gate #1 - Rolling Hills Shelter** ~ Kids, kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and an adult chaperone are invited to attend this event. Registration will begin at 8:00 A.M. at the Rolling Hills shelter. The individuals will spend the morning traveling to five different stations learning about fish identification, casting, fish cleaning and tasting, laws and ethics, and equipment. There is no charge for this family event!

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Hayrack Rides in the Park ~ 5:00 P.M. (start time) ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground** ~ Join a ranger-guided, 30-minute ride around Rock Creek Marina and Campground. Rides will be leaving every 45 minutes from the concession stand until 9:00 P.M.



**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge** ~ Family nature-theme movies will be shown. Popcorn is free of charge to guests in pavilion.

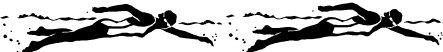
**6<sup>th</sup> ~ North Fork of the Maquoketa River Float ~ 8:00 A.M. ~ Cascade, Iowa's Riverside Park** ~ Veteran canoeist and CCCB Naturalist Chuck Jacobsen leads experienced canoeists down 18.6 miles of this pristine stream. This trip is **not** for beginners and will entail about 8 hours of steady paddling. On our breaks, we will be taking water samples and examining the aquatic life, as well as sunning on the beaches and combing them for fossils and the like. Call (563) 242-9088 or (563) 847-7202 to register. You will be called to confirm your reservation.

**7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> ~ EDIWILD 2004 ~ Educators in the Wild Workshop** ~ See special section for more details.

**7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week will kick-off eight, one-week day camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. Learn what life was like in the pioneer days. Experience how Laura Ingalls lived by spending time in an 1800s cabin and one-room school. Enjoy crafts such as soap decorating, candle dipping and much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Free Canoeing Day ~ All Day ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground** ~ Rock Creek's 10 canoes will be available to use free of charge all day in the Mississippi backwaters surrounding the park.

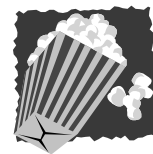
**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Triathlon ~ 7:00 A.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate #1 - Beach Parking Lot** ~ Participants begin the day by swimming Lake of the Hills, then bike a 15-mile trek and return to West Lake Park to finish with a run. Pre-registration is required. Contact either Eric Sarno at (608) 848-7441 or (608) 209-1054, or Kirby Winn (Director of Public Relations at Augustana College) at (309) 794-7473.



**14<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** ~ Ecology Week is next in a series of eight, one-week camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. Learn about the land, water and wildlife. An exploratory visit to the Maquoketa Caves will be included. Activities will include nature crafts, plant and

wildlife identification, recycling and our role with nature. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground** ~ Family nature-theme movies will be shown. Popcorn is free of charge to guests in the pavilion.



**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park** ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

**21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** ~ Nature Week is next in a series of eight, one-week camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. This is one week where you can actually camp out under the stars for one night! Enjoy lots of nature crafts, hikes, learn about deer and other wildlife in the park, plus take a trip to the Wapsi River Center. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

**26<sup>th</sup> ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.



**26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> ~ Women in the Wild Workshop ~ 7:30 A.M. (Sat.) - 4:30 P.M. (Sun.) ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ See the special ad, earlier in newsletter, for further details.



## EDIWILD 2004

### “Putting the Splash in Education”

### Monday, June 7 - Thursday, June 10



EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) is a 4-day teachers' workshop (including evening activities) to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. The workshop will use an interdisciplinary approach of teaching and will emphasize environmental issues.

- γ Workshop sites include: Nahant Marsh Field Station, Rock Creek Marina and Campground, Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.
- γ Activities and topics include: IOWATER, limnology, snapshot sampling, herpetology, marsh bird identification, ferns of the Quad Cities region, vermiculture and much more.
- γ Overnight accommodations will be available at

the Wapsi River Center's Owl's Nest Dormitory. Participants are encouraged to stay overnight on Monday; however, you do not have to stay overnight on Tuesday or Wednesday.

- γ Continuing education credit through Drake University and relicensure credit through the AEA 9 will be available for those interested.
- γ Cost for the workshop will be \$60. This does not include continuing education credit or relicensure credit costs.

If you are interested, please contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. We will send you an EDIWILD brochure, which will include a registration form, daily activities and other workshop details.

# *The Lost and Almost Lost*

by Bob Bryant

Wapsi River E. E. Center, Director

*The Lost and Almost Lost* is a series of articles on Iowa's game animals and how they have fared during the settlement of Iowa. The series is based on "A Country So Full of Game" by James Dinsmore (1994). This book is a comprehensive history of the interaction of man with Iowa's wildlife. Find out what species of wildlife we have lost, what species we could lose, and what species were lost but reintroduced.

Most of the pre-settlement records of American bison (commonly called buffalo) came from early explorers and military expeditions following the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The earliest Iowa record is found in the journals of Joliet and Marquette in 1673. They mention seeing many herds of up to 400 animals and described them as wild cattle.

Early military expeditions were led by Stephen Long (southwest Iowa in 1820), Stephen Kearney (northwest Iowa in 1820 and north-central Iowa in 1835) and Captain James Allen (led a company of U.S. Army dragoons from Fort Dodge into Minnesota, South Dakota and back into northwest Iowa). During these expeditions, encounters with bison herds were very infrequent, and the herds were usually not big. There are only two records of very large herds in Iowa. One was a herd of 5,000 observed by the 1820 Kearney expedition near Ruthven, Iowa. The other was an observation, with no details, by a convoy, passing north of Clinton County in 1839, that was stopped for two days by a herd of bison.

There are only a few accounts of Native Americans hunting bison in Iowa. One of the best accounts was by Chief Keokuk. While leading a group of Sauk and Fox to the headwaters of the Iowa River, they were delayed by an encounter with a party of Sioux. They eventually found a herd of 300 bison and killed 80.



The number of bison in Iowa at the time of settlement was probably relatively low. Most of the herds were found in the north-central and northwest parts of the state. During the 1840s and '50s, there was a steady stream of settlers moving westward into the open prairie areas of the state. The bison, on average, disappeared within two to three years after the first settlers moved into an area. By the middle of the 1860s, most of the bison were gone from Iowa.

Bison hunting in Iowa was not the wholesale slaughter and commercial exploitation that was to be seen in the 1870s and '80s out West. Bison were usually shot for food when the opportunity presented itself. Most of the bison hunts were made up of small groups of hunters. They usually chased down their prey on horseback or by foot. Many of the hunters were ill-equipped for bison hunting. Until after the Civil War, most rifles owned by early settlers were muzzleloaders. Most of these guns were not powerful enough to bring down a bison with one shot.

A bison was killed in 1863 in Pocahontas County. A commemorative sign now marks the site of the kill. The following is the text on the sign telling the story of the hunt, which typifies most Iowa bison hunts.

*In a slough on the S.W. quarter of this section the last buffalo seen in this territory was killed on August 20, 1863. Armed with three muskets and a revolver, W.H. Hait (who killed the buffalo), Orlando Slosson, Robinson Gordon and Abiel Stickney started the chase at Old Rolfe, 5 miles S.E. of here. The 1400 pound animal furnished the settlers of Rolfe with meat as long as they were able to keep it in the hot weather.*

The sign doesn't tell you the bison had charged them several times after being shot at and kept eluding them in the sloughs. After a three-hour chase, covering nine miles, they forced the exhausted animal onto dry land where it was finally finished off. During the hunt, at least twenty-five rifle balls were needed to kill the bison. When they returned with a team of horses, it took them quite awhile to find the bison in the tall prairie grass.

Most Iowa settlers very likely never saw a bison, let alone took part in a bison hunt. Probably the last bison to be seen in Iowa was in Dickinson County west of West Okoboji Lake in 1870.

During this time, there were a number of cases where bison calves and adults were captured with the intention of domesticating them and crossbreeding them with cattle. Bison did not domesticate that well, and the offspring did not produce very much milk, so most were eventually killed and eaten. Some were also captured and shipped east for show and food.

By 1870, the American bison had disappeared from Iowa's landscape, leaving only scattered bones, trails and wallows. Most of these also rapidly disappeared, just as their makers had, with the plowing of the state's prairies, along with commercial and residential development.

Bison bones still occasionally show up along stream banks or are discovered in archeological sites. Many of the trails were used as roads, and others were plowed up. A more distinct bison landmark was buffalo wallows. Buffalo wallows are depressions in the ground formed by bison rolling in the dirt to escape the heat or insects. A wallow near Kellerton, in Ringgold County, covered two acres and was approximately 20-ft. deep! Wallows in Blackhawk County were still visible until 1918. If wallows managed to escape the plow or development, the prairie grass eventually reclaimed them. When the Clinton County Conservation Board's Duke Prairie was being surveyed in the mid-1980s, one of the botanists pointed out a shallow depression, which could be a remnant of a small buffalo wallow. This small

depression is more visible after a prairie burn.

As usual, I have run out of room. The next installment of "The Lost and Almost Lost" will conclude with the story of the bison on the Great Plains and the role three Iowans played in saving the American bison from extinction.



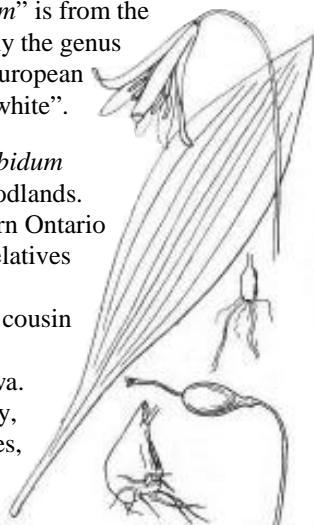
## Plant Profile ~ Dog-tooth Violet

by Stephanie Byers, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Spring calls to mind once again a carpeting of green in our woodlands. Snows melt, soils warm, and seeds and bulbs respond in an age-old cycle of birth and renewal. Shoots begin creeping towards the sun, unfolding tender new leaves, and providing us with small wonders to admire. A favorite of mine is dog-tooth violet (*Erythronium albidum*), which has many aliases: trout lily, adder's tongue, fawn lily and other regional names. Its dark green and brown-mottled leaves emerge close to the forest floor, followed by a "nodding star" flower. The whole effect is one of subtle grace.

Each of this plant's various names has a reasonable derivation. "Dog-tooth violet" hails from the Europeans' habit of assigning familiar Old World names to New World plants bearing resemblance to European species. In Europe, there is an *Erythronium* species with a bulb shaped like a dog's tooth, and violet flowers. The characteristic brown-mottling of the leaves leads to names like "trout lily" and "fawn lily", as each of these animals is marked by speckles and mottles. "Adder's tongue" may infer the mottling of a snake, or the likeness of protruding stamens to a tongue. "*Erythronium*" is from the Greek for "red", and was originally the genus name for a related red-flowered European species. "*Albidum*" is Latin for "white".

Belonging to the lily family, *E. albidum* blooms April to June in moist woodlands. This species is found from southern Ontario to Missouri and Kentucky, with relatives scattered across the country. *E. americanum* is a yellow-flowered cousin found further east, though may occasionally appear in eastern Iowa. To identify our species of trout lily, look for paired lance-shaped leaves, up to 8 inches long and 1½ inches



wide, with brown mottling on the upper surface and lacking a discernable stem. The flower stalk rises 6-9 inches from between the paired leaves, with the white flower resembling in shape a miniature Turk's cap lily, having recurved petals and nodding its "head". There are 3 petals and 3 sepals, all white and giving the illusion of 6 petals.

The plant grows from a perennial bulb, about 1½ inches in diameter, which sends out long shoots to make new plants, such that colonies of a few to 100 plants are not uncommon. The leaves appear 2-4 weeks before flowering. In the first 2-3 years, the plant only produces one tiny leaf. The next 2-3 years, the leaf is larger, and after 4-6 years of life, two leaves are produced. Only when the plant is 6-7 years old does it flower, always after having two leaves. If the flower and two leaves are picked, the plant dies, for in its short growing season it cannot produce new leaves to replenish food reserves in the bulb, which are necessary to overwinter and send up new growth the following year.

The Native Americans harvested the bulbs of *Erythronium* species as a food source, eating them raw, boiled or roasted. These bulbs are reported to taste crisp and slightly sweet; however, Europeans found the effort involved in digging the small tubers exceeded their value as a food source. Small burrowing animals like chipmunks also eat the tubers. Europeans tended to use the leaves medicinally, making a tea or poultice to treat skin problems and gout. The leaves have been shown to be antibacterial, especially topically. Though having a pleasant flavor, the leaves are known to be somewhat emetic if eaten in too large a quantity.

This spring, look for dog-tooth violets blanketing moist woodland slopes and bottomland forest, often interspersed with bloodroot and trillium, and stop a moment to enjoy the result of seven years' growth, dormancy and regrowth.

# Wildlife Profile ~ Double-crested Cormorant

by Greg Wolf, CCCB Interpretive Naturalist

As winter gives its last bite with snow and ice, we can look forward to the return of spring. The chipmunks come out to explore the renewed landscape, the birds start to reappear as they migrate up to the summer breeding grounds, and animals start to make pair bonds for the upcoming season. The Mississippi River is no exception to these phenomena. Shore birds, waterfowl, herons, vultures and cormorants make their appearance to breed and live in the river habitat. The double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) is one of those amazing birds that fly up from the Gulf of Mexico to breed along the Mississippi River corridor. This old species of bird is a unique and interesting animal found on the river. Many enjoy watching; others curse the bird for eating the fish and creating other damage.



The double-crested cormorant is one of the larger water birds on the river. It measures about two feet in length with a wingspan of four feet, weighing around four pounds and flying to speeds of 48 mph.

Cormorants' closest relatives are the darters, boobies and gannets, with pelicans not far behind. Common ancestors of these families can be

found in fossil records dating back some 60 million years! The divergence of cormorants and darters dates back at least half that far. The double-crested cormorant is one of thirty-seven species found around the world and one of six in North America. It is also the most common cormorant to be found on the Mississippi, with many birds being seen every year.

Cormorant comes from a Latin phrase meaning "sea crow." Its appearance is black all over with an orange throat pouch and long neck. Double-crested cormorants have a long hooked bill tilted upward when it swims. Both male and females look alike. Immature birds have a pale throat and chest, darkening towards the belly.

In Iowa, cormorants are common and spread all over the state. Habitat for this bird would require lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, reservoirs and prairie marshes. They are excellent swimmers; they have to be in order to catch fish and crustaceans.

Cormorants propel themselves underwater with their feet. This bird can stay under for 70 seconds and go to depths of twenty-five feet. Cormorants eat about 25% of their weight in fish a day. The most common place that double-crested cormorant can be seen in this area is the Mississippi River. The most frequent fish eaten by the cormorant is the gizzard shad.



Reproduction takes place soon after they return from the Gulf of Mexico, the wintering grounds, from April through May. During breeding season, the adults (adults being mature between two to five years of age) develop a double crest of two tufts, generally white, curving back from behind their eyes. The

females lay three to five chalky, pale blue-green eggs. These birds nest in colonies, usually in trees, with the nest being made out of sticks. It is often known that cormorants nest with great blue herons and egrets. These colonies are called rookeries. The pair will have one brood and then prepare to migrate. In the fall, the cormorants will fly in a V-shape formation just like geese.



For being a water bird, it does not possess an outer layer of protection from the water on the feathers. This is called being "wetable". The cormorant does have an inner insulating layer of waterproofing. This protects those feathers closest to the body to keep the body from getting chilled. Therefore, the cormorant is often seen in trees with its wings spread out drying itself. It was once believed that spreading the wings was a way to regulate body temperature called thermoregulation.

The double-crested cormorant population is currently at a historical high. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that there are about two million cormorants or more in North America. This increase is due to several reasons. The first is the elimination of pollution into the environment. Like most fish-eating birds, DDT, a pesticide, caused reproduction problems. Also, PCB, an industrial chemical that was released into the environment, caused many deformities in the young. During the 1960s through the 1970s, the population of cormorants crashed. Here in Iowa, the double-crested cormorant was placed on the endangered list from 1985 to 1994. As the environmental hazards worked themselves out of the ecosystem, numbers began to climb. The second is the large food source that is available. There are more healthy fishing areas than there were before.



Birdwatchers and recreational boaters love double-crested cormorants. These people like to watch this bird dive for fish and guess where it might surface next. Fishermen and people who use the islands will have a different opinion. Fishermen think that with so many cormorants the game fish population will be affected. There is also the concern for the island in which the cormorants nest. With so many birds incorporating the same area, their continued presence will wear the vegetation down and kill it.

The double-crested cormorant is one of those success stories, coming from being an endangered species to a very common sight along the Mississippi River. With or without the controversy, the bird is a wonderful sight to watch and enjoy. If you want to get a good, close look, consider taking a Blue Heron Eco Cruise out of Rock Creek Marina and Campground and see the double-crested cormorant in action!

## Kids' Column ~ An Oviparous Whodunit



Derlock Colmes and Dr. Whatsit here with a most egg-traordinary case. Several egg-cited clients contacted us egg-pressing concern that the protein bandit, Edds Benedict, had stolen their eggs. This case needed to be egg-pidited because the egg's survival rate depended on maintaining specific environmental conditions – hot, cold, wet, dry, egg-cetera, egg-cetera.



























Our clients were egg-static when Dr. Whatsit told them that we were onto Edds Benedict, and had him under surveillance. Upon apprehension, he began egg-hibiting an egg-aggerated amount of agitation. It appeared that

he'd started the Catkin's diet and soon confessed to the protein-napping.

Dr. Whatsit and I have located the stolen eggs. Now, we've begun to undergo the egg-orbitant task of sorting out the oviparous (egg-to-owner) relationship. We need some egg-tra help in returning them, so as junior sleuths, we are asking for your assistance. Will you help?

Egg-cellent! Dr Whatsit has sorted the clients and eggs into two columns. I, Derlock Colmes, with my superior powers of observation, have provided hints to determining whodunit – produced the egg, that is. Good luck! Answers are found on back page.



Bluegill		1. _____	A		eggs are in long, double strings
Monarch Butterfly		2. _____	B		oblong, leathery-shelled egg
Blue Racer		3. _____	C		eggs resemble a raft and develop into wrigglers that grow into summertime pests
Garden Snail		4. _____	D		solitary, sticky eggs sink and become attached to water weeds
Argiope (Garden) Spider		5. _____	E		eggs in huge masses in shallow water
Earthworm		6. _____	F		spherical, rubbery-shelled egg
Brown Thrasher		7. _____	G		eggs are protected in a hard, varnished case produced by a gummy liquid that's beaten to a froth and dried
Leopard Frog		8. _____	H		eggs found in slimy "cocoon" secreted by clitellum
Braconid Wasp		9. _____	I		eggs found in damp places under rocks or logs and resemble tiny bunches of grapes
Painted Turtle		10. _____	J		silken threads are spun to form a protective case around these eggs
Praying Mantis		11. _____	K		parasitized tomato hornworm carries cocoon-filled eggs
American Toad		12. _____	L		eggs often found on milkweed plants
Mosquito		13. _____	M		hard-shelled egg varying in color, size, shape and texture

**WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER**  
**31555 52ND AVENUE**  
**DIXON, IA 52745**  
**Tel: (563) 328-3286**  
**Fax: (563) 843-2845**

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52404  
PERMIT NO. 695

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is a joint project between the Scott and Clinton County Conservation Boards. "The W.R.E.N." is published quarterly by the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and the Scott County Conservation Board.

**Scott County Conservation Board**

**Members:**

John "Skip" O'Donnell	Rich Mohr
Leone Bredbeck	Gene Weis
Carol Fennelly	

**Director:**

Roger Kean

**Phone Numbers**

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center  
(563) 328-3286

Scott County Conservation Board  
(563) 328-3280

Clinton County Conservation Board  
(563) 847-7202

**Wapsi River Environmental Education Center Staff**

**Scott County:**

Bob Bryant, Director/Naturalist  
Mike Granger, Naturalist  
Lisa Gerwulf, Assistant Naturalist

**Clinton County:**

Mark Roberts, E. E. Coordinator  
Greg Wolf, Interpretative Naturalist

**Mailing List**

If you would like to receive "The W.R.E.N." free of charge, please send a post card to the Wapsi River E. E. Center at the address above.

The Scott County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes they have been subject to discrimination, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Scott County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.

---

**Kids' Column Answers = 1. D, 2. L, 3. B, 4. I, 5. J, 6. H, 7. M, 8. E, 9. K, 10. F, 11. G, 12. A, 13. C**