

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental Newsletter

SPRING 2016

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php

The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia



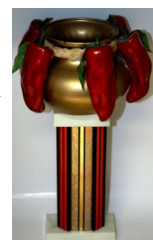
BALD EAGLE DAYS 2016

The 2016 Bald Eagle Days were held January 8-10 with good attendance as well as viewing of the eagles along the river. During the school day, the booth saw approximately **700 students, teachers, and adults**, while overall attendance was about **1800 from all over the Quad City area** including both Iowa and Illinois. This year our booth theme was "Vertebrates", and showcased our American kestrel, largemouth bass, and fox snake. We would like to thank our ***Friends*** members, and all the **volunteers** for assisting with the booth.

WINTER FUN DAY

Forty-eight participants enjoyed activities and programming this year, though we did not have a snowy winter day. The annual event started with a nature hike followed by making bug hotels and bird feeders, and ending with the Chili Cook-off! There

was a 3-way tie for the traveling **Chili Cook-off** trophy, congratulations! Thank you to our volunteers and ***Friends*** members for supporting the event!

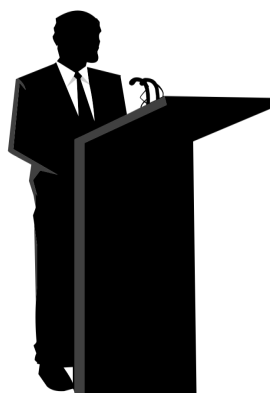


SCHOOLS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Wapsi Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education and maintains **100% satisfaction ratings** through comments cards and evaluations. The Center also meets at least one **Iowa Core** requirement for all Iowa school programs surveyed. The Center's staff can help plan your field trip to meet educator needs. Visit our website and view/download our **Field Trip Planner**. If you are an educator who wants to schedule a field trip or take advantage of our dormitory and schedule an overnight field trip, give us a call at (563) 328-3286.

NEED A GUEST SPEAKER?

Please feel free to call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 if you are in need of a speaker for your club, business, civic organization, school in-service, or event. We do not charge for speaking engagements and come equipped with our own PowerPoint projector and laptop in needed.





The 2nd Annual Quad Cities Pollinator Conference is being held June 23-24 in Davenport, Iowa. Nearly 20 experts will be speaking on current issues, challenges, and opportunities and the River Center in downtown Davenport.

Threats facing pollinators include habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation. As native vegetation is lost to roadways, manicured lawns, crops and non-native gardens, pollinators lose the food and nesting sites that are necessary for their survival. Migratory pollinators face special challenges. If the distance between suitable habitat patches along their migration route is too great, smaller, weaker individuals may die during their journey. Our

conference hopes to offer landscape solutions for a variety of applications (urban, rural, backyard) in order to address habitat loss for pollinators and other native species.



The conference focuses on the ag community, municipal, county, state, and federal employees, landowners, homeowners, beekeepers, and educators. **Dr. Karen Oberhauser of the Monarch Joint Venture** is opening Keynote and **Dr. Orley "Chip" Taylor, Founder/Director of Monarch Watch**, is lunch Keynote. Sponsorships and early registration is open at: www.qcpollinatorconference.org.

The Wapsi Center continues to promote **awareness, education, lifestyle behaviors, and stewardship** in support of pollinator health. The Center has installed pollinator friendly plantings, currently uses a observational beehive in the Eagle View Eco Center for education, and is adding other hives to support bee populations. **BEE** a supporter and visit!

SILENT EAGLE SPRING; A Recap of the Bettendorf Eagle Rescue!

By Director/Naturalist Dave Murcia

"One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds,,,,," **March 23-** Call from a concerned citizen about an eagle in her tree that had been there for days. She described it came down and hobbled across the street, falling once, before taking shelter behind a shrub. She asked if someone could help the eagle. I told her that I would get our team there to help. Naturalists Emily Santiago and Becky Horton, who have animal science and animal care experience gathered our rescue kit, called our local vet hospital contact, and met me on-site in Bettendorf. Upon arrival, I met with the caller who stayed by the roadway to ensure little disturbance to the eagle. After site evaluation we took our positions for rescue. Upon initiation, the eagle took only a few steps and slowly laid down, allowing me to wrap my rescue blanket around the once strong wings and body. I lifted the eagle out and immediately examined the eagle for external signs of injury. Becky acted to stabilize the head and beak, Emily acted to secure talons. I saw no blood, appendages appeared to be functioning, and pupils reacted normal. We transferred the eagle to the carrier and the eagle went to the vet hospital in Davenport for care.

March 24 - Preliminary examination from the doctor included x-rays, blood work, and administration of fluids and anti-biotics. The eagle presented abnormalities of heart and lungs reflected by x-rays, abnormal odor of feces, responding to fluids. Physical instability presented by the eagle indicated infection or poisoning. Awaited results of bloodwork, as eagle stayed on a protocol of fluids, anti-biotics, and solid food. We contacted partners at The R.A.R.E. Group (Raptor Advocacy Rehabilitation and Education) in Iowa City to coordinate care. I contacted

caller to keep her informed, our staff kept the eagle in their hearts.

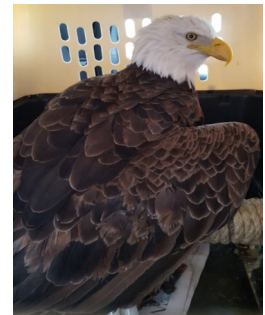
March 25- Update and transfer coordination to R.A.R.E. Eagle displayed a more active behavior, stool improvement, and able to travel with meds, and transfer paperwork. Physical depression was still present. Bloodwork indicated infection. Naturalists Mike Granger, Santiago, and I, thanked doctor and staff, and transferred eagle to R.A.R.E. Initial examination at R.A.R.E. confirmed it was an adult male, presented very low weight (starvation) and infection, was lethargic, and most importantly, presented a HIGH level of lead. Fluids, solid food, and chelation therapy was started to remove lead from the system.

March 26- Eagle presented depressed behavior, chelation therapy continued on this very sick eagle.

March 27- The eagle passed away.

„Much of the damage inflicted on the land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.” – Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*.

“I am grateful for those who have crossed my path, and that of the eagle, who is not invisible- Donna, Emily, Becky, Amber, Lauren, Mike, Luke, Elizabeth, and local media”.



SPRING EVENTS

APRIL

1st ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village opens for the season.

5th ~ EAB "Emerald Ash Borer" ~ 6:30 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. ~ Fairmount Library (3000 N. Fairmount Street; Davenport, Iowa) ~ The Emerald Ash Borer will prove to be a major menace for landowners and parks during the next few years. Join Director/ Naturalist Dave Murcia for a community public meeting and learn about the disease, how to identify ash trees, possible treatments and utilization of the wood. The session is free and open to the public.

9th ~ Paint By Nature "Water Works" ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ In this kid-friendly class that blends nature and art, explore the ways water works in the environment through fun games and activities! Then, learn to paint a themed picture on canvas in a guided, step-by-step experience. Cost is \$5/canvas. 20 painters MAX. Pre-registration is required. Please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



16th ~ Kite Flying ~ 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Up, up and away! Come to the Wapsi River Center to learn how to create a two-stick bow kite the old-fashioned way. Using sticks, paper, glue and string make kites like your grandfather did. There is a \$2 material fee for each kite. Please call to pre-register and reserve your supplies; (563) 328-3286.

21st ~ Plant Some Shade ~ 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ The Scott County Conservation Board is pleased to announce that we are hosting the Plant Some Shade Program. MidAmerican Energy company customers in Iowa are eligible to purchase trees for \$30 each. Tree purchase is initially limited to 2 trees

per household and advanced purchase is recommended as quantities are limited. (Credit card orders are not accepted). If you have questions regarding this, call (563) 328-3280.

21st ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us to learn about upcoming events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. Please call (563) 328-3286 for more information.

22nd ~ EARTH DAY 2016 ~ Find a way to celebrate Earth Day this year by getting outdoors!!! Check your local paper for Earth Day related events.



23rd ~ Spring Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come celebrate Earth Day at the Wapsi River Center. The Wapsi River Center will be hosting a spring workday. The workday will focus on habitat clean-up and sprucing up the facilities for upcoming field trips. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend! Afterwards, enjoy light refreshments provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Call to register at (563) 328-3286.



23rd ~ Archery Basics ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Learn how to use a bow and arrow in this informative and fun hands-on class. You'll learn safety and proper archery techniques according to National Archery in the Schools (NASP) guidelines. Children must be in 4th grade and above to participate. Please call to pre-register (563) 328-3286.

29th ~ Arbor Day ~ Did you know that Arbor Day is the only federal holiday that looks to the future? Planting a tree shows faith in that future! It's also a great way to commemorate a birth, death, anniversary or other special event.



29th ~ April 29th ~ IOWATER Introductory Workshop ~ 8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The first step in getting involved in IOWATER is becoming a trained, certified volunteer at Introductory Workshop. Workshops consist of some classroom time and outdoor, hands on learning. Upon completion of the workshop, you will be a certified IOWATER Citizen Monitor. You'll receive all the

materials you need to monitor Iowa's streams, lakes, and ponds at the workshop. During this 8-hour workshop, volunteers are trained in the basics of monitoring streams and lakes and how to submit data to the DNR. Volunteers learn simple techniques to measure the chemical, physical and habitat quality of their local water resources. To register, go to: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/Water-Monitoring/IOWATER> . Cost is \$20/participant (includes fees, meals, equipment) or \$30/group of 3 (includes fees, meals, 1 set of equipment). For more info please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286, or IOWATER Coordinator, Mary Skopec at (515) 725-3434



May

7th ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 1, Lake of the Hills Boat Ramp ~ Join Director/naturalist Dave Murcia for an adventure with kayaks. Whether you are a beginner or regular kayaker, come out to learn basics. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of Lake of the Hills.

Call to register for a kayak seat at (563) 328-3286.

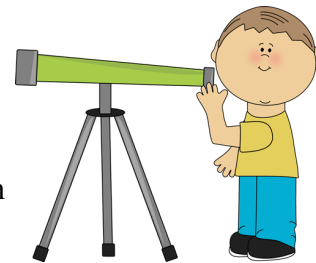


7th ~ Wildflower Hike ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us for a hike to identify some spring woodland wildflowers like rue anemone, hepatica, Dutchman's breeches, Jacob's ladder, spring beauty, dog tooth violet and many more. Please call to pre-register (563) 328-3286.

7th ~ Moonlight Frog Chorus ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Mike Granger for a lesson on our local frog and toad species. Visitors will learn how to identify the various calls associated with each species and then go on a night time frog catching adventure! Please bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear. Call to pre-register (563) 328-3286.



7th ~ Menke Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a celestial tour of the night sky. Call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event for a recorded message confirming whether the star party will take place or must be cancelled due to stormy weather. If the weather is merely cloudy, *the star party will still take place* with a tour of the observatory and an opportunity for questions and answers with local astronomers.



19th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us to learn about upcoming events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. Please call (563) 328-3286 for more information

21st ~ Paint by Nature "Pollinators" ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ In this kid-friendly class that blends nature and art, take a closer look at pollinators and the amazing work they do! Then, learn to paint a themed picture on canvas in a guided step-by-step experience. Cost is \$5/canvas. 20 painters MAX. Pre-registration is required. Please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

26th ~ Davenport Horticulturalist Society Meeting 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. ~ Duck Creek Park Lodge ~ Join Michael Granger, Wapsi River Center Naturalist, for a "Walk in the Woods" at the Duck Creek Park Lodge located at 3300 East Locust Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information on the club please call Dennis Derer at (563) 391-1599.

29th & 30th ~ 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 performances by the Wapsi Wranglers and Kickapoo Indian Dancer. Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village is located on the north end of Scott County Park. Admission is \$2/adult and \$1/children.

30th ~ Holiday ~ County Offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday.

31st ~ Raptors Along the River, Channel Cat Talks ~ 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. ~ Celebration Pier

Channel Cat Landing, 2501 E. River Drive, Moline, IL ~ Join Director/Naturalist Dave Murcia to learn about birds of prey in our area: habitats, ecology, and human impacts to these awesome predators. Be sure to bring your kids and see a live raptor up close!

June

2nd ~ Raptors Along the River, Channel Cat Talks ~ 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. ~ Celebration Pier Channel Cat Landing, 2501 E River Dr, Moline, IL ~ Join Director/Naturalist Dave Murcia to learn about birds of prey in our area: habitats, ecology, and human impacts to these awesome predators. Be sure to bring your kids and see a live raptor up close!

3rd – 5th ~ Free Fishing Days ~ Let's go fishing! During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish (within legal limits) without a fishing license.

4th ~ Fishing Clinic ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park - Rolling Hills Shelter, Gate 1 ~ This program



is exclusively sponsored by The Quad City In-Fisherman and is part of the FISH IOWA angler education program. Open to Scott County residents grades K-6. Children 9 and under must be accompanied by an adult, moms and dads are encouraged to attend. All poles and

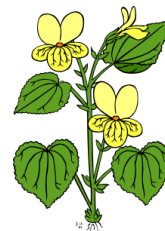
tackle are provided. Registration begins at 8:00am.

4th ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 1, Lake of the Hills Boat Ramp ~ Join Director/naturalist Dave Murcia for an adventure with kayaks. Whether you are a beginner or regular kayaker, come out to learn basics. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of Lake of the Hills. Call to register for a kayak seat at (563) 328-3286.

4th ~ Menke Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a celestial tour of the night sky. Call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event for a recorded message confirming whether the star party will take place or must be cancelled due to stormy

weather. If the weather is merely cloudy, *the star party will still take place* with a tour of the observatory and an opportunity for questions and answers with local astronomers.

11th ~ Paint by Nature “Wildflowers” ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ In this kid-friendly class that blends nature and art, take a walk on the wildflower side to see what's blooming! Then, learn to paint a themed picture on canvas in a guided step-by-step experience. Cost is \$5/canvas. 20 painters MAX. Pre-registration is required. Please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



13th - 17th ~ Wilderness Adventure Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. (each day) ~ Nahant Marsh Education Center ~ Enjoy outdoor recreation and learn how to be a wildlife biologist. Learn how to protect identify, track and collect data on plants and animals. Camp is for students ages 7 - 10 years old. Please call to sign up at (563) 323-5196.

13th – 17th ~ Pioneer Village Day Camp “Pioneer Adventures Week” ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. each day ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Sign up for a week of adventure, learning how the pioneers lived. On June 15th campers will take a field trip to the Clinton Sawmill museum, and the Windmill museum in Fulton, Illinois. Also learn how to play some pioneer games. (Camps are for children ages 6 to 12 years old). Please call for more information at (563) 328-3283.

June 16th – 17th ~ EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) ~ (Day 1; Nahant Marsh, Day 2; Wapsi River Center) ~ This 2-day educators' workshop serves to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. See the special add section for further details.

18th ~ Annual Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 12:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us to learn about the history of the Wapsi River Center, habitat ecology, animal care, upcoming events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. At 5:00 P.M. we will have our potluck dinner (bring a dish to share). Please call (563) 328-3286 for more information., and see our special add for further details.

18th ~ The Great Sunflower Project ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Great Sunflower Project is an ongoing summer project that helps better understand the reason for and impact of declines in bee populations. Becky will show you how to get involved with this research project and take a hike outside to the prairie to participate in a pollinator count. During this program, we will also learn how to make seed bombs. Please call to pre-register (563) 328-3286.



20th -26th ~ National Pollinator Week ~ Check your local listings for events that celebrate our local pollinators!

20th – 24th ~ Pioneer Village Day Camp “Weird Science Week” ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. each day ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Sign up for a week of science learning and fun. Campers will learn about science through experimentation, crafts and games. Launch a 50 foot solar bag using the suns energy for flight! Campers will visit the Putnam Museum on June 22nd. (Camps are for children ages 6 to 12 years old). Please call for more information at (563) 328-3283.

23rd & 24th ~ Second Annual Quad Cities Pollinator Conference ~ Join representatives, educators and professionals to learn about our local pollinators. This year’s sessions will be geared toward the agricultural community; municipal, state and federal employees; land owners; homeowners; urban dwellers; beekeepers; and educators. The first day will be at the River Center in Davenport, Iowa and feature 20 speakers presenting current pollinator issues, challenges and opportunities. Optional tours visiting successful pollinator projects around the Quad Cities will be given on the second day, June 24th. For more information and to register, visit: www.qcpollinatorconference.org.



27th – July 1st ~ Pioneer Village Day Camp “Wild West Week ” ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. each day ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Sign up for a week of learning about the wild west. Campers will visit the Buffalo Bill Museum (LeClaire, Iowa) and the Buffalo Bill Homestead on June 29th. See live buffalo, learn how to pan for gold and try to win the watermelon seed spitting contest. (Camps are for children ages 6 to 12 years old). Please call for more information (563) 328-3283.

EDIWILD ;Educators in the Wild

June 16th & 17th, 2016 ~Nahant Marsh & The Wapsi River Center

This 2-day educators’ workshop serves to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. The workshop will emphasize environmental stewardship and this year’s natural resource theme is ***WATER***. Educators will be able to gain professional development including grad credit. **This year’s activities, tours and**

topics include: IADNR ***IOWATER*** Certification, macro-invertebrates, stream-table and watershed activities, canoeing, rain barrels/bio swales/rain gardens, Frog & Toad surveys, classroom resources, and more.



See further details and registration information will be posted at:

<http://www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation> ,

<https://www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation>.

Please also check the AEA9 at: www.mbaea.org/ for Iowa credit info.



The Annual Friends Meeting

Saturday, June 18th, 2016

12:00 to 5:00 P.M.

Are you interested volunteering at the Wapsi River Environmental Educational Center? Do you have any interpretative skills already that you'd like to share? Are you looking to gain experience in nature interpretation for a future career? We want YOU! The Friends of the Wapsi River Center is a group of citizens interested in supporting conservation education programming at the Wapsi Center.



Learn about the [history of the Wapsi River and the Friends Group.](#)

Take a [hike](#) to learn about our unique [ecology, flora and fauna and habitats found at the Wapsi River Center.](#)

Learn how to become an [effective docent, and how to care and feed the animals, as a host of the Eagle View Eco Center.](#)

There will also be the [ANNUAL Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting at 3:30 P.M.](#) Any and all are encouraged to attend, to learn about recreational and volunteer opportunities!

The Friends [Potluck Dinner](#) will be at 5:00 P.M. The main dish and tableware will be provided. [Please bring a dish to share.](#)

“Please invite and bring a friend!”

Friends of the Wapsi
Center

Nahant Marsh
Iowa

State Scott Co. extension

Geneseo Garden Club

Geneseo Library

Ryan Schlater-IADNR
River Action

WHBF, KLJB, WQAD, KWQC

QC Times

Larry Lockwood

thank
you!

Western Illinois University
& Rob Porter RPTA

Donna Zimple-Harmon

Animal Family Veterinary Hospital,
Davenport

Raptor Advocacy
Rehabilitation education “RARE”, Iowa City

Brad Burt ~ Aqua-tech Car Wash

ANIMAL PROFILE: The Common Carp

By Naturalist, Michael Granger

Let me introduce to you a fish that is not highly thought of, but can provide a lot of fishing excitement, and will test your fishing equipment, the common carp, *Cyprinus carpio*. I was fortunate



Spring 1986 - West Lake Park

enough to have a wonderful father who would take me fishing as a boy, and I can remember the excitement getting ready to go on many fishing outings. Although, we took several trips up to Minnesota to fish and camp, in some pretty wild places, I remember the times my father took me carp fishing here in Scott County. We had it

down to a science, making our own dough balls and refining our techniques. For a young fishing enthusiast, catching carp can be a thrill like no other. The battles may last for many minutes and a carp can easily break your line. Over the years I have seen fishing poles pulled into the water never to be seen again and rods broken above the reel, giving the common carp, a reputation as a worthy opponent. Fishing has become a lifestyle for me and has, over the past few years, focused on catching carp and teaching others how to catch them. The common carp, is a member of the minnow family, *Cyprinidae*. If you have kept goldfish in an aquarium, they are also in the minnow family.

The common carp has a long history which has pluses and minuses. It is believed the original wild common carp was indigenous to the Danube River in Europe (which leads to reason it is often referred to as the German carp or Eurasian Carp. The common carp has since been introduced worldwide, excluding the Middle East and the poles. It is currently recorded on almost all continents and 59 countries. Historically, the fish was farmed by the Romans, who created large ponds for a carp aquaculture, plus it is fair game for the table in many countries. As with many fish species it has been introduced to new areas intentionally, and sometimes even illegally.

Here in Iowa, the common carp may be found in nearly every waterway. They are tolerant of many conditions but prefer to be in slower backwaters, and still water. Carp are not found in cold water streams in the northeastern Iowa. They are a schooling fish and are found in groups of 5 or more. The common carp is omnivorous and eats a variety of aquatic plants, plus they will scavenge the bottom for crustaceans, worms, and even smaller fish.

Early in the springtime large female carp seek out backwater areas with abundant vegetation. Carp spawn from mid April through June. Females can lay 300,000 eggs in a single spawn and may spawn several times during the season. Often carp can be seen spawning in the shallows splashing and making the water swirl and boil, with several smaller males cornering and spawning with one of the larger females. Carp eggs and young fish do not have an easy go however, as many predators are lurking in their environment. Great blue herons, kingfishers, raccoons, mink, and otter are some of the larger predators. Game fish such as largemouth bass, northern pike, catfish, crappie, and bluegill readily make a meal of fingerling carp.

Fishing for carp is definitely a science. Dough balls, canned corn, and worms are the standards. Be sure to have your fishing gear well attended, or secured to the bank as carp may take your equipment. Carp is eaten in many parts of the world. In central Europe, it is a traditional part of a Christmas Eve dinner. Often carp is seasoned and smoked. Common carp are extremely popular with anglers in many parts of Europe, and their popularity as quarry is slowly increasing among anglers in the United States (though destroyed as pests in many areas). Carp are also popular with spear, bow, and fly fishermen. The state record in Iowa is 67 pounds from Montgomery County, and 50 pounders are not uncommonly caught, elsewhere. For a fishing adventure, try to tangle into some carp this season. Be sure to have your valid fishing license and check your local rules and regulations!!!



PLANT PROFILE: SPRING CRESS

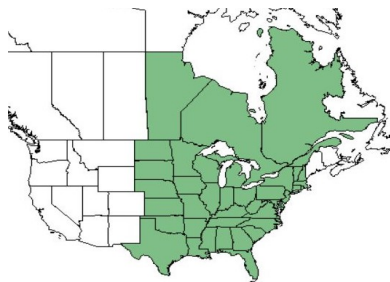
By Seasonal Naturalist, Kyle Moeller

Hello and happy spring, Wapsi Friends! As we enter this spring season we not only think about the rebirth and rejuvenation of plants and animals in general, but look ahead to potential wild edible and medicinal plants. With that said, let me introduce to you a plant called spring cress, or scientifically known as *Cardamine bulbosa*, which is in the Mustard family *Brassicaceae*. The family was formerly *Cruciferae*, which by definition have basal and alternate leaves, acrid or pungent juice and clusters of four petaled flowers, which distinguishes this family. The word *cruciferae* refers to the “cross-like”, flowers. Other plants in the Mustard family include some familiar garden plants, such as, turnip, sweet alyssum, radish, mustard, cress, cauliflower, cabbage and broccoli, just to name a few.

This particular plant is a perennial that grows anywhere from six to eighteen inches tall, and is one of the early spring bloomers in Iowa’s woodlands. Spring cress has one inch white flowers that contain 4 petals, 6 stamens, 4 sepals and 1 pistil. In full bloom it is about an inch in diameter. The plant blooms for about 3 weeks during mid - to late spring.

Spring cress can be found in the eastern half of the United States and eastern Canada.

Spring cress is often found in moist woodlands or wet meadows, and may be found in clumps with many plants, which may propagate by seeds or bulbs arising from spreading rhizomes.



Spring Cress - USDA—RANGE MAP

The main stem is green and may have up to five ridges or edges. As mentioned before, spring cress has basal leaves forming a rosette, and has alternate leaves on the rest of the plant. Just as in twig and tree identification alternate leaves means that as you go up and down the twig the leaves are not directly across from one another; one leaf will be on one side and the next leaf up or down the twig will be on the other side of the twig. Remember that opposite leaves means that as you go up and down

the twig, the leaves will be at the same point on the twig every so much of a distance but on the other side of the twig.

There are many different types of bees, flies and even some beetles that seek spring cress for the sweet nectar it provides. These insects rely on these early spring wildflowers, getting their first meal after a long winter.



Spring Cress; anna.xanga.com

Some plants, related to spring cress may pose more of a problem in Iowa’s woodlands. Garlic mustard, *Alliaria petiolate*, is an invasive species in many places and it has that pungent odor and taste, well associated with plants in the Mustard Family. Garlic mustard, as many may know, is quite invasive, and local efforts to eradicate this species are ongoing. I have eaten some garlic mustard leaves a few times, for originally Garlic mustard was introduced to North America as an edible herb. I remember on a recent hike here at the Wapsi River Center we had some young hikers try some wild garlic mustard and, perhaps needless to say, I will never forget the looks on a couple of the kids who did not care for the bitter taste of it! Be sure to understand when you can, and cannot eat wild edibles. Spring cress and wild garlic mustard leaves are normally consumed before they flower!

Like many different species in the Mustard family, spring cress is edible. However, most animals, including people, will avoid this plant because the leaves have a somewhat bitter taste. You can add spring cress leaves to salads to give them an extra peppery taste. As always, when on a quest for your favorite wild edible in nature, be sure to understand how to properly identify the edible plant or fungi, and in what stage it is edible! Keep your eyes out for some spring cress this spring on your next hike at the Wapsi River Center. Happy trails!

WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER
31555 52ND AVENUE
DIXON, IA 52745

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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