

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

SUMMER 2019

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi

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

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

Annual Friends Meeting

Our annual meeting recognized outstanding skills, knowledge, and abilities that members brought to the Center and the wide variety of programs they support.

A total of **1188.75 hours** were volunteered by all, including **451.25 hours** by the *Friends of the Wapsi Center* at an enormous value of **\$30,229.91** of support! The following *members* specifically recognized were:

Norn Nichols (President) as Volunteer of the Year, including most shifts hosted and hours volunteered, Bill Robbins (Treasurer) for most meetings attended, and Lucia Dryanski for outstanding program and event support. On behalf of the Wapsi River Center Director and staff, the Scott County Conservation Board, and Scott County, we are grateful and appreciate your continued support! **Go Team Wapsi!**



FRIENDS MEMBERS: Bill, Lucia (and Jake)

Spring Events 2018

It was another busy spring season with public programs including: **paddling, Earth Day Volunteer Stewardship Workday, Wildflower Hike, Wild Edibles & Archery programs, Pollinator Workshop,** and our **Annual Friends of the Wapsi Center** meeting!

We also presented for 58 school experiences including Pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school! As a regional environmental education center, we were scheduled by schools in Scott, Clinton, Cedar counties of Iowa, and Rock Island and Henry counties of Illinois.



ARCHERY: At the Wapsi Center

Earth Day Stewardship Workday

Spring workday this year was a success due to 30 volunteers including our own *Friends of the Wapsi Center* members! The day included: a total of 90 volunteer hours and cleared vegetation from the Eco Center, plus weeding our pollinator and vegetable gardens.



LIZZIE MURCIA: Cleaning our pollinator garden

Wapsi Staff Recognized

Naturalist Becky Baugh and Director Dave Murcia were recognized at the Spring *Iowa Association of Naturalists* (IAN)

workshop for continued professional development (PD). The IAN PD Program requires 20 hours of annual development including: **Knowledge of natural and cultural history and recreation, Program development & educational skills, Communication Skills, Administrative Skills, and Other certification/training.** Director Murcia was also recognized for 10 years of professional development with the **Golden Oak Award**, while Becky graduated from the **Scott County Leadership Summit.**



Center Recognized as "Good Neighbor"

The Wapsi River Center was recently recognized by the **University of Northern Iowa's Center for Energy & Environmental Education's, Good Neighbor Iowa Initiative**, for pesticide-free turf. The initiative aims to transform lawn-culture to encourage appreciation of diverse lawns as a way to protect child health, water quality, pets, and pollinators and biodiversity. The Wapsi River Center uses no pesticides in mowed areas as part of the on-going support of biodiversity, pollinator health, and environmental education programming. For more information on the program, and to see who else has pledged to manage their lawns without the use of pesticides and protect child health and local streams, go to: www.goodneighborIowa.org. PS- the Wapsi River Center is the only one in Scott County to have been recognized thus far!



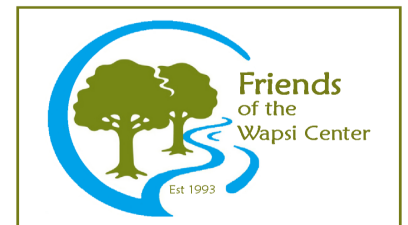
"BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!"

www.scottcountyIowa.com/conservation/Wapsi-friends

The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. organized in 1993, is a citizens' support group dedicated to encouraging the public use and enjoyment of the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and to the preservation of the Center's natural resources for present and future generations. Please contact the Wapsi River Center for more information (563) 328-3286.

YES! I want to join the Friends' Group.

Enclosed is my contribution to the Friends of the Wapsi Center.



Name _____ \$10.00 newsletter
 Address _____ \$20.00 contributing member
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ \$30.00 supporting member
 Phone Number _____
 Email Address _____

PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP FORM TO:

~~~Friends of the Wapsi "Treasurer"~~~

31555 52nd AVENUE, DIXON, IOWA 52745

Contributions to the Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# SUMMER EVENTS:

## JULY

4<sup>th</sup> ~ **Holiday** ~ County offices will be closed in observance of the holiday.

8<sup>th</sup> ~ **Kayak Experience** ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ **West Lake Park (Lake of the Hills) Gate 1** ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of **Lake of the Hills**. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.



8<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 2:30 P.M. ~ **Durant Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

9<sup>th</sup> ~ **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 our *Naturalist* 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 *Wapsi River Center* raptor up close!



9<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ **Eldridge Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

10<sup>th</sup> ~ **Scott County Conservation, Board Meeting** ~

3:00 P.M. ~ **West Lake Park Headquarters (Gate 3)** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

10<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ **Buffalo Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

11<sup>th</sup> ~ **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 our *Naturalist* 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 *Wapsi River Center* raptor up close!



11<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 2:30 P.M. ~ **Walcott Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

12<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ **Fairmount Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

16<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ **Blue Grass Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.



17<sup>th</sup> ~ **Birds of Prey** ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ **Princeton Library** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

18<sup>th</sup> ~ **Friends Meeting** ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ **Wapsi River Center** ~ Come learn about the current happenings, and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi

attending (563)328-3286.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Night at the Menke ~ ~ 7:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ In partnership with Green Iowa AmeriCorps, St. Ambrose University, and the QC Astronomical Society, join us for a night of star gazing, family activities, and smores! Contact [zalexander@caeiowa.org](mailto:zalexander@caeiowa.org) or (563)324-3236 ext. 1208 for more information.



**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Princeton Days - Princeton, Iowa** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, (Pride Lake)** ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of **Pride Lake**. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.



**25<sup>th</sup> ~ The 360 Trail Project: Wild Wapsi Scavenger Hunt ~ 9 A.M. -2 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join the AmeriCorps members on the trails for a day of hiking and geocaching. We have partnered with a student of the **University of Northern Iowa** to help complete his project that includes taking 360° photos of the hiking trails Iowa has to offer. Kids will be given the equipment to take photos of the trails while learning GPS, compass, and orienteering skills! This program is recommended for children 10 and up. Please bring a sack lunch, bug spray/sunscreen, and a water bottle. We ask that all participants register by July 22<sup>nd</sup>, please call to pre-register (563)328-3286.

**26<sup>th</sup> ~ Cordova District Library Community Luncheon ~ 11:30 A.M. ~ Cordova Civic Center in Cordova, IL** ~ Join Naturalist Becky Baugh at the Cordova Civic Center in Cordova, IL during their

butterflies. She will discuss the monarch's life cycle, their migration patterns, their population trends, and how you can help their declining population. You will also learn about 2 citizen science programs, Monarch Watch and Project Monarch Health. Within these programs, you will learn how to tag a monarch and how to test a monarch for parasites.

**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Paint by Nature ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ This time we will focus on the prairie. We will learn about some of our local wildflowers as we hike through part of our prairie. Then we will take the inspiration back to our canvases! The painting process will be guided by our naturalist. Lemonade will be provided to help cool off. The program is family friendly! Please wear paint clothes as there may be some finger-painting involved. \$5/canvas. Limited # of canvases— please call to register. (563) 328-3286.



**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Crafting for Conservation: Garden Stones and Wall Art ~ 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join AmeriCorps environmental educator Faith Henrichs and Naturalist Becky Baugh for our Crafting for Conservation series. During this series we will be making arts and crafts out of either natural or recyclable items. During this session, we will be making garden stones out of natural materials and wall art out of recycled paper towel and toilet paper tubes. Please bring a shallow plastic or tin container (i.e. a take-out container or pie tin) for the garden stones. This program is family fun for all ages. Registration is required. Please call (563)328-3286 to register for this program.

## AUGUST

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, (Pride Lake)** ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of **Pride Lake**. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress



appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey ~ 3:30 P.M. ~ LeClaire Library**  
~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Summer Wild Edible Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist Becky Baugh to learn about the many wild edibles in your own neck of the woods. We will focus on identifying plants, foraging basics, and preparing wild edibles. We will take a hike outdoors to identify and harvest some of the summer wild edibles available during this time. At the end of the program, you will get to sample some wild flavors! Registration is required. Please call (563)328-3286 to register for this program.



**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Prowl the Prairie ~ 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. ~Wapsi River Center** ~Join our team for an afternoon on the Prairie. Learn what it was like for the Pioneers and first settlers of Iowa, create a covered wagon, make a craft, take a hike and enjoy refreshing lemonade! Meet at the Menke Observatory. Registration is free. Please call to register at least 24 hours in advance (563)328-3286.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Lost Grove Lake ( enter at 220<sup>th</sup> Ave., for east boat ramp parking lot)** ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of **Lost Grove Lake**. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation, Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park Headquarters (Gate 3)**  
~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come learn about the current happenings, and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Star Party ~ Menke Observatory Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory for a 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.



**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Hurstville Interpretive Center- Jackson County, Iowa** ~ Join a Naturalist for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families. Come celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Hurstville!

## SEPTEMBER

**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Pioneer Village Labor Day Weekend Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (Daily) ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** ~ Come celebrate the Labor Day weekend at Pioneer Village. Event features blacksmithing, spinning, weaving, music, kid's games & crafts, food & ice cream for sale, and Wild West shoot-outs. Family fun for all ages! (\$2.00 adults, \$1.00 children, under 5 free). For more information please call (563)328-3283.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Terrarium Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M to Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join naturalist Michael J. Granger for a lesson on terrariums. Learn how to create a miniature garden under glass. Participants are asked to bring clear container with a lid. A glass tea jar, or a plastic cheese ball container (Dollar General) are recommended. Please call to pre-register or to learn more details (563)328-3286.



**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Grounded In Nature ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Connecting with Nature and disconnecting with electronics can enhance your wellbeing and relax your mind and body. This program will focus on using your senses to connect with Nature and help you feel rejuvenated! The program will include a hike that will teach us to open our minds to nature. Ages 15 and up. Please call the Wapsi Center with questions (563)328-3286.

**8<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey at Migratory Bird Day ~ 11:00 A.M. ~ QC Botanical Center, Rock Island, IL. ~** Bring out the whole family for a whole day of great activities including: A Bird Banding Station, Conservation Speakers, Raptor Education, and Family Friendly Activities. Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey ~ 11:30 A.M. ~ Bettendorf Public Library** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for a presentation on **Birds of Prey!** The program will include biology, ecology, habitats, with live owls and a falcon! Recommended for all families.

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, (Pride Lake)** ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of **Pride Lake**. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.



**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation, Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park Headquarters (Gate 3)** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804.



**14<sup>th</sup> ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Monarch Festival ~ 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join the Wapsi River Center staff as we celebrate Monarch Butterflies

during this day long festival. During the day, we will have kid's activities such as butterfly crafts, face painting, a story corner, a photo booth, and education stations. Ms. MariPosa's Monarch Butterfly Bus will also be onsite for the entire festival. There will be a monarch presentation at 10:00 A.M., a prairie hike and butterfly catching at 11:00 A.M., monarch tagging and testing at 1:00 P.M., and make your own seed balls at 2:00 P.M. The Friends of the Wapsi Center will provide a taco bar for lunch from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. This event is FREE and fun for the entire family, but registration is required. Please call (563)328-3286 to register your family today!

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come learn about the current happenings, and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Menke Star Party ~ Menke Observatory Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory for a 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.

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ World Rivers Day Float ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Syracuse Landing to Sherman Park** ~ Join the Wapsi River Team and explore the Wapsipinicon River by kayak, to celebrate and honor our sacred waters. Participants must be 16 years of age and accompanied by an adult. We will meet at Sherman Park and please consider bringing the following items: sunscreen, insect repellent, comfortable clothes, sturdy shoes, water bottle, waterproof container with snacks/lunch. Kayaks, paddles, and PFDs are limited to the first 12 people so call to register a seat at (563)328-3286. **Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem.**



**SAVE THE DATE:  
Fall Ecology day OCT 5, 2019**

# 1ST ANNUAL MONARCH FESTIVAL

Saturday, September 14th, 2019

~ Wapsi River Environmental Education Center ~

9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Join us for an exciting new event in celebration of the Monarch Butterfly. This free family oriented event has a variety of activities happening throughout the day. Also tour Ms. Mariposa's Monarch Butterfly Bus to learn more about these fascinating butterflies. Please call to reserve your family today!! (563)328 -3286.

10:00 to 11:00 A.M. ~

## MONARCH

**PRESENTATION** ~ Learn about the natural history and life cycle of the monarch butterfly and how you can get involved with programs to help out the Monarch butterfly!



1:00 to 2:00 P.M. ~

## MONARCH TAGGING

**& TESTING** ~ Learn how to participate in Monarch Watch and Project Monarch Health by tagging and testing monarchs that we collect on the prairie.



9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. ~ **KIDS ACTIVITIES** ~

Including butterfly crafts, face painting, a photo booth and story corner.

2:00 to 3:00 P.M. ~ **SEED BOMBS** ~ Learn how to make seed bombs and then take them home to plant in your own yard.



**ALL DAY LONG ~ MS. MARIPOSA'S**

## MONARCH BUTTERFLY

**BUS** ~ Learn more about the amazing Monarch butterfly by touring this interactive educational bus.

11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. ~ **LUNCH -TACO BAR** ~

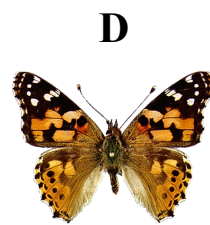
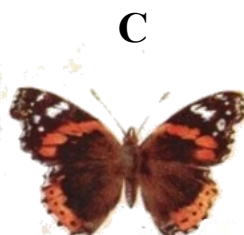
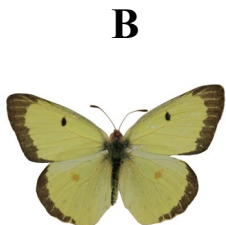
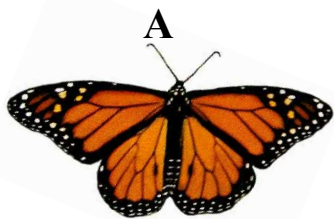
Provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Donations accepted.



11:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. ~ **PRAIRIE HIKE &**

**BUTTERFLY CATCHING** ~ Join a naturalist for a hike to the prairie to identify butterflies, look at milkweed and catch monarchs.

**BUTTERFLY QUIZ: CAN YOU NAME THESE COMMON LOCAL BUTTERFLIES?**



ANSWERS: A—Monarch B—Yellow Sulphur C—Red Admiral D—American Painted Lady E—Mourning Cloak

# FUNGUS PROFILE: THE YELLOW OYSTER

By Naturalist Michael J. Granger

During the spring time when warmer temps arrive, the lilac bush blooms, robins begin nesting, many people begin the search for morel mushrooms.



For many it is their springtime tradition, which helps to cure that cabin fever. Everyone has their own secret traditions when hunting morels, such as, you can begin to hunt morels after the

lilac bush blooms. Another common technique is to hunt around dead elm trees, which often rewards the morel hunter with a bountiful harvest. For the past few years we have notice an increasing abundance of bright yellow mushrooms actually growing on the same dead elm trees where we find morels on the ground surrounding them.

These mushrooms begin as small yellow buttons that begin to push through the loose dead bark on dead elm trees which may be standing or fallen. With increasing rain and dampness, these small yellow buttons seem to swell overnight into larger caps. Eventually the caps swell to over 4 inches and the yellow color fades and the caps deteriorate, turning a pale yellow or off-white color. It wasn't until I saw a man harvesting these yellow mushrooms, literally two grocery sacks full of them, that I did some more investigation. What also really peaked my interest is when we found a tree that was full of these mushrooms. I would guess over 50 pounds of mushrooms were growing on that particular tree!

It turns out they are known as yellow oyster mushrooms, which are botanically classified as *Pleurotus citrinopileatus*. The yellow oyster mushroom has an interesting history. It is well known that it is not native to North America, but originates from Asia. The question is then how did it get to the United States? The yellow oyster turns out to be very edible and easy to propagate. The yellow oyster mushroom is also known as the golden oyster mushroom, Il'mak in Russian, and Tamgitake in Japanese. It is believed that spores from growing kits escaped into the wild and thus we can now find them in North America.

They are not commercially grown for produce

since they are fragile and have a short shelf life. I have noticed they deteriorate fairly quickly, and would not survive packaging or transport. For the home mushroom enthusiast, the yellow oyster is easy to grow and propagate. It is fairly easy to obtain growing kits, for the yellow oyster mushroom, and they have been cultivated on a variety of different mediums, such as coffee grounds, paper, compost, sawdust and even straw. The yellow oyster is quite popular in China and Japan, where it is cultivated regularly for local dishes.

Yellow oyster mushrooms have a fruity aroma reminiscent of an aged red wine and are velvety, crisp, and chewy. Remember all mushrooms need to be cooked, as a rule. Cooked yellow oyster mushrooms are known for their rich balanced, nutty flavor similar to the flavor of cashews.

They are used in cooking in a variety of ways, and are most commonly used in stir frying, but they may be boiled for soups and stews. If you plan to harvest some yellow oysters, bring a few brown paper grocery sacks. Brown paper bags seem to help the mushrooms stay fresh, allow them to breathe, and not turn into a gooey mess. A paper sack also allows you to store them in the refrigerator until they are ready to use. It is recommend that the yellow oyster be utilized fairly quickly.

To harvest yellow oysters simply pluck the whole cluster of mushrooms and place into the sack.

To process the yellow oysters, they can be soaked in water and rinsed. Separate out each mushroom cap and wash again. Many people trim off the stems which may have a bitter taste. The caps can be then cut or diced into smaller portions. These then can be fried in oil or added to stews. Remember to look for the yellow oyster for it is a common edible wild mushroom and can be found around some dead elm trees in a forest near you!!





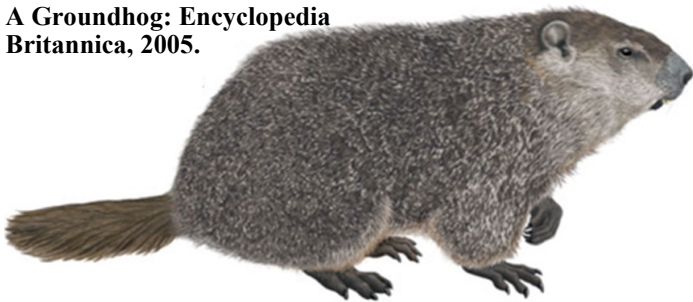
# ANIMAL PROFILE: THE WOODCHUCK

By Seasonal Naturalist Paige Ehrecke

Spring/summer are generally thought of as “baby season” for many types of animals. Well this year at the Wapsi Center we had a special arrival—a litter of 7 baby groundhogs! If you aren’t familiar with these guys, read on! And if you are, I hope you learn something new.

Although these critters have many common names: groundhogs, whistle-pigs, woodchucks, marmots, their scientific name remains the same: *Marmota monax*. The reason they go by “woodchuck” is not necessarily known with 100% certainty (there are many theories). One theory is that they get this name for the behavior of chewing on wood to keep their teeth ground down. The groundhog nickname is somewhat more obvious—they are stout like a pig (hog) and live in underground burrows. The whistle-pig name is also easily deduced from the high-pitched shriek they can make as a warning call.

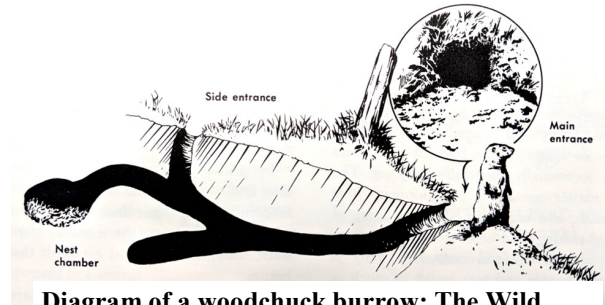
**A Groundhog: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2005.**



Groundhogs are a rodent and are the largest members of the squirrel family (they can reach weights of 8 – 12 pounds). They can be easily recognized by their stout bodies, short bushy tail, and short legs. The coloration is generally brown or brown/grey and sometimes the face will have white markings. Males and females look the same, so you cannot tell which gender you are looking at from afar. They also have the classic rodent teeth—two very long, very sharp front incisors that act like scissors to snip through the vegetation they eat. These teeth are constantly growing, hence the need to grind them down on wood. They are generally vegetarians (herbivores) eating mostly greens, some fruits, and flowers--in Missouri they have even climbed pawpaw trees to reach the fruits! Once in a while they can be seen eating grasshoppers or other insects, eggs, or even a fledgling of a ground-nesting bird.

The best habitat for groundhogs is open meadow areas (i.e., a hay field, forest clearing with not-too-tall grass or a mowed ditch near a road). Groundhogs are burrowing animals. Burrows generally have a “front door” and a “back door” (see image) for quick re-entry or escape. They often have

several homes for different seasons—one den for winter and another for summer months. They DO hibernate in winter. During this time their bodies slow



**Diagram of a woodchuck burrow: The Wild Mammals of Missouri, 1959.**

down to conserve energy and their heart rate may drop as low as 4 beats per minute! (the average heartrate when they aren’t hibernating is around 80 beats per minute)

Their burrows are often adopted by other animals including skunks, foxes, weasels, opossums, and even rabbits, making them very valuable for the ecosystem!

They are valuable to humans too! The burrows help more oxygen get into the soils, which helps the important microbes thrive, thus making conditions better for planting crops. They also used to be trapped for food and for their fur/hide. The hide was used for light-weight leather products including laces/ties. They are good prey for foxes, coyotes, dogs, bobcats, sometimes hawks, weasels or minks (especially the young).

These cute little guys mature at age 2. When they are mature, they can have 1 litter of babies per year with 2-9 babies. Babies are born extremely helpless. Like other rodents, they are bald, blind, and deaf. They are first able to venture out of the den at age 6 or 7 weeks old and they leave the nest to be on their own around 10-12 weeks old.

As cute as they appear, they can—and will—fight if cornered. Please use caution if you encounter a groundhog and do not try to pet it. They are best viewed and admired from afar.

**FUN FACT!** This is the only rodent with its very own day—Groundhog’s Day! (February 2) Punxsutawney Phil is the most famous groundhog because of this day. If he sees his shadow on Groundhog’s Day that means that there will (supposedly) be 6 more weeks of winter. If he doesn’t see his shadow that means there will be an early spring.



# HELLO FAITH!

Hey all, I am Faith Henrichs serving as an Environmental Educator through Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H at the Wapsi River EE Center. In May I graduated from QC Western Illinois University with my bachelors in Recreation, Parks, Tourism and Administration, minoring in Environmental Studies. I am very excited to be at the Wapsi because I've always had a passion for nature and teaching others. I am an enthusiast for all things natural, having special interest in conservation and open spaces. I have a lot

of different hobbies but some of them include kayaking, hiking, camping and fly fishing. After my term with AmeriCorps at the Wapsi, I plan to continue pursuing a career as a Naturalist. I am making the most of my service time here and I can't wait to see what's next!



# HELLO ALEXIS!

Hi, my name is Alexis! I am one of the new AmeriCorps 4-H Environmental Educator members here at the Wapsi River Center. I just completed the Parks and Natural Resources program at Kirkwood Community College and will be attending Western Illinois University - Moline in the fall for their Recreation, Park, and Tourism Administration program.

While attending Kirkwood, I was a member of the Women in Natural Resources club where other female students and I would attend various workshops and conferences to advertise our strong group of future

female naturalists that are ready to learn more about what's going on in Iowa. I aim to carry on the message and promote the presence and confidence for women in this field. Outside of class I enjoy bike riding, traveling, and attending concerts! I am thrilled to have this opportunity to serve at the Wapsi River Center and hope to meet you soon.



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# THANK YOU!

FRIENDS OF THE WAPSI CENTER

IOWA 4-H AMERICORPS

SAINT AMBROSE UNIVERSITY &  
INTERN CARTER HIMMELMAN

BETTENDORF HIGH SCHOOL &  
INTERN CLARAH BUHMAN

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

QC WOMEN'S  
OUTDOOR CLUB

IOWA DEPARTMENT  
OF NATURAL RESOURCES WILDLIFE  
DIVERSITY PROGRAM

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES WATER TRAIL  
PROGRAM

ATEEC- HEATHER BALLOU

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT



# Paddling in Iowa

The paddling season has arrived, and with it, many opportunities to enjoy our local waterways and the **innate beauty** found within them. Here at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center of Scott County Conservation, we offer many paddling programs that offer beginners and seasoned paddlers a chance to learn about this **low-impact recreation**, the **habitats** and **watershed** found in Iowa, and reflect on the impact we, as humans have on our natural world.

Our paddling programs offer adventurers a chance to learn about water safety including weather conditions, equipment, techniques, and a tour of the water body. The programs are determined by weather and site conditions and the weight capacities of our kayaks- 250-300 lbs./solo kayak, and 425-475 lbs./tandem kayak. Often paddlers are cautious with regards to weather conditions, water levels, and skills needed to paddle our waterways.



Here are some links to help you find out some **programs that are happening here in Scott County:**

Scott County Conservation Board: [www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation](http://www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation)

The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center: [www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi/wren](http://www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi/wren)

Scott County Conservation Board Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation/?ref=py\\_c](http://www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation/?ref=py_c)

Here are a few links to keep in mind **when planning to paddle:**

Iowa DNR Canoe & Kayak page - [www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking)

Iowa Water Trails Maps - [www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking/Water-Trail-Maps-Brochures](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking/Water-Trail-Maps-Brochures)

USGS Water Level - [waterdata.usgs.gov/ia/nwis/current/?type=flow&group key=basin\\_cd](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ia/nwis/current/?type=flow&group=key=basin_cd)



There are many local **organizations & clubs which hold and support local community paddling events (and have additional resources available)** .

Quad City Paddlers Group [www.facebook.com/groups/126519704622406/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/126519704622406/)

Saukenuk Paddlers - <http://www.saukenuk.org/>

River Action - <http://www.riveraction.org/>

Floatzilla - <http://www.riveraction.org/floatzilla>

Central Iowa Paddlers - <http://centraliowapaddlers.org/>

Skunk River Paddlers - <http://skunkriverpaddlers.org/index.html>

Iowa River Revival - <http://iowarivers.org/>

Iowa Whitewater Coalition - <https://www.iowawhitewater.org/>

Des Moines River - <http://www.desmoinesriver.org/>



Please keep in mind the following **rules of the water when paddling:**

Never paddle alone, have a way to communicate with others (phone), and have a float plan

Know the current and forecasted weather, have a weather radio

Know the current and forecasted water levels (at site, and upstream)

Have basic supplies: PFD, water, skin protection, first aid kit, audible/visual signal devices

Know your waterway- have a map



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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



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**Mailing List:** To receive a copy of the WREN free of charge, please send a postcard to the address above. The Scott County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against

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