

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

WINTER 2022

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

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

Wapsi Happenings

Awaken... in the Outdoors

The last year has been a challenge in many ways, most importantly, to our wellness. In the December 2021 *Parks & Recreation* publication, Richard J. Dolesh writes, "One incontrovertible fact about the effects of the coronavirus pandemic has been that people across the United States have turned to parks and recreation areas for healthy outdoor physical activity and relief from the worries and pressures of the pandemic on them and their families." Our fundamental *rights* to a clean, healthy lifestyle, includes how we *maintain* the great outdoors right here in Scott County, Iowa. "Shade, clean water, clean air and safe places to play were a legacy left to adults, and they must be a part of the legacy we leave to the next generations." *Parks & Recreation*, December 2021.

Healthy outdoor activities are highly recommended by experts, and include a variety of nature-based experiences. As we seek, *maintain*, and experience the *liberties* that are inherent in nature, we *prize* the *freedoms* that support not only our basic needs, as Maslow identifies, but *maintain* belonging and self-actualization. Our programs offer *choices* in life skills that promote healthy and sustainable *choices* for wellness. Zach Bush, MD states, "We need to be in the dirt together. We need to look to mother earth as our template". The natural biomes of our land and bodies are critical, and both rely on what we put in them, as well as do with them. From maple syruping, pollinator gardening to foraging for wild edibles, fishing and kayaking, to hiking, snowshoeing, grounding in nature, and *Leave No*

Trace, we maintain healthy lives in Scott County, Iowa. Rise up, elevate your conscious revolution, and explore the healthy outdoor meanderings offered by the Wapsi River staff. Call to register for upcoming programs at (563)328-3286 and remember, *keep well, stay wild!*

"Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one is watching- even when doing the wrong thing is legal." Aldo Leopold

Iowa 4H AmeriCorps Positions Available

The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center of the Scott County Conservation Board is seeking qualified individuals to serve as a temporary AmeriCorps 4-H Environmental Education Member. The positions require the successful completion of service hours by term ending November 30, 2022. The Member will receive: a living allowance to be distributed equally by month over the term of service, a Segal Education Award upon completion of the term, student loan forbearance, leadership and skill development, as well as hands-on experience.



The Wapsi River Center seeks a motivated, outgoing person with a background in natural resources, biology, parks/recreation, community organizing, communications, or administration. The candidate should have strong communication skills, a desire to serve with youth and diverse groups of people, and a passion for community stewardship. This is an excellent opportunity for an individual to

gain valuable experience in educating about the importance of Iowa's native resources and conservation practices.

Under general supervision of the Naturalist/Director, the Member will assist in developing/conducting interpretive and educational programs for community outreach including school and public groups by:

- Expanding outreach programs with focus to foster awareness and appreciation for Iowa's natural resources, designed to promote stewardship of local youth (K-12).
 - Educating on low-impact, healthy lifestyles (outdoor recreation/activities).
 - Teaching science/technology/engineering/math (STEM) concepts within Iowa's natural world.
 - Partnering/networking with schools, individuals, groups, and volunteers in the community for environmental education outreach.
 - Develop and grow leadership skills that advocate for citizenship/stewardship through natural resource education, volunteer recruitment/management, training, and philanthropy.
- Please contact the office at (563)328-3286 or wapsicenter@scottcountyiowa.gov for more information.

Field Experiences

An *emphasis on supporting the Iowa Core and Next Generation Science Standards* will enhance programming for school and public alike. If you are an educator and would like to schedule a winter or spring field experience, we recommend that you call well in advance if possible and contact us at (563)328-3286.

Friends Group Awarded Grant

The *Friends of the Wapsi Center* have been awarded a **\$4500 corporate grant from LyondellBasell** in



support of our education program. A big thank you to **Co-President Julie Ross** for her dedication and diligence on the application. The funds are planned to support our education program at the Wapsi River Center and will play a role in planned renovations. **LyondellBasell** seeks "to make a positive impact and advance the communities where we operate through charitable contributions and employee volunteerism." On behalf of the *Friends* group, we thank **LyondellBasell** for recognizing our education program and the positive, healthy, impacts we both bring to our community.

Winter Outdoor Recreation

The Wapsi River Center invites you to get outdoors this winter and get active by snowshoe or ski. Our cross-country ski/snowshoe trails are open for use when snow depth allows.



Photo: Wapsi Center

Adventurers are encouraged to call ahead of time to check conditions at (563)328-3286.

We will be offering programs at various SCCB locations, please check our calendar for dates and locations.

- *All programming is weather dependent.
- *We require a minimum of 4" of base and reserve the right to any loan, depending on conditions.
- *You will be required to render your license to hold any equipment while on loan.
- *You must remain on SCCB park property.

Cross-country skis and boots fit a variety of families, while snowshoes are weight rated for both adult and children. Waterproof boots are suggested for snowshoes.

Sponsor an Animal

If you are interested in sponsoring an educational animal, please contact us at (563)328-3286 for details.

Center Updates

The old **Owl's Nest Dormitory** renovations continue to trek forward with the completion of the outside. The entry stonework and the Bryant Memorial native butterfly garden are now installed while inside work continues.



Photo: Wapsi Center

The **St. Ambrose University's Menke Observatory** site has completed a first phase expansion that includes a new foundation for a second 12' observation dome. In cooperation with the *QC Astronomical Society*, a consolidation of resources will incorporate this 2nd dome and another roll-off building to be constructed at a later date.



New Dome on the Wapsi Prairie

FRIENDS PROFILE: BILL ROBBINS

Vital Statistics

Name: Bill Robbins
Friends Member Since: 2005 (?)
Favorite Plant: Rattlesnake Master
Favorite Bird: Eastern Phoebe
Favorite Animal: Turtle
Favorite Tree: Bur Oak
Favorite Book: Doubt: A History - Jennifer Michael Hecht
Favorite Nature Book: A Sand County Almanac - Aldo Leopold
Favorite Movie: All the President's Men

Bill Robbins grew up in East Davenport, IA. He is a self-employed potter, living with his wife and pets outside of Donahue, IA on 40 acres of former farmland, now turned into a refuge for wildlife. He first came to be interested in nature as a Boy Scout. He attended Camp Minneyata, that site is where the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center stands today, so he's come full circle! When he was in college, he worked for 3 summers in Estes Park, CO. After college, the service, and a stint working in Social Services, he returned to school at Iowa State and received a degree in Wildlife Biology. He then worked in Environmental Education at various sites, and as an interpretive ranger for the National Park Service for a number of years, before becoming a full-time potter. He's restored an 18 acre span of native prairie on his land near Donahue.

When asked why he joined the Friends group, Bill says, "I'm afraid that we're losing the battle with kids when it comes to appreciation of nature. There's so much technology (cell phones, TV, video games) to divert their attention. I think the answer lies in environmental education, and the Friends support that work."

As a member of the Friends, Bill has participated in Work Days, staffing the Center's booth at Bald Eagle Days, and hosted the Center on weekends. He's served as treasurer for several years as well. Bill enjoys hiking the Center's trails with his friend Ingrid (also a Friends member) before Friends' meetings. Besides maintaining his prairie and land, his other outdoor activities include hiking, camping, backpacking, canoeing, and kayaking.

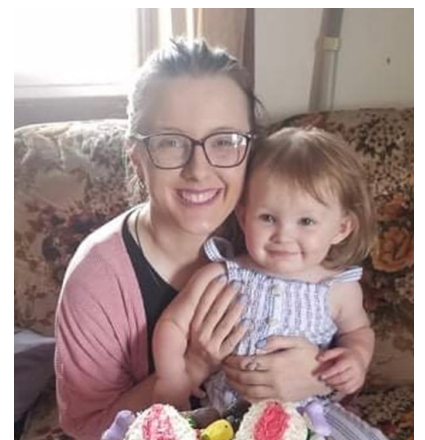


HELLO CHRISTINE

Hello! My name is Christine Hultquist and I am the new caretaker at the Wapsi Center! I was born and raised in Princeton Iowa and graduated from North Scott in 2014. I attended Clinton Community College where I graduated in 2016 with an Associates in Environmental Science. I decided to enlist in July of 2017 in the Air National Guard. I currently am a Staff Sergeant in the 182nd Security Forces Squadron as a Combat Arms Instructor. In the mix of school and military I also worked as a seasonal maintenance worker at West Lake Park. This is where I learned the ins and outs of park maintenance. The team at West Lake Park have a special place in my heart for accepting me as part of the team, teaching me, and for the countless adventures!

I currently am enrolled at Western Illinois University in the Recreations, Parks, Tourism and Administration Bachelors program.

I am excited to be apart of the Wapsi team! To be apart of the conservation of Scott County and it's parks is something that I use to dream of! I have a beautiful 2 year old daughter, Jolene, who is just as adventurous and curious as her mom! I am excited to see her grow in a wonderful learning environment here at the Wapsi Center! I am thankful for this opportunity and can't wait too see what lies ahead!



WINTER EVENTS

January

8th ~ Cocoa Picasso ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Enjoy nature in a creative way at this family-friendly program! Join Naturalist Paige to learn about winter in Iowa, then create a fun seasonal painting with guided step-by-step instructions. All supplies provided. \$5/canvas (payable by cash or check at the program). Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.



11th ~ Winter Wonders at the Library: Snow Shoeing ~ 4:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Library System (Eldridge Branch) ~ Join a Wapsi Center Naturalist at the library to experience some winter wonders! Come try out some snowshoes to explore the winter wonderland. No snow? No problem! We will adapt and take a hike to look for animal tracks. This program is suitable for ages 4 and up. For questions, or to register for any events of this series, contact the Eldridge Library at (563)285-4794.



12th ~ Scott County Conservation Board; Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office. The public and press are encouraged to participate virtually due to social distancing challenges. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

17th ~ HOLIDAY ~ County Offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday.

18th ~Feeding Backyard Wildlife ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Davenport Public Library (Fairmount Branch) ~ Join Naturalist Becky from the Wapsi River Center to learn about feeding backyard wildlife with an emphasis on backyard birds. Registration is required. Please call the library at (563)326-7832 for more information.



18th ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Lakeview Shelter) ~ Join the Wapsi staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adults and children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and

site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

20th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ (Virtual Only) ~ Learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be virtual only. Please call for more information (563)328-3286.

22nd ~ Winter Wild Edible Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Becky to learn about the many wild edibles in your own neck of the woods. We will focus on foraging basics, foraging safety, identifying plants, and preparing wild edibles. We will take a hike outdoors to identify some of the winter wild edibles available during this time. At the end of the program, you will get to sample some wild flavors! Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

February

2nd ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join the Wapsi staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

5th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Wapsi Naturalists to discover the wonders of winter at the Wapsi River Center. Please dress accordingly, waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

9:00 A.M. to Noon ~ Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe: Come explore the winter wilderness on snowshoes or x-country skis. (An outdoor hike and lesson on animal signs starting at 10:30 A.M. will be substituted if snow conditions are not ideal).



Noon ~ Chili Cook-off: Join us for the chili-cook off and a chance to win the chili cup. Participants are invited to bring a crock pot of their best chili recipe. The winning participant will get their photo taken with the coveted chili cup!



CHILI CUP

1:00 – 4:00 P.M. ~ Winter Survival Skills: Come learn survival skills with Wapsi naturalists including fire building, shelter construction, and winter foraging.



9th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office. The public and press are encouraged to participate virtually due to social distancing challenges. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

11th ~ Winter Wonders at the Library: Snow Shoeing ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Library System (Eldridge Branch) ~ Join a Wapsi Center Naturalist at the library to experience some winter wonders! Come try out some snowshoes to explore the winter wonderland. No snow? No problem! We will adapt and take a hike to look for animal tracks. This program is suitable for ages 4 and up. For questions, or to register for any events of this series, contact the Eldridge Library at (563)285-4794.

16th ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park (Whispering Pines Shelter) ~ Join Wapsi staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adults and children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

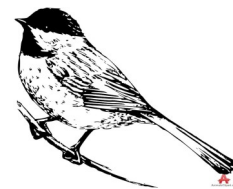


17th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Virtual Only ~ Learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be virtual only. Please call for more information (563)328-3286.

17th – Twentieth Annual Quad Cities Outdoor Show ~ Quad Cities Expo Center (Rock Island, IL) ~ The event is held at the QCCA Expo Center at 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, from 4:00-8:00 P.M. on Thursday, Noon to 8:00 P.M. on Friday, 9:00 A.M.- 8:00 P.M. on Saturday, and 10:00 A.M.- 4:00 P.M. on Sunday. Come visit the SCCB booth to pick up the latest info or visit with other vendors and get outdoors! Please call the Expo Center for more details (309)788-5912.

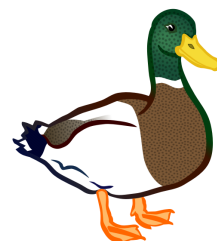
19th ~ Backyard Birds ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Becky to learn about the birds that can be found in your own backyard! You will learn ways to attract birds to your backyard and will make take-home pinecone bird feeders. During this program, you will also learn about the Great Backyard Bird Count. Bird watchers of all ages can participate in this free program. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286.

19th ~ Wine Bottle Bird Feeder Workshop ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Mike for a lesson on bird feeding. Visitors will make an upcycled wine bottle bird feeder. Wine bottles will be provided. Kits are \$10.00 each. Please bring a hammer! Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.



9th ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park (Whispering Pines Shelter) ~ Join the Wapsi staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adults and children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

25th ~ Junior Duck Stamp Workshop “Connecting youth with nature through science and art!” ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Library System (Eldridge Branch) ~ This will be an introductory program to the Iowa Junior Duck Stamp. The Junior Duck Stamp is a federal program that encourages students in grades K-12 to investigate waterfowl and conservation tactics and create a themed art piece. Artwork is submitted and judged for the opportunity to win a monetary prize, and be featured on a US stamp. This beginner session will go over how the program works and then dive into waterfowl ID, importance, and habitat conservation needs. After learning about the program and the birds, participants will have the opportunity to begin an artwork to submit. There will be assistance with sketching provided by Information Librarian Sarah. Please register for this program by calling the Wapsi River Center at (563)328-3286.



March

2nd ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join the Wapsi staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adults and children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

5th ~ Native Mushroom ID and Cultivation ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Becky from the Wapsi River Center and guest speaker Nick Buonauro, Co-owner and Laboratory Manager of Dark Shadow Mushrooms to learn about native Iowa

mushrooms and how to cultivate them. During this program, you will learn how to identify native mushrooms, which seasons they can be found, and gain a basic understanding on mushroom cultivation. There is no cost for this program. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

5th ~ Maple Syruping ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join Naturalist Mike for a lesson on maple syruping. Learn the history of syruping, tree identification, and then learn how to gather sap! Fun for the whole family. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

5th ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join the Wapsi staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather and site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

9th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office. The public and press are encouraged to participate virtually due to social distancing challenges. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

11th ~ Winter Wonders at the Library: Backyard Bird Feeding ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Library

System (Eldridge Branch) ~ Learn about common birds in our area in the winter months, and possibly a few early spring migrants! Also learn how to attract birds to your yard. For questions, or to register for any events of this series, contact the Eldridge Library at (563)285-4794.

17th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center and Virtual ~ Come learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be in person and virtual. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

19th ~ Maple Syruping ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join Naturalist Mike for a lesson on maple syruping. Learn the history of syruping, tree identification, and then learn how to gather sap! Fun for the whole family. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

April

SAVE THE DATE:

2nd ~ Fifteenth Annual STEM Expo ~ Bettendorf Middle School ~ 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. ~ Bettendorf Middle School ~ Join Director Dave Murcia and learn about the lives of native raptors including where they live, how they hunt, and what you can do to support these beautiful predators. Live owls will be on display.

SNOWSHOEING: A LONG TIME TRADITION

Traveling in the winter on snowshoes is not a new thing. Historical records show that snowshoes have been used for thousands of years. It is believed the concept originated in Central Asia, 4 to 6 thousand years ago. Early primitive “snowshoes” consisted of pieces of wood strapped to shoes and were called “Shoe Skis”. Later on, traditional snowshoes became crafted wooden frames with webbing made from animal hides or animal sinew. Traditional wood frame snowshoes are works of art, and there 4 basic styles, known by their shape and size. The OBJIBWA, ALASKAN or “Yukon”, MICHIGAN or “Beaver Tail” and the BEARPAW.

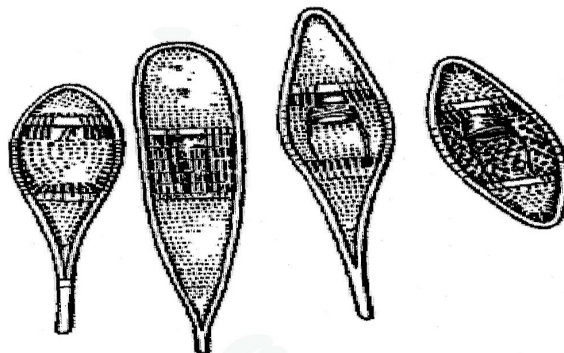
Traditional snowshoes are used for different conditions. The science behind the snowshoe is surface area. You can think of a snowshoe like a boat. A boat floats on water, and a snowshoe floats on snow. Every snowshoe has a up turned front or “bow” and a “tail” to stabilize the user. Every snowshoe has a “deck” that helps the user float on the snow. Finally

every snowshoe has a “binding” to attach the snowshoe to the wearer’s boot. To simplify the concept, the larger the snowshoe the deeper the snow one can travel through.

In the 1970’s aluminum snowshoes were invented with “space age” technology. Nowadays most people use aluminum snowshoes for winter travel.

Come out to one of our many snowshoeing events this winter to enjoy our winter wonderland via snowshoes!!!

MICHIGAN ALASKAN OBJIBWA BEARPAW
“Beaver Tail” “Yukon”



THANK YOU!

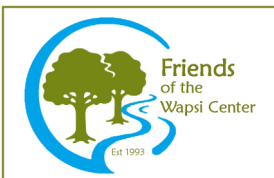
	West Lake Park Maintenance	Susan McPeters
<i>Friends of the Wapsi River Center</i>	Parker Hill (Iowa 4H AmeriCorps Member)	Lucia Dryanski
Sarah VanDeWalle & Family	James & Jane Varcho	Bill Robbins
Bill Collett	Betty Strom	Jim & Julie Ross
Share & Care Preschool	Mark & Lisa Cleve	Mike Krebill
Little Lights Home School	Ingrid Bogdanowicz	LyondellBasell
Troop 203 - Long Grove, IA	George Straetker	Scott County Library System, (Eldridge Branch)
Chris Neff	Jolinda Eggers	Dave & Connie Huber
West Lake Park Rangers	Mark Theisen	
	Anne Landaverde	



“BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!”

www.scottcountyiowa.gov/conservation/Wapsi-friends

www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheWapsiCenter



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 WOULD LIKE TO BE A FRIENDS MEMBER:

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.

# PLANT PROFILE: MULTIFLORA ROSE

By Seasonal Naturalist Paige Owings

Most people like roses, right? Well, did you know that there is a species of rose lurking in Iowa's forests that doesn't belong? Let me tell you about it! This mystery plant goes by many names including baby rose, Japanese rose, rambler rose, seven-sisters rose, and multiflora rose. We call it the latter, Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*). Read on to learn a little more about this plant, the issues it poses, and what you can do.

To identify this plant in summer, start by following your nose as their blooms are very fragrant! Look for white or pale pink blooms, typically with 5 petals.

They are usually visible from about April to June. In winter rather than looking for blooms, look for the small bright red fruits they make called rosehips. Each "hip" can contain up to 20

seeds and these seeds are hardy and can remain viable for several years after falling. Rosehips are a highly valued wild ingredient for many things, including teas, as they are a good source for antioxidants (among other benefits). **If you would like to learn more about the benefits of rosehips and other wild ingredients, consider attending one of the Wapsi Center's seasonal Wild Edible programs.**

Other identifying features include thorns and leaves. Thorns tend to be red-brown in color, so they stand out against the green viney stems. Thorns are curved and have very fine points that easily grab onto the fabric of hikers' pants or scratch bare legs. I



**Multiflora rose blossoms and fringed leaf stem**

describe the sharpness of these thorns as worse than having a kitten climb your leg (Which if you didn't know, it HURTS). Leaves are somewhat unique on this plant too. They are compound and have between 5 and 11 leaflets.

The leaflets are oval-shaped with pointy tips and the edges are serrated. The attachment from the leaf to the stem has small hairs or fringe-like structures.

This plant is tolerant to a variety of moisture,



**A sprawling multiflora rose bush & thorns**

soil, and light conditions so it can grow pretty much anywhere, and its growth form may vary depending on its location. Multiflora rose can grow 5-10 ft tall or climb up other plants and trees to reach even higher. If it is growing on its own, it will often have a sprawling shape with stems arching down towards the ground. It is the extreme tolerance that allowed Multiflora rose to become an invasive species in Iowa. It is in fact native to eastern Asia (Japan and the Koreas for example). So how did it get here? It was brought here in the 1800's for a number of reasons, one of which was to be a "living fence" to confine livestock, but because of its hardiness, it began to grow *too* effectively and started to take over. See below for resources on recommended control measures. Also, if you are battling Multiflora rose be sure to be vigilant and don't give up! Eventually the plant can be beaten!

I hope you enjoyed learning about this interesting species of rosebush! Next time you see red berries in the woods this winter, remember it may be multiflora rose. Here are some more great references to learn more about multiflora rose:

<http://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail/?id=15>

<https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/encyclopedia/multiflora-rose-invasive-species-profile>

<https://ipm.missouri.edu/ipcm/2015/2/weed-of-the-month-multiflora-rose/>

<https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/plants/multiflora-rose>

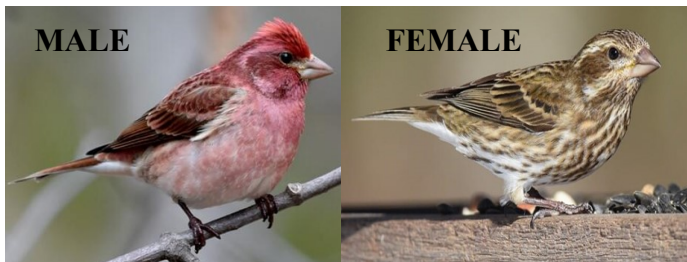


# ANIMAL PROFILE: PURPLE FINCH

By Naturalist Becky Baugh

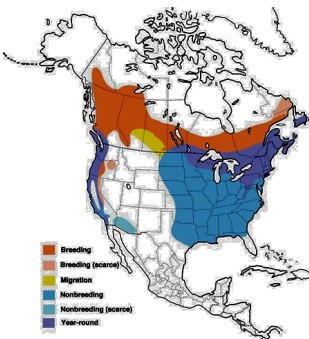
This time of year, we always get the question, “How do you tell the difference between the house finch and the purple finch?” There are many birds that show up to our feeders during the winter that look similar to birds that are more common year-round or during the summer months, but the species that seem to get confused the most in the winter are the house and purple finch.

The purple finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*) was once described by Roger Tory Peterson as a “sparrow dipped in raspberry juice.” This is a very good description of this finch. They are larger and chunkier than the typical forest dwelling song birds such as chickadees and nuthatches. They have a conical beak and a short tail that is notched at the tip. Their color is really what sets them apart from other birds. The male purple finches are more pink than purple overall. The pink is mainly on the head and breast and mixes with brown on the back and white on the belly. The males have a pinkish-brown patch that comes off the side of each eye and a pink eye stripe right above the eye. The female purple finches are brown and white in color with no red at all. They are coarsely streaked on the breast and belly with strong facial markings. They have a white eye stripe above the eye and a dark line down the sides of the throat.



**The Purple Finch: Male and Female**

The purple finches are only here during the winter months. Their breeding habitat is up north in Canada and the northern New England states in mainly coniferous forests. When they fly south during the winter months, they are not picky on their habitat. They can be found in old fields, forest edges, shrubby areas, and backyards. They mainly eat the seeds of coniferous trees, tulip poplars, maples, and elms. They will also eat some insects including



**Purple Finch Range Map**

caterpillars, grasshoppers, beetles, and aphids, and berries such as honeysuckle, poison ivy, and blackberries. The best way to attract purple finches to your yard during the winter is to provide black oil sunflower seeds. They seem to prefer sunflower seeds over any other type of seeds.

Between 1966 and 2014, the purple finch population decreased by 52%. The main reason for this decline is habitat loss. The house finch is another reason for the decline in the purple finch population. The house finch was originally a western U.S species, but was introduced to the eastern U.S. in the 1950's. The house finch outcompetes the purple finch, particularly in urban and suburban areas. They also seem to dominate over the purple finch in 95% of their interactions by scaring away the purple finches.

This leads me back to the original question at the beginning of this article, “how do you tell the difference between the house and purple finch?” The best way to tell the two species apart is their color. The male house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) can range in color from light orange to bright red, while the purple finch is more of a pinkish red. The red color on the house finch is only around the face and upper breast. They also have a red rump that is only seen during flight. Female house finches resemble female purple finches in color but the house finch lacks the distinct white stripe above the eye and has less distinct belly stripes. Another way to tell the birds apart is the time of year. House finches are here year-round while the purple finches are only here during the winter, so if it's summer, you know you saw a house finch!



**The House Finch: Male (below) and Female (above)**

The next time you see a flock of finches at your feeder and you are unsure which species is enjoying your seed, look for those distinct markings described above to identify the visiting birds. Purple finches are always a welcomed site at the feeders at the Wapsi River Center.

All Information and pictures are by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org).

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*For All Seasons*

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