

# ***The W.R.E.N.*** ***Wapsi River Environmental Newsletter*** ***SPRING 2022***

***Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter***

***[www.scottcountyiowa.gov/conservation/wapsi](http://www.scottcountyiowa.gov/conservation/wapsi)***

***[www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation](https://www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation)***

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

## **Wapsi Happenings** **By: Director, Dave Murcia**



**Photo: Wapsi Center**

**Immature bald eagle rescued by Wapsi staff: D. Murcia, B. Baugh, M. Fahrenkrug, and transferred to The R.A.R.E. Group on 2-25-22. Thank you P.V. H.S. teacher Chris Kohn.**

### **Revealing by Natural Law**

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” **Aldo Leopold**- *The Land Ethic*, *A Sand County Almanac*.

The latest April 2022 *National Recreation and Parks' (NRPA) Park Pulse Survey*, finds that parks are leaders in cultivating environmental stewardship through programming. Natural law, by innate and intrinsic origin, invites, or even demands us, to stay connected to the path we call nature. Inherent to Freeman Tilden's principles of interpretation, is the provocation (critical thinking, inspiration, action) through revealing (discovering truth), that our programming may awaken our citizens and communities to the freedom of nature and stewardship.

*“Cultivating an interest in environmental stewardship early in a child's life results in more environmentally conscious and conscientious adults. Nearly every U.S. adult agrees about the importance of children and young adults learning about the environment and ways they can help be good environmental stewards in their communities, NRPA.”*

### **NRPA Key Findings:**

- **Ninety-four percent** of U.S. adults agree that it is important for children and young adults to learn about the environment and ways they can help be a good environmental steward.
- **Seventy-six percent** of U.S. adults agree that it is extremely or very important for children and young adults to learn about the environment and ways they can help be a good environmental steward.
- **Eighty-two percent** of millennials and Gen Xers agree that it is extremely or very important for children and young adults to learn about the environment and ways they can help be a good environmental steward.

- **Eighty-one percent** of parents agree that it is extremely or very important for children and young adults to learn about the environment and ways they can help be a good environmental steward.

Through an artful, holistic approach, as naturalists, we *rise* to relate, reveal, and provoke our stewards in an appropriate light. Citizens and stewards, take your *liberties* and *prize* your innate *rights* to the *freedoms* of the natural world, and *maintain* wellness through nature. To register for upcoming programs and events in this *WREN* call (563)328-3286 and remember, **keep well, stay wild!**

***“The aim is to illuminate and reveal the alluring world outdoors.”*** Enos Mills

As a **Community Partner**, Scott County Conservation and the Wapsi River Center are **Proud Partners**. Leave No Trace is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing Leave No Trace programs, education, training and outreach in all 50 states and more than 100 countries around the globe. Utilizing the power of science, education for all, and stewardship to support and protect nature, Leave No Trace is on a mission to ensure a sustainable future for the outdoors and the planet.



At Leave No Trace, there is no substitute for nature. From neighborhood walks to backcountry treks, the outdoors is for everyone. But it all has an impact. More use, over use, trash, endangered wildlife and around it all: climate change. Leave No Trace empowers people to be the solution to conservation. Through pioneering science, sustaining partnership and activating our proven training and education systems, Leave No Trace leads the way. No matter where or why you get outside, it's yours to protect. Leave No Trace. Learn more at: [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org), and for upcoming events or to schedule a LNT event, see our calendar of events in this edition.

## Field Experiences

An **emphasis on supporting the Iowa Core and Next Generation Science Standards** will enhance programming for schools and public both. 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.

## Animal Ambassador Sponsorship

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

## New Bird Mount

It is with great appreciation that the Wapsi River Center is home to another world-class bird mount by **World Class Taxidermist, Kent Reedy**, of Dixon, Iowa. The latest mount reflects Kent's artistic ability to capture the fierce beauty of this native great horned owl! This mount was sponsored by the **Friends of the Wapsi Center** with all labor, talent, and dedication being donated by Kent! Come visit the Eagle View Eco Center and see all of his mounts!



**Photo: Wapsi Center**

## Center Updates

Phase 1 of the old **Owl's Nest Dormitory** building renovations now include: main floor- new restroom tiling and flooring, new kitchens, sealed fir ceilings and beams, basement- new kitchenette and restroom in the new education room, new indoor archery range, and a new storage room!



**Photo: Wapsi Center**

The theme throughout the new spaces incorporates natural color palates to mimic nature's natural habitat hues and elements. As the season grows, so will construction and renovations. Dare to explore the wild of the Wapsi!

## Winter Events 2021

Seasonal events welcomed snow this winter for the annual Winter Fun Day and Snowshoe Adventures. Winter Fun Day saw 47 brave explorers overall, along with cold temperatures. A winter hike started the event followed by winter survival skills: shelter building, fire starting, and wild foraging to end the day.



**Photo: Wapsi Center**

Congratulations to our own Resident Caretaker, **Christine Hultquist**, for her winning chili recipe! Thank you to our volunteers and **Friends** members for supporting the event!

# FRIENDS PROFILE: JULIE ROSS

## Stats:

**Friends Member since around 2010**

**Favorite plants: Common Milkweed, cup plants**

**Favorite bird: Owls—any kind**

**Favorite Water Bird: Mallards, because *Make Way for Ducklings* is such a sweet story**

**Favorite Tree: Native Oak**

**Favorite Book: *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman**

**Favorite Nature Book: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver**

**Favorite Movie: *Die Hard***

Julie grew up in Detroit and Chicago suburbs and had little to do with nature, until a dear friend used to stop by unannounced at her home during lonely high-school years, and say “Let’s go!” And Julie would respond, “Where?” and her friend would say, “Just get dressed!” These impromptu outings usually ended up as a trail hike in Chicago Forest Preserve. This seeded Julie’s love for nature.



Many years later, she entered graduate school at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, where the Shawnee National Forest gifts the world with beautiful scenery and trails. She met her husband Jim there. They shared and fostered their love of nature. Soon they were bringing

their two daughters along for their nature hikes and activities. The love of nature has continued in their now-adult daughters. Eliza works as an educator/coordinator at Cave of the Mounds in Wisconsin. Brenna works for a Ibcx Puppetry in NYC, which focuses on wisdom and tradition of First Nation Peoples and also works in partnership with

the National Crane Foundation.

Around 2010, dear friends Bill and Lucia invited Julie and Jim to join Friends of the Wapsi. Joining connected them with like-minded souls, and also enabled them to honor the memory of Dottie Wala. Moreover, Friends’ activities have expanded their knowledge of and connection to nature.

For the last 7 years Julie has become a dedicated monarch butterfly rearer. She discovered the importance of milkweed and has delighted in observing the development from egg to caterpillar to butterfly. She calls this, “A miracle you can observe.” Despite having only a very small backyard in central Davenport, she has expanded her milkweed



## Newly Hatched Monarchs

and native pollinator plant garden and has delighted in the critters that visit. She collects eggs almost exclusively from her little yard and has released close to 2,000 over the last 7 years. She recently began raising the caterpillars in her outdoor Biotent, like the ones at the Wapsi, in the hope that exposing the caterpillars to the rigors of outdoors will better simulate natural rearing and will result in a stronger monarch population. She is always willing to share her monarch wisdom with others and is proud that several of her neighbors have begun planting milkweed in their own yards and have honored her request to not spray pesticide or weed killer near her yard. She is also glad to set up interested folks with a healthy caterpillar and supplies needed to enable them to observe their own monarch miracles. This is one of the ways she has gotten her neighbors excited about monarchs. She recently has become the Volunteer Coordinator for the newly formed Wild Ones, Quad Cities Seedling Chapter, which promotes the planting of native plants.

In addition to raising monarchs, Julie’s hobbies include cutting 6-pointed paper snowflakes, making candy, and looking for oddities and treasures at flea markets.

# HELLO MEGAN!

Hello! My name is Megan Fahrenkrug, and I am the new AmeriCorps member at the Wapsi River Center. I am a Davenport native, and graduated from North High School in 2015. That summer I held another AmeriCorps position with Nahant Marsh as an Environmental Educator, as well as spent time doing research at Big Sand Mound on various turtle species. I then attended University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point where I had the privilege of being able to continue my experience with various on-campus positions, and I graduated from there with a bachelors in Environmental Education and Interpretation in 2019. During my studies, I was able to manage our student-run vivarium which housed many different reptile and amphibian species, and had a chance to be the education coordinator for our Herpetology

Society for a year and half. I was also able to assist with our research students caring for Zebra Finches, mice and rats during my senior year, and during my practicum term had the ability to create and implement new programs for students.

I am very excited for the opportunity to work at the Wapsi River Center, and continue on in my career after a brief hiatus since graduation. I have always been a huge fan of the Wapsi Center and it is an honor to have the chance to work here! I cannot wait to see how much more I can learn, and how much I can grow as an educator during my experience here!



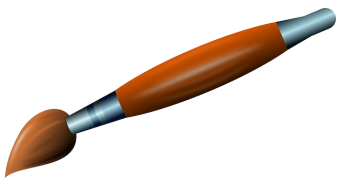
# SPRING EVENTS

## APRIL

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~** The Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village opens for the 2022 Season. Visitors may tour the site from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. through October 31<sup>st</sup>. Call (563)328-3283 for more information.

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead ~** The Buffalo Bill Cody Home Homestead opens for the 2022 season. Visitors may tour the site from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. through October 31<sup>st</sup>. Call (563)225-2981 for more information.

**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Paint By Nature ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Enjoy nature in a creative way at this family- friendly program! Join Naturalist Paige to learn about the misunderstood creatures of the forest, then create a painting with guided step-by-step instructions. All supplies will be provided. \$5/canvas (payable by cash or check at the program). If weather allows, the class will take place outdoors, so please come prepared. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.



**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Fifteenth Annual Bettendorf STEM Expo ~ 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!

**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory (Wapsi River Center) ~** Join representatives from the Quad City Astronomical Society for a tour of the night sky. Please visit the QCAS Facebook page for more details.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ 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.

**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Volunteer Stewardship Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. to Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Come celebrate Earth Day at the Wapsi River Center. Join the *Friends of the Wapsi Center* and Staff for our annual Spring Volunteer Workday. The workday will focus on habitat clean-up and sprucing up the facilities for upcoming events. All ages and skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend! Please bring a water bottle, appropriate clothing, and work gloves. Afterwards, enjoy light refreshments by the *Friends of the Wapsi Center*. Please call to register at (563)328-3286.



**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Songs of the Earth and Her Beings ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join Lucia Dryanski (from the *Friends of the Wapsi*) and members of the Quad-Cities Community Sing group to sing songs of the earth, cycles and seasons. Weather permitting, we will gather outdoors --around a fire if it's chilly---to join our voices in song. All songs (mostly rounds, chants, and similar types) are easy to pick up, and will be taught; you don't need to be a singer to join in! Bring a chair (some benches will also be available), a beverage to sip on, and prepare to have fun! "*Let the circle be wide 'round the fireside, and we'll soon make room for you. Let your heart have no fear, there are no strangers here---just friends that we never knew.*" -- Tommy Sands. (Note: Because of the nature of this activity, given the COVID pandemic, if we have to move indoors, masks will be required. Please call to register at (563)328-3286.



**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Sustainable Living with the 3 R's ~ 1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. ~ Davenport Public Library, Fairmount Branch ~** Join Naturalist Becky from the Wapsi River Center to learn about sustainable living focusing on the 3 R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Composting with ideas on how you can incorporate these practices into your daily lives. This program is best suited for adults. This program is offered in-person or virtually. Registration is required. Please go to: <https://davenportlibrary.libcal.com/event/8699818> to register or call the library at (563) 326-7832.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center & Virtually** ~ Come learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.



**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Earth Day 2021 ~ Find a way to celebrate Earth Day this year!**

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

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Grounded in Nature ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Connect yourself to nature through yoga at this adults-only, electronics-free, outdoor program. Join yoga instructor and country music artist Angela Meyer for yoga and meditation in nature. Come with an open mind and leave your technology behind. \$5/person. Please bring a yoga mat or towel. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



## MAY

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ 2022 Earth Day Fair presented by PACG ~ 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. ~ Freight House Farmers Market, Davenport, IA** ~ Join the *Friends of the Wapsi Center* at this year's Earth Day Fair on the opening day of the Farmers Market. Learn what our area is doing to invest in our planet and our community with many environmental organizations in attendance. This event is free and family-friendly.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Bird Hike ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join one of our naturalists for a brief presentation on local birds that call the Wapsi River Center home, and migratory birds that just pass through on their travels. Then explore the trails on a guided hike to look for these awesome feathery friends! This program is FREE and fun for the whole family! Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Bluebird House Workshop ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come learn about the Eastern bluebird, including identification, breeding



behavior, and habitat preferences. Then put together your own bluebird house and learn how and where to place it, to encourage bluebirds to nest near you. Kits are \$10 each. Please bring your own hammer! Registration is limited and required by calling (563) 328-3286.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory (Wapsi River Center)** ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory and members of the QCAS for a tour of the night sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of this event to find out if weather conditions will permit viewing.

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ 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.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring 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 spring 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.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Wildflower Hike ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist Michael Granger for a lesson on spring woodland wildflowers at the Wapsi River Center. May apple, bloodroot, and hepatica are just some of the wildflowers to discover. Please wear sturdy waterproof shoes for this woodland adventure. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.



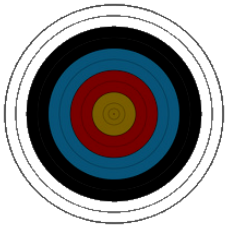
**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Frog Chorus ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come learn about the frogs and toads of Iowa and experience the sounds of the season, in search of the frogs and toads which inhabit the Wapsi River Center. Please bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center & Virtually** ~ Come

learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Camping 101- Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Park Terrace Campground** ~ Join Director Dave Murcia for an introduction to the 7 Principles of Outdoor Ethics. The workshop will cover *Leave No Trace* principles that protect the outdoors while minimizing our impacts to the land, soil, vegetation, water, wildlife, cultural resources and other visitors. Registration may be made by calling (563)328-3286, or if you are a park camper, please bring a chair to join.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Archery Basics ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Learn how to use a bow and arrow in this informative and fun hands-on class. You will learn safety and proper archery techniques according to National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) guidelines. Children must be in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above and accompanied by an adult to participate. Adults are welcome to participate as well! This program is free and weather permitting. Park in Parking Lot A and meet at the observatory. Registration is limited and required by calling (563) 328-3286.



**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Iowa's Native Reptiles and Amphibians ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Have you ever wanted to know what those creepy critters are that are crawling in your yard? Come learn about your local native reptiles and amphibians and how to create habitats for them in your backyard! Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Adult Paint Class ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join local (Eldridge) artist Julie Wall from the Artist's Vault for a fun painting lesson at the Wapsi Center. This is an adults-only program. Admission is \$35/ person, payable by cash or check at the program. All supplies will be provided. Registration is limited and required by calling (563) 328-3286.

**29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Heritage Days ~11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (Daily) ~ 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, live music and

performances by the Wapsi Wranglers. Admission is \$2 for Adult and \$1 for Children. Please call (563)328-3283 for more information.

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

## June

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. & 1:00 P.M. ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park)** ~ Join the Wapsi River Center staff for an adventure with 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 according to weather conditions and bring water. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



**3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> ~ 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.

**4<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory (Wapsi River Center)** ~ Join representatives from the Quad City Astronomical Society for a tour of the night sky. Please visit the QCAS Facebook page for more details.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Davenport Public Library Summer Reading Program "Beyond the Beaten Path: Wild Raptors of Iowa ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Eastern Avenue Library** ~ Participants will learn about native raptors of Iowa, habitats, ecology, and preventing human impacts to these carnivore creatures using *Leave No Trace Principles*. Please call the Library for more details (563)326-7832.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ PACG's Green Drinks Monthly Forum "Our Local Pollinators and Ways You Can Help Them" ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Virtual via Zoom** ~ One out of every three bites of food we eat is there because of pollinators, and as a whole, their populations are declining. Join Naturalist Becky to learn about our local pollinators, discuss the cause and effect of the decline in their populations, and what you can do to support them. To register for this event, please go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcoduGpqTIsH9fD6ssFCjEteY09ZH41w6m>

**8<sup>th</sup> ~ 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.

**8<sup>th</sup> ~ Yoga in Nature ~ 9:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Allyson Knanishu from Yoga for Peace, LLC for family-friendly outdoor yoga and meditation. Perfect way to help families relax and unwind. Come with an and leave your technology behind. There will be three monthly sessions throughout the summer (June 8<sup>th</sup>, July 6<sup>th</sup> & August 10<sup>th</sup>). There is a one-time program fee of \$10/family for all three sessions. Attend all 3 sessions to win a prize! **Registration closes on May 30!** Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Pollinator Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Learn about the cause and effect of the decline in pollinator populations through The Great Sunflower Project. You will also learn about native bee species and what you can do to support their populations. Then, participate in a pollinator count and make insect hotels that you can take home and install in your own garden using recyclable items. Please bring empty 1 or 2 liter bottles or empty soup or pasta cans for the insect hotels. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. & 1:00 P.M. ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park)** ~ Join the Wapsi River Center staff for an adventure with 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 according to weather conditions and bring water. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Bettendorf Library Summer Reading Program "Beyond the Beaten Path: Wild Raptors of Iowa" ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Bettendorf Public Library ~**

Participants will learn about native raptors of Iowa, habitats, ecology, and human impacts to these carnivore creatures. Please call the Bettendorf Library for more information (563)344-4175.

**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Annual Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center & Virtually** ~ Come learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

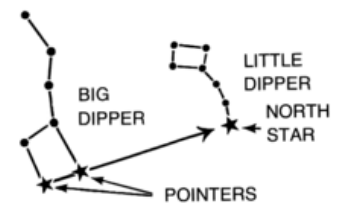
**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Camping 101- Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, Bald Eagle Campground** ~ Join Director Dave Murcia for an introduction to the 7 Principles of Outdoor Ethics. The workshop will cover *Leave No Trace* principles that protect the outdoors while minimizing our impacts to the land, soil, vegetation, water, wildlife, cultural resources and other visitors. Registration may be made by calling (563)328-3286, or if you are a park camper, please bring a chair to join.



**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Creek Stomping ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Scott County Park (Glynns Creek)** ~ Come get your feet wet and learn about the vast world of critters that live in our ponds and streams! Perfect for family fun, this event will allow you to learn more about aquatic life, and how important water quality is. Please plan to bring rain boots or other waterproof gear. Please meet at the parking lot by Pride Lake. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Summer Reading Program "Beyond the Beaten Path: Wild Raptors of Iowa" ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Eldridge Public Library** ~ Participants will learn about native raptors of Iowa, habitats, ecology, and human impacts to these carnivorous creatures. Please call the library for more information (563)285-4794.

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



28<sup>th</sup> ~ Raptors Along the River, Channel Cat Talks ~ 9:00 A.M. to 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:

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!



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!

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

30<sup>th</sup> ~ Raptors Along the River, Channel Cat Talks ~ 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. ~ Celebration Pier Channel Cat



# KID'S CORNER

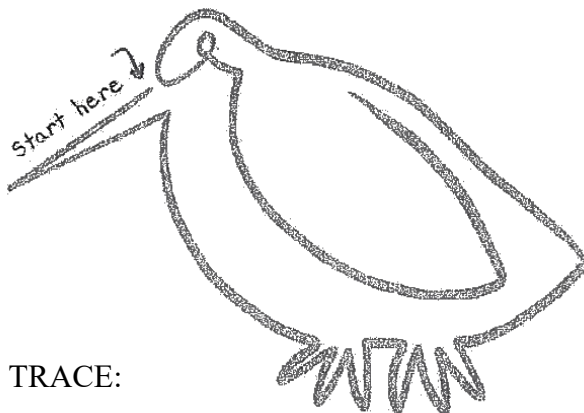


Adapted from: [waterloocenterforthehearts.org](http://waterloocenterforthehearts.org)

American woodcocks also known as “Timberdoodles” are silly-looking shorebirds that live where forests and prairies meet. They are best known for their early spring mating rituals that occur just after sunset. During these aerial dances the male timberdoodle calls or peents on the ground for several minutes and then launches into the sky, making a tinkering sound as he ascends skyward in a large circle flight. Once he reaches 300 feet he descends rapidly down and lands on his display “Stage”.

The Timberdoodle is an odd looking bird whose silhouette is very unique, with a short round body, large eyes, and a 3 inch long beak. They search for worms and other invertebrates by probing leaf litter.

In this activity you will doodle your own timberdoodle without lifting up your pen or pencil. First trace the timberdoodle below, and then try doodling one on your own.



TRACE:



TRY HERE:

Fact: Pablo Picasso made several one line drawings that are in museums throughout the world.



# THANKYOU!

## Friends of the Wapsi Center

Bill Robbins (Docent)

Lucia Dryanski (Program Support)

Susan McPeters (Program Support)

Jim & Julie Ross (Program Support)

Ingrid Bogdanowicz (Program Support)

Sandra Aune (New Membership)

Walter Lysell (New Membership)

Caroline Kimple (Renewal)

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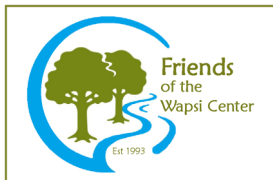


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The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. organized in 1993, is a citizens’ support group dedicated to encouraging the public use and enjoyment of the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and to the preservation of the Center’s natural resources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

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# FUNGUS PROFILE: PHEASANT BACK

By Naturalist Becky Baugh

When I walk outside this time of year, I am noticing the red-winged black birds and killdeer are back, snow geese are migrating high in the sky, birds are calling during all hours of the day, and occasionally after a rain storm...\*sniff sniff\* “Aahhhh...”, that fresh petrichor scent of earth fills the air. As I am noticing all of these seasonal changes I am



## Pheasant Back: Becky Baugh

realizing that mushroom season is right around the corner! The first mushroom that comes to mind for spring is of course the prized morel mushroom. I am anxiously waiting for the soil temperature to be in the 50's, which typically times perfectly with the blooming of the lilac bushes and the fruiting of the morel mushrooms. When I forage for these prized morels, I always notice many shelf mushrooms growing on wood sources, one of them being the Pheasant Back mushroom.

The Pheasant Back mushroom, *Polyporus squamosus*, is also known as Dryad's Saddle or Cucumber Mushroom. These mushrooms are polypore shelf mushrooms that grow with or without a stem directly from a wood source. They are both parasitic (get their nutrients from living trees to the detriment of that tree) and saprotrophic (get their nutrients by decomposing the dead tree, stump, or log). They get their name from their appearance. On the light tan to pale yellow colored cap of the mushroom, there are concentric rows of darker brown scales which looks like the feathers on a female pheasants back. The Dryad's Saddle name comes more from the shape of the mushroom than the color. The shape of the cap of the mushroom has a funnel-like curve that can look like a well-crafted horse's saddle about the right size for a Dryad, a mythological woodland nymph. The underside of the cap of the Pheasant Back is cream colored with many angular pores. The older the mushroom is, the larger the pores will be. On younger specimens, the pores are about the size of a pinpoint of a small metal straight pin and can be easily scraped off of the cap. On older specimens, the pores are about the size of pinhead and are tougher to remove from the

cap. All pheasant back mushrooms produce a white spore print.

Pheasant back mushrooms are found in woodlands east of the Rocky Mountains, mainly on elm, tulip poplar, and maple trees. They are most common in the spring when the morel mushrooms are popping up, but can also be found in the summer and fall. The flesh of this mushroom smells like watermelon rind, and to some people, they smell like cucumber, which is where it gets its Cucumber Mushroom name.

Pheasant back mushrooms are edible as long as it is cooked first! As for how tasty they are depends on the age of the mushroom and how it is cooked. I once had a participant in mushroom program describe the texture as “tough cardboard that tasted about the same”. When I eat them, however, they are tender and flavorful. The older the mushroom is, the tougher it is going to be, especially close to the wood source. The size of the mushroom doesn't always indicate the age. Always look at the pore size on the underside of the cap to determine the age. Just take



## Underside of Pheasant Back: [www.mushroom-appreciation.com](http://www.mushroom-appreciation.com)

the part of the mushroom that feels tender. There are no toxic look-alikes to this mushroom, so it is safe eat as a new forager. As with any new food, always start with small quantities so you know how your body will react. It is advised to soak the mushroom in a salt water bath before cooking to dislodge any dirt or bugs that may be living inside. To preserve this mushroom, sauté first in fat and then freeze. When cooking from the frozen state, do not thaw, but toss directly into a hot skillet to finish cooking. Since this is a polypore mushroom, it is known to take up the taste of whatever you use to sauté them.

The next spring hike you take when the morel mushrooms are popping, look around for the pheasant back mushroom. Remember, the Wapsi River Center does not allow foraging or hunting of any kind. Make sure you know the rules and regulations of the area you are planning to search. Happy foraging!

# ANIMAL PROFILE: SANDHILL CRANE

By Naturalist Michael J. Ganger

On a recent spring outing in Eastern Iowa along the Mississippi fly way we saw one of the more interesting spring migratory birds. Actually, we



**Sandhill Crane at Green Island Wildlife Area, Jackson County, Iowa**  
**Photo: Theresa Kruid**

heard their primordial call first. The Sandhill crane, *Grus canadensis*, has an unmistakable short gurgling call, which reminds me of a creature from Jurassic park. You can imitate their call by saying the letter “R” and rolling the back of your throat. This call can be heard for long distances.

Usually when looking for Sandhill cranes you will hear them, and then follow the sounds to try to spot them. Sandhill cranes may be found in pastures, open prairies and large freshwater wetlands. Sandhill cranes can be seen

across much of North America. Their annual migration takes some of these amazing birds from Central America to the Northern most regions of Canada.

Sandhill cranes are larger birds, generally standing 4.5 to 5 feet tall. They have a large wingspan of 6 ½ to 7 feet. The plumage is primarily gray in color. They are distinguished from other crane species by a brilliant red cap covering their foreheads. When flying, cranes hold their heads forward, while their legs trail behind them.

There are currently listed five subspecies of Sandhill crane in North America. “Lesser” Sandhill Cranes breed in the Arctic and are the smallest. The largest or “Greater” Sandhill Crane breeds in the northern U.S. The nonmigratory “Florida” Sandhill crane and the “Canadian” Sandhill crane, which breed in central Canada, are intermediate in size. The fifth is a “Cuban” race.

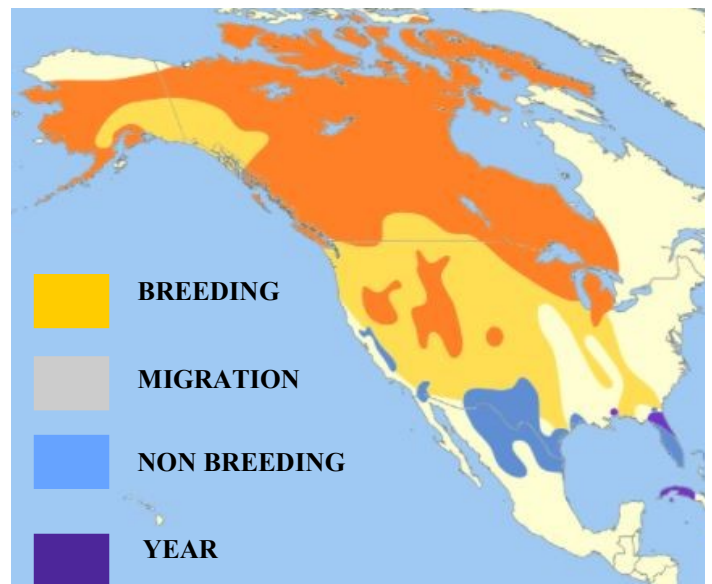
Sandhill’s are mainly herbivorous but will eat a variety of foods, depending on availability. They will forage in wetlands for abundant aquatic vegetation, and seeds. They rely on waste corn or wheat in harvested crop lands. This is especially

important during their annual migration. Many birds will also consume berries when ripe and hunt for mammals, insects, snails, reptiles and amphibians, during the breeding season.

Sandhill cranes are highly social birds, existing as pairs. Sandhill cranes mate for life. Cranes are known for their elaborate courtship. This involves the pair calling in unison, jumping up to ten feet in the air, wing flapping and dancing around each other.

A breeding pair will construct a nest in a marsh or wetland setting, by mounding aquatic vegetation into a small hill. The female will lay 1 to 3 dull brown eggs with reddish markings. Both parents will incubate the eggs for 30 days. Hatchling Sandhills are precocial, leaving the nest within 24 hours of hatching. The parents will feed the chick for the next few weeks, and protect the young bird from predators. The young chick has plenty of enemies including foxes, raccoons, and owls. Adult Sandhills are preyed upon by wolves, cougars and eagles.

In the 1930’s Sandhill cranes were basically wiped out east of the Mississippi River due to hunting and habitat loss. Since public awareness and the appreciation of wetland conservation has grown, Sandhill crane populations have increased greatly. Current population estimates there are 100,000 “Greater” Sandhill cranes, and 400,000 “Lesser” Sandhill cranes. With ongoing preservation of vital wetland resources this incredible species will be seen and enjoyed by many future generations.



**Sandhill Crane Range Map: Wikipedia**

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