



The WREN



FALL 2026

WAPSI HAPPENINGS

By: Director Dave Murcia



Partners of
Scott County
Watersheds

Fall Snapshot: "Water is Life"

Registration for the Fall 2026 Snapshot is open! This is your opportunity to become a citizen scientist for the day and gather important chemical and biological data on Scott County's watersheds. No experience is needed!

When: Tuesday, October 6th; 8am-12pm

Where: Bettendorf Crow Creek Fire Department, 5002 Crow Creek Road, Bettendorf, IA 52722

Volunteers will start the day at the Bettendorf Crow Creek Fire Department for a brief overview about water quality and quick training on how to collect the data. During this time, you'll be able to meet your data collection group while enjoying coffee and donuts.

After training, your group of 3-4 people will take off to collect data from 5-7 sites around Scott County. This data will include pH, nitrogen, chloride, and phosphorus levels. During the Fall Snapshot, we also survey benthic ("bottom-dwelling") macroinvertebrates in some streams - please reach out to allyson@nahantmarsh.org if interested. After collecting this information from each site, groups will meet back at the Fire Department for FREE pizza & swag.

Information



563-328-3286



wapsicenter@scottcountyiowa.gov



www.scottcountyiowa.gov/conservation



Scott County Iowa Conservation



Scott County Conservation

Conservation Board Members:

Doug Grenier – Chair
Richard Mohr – Vice-Chair
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Wapsi River Center Staff:

Dave Murcia - Director/Naturalist
Mike Granger - Naturalist
Becky Baugh - Naturalist
Paige Owings - Assistant Naturalist
Brendan O'Brien - Assistant Naturalist
Sam Miller - Caretaker

Scott County Conservation Board - 563-328-3280

Mailing List: To receive a free hard copy of The WREN, contact us using the information above.

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Wapsi River Environmental Education Center

31555 52nd Ave Dixon, IA 52745

WAPSI HAPPENINGS CONTINUED



Friend Recognition

Erma Wiszmann grew up in Nebraska and came to the Quad Cities to begin her career with the Bell Telephone Co. She became active with her union, the Communication Workers of America, and served for many years as president of the local chapter. After her retirement, she volunteered with several organizations, including the Friends of the Wapsi Center.

Erma was a reliable and enthusiastic member of the Friends, who was passionate about lifelong education, as these words from her obituary illustrate: "Make lifetime learning a habit. Learn about and study issues and the needs around you!!!!"



In honor of Erma, a new step stool has been built by North Scott School's shop class led by Anthony Bielski. The stool will allow young explorers to see into educational animal ambassador enclosures. Come visit the new Wapsi River Learning Center and Lorenzen Hall to see the stool! You are missed, Erma. Thank you all!



Monarch Festival Fun

Despite unfavorable outdoor conditions, the 8th Annual Monarch Festival and migration continued. Thank you to all the runners and walkers who understood trail conditions impacted the run/walk. After the kick-off presentation by Naturalist Becky Baugh, activities were held in Lorenzen Hall by staff and **Friends of the Wapsi Center** (photo above). A highlight during the day included Monarch tagging (<https://www.monarchwatch.org/tagging/>), and releasing Monarchs between rain periods. We look forward to March 2027 when we will find out if any of the monarchs tagged at the event were recovered in Mexico. Thank you **Friends of the Wapsi Center** for assisting at this event!

PLANT PROFILE

JEWELWEED

By Assistant Naturalist Paige Owings



Nature's Remedy to Poison Ivy and Stinging Nettle

Have you ever been unfortunate enough to contract poison ivy (PI) while outside working or exploring? Did you know there is a friendly plant foe for PI? That's right: Jewelweed, or "touch-me-not" (*Impatiens* species), can counteract the itchy-scratchies PI can cause as well as the stinging caused by stinging nettles!

Jewelweed is often found in the same habitat as PI—meaning just about anywhere! Woodlands are its typical habitat, but it will grow in yards, alleys, parks and other partially shady places.

Jewelweed has a slightly pinkish stem, especially when young. Leaves are oval shaped and lightly scalloped on the edges. They are a dusty mint green to medium green

color and alternately arranged on the stem. The stem is relatively soft (not fibrous or woody) and very watery.



If you submerge the plant in water, the droplets collect on the leaves and appear to glow silver, giving the appearance that there are jewels all over the leaves, which is where it gets its name.



If you have a known contact with PI or stinging nettle, simply grab some Jewelweed, crush the leaves and stem, and rub the juices on the affected area. This should help until you can wash with soap!

This plant's other name, "touch-me-not," comes from the seed-dispersal strategy – seed pods explode when touched. This launches the seeds to spread the plants farther and increase population density in an area. A favorite fall activity for many people is hiking trails and touching seed pods to see them pop!



In addition to the cool seeds and pretty shine when wet, Jewelweed also has a unique ability to reproduce without cross-pollination. This means it makes its own fertile seeds at a lower cost to the plant, so even if it can't cross-pollinate for some reason it can still spread and regrow! What a cool plant!

We hope you'll enjoy seeing Jewelweed on your next fall hike and maybe even pop a few seed pods.

ANIMAL PROFILE

HOARY BAT

By Naturalist Mike Granger



Iowa's Largest Bat

On warm summer nights, along rivers, prairies and forest areas in Iowa, you might be able to see some amazing flying nocturnal creatures. Bats are often misunderstood creatures that are sometimes subject to myths or tall tales. Bats belong to a group of mammals known as *Chiropterans* which means “winged hand”. They use elongated fingers with webbing to fly. All bats in Iowa are nocturnal, flying at night consuming small flying insects such as mosquitos and moths. They use high pitched sounds to echolocate their prey. Certain bat species in Iowa prefer to live in caves, some prefer roosting in trees, and others use human made structures such as barns or attics. Iowa's bats are highly beneficial nocturnal flying insectivorous mammals.

Iowa has 9 species of bats. The largest species is the hoary bat, *Lasiurus cinereous*. It has a 15.5-inch wingspan. The fur is yellowish-brown turning black and finishing with frosted white or gray tips. Its name hoary means “hairy” referring to the frosted furry appearance. White patches of fur are seen at the shoulders and wrists. The neck and face are covered with yellowish fur. Its tail membrane is heavily furred. Lastly it has relatively small ears, edged in black with white patches.

Even though the hoary bat is Iowa's largest bat, it is rarely seen because of its habitat preferences. It is primarily a solitary bat that roosts in tall trees in deciduous forests. If one is found, it usually is a female with young attached, displaced from its treetop roost after a windstorm. Adult males are

almost never encountered. Hoary bats are known to fly faster, and have a more direct flight pattern compared to other bats in Iowa, which helps them on their migration.

During the winter months, hoary bats are found in the southern United States, Central America, and Mexico. Throughout the warmer summer months, hoary bats migrate northward spreading throughout the United States and Canada. During spring and fall migrations, the normally solitary hoary bat may travel in small groups.

Mating occurs in the overwintering habitats. When the females return to their summer range they give birth to one to four young between May and June. By the end of June, the young will be ready to fly. Hoary bats feed primarily on moths but also feed on a variety of insects including mosquitos, flies, grasshoppers, termites, and dragonflies.

Recent data shows the hoary bat may be threatened in the future by deforestation and human disturbance of their overwintering grounds. The hoary bat is also susceptible to wind farms which disrupt the bat's migration. One recent study says the hoary bat makes up the most fatalities of all bat species due to wind turbines. It is estimated that the hoary bat may see a population decline in the next 50 years, but with more bat conservation, public education, and management practices, we can help make sure that the hoary bat will be here for future generations.



Photo Credit: Jose Martinez-Fonseca

FRIENDS OF THE WAPSI CENTER

The Friends of the Wapsi Center are a small but enthusiastic group of people, and are seeking new members! Become a Friends Member today!

The Friends of the Wapsi Center was organized in 1993 as a 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 call the Wapsi River Center for more information at (563) 328-3286.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____



MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION LEVELS (PLEASE CHECK ONE):

_____ **\$10 - Kestrel** - Receive a Friends' Newsletter

_____ **\$20 - Red-Tail Hawk** - Receive a Newsletter and a Friends of the Wapsi Center Magnet

_____ **\$35 - Great Horned Owl** - Newsletter, Magnet, and a Wapsi T-shirt at a discounted price

_____ **\$50 - Bald Eagle** - Newsletter, magnet, discounted t-shirt, and 10% off Gift Shop purchases.

PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP FORM TO:

FRIENDS OF THE WAPSI CENTER - 31555 52ND AVENUE, DIXON, IA 52745

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



www.scottcountyiowa.gov/conservation/wapsi/friends



Friends of the Wapsi Center

THANK YOU

Green Iowa AmeriCorps: Rhiannon Crews & Julia VanHouten
Putnam Museum
Prairie State Mushroom Club
River Valley Library District (Port Byron, IL)
Dr. Becky Jana
Richard Martinoff
Ryan Banks, Eagle Scout Candidate, Troop 103
Justin Baugh

Animal Sponsors

Susan Nixon & Aubriella Brock



Friends Members:

Thank you for all you do!

Lucia Dryanski

Linda Puls

Susan McPeters

Jessica Gilmore

Julia Mussack

Jim & Julie Ross

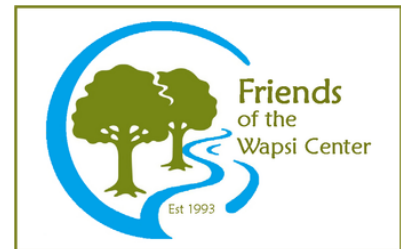
Trish Saxby

Bill Robbins

Bernadene Bowles

Richard Martinoff

Jennifer & Ed Broders



SPONSOR AN ANIMAL

The Wapsi Center is home to several species of animals. A very important part of environmental education at the Wapsi Center revolves around the live animal ambassadors. If you are interested in sponsoring an educational ambassador animal, please contact us at (563) 328-3286 for details.

Current Animal Sponsorships

Great Horned Owl

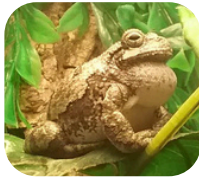
Heather Sanders
Aubriella Joi Brock

Eastern Gray Tree Frogs

Caroline Kimple

Central Newts

Heather Sanders



Western Fox Snake

Lucia Dryanski
Bill Robbins

Eastern Hognose Snake

Caroline Kimple
Friends of the Wapsi Center

Eastern Screech Owl

Caroline Kimple

Fish Aquarium

Caroline Kimple

Painted Turtle

Caroline Kimple

Three-Toed Box Turtle

Mark & Lisa Cleve

Blanding's Turtle

Heather Sanders

Speckled Kingsnake

Mark & Lisa Cleve



Wild Bird Feeders

Caroline Kimple

Animals Not Yet Sponsored

Red-Eared Slider

Musk Turtle

Alligator Snapping Turtle

Smooth Softshell Turtle

Common Snapping Turtle

Eastern Box Turtle

Fowler's Toad

Milk Snake

Barred Owl

Red-Tailed Hawk



FALL PHENOMENA

As the seasons change, we are excited to see new and familiar phenomena. We can expect shorter days, deer growing antlers, fawns losing spots as they mature, leaves turning colors, nuts ripening, many, many mushrooms appearing, birds (and insects) migrating....and so much more!

If you want to share what you're seeing as fall moves on, we'd love to see it! Upload photos of what you are seeing as the seasons change to Scott County's Natural Phenomena project!

Natural Phenomena in Scott County

The Natural Phenomena project goal is to collect consistent information over time so we can better understand how nature changes throughout the seasons and from year to year. By gathering many observations across different places and times, we can begin to see patterns—such as when certain flowers bloom, when birds return, or how weather and water conditions affect local habitats. We'll collect all observations, featuring top photos, in a 2027 calendar.

Record Your
Observations Here:



<https://arcg.is/HiXHD>

See All
Observations Here:



<https://tinyurl.com/4cah4x5k>