

THE BOG HAUNTER

the newsletter of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog
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TIMBERDOODLE

Woodcocks are among the "Landlubbers" in the shorebird family. These odd-looking birds - apparently, hunting dogs also find them odd-*smelling* - are listed among the upland game birds and are not tied to the shoreline. They have many nicknames, one of which is "Timberdoodle."



Their habitat is brushy fields and open woodlands, and they are often flushed from the underbrush on low-lying parts of the Bog's islands. Their superb camouflage makes it impossible to spot them before they fly.

Woodcocks (*Scolopax minor*) make their presence known in early spring, when males take to the air to perform their courtship "sky dance." They begin just after sunset and continue into the wee hours (especially if the moon is full). After calling from the ground for a while, a nasal sound described as a "*peent*," the male takes off. Specially-formed wing feathers produce a twittering sound as he ascends.

From high in the sky he zigzags back down, and this time the air flowing through his wing feathers produces a rich "chuck, chuck, chuck" sound. He lands not far from where he took off, *peenting* again. There, the theory goes, the awed female Woodcock will find him.

And awesome he is! A dumpling of a bird about 10 inches long, weighing up to a half-pound, with big eyes, very short legs, and a very long bill (2 ½ to 2 ¾ "). Females are larger than males.

A look at where a woodcock lives and what it eats explains its adaptations. Short, wide wings are perfect for flight through close, brushy areas. The long bill allows woodcocks to extract earthworms from deep in the mud. They can open the tip of their bill without opening the top, and a roughened tongue helps them grip a slimy earthworm.

Any animal that feeds with its head down runs the risk of becoming a meal while having a meal. Over the eons, woodcock eyes have migrated toward the top of their head. As a result, they can see well both to the top and the sides while they probe for worms.

After their noisy courtship is over, woodcocks are quiet. They lay their eggs early, in crude nests on the ground. They are often incubating during the final snowstorms of spring. The eggs in the picture were found on a Bog island on April 11.



Photo by Gail Epping Overholt

Woodcock young are "precocial," (think "precocious"). Unlike the young of songbirds, woodcock young are dried off and running around within hours of hatching.

Woodcocks migrate from the Bog in fall, but only to the southern states where unfrozen ground allows them access to earthworms.

THE FROGS' CALENDAR

Frogs, toads and salamanders are amphibians. The word's Greek root, "*amphibious*" meaning "*living a double life*," perfectly describes their life cycle. Although many species spend their lives on land, their tender eggs must be laid in water, and their young develop there.

Some amphibians start their journeys to the pond even before the ice disappears. For frogs and toads, courtship is about sound, and there is a rough order - a phenology - to their appearance.



The first sounds are the "peep" of spring peepers and the "sleigh bells" of chorus frogs. The din is huge, but the noise-makers are barely an inch long. Their voices are joined by the slow "snore" of leopard frogs and the "quack" of wood frogs. American toads are next; if the spring is warm, their trills begin as the calendar turns to May. Gray tree frogs are next, and in early June, green and bullfrogs are the final singers.

Frogs sing by forcing air out of their lungs, through their throat, and into a vocal sac, a loose pouch of skin under their chin (leopard frogs have two vocal sacs). Sound is made when the air vibrates the vocal cords as it passes them. Air in the vocal sac can then be "inhaled" again, producing more sound on its way back into the lungs. In the process, the vocal sac puffs up like a big bubblegum bubble and then deflates.

Come and witness the magic of the Timberdoodle's sky dance and the start of the spring frog chorus. See the **Calendar** for the date of the Friends' Woodcock and Frog Walk.

A WALK ON THE NORTH SIDE

Diane Miller hosts the *Welcome, HOME Bed and Breakfast* on Hawthorne Drive in Newburg. It advertises: "Our entire house and the grounds are wheelchair friendly." She says she loves to offer her guests "places to go and things to do." This spring she can add one more to her list.

When Mary Holleback, Adult Program Coordinator at the nearby Riveredge Nature Center, told her that the Friends of Cedarburg Bog was nearing completion of a nearly \$11,000 project to make part of the Bog -- especially Watts Lake -- more accessible, Diane e-mailed this reaction:

"That's very exciting news! Years ago -- Mom was with me, so at least 10 years ago -- I tried to meander down the trail from the Highway 33 parking lot. Very NOT doable.... so I never went back. I can't wait to be able to get in there. Isn't there an accessible fishing pier in there?"

Yes, there is.

Jay Johnson has been going to that area of the bog and fishing Watts Lake "for more than 20 years, since before the boardwalk and the handicapped fishing pier were there, even before the land was DNR property."



That was the irony of course: lying between the accessible trail to the accessible pier and the parking lot on the south side of Highway 33 was a 352-foot stretch of unfriendly terrain that was out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

That's why Johnson, a landscape designer with Lied's Nursery, and Holleback, a member of the Friends board of directors, were among the volunteers who showed up there on

a sweltering Saturday last September.

"This was just the logical next step," Johnson said, explaining why he and partner Heather Hathaway responded to an appeal from Joanne Kline, to join her and other volunteers husband Dan Kline, and Pat Fairchild on that work day.

The total estimated cost to reconstruct that section of the one-half-mile trail at the north end of the Cedarburg Bog State Natural Area by lessening the slope of a hill was \$11,600. The design was put together by the DNR's Ken Anderson, in consultation with Andy Krueger, the Harrington Beach State Park superintendent who also manages DNR land at the Bog.

A little Bog history

When the great conservationist Aldo Leopold initiated the State Natural Area program to protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's pre-contact landscape, there were two properties he wanted to safeguard: Parfrey's Glen near Baraboo and the Cedarburg Bog. He began land acquisition, and the Bog became a State Natural Area in 1952.

Its most unusual feature is the presence of a string or "patterned" bog, which consists of stunted cedars and tamaracks alternating with flatter, wetter areas dominated by sedges. String bogs are typically found much further north, and the Cedarburg Bog may be the southernmost string bog in all of North America.

The majority of the wetland is administered by the Department of Natural Resources. Since 1952, the state-owned land has grown to its present total of 1,656 acres through the purchase, often in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, of small parcels of land around its borders.

The acquisition by the DNR, about 20 years ago, of 150 acres along Highway 33 at the north end of the Bog solidified public access for hikers, fishermen and hunters. Since then, several trails and boardwalks have been developed on the parcel, and the Town of Saukville contributed to the fishing pier on Watts Lake.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee also operates its Field Station at the Bog.

The plan called for an excavation length of 152 feet and a fill area of 60 feet. The resulting trail would be 6-feet wide, covered by crushed gravel and have less than a 5% slope.

By pledging half that total in cash, in-kind donations and volunteer labor, the Bog Friends secured a \$5,800 matching grant from the State Stewardship Fund.

The volunteer labor included that September workday when chain saws and heavy brush cutters were deployed to widen the trail and clear the way for the excavation equipment.



The trail grading itself was done by an Ozaukee County Highway Department crew under the direction of Bill Tackes, who planned the work to build the DNR's design. That part of the project came in on budget at \$8,136.

Robert Weyker, a neighbor to the west of the trail, donated the large stones to control access at the trailhead. Joanne donated the seed.

"We corralled several folks who just happened to be there on different days to help A LOT with the seeding," Joanne recalls. "They were there to bird watch, check out the Bog before the opening of deer season, or take a stretch after bicycling in the area. After they asked what we were doing, they just joined in to help. Amazing!"

The project is not quite complete.

Come spring, volunteers still need to remove the hay bales used to control erosion during construction. They also plan to add native trees and shrubs to the disturbed areas adjacent to the parking lot and new path.

And in January, the Friends board approved a 96-foot extension of the boardwalk at the Watts Lake end of the 15-minute hiking trail to further improve wheelchair access.

With the help of a separate mini-grant from the Milwaukee River Basin Partnership, the Friends also plan to erect 13 interpretive signs that will focus on the value of wetlands, the role of the Bog and Cedar Creek in the Milwaukee River watershed, the glacial history of the area, the physical makeup of the bog, Native American habitation, and individual plant and animal members of the bog community.

In addition, since the boots of visitors can spread invasive non-native plant species like garlic mustard, a boot brush podium and educational sign are being installed in early spring.

By Carl Schwartz

IN EPHEMERAL PONDS

The Wisconsin Ephemeral Pond Project (WEPP) is almost upon its 4th year and 3rd monitoring season. You may remember that the Friends has been involved since WEPPs inception in 2006 with Jody Barbeau, Jim Engstrom and Debbie Schulze collecting pond information on behalf of the Friends. So what do these and other citizen monitors have to say about their experiences? When asked to give some updates or insights on their experiences, this is what they had to say:



Photo by Pat Fairchild.

Jim Engstrom: *Our evaluation of ephemeral ponds has grown in both number visited and in technological sophistication over the three years we have been involved in the program. Last year we monitored five ponds on a farm northwest of Saukville. I get impatient during the winter and want to start planning for the coming summer, so I started*

experimenting with the free software Arc Explorer to identify unmonitored ponds within a reasonable distance from our homes. In preparation for the 2010 monitoring season I found nine ponds in my home township and checked the Ozaukee County property ownership site I found out who owned the property. Debbie Schulze, my partner in crime, is currently contacting them for permission to monitor these ponds. To visit these ponds is a mile or so round trip. That much walking in the woods will be hard on my waders!

Jody Barbeau: *...Our plan for the macroinvertebrate sampling for the 2010 field season will include a brief survey for adult odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) at the 2008/2009 sampling locations (one at Riveredge Nature Center, three at Mequon Nature Preserve and three at the Cedarburg Bog) to help verify immature odonate identifications. As a group they are easier identified as adults than in the immature stage. We are starting four new locations (to be determined in March) located in the Kettle Moraine Northern Unit in Fond du Lac County. The new locations will get full macro-invertebrate surveys completed, and field parameters collected (pH, temperature, specific conductivity, total dissolved solids, and water depth).*

Upcoming WEPP trainings at Riveredge, Wehr and Schlitz Audubon Nature Centers will provide ample opportunity for all of you who are itching to get your feet wet and join in the fun!

For more information about these April 2010 events, go to the WEPP webpage at <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/lev3/WEPP/WEPPEvents.html>

Gail Overholt

LEAN AND MEAN – AND BREEDING IN THE BOG

Sleek and snake-like, with a mouthful of teeth, Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*), migrate up Cedar Creek and Mud Lake Creek at the southwest corner of the Bog to spawn in late March or April when the ice has gone out. Most Northern pike spawn when they are 2 to 5 years old and are good sized fish (14 to 16 inches long). They have

been known to migrate as far as 25 miles upstream to find suitable spawning sites, places with firm vegetative mats, such as grasses, sedges, and rushes with fine leaves. The migration occurs at night.



One female is accompanied by several males into shallow water with emergent vegetation. The female releases a small number of eggs which are fertilized immediately. This process is repeated in various locations until the female has deposited approximately 250,000 eggs. Both males and females are likely to spawn with multiple partners during a spawning season. Once the eggs are laid, they are on their own.

Cedarburg Bog is ideal for their breeding in terms of vegetation and its inlet and outlet. True bogs do not have an outlet stream, so it is actually a fen. Jim Reinartz reported in the 1985 Field Station Bulletin that at that time about 500 Northern pike made the trek into Mud Lake, laying an estimated 1.5 – 2.0 million eggs which hatch in 1½ to 2 weeks. This produced an estimated 5 to 10,000 fingerlings. Mud Lake is an ideal nursery for the young with excellent hiding places and lots of yummy invertebrates to eat. Predation by insects and other fish reduces the number of fingerlings by 99% by fall.

Northern pike are solitary, except during spawning. They are opportunistic feeders, eating whatever is available. As fry, they like microcrustacea and aquatic insects. Juveniles feed on aquatic insects and small fish. Adults are sit-and-wait predators, with fish being the primary prey, but include frogs, crayfish and ducklings if the opportunity presents itself. Juvenile northern pike are also included in the adult's diet.

In summer, they tend to be in deeper, cooler water. The rest of the year, they cruise the surface waters in search of food.

Chris Fredrich

CALENDAR

Riveredge Speaks Out

Public programs on Natural History.
Second Wednesdays and third
Tuesdays of the month
7:00 to 8:30 P.M.

For locations and topics, contact 1-
800-287-8098 or www.riveredge.us.
A \$5 donation is suggested.

Riveredge Bird Club

First Tuesday of the month
Bird walk - 6 P.M. Program - 7 P.M.
Riveredge Nature Center Barn.
Public is welcome.

Prairie Burn Training

April 7, 8 and 9, 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
A 3-day, hands-on course on
planning and safely conducting small
grassland burns.

Pre-registration is required.
Contact www.riveredge.us or 1-800-
287-8098.

Fee: \$75, Members: \$60
Riveredge Nature Center, Newburg

Friends of the Cedarburg Bog

Quarterly Board Meeting

April 15, 7:00 to 8:30 P.M.
At: UW-M Field Station
Members welcome.

Midwest Crane Count

April 17, 5:30 to 7:30 A.M.
Registration required. Contact
cranecount@savingcranes.com

Go Green 2010

May 1st. 9 A.M.-4 P.M.
Bird walk, hikes, hands-on activities
on home habitat improvement and
protecting our land and water
resources. Families welcome.
Pre-registration required.

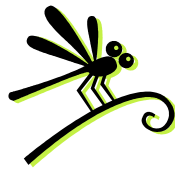
For more information or to be a *Go
Green* volunteer call: 262-338-12794
or e-mail: nshield@owl.org
Mequon Nature Preserve. 8200 West
County Line Road, Mequon

Sturgeon Project Volunteer Training

May 8, 9 A.M. - noon
Join dedicated volunteers who grow
and monitor these amazing fish in
Riveredge's streamside facility.
Volunteers commit to one half-day
per week after being trained.

Wildflower and Perennial Sale

May 8, 9 A.M. - 1 P.M.
Wildflowers and more.
Lac Lawrann Conservancy, 300
Schmidt Road, West Bend



Birdathon/Bandathon

May 15, Saturday- Dawn to dusk:
Join us for this all-day birding and
banding event on Riveredge Nature
Center property. For more
information contact
noel.cutright@we-energies.com.

Become a Water Quality Monitor

May 22, 10 A.M - 3 P.M.
Volunteer monitors conduct tests
monthly during the summer, and
submit their data to a statewide
website. Learn how at this meeting.
For information or to register contact
www.riveredge.us or 1-800-287-
8098. Riveredge Nature Center

FRIENDS' SPONSORED EVENTS

Please pre-register for Friends
Events by contacting 262-675-6844
or fieldstn@uwm.edu.
A \$3 donation is suggested.

Frogs and Woodcocks - night singers

April 29, 7 to 9 P.M.
Hear the night chorus of spring.

The Bog in Spring
May 23 9 A.M. to noon
See the Bog in its early vegetation.

*Bird walk: In Search of Late
Migrants.*

Bring your binoculars.
June 5 at 6:30 A.M.
Group size limit: 10.

Solstice Bog Walk
The magic of the Bog at twilight.
June 20, 6 to 8:30 P.M.

Breeding Birds and their Songs
July 3 at 6:30 A.M.
Bring your binoculars.
Group size limit: 10.

At the Cedarburg Bog.

Coming in July - stay tuned

July 17 - *The Cedarburg Bog State
Natural Area Bio-Blitz.*
A 24-hour survey of the Bog.
[http://www.nrfwis.org/index.php?pa
ge=intro](http://www.nrfwis.org/index.php?page=intro)

July 24 - *The Treasures of Oz* event
Visit natural areas in Ozaukee
County <http://treasuresofoz.org/>

C/O UWM Field Station
3095 Blue Goose Road
Saukville, WI 53080
www.bogfriends.org



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