

Write



JEAN RIEKE

A FAN OF OUR SUET FEEDER

Liz Spaeth-Werner, my niece, suggested I send you these pictures of the pileated woodpecker who frequents our suet feeder. We are wondering if it is a leucistic one or an albino. It does not appear to have any black on it at all. It appeared this winter. We have had occasional sightings of a true pileated in our neighborhood, or heard one. Let me know what you think.

Jean Rieke
Town of Barton

DNR wildlife biologist Ryan Brady responds: Pretty amazing given how rare this plumage is in this species. The term leucism is often applied to any abnormally white plumage that falls short of full-blown albinism and typically shows as a splotchy plumage where fully white feathers mix with normal ones. A better term for this pileated is probably "dilution," whereby the plumage is washed out, or dilute, yielding a ghostly appearance overall. One definition is this: "In dilution, melanin cells are present (unlike in leucistic birds where affected plumage lacks melanin) but produce less pigment than normal. White feathers can also be caused by chromatophore (pigment cell) defects, rather than an absence of melanin-producing cells."



STEVE PRICE

WHOSE TRACKS ARE THESE?

Could you identify these tracks? Looks like from the cat family but too big to be a domestic cat.

Steve Price
Spring Valley

Jane Wiedenhoef, DNR wildlife biologist from Park Falls, responds: Those are opossum tracks. The photo shows indirect registration, where the hind foot fell partially over the top of where the front foot had left a print. That makes the tracks look larger than they actually are.

SOME SWEET SKIS

By coincidence, I came across Tim Sweet's article on your website (dnr.wi.gov/wrnmag/), "A lifetime of skiing" (February 2011). His homage to the wood ski is very enjoyable and it made me feel a bit nostalgic to see the photograph of a pair of Landsem cross-country skis, almost identical to the ones I had some time in the 1960s. Here's a link to the municipality's collection of Landsem skis in Rindal, Norway: <http://www.rindal.kommune.no/artikkel.aspx?Mid1=19&AId=658&Back=1>. Unfortunately the Landsem factory was closed decades ago. My regards to Mr. Tim Sweet.

Hans H. Flatøe
Fredrikstad, Norway

FULL OF FLOWERS

We are enjoying our flower gardens.

Carla Timmerman
River Falls



CARLA TIMMERMAN

PHOTO CORRECTION

A photo caption on page 10 of the April issue misidentified the person in the photo. The caption should have read: "Former DNR employee Dave Vitrano takes a close look at a trout during the Trout Management and Stream Shocking Demonstration field trip in 1996." We regret the error.

COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7191, Madison, WI 53707. Or email letters to dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov. Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

NO ACCESS TO THE WEB?

Don't have access to a link we mention in a story? Let us know when you want to follow a link we list. We'll do what we can to get you a copy of the material if it is available free of charge and is relatively short in length.