

Write



KUDOS FOR AUGUST ISSUE

I just had to write about the August 2016 issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine. I've been getting the magazine for 30 years or so, as long as I can remember. But this issue touched on several things of interest to me. I'm an amateur beekeeper. This is my fourth season. I read the "Wild about honey" story and loved it. I'm not sure you could go about getting honey that way these days. But I bet it would have been fun to try. I have been using my wildlife camera for years to take pictures or short movies of animals and birds that roam my 12-plus acres in Chippewa County ("Get the picture with Snapshot Wisconsin"). It sees things that I would probably not see otherwise. And then there's "Native plant gardening...for the birds and bees and butterflies." I have a little over 2 acres planted in native prairie restoration. It has been over eight years since I planted some of these natives. This year I was amazed at some of the plants I have growing just past my backyard. And, I have the harrier hawk prowling mine and the neighbor's fields ("Getting to know the gray ghosts"). The light-colored male dips and dodges just as you describe it in the article. Wow!

Paul Nicolai
Chippewa Falls

LEG-BANDED COOPER'S HAWK

I read the article about Cooper's hawks ("A Cooper's hawk family album," February 2000) and to my surprise I have one living in my backyard. He comes every morning to eat the prey he caught. He has been here since May 1, 2016, and still comes every morning. We share our yard with the hawk and hope he stays. Just a beautiful bird and he is banded with a blue band on the right leg and a silver band on his left leg. What a gorgeous bird to have and watch with a cup of coffee in the morning. Thank you for the article!

Michael Joyce
Milwaukee

Thanks for sharing your observation, Michael. Just so you know, you can report the sighting of a leg-banded bird at www.reportband.gov. If you see a banded Cooper's hawk, send a direct email to Bob Rosenfield, a UW-Stevens Point professor who has studied and banded Cooper's hawks for more than 35 years. His email is Robert.Rosenfield@uwsp.edu.

COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7921, 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.



WEAVING A DEW-SPANGLED WEB

The fishing was poor yesterday. The weeds were tall and hard to navigate. The residents of the weeds were holding still and photogenic.

Len Harris
Richland Center

NEST BOX SUCCESS

Three years ago my neighbors cleared the woods behind my house in order to make room for their new building. There was a tall oak, which was home to a wood duck family. I thought if I built a wood duck house, would they come back?

I went to my local DNR office in Plymouth, got information on how to build one and asked many questions on a good location. With advice and building directions in hand I constructed the new home and mounted it on a tree in my yard. It took until the third year when I observed eggs in the box and wood duck activity in the area. I photographed the new arrivals on June 18, 2016. I know there were around a dozen eggs in the nest. Not all of them hatched, but at least this is a start of a new generation of ducks I hope continue to return to the area. My house is located approximately 300 feet from Lake Ellen, so the ducklings have their work cut out for them. Looking forward to what next year will bring.

Tammy Dassow
Cascade



50 YEARS OF SALMON

Just thought I would let you know that in the spring of 2017 will be 50 years since the first salmon were planted in Strawberry Creek in Sturgeon Bay. I worked for the DNR

out of Asylum Bay which is by Oshkosh. If you can see the photos of the planting, I was the driver in the third truck. I remember stopping at the chamber's office and picking him up to ride along with me. My stepdad was Larry Surgery who was the district fish manager out of Green Bay. The people at the drop site were so happy and had to have their pictures taken with a bucket of fish. At the end we did get to tube them into the creek. Just a little history of the salmon. We haul them over from Osceola hatchery.

Dave Wedler

Thanks, Dave! Bradley Eggold, DNR fisheries biologist stationed in Milwaukee, provided this photo of the 1969 stocking of chinook salmon in Lake Michigan.



DNR FILES

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.



PUFFBALL MUSHROOM

This photo was taken in my backyard in Eau Claire.

*Dan Perkins
Eau Claire*

TRUMPETER SWAN X40

It was noon on a beautiful fall day in 1998 and the Flambeau State Forest was ablaze with color. My husband Charlie and I had just arrived at our cottage on the Flambeau River. We were having lunch on the screened porch overlooking the river when I noticed we had a visitor. Swimming by our dock was a very large, long-necked white bird.

Charlie, an avid photographer, grabbed his camera hoping to get a photo of the beautiful bird. I decided to share the rest of my sandwich with our visitor hoping to keep it around for the photo shoot.

We both ran down the incline to the river. I tossed bread to X40, but he/she wasn't hungry and swam right past the bread toward me. This wasn't a hungry swan, it was a lonesome swan. X40 kept us company for about three days. We were thrilled, but wondered why the bird was tagged and where it came from. There was no phone service at the cottage so we had to wait until we got back to our Oregon, Wisconsin home to investigate.

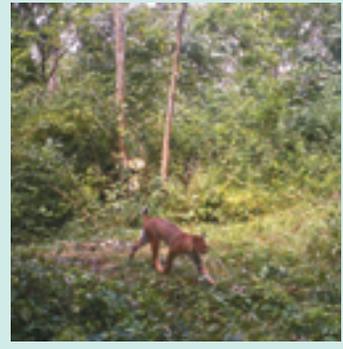
I called the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and was directed to Pat Manthey. She knew all about X40, who had quite a past. She said that in the late 1990s there were 18 nesting pairs of trumpeters and most of them raised young which resulted in 300 trumpeters, 51 of them cygnets that fledged. X40 was one of them and had quite a reputation.

In 1996, X40 was living on the Bad River Slough on the Bad River Indian Reservation. In the spring of 1998, he was reported to be in Babcock and from there he moved to nearby Bass Lake where he was known as an unfriendly neighbor. The residents and X40 did not get along. If he liked you, he liked you; if he didn't, he would hiss at you, slap you with his wings or kick you with his feet. One resident had a dog that couldn't go outside without being chased and hissed at by the unruly swan. Pat Manthey got so many complaints that she decided to catch the swan and move him.

X40 was caught, wings clipped and given a long ride on an all-terrain vehicle to remote Swamp Lake, which was only a few miles — as the swan flies — from our cottage. Once X40 molted and sprouted new feathers, he was able to fly again. Deciding he didn't like the life of a recluse, he flew back to civilization. That is when he visited us.

By the time I called and gave Pat Manthey details about our visiting swan, she had heard from Bass Lake residents that the ornery swan had returned and was once again up to his old tricks. The plan now was to once again snag X40 and take him to central Wisconsin with the hope of giving him the urge to migrate even further south. And, that as they say, "is the rest of the story." X40 was not welcome at Bass Lake, but we found him to be a delightful guest.

*Dorothy Kruse
Oregon*



TRAIL CAMERA CATCHES

Here are a couple of pictures from a trail cam set up on my brother-in-law's farm in La Crosse County. Interesting to capture a bobcat in the daylight. As far as the deer, I'm not sure what they were doing, but the fawn wanted nothing to do with it.

*Dave Thompson
Monona*

Kevin Wallenfang, big game ecologist in DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management, provided the following explanation for the deer's behavior: What they're doing is kicking at each other with their front hooves in an act of aggression. It's impossible to say why in this situation, but you can regularly see this kind of behavior when there is a limited food supply like during winter feeding. Because of that, it's one of the reasons we discourage people from winter feeding; the deer exert a lot of energy fighting over the food, plus there's a likelihood of injury to the loser.

CREX CRANE CLARIFICATION

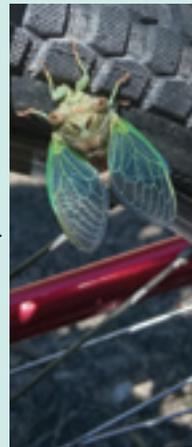
Thank you for publishing the article on sandhill cranes at Crex ("A graceful touchdown") in the October 2016 edition. We continue to see an increasing number of visitors coming to Crex each fall to witness this wildlife spectacle. There was one point of confusion in the article that needs clarification. The article implies that birds traveling through Crex in the fall will end up on the Platte River in the spring during the return trip. The birds that come to the Platte River are a separate subspecies of cranes. The lesser sandhills that gather on the Platte River follow the Central flyway north. These birds winter in the south central U.S./Texas gulf area. The greater sandhills in the eastern population that come through Crex follow the Mississippi flyway transferring over to part of the Atlantic flyway to winter from Tennessee south to Florida. Dave Fronczak with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recently published a paper based on data from radioed cranes that details the migration movements of cranes in the eastern population. The central population of lesser sandhills using the Platte is much larger than the eastern population of greater sandhills that stage throughout Wisconsin and the upper Gerat Lakes states. When you are standing out in the marsh watching thousands of these birds fly over, it is an incredible sight no matter where you are.

*Steve Hoffman, Wildlife Biologist
Crex Meadows Wildlife Area*

CICADA HAS NEW WINGS

While camping at Peninsula State Park in early July, I noticed a fresh-hatched cicada on the wheel of my mountain bike. It was fascinating to look at up close, as he had just crawled out of his shell. My daughter, Andrea, enjoyed the "nature" moment!

*Margaret Reisenauer
Sheboygan*



"WHITE" THE CHIPMUNK

I'm sending photos of a white chipmunk that appeared this summer in our garden. It is not true albino because of having black eyes and some hint of normal stripes. An active little fellow with the flash movements that you cannot miss. Thought readers of your magazine would find him of interest!

Dennis Belmont
Kenosha



You're right, Dennis! This chippie isn't a true albino, but rather displays leucism. Many leucistic birds and mammals have splotches of white (also known as piebald), but they can also be entirely white. If you look closely, you'll see the residual natural striping on this little fellow.

IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED

I liked your article on the Leopold benches ("Winter building," October 2016). I made a bench inscribed with the words "In honor of those who served" for our family reunion. Our family has a long history of military service, dating back to the Civil War. On the sides of this bench, I woodburned the names of 46 family members who served in the U.S. military. One of my friends is a big guy. He is 6 feet 3 inches tall and about 300 pounds. He also has multiple sclerosis. He can't sit in a normal chair. It is so hard for him to get back on his feet. So I made him an Aldo Leopold chair. It is wide enough for only him, and I raised the seat 4 inches. It is very sturdy and he can get in and out of it easily. He loves it! Thank you again for the great article!

James Olson
Wilton

RECALLING PRAIRIE CHICKENS

I enjoyed your prairie chicken story in the October 2016 issue of the magazine. In the early 1950s my two younger brothers and I spent a lot of time in the woods between farm chores and harvesting. For several winters in a row we set out an oats/barley mix for the prairie chickens in an area along the creek where their tracks were plentiful among the alders. Though we saw them flying in the summer we never saw them on the ground at any time. They were a flock of six. And it appeared they ate very little if any of our offerings.

One time Dad did shoot one, the meat was dark red. I don't recall much about its taste. Anyway, divided up among our large family there wasn't much to taste.

Dad and Mom settled on the farm in 1929. Dad said when he used to plow in the fall the prairie chickens would follow down the freshly turned furrow enjoying earthworms and bugs. This was in Taylor County about 6 miles east of Perkinstown on what is now known as Perkinstown Avenue.

I have watched sharp-tailed grouse dancing at the Pershing Wildlife Area near Hannibal in west central Taylor County. They displayed their bluish air sacs and at times perched atop my blind. Seeing and hearing them was a great experience.

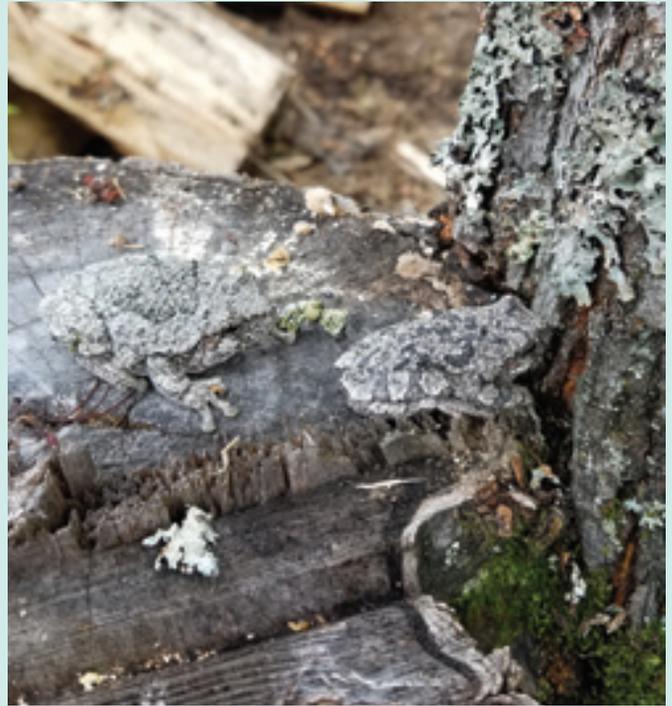
Stephen Lars Kalmon
Withee



DEER STAND VISITOR

Didn't see a lot of deer up north. But in Vilas County I had this visitor. He (or she) made the day a little more enjoyable.

Michael Rasmussen
Town of Delavan



CAMOUFLAGED DUO

While piling wood for our campfires at the cabin this summer, my husband Kevin and I found these two gray tree frogs. It seemed a little late for their breeding season, which is usually June through mid-July. They looked so cute together I had to take their picture. I really enjoy listening to the chirping sounds of the male and female back and forth in the trees. I'm so glad they found each other! This picture was taken on August 12, 2016, in Lake Nebagamon. I love reading your magazine! I learn so much about nature and I like supporting it too! Thank you!

Cindy Donley
Duluth, Minnesota

Thanks, Cindy! We asked Rori Paloski, conservation biologist in DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation, to confirm your identification. Here's what he said: They are definitely either gray treefrogs or Cope's gray treefrogs. Gray treefrogs are generally a bit more common, but the two species are physically identical and can only be told by genetics, chromosome numbers or their breeding call. Because only male frogs call, the writer was actually hearing two males, not a male and female.

FIRST DEER

I'm sending a photo of my daughter (Alexia, age 11) from the first weekend in October. This had to be the single greatest thing I have ever been able to experience with her. She had been on 10 hunts before she even saw her first deer, beginning last December, and it turned out to be this one. In her words, "it was totally worth it!" It was an emotional night for sure.

Joseph Kreuser
Muskego



CORRECTION

In the "Let it snow" story in our December 2016 issue, we incorrectly identified Darren Parks as an employee of the Dane County Parks Division. He should have been identified as Darren Marsh. We regret the error.