

## Write

### SINNIPPE CREEK

We have maintained our subscription of your magazine for many years and it brings back great memories! My wife and I are both from Wisconsin. We moved to Iowa 34 years ago, but have made many trips back to our home state. During our visits, we would occasionally stop at Finley Recreation Area in southern Grant County. My brothers and I fished this area back in the 1960s and '70s. It was privately owned but we were allowed to fish in a small stream called Sinnippe Creek. It flows through Jamestown Township in southwest Grant County.



We brought our three children with us in 1994 and took a few photos. We returned in about 2012 with our oldest daughter and grandsons. During our visit in 1994, cattle were allowed to graze around the stream. However, prior to our visit in 2012, cattle were fenced out and the vegetation flourished. Thought you may want to publish this information in your magazine.

*Terry and Nicholas (Nick) Kieler  
West Burlington, Iowa*

### EASY WAY TO PLUCK TURKEYS

I liked the article and the recipes provided by John Motoviloff in his article "Keeping it wild: Outdoor food and forays" in the April 2017 issue. He discussed plucking a wild turkey as being time-consuming and needing to pluck individual feathers out one by one. I did that in 1981 with my first wild turkey shot in Montana and it took several hours.

The following year when my late wife and I shot turkeys on the same Montana ranch, the rancher's wife had us heat 2.5 gallons of water on her stove until just short of boiling and then pour it into a 5-gallon plastic pail. We cut the lower legs off at the knees and stuffed the whole turkey except the head down into the hot water and left it there for four minutes. When we pulled it out, the feathers easily pulled out and the bird was clean-plucked in less than eight minutes.

The same process works with pheasants or chickens, as most farmer wives know and have done for centuries. I hope that reading this will help other hunters to quickly pluck their birds, but they should not remove the entrails before putting the bird in the hot water.

*Dr. Philip Whitford  
Cross Plains*

### "BOB" WHITE

While my wife and I were sitting on our deck this past summer, this bobwhite quail wandered into our yard and hung around for about two hours. He was so comfortable he actually fell asleep in the sunshine. We never saw it again but one of the neighbors mentioned they saw an unusual bird a few days later so we figured it must have been "Bob."



*Jeff Baker  
North Prairie*



### INJURED GRAY FOX?

This fox was found sleeping in our yard Easter afternoon. I was able to get a few photos of it before it woke and went into the woods. It is now in the woods and does not seem right. Maybe it was hit by a car? What breed of fox is this? It is rather large. Could it be a coyote?

*Barb Glessing  
Spooner*

*Thanks for sharing your photo, Barb. This is a gray fox. Since you mention that something didn't "seem right" with its behavior, it's best to steer clear of it. Nancy Businga, a wildlife disease specialist in DNR's wildlife health section, gives this advice: Gray foxes in Wisconsin are susceptible to several diseases shared with dogs including canine distemper, parvovirus and rabies. It is not possible to tell from observing a sick animal what disease it may have. Citizens should avoid any wild animal that appears sick and report it to their county wildlife biologist (visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "county wildlife biologist"). The DNR's wildlife health program tracks reports of sick wildlife and investigates the cause if multiple sick animals are reported. If contact such as a bite or scratch occurs between a sick fox and a person or domestic animal, the citizen should contact their county public health office for advice on submitting the fox for rabies testing.*

### ROBIN WHITE-BREAST

I spotted this unique fellow in my backyard. I was doing spring yard work when I noticed it on my garage roof — since it's quite easy to spot! I ran into the house to get my camera hoping it would still be there when I returned and it was. It even flew down onto the yard where I got some real close and special pictures of it.



*Nancy Champeau  
Sheboygan*

*Thanks for sharing this great photo showing leucism, which is loss of pigmentation in an animal caused by a genetic mutation.*

### KUDOS FROM MINNESOTA NEIGHBOR

I live in Minnesota and just want you to know how much I enjoy your magazine. I read it cover-to-cover whenever my neighbor will part with her copy and wish Minnesota had one similar to yours. We do have a magazine but not as nice. Thank you for the many different aspects you cover.

*Joan Taylor  
St. Francis, Minnesota*

### WONDERFUL WYALUSING

The article in the current edition about Wyalusing State Park ("A century of scenic grandeur," June 2017) reminds me of a visit I made there a couple of years ago. There was a couple standing on the overlook and as I approached I heard the man say to his companion, "Look at all that scenery!" There's not much that can be added to that.

*Rick Jones  
Madison*

## WISCONSIN BAT FESTIVAL



Consider hanging out at this year's celebration of the unique role that bats play in our world. Learn how bats help you, and more importantly, how you can help them! Explore techniques you can use in your own backyard that will make you look at bats in a whole new way.

When: Aug. 26, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Where: Mitchell Park Domes, 524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee

Cost: Free with paid admission to Domes (\$7 for adults, \$5 for ages 6-17 and free for 5 and under).

## BLUEBIRD HOUSE EXPERT

I would like to raise awareness about the efforts of Wisconsin citizens working to restore the habitat of the eastern bluebird by placing bird houses in the spring months. Each spring, year after year, my cousin's husband monitors his bluebird boxes, which he builds himself. His name is Leonard Place, from Oshkosh. After retiring from schoolteaching, he designed his own predator-proof boxes. At the peak he had 70 boxes but is now down to 34. Last spring, the boxes produced 96 baby bluebirds. He has done so much for the preservation of the bluebirds in the Oshkosh area. I was raised in northwest Wisconsin and only saw one eastern bluebird when I was growing up. It is so good to see the return of the bluebird, as they are such a beautiful blue color.

Gary Knerr  
Bakersfield, California

We encourage readers interested in helping restore bluebirds and other cavity-nesting songbirds to check out the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin website at [braww.org](http://braww.org). BRAW was organized as a nonprofit in 1986 when it was found that eastern bluebird populations had declined by 90 percent during the preceding half century. Efforts by BRAW members to coordinate nestbox construction and monitor boxes and trails have been successful in boosting bluebird populations, which are currently stable or increasing throughout their range.



## BASKING AT VERNON MARSH

On Memorial Day my wife suggested we take a hike through the Vernon Marsh since it is only 15 minutes from our house. For anyone who has never been there, I would highly recommend it. There is such a variety of wildlife — some permanent residents and many that stop briefly on their migration. Toward the end of our hike we were lucky enough to spot this spiny softshell turtle just basking in the sunshine. I was even luckier to snap a few quick photos before it disappeared into the water. Visitors will also see osprey, sandhill cranes, marsh hawks and a variety of ducks that migrate through in the spring and fall. A trip worth taking!

Jeff Baker  
North Prairie



## BLUFFING BULLSNAKE

Every year around this time I see bullsnakes wandering. I typically find them crossing roads. I escort them across after properly identifying them. They look very similar to rattlesnakes. They even make a similar rattling sound with their mouth when messed with.

In Gays Mills, I saw this magnificent bullsnake crossing the road. It was approximately 6 feet long. I looked for the classic diamond-shaped head of a rattler and there was none. After I looked for rattles and there weren't any I got closer to take a few photos. I did an immediate about-face when I heard loud rattling from this long snake. After my fear subsided, I moved in for a couple photos. The rattling sound was coming from the snake's mouth. I believe the snake learned to rattle to scare away potential predators. I have taken many photos of bullsnakes. Their colors vary and there is a subspecies called gophersnake that is identified by a "mask" across its eyes. Bullsnakes are imposing and scary. I was chased by a large bullsnake a couple years ago. They are aggressive to bluff animals and people to stay clear. They are misidentified as rattlesnakes lots of times and are killed. Bullsnakes are an endangered species.

Len Harris  
Richland Center

Rori Paloski, conservation biologist with DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation, provided this reply: This is a great photo of a bullsnake! They are one of our largest snakes in Wisconsin; however, because they are so rare and spend a lot of time underground in mammal burrows, they are not often seen. They are not endangered at this point, but are considered a Species of Special Concern, which means the DNR is keeping a very close eye on their status. Both the bullsnake and timber rattlesnake are also listed as Protected Wild Animals in Wisconsin, meaning they cannot be intentionally killed. The bullsnake is one of several snake species in Wisconsin that is considered a rattlesnake mimic — they "rattle" their tail to imitate a rattlesnake when they feel threatened. The noise made by vibrating their tail against gravel or dry vegetation sounds very convincing! Bullsnakes are also known for their ability to hiss loudly, which may also sound similar to a rattlesnake. Taxonomists and geneticists have been doing a lot of research on amphibians and reptiles recently and have been making many changes to common and scientific names. While many of us still call this species a bullsnake, the official name has now changed to a gophersnake. The DNR is always looking for reports of our rare animals, including the bullsnake/gophersnake — reports can be submitted to: <http://wiatri.net/nhi/>.

## NO SUNSCREEN REQUIRED

At a popular log on the Menominee River — you need to get a spot early or learn to share.

Rick Armstrong  
Cedar Grove



## 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](mailto: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.