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RED CEDAR LAKE STATE NATURAL AREA

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Bull-head pond-lily, spatterdock, yellow pond-lily, brandy-bottle. These are some of the creative common names applied to the plant known to botanists by its scientific name, *Nuphar variegata*. Red Cedar Lake State Natural Area in Jefferson County is a great place to see this and other emergent and submerged aquatic plant species in a wild setting. The natural area is dominated by a 344-acre hard-water seepage lake lying in a marshy pocket of a poorly drained landscape that was scoured and shaped by the last advance of glacial ice. The soft, mucky bottom provides excellent substrate for water plants such as water shield, pickerelweed, fragrant white water lily, whorled watermilfoil, and common bladderwort, a carnivorous plant that traps tiny water-borne invertebrates to supplement its intake of nutrients. Bands of soft-stem bulrush and cattails ring the lake's perimeter. The lake is a haven for amphibians, reptiles (especially turtles) and a host of deep-water marsh birds including yellow-headed blackbird, American bittern, green heron and terns. Waterfowl use is extensive. Panfish, along with largemouth bass and northern pike, make up the fishery. The area is accessible to watercraft via a boat landing, but the thick beds of aquatic vegetation make outboard motors somewhat useless as spring progresses. Paddlers of canoes or kayaks will find greater success exploring the lake.

Red Cedar Lake is owned by the DNR and was designated State Natural Area number 215 in 1984. There are no designated trails or other facilities on the property other than a shallow boat landing on the northern end. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search "Red Cedar Lake" for a map, access directions and more information about this site and the State Natural Areas Program.

