Spring 2012 Newsletter

Refuge News

A Publication Funded by Seney Natural History Association for its Members.

Seney Natural History Association

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Photo: Spectacular Sunset. Credit: Tina Pipes, 2011 Photo Contest.
Photo: Mark Vaniman. Credit: Sara Giles, USFWS.

Manager's Corner

by Mark Vaniman

As I enter what is my third spring at the Seney NWR I have to ask – "What winter?" For all the hoopla about tough winters and 235 inches of snow in the UP I am thinking that this is a walk in the park – especially for an old North Dakota boy. I am aware, that the odds are in my favor, that I will eventually experience one of those legendary northern Michigan winters. Luckily, when it does come my snowblower will have relatively few hours on it.....

Something that I am particularly excited about this year is the proposed acquisition of an additional 19 acres of land at our Whitefish Point Unit. We were notified about the availability of this property, which is adjacent to our tract at the Point, in 2011. The land is within designated critical habitat for the Endangered Great Lakes population of piping plovers and includes over 1000' of Lake Superior shoreline. After several false starts we signed a purchase agreement with the landowner in February and we hope to close by the end of August. As most of you know, land in the UP can be expensive, especially if it has lake frontage, and this tract is no different. You may have heard me say in the past that if you divide the cost of the land by forever it comes out to be pretty inexpensive. Once this property is added to the Refuge System it will be public land, managed for wildlife and people in perpetuity. The most remarkable part of this project, however, is the amazing support we have received from friends and partners. In order to effect this purchase we needed to cover a funding shortfall to meet the landowner's price. I am happy (and grateful) to report that the response was overwhelming and, with private

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Photo: Morning Mist - Trumpeter Swans. Credit: Dawn Kopp, 2011 Photo Contest.

The Oldest Known Common Loon in the World

by Damon McCormick
Common Coast Research & Conservation

The early morning of April 26 finds the male common loon of F Pool, known by his leg band letters - ABJ, shadowing the slow transit of his mate as she threads her way between islands dotting the eastern end of their territory. They are inspecting possible nesting sites. As she drifts toward the shoreline of a small hummock, his attention rises to a familiar silhouette soaring very high overhead: bald eagle. At much lower elevation an osprey is simultaneously crossing the pool with an ambitiously large branch in its talons, but it is only the eagle that garners his interest. He cocks his head to the left, fixes his distant antagonist with a tactical right eye, and decides against vocalizing a two-note wail of warning. The shallow northern perimeter of the pool is crowded with migrating ducks, and ABJ shifts his focus toward a pair of mallards that have strayed into deeper, more open waters. He swivels, hunkers, submerges... ten seconds later the mallards, roughly 60 meters away, flush boisterously as ABJ surfaces beneath them. A small group of nearby Canada geese take notice and move off wearily; a lone pied-billed grebe, also in the vicinity, sagely slinks toward the protection of shoreline cattails. ABJ's mate has continued her island inspections during his interspecific engagements, but as the figure of an in-flight loon suddenly appears low on the eastern horizon, she abandons the effort and swims briskly in his direction. ABJ waits until the flyer is over F Pool airspace before unfurling his abrasive territorial bellow, the yodel. The length of his bark is proportional to the level of threat that he perceives, and in this instance he deploys a relatively short five seconds of vocalization. The overhead loon, who has briefly arrested the pace of his wingbeats in anticipation of a possible landing, reacts to the call by immediately resuming his cruising velocity and redirecting himself to the southwest. A moment later another yodel, conspicuously different in pitch from that of ABJ, rises from the direction of E Pool's eastern end. By the time a fainter yodel emanates from E Pool's western end, ABJ and his partner have already recommenced with their scrutiny of possible nesting sites.

The last of the audible yodels, from the E Pool West territory, belongs to ABJ's twelve year-old son, who

hatched on F Pool in 2000, returned to the Refuge as an adult in 2003, and acquired E West in 2008. To the south of F Pool another son, a thirteen year-old, holds the C Pool South territory, and to the west a seven year-old daughter freshly occupies G Pool in her first season of territoriality. More distantly, forty miles to the west, a fourteen year-old daughter resides as the breeding female of Bunting Lake, in Alger County. A third son, hatched in 2001, held C-3 Pool for four summers before failing to return in 2011, a likely victim of botulism poisoning on Lake Michigan. A third daughter was recovered dead in April 2009 near Perdido Key, along Florida's Gulf Coast, seven months removed from fledging F Pool as a juvenile. These offspring are but six of the twenty chicks that ABJ and his mate have hatched at Seney since 1998. Although the loon passing over F Pool on this late April morning is not among the twenty, considerations of paternity would not influence ABJ's response to the prospective interloper: familial obligations end with a first-season juvenile's Refuge departure for autumn migration.

Until such an embarkation, however, ABJ distinguishes himself parentally. During the first six weeks after hatching, when a loon chick is most dependent and vulnerable, the average Refuge adult directly attends to his or her offspring with food and protection 78% of the time; at other moments he or she may be feeding on other parts of the territory, or even away from the pool altogether. In contrast, ABJ directly attends to his young offspring 97% of the time. Similarly, while the typical Refuge parent spends 12.7 weeks with his or her chick(s) before undertaking migration, ABJ devotes an average of 15.1 weeks (adults almost always depart for the season ahead of their fully-developed young; mothers more frequently leave first). Perhaps in consequence, he has successfully fledged 95% of his chicks compared to the Refuge average of 81%. And this efficiency has been coupled to stellar overall productivity: ABJ has hatched 1.43 chicks per season against a rate of 0.86 for all Seney loons, who themselves are the most reproductively successful loon population in the Upper Midwest.

In early June, ABJ will turn 25. He is the oldest common loon of known age in the world. Detailed observations of his life history have been enabled by a color-marking program that began in 1987, when ABJ was a chick on G Pool, and that has subsequently banded and monitored over 250 Refuge loons. Although the main intent of the research has been to illuminate aspects of the species' biology through the study of an entire color-marked population, an ancillary benefit of the work has been the agglomeration of data concerning specific birds that has, over time, assumed the contours of biography. In other words, in searching for truths about all common loons, along the way the research has stumbled upon truths about individuals such as ABJ. On the morning of April 26, as he initiates his nesting effort for 2012, the odds are good – 86% based on past evidence – that come summer ABJ will once again form a conspicuous, doting fatherly presence along the beginning of the Refuge's Auto Drive. ❀

Photo: Common Loon with Chick.
Credit: Terry Weymouth, 2011 Photo Contest.

Introducing the Interns

Dawn Marsh
Visitor Services Intern
May 9th to August 19th
Hometown: Greenville, Michigan

Hello, my name is Dawn Marsh and I am currently a junior at Northern Michigan University. I am working towards completing my Environmental Science major and my two minors in Photography and Biology. When I am not studying, I can be found volunteering at Moosewood Nature Center. Once I graduate, I plan on attending graduate school. Although I am from the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, I consider myself a "Yooper". Seney National Wildlife Refuge is a place that I hold near and dear to my heart because I practically grew up just miles away in Blaney Park, where I would visit my grandparents (Jack and Sue Marsh) throughout the year. Seney is where I first fell in love with the outdoors and I am looking forward to returning and re-exploring all that the Refuge has to offer. I love birding, taking photos, watching the northern lights, geocaching, hiking, and camping. I am looking forward to a great summer full of new experiences in a beautiful area that I consider my second home.

Michael "Mike" McCarthy
Visitor Services Intern
May 7th to October 20th
Hometown: Edmore, Michigan

I am a brand new graduate of Lake Superior State University as of April 28th, with my bachelor's degree in Conservation Leadership. I am very anxious and excited to start at Seney. I love Michigan, especially the Upper Peninsula, so Seney was a clear first step for me as a new grad. I'm an avid hiker and outdoor "adventurer", which is even more of a reason, Seney was a clear choice.

I have quite a few interests within my field including, wetlands conservation/restoration, native plant use, watershed management, forest succession, local sustainability, invasive species, and land conservation. While I was a student at Lake State I co-founded a student sustainability organization, where we focused on campus sustainability projects that helped save the university money. I was also involved in the Fisheries and Wildlife Club. As part of my graduation requirements I conducted my academ-

Former Intern Updates

Kimaya Franklin, 2011
Kimaya is an Administrative SCEP student at Grand Cote NWR in Marksville, Louisiana and will graduate from college next May. On January 3rd she gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Tyler.

Peter Rea, 2010
After leaving Seney NWR Peter was able to finish up his Masters in Resource Administration for Outdoor Recreation. Since graduation he has been working at Desoto NWR in Iowa. Desoto was 90% flooded for over 4 months last year and he had to help them quickly move the Steamboat Bertrand Museum Collection so that it was not destroyed in the flood. He is excited to start his new position as a Park Ranger at Mingo NWR in Missouri.

Annie Davies, 2010
Last summer and fall Annie interned at Minnesota Valley NWR on the biology team. She had a good summer although there was a lot of flooding to contend with. Annie has also been busy applying for the Peace Corps. She recently completed her interview in Chicago and awaits more news. Until then she will be volunteering whenever she can at Horicon HWR in Wisconsin and work-

ing to pay off some of her student loans.

Dale and Elise Maxson, 2010

Dale is currently working for the Nature Conservancy as a prescribed fire/stewardship technician. This summer he will also be assisting the US Fish and Wildlife Service conduct prescribed fires. Dale married Elise, a former researcher here at the Refuge, the summer of 2011. She is currently a SCEP student with Rydell NWR.

Katie Julian, 2011

For the past eight months Katie has been working on her Masters degree at Michigan State University in Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management. This summer she will be helping Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in LaCrosse. Summer of paddling - sounds like fun! ❀

Under Construction

Seney NWR and its satellite Refuges' websites will be getting new looks shortly. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working hard to update all National Wildlife Refuge websites so they look similar and have all the important information a visitor needs. Seney NWR will not lose any content, but it will have a new layout. Watch for the updates throughout the summer. ❀

ic service learning project on the "Biological Control of Purple Loosestrife in the Eastern Upper Peninsula," which was part of a larger project through the EUP Cooperative Weed Management District and the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

My hope is while at Seney I can learn as much as possible and move on to do stewardship and outreach work for an organization here in Michigan. My off the job plans for the summer include purchasing a kayak, and using it as much as possible, hiking Pictured Rocks, and searching and photographing the elusive Michigan moose. All of which are open for people to join me!

Jeremy Maslowski

Refuge Management SCEP Intern
April 22nd to August 10th
Hometown: Little Falls, Minnesota

Jeremy Maslowski has recently joined the staff at Seney National Wildlife Refuge working as a Refuge Management SCEP (Student Career Experience Program) under the direction of Greg McClellan. Jeremy hails from Little Falls, Minnesota where he graduated from high school. He completed an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Natural Resources Management and then transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Ecology Research and Management.

Jeremy brings a broad range of experiences to Seney which he hopes to be beneficial to his position on the Refuge as well has his future with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Most recently, he worked the fall and winter months as a waterfowl technician for a graduate student at Mississippi State University. Jeremy performed weekly water bird surveys at active catfish facilities and on most soil units in west-central Mississippi. He also sorted soil and dip-net samples in the lab looking at presence and abundance of invertebrates in the surveyed ponds. He has worked for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a Wildlife Technician at Camp Ripley Military facility for two consecutive summers. His main job duties were focused around radio telemetry of gray wolves, black bears, white-tailed deer, Blanding's turtles and fisher. The next two summers Jeremy worked at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge in Northwest Minnesota as a Biological Technician. He worked on a variety of projects including water management, water quality and mercury assessment, GIS vegetation mapping, avian influenza, duck banding, waterfowl surveys, assembling a refuge herbarium, prescribed fire, numerous vegetation surveys, and

invasive species control.

Jeremy will be working at the Refuge until mid-August when he will be starting graduate school at North Dakota State University in Fargo emphasizing in Natural Resources Management. This summer he looks to continue to gain many new experiences while working with a new refuge staff.

Ellen Comes

Applied Science Intern
May 14th to August 3rd
Hometown: Toledo, Ohio

This will be my second field season here on the Refuge as an Applied Sciences Intern. I had a great experience last summer and am ready for another summer of learning, working hard, and having fun. I am originally from Toledo, Ohio. In the Fall, I will be a senior at the University of Dayton (Go Flyers!) in Dayton, Ohio where I am pursuing a degree in Environmental Biology with a minor in Geology. At UD, I am a River Steward, which is a program for students whose goal is to reunite Dayton with its rivers, and a member of Distance 4 Dreams, which is a service organization that fund raises to send a child with a life-threatening disease to Disney World. I also work as an office assistant in the Biology Department and am a part of Dr. Ryan McEwan's ecology research lab. For fun I enjoy running (completed three half-marathons), kayaking, reading, and drinking coffee.

After graduation next spring, I plan to continue on to grad school with a focus on water resources, such as river restoration or water management, basically something related to water. One of the projects I will be working on this summer is the Driggs River stream bank erosion monitoring and sampling; I am eager to "get my feet wet" with a research project pertaining to water systems.

Morgan Slevin

Applied Science Intern
May 21st through August
Hometown: Sarasota, Florida

Hi, my name is Morgan Slevin and I am a recent graduate from Rhodes College (in Memphis) where I was a Biology major and Spanish minor with a focus on Ecology. At Rhodes I did Ornithology research for my Ecology/Ornithology/Senior Seminar professor Dr. Collins where I designed my own study looking at the effects of invasive Chinese Privet on local avian species diversity. Now that I have graduated, I look forward to learning everything there is to know about professional research in ecology and determining which specific area I am most interested in to pursue in graduate school. I will be taking a working gap year and gaining experience before I set off on getting my Masters in some field of ecology.

A little about my nonacademic life, I am originally from Sarasota, Florida and have

played competitive tennis all my life. My interest in coming to Seney lies in a deep-seated desire to live and work in the outdoors. Of all the places in the country, I've heard the UP is the place to do it. I love fieldwork and am looking forward to aiding current research as well as gaining valuable professional skills in the field of ecology. Ever since reading Aldo Leopold's - *A Sand County Almanac* I've wanted to experience this area of the country firsthand. Looking forward to a great summer!

Cody Besteman

Piping Plover Tech
April 22nd - July
Hometown: Hudsonville, Michigan

My name is Cody Besteman and I grew up in Hudsonville Michigan. I went to Hudsonville High School for four years and currently am enrolled in the Fisheries and Wildlife program at Lake Superior State University. I am an avid outdoorsman. My hobbies are hunting, fishing, four-wheeling and snowmobiling. My job this summer is to monitor nesting and brooding plovers along the shore of Lake Michigan. ❀

Manager's Corner
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donations, including a considerable one from the Seney Natural History Association, we have obtained the necessary funds to purchase this property. It is not a done deal yet, but I remain optimistic.

Those of you that travel the auto tour route you may notice increased and expanded vistas this year. Local loggers completed a project on the Marshland Wildlife Drive and along the Fishing Loop, removing trees that had grown under 'artificial' conditions. In short, trees associated with constructed dikes were removed and those trees growing on pine islands were retained. The trees, especially those that were growing along the downstream toe of the dikes, were cut and hauled off the Refuge. It is presumed that the removal of these trees will reduce water use below the dikes, thus restoring some of the wetland functions of the areas and will also reduce the risk of damage to the dikes by roots of trees that fall over. Most of the trees removed were less than 40 years old and had grown as a direct result of the construction of the dikes upon which visitors drive. Some areas harvested will now have a better visual flow as well as making it easier for pool to pool travel by our winged residents.

Per our Comprehensive Conservation Plan, we will also begin the preliminary work to remove portions of the Riverside Dike to restore somewhat natural hydrology to the area west of the dike. Opening parts of the dike, which runs nearly the entire length of the Driggs River on the Refuge, will allow water to flow across the landscape and into the Driggs River, as it had done for thousands of years. Monitoring and implementation of the project will be conducted by a PhD candidate from Michigan Technological University under the direction of Refuge Forester Greg Corace. Actual construction and/or removal of dikes and trees will be completed by our maintenance staff. Expect to see more projects of this type as we move toward an ecological and landscape management scheme for the Refuge. ❀

Photo: Eastern Kingbirds.
Credit: Jack Cook, 2011 Photo Contest.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge 2012 Amateur Photo Contest

You're invited to participate in Seney National Wildlife Refuge's Amateur Photo Contest. The sole purpose of the contest is to encourage you to visit and enjoy the Refuge. Up to five entries (total) per person may be submitted - no more than three per category with exception of the youth category. The Special Assignment category will change each year. Photos may depict any of the following categories:

1. **Wildlife (Mammals, Birds, Reptiles & Amphibians, Spiders, Insects, etc.)**
2. **Public Use/Recreation**
3. **Landscape**
4. **Plants/Plant Like Organisms (Wildflowers, Lichens, Mushrooms, Liverworts, etc.)**
5. **Special Assignment 2012: Macro - Take Time To Notice the Little Things**
6. **Youth (18 and under)**

The photos will be displayed at the Visitor Center in September and October and on Seney's Flickr page (www.flickr.com/seneynwr). Credit will be given to each of the contestants once the voting has been completed. The public will vote for their favorites in each of the categories. You may cast your vote at the Visitor Center or online. Voting will begin by September 10th and end on October 15th. To vote online check out the photos on the Flickr website (www.flickr.com/seneynwr) then follow the special instructions. Certificates, ribbons and prizes (e.g. books, t-shirts, posters) will be awarded.

Winners will be notified by November 15. For further information please call (906) 586-9851 ext.15.

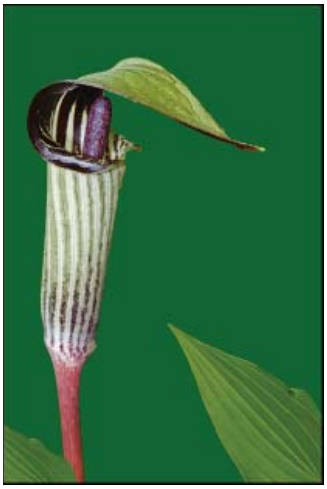
The 2011 1st Place Winners

Plants and Landscape
Atlee Hart 1st

Wildlife
Cathy Federinghe 1st

Public Use/Recreation
Kimber Reagle 1st

Youth
Andrew Cole 1st



Teen
Benjamin Hultz 1st

Contest Rules and Regulations

1. All entries must be photographs taken at Seney National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) or the Whitefish Point Unit of Seney NWR.
2. Up to five entries (total) per person may be submitted - no more than three per category with exception to the youth category. Youth may enter up to five photos in their age bracket.
3. Photographers must be non-professional; this is an amateur contest. For the purposes of this photography contest, a professional photographer is considered to be a photographer who has clients, depends on photography for their income, markets their services and/or writes off their expenses as a business owner.
4. All photographs should be submitted as an **electronic copy (please send the highest resolution possible) AND in a printed format** 5"x7", 8"x10" or 8"x12". Any photos not in accordance with size restrictions are subject to cropping. Black and white or color photos are acceptable. If you are unable to submit an electronic copy your photo Refuge staff will scan the photo for you. Note that scanned photos are not always as high quality as photos submitted electronically. Photos may not be matted nor should there be any frame or border surrounding the photo (digital or otherwise). Photos may not display the name of the photographer on the front of the photograph.
5. Mail or deliver the printed entries to:

   Seney National Wildlife Refuge
   Photo Contest
   1674 Refuge Entrance Road
   Seney, Michigan 49883

   Electronic copies may be mailed with the printed copy or emailed to seneyvs@gmail.com, the subject line should read "Photo Contest". Entries are accepted year round.
6. On the back of the printed photo, please attach a signed permission form with your contact information. Photos lacking the signed permission form will be disqualified.
7. All entries must be received by August 31, or they will be enrolled in next years competition.
8. Digitally altered photos - other than slight color correction (brightness or contrast) or a shift to black and white - will be disqualified.
9. Anyone whose photo has been disqualified will be notified before the voting begins.
10. All entries will be retained by the Refuge and may be used for non-profit publications, webpages and presentations.
11. While extreme care will be taken in handling entries, the Refuge cannot be responsible for any damage to photographs.

Online Voting: Cast your vote for your favorite photos from September 10th to October 15th. Remember only one vote per category per person. Each email address will be allowed one vote - if you have more than one email please be honest and only vote one time; duplicates will be deleted. Vote for the best photograph in EACH of the categories. If you would like to vote, email seneyvs@gmail.com. The subject line should read, VOTE 2012. The body of the email should include the code numbers for each of the four categories. Example: Landscape: L#, Wildlife: W#, Plants P#, Public Use/Recreation: R#, Special Assignment: S#, and Youth Ages 18 and Under: Y#.

Detach Here Detach Here

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Nature Nut Column

Dear Nature Nut,

Do both the male and female trumpeter swans incubate the eggs?

Signed,
A Curious Dad

Credit: Trumpeter swan with cygnets.
Credit: Laurie Gordon, 2010 Photo Contest

Dear Curious Dad,

What an eggcelent question. As most parents know child rearing can be exhausting work. First, a suitable place to raise the young must be found. Trumpeter swans select a location surrounded by water like a small island, a muskrat feeding platform or a beaver lodge. Next, the nest has to be constructed and this can take anywhere from two weeks to a month to prepare. Nest construction begins as early as one to two weeks before ice melts. After the eggs are finally laid the home territory has to be defended and the eggs incubated. If left uncovered for too long, the eggs would get too hot or cold and the young developing inside would not survive. Because the female does need time to feed, both male and female trumpeter swans take turns incubating the nest. However, the female does spend more time incubating the nest than the male.

While nesting trumpeter swans become very territorial and will chase away or become aggressive towards some other species of birds, mammals, and even people. At Seney NWR many spring visitors have witnessed fierce battles between resident Canada geese and trumpeter swans. Trumpeters tend to relax the defense of their territories after their eggs have hatched, although some parents keep their children sequestered until they have fledged.

Sincerely,
The Nature Nut

Dear Nature Nut,

My friend showed me a mushroom he found the other day. He said, “It is a beefsteak mushroom, come on over for dinner.” After looking at the mushroom I thought it was what my mom told me was a false morel and told me never to eat it because it is poisonous. I am now very confused. He said that he has eaten them all his life, but I am not sure if it is a good idea. Should I take up his dinner invitation?

Help,
Mushroom Lover

Dear Mushroom Lover,

While I can certainly understand your desire to eat a mushroom – being a fellow mushroom lover. I steer clear of the beefsteak mushroom. Its scientific name is *Gyromitra esculenta* and it is just one of the many false morel mushrooms worldwide. While false morels look similar to the edible morel mushroom they are in fact poisonous, especially when eaten raw. Some sources will tell you that if you parboil the mushroom they will then

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WANTED

Photos: Left - Smooth Green Snake. Center: Blue Spotted Salamander. Credit: squamatologist. Right: Blanding's Turtle. Credit: whiteoakart. All photos are from the Flickr Creative Commons.

Photos of Reptiles and Amphibians on the Refuge

This summer we need your help to fill in some gaps in our knowledge of the reptiles and amphibians living on the Refuge. For years, frog and toad surveys have been conducted at Seney NWR. Therefore, we have a pretty good idea of our frog and toad populations. We see a lot of snapping and painted turtles and feel confident in the knowledge that they are abundant on the Refuge. What we don't have a good grip on is the other types of snakes, salamanders, and turtle species living here.

This is where you come in. When you visit the Refuge this summer please help us out by watching for snakes, salamanders and turtles. If you happen to see one, mark the place you saw it on a map and take a picture. Then, stop by the Visitor Center or email Sara_Giles@fws.gov with the location of your sighting, your contact information, and a photo. You may help us confirm a species is present on the Refuge and give us a better understanding of the population's size.

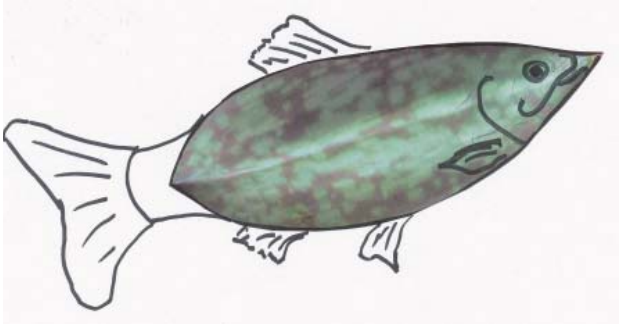
We will also enter confirmed sighting into the Michigan Herp Atlas. Anyone can join and help the Michigan DNR map the amphibians and reptiles in the state. Visit their website at www.miherpatlas.org. ❀

What's mottled, fleeting and found in masses?

by, Jennifer McDonough

Yellow Trout Lily.
Sara Giles, USFWS.

Erythronium americanum of course! Even if you didn't recognize its scientific name, *Erythronium americanum*, you might recognize this common woodland wildflower by sight or by one of its many common names. People tend to give names to things based on what their characteristics remind them of and this plant is no exception.



Trout Lily. Jennifer McDonough, USFWS.

Trout Lily

Appearing in early spring, the mottled leaves remind some people of the brook trout they are out fishing for during the start of trout season. The mottled leaf patterns of plants from the same colony may be closely similar. If you tire of looking for fish, take a rest among a patch of trout lily and see if you can tell which plants belong to separate colonies or how large one colony is.

Adder's Tongue

Our primordial fascination with snakes emerges with the young leaves and then shows its face again within the flower. The early shoots emerging from the soil, along with a cold slow brain emerging from winter, could create an image of snake tongues, and it doesn't take too much of a stretch of the imagination to see a snake's tongue in the pistil and stamens emerging from the "mouth" of the flower.

Adder's Tongue. Jennifer McDonough, USFWS.

Dogtooth Violet.
Jennifer McDonough, USFWS.

Dogtooth Violet

To discover the imagination behind this name you have to get your hands dirty. If you gently dig 6-15 inches below the base of the leaves you will find a corm (bulb-like part of the stem that stores food). This corm is rounded at the base and pointed at the top, similar to a canine tooth from a dog. The "Violet" part of the name may have been applied to many common spring flowers or may come from an Eurasian variety that has a violet colored flower. It is this "dogtooth" corm that sends out stolons (horizontal stems) to produce more plants within the colony. This vegetative reproduction probably allows the plant to reproduce far more productively than relying solely on seed production during a time of year when there are not a lot of pollinators around to help fertilize plants.

Fawn Lily. Jennifer McDonough, USFWS.

Fawn Lily

The two leaves of this plant often stand erect like the ears of a fawn. It is the plants with two leaves that produce flowers. You may have noticed that there are many more single leaves than flowering plants. It seems that this plant relies more on cloning than seed production, producing only enough flowers and seeds to start new colonies and may take nearly seven years for a plant to produce a flower.

Spring Ephemeral

Plant enthusiasts often speak of the "Spring Ephemerals", typically referring to any of a variety of woodland wildflowers that take advantage of the sun's exposure to the forest floor before the trees leaf out. Like many other spring ephemerals, *Erythronium americanum* pokes through the ground in April, flowers in April/May, and then retreats back underground until the next spring. More-so than many other plants, *Erythronium americanum* is good at capturing spring runoff and storing phosphorous in its leaves. This phosphorous gets returned to the soil when it dies. The phosphorous can then be used by other forest plants. ❀

Join the Social Network

Since 2010, Seney NWR has hosted three social networking sites. These sites have blossomed and grown into wonderful communication tools. We often hear how much visitors enjoy the updates on Refuge happenings. Today we have over 1,275 Facebook fans, 50 Twitter followers, and many more enjoy looking at the photos posted on our Flickr photo sharing website. If you haven't done so, Fan us on Facebook to stay up to date on the happenings at Seney NWR. Become our contact on Flickr and see up to date photos of the Refuge. ❀

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Announcements

Name Change

Visitor Services Manager Sara Hollerich wed Rob Giles on April 5th, 2012. The wedding took place at the Riviera Maya near Cancun, Mexico. Immediate family and a couple of friends attended the wedding. Please note that Sara's new last name is Giles (pronounced Jiles). Please be sure to note that her new email address is Sara_Giles@fws.gov and her phone number is 906-586-9851 x10.

Navigating by GPS?

If you have noticed that it is difficult to navigate to Seney NWR using a GPS unit you are not alone. Currently, Google Maps lists the drive being closed May to October and NavTec (who provides maps to Garmin and Microsoft) routes people to the center of the Refuge, not the Visitor Center. The Visitor Services Staff has been working to update our maps so people can more easily find their way to the Refuge. Although there have been many changes for the better, we are still working out some of the bugs in the program. Please be patient with us as we attempt to make these changes. Unfortunately, we have not found a way to correct this error. The Marshland Wildlife Drive, Fishing Loop and Visitor Center are be open annually from May 15 to October 15. ❀

Photo: American bittern. Credit: Barbara Hysell, 2012 Photo Contest.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge
2012 General Calendar

Twilight Tours
Thursdays, May 31st
9pm to Midnight
Use your ears not just your eyes on these special nighttime tours. The Refuge is closed from dusk to dawn so this tour is a rare opportunity to experience the twilight and early evening hours when many animals are active. **Preregistration is required.**

Amateur Photo Tours

Most Thursdays June - September
7 to 11am
Join other amateur photographers to explore the Refuge, look for great shots, and share photos and skills. You should have a working knowledge of your equipment and come prepared for a variety of weather and bug conditions. **Preregister by noon the previous day by calling 906-586-9851 x 15 or at the Visitor Center.**

Wildlife Wednesdays
Wednesday Nights June – August
7 to 9:30pm
Join us Wednesdays this summer for an evening guided auto tour of the Refuge backcountry. We'll be on the lookout for a variety of wildlife, while sharing Refuge history and management practices.

Children's Fishing Day

Saturday, June 23rd
9am to 4pm
Join us for the 23nd annual Children's Fishing Day. Youth 17 and under are invited to fish the Refuge pools. Youth 16 and under do not need a fishing license. Certificates will be awarded to the largest perch and pike. A limited number of poles will be available at the Visitor Center. Activities include games, arts & crafts, presentations, etc. Registration begins at 9am and entries are accepted until 2pm. A free fish dinner and awards ceremony will conclude the festivities.

Junior Duck Stamp Art Exhibit
July
9am to 5pm, Daily
Community members and visitors alike should mark their calendars for this exhibition of original art work by kids from across the country. The first place winners from each state and U.S. territory will be on display.

Discover Seney
Wednesday, August 15th
9am to 3pm
Limited to the first 50 participants, *Discover Seney* is a way for adults to learn more about the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Activities and presentations will take place throughout the day. **Preregistration and a $5 registration fee are required.** Lunch will be provided.

Nature Programs
Various dates & times
Staff and interns will present programs and tours on a variety of topics. Check the website monthly for locations, times and dates.

Amateur Photo Contest
Last day to enter is August 31
The purpose of the contest is to encourage you to visit and enjoy the Refuge. When on display for voting the entries create an incredible array of Refuge experiences. Details can be found in the Visitor Center or on our website.

Monarch Madness
Sunday, September 2nd
9am to 1pm
Would you like to participate in collecting and tagging monarch butterflies? Join us for this morning of Monarch education and citizen science. We will start with an orientation session and then head to the field for about 3 hours.

Youth In the Outdoors

For elementary age boys & girls
Saturday, September 29th
9am to 4pm
A variety of activity stations will be available to introduce youth to outdoor related topics, some will fulfill scout badge requirements. **Preregistration is required.** See the website or call for details and registration form.

Fall Color Float
Sunday, October 7th
11am to 4pm
Join our staff for a 4-5 hour canoe/kayak trip down the Manistique River. Boat rentals are available locally. **Preregistration is required.** Call for details.

National Wildlife Refuge Week

Week of October 7th to the 13th

Lace up your hiking shoes, strap on your bike helmet, grab your binoculars, launch your boat in the river, drive your car…. whatever your passion, come to the Refuge and enjoy your great outdoors!

Science and Seney Series

Wednesday, May 23rd
Thursdays, June 14th, July 12th, August 2nd & 23rd
Tuesday, Sept. 11th (dates are tentative)
7 to 9pm

This series of evening presentations will cover a variety of topics including an overview of research and monitoring projects occurring at the Refuge. A detailed presentation schedule will be available at the Visitor Center and on the website. ❀

Nature Nut
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become edible, but should you really take the chance? After all, not all the toxins are removed by this process. Not to mention, if you breath the vapors produced while preparing the mushrooms they can also make you sick.

In and around the Great Lakes and Scandinavia some consider these mushrooms a delicacy. There are, in fact, some people that eat them and seem to have no ill effect. This is not a good idea however, because these mushrooms contain a toxin called monomethyl hydrazine (MMH), the same stuff used in rocket fuel. This compound causes vomiting, dizziness, diarrhea, and possibly death among a whole host of other unpleasant side effects. MMH is also a known carcinogen, so those who dine on these mushrooms are taking two risks each time they take a bite.

Each individual mushroom varies in the amount of the MMH toxin it contains. Some may contain a small amount, while others a lethal dose. It is somewhat like playing Russian Roulette. While death from these mushrooms is not common, many people who end up in the hospital sick from eating this mushroom will eventually recover. One source I read said that the beefsteak mushroom is responsible for 2 to 4% of all fatal mushroom poisonings. Also, because it can accumulate in your body over time there seems to be a threshold that can be passed and a person that has eaten the beefsteak mushroom many times with no ill effect can suddenly become violently ill or even die.

Photo: Beefsteak or false morel mushroom. Credit: Sara Giles, USFWS.

Identification Tips:

- Seems wavy or lobed outwards
- May have a squashed appearance
- Inside is not completely hollow
- Can appear in many colors some a dark red some even yellowish
- Cap is not attached to the stem

Photo: Morel Mushroom. Credit: Sara Giles, USFWS.

Identification Tips:

- Seems pitted or ridged inwards
- Stem and cap are both completely hollow from top to bottom
- Can range in color yellowish to gray
- Uniform in shape
- Cap is attached to stem

Of course every person has to decide for themselves what to eat and what not to eat. I personally wouldn't dream of eating a "false morel" of any variety. Why risk it? Those who choose to eat the mushroom should not invite others to join in this dangerous dining.

Be Safe,
The Nature Nut

The questions in the Nature Nut column come from questions posed by visitors. This month the nature nut column was written by Sara Giles, Visitor Services Manager. If you have a question you would like the Nature Nut to answer email Sara_Giles@fws.gov ❀

Seney Natural History Association
1674 Refuge Entrance Road
Seney, MI 49883

Photos from the 2012 Pine Creek Wildfire

More information on the 2012 Pine Creek North Wildfire will be in the next issue of “Refuge News”.

Right: Trees torching just off Pine Creek Road. Credit: Sara Giles, USFWS.

Left: Helicopter used to dump water on the fire. Center: Forest Service personnel assisting with the fire.