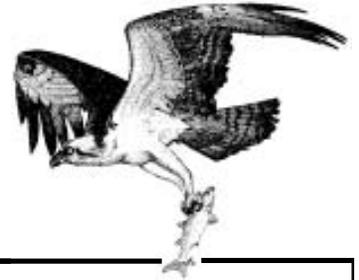




# Refuge News



Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Summer 2008

## Monitoring Botulism Affects on Lake Michigan

The outbreak of type-E botulism that killed thousands of birds on Lake Michigan in 2007 has, as expected, re-appeared this summer. While mortalities have thus far been reported only in the northern Lower Peninsula, it is highly likely that in the coming months stricken birds will begin appearing on the shores of the eastern UP. Common Coast, a non-profit research organization, will again be involved in the study of the outbreak's impact and would appreciate the assistance of volunteers in this effort.



The work would involve monitoring mile long "transects" of beach. These areas will be walked in two-week intervals to provide an account of particular species being afflicted by the toxin over the course of the summer and autumn. As an organization devoted to the protection of Common Loons, an emphasis will be placed upon their identification, including the search for possible banded loons from Seney NWR.

The monitoring window will stretch from August through November. Individuals who can participate for only part of this period are still needed. Additionally, for volunteers with houses along Lake Michigan, transects can be established with home-based starting points.

If you would like to help with this important project, please contact Damon McCormick at [dml@commoncoast.org](mailto:dml@commoncoast.org) or (906) 202-0602. A sign-up sheet is also posted at the front desk in the Seney NWR Visitor Center.

## Pollinators in Question

What do raspberries, chocolate and almonds have in common? Besides being bestselling ice cream toppings, they are also foods from plants that require pollinators. Raspberries are typically pollinated by bees, as are almonds. Chocolate is pollinated by a small fly called a midge. In fact over 90% of all flowering plants and over three-quarters of the staple crop plants that feed humankind rely on animal pollinators.



Supporting pollinator conservation and education is important to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because pollinator conservation and education are critical components of the Service priorities. Promoting an interest in pollinators helps connect people with nature. Seney Refuge Visitor Services staff have had four opportunities to educate local children of all ages from Curtis and Newberry on the benefits of pollinators.

Programs consisted of showing off food pollinated by insects, an interactive game matching pollinators with their behaviors, having children invent their own pollinators with craft supplies and building kids into insects using common materials, such as goggles for compound eyes and wings made of poster board.

## Interns Reports

The 2008 interns were on hand at the July volunteer social to give updates on their projects. Anna Treado, the Applied Conservation Biology Intern, spoke about her study of standing dead trees, or snags. Vanessa Walthall, Biology Intern, described her experience doing marsh bird surveys. Reid Plumb, Bio Tech, talked about his main duty, killing glossy buckthorn. Public Use Interns, (Jody Demeyer, Miriam Johnson, and Ryan Isaac) provided examples of their programs, on the topics of prescribed fire, painting Seney's scenery, and animal tracking. All of the interns are grateful to the SNHA members for their generous support.

## Mark Your Calendars

- Volunteer Social: Tuesday, August 19th 6:00pm
- Last Wildlife Wednesday of the summer: August 27
- Art on the Lake: Saturday, August 30th
- Jr. Duck Stamp Art Display: September 3 -13
- 08 Volunteer Banquet: Friday, September 19, 6:00pm
- Scout Day: Saturday, September 27

Seney National Wildlife Refuge  
1674 Refuge Entrance Rd  
Seney, MI 49883

Did You Know . . . muskrats stay active all year. They can swim under ice and stay submerged for as long as fifteen minutes at a time.

## What's in Pine Creek?

An aquatic life survey of Pine Creek was conducted this June. The survey was done by the Refuge Biologist (Dave Olson), the Biology Intern (Vanessa Walthall), volunteer George Phinney, and volunteer Rob Treuax. A total of 12 stations were randomly selected to be sampled. The plots began near the headwaters of Pine Creek and continued towards the mouth near the Manistique River. During the survey seven species of warm water fish were collected and identified. Several specimens of invertebrates were collected, the most significant being the rusty crayfish, *Orconectes rusticus*, an invasive species.

The rusty crayfish is a native of the Ohio River Basin. They require permanent bodies of water with cover provided by rocks, logs or tree branches. Their diet is comprised of aquatic plants, insects, other crustaceans, fish eggs and small fish. It was originally released into Michigan waters by anglers who used them as bait. They are now considered to be a threat to the local riparian ecosystems. The primary concern is the reduction of aquatic vegetation and the effect on the species that use the plant beds for shelter and/or nesting areas.

Michigan DNR suggests that, "a potential control of this aquatic alien may be as close as your cookbook. They can be used for a variety of tasty dishes."



## Seney's Newest Employee

Richard Wilson is the newest staff member at Seney NWR. He has worked at Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. He was stationed in St. Ignace while serving in the Coast Guard from 1980-82. Most recently; he was with the U.S. Forest Service working at the Ottawa National Forest. He also has a wealth of private sector experience. He operated a vehicle repair and welding shop in Grand Marais, and was a master mechanic for Fox River Auto. Richard is filling Terry Papple's vacant position. You can expect to see him at work on the Refuge this August.

## Boas for a Smile

On July 17th guests and staff in the Visitor Center were introduced to a unique lady. Pamela P. Rettig stopped by to exchange boas crocheted by hand for smiles and hugs. Intrigued visitors and staff gathered around when she pulled out her collection of brightly colored boas (or scarves for the men). Before long, numerous hugs were traded for the neckwear. She left Seney achieving the milestone of 700 boas distributed worldwide! Thanks for a wonderful visit Pamela!



Jody, Pamela, Jen, and Ryan