



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Summer Calendar of Events



June, July, August
2015



Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) is a favorite food plant for Bumble Bees. Photo K. Raveling

Buzzzzzzzz, mmmmmmmmm, rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr, flashes of black and yellow, metallic blue, shiny green, purple and orange, whirr of wings, tck, tck, tck, of chewing jaws, warm sun, warm breeze, scent of lilacs in the air. The milkweed patch bursts forth with life in July. Hungry monarch caterpillars chomp on milkweed leaves. Spotted ladybugs devour aphids. Bumble bees, wasps, and flies glide about, gathering nectar and pollen to feed their young. Birds dart in and out, picking off flies, ants, and other insects feeding on the plants. Purple bergamot, yellow coneflowers, and orange butterfly weed shine brightly in the strong sunlight. Mixed in among all the activity, color, and sound, is the understated pale pink common milkweed. It can easily be overlooked but is the cornerstone species of the milkweed community

Common milkweed is a native North American plant and gets its name from the milky white sap that flows in its stem. The sap contains latex and a cardiac glycoside. It is toxic to most animals, but monarch caterpillars, red milkweed beetles, and stem weevils are a few of the insects that can eat the plant's stem and leaves. The nectar and pollen produced from the flowers are not toxic and feed a variety of animals. Common milkweed is nectar-rich and most butterflies will forage on it. Bees, wasps, flies, and ants all eat nectar, and some unwittingly pollinate the plant as they feed. Hummingbirds spend lots of time zipping from plant to plant, sipping nectar and eating ants off of the flowers.

A small milkweed patch can support thousands of different animals. Please visit the patch in front of the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center. Mid-July is the best time to visit, and as a bonus, the blooming milkweed smells like lilacs! Spend some time in the patch and enjoy the amazing variety of life that is found here.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to restoring and protecting pollinator habitat, and can help you create your own milkweed patch.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/>



Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and pollinators, photo Mary Graves

June



5 An Original Duckumentary

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:30 pm-4:30 pm

6 National Trails Day Bird Walk

Bass Ponds Trailhead
7:30 am-8:30 am

6 Summer Birding

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:30 am-11:30 am

6 Backyard Birding Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-11:00 am

6 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

7 Bird Banding

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
7:00 am-8:00 am

7 Nesting Birds of the Refuge

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-9:30 am

7 Bird Language

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

13 Colors of the Prairie: The Pink Palette

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
10:00 am-11:00 am

Patio Programs

NEW!

*Bloomington Education and
Visitor Center*

Tuesday-Sunday, 11:30

June 2-August 30

*Join in on 15 minute
presentations on the patio! The
subject will be different every
day. On Saturdays, join in on the
“Family Nature Hike” after each
patio program.*



June *continued*

13 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

13 How to Bee a Pollinator Friendly

Family
Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
1:00 pm-2:30 pm

14 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

14 Making Tracks: Hillside Trail

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
5:00 pm-6:00 pm

15 Bird Watching Trek

Louisville Swamp Unit
8:00 am-11:00 am

19 Beginning Nature Photography

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-11:00 am

20 Wild Writers!

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
10:30 am-11:30 am

21 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

27 Family Nature Walk

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

28 Nesting Birds of the Refuge

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-10:00 am

28 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

Summer Hours

*Bloomington Education and
Visitor Center
Tuesday-Sunday, 9 am-5 pm*

*Rapids Lake Education and
Visitor Center
Tuesday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm*

Saturdays

June 13

July 11

August 8

9 am-4 pm



July

5 Bird Language

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

5 Wild Writers!

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
10:30 am-11:30 am

5 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

5 Making Tracks: Bass Ponds Hike

Bass Ponds Trailhead
5:00 pm-6:00 pm

6 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-11:00 am

11 Summer Birding

Louisville Swamp Unit
8:30 am-11:30 am

11 Monarchs, Milkweed, and Macro Photography

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-12:00 pm



11 Colors of the Prairie: A Whisper of White

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
10:00 am-11:00 am

11 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

11 How to BEE a Pollinator

Friendly Family
Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
1:00 pm-2:30 pm

11 Minnesota to Montreal: The History of Carver Rapids

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:00 pm-9:00 pm

12 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

17 Beginning Nature Photography

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-11:00 am

18 Family Nature Walk

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm



July *continued*

19 Nesting Birds of the Refuge

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-10:00 am

19 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

20 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-11:00 am

25 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

26 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm



Black-eyed Susan, photo USFWS

August

1 Summer Birding

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:30 am-11:30 am

1 Beginning Nature Photography

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-11:00 am

1 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

2 Bird Language

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

2 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

8 Colors of the Prairie: End-of-Summer Yellow

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
10:00 am-11:00 am

8 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

8 Beginner Archery

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
12:30 pm-2:30 pm



August *continued*

9 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

10 Bird Watching Trek

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

15 Beginner Archery

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
10:00 am-12:00 pm

15 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

16 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

22 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-11:00 am

22 Landscape Photography

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
10:00 am-12:30 pm

22 Wild Writers!

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
10:30 am-11:30 am

22 Family Nature Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

23 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

23 Making Tracks: Long Meadow Lake Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
5:00 pm-6:00 pm

24 Bird Watching Trek

Bloomington Ferry Unit
8:00 am-11:00 am

29 Family Nature Hike

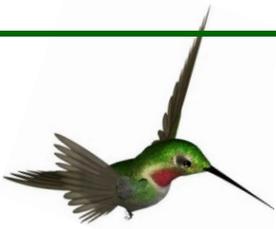
Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:00 pm-12:45 pm

30 Beat the Heat Film Series

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm



Monarch and Goldenrod,
photo Robert Herndon



Program Descriptions

Backyard Birding Hike

Have you ever seen a bird in your neighborhood and wondered what it was? Join us for this fun introduction to urban birds and explore the many kinds of feathered friends living in your own backyard. New to birdwatching? No problem! Our knowledgeable staff can help you hone your skills. Binoculars and field guides are provided.
Patrick Bryant, Refuge Naturalist

Beat the Heat Film Series

Come inside on Sunday afternoons to enjoy a comfortable hour of films featuring some of our Refuge favorites. There is something for everyone with weekly themes, prize-winning documentaries, and great footage. Films may be checked out from the Resource Center for FREE! Recommended for all ages.

June 14: Attracting Birds to your Backyard

June 21: Strange Creatures of the Night

June 28: Living with White-tailed Deer

July 5: Turtle Planet

July 12: Bees: Tales from the Hive

July 19: Conservation Legacies

July 26: Animal Olympians

August 2: Owls up Close

August 9: Gray Wolf Reintroduction

August 16: Hummingbirds up Close

August 23: Cottontail

August 30: Dragonflies and Damselflies of North America

Beginner Archery

Have you ever wanted to try archery? Would you like to learn the skills of a good archer? This program begins with the basics of stance, form, aiming, shooting, and range safety. For ages 8 through adult. This program will be cancelled in case of rain, call 952-858-0715 for weather updates. Reservations are required. Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/beginarchery> to reserve your spot.
Chelsi Burns, Refuge Naturalist

Beginning Nature Photography

Capture your favorite part of the Refuge in this family friendly photo adventure. Our naturalist will show you how to take great photos as we walk the trails around the visitor center. At the end of the program you can select and print your favorite photo to take home with you. Digital cameras are available to borrow on a first come, first serve basis.

Patrick Bryant, Refuge Naturalist

Bird Banding

Join U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff for an early morning bird banding demonstration. See live songbirds up close and learn how bird populations have benefitted from banding.

Sarah Inouye-Leas, USFWS bird bander

Connect with the Refuge online

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley

<http://www.facebook.com/MNValleyNWR>

<http://twitter.com/usfwsminvalley#>

Bird Language

Join us as we gather on the slopes of the Minnesota River Valley to explore what the birds are telling us about our surroundings. We will split time between the classroom and outdoors. Bring a notebook, pencils, and something to sit on outdoors. To register visit:

<http://www.mntracking.org/>

Donnie Phyllaier and Jonathan Poppele, Refuge Naturalists

Bird Watching Trek

Join in on a bird walk at one of the Refuge's largest units and learn about the birds that breed there. We will search for willow flycatchers, prothonotary and blue-winged warblers, many species of sparrows, and other summer residents. Birders of all skill levels are welcome; bring your binoculars, field guide, and dress for the weather.

Craig Mandel, Refuge Naturalist

Colors of the Prairie

The prairie is a summer wave of color and a buzz of sound. Take a closer look at the beautiful blooms and visiting pollinators unique to each stage of the prairie summer. Artists are encouraged to stay and sketch, paint, or photograph the summer prairie.

Suzanne Trapp, Refuge Naturalist

Family Nature Hike

Bring the kids, grandparents, and friends for an easy stroll through the Refuge. We will look for birds, bugs, plants, and all other things "nature". Each week will bring something new! Wear sturdy shoes and bring bug spray.

How to BEE a Pollinator Friendly Family



Pollinators are in trouble and you can help! Just a few simple changes to your lawn, yard, and even your patio containers can make a BIG difference. Join this discovery walk to meet some of our most common pollinator insects. Go home with easy tips on how to grow your own pollinator habitat this summer.

Suzanne Trapp, Refuge Naturalist

Landscape Photography

Landscape photography is coming to the Refuge! This lecture was first given at Crex Meadows as part of an all day workshop. Since then it has been converted to a club lecture and has been delivered to a number of camera clubs in the Twin Cities. Bring your camera, tripod, and other outdoor gear.

Don Tredinnick and Peter Berman, Refuge Naturalists

Making Tracks! Trail Hikes

The wetlands, shoreline and forest edges around Long Meadow Lake provide homes and food for a variety of wildlife. We'll take a leisurely hike through the river valley exploring some of the Refuge's best habitat. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water. Binoculars provided.

Judy Geck, Refuge Naturalist

Minnesota to Montreal: The History of Carver Rapids

Take an easy stroll along the banks of the Minnesota River and listen to the story of the history of Carver Rapids.

Todd Smith, Refuge Naturalist

Blowin' in the Wind,
photo by Don Tredinnick



Monarchs, Milkweed, and Macro Photography

The Monarch butterfly is one of the nation's most beloved animals, and the prairie in front of the Visitor Center is a great place to view them! There will be a short presentation about monarchs followed by a brief lecture on macro-photography. Afterwards we will go outside and practice macro skills in the milkweed patch. Bring your camera equipment, hat, water, and sunscreen!

Don Tredinnick, Peter Berman, and Kristin Raveling, Refuge Naturalists

National Trails Day Bird Hike

Uplands, wetlands, streams and ponds all come together in the Bass Ponds. Explore the layers of ideal bird habitat as we descend from the bluff to the river valley. Binoculars provided.

Judy Geck, Refuge Naturalist

Nesting Birds of the Refuge

Over 100 species of birds have been observed nesting in the Refuge. We will search for some of those 100 nesting species and document the birds we do find. Bring your binoculars, a field guide, and dress for the weather.

Craig Mandel, Refuge Naturalist

Original Duckumentary

Ducks are born knowing how to survive. They must make it through a gauntlet of hungry predators, but ducks have a talent for survival. Their life stories are filled with personality and charm. Featuring a selection of divers, dabblers, and waddlers, this film highlights the remarkable adaptations and behaviors of one of our favorite species.

Summer Birding

Hike the western portion of the Refuge and meet the birds that nest there. Eastern Kingbirds, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, and many species of warblers and grassland sparrows are some of the many birds you will see on this hike. George Skinner and Anne Hanley, Refuge Naturalists

Wild Writers!

Discover how to make a difference and a future-for human and wildlife habitat through literature. We will discuss a variety of books that all nurture a land ethic. Learn how to use the Refuge's Resource Center to expand your horizons. For book and nature lovers, families, and educators who want to make meaningful connections with the natural world.

Judy Geck, Refuge Naturalist

June 20: Art in Nature

July 5: Natural History

August 22: Choosing and Using Field Guides

Now Showing in the Art Gallery

Seasons of the Refuge

2015 Refuge Partner School Student Art Show

Opens May 19 and closes June 30. Students from Lake Nokomis Community School in Minneapolis and Jackson Elementary in Shakopee visit the refuge during the spring, summer, and fall. This exhibit showcases students' learning throughout all three seasons. A reception for the artists and teachers will be held on Saturday, June 6, at 10 am.

To find out more about the Refuge Partner School Program please visit http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota_Valley/visit/for_educators.html

*"Primary Birds" by Lake
Nokomis Community School
2nd graders*

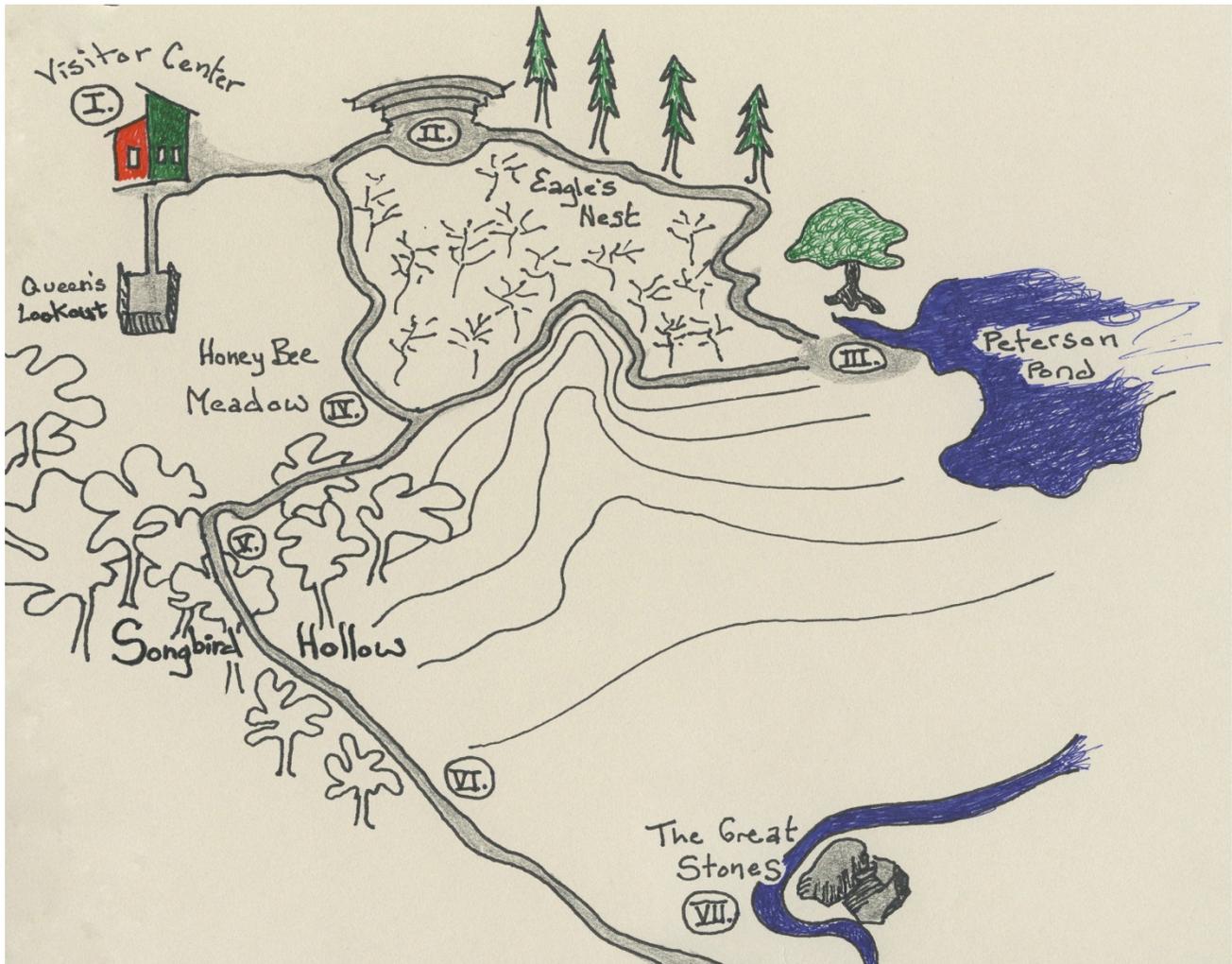


*"Leaves" by Lake Nokomis
Community School 1st graders*

After the Birds Taught Me to Fly

On June 6 and 7, as part of the Twin Cities Urban Bird Festival, join PlaceBase Productions for Birdwatching Theatre on the paths of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The play will visit four flocks of Refuge birds and observe their behavior through the eyes and imagination of an eight year old birdwatcher. Over the course of this theatrical journey audiences will explore the history of the Refuge, the history of the South Loop Community, and the lives and behaviors of over 25 of the Refuge's feathered residents. Prepare for laughter, music, dancing, luxurious costumes, and a 1/2 mile walk around the Refuge in this original, jaw dropping community-driven performance.

Keep your eyes peeled for the upcoming reservation information. Tickets are free, but you must reserve a spot!



Trailhead Addresses

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center

3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington
Phone: 952-854-5900

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center

15865 Rapids Lake Road, Carver
Phone: 952-361-4500

Old Cedar Avenue:

9500 Old Cedar Ave S, Bloomington

Chaska Unit, Carver Riverside Park Trailhead:

725 West 1st Street, Chaska

Bass Ponds:

2501 East 86th St, Bloomington

Louisville Swamp:

3801 145th St W, Shakopee

Wilkie Unit:

7701 County Road 101 E, Shakopee

Lyndale Avenue Trailhead:

11135 Lyndale Avenue S, Bloomington

Minnesota Valley
National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Blvd E
Bloomington, MN 55425