

## The Sights and Sounds of Spring

From the early dawn chorus of springtime migrants to the longer moments of evening light, the first signs of spring bring out the best in all that surrounds us. It is a time of reawakening and renewal, and a time to hit the trails and tune in.

For many of us our childhood memories are tied to those magical moments of discovery: Of looking to the sky, when surprised by the honk of Canada geese and overturning rocks to see salamanders scurry away. Spring encourages the senses to work overtime.

Become familiar with the seasonal changes and discover how many you see and hear!

### Birds

Establishing territories and breeding are the top priorities for many in the animal kingdom during early spring, but it is perhaps most noticeable with birds.

Beginning with those first warm mornings of February, there are sounds that were silenced during the quiet of winter. Suddenly the trees are filled with chatter and song; the sounds having different purposes and characteristics.

Listening carefully, one can notice that most birds have distinct types of vocalizations: the call note and the song. The *call note* is usually brief and non-melodious and heard throughout the year. An example would be the *dee-dee-dee* of the black-capped chickadee. The other is the *song*, which is usually loud, melodious and most often restricted to the breeding season of spring and summer. For that same black-capped chickadee it's their *fee-bee fee-bee*.

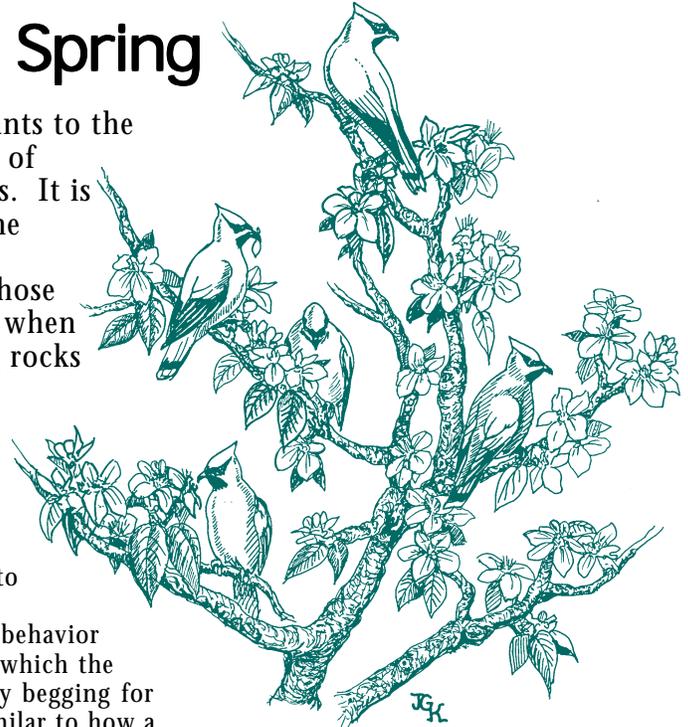
Migrating males, often arriving first to establish a territory, will sit atop high perches and sing loud and strong, signaling to other males that a certain area is taken and advertising to

females they are ready to mate.

Another springtime behavior is courtship feeding in which the female bird is seemingly begging for food from the male, similar to how a juvenile would behave. But as researchers point out, this should not be considered a placating behavior on the part of the female. She usually ends up with a juicy high protein treat, and he helps her gain the strength necessary for nesting and raising his offspring. It's mutually beneficial.

Springtime is also when trees are suddenly filled with loud *caw-caw-cawing* of crows and "raspy" sounds from grackles. Large flocks of blackbirds are looking for places to roost, usually after long periods of night travel from their southern wintering areas. Usually they will stay for only a few days, then continue northward. As with other migrating birds, the males arrive first, and are followed by the females.

John Kricher author of *Eastern Forests* explains that "flocking in birds, like schooling in fish, helps individuals avoid predation. Flocks are visually



obvious and often very noisy, seemingly attractive targets for predators. However, flocking makes it difficult for a predator to both go undetected and to be able to focus its concentration on any individual bird." He even suggests one can test this by attempting to keep track of one specific bird as the flock swirls in the air.

Early spring nights are just as marvelous for listening to nature. Owls, whippoorwills and chuck-wills-widows are often vocalizing, and at dawn and dusk when light is low our sense of hearing seems heightened and

*(Continued to Page 4)*

### Inside this issue...

- \* Nongame Weekend!, Pg.6
- \* Help Wanted: Frogs, Pg. 5
- \* A Very Wild Yard, Pg. 2

# Going Wild In Your Own Backyard



Alex Honcharik sits beside the artificial pond created on his Dry Fork property.

When Mary Ann and Alex Honcharik moved from the Baltimore, MD area in 1995 to a 4-½ acre parcel of land at the base of Mount Porte Crayon near Dolly Sods, they left the trappings of urban life to find serenity and to live with wild things. The land on which they built their new home was mostly worn-out pastureland. A few shrubs

and young trees grew scattered about the property. The rest was fescue and a few wild flowers.

The existing vegetation did attract some birds and small mammals, especially considering that their property borders the Monongahela National Forest. However, they wanted to create habitat for frogs, salamanders, butterflies and a greater diversity of birds. They learned about the WV Wild Yards Program and wrote to the DNR for the planning guide and application.

Mary Ann says “the book provided a lot of information and was helpful in choosing what plants would attract butterflies and birds. It also provided a lot of helpful information about the physical habitat needs of wildlife and how to plan for and place features like rock walls and brush piles.”

With a little help from the Wild

Yards program and a lot of trial and error and hard work, they planted native trees, shrubs and wildflowers and converted much of their once scrubby landscape into a magnet for wildlife. The area now supports natural habitats including a pond for many different kinds of wildlife. To quote Mary Ann, “we wanted to get rid of the trouble and mess of bird feeders and provide natural sources of food and cover for songbirds.”

All their hard work has paid off. The perennial wildflower mixes attract waves of butterflies. The hemlock, dogwoods, redbuds, birches, rhododendrons and other native trees that were planted have attracted greater varieties and numbers of birds. Mary Ann says that goldfinches especially relish seeds of the *Coreopsis* growing in her perennial wildflower meadow.

They have also enjoyed the myriad sounds and sights of mammals and amphibians, especially the calls of frogs from their pond. The only problem is that “they now attract too much wildlife – too many deer that is,” according to Mary Ann. She says with a chuckle that they have tried every deer exclusion trick they can find; including planting things the deer won't eat.

So far, the only plant besides spruce trees that she has seen the deer leave alone is *Spiraea tomentosa*. However, the trouble with the deer has been far outweighed by the endless joys of their *West Virginia Wild Yard*.

For more information about the Wild Yards Program contact the Wild Yards Coordinator, Emily Grafton, at [egrafton@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:egrafton@dnr.state.wv.us).

--Emily Grafton

## Spring Birding Activities

Early in the season, bird watchers throughout West Virginia will take to the woods, meadows and marshes for a glimpse of their favorite herons, hawks, gulls, and warblers on **International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)**, May 12th. Nationally, this annual event includes bird counts and walks, presentations and festivals. Locally, bird walks will be hosted through both the Elkins and Fairmont offices of the WVDNR. For more information contact the office closest to you.

WV will also participate in the nation-wide North American Migration Count to monitor migratory bird populations. In past years, an average of 130 West Virginians have counted birds in twelve counties. All bird watchers in the state are encouraged to participate! If interested, contact State Coordinator, Paul Shaw (304) 574-9010.

--Russ McClain



## People and Places of Note

**wCongratulations to the latest West Virginia Wild Yards participants! The following "home ecologists" have created backyard habitats following the criteria established by the Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Program:**

**Kellie Hoffman**, Huntington; **Kathryn Dawson**, Charleston; **Mildred Garrison**, Buffalo; **Ayar and Barbara Lore**, Nitro; **Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Barnes**, Cross Lanes; and **Charles and Wilda Wheeler**, Cross Lanes.

If you would like information on the program, contact the Wild Yards Program coordinator listed above. You can also check out the WV DNR website at [www.dnr.state.wv.us](http://www.dnr.state.wv.us) and download a copy of the Wild Yards booklet!

wThe NWNHP welcomes **Angela McWilliams** of Elkins to the staff as secretary. She is assisting Natural Heritage Program personnel and the District Biologists with human resources issues, record keeping and communications.

## Rare Species at a Glance

### Smallmouth salamander

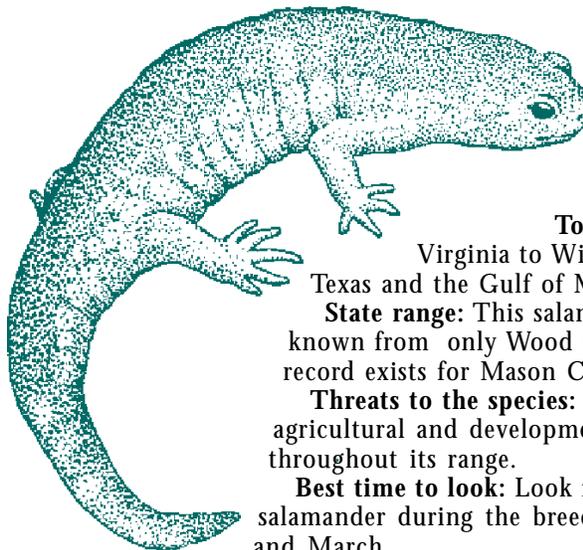
**Scientific name:** *Ambystoma texanum*

**State status:** Extremely rare in West Virginia, known from just two locations. West Virginia is at the eastern extent of this species range.

**Global status:** Common throughout most of its range.

**General description:** This stout salamander may reach a length of six inches. Compared to its heavy body, the head and mouth are small. It is dark brown to black with many silvery gray or bluish gray markings along its sides and on its tail.

**Habitat:** The smallmouth salamander spends most of its time underground in a variety of habitats, but makes appearances in the spring to breed.



Breeding areas include ponds, temporary pools and roadside ditches.

**Total range:** Western West Virginia to Wisconsin south to eastern Texas and the Gulf of Mexico.

**State range:** This salamander is currently known from only Wood County, but a historical record exists for Mason County.

**Threats to the species:** Loss of habitat due to agricultural and development threaten this species throughout its range.

**Best time to look:** Look for the smallmouth salamander during the breeding season— February and March.

**Source:** Green, N.B. and T.K. Pauley. 1987. *Amphibians and Reptiles in West Virginia*.

### Least trillium

**Scientific name:** *Trillium pusillum*

**State status:** Extremely rare in West Virginia, with only one occurrence.

**Global status:** Rare throughout its range.

**General description:** The least trillium grows to a height of four to twelve inches and has a slender stem that is sometimes tinted with maroon. A whorl of three leaves top the stem, and the flower, which is nearly sessile (lacking a flower stem) sits above the leaves. The flower has three blunt-tipped petals, and is white when it first opens, but deepens to purple with age.

**Habitat:** In West Virginia, the least trillium occurs in ridge top thickets with well-drained soils.

**Total range:** *Trillium pusillum* occurs from Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, south to Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. The variety *virginianum* occurs in West Virginia, as well as Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.

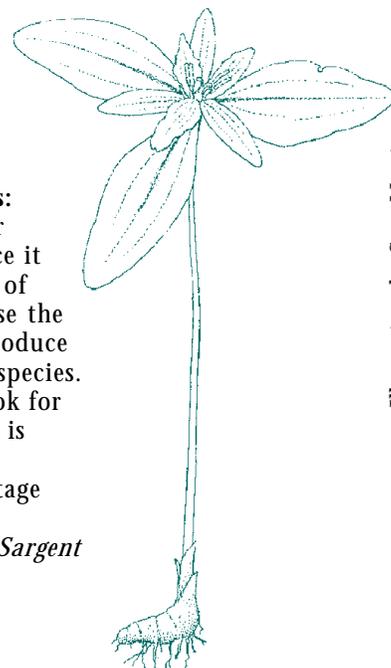
**State range:** The least trillium is known from only one location in Pendleton County.

**Threats to the species:** Clearcutting is the major threat to this species since it can increase the amount of water in the area, increase the amount of light and introduce non-native, competitive species.

**Best time to look:** Look for the least trillium when it is blooming in May.

**Source:** Natural Heritage Program files.

--Barbara Sargent



Illustrations by Sam Norris



## Snail Mail Too Slow?

Get Your Newsletter Via Email! Contact [dhale@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:dhale@dnr.state.wv.us)

Also check out the DNR website at [www.dnr.state.wv.us](http://www.dnr.state.wv.us)

## Signs of Spring, Continued From Page 1

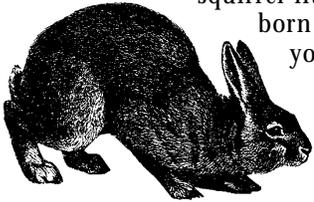
we hear the sound of migrating birds traveling high above us.

### Mammals

A noisy rustling in the leaf litter and aerial acrobatics in the tree branches indicate small mammals are extremely busy preparing for breeding. Beginning as early as February, chipmunks come out of hibernation, scampering quickly across the woodland floor and rabbits scurry about looking for mates and nesting areas.

Interestingly, rabbit reproduction is triggered by weather above 60 degrees, when males begin fighting and establishing territory. Opossums, flying squirrels, and skunks are all active in courtship and breeding behavior in early spring. Look for increased signs of activity in the last snows of winter; footprints seeming to appear everywhere.

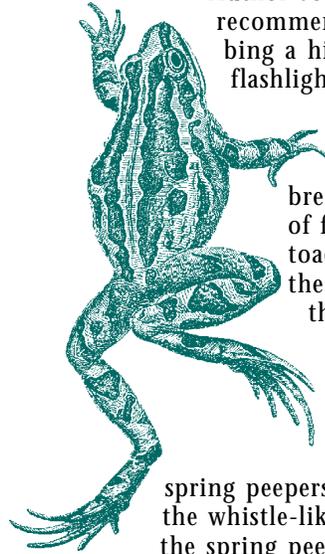
By March, some of the first squirrel litters are born and the young pups start appearing outside of the nest in late March.



### Amphibians

The best time to look for frogs and other amphibians is in the evening when they are most active.

Author John Kricher recommends grabbing a high powered flashlight and



listening carefully for the breeding calls of frogs and toads. Usually the first ones that one hears are the wood frogs followed by the

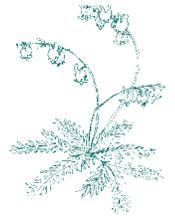
spring peepers. Listen for the whistle-like peep of the spring peeper and the chattering-quacking sound of wood frogs.

Even during the day one can look for the gelatinous egg masses of the spotted salamander along the edges of ponds and slow-moving streams. One can gently lift rocks to see if any salamanders are hiding underneath, but remember to put the rock back first then allow the salamander to crawl back under it without injury.

### Plants and Flowers

Look for the tiny carrot-like leaves and white and black flowers of harbinger-of-spring in lower elevations many times it is almost hidden in the leaf litter. Coltsfoot, an exotic invasive plant with blooms which look like small dandelions, are in bloom along sunny roadsides often as early as March. In the woodlands the small, delicate spring beauty and bluettes also start to appear, along with bloodroot. Soon will come the lady's slipper, in one of its three forms: the pink, yellow and showy which is a larger version with white and pink petals. Their graceful orchid-shaped flower bring spots of color to the largely brown and green palette of the woods during late spring (and even into summer in the higher elevations).

Other favorites to look for in early spring are Dutchman's breeches, a small white flower that hangs like bloomers on a line, and various species of the three-petaled trillium. Buy a good guide such as Peterson's *A Field Guide to Wildflowers* or Audubon's *Wildflowers* and start looking more carefully to see the marvelous rebirth of the earth.



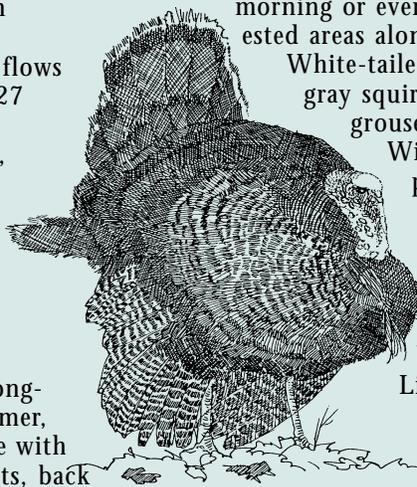
--Nanci Bross-Fregonara



## WV Wildlife Viewing Guide: Valley Falls State Park

**Description:** In just 2.5 miles, the river here flows over four waterfalls and 27 rapids. What this small day-use park lacks in size, it more than makes up for in stunning river views, an extensive trail system and abundant wildlife.

**Viewing information:** Valley Falls State Park is known for its excellent song-birds. In spring and summer, the forest canopy is active with many neotropical migrants, back from their wintering grounds in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Look for vireos, warblers, and flycatchers in the early



morning or evening in the forested areas along the river.

White-tailed deer, eastern gray squirrels, and ruffed grouse are abundant.

Wild turkeys are also present; the males, known as toms or gobblers, gobble to attract females, called hens, to their breeding grounds.

Listen for the familiar gobble in late April when it reaches its

peak. Year-round, raccoons can be seen in late evenings. Raccoons are omnivorous and feed on fruits, nuts,

bird eggs, crayfish, frogs and insects.

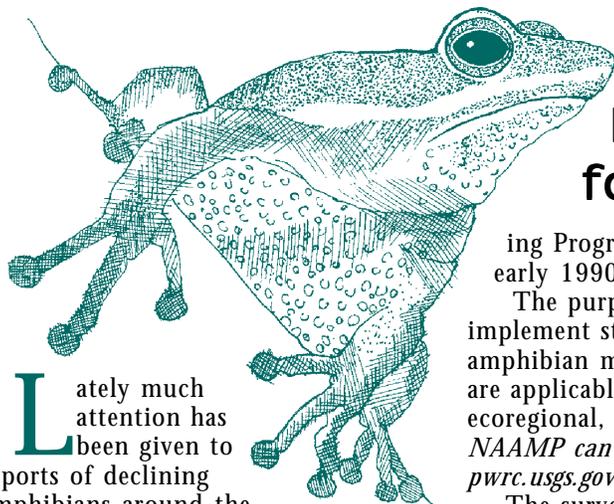
**Directions:** From Interstate 79, take West Virginia State Route 310 (Exit 137 south) for 7.7 miles. Turn right onto County Route 31-14 (Rock Lake-Valley Falls Road) and proceed 0.7 mile. Turn left and go 0.8 mile to the park entrance; the park office is another 0.1 mile on the left. Continue 1 mile to the falls and parking area.

**Ownership:** WV DNR (304)367-2719

**Size:** 1,145 acres

**Closest town:** Fairmont

*Editor's Note: The WV Wildlife Viewing Guide by Mark Damian Duda is available at bookstores throughout the state and can be purchased from the WV DNR by calling (304)637-0245.*



## Notes From The Field

### Frog Call Volunteers Needed for Amphibian Study

Lately much attention has been given to reports of declining amphibians around the world lately and West Virginia is no exception. Beginning in 2000, West Virginia has joined an important national effort to monitor populations of calling frogs and toads.

The survey is part of NAAMP, the North American Amphibian Monitor-

ing Program, which began in the early 1990s.

The purpose is to develop and implement statistically defensible amphibian monitoring programs that are applicable at various levels: state, ecoregional, etc. (*More information on NAAMP can be found at [www.mp1-pwrc.usgs.gov/amphibs.html](http://www.mp1-pwrc.usgs.gov/amphibs.html)*).

The survey is volunteer-based and consists of 39 routes along roads randomly located throughout the state. Each route consists of ten stops where volunteers listen for five minutes to record the identity of all of frog and toad species, and an index of the number calling. The routes are

run three times per year between February and July. Eventually, the survey will provide land managers, government agencies and scientists with valuable information that might be used to curb declines in amphibian populations.

The first year of the West Virginia effort was spent getting organized, visiting routes, assigning stops and contacting volunteers. Coordinators from West Virginia also attended national meetings and contributed to the development of a unified national protocol that will be implemented for the first time in the 2001 field season.

Also new this year, volunteers will be able to enter data from their routes on the web. Eventually, anyone will be able to access survey information, including population trends, for many species.

Recruiting volunteers has been one of the largest challenges for the coordinators. Last year eight hardworking folks ran routes, but more are needed; especially in the eastern panhandle and northwestern West Virginia.

If you think you would like to be part of this important effort you can contact one of the coordinators below and they will be glad to send you an information packet that can get you started listening to the wonderful sounds of West Virginia frogs and toads!

*For more information, contact Nancy Dickson at ([tadpole\\_mu@yahoo.com](mailto:tadpole_mu@yahoo.com)) or Dr. Thomas Pauley at Marshall University, Dept. of Biological Sciences, 400 Hal Greer Blvd., Huntington, WV 25755, (304) 696-2376, or at ([pauley@marshall.edu](mailto:pauley@marshall.edu)).*

*--Zach Felix, Marshall University*

## Kid Krafts

### Build It and They Will Come: Building a Birdbath

Although many people provide food for birds, few people provide fresh water for their feathered friends. Birds use water for a variety of reasons including drinking, bathing, and preening and some even use water to make mud for use in nest construction. Here is an easy way to make a bird bath to attract more birds to your yard.

There are as many available bird baths on the market as there are birds, but all you need is any flat container that can hold water. The water should be between ½ inch to 2 inches deep. The bottoms of flower pots, pie or baking tins, shallow trays or even an inverted garbage can lid will work. These containers can be placed on the ground or on a pedestal using rocks or a tree stump.

Make sure the location of your birdbath is near plenty of cover for the birds to retreat to dry off and escape from predators. Also, make sure the bath is within view for your enjoyment. Place some pebbles or rocks in the container to provide a firm walking surface and to help weigh the container down so the wind will not blow it over.

The birdbath should be cleaned frequently and water replenished as often as necessary.

The sound of dripping water can be a "bird magnet," attracting birds to your birdbath. This can be easily accomplished by filling a gallon plastic jug with water, suspending it over the bath and punching a tiny hole in the bottom. The amount of water dripping into the bath can be adjusted by tightening or loosening the cap on the jug. All that is needed is a few drops dribbling out of the jug. The water will have to be replaced as often as it runs out.

More elaborate baths and ponds can be created depending upon your budget and the amount of time and energy you are willing to spend. More information on pond construction and how to turn your backyard into a Wild Yard can be obtained by contacting the WVDNR office at 304-637-0245.



### Fish Checklist Out

The WV DNR has recently published a new brochure, *Fishes of West Virginia*, which is a detailed checklist of the fish species found in the Mountain State. To receive a copy of the brochure, call 304-637-0245.



# Nongame Wildlife Weekend Schedule Announced

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual 2001 Non-game Wildlife Weekend at Blackwater Falls State Park in Davis, WV will be held this year on June 1, 2, and 3.

The cost will be \$118 per person for a lodge room or cabin (for children 5 to 12 years of age the cost is \$59 per person). This fee includes registration, two nights lodging, 3 meals (Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner) and evening refreshments Friday and Saturday.

If you wish to participate and do not need lodging, the cost will be \$55 per person. This covers meals Saturday, evening refreshments and registration. There is a \$15 registration fee for the weekend, or \$10 for just Saturday if you do not require meals or lodging.

## Friday, June 1, 2001

1pm-- Registration Begins

2pm to 4 or 5pm -- **Small Mammals**, Sue Olcott, WVDNR

**Tour of Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge**--Jackie Burns, USFWS

**Butterflies of WV**--Tom Allen, WVDNR

3pm-- **Tour of Blackwater Falls State Park**--Park Naturalist

### **Dinner on Your Own**

6:30pm--Welcome/Introductions

**NEW!** 6:30-7:45--**Evening Program for Children**--Emily Grafton, WVDNR

7pm--**Folklore of Native Plants**--Bill Grafton--WVU Extension

8pm-- **WV Raptors in the Environment** Natasha Diamond & Mike Book, WV Raptor Rehabilitation Center

## Music in the Mountains

If you are interested in making some "Music in the Mountains" in the evenings bring along your favorite instrument for some informal pickin' in the Park!



9pm--Social & Field Trip Sign up  
9:30pm--Evening Field Trips  
**Salamanders**--Tom Pauley, MU  
**Owl Prowl**--Russ McClain, WVDNR  
**Astronomy Workshop**--John Hall, Albright College

## Saturday, June 2, 2001

6:30 Bird Walks

### **Breakfast Buffet--Lodge**

All Day Field Trips--**Must Pre-register** (in registration packet)

7am-- **Warbler Walk at Fernow Experimental Forest**--Brete Griffin and Joey Herron, Naturalists

8:45am-- **Dolly Sods Trip**--Russ McClain and Jennifer Wykle, WVDNR

9am-- **Daubin House Trail:History, Botany & Wildlife**--Emily Grafton

9am-- **Nature Biking Trip in the Blackwater Canyon**--Dale Porter, Mountain State Wheeler's Bike Club

9am--**Choice of one Workshop:**

**Amphibian Walk**--Jeff Hajenga, WVDNR

**WV Snakes**--Frank Jernejcic, WVDNR

**Fish Identification & Streamlife**--Dan Cincotta, WVDNR

**Cathedral State Park**--Pat Hissom, Blackwater Naturalist

**Nature Workshop for Children--Crafts, Scavenger Hunt, Animal Painting & More!**--Jim Fregonara, WVDNR

**Medicinal, Edible & Useful Plants of the 18th Century**--Dianne Anestis, Pharmacist & Naturalist

**Photography Workshop**--Jim Clark, Professional Nature Photographer

**Raptors**--Natasha Diamond & Mike Book

### **Noon Lunch Buffet--Lodge**

1:30pm **Choice of one field trip:**

**Animal Tracking**--Doug Wood, WVDEP & Dianne Anestis

**Canaan Valley Wetland & Amphibian Walk**--Ed Micheal, WVU, & Tom Pauley

**Mushrooms, Wild and Wonderful**--Bill Roody, WVDNR

**Cave Trip to Bowden Cave**--Craig Stihler & Jack Wallace, WVDNR, John Hall

**Streamlife Scavenger Hunt for Children**--Dan Cincotta

**Trip to Snake Den**--Frank Jernejcic  
**Yellow Birch Trail Interpretive Walk**--Bill Grafton

**Geology and Paleocology of Canaan Area**--John Northeimer, Canaan Valley State Park Naturalist

**Butterflies of WV**--Tom Allen

4:30--6:30pm **Dinner Buffet--Lodge**

6:30pm--**Insects of Interest in WV**--Tom Allen

7:30pm-- **"Mason Jars & Memories: Discovering a Sense of Place"**--Jim Clark--Professional Nature Photographer

9pm Social

9:30--**Evening Field Trips**

**Salamanders**--Tom Pauley

**Owl Prowl**--Brete Griffen

**Astronomy & Bats**--John Hall & Craig Stihler

## Sunday, June 3, 2001

6:30am Bird Walks

### **Breakfast on Your Own**

8:30am Sunday Service

9:30am **Informal Workshops:**

**Teacher's Workshop**--Emily Grafton

**Amphibians & Reptiles**--Jeff Hajenga

**Mammals**--Sue Olcott

**Mushrooms**--Bill Roody

**Other Displays**--Staff

**Fish**--Dan Cincotta

11am **Recap of Weekend Events**--Jim Fregonara

11:15am **Door Prizes & Adjournment**

Please Note: Schedule is subject to change

## Make Tracks to Come!



If you are interested in attending this year's event, please write Dawn Hale, WV DNR, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241, call (304) 637-0245 or email dhale@dnr.state.wv.us for a registration packet. You must send your reservation form directly to Blackwater Falls State Park.

# Plant Lore of the Mountains

## Trailing Arbutus Springs to Life

Height is truly not a measure of importance when you consider the historical popularity and the number of sonnets written about this tiny member of the heath family. Never reaching more than a few inches in height, the stems and leaves of trailing arbutus (*Epigaea repens*) cling tenaciously to the earth as they grow slowly in a vine-like fashion.

Trailing arbutus prefers acidic-sandy soils and occurs within both hardwoods and coniferous forests. It grows best in partial shade along rock ledges or on steep banks. Also known as little laurel, its ovate-leathery, evergreen leaves resemble those of its bigger cousins in the Rhododendron family. Rust-colored hairs cover the wiry stems and undersides of the leaves in varying amounts. Like all members of the heath family, arbutus is adapted to survive in low moisture and nutrient poor environments.

The main allure of this coarse-looking plant is the clusters of bell-shaped flowers with fluted edges. The pinkish flowers produce one of the sweetest, most captivating fragrances in nature. The ½ to ¾ inch long flowers arise from leaf axils and the ends of individual shoots. Blossoms appear from March to May, and can be seen peeking through a few inches

of snow on several days in March.

Trailing arbutus was heavily collected from the wild by street vendors in 19<sup>th</sup> century New England. The "hawkers" would fill their carts with the evergreen plants winter through spring and walk the streets of Boston yelling "Mayflowers for sale." Poets like Whittier and folklorists tell us that blossoms of trailing arbutus greeted the colonists who landed at Plymouth Rock, thus the name, Mayflower.

The relentless harvesting of trailing arbutus from the landscape inspired a group of Boston women to form one of the nation's strongest conservation organizations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They worked to make trailing arbutus the state plant of Massachusetts and a criminal offense to collect it. This group later became the renowned *New England Wildflower Society*.

While the concerned women of Boston were organizing their conservation efforts, the Shakers had been propagating the plant for medicinal uses. Native Americans used it to treat several ailments, especially problems of the kidneys. The Shakers, who produced the most effective and safest herbal remedies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, used it in a formulation to treat kidney stones. Thus, this loveliest of flowers came also to be known as gravel plant.



(*Flora of West Virginia*)

Please do not attempt to transplant trailing arbutus from the wild, it is difficult to propagate. Individual strands or shoots grow out from a central crown that may be hard to locate.

If you would like to incorporate trailing arbutus into your wild garden, purchase young plants from nursery propagated stock. Native plant nurseries in West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia sell this species. Contact the DNR at 637-0245 for a list of native plant suppliers.

--Emily Grafton



## Who Wants To Be A Biologist?

Congratulations to our second contest winner, **Lyla Rothwell**, of Peterstown, WV whose name was picked by random from the many correct entries we received.

She correctly answered last issue's question: What is the fastest flying bird that nests in West Virginia? The answer is the peregrine falcon. Peregrines currently hold the air speed record for animals by reaching speeds up to 208 miles per hour when diving towards their prey. Last year one pair nested along North Fork Mountain.

Others correct answers were submitted by : *Linda Luchuck*,

*Wallace; Ralph McMillon, Montrose; Ron Salmon, Winchester; Hallie Sims, Ballengee; Camy Crouse, Oceana; Doris Hughes, Martinsburg; Judy Aversa, Hedgesville; and Robert O'Conner, Charleston.*

Thank you all for playing!

**Everyone knows that the state bird is the cardinal, state mammal the black bear, state tree the sugar maple and the state flower is the rhododendron. But did you know we have a state soil? That's this issue's question:**

**What is WV's state soil?**

### Official Rules:

Clearly print your answer on a postcard along with your name, address and phone number and send it to: WV DNR, Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Newsletter, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241, **Attention: trivia contest.** or email [nbrossfregonara@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:nbrossfregonara@dnr.state.wv.us).

Only one postcard will be accepted per household, per question.

Postcards for this issue's contest question must be postmarked by **May 15, 2001** and this issue's winners will be sent the **WV Watchable Wildlife Guide**.

Please do not call our office and ask for the answers. That would be too easy, but you can visit our website: [www.dnr.state.wv.us](http://www.dnr.state.wv.us) and search for clues.

Employees of the WV DNR and the Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Program and their families are ineligible. Only one winner will be chosen for each question. Each winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries received by the postmarked deadline.

## Children's Book Reviews

Tiny Green Thumbs

By C.Z. Guest

Hyperion Press, Ages 4-7

This book is filled with a brilliant energy that will inspire young and old alike to dig in the garden. It is a simple story of intergenerational love, hard work and the satisfaction one feels when you have put your heart into a garden project. Two small animals learn the elements necessary for a garden: soil, seed, water, sun, time and love. The toughest lesson of all for them to learn is patience! The illustrations remind one of the beauties of a summer garden and interspersed throughout are child-friendly directions on gardening. Readers and listeners of all ages can feel the fulfillment of harvest time.

Seedfolks

By Paul Fleischmann

HarperCollins Publishers, Ages 10+

In a series of vignettes, this award-winning author weaves the story of an impoverished city neighborhood that finds friendship, inspiration and hope in the combined efforts to cultivate a garden in a vacant, garbage-strewn lot.

Each gardener is inspired to participate in the project for a variety of personal reasons—connecting to an unknown parent, making money,

impressing a friend—but they each find more than they expected.

People working side by side find satisfaction in their work, their lives and their ability to help neighbors. The story reminds us that working in harmony with nature is analogous to working together with persons from all backgrounds. The book jacket put it most eloquently: Fleischmann has written a "hymn to the power of plants and of people" This is a quick, satisfying read for those older, sometimes reluctant readers.

--Sue Talbott, Vandalia Educational Services, 1-800-637-0566 or email: [vandalia@msys.net](mailto:vandalia@msys.net).



## This Just In!

### New Eagle Nest Sighted

A new bald eagle nesting pair has been discovered in western West Virginia. The nest, located on the Ohio River within Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park near Parkersburg, was discovered in January and continues to be tended by two young adult eagles. This is the first known bald eagle nest in the upper Ohio River Valley. The WVDNR continues to

WV Nongame Wildlife  
& Natural Heritage  
News



is a free quarterly newsletter published by the WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES (WVDNR) Wildlife Resources Section's Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Program. This program is dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the state's nongame wildlife and botanical resources.

**Bob Wise** - Governor

**Ed Hamrick** - Director

**Bernard F. Dowler** -  
Deputy Director

**Kathleen Leo** - Editor-In-Chief

**Nanci Cross-Fregonara**  
Editor

Address corrections and other correspondence should be addressed to the WV Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage News, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241, phone (304) 637-0245 or email: [dhale@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:dhale@dnr.state.wv.us). Articles from this newsletter may be reprinted without permission. Credit to authors and the Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Program is appreciated. The Division of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity employer.

monitor this and ten other active bald eagle nests in the state.

If you sight an eagle nest this year, please contact the WVDNR at (304) 637-0245 or email [Russ McClain](mailto:rmcclain@dnr.state.wv.us) at [rmcclain@dnr.state.wv.us](mailto:rmcclain@dnr.state.wv.us).

Spring 2001

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Resources Section  
Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Program  
P.O. Box 67  
Elkins, WV 26241

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 67  
Elkins, WV 26241