

# The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

WINTER 2021

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

[www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi](http://www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi)

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The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board

## Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

**We Are Important,  
We Are SCCB**

"3 in 4 U.S. adults say it's important for people to have access to outdoor amenities during fall and winter to continue or create new family traditions". *NRPA November 2020*

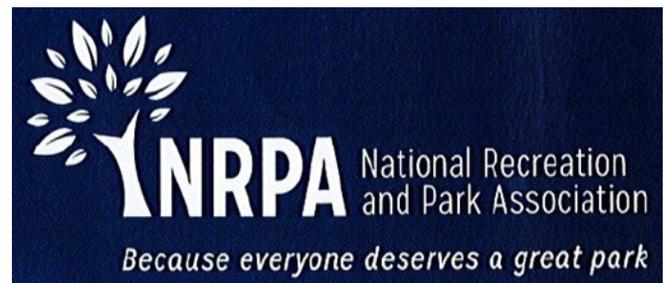


In the latest November **National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA)** edition, the monthly poll of U.S. residents recognized the current and inherent importance of outdoor amenities.

Wild and outdoor areas include parks, picnic areas, campgrounds, pavilions, refuges, and a variety of other accessible outdoor areas. In Scott County Conservation park places, you will find not only physical, but mental, and some say, spiritual medicine throughout every season. Living in these times of uncertainty, you may always find truth and power in nature by seeking your own journey in nature. Lots of research has been done on the benefits of mind, body, and spirit, by spending time with nature.

Now, whether you seek healthy, natural paths to wellness, truthful treatments for illness, or a meaningful and peaceful path to spiritual wellness, our sacred earth always has the true medicine. Our personal responsibilities and choices to include

nature invite clear, deep breaths, bare skin, sounds of water, and the light of the cleansing sun. Today, we need nature, nature does not need us.



Considering NRPA's Special December Parks Survey, SCCB parks are not the only parks that are open in the nation! Open for business... "Park and recreation professionals and their agencies continue to make the vast majority of their amenities available to the public." Many can find areas considering, "nearly all agencies reporting that all their trails (99 percent of agencies), and parks (local parks: 98 percent: regional parks: 97 percent) are open." Powerful and meaningful experiences in nature, following our intuitions, can promote health, wellness, and community. Limit your distance from nature, and join us in the **outdoors**. You can call to register at (563)328-3286 for upcoming programs, and remember, **keep well, stay wild!**





## 1000 Hours Outside

Calling all adventurers, pathfinders, seekers, explorers, and wilderness warriors. On average, our youth spend 1200 hours of media time on a screen, every year! In partnering with *the 1000 Hours Outside* campaign (<https://www.1000hoursoutside.com/>), the Wapsi River naturalist staff is offering outside time in nature. There are many science-based benefits to both physical and mental wellness when including nature. Starting this new year, SCCB at the Wapsi River Center, will be promoting **1000 Hours Outside**, and offering healthy, low-impact, outdoor opportunities for all explorers. **Nature does not close!** Visit the website above to print off your **1000 Hours Tracker**, or pick up a tracker at the Wapsi Center when you attend any outdoor program. **Citizens In Charge!** Be empowered, live healthy, keep well, stay wild!

## Wild Wapsi Selfie Station

Come explore the trails, wildlife, and maybe take in a program, but don't forget to take a selfie at our new selfie station. Thanks to the *Iowa's County Conservation System*, "Some 80 counties will have over 110 Selfie Stations at their county parks as we have partnered with the Iowa Tourism Office in celebration of Iowa's County Park System! Plan out your "Selfie Stations Road Trip!". You can also visit the Iowa Tourism Website via the following link to immerse yourselves in all aspects of the **99 PARKS / 99 COUNTIES** in Iowa's County Parks! LINK: <https://www.traveliowa.com/99parks/> Our station is located along the "River Trail", at the paddling access to the Wapsipinicon River, and can be adjusted for just the right view.



PHOTO: QC Women's Outdoor Club

## AmeriCorps Educator Paddles On



PHOTO: Becky Baugh

The Wapsi River Center is grateful for the education efforts of **Iowa 4H AmeriCorps Environmental Education Member** Faith Henrichs, who has completed her final term here. Faith reached many youth and enhanced youth-focused projects through education related to the outdoors, including our local partners. Faith initiated and assisted in new programming including: 360\* Trail Projects, Natural Health & Home, International Mud Day, Fire Fly, Leave No Trace, Prowl the Prairie, Winter Break Day and multiple programs with the Girls Scouts. The partnership between AmeriCorps and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach 4-H focuses on preparing Iowa's youth to be knowledgeable, active, and contributing members of society. Good luck Faith as your path continues at Wapello County Conservation!

## Local Artist Donates

On behalf of Scott County, the Scott County Conservation Board, the *Friends of the Wapsi Center*, and Wapsi River Environmental Education Center staff, I am most grateful for the very kind and thoughtful wildlife art donation and supplies by local wildlife artist, **Craig Carlson of Eldridge, Iowa**. Plans for including his donated artwork are floating forward for our new education spaces. Thank you Craig.

"Craig's childhood was spent in rural Iowa. He currently resides with his family in Eldridge, a small, quiet town near the Quad Cities and the Mississippi River. He has been drawing since he was old enough to hold a pencil. As a boy, the small, wild animals and birds he encountered as he walked the cornfields of the family farm inspired Craig. The pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, deer and occasional red fox were among his first subjects. He has exhibited in juried Arts & Crafts shows throughout the Midwest. His paintings have reached collectors throughout the United States and overseas to Europe.

Many of Craig's original acrylic paintings are available as signed and numbered limited edition prints. Craig donates prints to multiple conservation organizations for fund raising efforts.

To view or obtain information on original paintings, pencil drawings and prints, visit Craig's website at [www.fineartamerica.com](http://www.fineartamerica.com). "

## Friends Group Awarded Grant

The *Friends of the Wapsi Center* have been awarded a **\$2000 corporate grant from LyondellBasell** in support of our education program. A big thank you to **President Norm Nichols** for his hard work on the application. The funds are planned to support educational animal enclosures, exhibits, and trail signage, at the Wapsi River Center and will play a role in planned renovations. "LyondellBasell seeks to make a positive impact and advance the communities where we operate through charitable contributions and employee volunteerism." On behalf of the *Friends* group, we thank **LyondellBasell** for recognizing our education program and the positive impacts we both bring to our community.

**lyondellbasell**  
*Advancing Possible*

## Winter Outdoor Recreation

The Wapsi River Center invites you to get outdoors this winter and get active by snowshoe or ski. Our cross-country ski/snowshoe trails are open for use when snow depth allows. Adventurers are encouraged to call ahead of time to check conditions at (563)328-3286. We will be offering programs at various SCCB locations, please check our calendar and Winter *WREN* for dates and locations.

## Wapsi Awarded Grant

The Wapsi Center education program was just awarded a \$1348 grant by the **Iowa Chapter of Safari Club International** (<https://www.iowasci.com/>) for new archery range equipment. The **Iowa SCI** appropriates funding annually for projects that fulfill the SCI Mission that includes education, conservation, and humanitarianism.

The grant funding will be used for new archery equipment benefiting the youth, schools, and public groups we conduct

education for. The equipment will be used in the new education center range where it can be used year-round. Thank you to **Iowa SCI** for support of Iowa archery



education at the Wapsi River Center of Scott County Conservation.

## Center Updates



Photo: Wapsi Center

The old **Owl's Nest Dormitory** renovations continue to flow into Autumn with the new addition including a full basement. The panoramic view above, displays the large multi-purpose room. Along with facility renovations, landscape work includes native prairie seeding (thanks to our Scott County Secondary Roads Department), tree plantings (thanks to Dubuque CCB), pollinator/butterfly garden, and watershed management practices.

**Redtail Lodge** has made it's final flight, and is now closed to public rentals. The original building was the trading post for Camp Minneyata when the Boy Scouts were active here, and will remain in education use.

## PSCW Supports Local Clean-up



Thanks to local John Deere employees, PSCW Coordinator Cassie Druhl, coordinated with the IADNR for a November 11<sup>th</sup> **cleanup** of the Crow Creek Wildlife Management Area near Mt. Joy, IA. Along with large debris items, 18

bags of trash were collected by the group including:

PSCW Chair Amy Kay (Clean Water Manager- City of Davenport), Vice Chair Steve Gustafson (Bettendorf Resident), and Board Member Dave Murcia (Scott County Conservation Board).



PHOTO: Amy Kay

# THANKYOU!

*Friends of the Wapsi River Center*  
*Iowa Association of Naturalists*  
*Nahant Marsh*  
*Clinton CCB*  
*Dubuque CCB*  
*Partners of Scott County Watersheds*  
*St. Ambrose University*  
*QC Women's Outdoor Club*  
 West Lake Park maintenance & Ranger staff  
 Davenport Public Library  
 Scott Co. IT Department  
 Scott Co. FSS Department  
 Scott Co. Secondary Roads Department  
 LyondellBasell  
 Wallace's Greenhouse (Bettendorf)  
 IADNR  
 Craig Carlson

Norm & Cathie Nichols  
 Caroline Kimple  
 James & Jane Ann Varcho  
 Gary & Mary Froeschle  
 Connie & Dave Huber  
 Hagen Homeschoolers  
 WHBF Living Local  
 Pack 89, Bettendorf, IA  
 GSA Troop 4109  
 Susan McPeters  
 Lucia Dryanski  
 Mark & Lisa Cleve  
 Anne Landaverde  
 Ingrid Bogdanowicz  
 Ron Rickman  
 Faith Henrichs, Iowa 4H AmeriCorps EE Member



**“BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!”**

[www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/Wapsi-friends](http://www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/Wapsi-friends)

 [www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheWapsiCenter](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheWapsiCenter)



The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. organized in 1993, is a citizens' support group dedicated to encouraging the public use and enjoyment of the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and to the preservation of the Center's natural resources for present and future generations. Please contact the Wapsi River Center for more information (563)328-3286.

**YES I WOULD LIKE TO BE A FRIENDS MEMBER:**

Enclosed is my contribution to the Friends of the Wapsi Center.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 newsletter  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 contributing member  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ \$30.00 supporting member  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP FORM TO:**

~~~Friends of the Wapsi “Treasurer”~~~

31555 52nd AVENUE, DIXON, IOWA 52745

Contributions to the Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# WINTER EVENTS

## January

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Holiday ~ County offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday!**

**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Winter Wild Edible Class ~ 10:00 A.M. to Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist Becky Baugh to learn about the many wild edibles in your own neck of the woods. We will focus on foraging basics, foraging safety, identifying plants, and preparing wild edibles. We will take a hike outdoors to identify some of the winter wild edibles available during this time. Registration is limited and required by calling (563) 328-3286.



**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park & Virtually** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office (Gate 3) 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804. Please call if interested in attending (563)328-3280.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Holiday ~ County offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday!**

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Great Back Yard Bird Count ~ 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. ~ (Virtual Program through the Davenport Public Library)** ~Join Naturalist Becky Baugh from the Wapsi River Center to learn about a global Citizen Science Project called the Great Backyard Bird Count. This annual event is hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. During this program, you will learn about this research project



and how you can conduct your own backyard bird count at home. Bird watchers of all ages can participate in this project to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are located. Contact the

library for more details at (563)326-7832.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center & Virtually** ~ Come learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Cocoa Picasso ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River**

**Center** ~ This family friendly program blends art and nature in a fun way! Join Naturalist Paige at the Wapsi River Center to learn about our resident Great horned owl and then create an owl-themed painting with guided step-by-step instructions. This program costs \$5/ canvas (payable by cash or check at the program). Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park: Gate 1 (Lake View Shelter)** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563) 328-3286.

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park: Gate 1 (Lake**

**View Shelter)** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/ children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563)328-3286.



## February

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure on

snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563)328-3286.

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Virtual Winter Wild Edibles ~ 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. ~ River Valley District Library, Port Byron, IL** ~ Join Becky Baugh from the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center for a Zoom presentation on wild winter edibles. For more information, contact the library at (309)523-3440 or go to [www.rivervalleylibrary.org](http://www.rivervalleylibrary.org).

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9:00A.M. to Noon or 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Head out to the Wapsi Center to spend



some time in the great outdoors! Families of all ages welcome! All activities will take place outdoors, so please dress accordingly. Activities offered include: snowshoeing, cross country skiing, archery and a scavenger hunt. Some activities will be

weather-dependent. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park & Virtually** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office (Gate 3) 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804. Please call if interested in attending (563)328-3280.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Backyard Birds ~ 10:00 A.M. to Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~

Join Naturalist Becky Baugh and learn about the birds that can be found in your own backyard! You will also learn ways to attract birds to your backyard and will make take-home pinecone bird feeders. During this program, you will also learn about the Great Backyard Bird Count. Bird watchers of all ages can participate in



this free program. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Cocoa Picasso ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Continue learning about backyard bird. Join Naturalist Paige to learn about a few of Iowa's resident winter birds. Then, take a hike and explore the Wapsi woods looking for them. Finally, create a bird-themed painting with guided step-by-step instructions. This program costs \$5/canvas (payable by cash or check at the program). Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, (Whispering Pines Shelter)** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563)328-3286.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center & Virtually** ~ Come learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, (Whispering Pines Shelter)** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563)328-3286.



## March

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure on snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program

is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563)328-3286.

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Maple Syruping ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come join Naturalist Michael Granger for a lesson on maple syruping. Learn the history of syruping, tree identification, and then learn how to gather sap! Fun for the whole family. This program will be outdoors, please dress according to the conditions.



Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist/Director Dave Murcia for an outdoor adventure in snow shoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions with limited spaces and registration required by calling (563) 328-3286.

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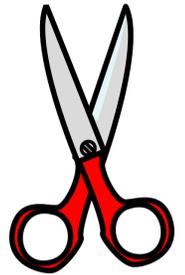
**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Sustainable Lawns ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Sustainable Stewards to learn about eco-friendly approaches that can make your lawn look great and dominate. Participants



will get an insight on renewable energy and emissions, natural fertilizers, healthy growth, and lawn equipment alternatives. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center & Virtually** Come learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Crafting for Conservation “Upcycle IT” ~ 10:00 A.M. to Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join us for the next installment of the Crafting for Conservation series! This program focuses on recycling and repurposing household items into something new. During this session, we will focus on recycling t-shirts into dog and cat toys, magazines into bookmarks and more, and toilet paper tubes into artwork. Please bring your own t-shirt to reuse, we will provide the magazines and toilet paper tubes. This program is family-friendly. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



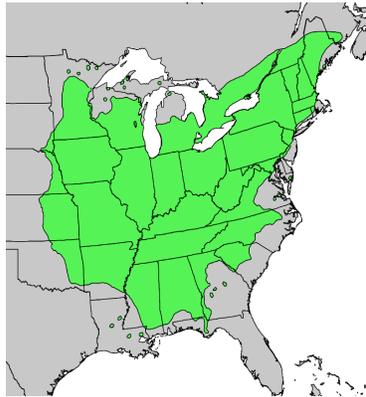
**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Natural Health and Home ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join the Wapsi River Center staff and learn how to make your own health and home products made with natural ingredients. Creating your own products is cost effective, customizable and a sustainable solution to buying products with harsh chemicals, plus it is fun! This program provides supplies and recipes for seasonal items. This time we will make a moisturizer, headache relief balm, dryer sheets, and a multipurpose cleaner. There is a program fee of \$15 per set of products for ingredients (payable by cash or check at the program). Please supply the following containers: 2 small wide-mouthed jars with lids, a cleaned repurposed spray bottle, and a glass jar with a lid. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



# PLANT PROFILE: SILVER MAPLE

By Naturalist Michael J. Granger

Let me introduce to you one of the most common trees in Eastern United States - the Silver Maple, *Acer saccharinum*. The silver maple is a water loving tree which will grow in wetter habitats. Silver maples are commonly found in open sunny areas along creeks, streams and larger rivers. Silver maples are fast growing trees and mature trees can be 45 to 80 foot tall.



**Silver Maple Range; Wikipedia**

A great tree rule to learn is MAD BUCK. The acronym refers to trees that have opposite branching, including maples, ashes, dogwoods and buckeyes. The leaves and twigs grow on direct opposite sides of the larger branches. This quick tree rule can help you quickly identify maple trees and rule out alternate branched trees.

Maple trees are fairly easy to identify by looking at twigs, leaves, buds and bark. Silver maples in particular will have large round terminal buds, which are reddish in color. Reddish buds will also be

along the twigs making this tree easy to identify. On mature trunks, the bark is gray and shaggy. On branches and young trunks, the bark is smooth and silvery gray. Silver maple leaves are simple with palmate venation. Leaves have five deep lobes, with pointed leaf tips. Leaves rest on long stems which wave with the slightest breeze. The term “silver” maple refers to the



**Silver Maple Leaf; Wapsi River Center**

undersides of the leaves which have a silvery appearance, while the tops are light green.

Early in the spring silver maples will flower and eventually produce winged seeds known as samaras, but most of us know them as



**Silver Maple Samara; Clipart**

“helicopter” seeds. They are the largest maple seeds native to our area. The silver maple produce their seeds in the spring instead of the fall like most maples. The seeds can also float allowing them to reseed waterways. The seeds are also said to be a delicious wild edible, by peeling and eating the inner seed. Remember to do your research before consuming any wild plant.

Many animals rely on the silver maple for food and nutrition. The large round buds are consumed readily by squirrels. The seeds are great resource for squirrels, chipmunks and birds.

Silver maple bark is stringy and consumed by deer and beaver. Trunks are prone to produce hollow cavities providing homes for woodpeckers, raccoons and possums. A variety of caterpillars forage on the leaves. One moth in particular, the Rosy Maple Moth, *Dryocampa rubicunda*, is quite showy with bright yellow and pink markings.



**Rosy Maple Moth;**

Historically the silver maple was utilized by Native Americans in the springtime for maple syrup production. Silver maple sap has a very low sugar content so it takes roughly twice the amount of sap to produce consumable syrup compared to the sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*, (so there is not a silver maple sugar demand on market today). They also used the wood for basket making and furniture. Today the wood can be used as pulp for making paper. Lumber from the tree is also used in cabinets, flooring, musical instruments, crates, and even tool handles, because of its hardness and durability.

Silver maple trees are planted regularly for landscaping in towns and cities for their fast growth, but are considered brittle and often trees are damaged during storms. Although fast growing trees which provide lots of shade their roots are shallow and may break through sidewalks. Seed production is very high resulting in an overproduction of seedling growth. Some cities and towns have banned silver maple plantings along streets due to these tendencies.

Silver maple trees are fast growing trees which love moisture, provide food and shelter for local wildlife and provide shade for homeowners. So next time you are hike or exploring see if you might be able to find one of our most common trees, the silver maple!

# ANIMAL PROFILE: RED HEADED WOODPECKER

By Wapsi Naturalist Becky Baugh

Growing up, I was always excited to see a red-headed woodpecker, *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*, in my backyard. It was a very easy bird to identify with its bright red head and black and white wings. It was not that common to see them flying around the neighborhood, so I thought it was not in their range. Now I know it was not the right habitat for them. The Wapsi River Center has the perfect habitat for them and therefore I see them almost every day!

The red-headed woodpecker is sometimes referred to as a flying checker-board. It has an entirely bright red head, a bright white belly, a black back, and half white, half black wings. The juvenile red-headed woodpeckers look similar except they have a few black spots in their white wing patches and their heads are gray-brown. They are a larger woodpecker species with their size ranging between a robin and a crow. They have a chisel-like beak that is typically gray in color and a short stiff tail.



Juvenile Red Head  
Photo: Becky Baugh

These woodpeckers can be found all along the East Coast and west to Montana. They are as far north as the southern border of Canada down south to Texas and Florida. They are an irregular or short-distance migrant. They usually migrate out of the western and northern parts of their range during the winter months. They typically migrate at night in the spring and during the day in the fall.

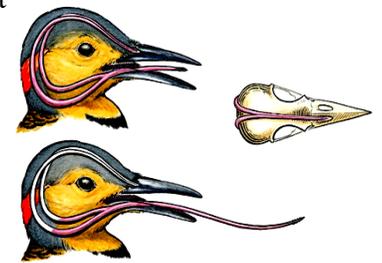


American Bird Conservancy:  
[abcbirds.org](http://abcbirds.org)

Preferred habitat consists of deciduous woodlands with old-growth oak, hickory, maple, ash, beech, and pine trees. They also can be found in river bottoms, farmland, orchards, forest edges, parks, and grasslands with scattered trees. During breeding season, dead or dying trees with nest cavities are an essential part of their habitat. There are plenty of snags, or broken trees, in the woodlands surrounding the Wapsi River Center, which is why there is a constant population of them found on the property.

Red-headed woodpeckers enjoy insects, fruits, and seeds. The insects take up about one-third of their diet while plant material takes up the other two-thirds. Their insect diet consists of grasshoppers, cicadas, beetles, honeybees, and midges. Their plant material diet consists of seeds, corn, berries, other fruits, and nuts including acorns, beech nuts, and pecans. The red-headed woodpecker is one of four North American woodpeckers known to store food in cracks in wood, fence posts, under roof shingles, and under bark. It is the only known woodpecker that covers its food to hide it from other birds. During the summer, they typically store grasshoppers live, wedged tightly into crevices so they cannot escape. During the winter, they retrieve the fruit and nuts they stored during the summer and are often found eating suet and seeds at nearby feeders.

Red-headed woodpeckers, like most woodpeckers, hammer at trees to retrieve the insects crawling under the bark. They have a specialized long tongue to help retrieve the insects in the small hole they just excavated. To prevent themselves from getting headaches and as a storage for their long tongue. The tongue typically starts at the base of the upper beak (near the nostrils) and wraps around the top and back of the skull, then underneath before coming out through the beak. This adds cushion around the skull when they are hammering away at the bark.



Picture by:  
[www.birdwatchingdaily.com](http://www.birdwatchingdaily.com)

Unfortunately, there has been a cumulative decline of 70% in the red-headed woodpecker population since a survey started in 1966. This decrease in population is a result of habitat and food loss. There was a blight that killed nearly every American chestnut tree in the early 1900s. This allowed for more nesting habitat in the short term with the dead trees, but it took away a major food source. One way you can help these woodpeckers is leaving the snags and dead trees on your property if they don't threaten damage to a house or vehicle. Also, use less pesticides, and leave out more seeds and suet during the winter months. If you have not seen a red-headed woodpecker in person, come out to the Wapsi River Center! You are bound to see one flying between trees, along our woodland trails!

**WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER**  
**31555 52ND AVENUE**  
**DIXON, IA 52745**  
**Tel: (563)328-3286**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



“The W.R.E.N.” is published quarterly by the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and the Scott County Conservation Board.”

**Mailing List:** To receive a copy of the WREN free of charge, please send a postcard to the address above.

### **Scott County Conservation Board**

Members:

Rich Mohr                      Doug Grenier  
John “Skip” O’Donnell      Beth McAleer  
Carol Fennelly

Director:

Roger Kean

### **Phone Numbers**

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center  
(563) 328-3286

Scott County Conservation Board  
(563) 328-3280

### **Wapsi River Environmental Education Center Staff**

Dave Murcia, Director/Naturalist  
Mike Granger, Naturalist  
Becky Baugh, Naturalist  
Paige Owings, Assistant Seasonal Naturalist  
Brandi Turner, Resident Caretaker

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