



Bur Oak Tribune



Wildwood Nature Center

Park Ridge Park District

September 2010

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General Information

During your visit to Wildwood Nature Center you will find an **Animal Exhibit Room** with a turtle pond, snakes, prairie dogs, snapping turtles, and much, much more. Wildwood also offers an activity room called the **Nature Nook** complete with books, puzzles, puppets, games, and activities. Visit the Nook this month to learn about seeds!

Wildwood Nature Center is located at:

529 Forestview Ave.
Park Ridge, IL 60068

Contact Info:

847-692-3570
jclauson@prparks.org

Web: www.prparks.org

Visiting Hours:

Tuesday -Thursday 10am-6pm
Saturday 10am-4pm

Admission : FREE

Wildwood Nature Center Bur Oak

Editor: Hillary Wells-Pranga

Nature Feature

This month's feature is the brown-headed cowbird. The male brown-headed cowbird is mostly black with a brown head and the female is all brown.

Cowbirds in general get their name from their fondness for following large animals such as cows and



World Book illustration by Trevor Boyer, Linden Artists Ltd.

horses. Following the

large animals means an easy meal as the cows flush insects out from the grass as they walk. When bison dominated the Great Plains cowbirds would follow the herds for the same reason. Cowbirds also eat seeds from grasses, weeds and grain, this is their main diet in the winter time. In addition to farms, cowbirds can also be found around fields, prairies, wood edges and river groves. They are often seen foraging on the ground for spiders, millipedes, grasshoppers and beetles. Cowbirds are most known for being brood parasites. Instead of building a nest, laying eggs and raising their chicks, cowbirds let other birds do all the work.

Female cowbirds look for unattended nests and



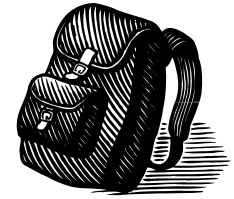
www.sialis.org/images/

then remove one egg from the nest and lay one of their own. The mother of that nest will then raise their chicks along with cowbird's chick. The cowbird chick will often outcompete the other chicks for food.

Female cowbirds can lay one egg per day for several weeks. This is a great strategy for the cowbird but unfortunate for other struggling songbirds.

News Bulletins

➤ Wildwood now has explorer packs that you can borrow with fun tools to aid in your outdoor adventures. Each backpack has a different topic, such as birds, ponds, wildflowers, animal tracks and more. To get started all you need is a \$5 deposit (refundable upon return) to check out a pack. Please see a member of Wildwood' staff if you are interested in checking one out.



Upcoming Events

Bug Club* (Ages 4-8): Sept 15, 4:00pm—5:30pm~ Hands-on insect building and computer exploration– bring nature study and engineering together with new friends in a big way at the bug club. A great all around adventure.

Fee: \$21 resident/nonresident, Class #16962



Family Campfire*: Sept 17, 7:00pm—9:00pm~ The entire family will enjoy the peaceful night air while sitting around a warm fire listening to stories, singing songs, going for a night hike, and making S'mores. Flashlights are not needed but you can bring a blanket or chair to sit on.

Fee: \$15 resident/nonresident families, Class #16714

Fun Haunted Prairie* (Ages 2-10 with Adult): Oct 2, 2:00pm—5:30pm~ Enjoy a fun fall day as you take a walk around Wildwood trails and facility looking at decorations, gathering treats, making a craft and participating in other seasonal games and activities. Arrive anytime between 2:00pm and 5:00pm.

Fee: \$9 residents/\$17 nonresidents, Class #16712



Halloween Hoopla* (Families): Oct 7, 6:30pm—8:30pm~ Join us for a fun-filled family event that includes pumpkin carving, a hayride, scarecrow building and s'mores around the campfire. Please bring your own scarecrow clothes.

Fee: \$31 residents/\$50 nonresidents, Class #16711, \$12 additional pumpkin Class #16716

* Registration is required for all classes, for more information call 847-692-3570 or Discover the Fun on the Park District website at www.praparks.org



Volunteer News

Wildwood would like to welcome our two new volunteers Pete and Kelly! Happy Birthday to Wednesday animal volunteer Alex G.!

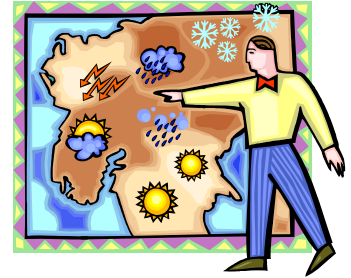
Family Fun Corner

Meteorology Fun

Materials: plastic bag, scissors, stapler, yardstick, outdoor thermometer, pine cone, compass, notebook, ruler, glass jar, permanent marker, & heavy duty tape

- Using the plastic bag cut a strip out around 2 by 12 inches and staple it to the yard stick. Stick the yard stick in a spot in your yard that isn't too sheltered. Watch the plastic from day to day, is it moving a lot or a little? You can use a compass to figure out wind direction.
- Pine cones react to humidity, place a pine cone on your patio or outdoor window sill. If it is humid the pine cone will close up, protecting its seeds. If it is dry out, the pine cone will open to release the seeds.
- For the thermometer, find a place that isn't too sunny and check the thermometer a couple times of day with your child and teach them how to read it.
- To make a rain gauge use a ruler to make marks on the jar with the marker. Tape the jar to the ruler (or a garden stake) with heavy duty tape and stick the ruler or stake into the ground.
- If your child is old enough to write, they can also keep track of the weather in a journal or notebook. As they watch the patterns of weather they will learn more about meteorology.

(Some ideas were taken from My Big Backyard magazine)



Earth Stewards

You can be an earth steward by checking out these Green iPhone Apps



Green Projects

“Green Genie” (\$0.99), an App recommended by Apple, helps you select projects based on your budget and lifestyle that can help you save money and the earth. There is even an option to submit your own project ideas.

Green Shopping

“GoodGuide” is a free App that helps you select products with high ratings on being earth friendly, good for your health and are socially responsible. Just scan the bar code of the product and the App gives you the ratings to help you decide which product to buy.

Green Cooking

“Eco Chef 10 Minute Meals With Bryan Au” (\$1.99) is an App for people with little time but a desire to cook healthy. You just pick a food category (i.e. Mexican) and it gives you recipes with pictures and helpful hints.

For More Info go to www.afreshsqueeze.com



Junior Naturalist Pages



Wild Wonders

Hello again and thanks for joining me, LeeAnn Ladybug, for my monthly wildlife news report here at Wildwood! Well, fall is on its way but September is still a great month to get out and have a picnic at Wildwood. Picnickers beware though, one



of my friends likes picnics too and he has a stinger! During the summer Willy Wasp was busy feeding his babies (called larva) but now that his queen has stopped laying eggs he might check out your picnic for a sweet treat! I was having my own picnic eating aphids a week ago when I heard something slithering through the prairie. Do you know who it was? It was

Greta Garter snake looking to have me for lunch. Greta will be having her babies soon, did you know garter snakes do not lay eggs? Baby snakes are trouble for me but, you do not need to worry because garter snakes have no venom and do not attack people. Speaking of things on the ground, a couple days ago I was flying around the trees at the back of the pond by the bench and I saw some yellow and brown things all over the ground. Do you know what they were? I'll give you a hint they are shaped like hearts with toothed (bumpy) edges. They were cottonwood leaves! Cottonwood trees like lots of water so they are one of the first trees to start losing their leaves. As I flew closer to one of the trees I saw Winston White-Tailed Deer rubbing his antlers on the tree trunk. I asked him what he was doing and he said he was leaving his mark so other bucks know this is his place and they should stay away! Wanda White-Tailed Deer was with him and she was busy grooming herself. Just like people need different clothes for different seasons, deer shed their reddish summer coat of hair in order to grow a darker winter coat. This can be an itchy process so they groom a lot. I need to find a place hibernate now, see you in the spring!

LeeAnn's challenge: Cross out every third letter to solve this riddle—
“What’s a snake’s favorite dance?”

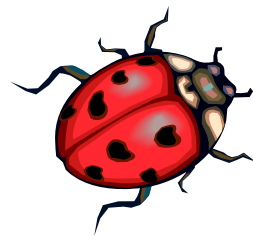
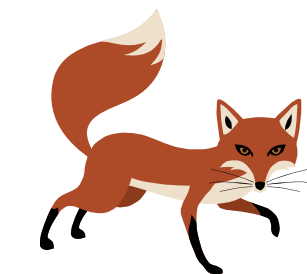
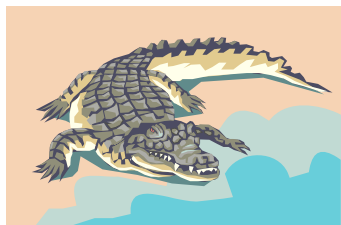
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rosllq!



Junior Naturalist Pages



September 23rd is the first day of fall. Can you find and circle all the animals below that start with the letters in the word fall?



Answers: Fish, Alligator, Fox, Lobster, Leopard, Armadillo, Ladybug, Ant, Frog

Animal Feeding Times

Watch the Wildwood staff feed some of your favorite animals! Call the Nature Center for more information at 847-692-3570.

This Month:

Saturdays 10:30am

Wednesdays 10:30am and 3:30pm

Location: Animal Room

Critter Connection

Get up close to a Wildwood animal during a short, family friendly presentation. Learn about the featured animal, what makes him special, what he eats, and more. Make sure to pet him before he heads back to the animal room. Visit different animals each month.

Day: Every Saturday

Time: 10:15am-10:30am



Location: Nature Nook

Ask the Naturalist

Wildwood is a great place to find answers about the natural world.



Q: Do ferrets have backbones?

A: Yes, ferrets have backbones. Ferrets have extra long vertebrae (bones in their spine),

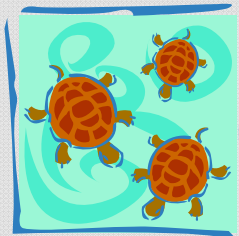
which is why they are so flexible and it looks like they have no backbone.

You can submit your questions anonymously or with your first name and city to Wildwood's mailing address (2701 W. Sibley) or email them to: jclauson@prparks.org. We encourage people of all ages to write in with their questions!

Pet Connection

~ **Needs a home:** two female, three year old lop-eared bunnies.

~ **Needs a home:** Six cats, male and female. Cats have been fixed, vaccinated and micro-chipped.



~ **Needs a home:** male two year old Scottish terrier, neutered and housebroken.

~ **Needs a home:** female, 9 inch red-eared slider. Comes with 50 gallon tank.

To respond to these ads or to post an ad, please contact Wildwood