



Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 55 NUMBER 1 • SPRING EDITION • MARCH—MAY 2022

A Sweet Surprise

Article by Dominique McKillop

I have always found honeybees interesting. At my previous job, working at Pokagon Nature Center, I found myself always talking about the hive and wanting to learn more about the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*). When I found myself looking for a new job last year in January, of course my first thought was that I can do beekeeping, collect honey, make money off of it, and make candles from the beeswax. I have not been able to get my own hive started, but my love of honeybees has not stopped either. As I did more research on beekeeping I found the honeybee dynamic of the hive very interesting.

Life in the hive can look different for each individual honeybee, you are either a queen, drone, or a worker. A queen's main job is to lay eggs for the hive, and a drone's main job is to mate with the queen. These two jobs, which are very important, do not show entirely how a hive works. My main focus is on the workers and what they actually do in and outside the hive. All worker bees are females, and they comprise the largest group within the hive. They are not sexually developed so they cannot lay fertile eggs like the queen. This, however, does not mean their job is less important. The worker bee begins her life as a fertilized egg which hatches into a larva about day three. During the first two stages of their lives, from egg to larva, they are completely dependent on adult worker bees to feed them every 15 minutes. When the larva grows it spins a cocoon, and through the process of metamorphosis turns itself into a pupa. This process typically occurs between nine and ten days. Their cell is capped by an adult worker bee, where they leave them alone until day 20 when they emerge from their cell into an adult bee. The worker bees make sure the temperature of the nest is maintained at 90 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit during the egg, larvae, and pupae stage, which is known as brood rearing. The worker bees maintaining the temperature ensures the eggs develop the way they are supposed to. The average adult worker bee lives about four to six weeks in the spring or summer. However, in the long winter months they can live up to six months.

In their brief life, worker honeybees specialize in one specific task at each stage of their adulthood. The first few days after emerging from her cell she serves the hive as a house bee

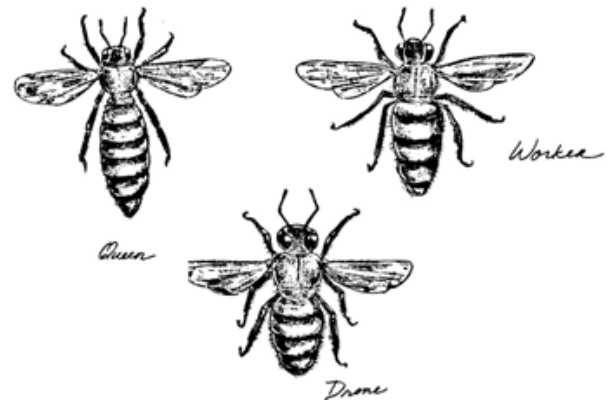


Illustration by Elara Tanguy

and a cell cleaner. This young female inspects, cleans, and polishes the cells in which the queen lays her eggs. Around day three she begins feeding older larvae with pollen and nectar brought into the hive by the more mature bees. At six to eleven days, her glands develop and she begins to secrete and feed royal jelly to the younger larvae. For the first three days all larvae are fed royal jelly, but the larvae with potential to be a queen are continuously fed the royal jelly. These royal jelly glands are located in her head, but these are not the only glands that are developing. Her wax glands also develop during this time on her abdomen. The glands on her abdomen allow her to secrete beeswax, and she uses her mandible to form it into a comb. These cells make up the brood nest, where eggs and larva grow, and where pollen and honey are stored. The beeswax is also used to cap the cells that are filled with larvae or delicious honey. During this stage, around the twelfth day, she also helps to repair damaged comb. In between these activities she takes time out to flap her wings to circulate air and provide ventilation in the hive. They help remove moisture from the pollen, brought in by foraging bees. Worker bees metabolize honey to generate the heat needed to warm the hive. Honey must be present in the hive at all times!

The next stage of the worker bee comes on the eighteenth

Reflections...

You are holding in your hands *Heron Tracks*, Volume 55, Number 1... Fifty-five years! Let that sink in for a moment. Fifty-five years of quality programs, dedicated staff, incredible volunteers, community support, and this wonderful place for people to visit, explore, discover, learn, and seek respite. Pretty amazing, don't you think?

When I started my tenure here as Executive Director in 2017, we celebrated our 50th anniversary with a *Party at the Ponds*, which included historical displays, presentations, games for children and families, and naturalist-led activities. Many former staff and board members returned to help commemorate the occasion. A good time was had by all as were reflected on fifty years of service to our community.

Now, at 55, perhaps it's time to look back again over the past five years, while also looking ahead to our future. Over the past five years, the nature center has endured two major challenges: staffing and a global pandemic.

Since the end of 2016, five staff members have retired, collectively representing more than 105 years of nature center experience. Taking their place were employees with very little nature center experience between them. You have to start somewhere, right? I think we've done pretty well, considering.

In 2020 Seven Ponds was hit with a completely unexpected challenge with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in the temporary closure of the nature center, furloughed staff, cancelled programs including school trips, weekend programs, field tours, and more. Important fund raisers including our Holiday Auction and Corks & Caps events did not happen. Amazingly – with the incredible help of our wonderful supporters – Seven Ponds weathered this storm and came through strong.

Looking ahead, we endeavor to be a nature center people can depend on for high quality nature programming as well as a special place to visit and enjoy. We continue to adapt our school programs to match state and national science standards, helping teachers connect their students with the natural world. Our naturalist staff works hard to develop fun and interesting programs for children, families, and adults. Our maintenance staff strives to keep the building and grounds in top shape, improving and adding features whenever possible.

Seven Ponds is an exciting place to be, and we hope you enjoy each and every visit you make. Here's to the next five years and beyond. Until then, see you on the trails!

Daryl Bernard
Executive Director

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CORKS & CAPS 2022

Our sixth annual Corks & Caps Fundraiser will be held Friday, June 17 at 6:00 PM at the Metamora Golf & Country Club. This fun event is one of our most important fundraisers of the year and we hope you will be able to attend and support the nature center.

Plans are underway to make this the best Corks & Caps to date, and we'd love to see you there, supporting Seven Ponds Nature Center.

Individual registration for the event is forthcoming - check our website for up-to-date information. If you'd like to support the event as a sponsor, please consider taking advantage of the following sponsorship levels:

Platinum \$1000

Signage and Recognition in program & *Heron Tracks* newsletter
8 tickets to Corks & Caps plus 8 passes to Seven Ponds

Gold \$750

Signage and Recognition in program & *Heron Tracks* newsletter
6 tickets to Corks & Caps plus 6 passes to Seven Ponds

Silver \$500

Signage and Recognition in program & *Heron Tracks* newsletter
4 tickets to Corks & Caps plus 4 passes to Seven Ponds

Bronze \$250

Recognition in program & *Heron Tracks* newsletter
2 tickets to Corks & Caps plus 2 passes to Seven Ponds

Heron Tracks

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www.sevenponds.org 810-796-3200

The mission of Seven Ponds Nature Center is to conserve the natural environment of Seven Ponds as a sanctuary for native plants and animals, as a living classroom for environmental education, and as a peaceful retreat for its visitors. The nature center fosters an understanding and appreciation of our natural world and development of an environmental ethic in the people and communities of Southeast Michigan through education, service as a community resource, and responsible stewardship of Seven Ponds and adjacent lands.

Executive Director:

Director of Environmental Education:

Office Manager:

Naturalists:

Weekend Receptionist/Gift Store Manager:

Weekday Receptionist:

Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds:

Daryl Bernard

Carrie Spencer

Diane Rankin

Stacey Holinsworth

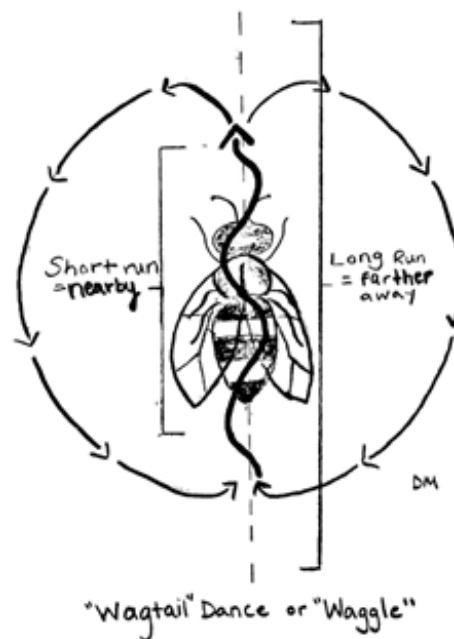
Krincy Rice

Mike Grappin

day when she becomes a guard bee, stationed at the entrance of the hive. Guard bees play a big role in their colony. They allow returning forager bees in, only if they are a part of their colony. The bees must carry their own queen's pheromone to gain access to their hive. The guard bees will reject old or diseased bees, and drive out the drones in the fall. This also means that her sting glands are now fully developed, and her main duty is to defend the hive. A honeybee dies after inflicting one sting. Guard bee is the last inside job before she will have become a forager bee.

A worker bee will start foraging for pollen and nectar when she is 21 days old (three weeks). At this point she leaves the hive to collect nectar to make honey, pollen to feed the hive, water to drink, and propolis. Propolis or bee glue is a resinous mixture made by mixing saliva and beeswax with sap from tree buds or other botanical sources. This is used to seal up cracks and other unwanted spaces in the hive. If you have ever seen someone try to open a hive and have difficulty it is because of the propolis the worker bees produce. She will also be a scout bee during this time and return to the hive to inform the other foragers where they can find the pollen, nectar, water, or propolis. On average a single worker bee makes only 1/12 teaspoon of honey in her lifetime. She will continue to be a forager until her last days. With all these duties a worker bee truly works herself to death, by wearing out her wings or succumbing to sheer exhaustion. The worker bee has many tasks within her lifetime and works with other bees, but how do these forager bees communicate with each other?

Honeybees have developed a system with each other by dancing around the hive. This dance is called the "wagtail" dance or "waggle" dance. During this dance scout bees communicate to forager bees distance, direction, quality, and quantity of the food source by using the direction of the sun. The first step of this dance is performed when a scout bee brings back a sample of a floral source. Then forager bees observe the scout's dance. This dance is performed on a vertical honeycomb inside the hive, and the steps create a figure-eight pattern. Imagine you are looking at a clock. The dance begins at six o'clock with a short walk and wiggle straight to twelve. Once at twelve she moves to the right still wiggling back to six o'clock. After returning to six o'clock, she makes her way directly back to twelve. From twelve she will turn to her left and make her way back to six o'clock. To the human eye it looks like she is moving in a figure eight movement (see illustration), but every angle of the steps she's taking is indicating a location of the food source relative to the sun. If the run lasts a short distance the source is nearby, but if her run is longer the source could be farther than a mile away. In the hive there are several bees doing this dance, and each one could indicate a different source. One may do a dance for nectar that is nearby while another does a dance for water that they have found. New foragers will not be able to locate



the specific site, but they will be able to find the general area. The honeybees will return to the hive and continue this process by dancing all over again.

To my sweet surprise these creatures are highly intelligent. In the coming years, I hope to have my own hives, allowing me to learn even more from these very interesting creatures and their many life processes.



Seven Ponds Naturalist Dominique McKillop

Wandering with the Birds

By Daryl Bernard

Spring is a magical time for birders, there's simply no denying it. We content ourselves with our winter residents like chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, cardinals, woodpeckers, and jays, and we certainly enjoy our special winter visitors such as Dark-eyed Juncos and American Tree Sparrows, but near the end of winter we are ready for the sounds and colors that spring birds bring our way.

It starts in March as the lakes break free from their icy winter freeze. Waterfowl - ducks and geese and swans - begin moving through en masse. Dabbling ducks like Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Northern Pintail hit the ponds, backwaters, and small lakes. Diving ducks, including Redhead, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Canvasback prefer the bigger waters where they dive underwater for their meals. Large flocks of Tundra Swans cruise overhead, stopping in farm fields to rest and resupply on their journey to their breeding grounds in the far north. Trumpeter Swan pairs reclaim their favorite northern Michigan lakes and ponds in ever-increasing numbers, still recovering from their near extinction of the early 20th century. Loons and grebes, sometimes classified as waterfowl, also begin arriving during this time. This waterfowl migration is merely a prelude, a wake-up call for birders to what is headed our way.

About the same time the ducks begin arriving in wetlands across Michigan, migratory songbirds in the neotropical regions of Central and South America begin their incredible journey north. For some, spring migration won't end until they reach the boreal forests of northern Canada. Songbirds time their migration route and stops along the way with the emergence of insects and other arthropods, which provide critical energy for the long and demanding flight. By late April the advance troops start arriving in Michigan, and by mid-May the fields and forests are alive with the songs and colors of warblers, vireos, thrushes, sparrows, tanagers, orioles, and other feathered treasures.

Birders flock to migration hotspots such as Lake St. Clair Metropark, Tawas Point State Park, Wilderness State Park, and Whitefish Point. But, really, any patch of woods can hold these wonders of nature. Seven Ponds Nature Center certainly hosts its share! All it takes to find them is a keen ear, sharp eyes, and a decent pair of binoculars. Ahhh, spring! When you just never know what you may find when you're out, wandering with the birds.



Around the Center

Baby Birds Abound!

2021 was another successful year of bird box monitoring at Seven Ponds. Out of 88 nest boxes monitored we had 161 Tree Swallows, 92 House Wrens, and 19 Eastern Bluebirds fledge. Thanks to our squadron of volunteers who monitor our nest boxes on a weekly basis throughout the nesting season.

Seven Ponds Challenge

The Seven Ponds Challenge is a new program that connects people to nature through hiking. The program is free for Seven Ponds members (\$3 for non-members). While we navigate through the challenges of COVID-19, one thing has become very clear: being outside is ESSENTIAL. It plays a vital role in sustaining our physical, mental, and spiritual health. This is why we came up with our challenge; it will gain you physical fitness, mental well-being, opportunity to explore new places, and help you connect with family, friends, and yourself through nature. This is also a great way to support Seven Ponds Nature Center! You may find the map at the nature center building - just ask at the front desk. Any questions about this fun hiking challenge should be directed to Seven Ponds Naturalist, Dominique McKillop, 810-796-3200, dmckillop@sevenponds.org.

New Teaching Platform for the North-80

We have a new patio dock ready to install on the shore of Waterfowl Pond in the North-80 this spring. The dock will provide a perfect platform for our naturalists to use with students while pond dipping and exploring the world of aquatic invertebrates. Visitors may use the dock to sit and enjoy this wetland on the north side of Crawford Road.

Nature Playscape Taking Shape

Seven Ponds staff are very excited about our forthcoming nature playscape, which we hope to open during this summer. Plans are in place and features are being constructed for this wonderful area, which will allow children the opportunity of free and creative play in nature, climbing, crawling, jumping, running, balancing, creating, and imagining.

Where there's Smoke, there's Fire

As part of our invasive species and prairie management, we will be conducting a prescribed burn in our tallgrass prairie and other fields. Depending on weather conditions, the burns should take place in early April.

Seven Ponds Tributes

Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

In memory of Mike Mercier

- Lynn M. and M. Lynn Rose
- Charles and Yolanda Turner
- Vietnam Veterans of America - Chapter 287

Seven Ponds Photo Club Memorial in memory of Mike Mercier

- Gaylene Barker
- William and Kathleen Bolio
- Kelly Daniels
- Stuart Davis
- Germanine Finley
- Elizabeth Gondert
- Tom Harpootlian
- Karen Hill
- Dennis Kelly
- Bobbie Lewis
- Larry Ludwicki
- LeeAnn McLane-Goetz
- Melody Munro-Wolfe
- Tim Toland
- Dale Vronch
- Bette and Jim Kenward
- Imlay City - City Office

In memory of Art Korson

- Lynn M. and M. Lynn Rose

In memory of Bill Connor

- Lynn M. and M. Lynn Rose

In memory of Sue Ann Vermillion

- Lynn M. and M. Lynn Rose

In memory of Bob Hollis

- Kristin Rohrbeck

In memory of Richard Greer, Sr.

- Richard Greer, Jr.

In memory of Ruth Glass

- Paul and Jill Messing

Buy-a-Tree in memory of Mike Mercier

- Seven Ponds Staff

Buy-a-Tree in memory of Virginia Green

- Seven Ponds Staff

Buy-a-Tree in memory of Wayne Toles

- Peggy and Douglas Warner

Buy-a-Tree in honor of Jason Krick

- Alec and Lynn Harding

Buy-a-Tree in honor of Mary Wyatt

- Alec and Lynn Harding

Buy-a-Tree in honor of Tristan & Jill Harding

- Alec and Lynn Harding

In honor of Mike Champagne

- Rich and Nancy Kautz

In honor of Patty & Rip Schemm and Lynn & Alec Harding

- Sarah McDermott



The Seven Ponds community was deeply saddened by the death of Mike Mercier, who passed away in January. Mike was a genuinely kind person who served the nature center in many capacities over the years, including Assistant Naturalist and longtime member of our board of directors. Mike was a steadfast volunteer, supporter, advocate, and promoter of the nature center, always willing to lend a hand whenever and wherever needed. He was a skilled photographer, and his images helped capture the beauty of Seven Ponds and the impact this place has had on so many. Mike was a valued member of the Seven Ponds family, loved by all, and he will be greatly missed.

Volunteer News

On the Trail

Thanks to all the many volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past winter.

Thanks to **Anne Melnik** for helping with cleaning up around the center.

Thanks to **Claudine Zach** for coming in to take care of our animals. They and we really appreciate it.

Thanks to **Don Dukelow** for all the volunteer work he does around the nature center.

Thanks to **Noah Elkins** for his dedication and willingness to take on any task.

Thanks to **Joey Janicki** for trekking outside with the naturalists and helping to clear invasives.

We want to thank everyone who came out and helped with our annual Winterfest event. The weather was cold but the stage was set for a great day, and our volunteers made it all possible. Thank you for helping to make this day a success. Thank you to **Kathy Cole, Nancy Kautz, Marianna Fitzgerald, Penelope Spencer, Jackson Spencer, Nathan Spencer, Don Dukelow, Noah Elkins, Madelyn Gucciardi, and Vickie Simek.**

Volunteer Opportunities

Call us at 810-796-3200 or contact Katie McKiernan at kmckiernan@sevenponds.org if you are interested in volunteering at Seven Ponds. You can also fill out the volunteer interest form located on our website at sevenponds.org

ASSISTANT NATURALIST CLASSES

These classes are open to Assistant Naturalists only. Classes take place on the third Thursday of the month and begin at 3:00 PM. If you would like to become a part of this rewarding program, contact naturalist Katie McKiernan at 810-796-3200 or kmckiernan@sevenponds.org.

Nature Journaling

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 3:00 PM

First Pollinators of Michigan

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 3:00 PM

Nature Play

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 3:00 PM

Seven Ponds Clubs!

Astronomy Club
Beekeeping Club
Birding Club
Photography Club
Friends of Herbs
Butterfly Gardeners
The Stingers

Visitors are welcome at all club meetings.

For additional information about any of the clubs which meet at Seven Ponds, please visit sevenponds.org.

Stingers Rummage Sale and Resale Shoppe Reminder

The Stingers' Annual Rummage Sale and Bake Sale will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 16-18 at the nature center. A special "member's only" pre-sale will take place June 11. ITEMS ARE NEEDED! The Stingers will be accepting items for the sale from March 1 to June 12, including clean clothing, household goods, toys, tools, and other items. We cannot accept appliances, television sets, computer equipment or building materials.

Additionally, the Stingers will be accepting items for their Resale Shoppe May 1-11, such as handmade items or other unique, high-end items that would be better suited for their sale in the big room that takes place a couple times each year.

Here and There...

Thanks to **Mutch's Hidden Pines** (Lapeer) for the donation of a wonderful Christmas tree for display at the nature center. We appreciate your continued generosity and support!

Thanks to the **Seven Ponds Beekeeping Club** for their generous monetary donation.

Thanks to **Crooked Creek Farms** (Lapeer) for keeping us well stocked with beef suet for our bird feeders. The birds thank you as well, especially on the coldest winter days!

Thanks to our own **Friends of Herbs** for adorning the nature center for the holidays with wreaths and other festive decor.

Thanks to our **Secret Santa** - the staff thanks you very much for the wonderful gifts! We appreciate you, Santa!

Thanks to **Karen Blaszyk** for donating some snow toys for Winterfest.

Thanks to the **Seven Ponds Photo Club** for the donation of a projector.

Winterfest 2022 A Cold Day of Fun!

Winterfest 2022 might have been the coldest winter event we have had in a while. With the morning temps in the crisp single digits the day was shaping up to be a lovely, windless day of winter fun. The ice was nearly a foot thick this year and made for some impressive blocks when cut away with old fashioned ice harvesting tools. Three campfires blazed up by the nature center and down on the ice. The very cold temperatures made for some interesting times at the food station with frozen Nutella making a surprise appearance on the menu. Life was found on top and below the frozen waters. While ice skaters carved patterns into the cleared away rink, pond dippers looked below and found several creatures (including caddisflies) thriving in the cold water. With the help of a cadre of volunteers, it seemed that a good time was had by all. Attendance was necessarily limited this year due to COVID. We will see what next year brings, but it is our continued hope that we will not have to limit registration, but will be able to have the event open again to everyone who wishes to come.

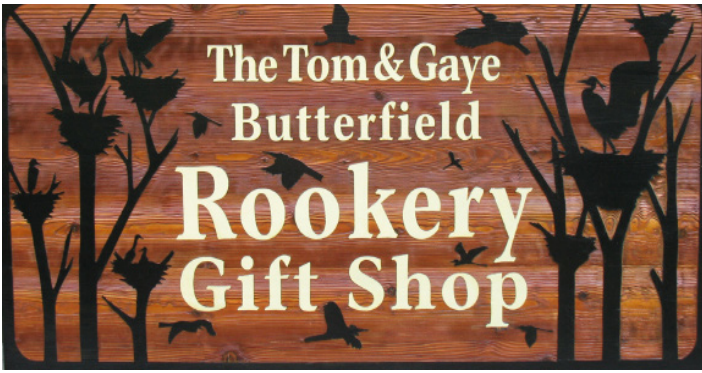
CRITTER CROSSING REHABILITATION Needs Your Help!

Seven Ponds Nature Center is teaming up with **Critter Crossing Rehabilitation** in Attica to do an item drive during the months of April and May. Your donations help make a difference in the lives of many injured wild animals that are brought to the rehab. Last year Critter Crossing took in over 400 animals! That's a lot of supplies to go through. During the months of April and May please bring your donations to the nature center. After the drive we will hand over all the goodies to Erica Zuhlke who runs the rehab.

You can find Critter Crossing on Facebook at facebook.com/crittercrossingrehab/

Here is a list of some much-needed items:

- Oxbow Orchard Grass Hay
 - Paper Towels
 - Gerber Baby Food (any fruit and vegetable kinds)
 - New or Used baby toys NO STUFFING
 - Baby Blankets
 - Whole Corn Feed
 - Antlers (from the store)
 - Tree Nuts (raw and in shell)
 - Peanuts (unsalted in shell)
 - High Efficiency (HE labeled) laundry detergent
 - Nesting Boxes (all sizes, for squirrels)
 - PetAg brand "Goat's Milk Esbilac" formula
 - Cotton Balls
 - Rice Bags
 - Heating Pads (with NO auto-shut off)
 - Handwarmers
 - Purina Cat Chow (indoor formula)
 - Clean Peanut Butter Jar Lids
 - Sardines (frozen or canned in water, no salt added)
 - Shelled walnut meat
 - Pouches and Hammocks
- (see instructions on Critter Crossing's Facebook page)



THINK GLOBALLY, SHOP LOCALLY

Looking for a unique gift or a locally made product? We offer a variety of locally handmade items, including body products like foot scrub, lip balm, lotion bars, and soap. We now have locally made shampoo bars. As always we have our locally made honey, maple syrup, teas, sniffle bags, wax melts, vinyl decals, clay earrings, faux leather earrings, beaded bracelets, and hand-crafted jewelry. Other items include Seven Ponds patches, bird houses, bird feeders, birdseed, field guides, children's books, nature themed jewelry, note cards, toys, stuffed animals, puppets, and wind chimes. So come get your unique items today!

Include a gift membership or Rookery gift certificate with your next purchase. These are the gifts that keep giving through all the seasons.

Seven Ponds Nature Center

3854 Crawford Road
Dryden, MI 48428
810-796-3200
www.sevenponds.org

Address Service Requested

REDUCE YOUR PLASTIC FOOTPRINT

To help reduce the abundance of single-use plastic items we have reusable Chico bags that are made from recycled materials. Other reusable items are Blue Q bags, totes, pencil cases, lunch bags, and coin purses all made from 95% recycled materials!

NEW HOODIES HAVE ARRIVED!

We have brand new Seven Ponds hooded sweatshirts in stock - both childrens and adults. Stop by and check out these great-looking hoodies.

BIRDSEED HOME DELIVERY

We offer birdseed delivery within a 20-mile radius for just a small \$5.00 delivery fee.*

CURBSIDE SHOPPING

Curbside shopping is also available - just call the nature center to place an order and we will deliver right to your vehicle.*

*All delivery and curbside orders must be prepaid.

Purchases made in the Rookery Gift Shop support the nature center, including all of the programs we do and land stewardship we perform. Your purchase dollars help us do good things!

Non-profit Organization US Postage PAID Permit No. 2 Dryden, MI 48428

Spring Programs

March - May
2022

Spring has arrived! As the ponds thaw and the forest wakes up from its winter slumber, it's a great time to get outdoors and explore! Seven Ponds offers something for everyone, from preschoolers and families to adults and seniors. Mark your calendar for some programs, walks, and classes. **All programs now require advance registration through our website.** Unless indicated, program fees are \$3.00 for adults, no charge for members or children 12 & under. COVID-19 precautions may be in place for various programs - check our website for more information. **Please register online for all programs at sevenponds.org.**

March

Spring Scavenger Hunt

Sunday, March 6, 1:00-4:00 PM

Spring is almost here. Sometimes you have to look hard to see it. Use your observational skills to seek out clues along the trail. Pick up a scavenger hunt sheet at the front desk and hit the trails. Show your findings to the naturalist when you are done to receive a prize.

Wee Readers

Saturday, March 12, 10:00 AM

Abracadabra! Alakazam! It's almost spring and to celebrate we will read *Abracadabra, It's Spring* by Anne Sibley O'Brien. After reading this fun book we will go for a walk to look for signs of spring here at the Nature Center.

Full Moon Exploration

Friday, March 18, 5:30 PM

Sometimes the forest at night can seem a bit frightful. Join a naturalist as we explore the trails under a full moon and learn about what's happening here at night.

Invasive Species Work Day

Sunday, March 20, 2:00 PM

It's that time of the year again when invasive species start to make their appearance. Join our land steward in an effort to help control them here at Seven Ponds. Tools will be provided but if you have a tool you like to use feel free to bring it. Please bring water and gloves.

Journaling in Nature

Thursday, March 24, 2:00 PM

We'll spend a portion of the time inside, where we'll share some helpful tips for keeping a nature journal. Then we'll head outside to practice what we learned. Participants please bring a journal and their favorite pen or pencil. You could also bring colored pencils and a camp stool if you would like.

Painting at the Ponds

Saturday, March 26, 5:00 PM

Naturalist Katie is back with another Painting at the Ponds class! Join her in this step by step adult program and walk away with a completed art piece. Participants must be 21 or older. This is a bring your own beverage class. All other supplies will be provided for you. \$25.00 for non-members and \$20.00 for members.

April

Salamander Foray

Saturday, April 2, 2:00 PM

Join a naturalist for a salamander day of discovery at Jonathan Woods. We will be looking for many examples of the six species that reside in the rich woods while learning about their natural history and conservation. Meet at Seven Ponds, but we will be driving separately due to COVID-19 precautions. Space will be limited.

N-80 Exploration

Sunday, April 3, 1:00 PM

Let's take a walk on the wild side of the nature center. The N-80 to be exact. Make sure to wear shoes that are waterproof because we will be exploring the less traveled side of the N-80.

History of Seven Ponds Walk

Sunday, April 10, 2:00 PM

Have you ever wondered how Seven Ponds Nature Center came to be? Come along on a walk through time as you join a naturalist around the property. We will visit key sites throughout Seven Ponds, and show you how four peoples' dream became a reality.

Seven Ponds Challenge Hike

Thursday, April 14, 12:00 PM

Join one of our naturalists to complete our NEW Seven Ponds Challenge. The hike is a 4 mile trail loop that features lakes, forest, wetlands, and a tall grass prairie. Make sure to bring water, and good hiking shoes for the trails.

Invasive Species Work Day

Saturday, April 16, 10:00 aM

This will be a great opportunity for people who are community-minded to come on out and get some volunteer hours! We will be working in our demonstration gardens in front of the building making sure they look great for our visitors. Tools will be provided, but please bring gloves and water.

Spring Wildflower Walk

Sunday, April 17, 2:00 PM

Do you love native wildflowers and want to learn more about them? During this program we will walk the trails and go into our Woodland Wildflower Area looking for some of the different wildflowers that we have here at the Nature Center.

Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga

Beginners/Basic Yoga Class

WEDNESDAYS, APRIL 20 THROUGH MAY 25, 6:00-7:00 PM

Unwind, rejuvenate and relax with Cat Minolli and the 'Peaceful Moon' series. These classes are designed for newcomers and beginning yoga students and/or those who wish to become re-acquainted with the practice. Participants will experience the mind, body, spirit connection while learning basic yoga poses in a serene environment. You don't have to be able to touch your toes or twist into a pretzel to participate, however many postures are done from a seated or prone position on the floor. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or a blanket. Pillows, additional blankets and any other "creature comforts" are also welcome. Fee is \$10.00. Classes will be held inside the building with COVID-19 protocols in place.

Birding for Beginners

Saturday, April 23, 9:00 aM

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a...oh wait, it is a bird after all. Have you ever wondered about the birds in your backyard? This may be the walk for you. Together we will practice our observation skills through a set of binoculars on our quest to spot the birds of Seven Ponds. No experience necessary. This is an introductory walk to those wishing to start their birding experience.

Frog and Toad Survey

Saturday, April 30, 7:30 PM

Frog-tacular! Toadally Awesome! Come out for a night of surveying the Seven Ponds frog and toad species at our Jonathan Woods property. We will meet at the nature center and drive to the satellite property. Space will be limited, so please pre-register.

May

Morning Paddle at the Ponds

Sunday, May 1, 8:00 aM

Let's start the month of May off with a peaceful paddle around ponds. We will enjoy the morning by listening, reflecting, and simply just enjoying a morning on the water. Come dressed for the weather. Fee: \$5.00 per person (\$3.00 for members) Minimum: 5 years old to ride and 10 years old to paddle. Space is limited, please pre-register by Friday, April 29th.

Walk on the Wildflower Side

Saturday, May 7, 1:00 PM

Buds are blooming and the forest is waking up once again. We will visit our Woodland Wildflower Area as well as take a walk through Paul's Woods to explore the world of the first flowers of Michigan.

EcoDay and Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14 - Please see the flier for details.

Jonathan Woods Hike

Saturday, May 21, 2:00 PM

Looking for a hike and not just a pleasant walk in the woods? Join a naturalist as we go to our satellite property, Jonathan Woods to hike the less used trails. We will meet at the Nature Center and drive separately to the property. Space is limited, please pre-register.

Bringing Pollinators Home Series

Do you want to learn how to attract native pollinators to your gardens? Join Seven Ponds Naturalists in this two-part series as we learn about our native pollinators and their importance to our environment.

Pollinators - Part One - Sunday, May 22, 2:00 PM

To start this series, we will learn about who our native pollinators are, why they are important, and what they need to survive. We will also be building a Hymenoptera Hotel (or more commonly called a Bee Hotel) for you to take home and use in your gardens to help our native pollinators out. Cost for this part is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

Pollinators - Part Two - Sunday, May 29, 2:00 PM

We will finish off the series with a freshly potted plant to get you started in your new garden. Bring your creativity skills as you sit down to paint your own pot with a cool design. We will go on a short walk to view some native plants growing here at Seven Ponds. When we come back we will fill our pots with a lovely, young, native plant for you to take home to attract native pollinators. Cost for this part is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

SPRING BIRD WALKS

This spring we will offer bird walks on Wednesday mornings from late-April through May. Highlighting several local natural areas, all walks away from Seven Ponds will take place at nearby parks and preserves, generally under 30 minutes driving time from Seven Ponds Nature Center. Our bird walks are open to birders of all skill and experience levels, and beginners are always welcome. Bring your binoculars, your enthusiasm, and be sure to dress for the weather. These bird walks are free for Seven Ponds members and \$5 for non-members. Online pre-registration is required, and bird walks are limited to ten (10) participants. Each spring bird walk will begin promptly at 7:00 AM at the trailhead of the destination park or preserve. Please arrive on time and ready to go birding!

Spring Bird Walk #1 – April 27

PINE RIVER NATURE CENTER
2585 Castor Road, Goodells

Spring Bird Walk #2 – May 4

CRANBERRY LAKE PARK
384 W. Predmore Road, Oakland Township

Spring Bird Walk #3 – May 11

BEAR CREEK NATURE PARK
740 W. Snell Road, Rochester

Spring Bird Walk #4 – May 18

WETZEL STATE RECREATION AREA
2600 27 Mile Road, New Haven

Spring Bird Walk #5 – May 25

SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER
3854 Crawford Road, Dryden

The Awesome Opossum! A Look into Our Backyard Marsupial

**With Erica Zuhlke
Saturday, April 16, 1:00 PM**

Critter Crossing Rehabilitation, a local wildlife rehab facility, brings their educational opossum, “Chubbs” to discuss how opossums use their anatomy to survive right in our own backyards! This presentation is geared towards all ages and dives into the natural history, unique behaviors, and common misconceptions the public has about our one and only North American marsupial. This is a special opportunity to see Chubbs LIVE and in person. Seating is limited; online registration required.



Register for this program online at sevenponds.org

Erica Zuhlke is a licensed and certified wildlife rehabilitator and local animal control officer. Erica founded Critter Crossing Rehabilitation in 2018 in her hometown of Attica, Michigan, for the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned native wildlife. Learn more about this local nonprofit organization by visiting their website at <https://www.crittercrossingrehab.com/>.

Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers - Spring Sessions

Seven Ponds Nature Center is an ideal outdoor classroom where children can experience nature first hand. In this series of programs, our experienced naturalists guide children toward an awareness and appreciation of our natural world, using hands-on activities, specimens, slide shows, and nature walks. These programs complement state science objectives and focus on specific ecological concepts. Fee: \$4.00 per person. Register for the *Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers* sessions online at sevenponds.org.

Wednesday, March 16, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

SMELLS THAT TELL ~ Grades K - 2 and Grades 3 - 6

Nature is full of smells, but did you know many plants and animals communicate with smells? During this lesson, students will learn how wild animals use smell to find their babies, food, and mates. They will also learn how plants use smells to communicate with each other, and with insects. This program will be divided into younger and older learners.

Wednesday, April 20, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

JUNIOR METEOROLOGISTS ~ Grades K - 1

Students will become meteorologists as we explore climate and weather. We will use scavenger hunts and weather stations to help us understand the sun and its effects on Earth. Homeschoolers will also problem solve how to keep plants and animals cool on sunny days.

AMAZING ANIMALS ~ Grades 2 - 4

Thinking about Michigan's seasons and how they affect the animals, we will investigate what adaptations wild animals have to succeed in our seasonal changes. Through hands-on activities and investigations, students will learn how some animals survive in Michigan, and how they compare to these animals' traits.

A SCURRY OF GRAY SQUIRRELS ~ Grades 5 - 6

Homeschoolers will become wildlife biologists as they study Seven Ponds' gray squirrel population. Through outside observations, discussion, and hands-on activities, students will examine gray squirrel behaviors, adaptations, and habitat to make predictions about future squirrel populations.

Wednesday, May 18, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

FAST LIVES OF SPRING WILDFLOWERS ~ Grades K - 2 and Grades 3 - 6

Spring wildflowers are tough plants that only flower in the spring for a short period of time. Homeschoolers will explore these beautiful plants through hands-on activities to learn about their life cycles, habitats, plant parts, and their relationships with the animals of the forest. This program will be divided into younger and older learners.

Knee-High Naturalist Classes

For preschool children around 3 or 4 years old

Fridays

10:00 - 11:30 AM

Fee: \$7.00 per child (\$6.00 for members)

Come out and enjoy nature with your child. All classes include nature fun like walks, crafts, games, stories, snacks, and so much more!

Online registration required.

Cats of Michigan

MARCH 18, 2022

Rainbows

APRIL 22, 2022

Animals of the Past

MAY 20, 2022