



# Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

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## Fish Musings

Article by Katie McKiernan

Growing up, I had never given a great deal of thought to fish. Like many kids, I had several fish and tanks throughout the years without knowing how to take care of them successfully. It wasn't until a couple years ago, before the pandemic, that I really started to look at our underwater friends. Since then I have thrown myself into proper fish care and have even taken up the call of betta fish rescuing. Six fish tanks later, my house is full of dozens of fish eagerly awaiting their meals when I come home for the evening.

But what is a fish? To understand fish we need to go back in time. WAY back in time. If you remember, the first article I ever wrote for Seven Ponds was about the Devonian Period, a place in time about 420-359 million years ago, also known as "The Age of Fishes." Before any mammal ever walked on land, the fish swam in the sea. The Devonian was called "The Age of Fishes" because during this time period fish were undergoing some dramatic diversification. Jaws were being developed, sharks came onto the scene, and different forms of fins were the trend. Some of these fish are still as they were all those years ago, such as Coelacanth, found in the Indian Ocean. Some fish crawled out onto the land and became the terrestrial animals we know today, while others continued to evolve in the waters. The latter is what I want to focus on.

Fish make up about 60% of all known vertebrate animals on earth. I am sure many of us have a tale or two about going out for the first time, at a young age, to sink a lure into one of Michigan's many waters. Most of the fish found in Michigan are part of the boney fish called teleosts. Over 95% of all fish species are in this infraclass. Sharks, rays, and skates make up the cartilaginous fish. However, like I tell all the kids that come to Seven Ponds hoping to see a shark swimming under the A-frame Bridge, you will not find them in the waters of Michigan.

Fish are ectothermic, meaning they rely on their surroundings to regulate their body temperature. Being in Michigan you will find our fish are cold water loving species, and can tolerate this climate much better than a tropical but-



Northern Pike (WikiCommons)

terfly fish could. Seven Ponds is home to many species of fish in our glacier formed lakes. Some of the fish found here include: several species of minnows, bullhead catfish species, northern pike (*Esox lucius*), yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), Iowa darter (*Etheostoma microperca*), smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), longear sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*), rock bass (*Ambloplites rupestris*), black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), green sunfish (*Lepomis cyanellus*), brook sticklebacks (*Culea inconstans*), and hognose suckers (*Hypentelium nigricans*). Phew, that's a lot of fish!

The next time you visit the dock down on Tree-top Pond, I would encourage you to look for some of these fish hanging around. Bluegill males can be found guarding small, bare patches of lake bottom that act as their nests. Northern pike might be just visible in the plants, waiting for the perfect moment to snatch a meal. But are these fish just mindless beings, driven only by instinct and need? It depends on who you ask, but as someone who spends many long moments watching my fish swim around in their tanks, I can certainly attest they are anything but. I recently picked up a book suggested to me called "What a Fish Knows" by

## Reflections...

If you've been out to the nature center recently, you've probably noticed big changes taking place on the grounds. We have several large projects in the works, each in various stages of completion. We are always looking for ways to enhance the nature center and improve our visitor experience. Let's look at each of these projects, keeping in mind that this article was written well in advance of your receiving this issue of *Heron Tracks*.

We have a new teaching platform on Waterfowl Pond in the North-80. This platform replaces the old dock, which had suffered natural decay since being installed in the 1970s. The new platform should last for decades and provides our naturalists another place where they can lead school groups in pond dipping and wetland exploration. You're welcome to relax on this dock and enjoy the sights and sounds of Waterfowl Pond and the surrounding area.

A new pavilion will soon stand in the back parking lot area. This pavilion can be used by members as a picnic place, by our naturalists as a teaching area, and by visiting school groups for lunch. The pavilion will replace the picnic area, which was located nearby in the woodland edge, and offers the added benefit of a roof for protection from rainy weather. An anonymous donation specifically earmarked for a pavilion made this addition possible.

Another sizeable donation came our way, making possible the breaking of ground for a new naturescape. The naturescape will provide a place for children to explore, imagine, create, run, jump, climb, crawl, and play, all in the safe confines of Seven Ponds. Elements will include an A-frame shelter, a bouldering wall, a large spider web, a sand pit, a hand pump and water feature, and natural elements like rocks, boulders, and logs. We hope to have this area open to the public by mid-summer.

These additions and improvements come at a cost, of course. Our small, dedicated staff works hard to maintain and enhance the nature center, but it's only through the support of our members and friends that projects like these are possible. We truly appreciate you – our members – and the contributions you make that keep Seven Ponds Nature Center viable and relevant in our community.

Daryl Bernard  
Executive Director

## PLEASE COMPLETE OUR SHORT SURVEY!

**Seven Ponds Nature Center's mission is to conserve its natural environment as a sanctuary for native plants and animals and to serve as a community resource for environmental education that fosters an understanding, appreciation, and stewardship ethic for our natural world.**

**With that mission in mind, the Board of Directors is seeking your input to help define our strategies that will best enable us to fulfill our mission, now and in the future. Thank you for providing your thoughtful responses.**

**The survey will take approximately seven minutes of your time, and will provide valuable input for us.**

**Take the survey now at  
[sevenponds.com](http://sevenponds.com)**

## *Heron Tracks*

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[www.sevenponds.org](http://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.*

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**Director of Environmental Education:**  
**Office Manager:**  
**Naturalists:**  
**Weekday Receptionist:**  
**Weekend Receptionist:**  
**Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds:**

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**Carrie Spencer**  
**Diane Rankin**  
**Nicole Kopas, Katie McKiernan**  
**Gina Stoldt**  
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**Mike Grappin**

Jonathan Balcombe. It is an in-depth look at the lives and emotions (yes, emotions) of our fishy friends all around the world. I had always known fish were not just robots that swam in the water, but it wasn't until I started reading this book (and caring for my home fish) that I realized how truly amazing and skilled fish can be!

If you are down on the Treetop Pond dock, and see the bluegill, I want you to really focus on what they are doing. A fish is never truly motionless for long. Lacking lungs like us mammals, the bluegill (like most fish) is breathing using its gill system. Every time that bluegill intakes water it is passing it over blood-filled filaments to pull oxygen out and expel CO<sub>2</sub> in its wake. You may be asking, "Katie, that's fish 101, what's your point?" Did you notice what the fins were doing while that bluegill took its underwater breaths? They were moving. Every time a fish takes a breath it produces a little puff of forward motion that might slowly propel the fish around its habitat. That is, it would, if it weren't for the counter actions of the pectoral fins on the side. To keep themselves in one place, every time a fish takes a breath they quickly flick their fins to cancel out the forward puff of the gills closing.

They would have been using their eyes, too. Those bluegill were probably watching that northern pike hiding in the plants, looking to make a meal out of them. They could be looking at the pike straight on, or they could be using the water like a mirror. If you have ever spent any time snorkeling and looked up you would have seen a mirror-like effect on the underside of the water surface. Fish have noticed this effect, too. To keep an eye on predators that might be hiding behind an object, the bluegills use the reflective surface of the water to avoid any sudden sneak attacks.

There is a saying, "Don't poop where you eat." For obvious reasons it is unhealthy and not to mention messy. For the northern pike it goes beyond that. Studies found that if a northern pike eats, let's say, a brook stickleback (another species found at Seven Ponds) the excrement will carry traces of what is called schreckstoff. Schreckstoff is



Yellow Perch (WikiCommons)

a chemical alarm compound given off by fish when they sense danger, signaling to other fish to be on guard. Getting eaten by a pike can certainly make a fish give off these chemicals. So when a pike poops out his last dinner, that schreckstoff can still be detected in the fecal matter, sending the still living sticklebacks on high alert and thus diminishing the chances of a kill for the pike.

Can a fish hear? Like Mr. Balcombe says in his book, if you ask any fisherman they could certainly tell you, yes they can. They would be right after all. Fish can hear sounds, and can make noises of their own while they're at it. When you go to visit the dock, walk quietly and calmly. Ninety-nine percent of airborne sounds bounce off the top of the water, but that number goes down when an object is placed in the water, which amplifies the sound to the underwater inhabitants. The supports of the dock could help project your footsteps to the fish you are trying to view. But if you are patient and quiet those fish will come into view. If you can't find any fish on the day you visit, I would encourage you to spend some time viewing fish going about their business in an aquarium. What you will find looking back at you (though they lack the facial expressions we associate with it) is an intelligent being capable of feeling and communicating in their own way.



Smallmouth Bass (WikiCommons)



## Wandering with the Birds *By Daryl Bernard*

In late March, a couple of visiting birders were standing on the A-Frame Bridge when they observed four Trumpeter Swans on Long Pond. Those birds represented the first known record of Trumpeter Swans at Seven Ponds Nature Center and were a testament to the success of a reintroduction program dating back to 1986. But the Trumpeter Swan story goes back much further than that.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Trumpeter Swans were hunted extensively for their meat, skins, quills, and feathers. Habitat loss due to the draining of wetlands furthered their decline. By 1933, fewer than 70 Trumpeters were known to exist, and there were none remaining in Michigan. Intensive management efforts, including habitat restoration and reintroduction programs, have brought this majestic swan back from near extinction to a nationwide population exceeding 45,000.

In Michigan, biologists obtained Trumpeter Swans from Alaska in 1983 to begin the reintroduction program. The effort was sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources nongame program and Michigan State University's Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, and was executed by Consumers Energy Corporation, Native American tribes, and private citizens. Conservation efforts, including systematic reduction of invasive, aggressive Mute Swans, has permitted the population in Michigan to reach 3,000 birds.

By average weight, Trumpeter Swans are one of the heaviest birds in the world capable of flight, averaging about 25 pounds. To get their mass airborne, they require a water "runway" of nearly 100-meters, running and flapping along the surface of the water. Adult Trumpeters sport completely white plumage, with jet-black eyes, bill, and legs. Pairs form bonds at 3-4 years of age and mate for life. Trumpeter Swans may reach 20 or more years of age in the wild, though mortality of young swans can be as high as 60%. While established populations are largely non-migratory, they may move south somewhat in winter to find open water.

I always enjoy seeing Trumpeter Swans whenever I encounter them here in Michigan. In the face of many bird population declines, they represent a significant conservation success story. They also spark in me a deep connection to the wild, similar to how I feel when I see (or hear) loons. And we were thrilled that this small group stopped by Seven Ponds, even briefly, on their return trip to northern breeding grounds. You just never know what you might find when you're out there, wandering with the birds.



*Heron Tracks* page 4

## Around the Center

### Welcome Gina & Damian

You will see a couple new faces when you walk through the doors at Seven Ponds. Gina Stoldt is our weekday receptionist, and Damian Goidich is our weekend receptionist. They both started at the nature center in late March and have quickly taken to their new responsibilities. Be sure to say hello next time you call or visit, and welcome both of them to the Seven Ponds crew!

### Research in the North-80

Two Oakland University students - Lizz Parkenson and Katri Studtmann - will be conducting their graduate research at Seven Ponds this summer. Utilizing Waterfowl Pond and the fields in the North-80, they will be studying the effects of various wavelengths of artificial light on aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. You may see their set-up when you walk the trails. We are happy to assist their research and look forward to reading their results.

### Naturescape Nears Completion

We hope to open our new nature playscape to the public around mid-summer. This area will offer parents a place to let their children play, explore, create, and imagine. Structures in the naturescape will include a water features including a handpump, a bouldering wall, an A-frame fort, a sand pit, a plant tunnel, a spider web climbing net, an art station for painting and weaving, an oversized bird nest, and logs and rocks for climbing, jumping, and balancing. Look for an announcement on our website and Facebook page for the grand opening later this summer.

### New North-80 Teaching Platform

Next time you're over in the North-80, check out our new teaching platform on Waterfowl Pond near the observation tower. This platform is used by our naturalists for pond dipping during school group visits, weekend programs, and summer camp. You can use it to get a close-up view of the pond.

### Here and there...

Thanks to the following people for their generosity:

- To **Chris Beeler** for donating skulls and turtle shells for collections and teaching.
- To **ReLiteration Used Books** of Almont for donating funds raised during their recent Betty White fundraiser.
- To the **Seven Ponds Photography Club** for the donation of a wonderful bench in honor of Mike Mercier.

# Seven Ponds Tributes Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

## ***In memory of Lawrence "Bud" Beeler***

- Susan Petersen

## ***In memory of Mike Mercier***

- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 287

## ***In memory of Mike & Donna Ratkos Mercier***

- Yvonne Mercier and Mark Spraic

## ***In memory of Carolyn Dylong Roberts***

- Barbara Roberts

## ***In memory of Esta Corbin***

- Gail Vermander

## ***In honor of Elaine Clampitt-McDonald***

- Candace Clampitt and Shea Ennen

## ***In honor of Mike Champagne***

- Curt Carter

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Bethany J. Calka***

- Anne and Dean Sousanis

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Dick Greer***

- Curt Carter

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Mike Mercier***

- Curt Carter
- Anne and Dean Sousanis

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## **Increase in Membership Dues and Program Fees**

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Seven Ponds Nature Center is sustained - and has been for 55 years - through the generosity and support of our members, visitors, and program attendees. Sources of revenue include fundraisers, donations, membership dues, program fees, endowment fund earnings, grants, and sales in our gift shop. We have maintained our membership dues price structure for many years and have provided countless programs at no cost to our members. Unfortunately, those programs do have costs, and those costs have risen significantly - to the point where we can no longer fully subsidize program participation for members.

With those increased operational costs in mind, we will begin charging a nominal program fee for our members. In no way will this fee fully cover the costs associated with these programs, but the additional fee will allow us to continue to offer high quality environmental programs and activities. We are also increasing our membership dues effective June 1.

Program cancellations: please keep in mind that when you are registered for a program and do not show up, the nature center suffers a financial hit as well. There may be people on the waitlist who would have attended and paid. There may be materials that are prepped and then go to waste. There may be staff staying past their normal working hours. Please keep all this in mind when you register, and if you must cancel, give us as much advance notice as you can to allow us to register additional attendees, adjust staffing and supplies, recoup our costs, and continue to run these programs.

### **Revised Membership Dues structure:**

Individual Student (19 & under): \$20

Senior/Senior Couple (60+): \$30

Individual Adult (20 & older): \$40

Family (includes all members of your immediate household): \$50

*Additional membership levels are still available for those wishing to further support the nature center.*

We hope that you understand our reasoning and will continue to support Seven Ponds Nature Center through your membership, program participation, donations, and involvement in our fundraising events. Thank you!

# Volunteer News

## On the Trail

Thanks to all the many volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past spring:

- Thanks to **Claudine Zach** for feeding the animals in Critter Corner every week.
- Thanks to **Don Dukelow** for completing various tasks around the center.
- Thanks to the following volunteers for climbing up to and cleaning out our Wood Duck boxes: **Joe Drinkhourn, Ethan Sperry, Aaron Porritt, Jackson Cherrill, Rip Myer, Austin McCreary, and Brent Hauzwell.**
- Thanks to **Marianne Fitzgerald, Kathy Cole, Nancy Kautz, Vickie Simek, Teddi Bradford, Christine Podsiadlik, and Karen Blaszyk** for helping along the trails and teaching.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Call us at 810-796-3200 or contact Katie McKiernan at [kmckiernan@sevenponds.org](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:kmckiernan@sevenponds.org).

## Water, Water, Everywhere!

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 3:00 PM

We do a lot of programs that have water as their theme. We are Seven PONDS Nature Center, after all! We will learn some of the basics of water science as well as how to teach it to groups.

JULY & AUGUST - NO CLASSES

## Board of Director News

The Seven Ponds Nature Center Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, March 26. The Board of Directors reviewed the current financial status of the nature center, thanked outgoing board members, appointed new board members, and elected officers. Nancy Buck completed her second consecutive three-year term and stepped down as board chairperson. The board welcomed three new Members-at-Large: Rachel Hansen-Hervey, Sally Kwaiser, and Julie Markgraf. The following officers were elected: Joanna Pease, Chairperson; Kelly Heyener, Vice-Chairperson; Charlie Turner, Treasurer; and Paul Messing, Secretary. To see a complete list of board members, visit our website at [sevenponds.org/board/](http://sevenponds.org/board/).

## Stingers Rummage Sale!

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. All items in the rummage sale are available on a donation basis - you name the price. The Stingers donate all proceeds from the sale to Seven Ponds to support environmental education programs for children, so please be generous. Mark your calendars and join us for this sale!

**Item donations will be accepted through June 12.**

## Seven Ponds Clubs!

**Astronomy Club • Beekeeping Club  
Birding Club • Photography Club  
Butterfly Gardeners • Friends of Herbs  
Friends of Seven Ponds (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](http://sevenponds.org).



# CORKS & CAPS



## FUNDRAISER FOR SEVEN PONDS

Friday • June 17, 2022 • 6:00 PM

Metamora Golf & Country Club

This annual fundraiser is a fantastic way to show your support for Seven Ponds Nature Center while enjoying a delightful and elegant evening in a truly beautiful, outdoor setting. The event consists of wine, beer, dinner, raffle, and live auction. Ticket price is \$100 per person, which includes a plated dinner, wine, beer, and all the good times you can have in one evening! Registration is now open on our website at [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org)

You can support this important fundraiser by:

- Attending the event
- Sponsoring the event
- Donating a raffle or auction item

✦ Registration deadline is June 10<sup>th</sup> ✦



## CORKS & CAPS 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

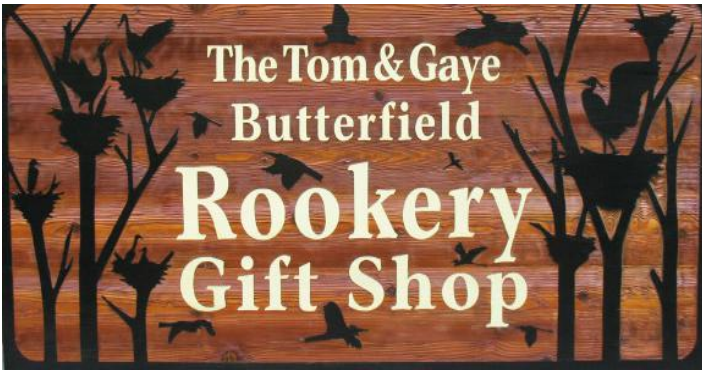
### Silver \$500

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

Seven Ponds Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1967 in southern Lapeer County. The mission of Seven Ponds is "to conserve the environment of the Nature Center as a sanctuary for native plants and animals, as a living classroom for environmental education, and as a peaceful retreat for its visitors." This is all made possible by the generous contributions of our members and supporters. Thank you for your generosity!



If you haven't been in to the Rookery gift shop lately, be sure to stop by and check out our Sanded Fleece Hooded Sweatshirts. These are the softest sweatshirts we have ever owned, and they will soon be your new favorite sweatshirt, too. We have adult and childrens sizes for you and your loved ones.

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

*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!*

### **THINK GLOBALLY, SHOP LOCALLY**

Here at Seven Ponds Nature Center, we have made a commitment to help reduce the abundance of single use plastic. To help support this endeavor, stop in and check out our new Earth friendly items that were featured at our recent ECO Day event. We have Swedish dishcloths, bamboo utensils, beeswax wraps, shampoo bars, and Bubbe Clips, just to name a few.

Also new in the gift shop, we have two new lines of nature-themed greeting cards. One design is hand painted watercolor prints from a local artist with a nature and bird designs. The other designer creates images with paper cuttings that are then printed. Both are very unique and perfect to include with a gift or just add a note for any occasion.



### **Seven Ponds Nature Center**

3854 Crawford Road  
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810-796-3200  
[www.sevenponds.org](http://www.sevenponds.org)

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# Summer Programs

June - August  
2022

Summer is the perfect time to visit the nature center and participate in our programs. Seven Ponds offers something for everyone, from preschoolers and older children to families and adults. Mark your calendar for some programs, walks, and classes. Unless indicated, program fees are \$3 for Seven Ponds members and \$5 for non-members. Pre-registration is required for all programs, and registering online is quick and easy. Visit [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org) to register.

## June

### ***Teddy Bear Walk***

Sunday, June 5, 2:00 PM

Do you have a special stuffed friend who goes with you everywhere? Do they protect you at night until you wake again? This walk is for you! Explore nature with your trusted sidekick as a naturalist takes you on an adventure around the ponds.

### ***Peaceful Reflections***

Saturday, June 11, 9:00 AM

Looking for a peaceful morning to practice your nature journaling? One of the naturalists will be leading a nature journaling class that is focused on slowing down and using our observation skills to notice the intricate details of our world around us.

### ***Invasive Species Work Days***

Sunday, June 12, 2:00 PM

Saturday, July 9, 9:30 AM

Saturday, July 23, 9:30 AM

Sunday, August 7, 11:00 AM

Saturday, August 20, 9:30 AM

Invasive species are in full swing here at Seven Ponds. This will be a great opportunity for people who are community-minded to come on out and get some volunteer hours! Join our Land Steward as you learn about our invasive plant species, but also help us to manage them. Please bring gloves and water; tools will be provided.

### ***The End of Spring Sunday Walk***

Sunday, June 19, 2:00 PM

Hard to believe that spring is almost over for the year. Let us celebrate the comings and goings of the seasons by taking a leisurely walk around the ponds to experience the sights and sounds of nature.

### ***Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga***

Wednesdays from June 22 through July 13, 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.

### ***Morning Paddle at the Ponds***

Saturday, June 25, 8:30 AM

One of the best times to be on the ponds in a canoe is first thing in the morning. We will welcome the day by listening, reflecting, and simply 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 register by Thursday, June 23.

### ***Insect Extravaganza***

Sunday, June 26, 2:00 PM

This fun family program will take a look at the different habitats around the nature center and we will see which insects live where. Upon closer inspection of these little critters we will note their special adaptations that show us how they can survive in these different habitats.

### ***Messy Mud Day***

Wednesday, June 29, 2:00 PM

Celebrate International Mud Day at Seven Ponds! This messy celebration will connect your children to the Earth through the sloppy joy of playing with mud. We will make mud castles, paint with mud, make Forest Soup, do a little mud throwing, and have a good time just playing in mud! Be prepared to get dirty.

# July

## **Butterfly Count**

Saturday, July 2, 10:00 AM

Join us for our annual count for the North American Butterfly Association. We have extra nets available for all participants.

## **Morning Canoe Paddle**

Sunday, July 3, 9:00 AM

Rise and shine! It's time to hit the waters in one of our canoes. Join a naturalist as we visit (almost) all of the ponds. Come dressed for the weather. Minimum: 5 years old to ride and 10 years old to paddle. Space is limited, please pre-register by June 30th.

## **Story Time in the Garden**

Sunday, July 10, 10:30 AM

Is there a better way to spend your Sunday morning than in the garden reading a book, doing crafts and some garden exploration with your littles? Join a naturalist as we read a garden related book, create insect themed crafts, and do sensory activities in our butterfly and herb gardens.

## **A Brush with Baby Wildlife**

*Erica Zuhlke of Critter Crossing Rehabilitation*

Saturday, July 23, 1:00 PM

Encountering infant animals in the wild is a common occurrence in the spring. From walks in the park to right in your own backyard, this presentation with Critter Crossing Rehabilitation addresses the many myths about baby animals and provides insight on what to do when stumbling upon our wild neighbors, including how to determine if an animal truly needs human intervention and what steps should be taken thereafter. This program is intended for ages 16 and older.

## **Hop, Run, Fly, let's see Jonathan Woods in July**

Sunday, July 24, 2:00 PM

We will hop, run, or fly to Jonathan Woods, our largest satellite property at 145 acres. There are many habitats at this property and we will investigate some of the differences throughout the property and see what we can see! We will meet at the Nature Center and drive separately to the property. Space is limited, please pre-register.

## **Earl's Prairie Excursion**

Sunday, July 31, 2:00 PM

The great thing about Earl's Prairie is that there is always something new to look at in the summer. Come learn about the special adaptations these plants have in order to survive the hot summer sun. We will also look for the animals that make the prairie their home.

# August

## **Tipsy Naturalist**

Friday, August 5, 6:00 PM

Join us as we explore the world of botany and booze... as we'll learn every great drink starts with a great plant. We will spend the evening exploring the woods of Seven Ponds discussing the plants' botanical, medicinal, and culinary histories. We will use our new knowledge to make and sample botanical cocktails. All participants must be at least 21 years of age. Fee: \$30.00 (\$25.00 for members) includes drink samples, recipes, snacks, and a "Tipsy Naturalist" glass. Space is limited. Please sign up online by July 22.

## **Party at the Ponds**

Saturday, August 6, 12:00-6:00 PM

A day of nature fun at the nature center! See the back page of this Summer Program flier for more information. This event is free for all attendees, but pre-registration is required.

## **Campfire Evening**

Saturday, August 13, 6:00 PM

We will celebrate S'mores Day around a campfire at the nature center. Stories and s'mores will be provided. You just need to bring a chair and your appetite!

## **Prairie Walk**

Sunday, August 21, 10:30 AM

Our tall-grass prairie has lots going on this time of year. Plants are taller than people, insects are preparing for fall, and birds are feeding on seeds. As we walk the prairie we will be on the look-out for plants tall and small, different insects, birds and anything else we can see on this casual walk.

## **Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga**

Wednesdays from August 24 through September 14, 6:00-7:00 PM

See full program description in June. Fee is \$10.00.

## **Family Field Netting**

Sunday, August 28, 1:00 PM

Do you like catching insects and spiders? So do we! Luckily, we know of some good catching places to try out your skills. All supplies will be provided. Bring your family and let's get buggy.



# SUMMER BIRD WALKS

This summer we will offer bird walks on select Wednesdays. 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 \$3 for Seven Ponds members and \$5 for non-members. Online pre-registration is required, and bird walks are limited to twelve (12) participants. Note the program description for starting time and meeting place. Please arrive on time and ready to go birding!

## **SUMMER BIRD WALK #1**

**Wednesday, June 8, 7:30 AM**

**(depart from Seven Ponds at 6:00 AM)**

### **Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge**

Join us as we travel, caravan-style, to southern Saginaw County to take a bird drive on the wild side. Starting at the refuge parking lot on Curtis Road, we'll proceed slowly through the 6.5-mile Wildlife Drive, making numerous stops along the route. We encourage carpooling for this trip to reduce the length of our caravan in the refuge.

## **SUMMER BIRD WALK #2**

**Wednesday, June 15, 2:00 PM**

### **Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area**

Evening is a wonderful time to spend in the marshlands, and Nayanquing Point is one of the premier birding areas in Michigan. We'll caravan to northern Bay County, arriving at Nayanquing late afternoon to begin our birding adventure. We'll encounter ducks, geese, swans, wading birds, shorebirds, and songbirds – including one of Michigan's only populations of Yellow-headed Blackbirds. This trip will involve 2-3 miles of walking and will conclude with sunset on the tower overlooking the marsh.

## **SUMMER BIRD WALK #3**

**Wednesday, June 22, 7:00 AM**

### **Polly Ann Trail - Imlay City to Dryden (5.6 miles)**

This bird walk will traverse the Polly Ann Trail from Imlay City to Dryden, a section that spans nearly six miles. Along the way we'll encounter woodlots, fields, wetlands, and even sewage ponds – let's see what birds we can find along the trail! Bring your hiking shoes and be sure to pack water and snacks. We'll arrange vehicles at both ends of the trail so we can walk from point to point.

## **SUMMER BIRD WALK #4**

**Wednesday, July 13, 7:00 AM**

### **Seven Pond Nature Center**

Let's spend a mid-summer morning at the nature center, exploring the trails and waters to see what we can find. We'll check out the North-80, Earl's Prairie, and Paul's Woods in search of feathered treasure.



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## **Fall in the Little Smokies!**

**A Natural History Field Tour with Seven Ponds Nature Center**

**October 16-21, 2022**

**Southern Ohio**

Join Seven Ponds naturalists Carrie and Katie as they lead an exploration of the streamside forests, rocky gorges, and ancient white cedars of the "Little Smokies" of southern Ohio. The Shawnee State Park Lodge will be the group's home base, and from there adventure awaits every day of the tour. Carrie and Katie have a full itinerary planned for you, all set in the colorful splendor of an autumn landscape.

Registration is now open for this tour and space is limited. Check our website for a full tour itinerary and registration information.



# **PARTY at the PONDS!**

## **A Celebration of Prairie, Woods, and Waters**

Saturday, August 6, 2022

Noon – 6:00 PM

Admission and all activities are FREE for ALL attendees!

Join us for a day of celebration at Seven Ponds Nature Center – open to all members and visitors for a full day of fun, adventure, and discovery for the entire family!

Children's area with fun, old-time games and activities!

Stingers Resale Shoppe & bake sale!

SPNC club and group representatives on-hand for information and demonstrations

**REGISTER ONLINE AT SEVENPONDS.ORG**

### **FUN ACTIVITIES!**

**Naturalist-led Trail Walks**

**Field Netting: butterflies, grasshoppers, beetles, and more!**

**Pond Dipping: snails, boatman, nymphs, and more!**

**Golf Cart Nature Tours**

**Canoeing the Ponds**

