



WILD TIMES

SUMMER 2010



If "NATURE NUTS" ruled the world

WHENEVER I GO BIRDING, I am always amazed by the genuine spirit of cooperation and camaraderie I find. Linked by the desire to see something wonderful, a kind of hunt and seek conversation often flows between total strangers: "Over there, in the big green tree next to the red flowers... see it? Higher...see it now? Step left, ok, try again... a little higher. Great, you found it!" I always feel better when everyone gets to experience the full joy of their nature pursuits.

At Lake Metroparks, we rely on many great people to help us achieve that same goal. They are our friends and partners who serve in the clubs and projects highlighted in this issue of *Wild Times*. Passionate about the night sky, outdoor photography or creating connections with kids (or adults!) through nature, these committed people enrich the experiences of all they serve. We hope you will enjoy reading about them, be inspired by them and meet some of them during your next park visit. I like to think that if nature enthusiasts ruled the world it would be a more cooperative place!

Ann Bugada
Chief of Interpretive Services



STEVEN M. HALE



MITZI SMETTERS



J.DELL PHOTOGRAPHY



GETTING TO KNOW...

The Western Reserve Photographic Society

The Western Reserve Photographic Society (WRPS) has been a community partner with Lake Metroparks since September 1988. Meetings are free, open to the public and held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 7 to 10 p.m. at Penitentiary Glen Nature Center. Over the years, the club has been instrumental in developing Lake Metroparks' Annual Amateur Photography Contest, now in its 24th year, as well as fostering an appreciation for nature photography through a variety of programming and activities within Lake Metroparks. Members lend their expertise in specific park sponsored programs like Spring Wildflower Photography, Bird Photography, Photo Affair and the popular Fall Mystery Photo Trip. So whether you're a novice with a new digital camera or a seasoned photographer looking to meet and share your knowledge with others, be sure to check out the

Western Reserve Photographic Society! Log on to wrpsphoto.org for more information.



photo by Linda Terdan, member of WRPS

Lake Shore Live Steamers

Lake Shore Live Steamers (LSLS) has had a longstanding partnership with Lake Metroparks. This group of train enthusiasts has been meeting at Penitentiary Glen Reservation since 1983. In cooperation with the club, the park provides space for the steamers to hold their monthly meetings, have permanent train tracks set up on the property used for "open meets" for family and friends, and also for hosting other dinners and events. In exchange, the LSLS provide the very popular free public miniature train rides to park visitors at special events and every other Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m. throughout the spring, summer and fall seasons.

A recent addition has also included a December train run, weather permitting. They are always looking for new members to share in their passion for trains—if you are interested please ask the Nature Center staff for more information.



photo by Steven M. Hale

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Blackbrook Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and serves members in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula Counties. The club has a long history of involvement with Lake Metroparks and has been holding monthly meetings at Penitentiary Glen Nature Center for more than 20 years. The club lends its expertise and environmental stewardship to park events like Earth Day, International Migratory Bird Day and Wildlife Festival. In addition, the club hosts regular bird walks at Important Bird Areas including Veterans Park, Chagrin River Park and Beauty Landing and shares their sightings with Lake Metroparks' staff for biological inventories. For more information, contact Nature Center Staff.

Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society

The Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society (CVAS) has partnered with Lake Metroparks for many years. This volunteer group of professional and amateur astronomers was founded in 1963 for the purposes of increasing the astronomical knowledge and technique of members and for public service in the community. The group's goals are to promote public education in astronomy, the continuation of useful research, and the preservation of unpolluted skies for future use of both the astronomer and the general public.

With their help, Lake Metroparks has been able to offer many programs that have the added bonus of telescopes! Monthly astronomy nights are a time to find Jupiter's moons or Saturn's rings as well as truly awe-inspiring galaxies and stars! The Super Star Party on August 14 at 8 p.m. at Penitentiary Glen, would not be the same without the help of CVAS. Ten to 15 telescopes explore the night sky as the public gets an up-close and personal look at what the universe has to offer! Many thanks go out to CVAS and all of the volunteer hours they put into helping out Lake Metroparks. For more information, visit chagrinvalleyastronomy.org.



at Super Star Party

We value our partnerships!

Mayfield Excel TECC Interactive Media

Lake Metroparks' Marketing Department explored and entered into a creative partnership with Mayfield Excel TECC Interactive Media, a two-year career technical high school program that prepares students for careers in graphic design, videography, website design and related media arts. The senior class designs two exciting projects for Lake Metroparks each year in order to complete curriculum requirements for graduation. These "capstone" projects provide students with field experience to prepare them for their careers.

The students produce a Nature Center events card that lists special events, art shows and train schedules to be handed out throughout the year. Interpretive messages are included and focus on nature or history. The students also develop a souvenir holiday key to highlight Penitentiary Glen's winter exhibit, which runs for six weeks during the holiday season. All visitors take home a key that they can hang on their trees or put in a scrapbook (more than 16,000 keys and 16,000 events cards were distributed in 2009).

Lake Metroparks staff holds several meetings with the students, explaining the projects and providing the text and some of the artwork necessary. Each student works on the project and creates individual products. Lake Metroparks staff members choose the pieces that best represent the theme and they are printed and distributed to Nature Center visitors throughout the year. This is a "real world" work project for the students and gives them a chance to create items for their portfolios for future college or job opportunities.

Through this partnership, Lake Metroparks enhances the educational experience of high school seniors. At the same time, the park system benefits from the production of creative promotional materials. 2010 marks the seventh year for this win-win partnership.



Lake Metroparks staff members meet with seniors from Mayfield Excel TECC to discuss and offer feedback on their holiday key designs.

photos by Mike Caldwell

Trees for Wildlife

2010 marked the 22nd year of the award-winning Trees for Wildlife program presented to all Lake County first graders. Presenters share information and a Power Point presentation highlighting how trees provide habitats for many types of wildlife while interacting with the students. Woody the Tree (the Trees for Wildlife mascot) shares a story, gives each student a white pine seedling and asks all students to pledge that they will take care of their new trees.

Through a partnership with Lubrizol Corporation, the Trees for Wildlife program provides white pine seedlings to all first grade students in Lake County. The seedlings are always a big hit with the students and teachers and provide a way for students to take their new knowledge home and put it into practice. This year, Lubrizol helped us purchase the white pine seedlings. In addition, 11 Lubrizol representatives were in attendance at presentations this year. Enthusiastic volunteers and staff assisted in providing this program at 46 schools for 2,867 students and 132 teachers.



Chris Lonsway from Lubrizol, Mark Evangelista from Lake Metroparks and volunteer Jane Krehel (Woody) at Orchard Hollow Elementary School in Mentor

WILDLIFE RESCUE SUPPORT



THE WILDLIFE CENTER ACCOMPLISHES its mission not only through the support of the local community but also through partnerships with other organizations. Two such organizations are Lake Humane Society and Hiram College Field Station.

Lake Humane Society, located in Mentor, receives funding solely through donations and grants. Recently, they received a grant that will allow their staff to provide animal rescues 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since the Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center does not currently provide wildlife rescues, Lake Humane Society offered to help us. They have started providing wildlife rescues to those animals in need of help after we have closed for the day. We provided safety training to their staff so that they can handle wild animals without getting injured. We also taught them how to capture wild animals without causing injury or distress to the animals.

The Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. During this time, injured and/or orphaned animals can be brought in for examination. After 5 p.m., we have a drop off animal cage where anyone can bring an injured wild animal to be examined the next day. However, there are some cases where an animal may need to be handled by a trained professional. If that is the case, Lake County residents can call the local police department and they will contact the Lake Humane Society if needed for a rescue.

Another collaboration valued by the staff at the Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center is with the **Hiram College Field Station**. The field station focuses on wildlife research and education and has received money to build a new wildlife rehabilitation facility. To help prepare them to be successful in this endeavor, Wildlife Center staff is providing hands-on training for the students who will be performing rehabilitation at the station. In return, the college pays the students and they help us with research so we can provide better care to the animals we rehabilitate. This is a great way for the students to receive field experience. It is a win-win situation—we benefit from the students' research skills and the college gains training for students by professionals in the field.

Through these partnerships we are all more successful. Each organization has a unique niche and together we can help educate our communities about helping animals. Thank you to Lake Humane Society and Hiram College Field Station for their hard work and support.

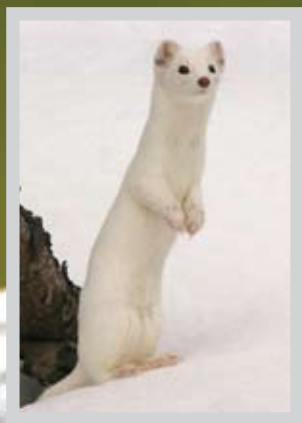


SPECIES SPOTLIGHT:

the LONG-TAILED WEASEL

THE LONG-TAILED WEASEL (*Mustela frenata*) is the most widespread Mustelid (weasel) of the Americas. It is found from the Northern tip of South America to the southern border of Canada. Weasels exhibit a slender, long body with small head, long neck, short legs and a relatively long, slender tail. The upperparts of this weasel are yellowish-brown and the tip of its tail is black. For the majority of the year, the weasels' body is covered with brown fur but as winter approaches, within 30 days, it grows a coat of white, giving it perfect camouflage against the snow.

Although largely terrestrial, these weasels are skilled at climbing trees. They are also strong swimmers and are not afraid to cross rapidly flowing streams. On the ground, the long-tailed weasel usually occupies areas where there are many small rodents. They often live in the burrows of groundhogs, in rotten logs, hollow stumps and under tree



roots. Their nests are made of grass and leaves, and lined with fur from animals that they have preyed upon.

The Long-tailed weasel, long thought to be nocturnal, also hunts by day. The food of long-tailed weasels consists almost entirely of small mammals—ground squirrels, chipmunks, mice, rats and small cottontails. Birds and insects make up a small percentage of their total diet and are rarely hunted unless there is no other food available. Long-tailed weasels are not picky eaters, but they eat only meat! They use tunnels made by other animals to hunt for their food and are known for their zigzag pattern when hunting from burrow to burrow. Long-tailed weasel tracks have a unique appearance, the hind feet of the animal fall exactly in the tracks of its front feet. Weasels may kill all animals they find, even if they do not need all of the food. This is because a weasel's instinct tells it to collect food when it is available and store it for the future. In captivity, adults can consume an amount equal to 1/3 their own body weight in 24 hours. In the wild, they may store food in a burrow or near a kill site. Weasels, although considered a pest to many farmers, are beneficial to the environment because they help keep rodent populations low.

Long-tailed weasels are active year round and show no tendency to hibernate during winter. As winter approaches, the weasel's coat turns from brown to white, all except for the tip of its tail, which stays black. A hungry predator, such as a hawk or owl, aims for that black tip, enabling the weasel to escape. However, foxes, raptors, coyotes, domestic dogs, cats and rattlesnakes are just a handful of the many animals that prey on Long-tailed weasels. Although they can live in a variety of habitats, population densities are low.

Long-tailed weasels make a loud chirping sound when scared or ready to attack. When they feel friendly and meet another weasel, they will make a low trilling sound like a whistle. When alarmed or excited they drag their rear ends on the ground, which leaves a scent to let other weasels know their identities. The Long-tailed weasel can have many mates and will have three to eight young in each litter. Shortly after babies are born, they begin to follow their mother on hunting excursions. Young weasels begin to hunt on their own at approximately two months old. Females reach adulthood in approximately three months, but males do not reach adulthood until one year old. The Long-tailed weasel's life span can be quite short—less than one year in some cases—because they have many predators. However, they usually live an average of three to four years in the wild and up to eight years in captivity.



Lake Metroparks
 Penitentiary Glen Reservation
 8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd.
 Kirtland, Ohio 44094
 440-256-1404
 lakemetroparks.com

PRSRT STD
 U.S. Postage PAID
 Willoughby, OH
 Permit No. 10

LAKE COUNTY PROBATE JUDGE Ted Klammer
 BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
 Ellen Foley Kessler • Mark P. Oesterle • Frank J. Polivka
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Stephen W. Madewell

Lake Metroparks does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, nationality or disability in employment, services, programs or activities. Should special assistance be required in visiting facilities and/or participating in programs or activities of Lake Metroparks, please call 440-358-7275 at least 48 hours in advance.



Printed on recycled paper

Wild Times contributors: Mary Beth Bender, Ann Bugeda, Lisa Hall, Pat Morse, Tammy O'Neil, Becky Parkin, Kathy Terrell, Melissa Terwilliger



"MR. TUFTS" is a great horned owl rescued in October 2009 at Veterans Park. A maintenance worker found the owl on the ground beneath a tree, unable to fly. Upon examination, we found that he had sustained an injury to his right wing in addition to head trauma and a fungal infection.

Great horned owls can be found from forests to deserts or even in city parks. They usually nest in abandoned nests of hawks or squirrels. Great horned owls have large yellow eyes, stocky bodies and visible ear tufts. Although these tufts are often mistaken for ears, they are actually there to aid in camouflage. They eat a wide variety of foods including rodents, skunks, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

"SAVANNA" is a female short-eared owl received in November 2009 with a fracture to her right humerus (wing). She was taken to a local veterinarian to pin her wing, but she is still not able to get full extension of her wing to sustain flight. Short-eared owls live in a variety of habitats including prairies, marshes, meadows, open fields and savannas. Short-eared owls are most often seen hunting at dawn and dusk (crepuscular). Their favorite foods are voles, small rodents, songbirds and insects. Short-eared owls are ground nesters and are uncommon in Northeast Ohio.

Meet our two new permanent resident owls: Mr. Tufts and Savanna

HELLO