

“Looking OUT THE BACK DOOR...”

The Sac County Conservation Board’s Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2012

Volume 26/ Issue



Wild Mothers

It is hard to believe that on this snowy February day that spring is in the air. Already the owls and eagles are laying eggs. Then before we know it the spring wildflowers will be out and little goslings will be following their mothers around. May will be here in full swing and we will be celebrating Mother’s Day. Although we understand the wonderful things human mothers do for their children here is a chance to look at what wild animals do. Wild animal mothers take many approaches to motherhood, some take more of a hands off approach. For example Painted Turtle eggs were laid in a nest under the ground. The



mother will travel up to about a third of a mile to lay her eggs in a nice sandy spot. The eggs/hatchlings either emerge in the fall or stay there all winter

then come spring they dig themselves out and seek out the safety of the water.

Wolf Spiders are very devoted mothers. First she will spin a large web like blanket which she will use to wrap up and carry her eggs. There may be over 3,000 eggs! And she carries them everywhere! Sometimes the forgetful mom will loose her egg sac and may carry with her bits of cork, shell or paper. If she does not lose her spiderlings



she will let them ride on her back until they are ready to be on their own. Mothers who belong to the large dog and cat group like Bobcats, Mountain Lions, Coyotes and Fox all have a few things in common. For one being mammals they all feed their young milk. They must find shelter and keep their young warm.

When their young are new they must stimulate bowel movements by licking the anus area. They also much teach their young to hunt and how to eat prey. This is often first done by bringing in a prey to the den, sometimes killing it there, then regurgitating it for the young. This gives the little ones a chance to learn what prey looks like, how it tastes and how it can be killed. There are some differences



between the cats and dogs. With Bobcats and Mountain Lions the mother receives no help from the father while the Red Fox and Coyote fathers actively hunt and bring food for the young. (Cont. on page 6)

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Director's Notes

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Sac County Conservation Board. Established in 1962 by a resolution by the Board of Supervisors and a vote from the county residents, the SCCB was born. The SCCB would have the custody, control and management of all real and personal property acquired by the county for public museums, parks, preserves, forests, wildlife areas and other county conservation and recreation purposes.

The five original board members appointed were as follows: Muriel Minglin, W.H. Redenbaugh, Lee Witte, Almer Noyd and J.V. Paulson. It is these individuals that are credited with the planning and hard work that laid the foundation for what the SCCB is today, 50 years later. Some of the early parks, such as Hagge and Grant Parks, were acquired for no more than \$125 per acre! With today's land prices it is obvious what vision and foresight these individuals had. These two parks as well as others have turned out to be tremendous investments over the years for the people of Sac County. In celebration of the past 50 years, the SCCB is planning a celebration later this summer on Saturday, August 4th. Plans are still being finalized, but some of the events will include children's games and activities in the morning, open house of the Conservation Center with new exhibits and a photo contest in the afternoon, and an evening meal and program at the shelterhouse highlighting the past 50 years. Other activities are still being planned and finalized. Stay tuned for more information but mark your calendars for August 4th and join us for a fun celebration of the SCCB turning 50!

Looking into the fact files! *American White Pelican*



(Pelecanus erythrorhynchos)

- This bill that is 8-9 inches long and attached pouch can hold three gallons of water
- The average live span is 10-25 years
- The wingspan is around 9 feet
- Gregarious natured bird, meaning it is always found with other pelicans.
- Work together to push and corral fish by forming U shapes and bill dipping into water to push fish towards shore for easy pickings.
- During breeding season they form a white crest of feathers on head, legs turn orange and a centerboard, which is a fibrous knob on the top center of the bill. It falls off after breeding season.
- This pelican gets its name from its color. Being mostly white with black tips on the wings and yellow legs.
- Pelicans nest in colonies and their calls to each other sound like grunting or pig like noises.
- One pelican can eat 4 pounds of fish in a day.

Thank You

- Roadside for snow removal
- Endowment Foundation and Renze Grant for assistance with display purchase.
- Red Hats for donations
- Buena Vista and Crawford County Conservation Boards for all the wonderful items I have borrowed
- PEO for donation of books
- Wendy Miller for donation of bird feeder

Photography Contest

Photographs must be of people in nature and taken in Sac County. Photos should be matted and at least 5x7 or larger. Photographs will be due on July 20th. Winner will be chosen by the public.



Upcoming Programs

The Iowa DNR will be discussing potential changes to the deer, mi-gratory bird and otter and bobcat seasons during a statewide meeting on March 6 at the Carroll High School (2809 N. Grant Road) The meeting will be held over the Iowa Communications Network from 6 to 9 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend. More information is available online at www.iowadnr.gov/hunting



March 16th– Sac County Sportsman’s Club Fish Fry

Enjoy a great meal anytime between 5-8pm and help support the Sportsman’s Club. This club supports many conservation programs such as Summer Camps and the Halloween Night Hike. There will be door prizes for kids and raffle tickets available at the door. Tickets prices are adults \$7, \$8 at door. Kids \$4, \$5 at door. Purchase Tickets at the Sac County Conservation Center.

March 17th– St. Patrick’s ssssss Day

St. Patrick is known as the person responsible for driving the snakes out of Ireland. March also happens to be the time when snakes are awaking from their winter hibernation. Come meet some live snakes at this free program which will be held at the Wall Lake Community Building from 1-2 pm. Please sign up by calling



March 23rd– Pheasant's Forever Banquet

The Sac County PF chapter supports local conservation by sending kids to summer camps, supplying seeds and much more. Help support conservation by attending this event. Doors open at 5 pm. This event is held at the Wall Lake Community Center . Tickets are \$45 and include your meal and year’s membership to PF. For tickets stop by the Sac County Conservation Center.

April 14th– Fishing Club Meeting—Fishing club will be meeting from 10-11:30 . Meet at the east shoreline of Storm Lake between King’s Pointe Resort and the Lakeside Marina.

April 15th– Pelican Festival

There will be many activities happening at the annual Pelican Festival held in Lake View. 8-12 is a Pancake Breakfast, Wagon rides, Wildlife seminars and viewing at town bay will run from 12-2 pm. The Pelican Pedal will start at 1:00 and the Pelican Plunge is at 3:00. Keep your eyes out for posters with more information



April 21st– Little Sioux Spinners and Weavers Meeting

This event is \$15 at the door which includes lunch and a speaker who will go though life in Africa and how textiles are an iatrical part of the life there. This event will be held at the Sac County Conservation Center.

April 22nd– April Showers bring May Flowers

During this free program at the Conservation Center adults will learn the ins and outs of rain barrels. They will also receive information on what plants are best for rain gardens as well as take home information on how to build your own rain garden at home. To sign up for this program please call 712-662-4530.



May 12th—Fishing Club -

Fishing club will be meeting from 10-11:30. Meeting at Icehouse point on Blackhawk Lake.



Kid's Korner

Spring is a time for baby animals. Babies are called many things, baby dogs are called pups while baby cats are called kittens. Match the wild baby with the baby with the correct name. Answers can be found at bottom of the page.

1. Badger

2. Otter

3. Dove

4. Eagle

5. Fox

6. Opossum

7. Swan

8. Hare

9. Bat

10. Turkey

A. Pup

B. Eaglet

C. Cygnet

D. Leveret

E. Kit or Cub

F. Squab

G. Poult

H. Pup or Whelp

I. Joey

J. Kit

Making gifts for Mother's Day is a wonderful activity that you can do. It can be simple or fancy, don't worry mom will love it. Below are some ideas you can use to make your own special creation.

Decorated Soap Pumps!

Instructions:
Find old soap pumps
Remove labels and
wash bottle
Empty soap and add
decorations like
large glass beads or
stones. Paint flowers
on bottle or insert
fake flowers into
bottles. Try to match
bathroom. Then
refill with soap.
Taken from: <http://www.mothersdaycentral.com/mothers-day-crafts/>



Copyright 2004 Allfreecrafts

Cute Plant Creatures

Instructions:

Create pom-pom creatures with glue, googol eyes, foam and pipe cleaners. Make sure that the pipe cleaner wraps around your creature near the end and twist pipe cleaner to itself. You should have a long tail wrap that tail around a skewer, old pencil or stick. Dab a little glue to make sure it doesn't slide. Place in a nice potted plant or deliver it to mom so she can decide which potted plant it will look best in.

Taken from: <http://familyfun.go.com/crafts/plant-stakes-664054/>



Answers: 1=E, 2=H, 3=F, 4=B, 5=J, 6=J, 7=C, 8=D, 9=A, 10=G



Thank You Endowment Grant!

The Sac County Conservation Board won a Sac County Endowment grant last year for \$4,000. This money helped to pay for two new displays.

We are proud to announce that the Introduction to Sac County and Crawl Thru Log displays are completed and installation will be completed by the end of March. The Introduction to

Sac County display encompasses a short history of the county and current information such as a light up map of the county parks as well as featuring the geological and biological features that make Sac County unique. The

Crawl Thru Log is literally a large fake log that one can crawl through, as children go through the log they see backlit image of animals that call a log home. On the log are doors that show animals inside the log and an informational panel that explains nutrient recycling in the forest. We hope and encourage everyone to come to Hagge to see the displays this spring.

Thank You Renze Grant!

In August of 2011 the Sac County Conservation Board was awarded \$7,442.20 from the Gilbert and Barbara Renze Charitable Foundation.

This paid the entire amount for the Children's Area. This area is an activity center for children, it is edged by one 10 x13 foot felt wall which has many habitats where children can move felt creatures through the different habitats. Cut carpet on the floor will make the area special by extending the habitat types on the wall throughout the area. Kids can sit and read or relax in a large fabric nest with pillow eggs. A counter with a slate top will be used to make tracks using stamps and water. On the side of the cabinet there will be animals who represent Iowa's three main habitat types, when a child picks up the phone and pushes the button the image will light up and the animal sounds will come through the phone. Plan to visit Hagge park after March!

Visit us on Facebook!

If you haven't heard yet, the Sac County Conservation Board has a Facebook page. On this page we post the goings on in the park, such as when the deer rummage through our garden beds and the turkeys stroll by the building. We also post events like public programs announcements, pictures from previous programs and much more. The public is encouraged to participate on the page. Send in pictures of nature, questions or comments on the things you've noticed happening in the outdoors. To visit the page please go to Facebook and search Sac County Conservation

Board or copy and paste this link: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sac-County-Conservation-Board/182554391787162>

Of course inappropriate pictures or comments are not acceptable and will be removed from the page. We hope that using this new media we can better serve the citizens of Sac County.

Eyes To The Skies

- **March 3rd– Photograph Mars**– assuming the weather cooperates Mars will be at its closest approach to Earth on this night, it will also be fully illuminated by the sun making it nice for photography.
- **March 8th– Full Moon**
- **March 14th– Meeting of Venus and Jupiter**– These two bright planets will be within 3 degrees of each other on this night.
- **March 20th– Spring Equinox**
- **March 22nd– New Moon**
- **March 25th– The planets visit the Moon**– Venus and Jupiter will be near this waxing crescent moon making a nice display in the sky
- **April 6th– Full Moon**
- **April 15th –View Saturn**– Saturn will be on its closest approach to Earth on this night so get out the telescope and binoculars, then try to get a peak at its rings and moons.
- **April 21st– New Moon**
- **April 21st and 22nd– Lyrids Meteor Shower**– With a new moon this year this average (20 meteors/ hour at peak) shower should be a great site. These showers are known for having meteors which leave trails for a few seconds. This shower can be visible from the 16th-25th with the peak on the 21-22nd. Look for meteors coming from Lyra the harp after midnight.
- **May 5-6th– Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower**– This light shower will be out shown by the full moon and difficult to see.
- **May 5th– Full Moon**
- **May 20th– New Moon and Partial Eclipse**– A partial lunar eclipse can be seen in the western United States and in China. We are barely on the edge so any eclipse we see would be slight.



Cottontail Rabbits and Whitetail Deer have a similar stay put philosophy for protecting their very young.

Cottontail's will dig a shallow hole and leave their litter of 4-5 for most of the day only coming to nurse at night. While for the first month of a Whitetail's life the mother will leave the 1-3 fawn in usually tall vegetation coming back for the young every once in a while. If the fawn wants to follow she will put her hoof on the fawn to keep it from getting up then she will leave.



However after the fawn is over one month old and is fast enough the mother will

allow it to follow her. These animals do this because their young is well camouflaged and don't have much of a scent, making them virtually indetectable to predators. If you spot a fawn or a cottontail nest this spring remember that the mother is coming back for them and that it is better not to disturb or move the young.

Many animals will do whatever they can to protect their young and sometimes that means getting physical. Groundhogs and Raccoons are an example of mothers who can become very aggressive. Groundhog mothers prepare a nest lined with leaves in one of the chambers within her burrow. The young are born late march- mid may and this is the time that she becomes intolerant of other animals entering her burrow, she will actively chase away intruders. Mother Raccoons find a protected opening in a tree about 10-60 feet in the air. She will make it homey by scratching and enlarging the cavity and create a wood chip lining. When the young are too little to leave the nest she rarely strays far from home. When the young are starting to explore the



world around them she will sometimes move them to a lower or ground level

den so that they don't fall out of the tree as they are playing around. Once the babies are old enough to leave the den they will follow their mom as she teaches them to forage. However if danger becomes present she pushes the young up into the trees and furiously defends them.

The next animal is the only marsupial native to Iowa. Just like Kangaroos, the Virginia Opossum has a pouch on the front of the stomach. Opossums can give birth to over 50 kidney bean sized babies. They are not fully developed with closed ears and eyes as well as no hair. They must fight for survival right



away by climbing though their mothers hair, entering the

pouch and latching onto one of the 13 nipples. Once in the pouch they are safe and they will stay there for 10 weeks. They also ride on their mothers back especially during foraging and playing dead lessons.

Bird mothers can also be very interesting. One of the neatest behavior comes from mother Killdeers. These shorebirds do not make much of a nest apart from maybe scrapping off the ground a bit. She lays well camouflaged eggs in sandy or rocky areas. The young can walk and eat for themselves shortly after hatching. When the young are in danger she is very active. She will feign a broken wing in front of a potential predator in hopes that it will follow her and not find the chicks. As soon as she feels they are



a safe distance away from the young she will suddenly take flight.

If the danger is a large animal such as a cow she will aggressively charge the animal to try to keep it away from the young.

Humming birds are very busy mothers! Their 1-2 pea sized chicks hatch in a small nest made of spider web, moss and lichen. They must eat 1-3 times per hour. She has no help from the male and must remove poop from the nest site as this reduces smell. Once old enough she will teach them how to feed. Mothers do a lot for their young so to all mothers out there, human and wild, Happy Mother's Day !!

Sac County Conservation Board

Board Members

Barb Bloom-Odebolt-Chairperson
 Andy Meredith-Lake View-Vice Chair
 Kenny Bentsen-Sac City-Secretary
 Dean Stock-Lake View-Member
 Rich Feilmeier-Early-Member

Staff

Chris Bass-Executive Director
 Sandi Huster-Secretary
 Rene Stroud-Naturalist

Meetings

Regular board meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Sac County Conservation Center. These meetings are open to the public.

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The Sac County Conservation Board in the provisions of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Sac County Conservation Board Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240