



CONSERVATION NEWS

A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 24 No. 4 Winter 2011/12

Irksome Invaders

Invasive species can come in the form of a plant, insect, animal, or disease and they threaten a region's lands and waters when they compete with or destroy native plants and animals.

An invasive species can be native to an area and is just very hard to control. But, the majority of invasive species are most likely to be something non-native that was either accidentally or intentionally introduced into an area. Iowa has its share of these invaders, and it's way too many to list here.

One of the more infamous invasive aquatic species found here are Zebra mussels which were accidentally introduced into the Great Lakes by transatlantic ships and have made their way to the Mississippi River all along Iowa's border. They reproduce quickly and threaten native species of mussels.

Some invasive plants found here are Garlic mustard and Amur honeysuckle, both brought here intentionally. Garlic mustard was brought from Europe in the 1800's for medicinal and eating purposes and has spread throughout forest floors crowding out native species. It is edible, however you should never plant it in your home garden because there's plenty of it to be found in wild areas.

Amur honeysuckle was brought here from Asia in the late 1800's to be used for ornamental plantings and soon spread and became difficult to control, also crowding out native plants. While native honeysuckle can be difficult to control and should be pruned, it won't interfere with wildlife habitat.

Most invasive species don't get much attention until they are out of control and a real problem. Being proactive can help stop an invasive species from spreading. Recently, the invasive Emerald ash borer, which kills native ash trees, was found in Iowa although not yet widespread. Because the pest is widespread in some of Iowa's bordering states, regulations have been enacted concerning the sale and movement of firewood in and around Iowa with hopes that they will slow the spread of the invader.

Controlling invasive species is expensive and labor-intensive. According to the Iowa DNR, millions of dollars, both public and private, are spent each year trying to control invasive plants, insects, animals, and diseases.



An endangered Higgins eye mussel covered in Zebra mussels.

A Scout Does His Part

Thanks to Eagle Scout candidate D.J. Mathias for doing his part in helping to control an invasive plant as his Eagle Scout project. D.J., a member of Boy Scout Troop 153 from Durant, and his volunteers worked 103 man-hours clearing invasive honeysuckle on the south side of Heron Hideway Pond at Discovery Park.

continued on page 2



Thanks Friends

Thank you to all our “Friends” whose donations to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation support the development and enhancement of environmental education and conservation projects in Muscatine County.

*Joni Axel
Diane Bunker
Henry & Pat Tober*

The names of all donors go into our donor book and those who donate \$250 or more receive a plaque on our donor wall. Please include the form at the right with your donation and become a “Friend” today.

A Scout Does His Part

continued from page 1

Thanks to D.J., Troop 153, and all those who helped out with the clearing project. It should make it easier for the fisherman and others to access that side of the pond.

*Jeremy Ables Dave Bakke
Noah Cawiezell Jonathan Licht
Slater Marshall Laura Marshall
Rory Marshall Drew Mathias
Shelia Mathias Ben Mathias
Claire Mathias Winnie Muhl
Kyle Schlapkohl Loren Schlapkohl
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- Steward \$500—\$999
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- I would like to donate my time.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Thank you for your support!

Please make checks payable to:
Muscatine County Conservation Foundation
PO Box 109, Muscatine, IA 52761

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who generously gave donations of time, talent, funding or materials to help with our projects and programs.



Roberta Gabbard - suitcase to store furs.

Ray Cherrier - fishing poles, tackle boxes, and tackle.

Julie Herold - instructing the Polliwog Playtime classes for toddlers, and help at the reception desk.

Al Wagner - helping with a variety of projects and programs around Discovery Park, as well as the trout release.

Hazel Ford & Family - “Murtle” the painted turtle.

Lake Township 4H - dried wildflower arrangements for the Learning Center.

Dave Jones - helping with the trout release.

D.J. Mathias - helping with the trout release.

Muscatine Garden Club - monetary donation toward the environmental education program.

Holiday Closings

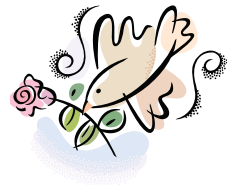


The Environmental Learning Center and Conservation Board Offices will be closed on December 24-26 and December 31-January 2.

Have a happy and safe holiday season!

Memorials

A tree planted at Discovery Park
In Memory of Alan Fikes.



A tree planted at Discovery Park
In Memory of Ray Frenzel.

A tree planted at Discovery Park
In Memory of Tom Fox.

A tree planted at Discovery Park
In Memory of Bob Eichelberger.

A bench installed at Discovery Park
In Memory of Maurice Reed.



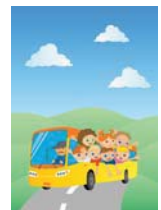
Honorariums

A tree planted at Discovery Park
In Honor of Joan Paetz.



Teachers

We're scheduling classroom visits and spring field trips. Call us at (563) 264-5922, or email us at conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us, to schedule yours.



Programs and Special Events

HOLIDAY NATURE CRAFTS

Join us for some holiday craft making. We'll use items from nature as well as some recycled items. All materials will be provided.

Saturday, December 3
10:00 a.m.
Learning Center
Free



HUNTER EDUCATION



Anyone born after January 1, 1972 who wants to purchase a hunting license in Iowa must have successfully completed a Hunter Education course. The minimum age for certification is twelve. Class is limited to 40 students. Attendance at all three class sessions is mandatory.

You are required to register on-line at www.iowadnr.gov/training. **After** registering online you need to pick up a workbook no later than March 1 at the Conservation Board office. The workbook questions must be completed prior to the first night of class. Anyone not picking up a workbook by the March 1 deadline will be deleted from the class roster and will not be allowed to attend the class.

Environmental Learning Center - Muscatine

March 7-8 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

March 10* 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon *Class meets on this day at the West Liberty Gun Club.

POLLIWOG PLAYTIME

ages 18 months through 3 years \$4.00/class maximum 12/class

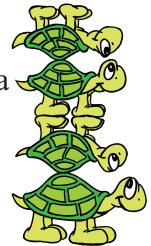
Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for activities designed to help toddlers explore nature. Children must be accompanied by an adult. All classes meet on a Thursday from 9:15-10:15 a.m.

January 12 "Owl Moon"

March 8 "Busy Bees"

February 9 "Terrific Turtles"

April 12 "Animal Babies"



KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS



4-5 year olds \$4.00/class maximum 12/class

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for nature activities such as games, crafts, stories, and exploration. Children must be accompanied by an adult. All classes meet on a Saturday from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

December 10 "Snow Way!"

February 11 "Terrific Turtles"

April 14 "Animal Babies"

January 14 "Owl Moon"

March 10 "Busy Bees"

Michelle's Creature Feature

Eastern Wild Turkey

The Eastern Wild Turkey is one of the wildlife success stories of Iowa. When Europeans came to America, the wild turkey population nationwide was in the millions. After only a few years of Iowa's settlement, the turkey population plummeted for two reasons. First, settlers cleared their prime habitat, woodlands, for homes and crop lands. Trees had multiple uses with the settlers; building materials, railroad ties, fence posts, and fuel. The other reason for the loss of the wild turkey in Iowa was because of unregulated hunting. Settlers arrived to find a big and tasty bird that was easy to hunt and very plentiful. There are stories of settlers killing 57 turkeys in one sitting. That type of hunting doesn't support future generations of animals, and in 1910 there were reports of only three turkeys left in Iowa.

In 1920, conservation groups started forming and Iowans started to reintroduce the turkey to Iowa. All of these efforts failed because pen-raised turkeys were being released into the wild. These birds didn't have the natural abilities to survive in the wild. Most disappeared or ended up hanging around farms.

In 1960-61, the Iowa Conservation Commission, (now called the Iowa DNR) captured wild birds from Texas, Nebraska, and North Dakota. The wild turkeys were released into three different places across Iowa. These birds didn't survive either because the habitat that they came out of was too different from the habitat they were released into.

Finally in 1965-66, the Conservation Commission was able to get birds that came from similar habitats. Initially 11 turkeys were released into Shimek State Forest in Lee County. The turkeys thrived and by 1973 there were an estimated 400-500 turkeys living there. In 1968, another 20 turkeys were released into Stephens State Forest in Lucas County. This small flock also thrived, increasing in size to 400-500 by 1974. Turkeys were then trapped from these two locations and released into other places around Iowa.

In 1974, a limited turkey hunting season was opened. In 1989, turkey hunting was opened across the entire state. Turkeys have established themselves so well throughout the state that the Iowa DNR used them to trade with other states for extirpated animals. Prairie chickens, ruffed grouse, river otters, and sharp-tailed grouse are a few of the animals that have been traded with other states.

The Eastern Wild Turkey is a pretty amazing bird. Males, called gobblers, weigh 17-30 pounds and females, called hens, weigh 8-12 pounds. Even with this weight, the turkey can run at 25 mph and fly at speeds of 55 mph! They live in mixed habitats of deciduous forests and agricultural fields. One of their favorite foods is nuts, but they also eat insects, fruits, seeds, green leafy material, and during the winter rely heavily on waste grains from agricultural fields.

These birds nest from April to June and usually dig shallow depressions in the ground. The average clutch size is about 11 eggs, although they can range from 6-18 eggs. The eggs, tan to white with reddish spots, are incubated for about 28 days. Soon after hatching the young are able to follow their mothers around and can fly to a nighttime roost tree in about two weeks.

Turkeys have many predators. Hens are most susceptible in spring while sitting on their nests. Eggs are favorite foods of raccoons, foxes, skunks, crows, opossums, chipmunks, and squirrels. Cold or wet weather can also destroy a whole nest of eggs in a short time. Young turkeys fall predator to raccoons, foxes, owls, and hawks.

Humans are the biggest predator of adult turkeys. In Iowa, there are two hunting seasons per year for turkeys; a spring and a fall season.



State Symbols

“State Symbols” was the theme for the Conservation Board’s 23rd Annual Halloween Hike that was held on October 21 and 22. About 300 people attended over the two evenings. Hikers walked along a path lit with 185 jack-o-lanterns to visit the six stations.

Hikers first met a goldfinch and thistle. The goldfinch told the crowds that she was Iowa’s state bird, while the thistle plant pleaded his case on why he should be the state plant.

Next up was a wild rose, a rose hip, and a lost piece of silverware looking for the USS Iowa battle ship. The wild rose explained that she was Iowa’s state flower while the rose hip talked about her medicinal properties.

As hikers walked up the hill towards the Arboretum they met up with the oak tree and acorn. The oak tree bragged about why she was chosen to be the Iowa’s state tree and talked to her daughter, the acorn, about some of the animals that like to eat acorns.

After a short stroll through the grass, everybody met the grumpy badger and the upbeat Tama soil. Both were vying to be the state mammal and state soil, respectively. They asked everyone to contact their representatives to make sure Iowa gets a state mammal and state soil.

Halfway down the hill, there were three fish swimming in a pond. All of whom thought they should be Iowa’s state fish. The big bass and catfish argued with each other on who should be state fish while the itty bitty minnow stole the show and the hook!

At the last station, hikers met a geologist and a geode. The geologist was searching for the Iowa’s state rock, a perfect geode, and found it.

After visiting the six stations, hikers came inside for cider, lemonade, and popcorn. The kids all received treat bags and were invited to paint pumpkins in the classroom. The pumpkin painting was courtesy of the Young Professionals Network.

A special **THANKS** to the following donors for helping to make the Halloween Hike a huge success.

Rich Buser, Mark Stout and Earl W. Krueger for providing lots of pumpkins to light the trail.

Wal-Mart for a gift card to purchase supplies.

Young Professionals Network for pumpkins for the pumpkin painting, candy for the treat bags, and volunteers.



Thistle & Goldfinch



Oak Tree & Acorn



Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out the Halloween Hike. We couldn't do it without you!

*Carl Anderson
Amy Bakke
Julia Baxter
Michelle Berns
Jocelyn Broderson
Larkin Chapman
Carol Christophersen
Mark Cochran
Kevin Dirth
Steven Dirth
Kathi Eichelberger
Will Eichelberger
Megan Francis
Luana Gredell
Nick Gow
Chanda Groman
Tom Gross
Marla Kurriger
Megan Jameson
Carolyn Land
Paul Mayes
Emily McCormick
Katie Meyer
Diane Moritz
Anna Mae Noll
Jenny Paetz
Charla Ramirez
Andrea Scott
Rose Smith
Shawna Trosen
Eli Trosen
Al Wagner
Hannah Wagner
Kim Warren
Jill Ziegenhorn*

*Helen Atkinson
Dave Bakke
Charlie Berns
Beth Broderson
Mary Bulger
Gabe Chapman
Karol Cochran
Betty Collins
Denise Dirth
Lauren Dirth
Riley Eichelberger
Jack Eichelberger
Roberta Gabbard
Jim Goedken
Steve Greene
Barb Gross
Julie Herold
Eva Kurriger
Britt Jameson
Gregory Land
Ann Mayes
Matt McElroy
Casey Miller
Dave Moritz
Mark Norris
Larry Paetz
Rick Ray
Jennifer Simpson
Janet Terwische
Caleb Trosen
Kaitlyn Tulliani
Emma Wagner
Emily Wagner
Levi Wright*

Trout Release

The Iowa DNR released 1000 rainbow trout, 100 tagged, into Discovery Pond on November 5. On that day tagged fish turned in between 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. were worth a \$10 gift card from Blain's Farm & Fleet. Nineteen tagged trout were turned in and the fisherman's name was put into a drawing for a \$100 gift card from Blain's Farm & Fleet. Congratulations to Darryl Schwarz of Walcott who was the winner of the \$100 gift card.

Thanks to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation and Blain's Farm & Fleet for providing the gift cards. Also, thanks to volunteers Al Wagner, Dave Jones, and D.J. Mathias for helping with the trout release.



Fishermen waiting for the trout release.



Dan Stauffer catches a big trout.



Trevor Kleist shows off his trout.



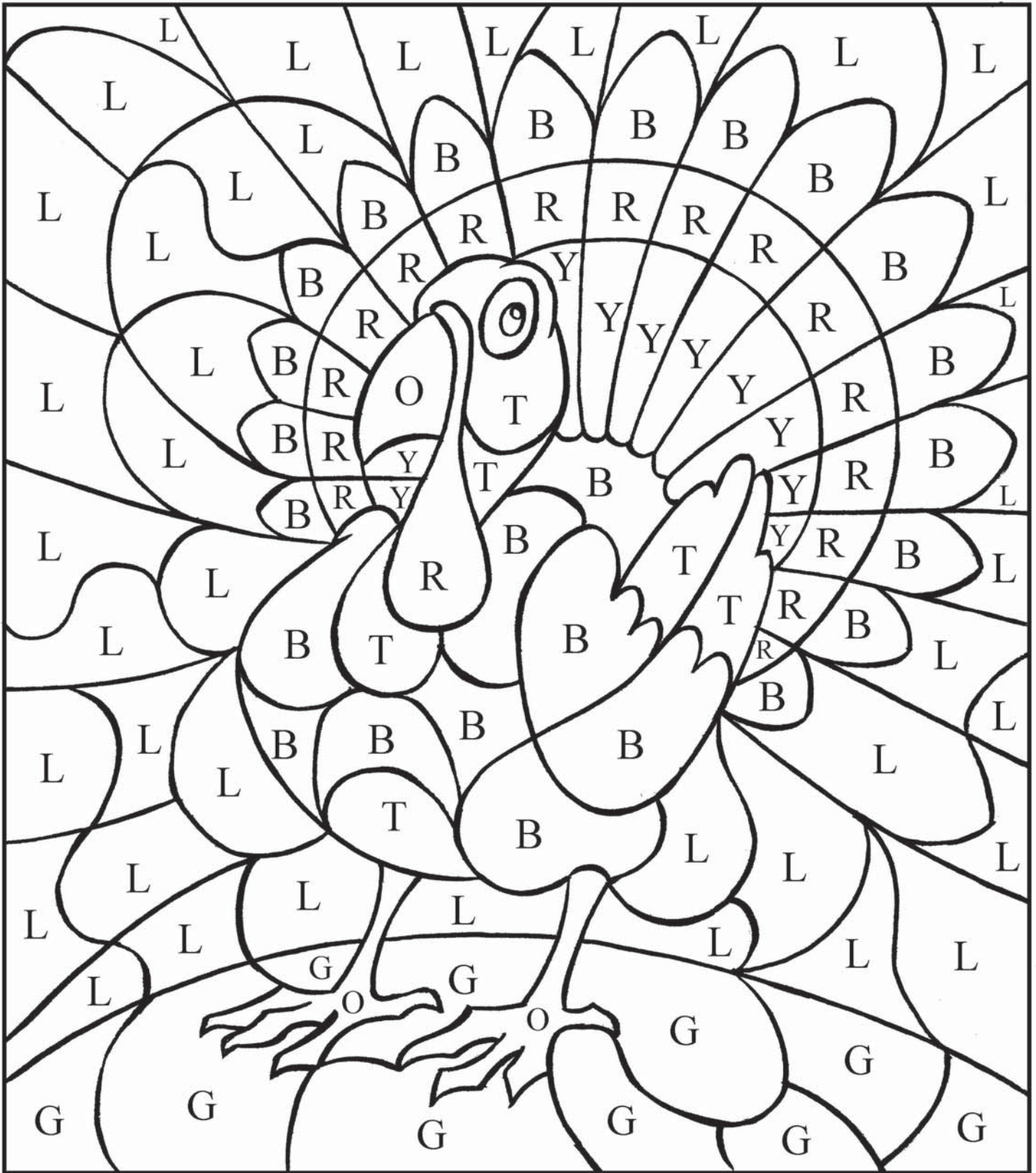
Topper's Page

When we think of November we think of TURKEYS!!!! We remember the story of the Pilgrims and their first dinner with the Native Americans. Turkeys played another important part of United States history. Did you know that Benjamin Franklin thought that the turkey should be the symbol of the United States? Help Topper find the turkey words in the puzzle.

- BEARD
- CARUNCLE
- FAN
- GOBBLE
- HEN
- JAKE
- POULT
- SNOOD
- STRUT
- TOM
- TURKEY
- WATTLE

B	W	M	B	A	C	L	M	S	M	Y	E	R	E	Z
J	J	X	Z	O	F	O	N	G	E	P	W	N	L	X
W	V	C	Y	Q	T	O	J	K	K	O	N	W	C	C
E	N	Z	R	A	O	R	R	X	D	U	I	W	N	X
J	A	X	U	D	X	U	Z	H	B	L	A	E	U	K
Q	T	W	Y	P	T	H	E	N	R	T	Z	K	R	H
N	T	E	R	H	W	X	Q	W	K	R	J	A	A	H
G	O	B	B	L	E	A	D	R	A	E	B	G	C	Z
H	F	P	A	T	I	C	T	H	X	R	A	W	P	U
N	B	Z	Y	O	U	T	W	T	Q	J	E	S	F	G
U	X	K	R	W	Y	R	W	P	L	J	K	V	C	R
E	T	F	R	E	E	L	T	S	W	E	A	A	P	M
Y	T	O	A	I	O	Y	G	S	S	E	J	V	L	U
O	A	B	W	N	W	Y	C	J	T	G	K	Z	H	T
A	C	L	D	M	G	M	P	Q	I	A	A	N	K	T

Help Topper color Tom the turkey.



B = Brown T = Tan R = Red
G = Green Y = Yellow W = White
O = Orange L = Light Blue

MUSCATINE COUNTY
CONSERVATION BOARD
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Mary Bulger	Learning Center Assistant

The Muscatine County Conservation Board meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Environmental Learning Center, 3300 Cedar Street in Muscatine. The public is welcome to attend.

If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Muscatine County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

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