



## Attracting Song Birds to Your Lakeshore Property

*by John Haack, UWEX Educator for Natural Resources, St. Croix River Basin*

In 2001 there were 4.6 million bird watchers 16 years of age or older in the United States- a little over one in five people. Interest in songbirds grows every year and feeding birds is likely the most popular wildlife-related activity in the country. Burnett County's Long and Des Moines Lake residents agree. In a recent survey they rated song birds as the group of animals they enjoyed viewing the most. Not surprisingly, most of us enjoy seeing and hearing birds. The bright flashes of color and their distinctive songs add interest and joy to our lives.

Keep bird watching in mind as you landscape and plant around your lakeshore and yard. You can increase the chance that birds will regularly visit your property and possibly nest in your yard. Big landscapes or large

forests that surround your lake property are as important as the condition of your yard. The lake itself is a landscape feature that encourages many birds. Making your lakeshore property more compatible with surrounding habitats welcomes more native song birds.

### Tips for attracting more birds:

Add a few native conifers (evergreens). They are good cover for songbirds. White spruce, red and white pine or balsam fir provide wind breaks and good nesting cover.

Plant one or more of the shrubs listed in the NEW Top Ten Wildlife Shrubs. Shrubs on this list provide cover and edible fruit during summer and fall for many song birds. Dogwoods, cherries, and junberry have beautiful flowers and form, and many birds like their berries.

Placing nest boxes on your property can also bring birds to your yard. Some of the boxes that are a good fit for Burnett County lakeshores are those for chickadee, barred owl, screech owl, wood duck and hooded merganser. Directions for building boxes can be found in Woodworking for Wildlife available online from the Minnesota DNR: [www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/w4w.asp](http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/w4w.asp).

Leave dead trees either fallen or standing along the shoreline or the edges of your yard for flickers, woodpeckers, great crested flycatchers, chickadees, and white breasted nuthatches. Many other birds use them for shelter, feeding, nesting and perching along shorelines.

Let it grow. Leaving lightly used areas along your lakeshore or yard edge un-mowed or un-cut can provide cover for nesting and migrating songbirds. Leave a corner of your yard alone and wait; then watch to see what grows back.



**W**hite breasted nuthatch (above photo). The United States is home to about 800 breeding bird species. Wisconsin provides home to 330 of these species. An estimated 158 species of birds nest in Burnett County.

**(Article Continues on Page 4)**



## Message from the President *by Roger Noe*

### *Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association*

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On November 13, 2010, we received our first snowfall of the season. Six inches of beautiful snow made for a snowy, icy, cold, deer season and the beginning of a long, tough winter. As I write this on April 1, 2011 a bit of that 6 inches remains. Perhaps 2010/2011 was a bit more normal for winter in Burnett County.

To the delight of many, the cold and snow are waning while critters large and small, furry and feathered are returning to their Burnett County summer homes. The lakes and rivers are opening and soon will bustle with activity. As you and your guests return to your summer retreats be aware of the blessings of nature that abound in northwest Wisconsin. As you all know, the beauty is endless as are the opportunities to enjoy nature.

If you are interested there are numerous educational opportunities in our area held during the spring and early summer:

1. The annual Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention is held in Green Bay Wisconsin on April 12-14. An outstanding conference dedicated to the lakes and streams of Wisconsin – perhaps too late for 2011 but think about it for 2012.
2. The annual Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference will be held in nearby Minong Wisconsin at the Northwoods School on June 24. This is a mini version of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Conference and an excellent opportunity for lake and river property owners to learn and network with others.
3. On June 25, at 9:00 am the Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association will hold its annual meeting at the government center in Siren. This year the meeting will feature Chris Cold, a Wisconsin Wildlife specialist. Chris will present various Wisconsin critters and relate his experiences with them – join us for an hour or two.
4. “The Youth Journal” has already been purchased by many of you. This is a wonderful teaching tool for our grandchildren and children. These may be purchased from any BCLRA member at your annual lake meeting or by mailing the order form in this edition of Lake Lines.

For further information contact any BCLRA member or Roger Noe at 715-635-6309. Have a safe and enjoyable return to your lake/river retreat. Put in the dock – rake the leaves – turn on the water – and go fishing. Have fun.

# Wild Rice - Can Big Sand Rebound?

*by Don Button - Professor Emeritus - University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Wild rice has been a staple of the Ojibwa since they pushed west from the St. Lawrence seaboard some 400 years ago. As a trade item its value was near that of maple sugar and fish oil. The deep voice of their drums resonated across the waters of Big Sand as the tribe “hoped” for a good crop or later gave thanks for the bounty provided. These peoples were skilled conservationists, with attention to efficient collection, little damage to the plants, and minimal waste. Harvests could exceed 1,000 pounds per acre, but they were quite variable. The grain is prized by insects and animals, as well as man, due to its abundance and extraordinary nutritive value. Many plants vary their seed production annually to minimize dependency of foragers on dense supplies of food, thereby avoiding decimation.

Unlike most aquatic plants, wild rice is a grass that penetrates the bottom of shallow waters with roots rather than rhizomes, horizontal stems of plants found under water. Following germination in the spring, the young plants grow to the surface. The long flat leaves float on the surface to collect light and carbon dioxide. Young roots are easily dislodged from the soft organic-rich bottom by waves, high water, and boat wakes. Many lakes, nearly all to the south, have lost their stands of rice. The main reason is probably artificial control of water levels above historic norms. The plants do best in only about six inches of water; little vigor remains when the water is more than a couple of feet deep. Invasive species are another problem. The huge rice beds of Upper Clam Lake were wiped out two years ago by thousands of carp rooting for invertebrates in the muck where the plants anchor.



Enclosures in Big Sand Lake seeded with wild rice. Strong response to fertilizer added to the first and third is shown by vigorous growth.

In an effort to mitigate the dwindling of rice beds in Big Sand Lake, there have been efforts to analyze potential causes for the loss. Transparent plastic cylinders about three feet across were anchored to the muck bottom in the west bay. Four were seeded, and two were amended with fertilizer to rectify a perceived nitrogen deficiency. Only the fertilized enclosures flourished as shown in the photo.

Whole sections of the bay were also seeded. The only other significant growth was where the sediment had been recently disturbed. Perhaps there were some deeply buried nutrients that stimulated the rice in this disturbed area. Straw from previous beds is associated with strong monocultures of rice. Perhaps this nitrogen fixation by the associated microbial community on the straw helps support growth as well. These efforts continue.

The St Croix Tribe with its environmental protection section has been particularly helpful in this effort. Recently the Siren-Webster Rotary has voted to provide additional support. Such contributions are greatly appreciated.



## Lake Notes

by Mike Kornmann - UWEX Community Development Agent

The 2011-2013 State of Wisconsin Executive Budget Bill (AB40/SB27) was released on Tuesday, March 1. The state budget is a fluid document with items changing throughout the spring. A summary of major provisions related to land use and community planning follows:

### Stewardship Program:

- Eliminates payments in lieu of taxes for lands purchased through Stewardship funds.
- Prohibits purchase of development rights and limits easements except for logging and trails.

### Planning Grants:

- Increases the limit for lake management planning grants from \$10,000 to \$25,000.
- Provides \$7 million for grants to counties to implement land and water resource management plans, including cost-share grants to landowners.

### Water Quality:

- Provides an additional \$13 million to reduce nonpoint source water pollution through increased nutrient management planning and other practices.

- Reduces the subsidy on loans in the Clean Water Fund Program by \$14 million.
- Lowers recently adopted phosphorous standards to a level no more stringent than neighboring states.
- Increase tourism marketing to \$15 million.
- Lowers municipal stormwater standards to a level no more stringent than federal law.

### Recycling:

- Eliminates the grant program and requirement for local recycling programs, yet retains the ban on landfilling aluminum, paper, glass, plastic, etc.

**Contact your legislators at**  
[www.burnettcounty.com/electedofficials](http://www.burnettcounty.com/electedofficials)

**Sen. Harsdorf and Rep. Severson:** Towns of West Marshland, Lincoln, Meenon, Grantsburg, Wood River, Daniels, Siren, La Follette, Dewey, Roosevelt, Trade Lake, Anderson

**Sen. Jauch and Rep. Milroy:** Towns of Blaine, Swiss, Webb Lake, Union, Oakland, Jackson, Scott, Sand Lake, Rusk

## Attracting Song Birds to Your Lakeshore Property (Continued from Page 1)

Manage bird feeders with bears and other pests in mind. While feeders are a fantastic way to attract birds for family enjoyment in the winter, they also attract unwanted visitors especially in the non-winter months. Lakes ringed with homes and bird feeders are especially vulnerable to these door to door moochers. The best option to avoid them is to remove feeders during the non-winter season and rake up any seeds on the ground.

### For additional information:

Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality by Carrol Henderson.

Wild About Birds: The DNR Bird Feeding Guide (Minnesota DNR) by Carrol Henderson.

Both are available at: [www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore](http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore)

Birdscaping in the Midwest by Mariette Nowak. Available at your local book stores.

Landscape Plants that Attract Birds by Scott Craven. Available at: [www.learningstore.uwex.edu](http://www.learningstore.uwex.edu)



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Photo by Scott Hoffman

# Understanding Common Local Invasive Species

by Brad Morris, LWCD AIS Coordinator

Our lakes, streams, wetlands and even our backyards are being subjected to invasive plants. For instance, Japanese Knotweed and Purple Loosestrife are two common plants found in Burnett County. These plants have been found in most of the above mentioned places. Growing concerns have influenced how these plants are viewed. Though very beautiful in nature, the negative impact these plants have make them unwelcomed. Please contact the Burnett County Land and Water Conservation Department if you have seen either of these two invasive species or other invasive plants that you might have.

Purple loosestrife is a wetland herb that was introduced as a garden perennial from Europe during the 1800's. It is still promoted by some horticulturists for its beauty as a landscape plant, and by beekeepers for its nectar-producing capability. Currently, about 24 states have laws prohibiting its importation or distribution because of its aggressively invasive characteristics. It has since extended its range to include most temperate parts of the United States and Canada. The plant's reproductive success across North America can be attributed to its wide tolerance of physical and chemical conditions characteristic of disturbed habitats, and its ability to reproduce prolifically by both seed dispersal and vegetative propagation. The absence of natural predators, like European species of herbivorous beetles that feed on the plant's roots and leaves, also contributes to its proliferation in North America.

This plant's optimal habitat includes marshes, stream margins, alluvial flood plains, sedge meadows, and wet prairies. It is tolerant of moist soil and shallow water sites such as pastures and meadows, although established plants can tolerate drier conditions. Purple loosestrife has also been planted in lawns and gardens, which is often how it has been introduced to many of our wetlands, lakes, and rivers. Here in Burnett County, there are several locations

Below: Japanese knotweed



where purple loosestrife is abundant. Efforts have been made for several years to control the widespread effects of this invasive.

Another invasive plant of concern is Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). Japanese knotweed, in the buckwheat family, is a perennial that grows to heights of 5-10 feet in large clones up to several acres in size. The arching stems are hollow and bamboo-like, a reddish-brown to tan color. They die, but remain upright through the winter. Mature leaves are 3-5" wide and 4-9" long, lighter on the lower surface, and egg to spade shaped; young leaves are heart-shaped. Lacy 2 inch long clusters of tiny greenish-white flowers are produced in late summer and held upright at the leaf base. Japanese knotweed reproduces occasionally by seed, but spreads primarily by extensive networks of underground rhizomes, which can reach 6 feet deep, 60 feet long, and become strong enough to damage pavement and penetrate building foundations.

If you have any questions or think you may have an invasive plant on your property please call the Burnett County Land and Water Conservation Department at 715.349.2186.

**AIS Workshop: Burnett County Land and Water Conservation department will be hosting a workshop to teach citizens how to identify aquatic invasive species on July 9, 2011. For details, call 715.349.2186.**

# Celebrating 100 Years of the St. Croix River Association

*Edited by Mike Kornmann, UWEX Community Development Agent*

In 2011, the St. Croix River Association celebrates a centennial of advocacy for conservation throughout watersheds of the St. Croix River basin. From the beginning this grassroots organization was linked inseparably to the St. Croix River itself. Starting as an informal group of landowners, SCRA evolved slowly out of the basic, direct interests of people living along the banks of this border river between Minnesota and Wisconsin. Many of the association's specific goals have changed in 100 years, but the essential idea of serving the St. Croix for the people of both states has remained constant. Today the SCRA focus is on water quality and land protection, stewardship and education throughout the watershed.

To celebrate SCRA's anniversary a celebratory paddle down the St. Croix River from Solon Springs to Prescott, WI is being held from July 5 – 22, 2011. Registration packets and detailed maps for each paddling day can be found at [scrapaddle.org](http://scrapaddle.org).

Consider paddling for a day or two or event week with your family, friends, or community organization. It's a great opportunity to meet people and experience one of America's great wild rivers. A variety of support services will be provided such as shuttles, camping and other lodging connections will be offered. You will need to provide your own canoe or kayak, along with appropriate gear. Questions should be directed to [paddle@scramil.com](mailto:paddle@scramil.com) or 715-483-3300.











# Northwest Lakes Conference

## 2011 Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference Friday, June 24, 2011 – Northwood School, Minong, WI

### Agenda

7:30	Registration, Continental Breakfast and Exhibits	
7:30	NW Wisconsin Waters Consortium Annual Meeting – Waldo Asp	
8:45	Welcome and Opening Remarks – Roger Dreher, Bayfield Co. Lakes Forum	
9:00	Toxic Bodies: The Struggle for Healthy Watersheds – Dr. Nancy Langston, UW-Madison	
9:50	BREAK	
10:10	SESSION I	
	Frogs in and Around Your Lake – John Haack, UWEX	
	The New NR 115 Status and Updates – Heidi Kennedy, WDNR	
	Lake Grants: The Nuts and Bolts – Pamela Toshner and Jane Malischke, WDNR	
	Eurasian Water-Milfoil Prevention and Control Strategies – Sam Lewis, Nancy Lake and Doug Bush, Minong Flowage and Russ Robinson, Gilmore Lake	
11:10	BREAK	
11:30	SESSION II	
	Bringing Wildlife to Your Shore – Chris Cold, WDNR	
	Comprehensive Plans: Dream or Reality – Shari Eggleston, Retired WDNR Attorney	
	Lake Protection Grant Projects – Rod Olson, Desair Lake and Karen Aubin, Balsam Lake and Dianne Keefe, Mercer Lake	
	Clean Boats, Clean Waters: Continuing Our Containment Efforts – Bob Wakeman, WDNR	
12:30	LUNCHEON and EXHIBITS	
1:30	SESSION III	
	Tracking Loons: Migration Routes and Wintering Areas – Mike Meyer, WDNR	
	A Compact History of Wisconsin Water Law – Bill O'Connor, Environmental Attorney	
	Lake Conservation: Citizens Using Modern Mapping Tools – Ben Niemann and Bill Czeskleba, Couderay Waters Regional Land Trust, and Doug Miskowiak, UW-Stevens Point	
	Mail Order Invasives – Kristy Maki, Sawyer Co. AIS Program	
2:30	BREAK	
2:45	SESSION IV	
	Green Globbs: Algae, Sponges and Bryozoans – Gena Laiberte, WDNR	
	Legislative and Executive Actions – Bill O'Connor, Environmental Attorney	
	Using Conservation Easements to Protect Lakeshore Habitats – Ellen Kwiatkowski, Bayfield Regional Conservancy	
	Eurasian Water-Milfoil Herbicide Research Results That May Surprise You – Michelle Nault, WDNR and John Skogerboe, Army Corps of Engineers	
3:45	ADJOURN	

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 Lake Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Submit names and addresses for each registrant.

#### Conference Registration Fee:

The conference registration fee is **\$45.00** per person (**\$25.00 for students**) and includes continental breakfast, lunch and materials.

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No. Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$45 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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#### You may also register:

online at: [www.northland.edu/soei](http://www.northland.edu/soei)

Registration Deadline: **Saturday, June 18, 2011**

For more information contact:  
 Paula Kaimon, Office Manager of SOEI,  
 at (715) 682-1223 or [pkaimon@northland.edu](mailto:pkaimon@northland.edu)  
 Planning Committee contact:  
 MaryJo Gingras at (715) 561-2234 or  
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# Critters for Kids

By Christian W. Cold - WI DNR - Ladysmith

## Northern Water Snake • Nerodia Sipedon

### What is a northern water snake?

This snake is a medium to large (24 to 40 inches long), thick-bodied snake with dark brown and/or reddish-brown blotches on its upper body. The underside is whitish, with lots of speckles or flecks of reddish-brown and dark gray.

### Where do they live?

Look for water snakes along the shores of ponds, lakes and rivers.

### Are they dangerous to humans?

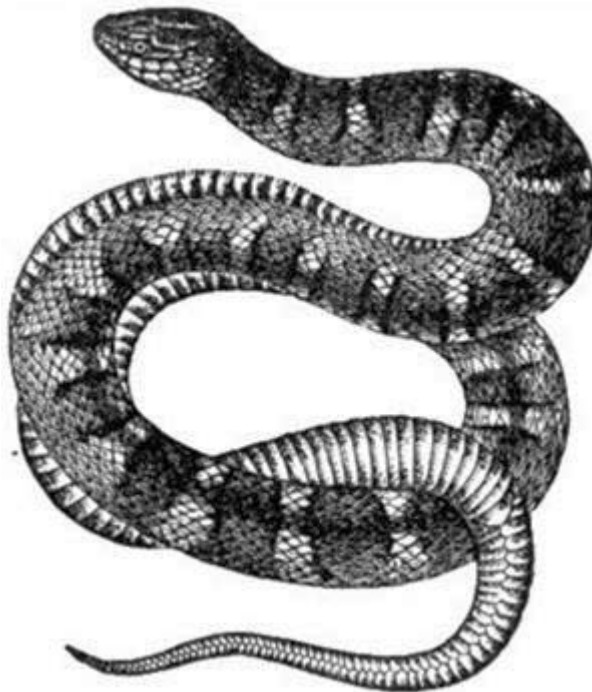
No. They are not poisonous or dangerous to us. If you grab one, however, it will probably deliver a very unpleasant bite.

### What do they eat?

Water snakes eat small fish, frogs and toads. Crayfish (crawdads) are also occasionally taken.

### Are water snakes good or bad?

All animals are important in nature, when they live in the proper place and numbers. I don't like using the words "good or bad" when trying to understand or describe the value of any animal.



### How do I know if water snakes live on my wetland?

On a calm, warm, and sunny summer afternoon, climb into a canoe and quietly paddle (slowly drift) up-close to an old beaver lodge on the shoreline of your lake. As you approach, look closely at the pile of logs and branches and watch for any movement. Reach out with your paddle and tap the lodge one or two times. Water snakes love to bask on these "beaver houses", and they will reveal their presence.....as they gently slither off, into the water and out of sight.

### One last word (well, maybe a few).....

Never harm or destroy a snake (or any animal) unless you are protecting yourself, your property.....or if you intend to eat it. It is important that we respect all life (including ourselves and each other). Snakes (like all wildlife) have a special purpose and place in nature. We may harvest animals from nature if we have a good reason to do so. Otherwise, it is best to quietly observe and appreciate them as fellow members of the great Circle of Life.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Many people think that these snakes are poisonous water moccasins, and destroy them when they find them. Water moccasins do not live in Wisconsin. You must travel to the southern part of the United States to find them.

# Odds and Ends

## Top Ten Shrubs

Included within this edition of Lake Lines is your complimentary copy of the Top Ten Wildlife Shrubs. Clip the coupon in the newsletter to get one of these shrubs free at participating nurseries in Burnett County. We hope they inspire you to plant shrubs near the lake to enjoy the birds, butterflies and other wildlife that use them.

Thanks to the Burnett County Lakes and Rivers Association for funding for the coupons.

The native shrubs featured in the enclosed "Top Ten Wildlife Shrubs" are adapted to the soil, rainfall and temperature conditions found across Burnett County. These ten were chosen because of their wildlife value, availability at local nurseries and their attractive and varied landscape features.

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**CHOOSE FROM THESE TOP 10 NATIVE SHRUBS**

- Nannyberry
- Red osier dogwood
- American highbush cranberry
- Black chokeberry
- Gray dogwood
- Pagoda dogwood
- Snowberry
- Dwarf bush honeysuckle
- Juneberry
- Chokecherry

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## Youth Lake Journal

**W**ant your kids or grandchildren to learn about your lake and the plants and animals that live in lakes or along the shorelines? The Lakeshore Field Journal for youth has activities for rainy days and sunny days. Youth will learn to identify common plants and animals on your lake. Projects like plant pressings and photography will add fun to a child's weekend or summer! The Youth Lake Journal is available through your lake liaison contact or by using the mail-in order form.

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# LAKE LINES

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

VOLUME 16, ISSUE ONE



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