

# FAVORITE WISCONSIN WILD THING!

## MAGIC TRICK

### OBJECT

Reveal the secret identity of your friend's favorite plant or animal.

### WILDCARDS

21 different native Wisconsin plants and animals

### DO THE TRICK

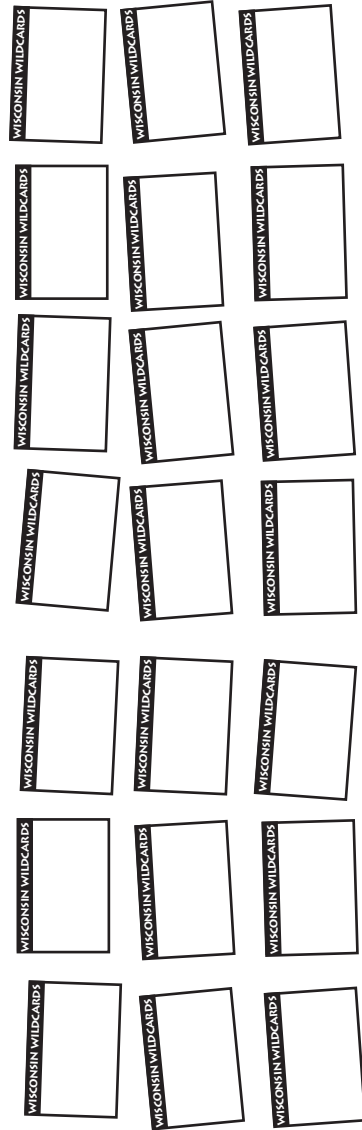
Lay out three columns of face up cards, each containing seven cards. See diagram. While you look away, your friend chooses a card, but doesn't reveal the identity of the card to you. Your friend could show it to others, then return it to its location.

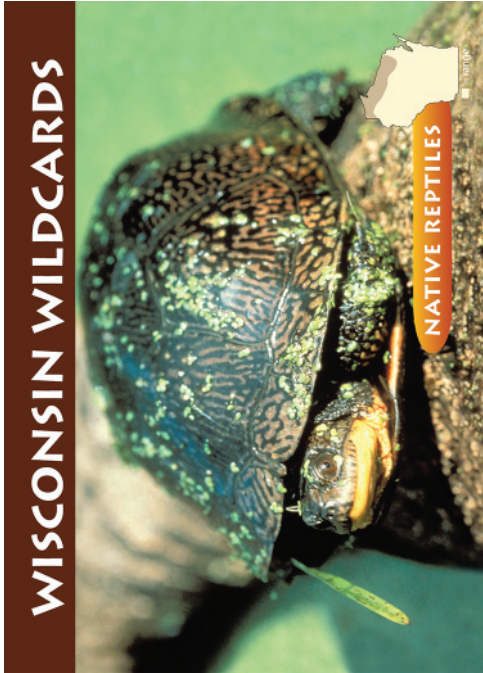
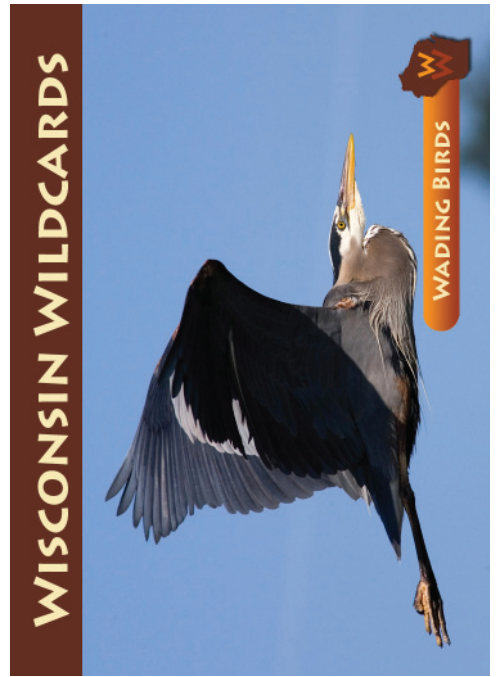
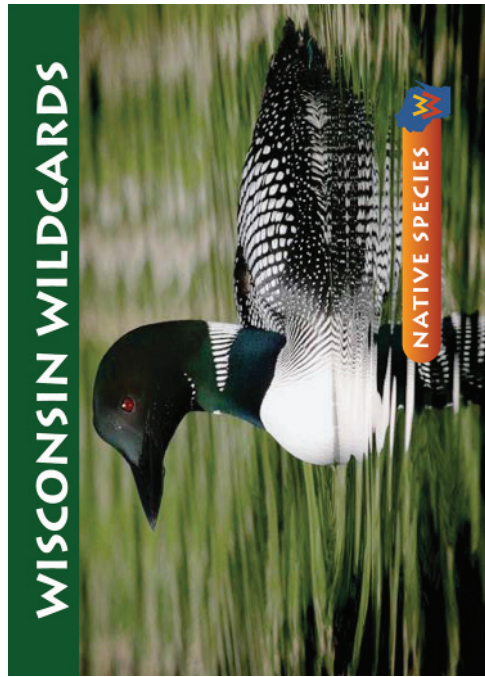
Ask your friend which column the card is in. You pick up the columns of cards - top to bottom. Be sure to pick up the column containing the "favorite" card second so it is in the middle of the deck.

Now lay the cards down by **row** - placing three cards in each row. Starting at the top, you will end up with seven rows of cards.

Ask your friend which **column** the card is in now. Pick up the cards by **column** as before, being sure to pick up the column with the "favorite" card second.

Once again, lay the cards out by **rows**. Once again, ask which column the card is in. Reveal the "favorite" card by silently counting down four cards in the chosen column. Read the back of the card to discover why the plant or animal is a favorite!





## GREAT BLUE HERON

*Ardea herodias*

**BASIC ID:** A 4-foot tall bird of wetlands. It has long wading legs, long neck & dagger-like bill. Its body is blue-gray & its head is white with a dark plume. In flight, its neck is doubled back, with head resting against shoulders & long legs trailing straight behind.

**HABITS:** Often found wading in shallow water where it waits patiently to snap up a small fish, frog, water snake, crayfish or even a mouse or large insect near shore. They have elaborate courtship displays with bill-snapping & side-to-side tapping of each other's bill tips. They nest in colonies. Males & females share duties of incubating eggs & feeding young. Often silent, they make a loud, harsh croak when startled. Herons migrate to the southern U.S. & Mexico.

**HABITAT:** Great Blue Herons depend on wetlands from cattail marshes & backwater swamps to ponds & lakes. They build large nests of sticks in tall trees near water.

**WILD!** These large herons have a wingspan of 7 feet & can fly 20-30 miles per hour. They live long lives, some living to be 17 years old!

For more info, visit WiDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Frank Leung  
Printed on Recycled Paper

WM-524 2009



## COMMON LOON

*Gavia immer*

**IDENTIFICATION** The common loon measures nearly 3 feet and has a 5-foot wingspan. It is gray and white until four years of age, when it grows the elegant black and white breeding plumage for which it is famous.

**VOCALIZATION** Loons have four calls. The laugh-like tremolo is an alarm call, while the hoot reassures. The males' high-pitched yodel is territorial; the mournful wail is a call to other loons.

**HABITS** Loons are expert divers, feeding on fish and aquatic invertebrates. They nest along the water's edge and rear one or two chicks each summer.

**CONSERVATION** Protect natural shorelines, essential for suitable nesting habitat, and use lead-free fishing tackle like bismuth sinkers to reduce fatal lead poisoning.

For information about Loonwatch:

<http://www.northland.edu/soei/loonwatch.asp>

Photo: Ginger Gumm/Daniel  
Petersback Jr.  
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fip/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/workshopschedule.shtml>  
Recycled paper



ER-1084-2005



## RED-TAILED HAWK

*Buteo jamaicensis*

**BASIC ID:** Wisconsin's largest & most widely-distributed hawk. Adults sport a brown back, cream-white breast and undersides. Adults have a brick-red tail. Their feet are large and powerful with sharp talons (toenails).

**HABITS:** These hawks hunt a wide variety of small & medium-sized animal—from meadow voles to cottontails—while sitting on an exposed, elevated perch, or while soaring and scanning the ground from a considerable height.

**HABITAT:** Powerful & adaptable, the "redtail" has always been a familiar resident of Wisconsin. They usually live in open savannah & forest edge habitats. Whenever forests are fragmented or cleared for pasture, redtails quickly move in and establish territories. Due to people's breaking up of forests, there are likely more redtails in Wisconsin than ever before!

**WILD!** Take a roadside raptor survey! Red-tailed Hawks are easily spotted along highways & backroads, especially after leaves drop in autumn. Look for the "beacon" of their white breast against the distant forest & woodlot edges.

For more info, visit WiDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photos: Rich Legg & Dan Cardiff  
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WM-517 2009



## LAKE STURGEON

*Acipenser fulvescens*

**IDENTIFICATION** This ancient fish with bony plates and barbels (whiskers) shared the swamps with dinosaurs. It can live for over 100 years and females do not spawn until at least 25.

**HABITAT** The Lake Winnebago system hosts the world's largest population of lake sturgeon. They're also found in the Chippewa-Flambeau system and the Menominee, Mississippi, and Wisconsin rivers. In the late 1800's, sturgeon were considered a nuisance. They tangled and tore commercial fishing nets, so were tossed ashore to rot. Dams and over-fishing further reduced their numbers.

**TACKLE TIPS** Sturgeon are caught during a short winter spearing season on Lake Winnebago. A record-setting 82-year-old, 180-pounder was speared there in 1953. There is a limited hook and line season in some rivers. Watch them spawn along the banks of the Wolf River in New London and Shiocton.

**COMMON CATCH SIZE** 3-5', 10-80 lb.  
(Check regulations for legal catch size and season.)

For more information, visit:

[dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

Painting: Virgil Beck  
Recycled paper



FH-930t 2009



## MUSKELLUNGE

*Esox masquinongy*

### WISCONSIN'S STATE FISH!

**IDENTIFICATION** The musky is the largest predator fish in the state. Look for wide, vertical markings to distinguish musky from northern pike. They do not have scales on the lower part of the gill cover like the northern pike does.

**HABITAT** Musky are found statewide and inhabit a wide range of waters from rivers to the Great Lakes. They live alone, searching weed beds and tangles of old logs for prey.

**TACKLE TIPS** Bring along some big bait and a steel leader for these ferocious fighters! Jerk baits, spoons, and bucktails are popular lures used to chase the musky.

**COMMON CATCH SIZE** 38-40", usually less than 15 lb. (Check regulations for legal catch size and season.)

For more information, visit:

[dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

Painting: Virgil Beck  
Recycled paper



FH-930p 2009



## BLANDING'S TURTLE

*Emydoidea blandingii*

Threatened

### BASIC ID

The 6-10" shell is blackish with yellow flecks, elongated and domed. The bottom is hinged. The chin is bright yellow.

### HABITS

Their diet includes invertebrates, tadpoles, fish and berries. They prefer marshy areas with dense vegetation, but can live in many aquatic habitats. They can also live on land. Habitat loss and car kills are major causes affecting populations.

### FUN FACT

Blanding's turtles must live 17-20 years before they can breed. This fact limits population recovery following habitat loss.

### FOR INFORMATION

[www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er)

Photo: A. B. Sheldon  
Recycled paper

ER-106C 2008



## EASTERN HOG-NOSED SNAKE

*Heterodon platirhinos*

### BASIC ID

This 1.5-3' snake has an upturned, pointed snout. The body has dark brown blotches on a brown-gold background. The belly is a uniform pale in adults. The neck has two "eyespots."

### HABITS

Hognose snakes eat mainly toads or other amphibians. They live in sandy grasslands, oak savannas, and sand prairies.

### FUN FACTS

This snake flares its neck and looks somewhat cobra-like when disturbed. They often play dead and flip upside down if harassed.

### FOR INFORMATION

[www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er)

Photo: A. B. Sheldon  
Recycled paper

ER-106F 2008



## GIANT SILKMOTH CATERPILLAR

*Hyalopora cecropia*

### BASIC ID

All giant silk moth caterpillars are huge, up to 4" long, and bright green. Different species are distinguished by their colorful knobs or stripes.

### HABITS

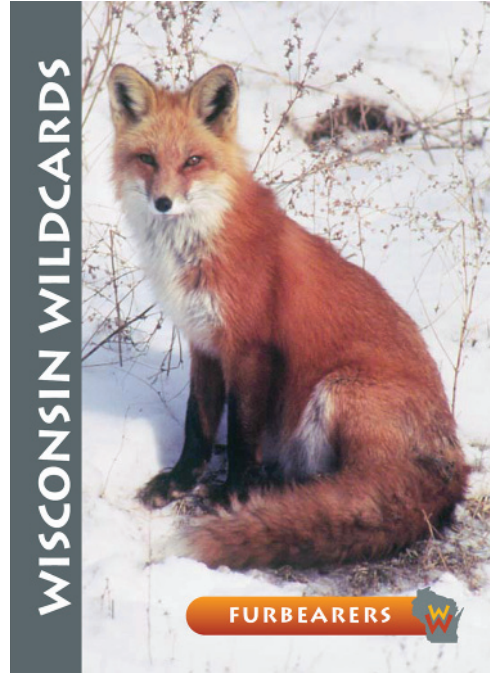
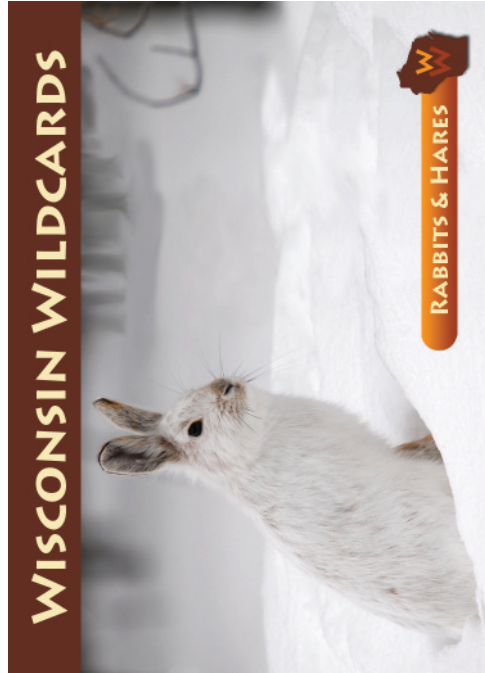
Caterpillars eat a variety of trees and shrubs, including sugar maple, birch and apple. They are completely harmless. Young larvae feed in groups while older ones are solitary. Their brown, papery cocoons are attached to twigs in dark protected areas.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local DNR Service Center or State Park Naturalist.

Photo: © Caroline Beckett, Flying Fish Graphics  
PUB-FH-218; 2002  
Recycled paper





## KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY

*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*

**BASIC ID** Karner blues are distinguished by orange spots on the edge of the underwing. The male is on the left, the female is on the right.

**HABITS** KBBs feed only on wild lupine growing in prairies and early successional jack pine forests. There are two generations per year. Habitat loss, due to development and farming, caused the Karner blue population to decrease.

**MANAGEMENT** Karner blues are a federally endangered species. The DNR works with private landowners and supports prairie restoration and forestry practices that benefit the butterflies.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
Contact your local DNR Service Center.

Photos: Thomas A. Meyer, WI DNR  
Recycled paper

PUB-FR-218j 2002



## WHIRLIGIG BEETLE

Order Coleoptera (meaning "sheathed wings")  
Family Gyrinidae

The predatory larvae are rarely seen, while scavenging adults are usually seen swimming in circles on the water's surface. There are 25 species in Wisconsin. Avoid confusing larvae with caddisfly, dobsonfly, or alderfly larvae.

Check for these characteristics:

- Larvae:
- Long, slender, pale-colored
  - 10 pairs of unsegmented projections on their sides
  - Two pairs of sickle-shaped hooks on end of abdomen
- Adults:
- Stream-lined body
  - Club-shaped antennae
  - Back legs flattened for swimming



**WILD!** To see above and below the water at the same time, adult whirligig beetles have two pairs of eyes.

[clean-water.uwex.edu/waj](http://clean-water.uwex.edu/waj)

Photos: (adult) Dr. Bart M. Drees, TX A&M University; (larva) John Hawking, Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology; Art: (larva) Carie Nixon, Illinois Natural History Survey; (adult) UWEX.

Partial funding provided by  
US EPA S. 319 Water Quality Act



WT-814 2005



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## AMERICAN BISON

*Bison bison*

**BASIC ID:** This huge member of the cattle family isn't really a buffalo. True buffalo are native only to Africa & Asia. Bulls have a distinct shoulder hump with shaggy dark brown hair on head, neck, shoulders & forelegs; their hind quarters are covered in short, brown hair. Their large, heavy head sports short, curved, black horns. Their short tail ends in a hair tuft. Bulls weigh up to 2,200 pounds; smaller cows weigh 700-900 pounds. They stand 6 feet at the shoulder.

**HABITS:** Living in herds, these cud chewers have poor eyesight, but keen hearing & sense of smell. They enjoy wallowing in dust & mud. Their voice is a low bellow. They graze on grass. One calf is born per cow in May. Its hump isn't noticeable until autumn. Calf stays with the cow 3 years.

**HABITAT:** Bison were infrequent periodic visitors to southern & west-central Wisconsin (like Buffalo County). Only captive herds exist today. Look for them at Sandhill Wildlife Area (Babcock, WI) & at MacKenzie Environmental Education Center (Poynette, WI).

**WILD!** Market hunters slaughtered the great western herds to feed the demands of the Industrial Revolution. Bison hides were turned into leather pulley belts. Populations crashed from an estimated 30-60 million to only 541 individuals by 1889.

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Heather L. Jones  
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WM-504 2009



## RED FOX

*Vulpes vulpes*

**BASIC ID:** Red foxes weigh 10-15 lbs. and may be red, sandy blonde, black or silver with bushy, white-tipped tails. They usually have a white chin, throat and belly.

**HABITS:** Red foxes eat plants and insects, but prefer small mammals such as mice or cottontails. They live in fields and woodlots and are most active at night.

**HISTORY:** Farming and logging by early settlers increased fox habitat. Today, foxes compete with expanding coyote populations for space. They are, however, still plentiful.

**WILD!** Foxes often "bite off more than they can chew" by killing more than they can eat at the moment. Extra food is often buried for future use.

For information: please see wildlife management publication, *The Red Fox* (WM-063), or order it at:

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/PUBL](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/PUBL)

Photo: Herbert Lange  
Recycled paper



WM-447 2004

## SNOWSHOE HARE

*Lepus americanus*

**BASIC ID:** The "varying hare" has a coat that changes from summer brown to winter white as a camouflage aid. This hare has large, well-furred feet that allow it to hop across deep snow. It is larger than a cottontail: 15-20 inches long and weighing 2-4 pounds. Its ears are long and its fur is very soft.

**HABITS:** Hares are not very social. Pregnant females drive off males; and breeding males bite & claw each other. During the day, hares rest in depressions called **forms** or in hollow logs. Each night, they dine on grass, clover & bramble shoots in summer, and twigs, buds & bark of aspen, willow, birch, maple & alder in winter. They follow runways warm into snow or forest undergrowth. A female's home range is 3-4 acres. Gestation is 36 days. They give birth to 3 or 4 fully-furred young weighing 2.5 ounces. The young hare's eyes open soon after birth and they are quite active in one week.

**HABITAT:** Hares inhabit Wisconsin's northwoods, preferring evergreen forests & thick stands of aspen.

**WILD!** These well-camouflaged hares "freeze" when threatened. They provide food for many native predators. Only 3 out of 10 reach 1 year of age.

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Alain Turgeon  
Printed on Recycled Paper

WM-521 2009



## GREAT HORNED OWL

*Bubo virginianus*

**BASIC ID:** Twice the size of a crow, this very large, brown or gray owl has prominent ear tufts and yellow eyes. It is the only "eagle-owl" in the entire Western Hemisphere.

**HABITS:** A very powerful bird, this owl preys on all types of animals—from insects & mice to porcupines & skunks. It can take birds as large as turkeys & geese. By day, it hides in trees, especially large evergreen conifers. Courtship begins in early January. Listen for low, booming hoots. The nest is often an old, unoccupied hawk nest, or the broken top of a large dead tree. Look for owl pellets (castings) beneath large conifers. If they contain bones, you have discovered an owl's daytime roost!

**HABITAT:** This common & widely distributed owl has always been a familiar resident of Wisconsin. It lives in almost any habitat as long as a few trees or shrubs are present for cover. They are highly adaptable birds and reside even in cities along rivers or in parks.

**WILD!** Be cautious near nests—horned owls are good parents who may encourage you to retreat with determination!

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Jill W. Lang  
Printed on Recycled Paper

WM-516 2009



## GRAY SQUIRREL

*Sciurus carolinensis*

**BASIC ID:** This 17-20" rodent is covered with dense, gray fur with some tints of white, brown & rust. Its broad, bushy tail is about as long as its head & body combined. Black phases occasionally occur.

**HABITS:** In early fall, this agile tree-dweller is busy eating & storing acorns and nuts that it later searches for, by smell, during winter. In summer, the gray squirrel eats seeds, wild fruits, insects, mushrooms & an occasional bird egg or nestling. A squirrel remains active all year long, though in sub-zero, blizzard-like conditions it often stays in its den until the storm passes. It uses its bushy tail for balance, a blanket, an umbrella, a parachute & communication.

**HABITAT:** Found throughout Wisconsin's hardwood forests, older neighborhoods and parks with mature nut-producing trees like oaks, black walnut & shagbark hickory. They den in abandoned woodpecker holes or decaying tree cavities. They also build large nests of leaves & twigs.

**WILD!** In some years, when squirrel populations are high & food is scarce, large numbers migrate cross-country in search of new homes.

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Damian Kuzdzak  
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WM-515 2009



## MOOSE

*Alces alces*

**BASIC ID:** This largest member of the deer family is distinguished by its huge head, bulbous snout, small rump, long, spindly legs and—in bulls—enormous, flattened and pronged antlers spreading to 6 feet. Moose stand over 6 feet at the shoulder, are 6-9 feet long & weigh 725-1,100 pounds! Their coat ranges from dark tan to blackish-brown; legs are lighter. Calf is dull red-brown. Bulls have a long, dangling flap of skin, called a "bell," below the throat. Cows lack antlers.

**HABITS:** Spring thru fall, moose feed on tree leaves or on aquatic plants while standing in shallow water. In winter, they survive by browsing on twigs. Bulls call in deep throaty grunts & moans. Usually, only one calf is born from mid-May through early June. It stays with its mother until the following year when she chases it away just before her new calf arrives. Moose are good swimmers with keen hearing but poor vision.

**HABITAT:** Originally inhabiting forested wetlands & shallow lakes in northern Wisconsin, infectious brainworms (transmitted from deer) have caused the decline of this native mammal. It now only occasionally immigrates into our state from neighboring Minnesota or Michigan.

**WILD!** Moose need large areas of wilderness to thrive.

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Eliza Snow

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WM-503 2009



**WISCONSIN WILDCARDS**



**MATCH YOUR CATCH!** **W**

**WISCONSIN WILDCARDS**



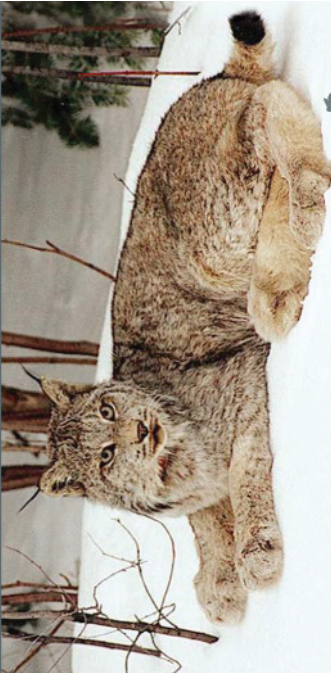
**WILD LUPINE** **W**

**WISCONSIN WILDCARDS**



**RARE SPECIES** **W**

**WISCONSIN WILDCARDS**



**RARE MAMMALS** **W**

**WISCONSIN WILDCARDS**



**WATERFOWL** **W**

## DWARF LAKE IRIS

*Iris lacustris*

**STATUS** Listed as threatened by both Wisconsin and the federal government.

**BASIC ID** This early spring bloomer has an eye-catching blossom, about two inches wide. Its bluish-purple petals are marked with yellow crests. Its sword-shaped leaves grow up to six inches long and are arranged in fans.

**LIFE HISTORY** Thrives in thin, moist, sandy or rocky soils in sun-dappled openings under white cedar and birch. It grows in colonies and spreads primarily by horizontal stems.

**RANGE** In Wisconsin, it grows near the northern shores of Lake Michigan in Brown and Door counties.

**WILD!** "Lacustris" means "of lakes," reflecting where this plant grows.

If you think you have this plant on your property, contact the Bureau of Endangered Resources at 608-266-7012.

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/factsheets](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/factsheets)

Photo: Martha Makholm  
Recycled paper



Extension

ER-108c 2005



## WILD LUPINE

*Lupinus perennis*

### BASIC ID

This sun-loving perennial grows best in open savannas or prairies. In Wisconsin, it germinates in mid-April. Its spikes of blue flowers bloom in late May, and its seed pods mature to brown or black before bursting in late June or early July.

### IMPORTANCE

The caterpillar of the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly relies exclusively on lupine leaves for food.

### SEED PLANTING

- Collect mature seed pods before they burst
- Dry pods under a screen to extract seeds
- Plant seeds in late fall before snow cover for best growth
- Select sunny, weed-free areas with sandy, well-drained soil

### FOR INFORMATION

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invertebrates/karner.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invertebrates/karner.htm)

Photo: Thomas Meyer  
Recycled paper

Extension

FR-237 2003



## PADDLEFISH

*Polyodon spathula*

**IDENTIFICATION** You'll have no problem telling this fish apart from any other! Their long, flat, paddle-like snout and shark-like, forked tail fin make them easy to identify. They can grow to be 65 pounds in Wisconsin. Many anglers know them as "spoonbill catfish".

**HABITAT** Paddlefish move about on muddy bottoms of the Mississippi and Wisconsin river systems, especially where the rivers widen. These fish usually stay in deep water but will come to the surface in the summer. Dams on large rivers have eliminated paddlefish spawning habitat and severely reduced their population.

**TACKLE TIP** The paddlefish is listed as a threatened species in Wisconsin so don't even try to catch one! They rarely bite on a hook and would rather eat plankton than bait.

**COMMON CATCH SIZE** Don't catch one!

For more information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

Painting: Joe Tomelleri  
Recycled paper

FH-930v 2009



## BLUE-WINGED TEAL

*Anas discors*

**BASIC ID:** The "bluewing" is a small duck (14-16 inches long, less than a pound) that breeds in Wisconsin. A spring drake is gray-brown, with a large white rump patch & black tail. A distinctive white crescent moon graces his face. His forewings sport a large, pale blue patch. Hens have blue wing patches, too, but they are mostly a mottled tan-brown.

**HABITS:** In mid-April, teal begin to migrate to and through Wisconsin. During the breeding season, drakes display to hens with ritualized feeding & "chin-lifting." Hens build grassy nests in moist meadows or grasslands, laying one egg a day, until a clutch of 9-11 dull white eggs is complete. After about 24 days of incubation, fuzzy ducklings hatch & soon follow the hen to dense cover.

**HABITAT:** The teal's favorite nesting cover is long prairie grasses, wet meadows or alfalfa fields. Hens need prairie "pothole" ponds greater than two acres to raise their broods. These ducks rely on clean wetlands during migration.

**WILD!** The loss of grasslands for nesting cover near wetlands is the greatest threat to the conservation of blue-winged teal.

For more info, visit WiDNR's Wildlife Notebook:  
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Norman Bateman  
Printed on Recycled Paper

WM-520 2009



## CANADA LYNX

*Felis lynx*

**BASIC ID:** The lynx weighs from 15 to 30 pounds; has long ear tufts; huge, snowshoe-like feet; and a short, black-tipped tail (compare with bobcat's tail).

**HABITS:** Lynx are rare visitors to our state from Canada. They prefer diverse forests with shrubby openings. Lynx hunt well in deep snow and eat snowshoe hares.

**HISTORY:** Old fur trade company records indicate that lynx follow a distinct population cycle. When hare populations crash, lynx numbers follow suit and crash one to two years later. Lynx are a federally threatened species and protected by Wisconsin law.

**WILD!** Scientists think that Wisconsin's lynx population originated from two different migrations of the Asian lynx 20,000 years ago!

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/eek/critter/mammal/lynx/htm>

Photo: J. Vashon, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

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WM-446 2005

