

# HABITAT TOSS

CARD STUNT  
EASY & FAST  
2 PLAYERS

## OBJECT

Toss the largest number of cards into the right habitat.

## WILDCARDS AND OTHER THINGS

16 native plants and animals

3 boxes, buckets, or other containers labeled "Forest," "Wetland," and "Prairie"

## DEAL

Divide the cards equally among the players. Place the boxes along a wall. Designate a throwing line that players must stand behind. Adjust the line if it is too hard or too easy.

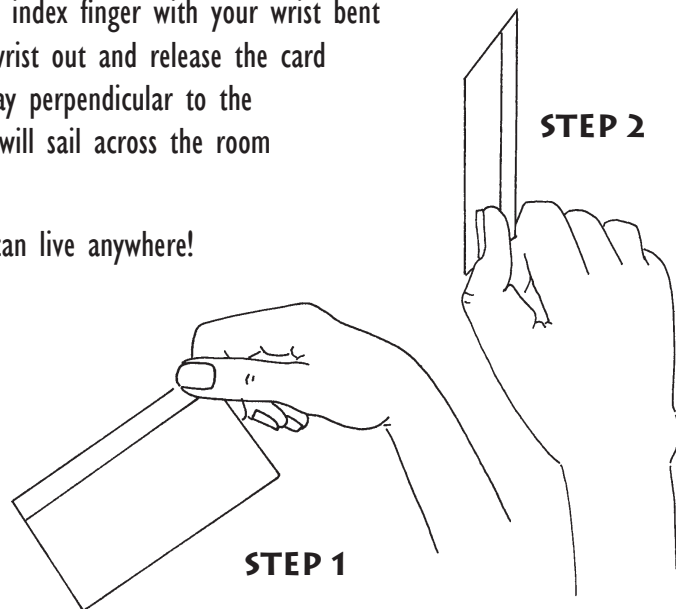
## PLAY

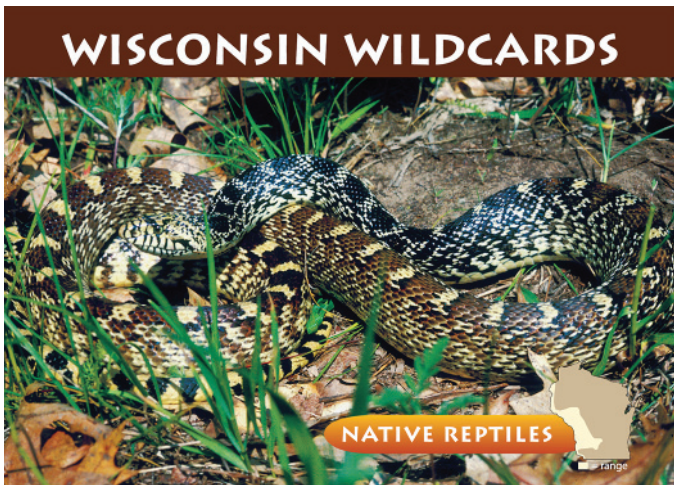
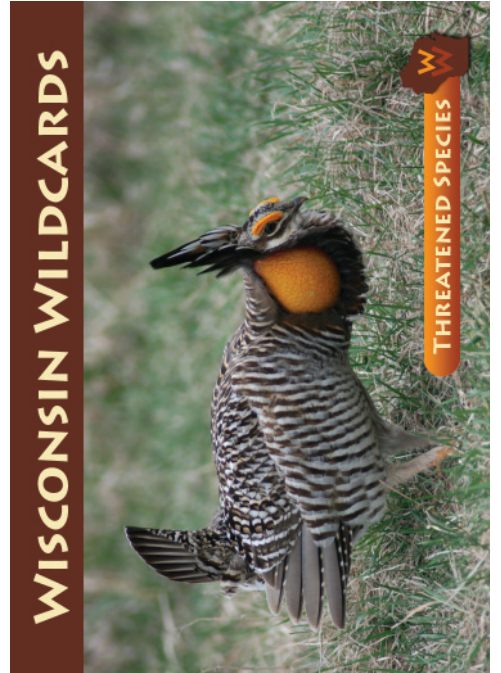
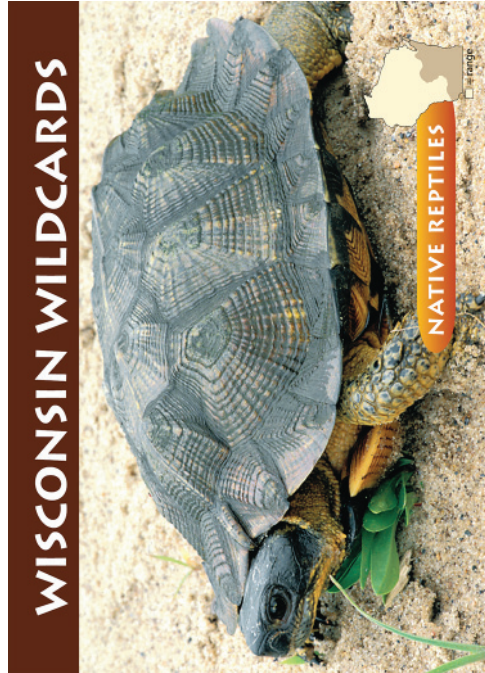
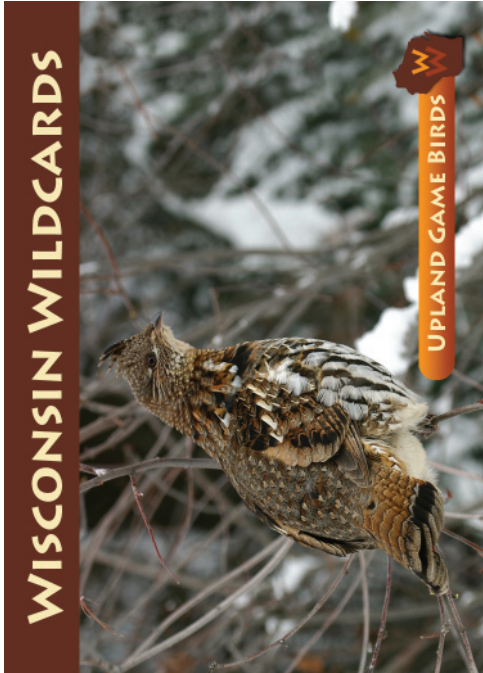
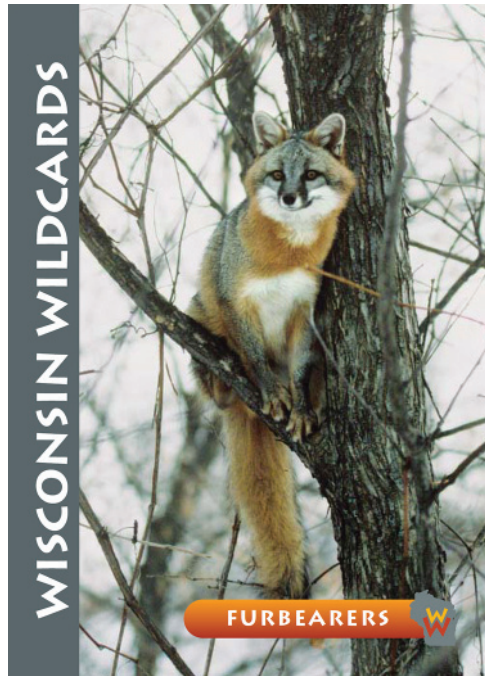
Take turns. When it is your turn, stand behind the line and look at the top card in your hand. Decide which habitat it belongs in. Call out the name of the plant or animal and which habitat it belongs in. Try to toss the card into that habitat box. You get one point for saying the right habitat and one point for getting the card into the right box. Keep track of points on a scrap of paper. The player with the most points wins.

## STRATEGY

Hold the card between your thumb and index finger with your wrist bent toward your body (Step 1). Flick your wrist out and release the card at the same time so the card spins away perpendicular to the floor (Step 2). After practice, your card will sail across the room into the right box!

Hint: Remember that white-tailed deer can live anywhere!





## 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/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Damian Kuzdak  
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WM-515 2009



## GRAY FOX

*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*

**BASIC ID:** The gray fox weighs 9-11 lbs. and has short, gray and red fur with a black stripe down the top of its tail.

**HABITS:** Gray foxes prefer bluffs, hills, woodlands, and field edges. They are secretive and hunt at night for small mammals, insects, birds, seeds, nuts and berries.

**HISTORY:** Gray foxes are most common in southwest Wisconsin and in the Southern Kettle Moraine. Records suggest that the gray fox has always been common in southern WI.

**WILD!** Gray foxes have retractable claws (like cats) and are excellent tree climbers. They climb to rest, feed, and escape predators.

For information: please see wildlife management publication, *The Gray Fox* (WM-005), 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



Extension

WM-448 2004



## 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/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Jill W. Lang  
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WM-516 2009



## GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN

*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*

**BASIC ID:** This 2-pound chicken-like bird is 16-18 inches long. Body is brown & tan striped with black feathers on the side of neck. Males have a short, rounded black tail & orange air sacs along their necks. Hen's tail is banded in tan & brown. "Booming" males make a low "oo-oo-woo," like the sound made by blowing across the mouth of a bottle.

**HABITS:** Each spring, males perform a courtship dance on the mating ground (called a lek). The males strut & stamp their feet with their black neck feathers erect like horns & the orange air sacs inflated. They leap & twirl in the air hoping to attract a hen. This display is called "booming." Hens nest in grasslands, laying 8-12 olive-colored eggs. Diet consists of insects, seeds, leaves & farm grains.

**HABITAT:** Once found from the Great Plains to the east coast, this bird has disappeared from much of its native range due to destruction of grassland habitats. Wisconsin DNR Wildlife Management program is bringing in prairie chickens from other states to boost our bird population's health & vigor.

**WILD!** Prairie-Chickens do not migrate. They sometimes survive snowy winters by roosting under the snow!

Dane County  
Conservation  
League since 1988

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

Photo: Lesa Kardash, WDNR  
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WM-525 2009



## WOOD TURTLE

*Glyptemys insculpta*

Threatened

### BASIC ID

This 6-9" brown-shelled turtle has sculpted sections resembling tree rings. The bottom is yellow with black blotches. The head is black and the neck and leg skin is yellow or orange.

### HABITS

They eat berries, greens and invertebrates. They live in clean rivers and adjacent forests and meadows.

### FUN FACT

Some wood turtles hunt worms by "worm-stomping." They quickly stamp their front feet, mimicking heavy raindrops hitting the ground. The worms are eaten when they surface.

### FOR INFORMATION

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

Photo: A. B. Sheldon  
Recycled paper

ER-106Q 2008



## RUFFED GROUSE

*Bonasa umbellus*

**BASIC ID:** This chicken-like bird is 15-19 inches long with a 5-7 inch tail fan. Mottled feathers are camouflaged. Iridescent black "ruff" on each side of neck is larger in males. Grouse have a short, erect head crest & a sturdy, curved beak. Wings are short & wide, cupped downward. These explosive birds can fly only short (1/4 mile) distances. In winter, legs get more feathers & toes develop comb-like "snowshoes."

**HABITS:** In spring, a male drums on fallen logs. Spreading & pressing his tail against the log, he begins a series of slow, strong, rapidly increasing wing strokes. His wings compress air, creating a vacuum that produces a thumping drumroll sound. When hens arrive, the male begins strutting with tail erect & fanned, neck ruffs flared, head shaking & hissing. Populations cycle thru highs & lows about every 8-10 years. Grouse eat aspen buds, fruits, acorns, leaves & insects.

**HABITAT:** Grouse depend on forests dominated by aspen in various stages of growth. Natural disturbances or forest management is needed to maintain grouse populations.

**WILD!** Grouse will snow roost by burrowing or diving into snowbanks. The snow blanket is 20-30 degrees warmer than the surrounding air.

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

Photo: Lee Horn  
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WM-507 2009



## 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/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Heather L. Jones  
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WM-504 2009



## BULLSNAKE

*Pituophis catenifer sayi*  
Protected

### BASIC ID

This 4-6.5' snake has a variable pattern along its length. The tail is golden with black rings. The mid-body has blotches of dark brown to reddish-brown on pale yellow. The neck is mottled with black and white. Its thick, triangular head shape is distinctive.

### HABITS

Prey is mostly small mammals. This rare snake lives in sand and bluff prairies, oak savannas, and in pine and oak barrens.

### FUN FACT

The bullsnake is one of the loudest hissing snakes in the world. Hissing is mostly all bluff, thus its name.

### FOR INFORMATION

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

Photo: A. B. Sheldon  
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ER-106D 2008



WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



RAPTORS



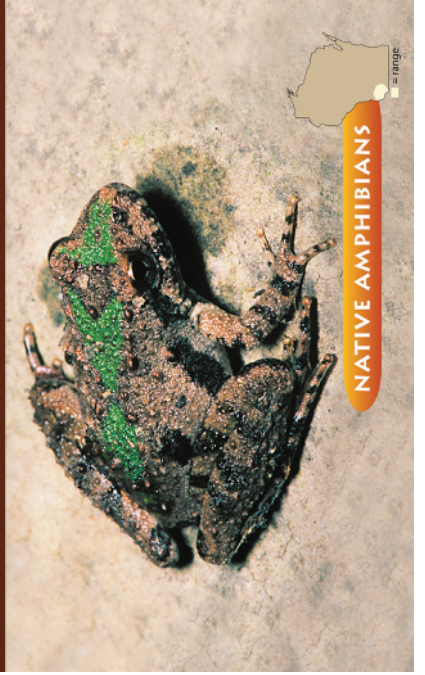
WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



RARE SPECIES



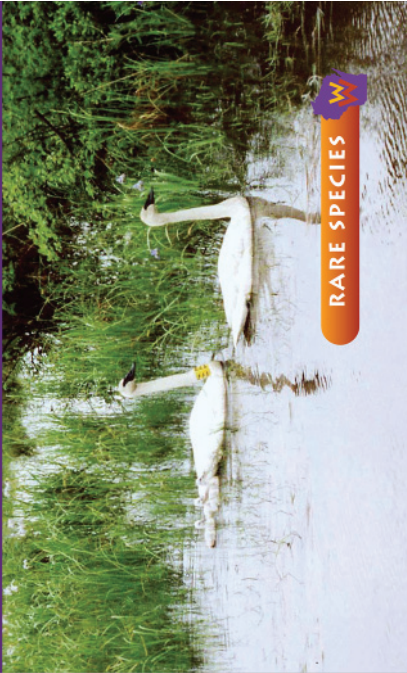
WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



NATIVE AMPHIBIANS



WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



RARE SPECIES



WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



WADING BIRDS



WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



FURBEARERS



WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



MATCH YOUR CATCH!



WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



LARGE MAMMALS



## NORTHERN CRICKET FROG

*Acris crepitans*  
Endangered

### BASIC ID

This .7-1.2" frog is brownish-tan or green with a rust or green colored triangle on its head and has bumpy skin.

### HABITS

They eat small insects. They live in lakes, ponds and rivers, preferring mud or sand flats with sparse, low vegetation. Their 6-7-second call is like two ball bearings clicking together.

### FUN FACTS

The 1-inch cricket frog can leap 4 feet in a single jump. One of these frogs can eat 4,800 bugs in a single season.

### FOR INFORMATION

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

ER-106B 2008

Photo: A. B. Sheldon  
Recycled paper



## PRAIRIE BUSH CLOVER

*Lespedeza leptostachya*

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

### BASIC ID

This perennial legume grows up to 3' tall. The white, yellow, or pink flowers are grouped at the tips of the stems. The leaves and stems have silky hairs. It flowers from July to September.

### LIFE HISTORY

Preferred habitat is dry to medium-moist prairies, often in sand or gravel. It cannot tolerate much shade.

### RANGE

This plant is native only in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and western and southwestern Wisconsin.

### WILD!

The first prairie bush clover specimen was collected in Dane County in 1860!

### FOR INFORMATION

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

ER-106Z 2003

Photo: W.S. Alverson  
Recycled paper



## 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.gov/org/land/wildlife/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photos: Rich Legg & Dan Cardiff  
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WM-517 2009



## MUSKRAT

*Ondatra zibethica*

**BASIC ID:** Muskrats are small, semi-aquatic rodents with webbed hind feet, a scaly tail, and large incisors (front teeth) designed for gnawing.

**HABITS:** Muskrats build cone-shaped houses from wetland plants, or dig holes into banks, shorelines or lawns. Common in Wisconsin wetlands, they feed on cattails, rushes, and other plants and are important prey for other animals. Over-populations are common and cause problems. Trapping is allowed through scientifically-based regulations enforced by Wisconsin conservation wardens.

**HISTORY:** Use of muskrats for food and clothing was common for hundreds of years and continues today, combining modern science with historic traditions.

**WILD!** In Wisconsin, muskrats can have up to 4 litters per year!

For information: please see Wildlife Management publication, *The Muskrat* (WM-009), or order it at

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

WM-424 2003

Photo: Herbert Lange  
Recycled paper



## 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  
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WM-524 2009



## TRUMPETER SWAN

*Cygnus buccinator*

**STATUS** Endangered

**BASIC ID** This swan, largest of our native waterfowl, stands four feet tall with a wingspan of seven feet. Adults are pure white with black bills. Cygnets (young swans) are gray with pinkish bills. Listen for a deep and trumpet-like call.

**BREEDING HABITAT & HABITS** Trumpeter swans breed in large, shallow wetlands. They feed on arrowhead, bur-reed, bulrush, sedges, wild rice, pondweeds and other wetland plants. Cygnets hatch in late May or early June. Identification collars help biologists track swan movements and survival. If you see a collared swan, report the letter and number on the collar to your local DNR office.

**CONSERVATION** It is critical that we protect large wetland systems and remind waterfowl hunters of the differences between swans and geese.

**WILD!** Trumpeter swan nests may be six feet or more in diameter. Their eggs measure 4 1/2 inches by 3 inches!

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

ER-108b 2005

Photo: Mary Brazeau Brown  
Recycled paper



## WHITE-TAILED DEER

*Odocoileus virginianus*

**BASIC ID:** Wisconsin's "State Wildlife Animal" is very common & easily recognized. Bucks, which develop antlers in summer and fall, are larger than does. Adults are 63-85" long & average 125-185 lbs. Deer have large eyes and ears, a naked nose pad & long legs with hooved feet. Their hair is reddish-brown in summer and grayish-brown in winter.

**HABITS:** Deer spend most of the year in small family groups, with adult bucks often living in small bachelor groups. "White-tails" don't generally herd up like elk or other cervids, except during northern Wisconsin winters when 100s may gather in a single swamp (in deer yards). Deer browse on twigs, buds & leaves & graze on grass & forbs (herbs). They relish acorns, corn, apples & alfalfa. They have excellent senses of smell & hearing. When alarmed, deer fan their ears & raise flag-like tails to signal other deer of nearby danger.

**HABITAT:** This native deer lives in abundance across our state in forests, remote swamps, & along edges of farm fields & woodlots. They also live in city woodlots & parks.

**WILD!** Some individuals have been known to jump higher than 8 feet and to run 40 mph! Deer hunting generates \$1 billion each year in WI.

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

Photo: Wanda Embard & Bryan Eastham  
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WM-501 2009



## SMALLMOUTH BASS

*Micropterus dolomieu*

### IDENTIFICATION

The smallmouth is perhaps Wisconsin's scrappiest game fish. Vertical markings, a shallow notch in the dorsal fin, and an upper jaw that ends in line with the center of their red eye, distinguish smallmouth bass from the largemouth bass.

### HABITAT

"Smallies" like rocky streams or lakes where they can find their favorite food - crayfish. In summertime, they seek out deep, cool waters.

### TACKLE TIPS

Shhh! Fish quietly and cast near old logs or rocks. Bring along natural baits like hellgrammites or dragonfly larvae. Live crayfish are allowed only on the Mississippi River. For inland use, the crayfish must be dead.

**COMMON CATCH SIZE 12", 1-2 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

