



THIS ISSUE

**Sunday, August 8 Open Hours /
Program: Feeding Frenzy
Insect-Collecting Camps for
Elementary, Middle & High School
Coffee Break
Around the State in August**

***Say Hello to the
Elephant in the Room***

We're going to call the opening column in Issue Number 33 of Nature Discovery's *Wild Times*, the most important we've composed to date. Not only do we hope the content of this column is absorbed by the readers, but even more vitally, the content of three links provided below. While our column can be read in minutes, the combined content of the links will require close to an hour of your time. It may be the most eye-opening hour you've spent in awhile, we hope. Please make the time. Life as we know it, and as our children will know it depends on it.

There is an elephant in the room that is growing larger by the day. Yet, Carol and I are stymied at how, rapt in their personal lives, many Americans insist on ignoring it. We're not. In fact, we can't continue to just watch it grow quietly, either. We have to point it out to anyone who isn't looking. On the other hand, to say nothing would not only violate Nature Discovery's mission statement. To say nothing would run counter to everything we've dedicated our lives to achieving. So, here it is: **HEY! THERE'S AN ELEPHANT!!!**

At our presentations and exhibits we regularly encounter examples of how out of touch the common adult is with the surrounding environment. We receive surprised comments about how much they learned in their short time with us. We're not surprised. Educational opportunities that create a sense of understanding and value toward the world we share are grossly inadequate in our public schools. Young adults leave school with little sense of connection to the environment that supports them.

Our many loyal past and present supporters know why we are driven to do what we do. It flows through the pages of most every monthly newsletter. Obviously, it's not for the money. Just look at our house and our life style. We rely on none of the grant monies or subsidies deemed essential to the survival of other educational facilities.

Twenty-five years into it, our methods are tried and true. We always educate under this blunt assumption related to Michigan wildlife, the environment that supports it, and, by extension, the environment that supports us and our quality of life: It is inherently difficult to care about something if you don't know about it. Attainment of knowledge leads to concern. Concern leads to action.

The elephant is not just climate change, but more critically, recognition of the source – the burning of millions of years’ worth of stored carbon inside the earth in less than one hundred years, *and* at an astonishingly accelerating rate. This is not rocket science. With a sound understanding of the greenhouse effect, it is difficult to come up with any other conclusion than the one you would expect from calculating two plus two. It is mathematically precise. Who’s going to argue the result of adding two and two?



The Mink Frog, a Canadian species found in the UP, may be the first Michigan frog to go extinct. It is receding from the southern edge of its range.

So, Galileo had a difficult time getting the Church to acknowledge that the earth revolved around the sun. By comparison, he’d surely feel he had an easy time of it if he could check out what today’s scientists are up against...

Climatologist-bashing has become fashionable. A campaign of sophisticated rhetoric has been launched by wealthy fossil fuel corporations, aided by a government comprised of politicians who are beholden to them, and a broad-based media that panders to them.

Two plus two equals four? Not if you listen to the well-groomed talking heads with law degrees on the media device of your choice. A great lawyer can make a listener doubt any truth, no matter how obvious, and the corporate elite only hire the best. The argument is even more effective if the listener knows little or nothing of the subject matter, enabling the talking head to play the role of expert. For instance, all high school graduates should have a firm understanding of the greenhouse effect, but, in most cases they can’t even define it. As a result, the environmentally-undereducated, socially-overstimulated masses are eating up the hired spin with a spoon. Our doubt leads to inaction... Mission accomplished.

If you’ve researched the science behind global warming and climate change it’s impossible to miss the work and conclusions of NASA scientist, turned activist, James Hansen. Predictions he’s made as far back as the ‘80s are frighteningly close to the target record-setting heat, droughts and storms we’re experiencing today. This guy knows what he’s talking about. He’s genuinely concerned about conveying real scientific evidence, no matter how unpopular with the elite - and we believe him.

Watch this 18-minute video of his March 2012 TED talk entitled, *Why I Must Speak Out About Climate Change*. http://www.ted.com/talks/james_hansen_why_i_must_speak_out_about_climate_change.html Hansen’s talk preceded this summer’s record shattering heat and drought.

The following link is to a July 22 column entitled, *Loading the Climate Dice*, by New York Times op-ed columnist, Paul Krugman.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/23/opinion/krugman-loading-the-climate-dice.html?_r=2

Finally, in the July issue of Rolling Stone Magazine, award-winning environmental writer, Bill McKibben, delivers a lengthy, but engrossing article entitled, *Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math*. <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719?link=mostpopular1>

The numbers are so frightening, it is easy to become disheartened. However, to some degree or another, acting now is better than acting later or not at all. Our descendents will view us with less disdain if we act now to curtail what future historians may euphemistically dub, “The Petroleum Age.”

Knowledge leads to concern. Let your concern lead you to action. Start as simply as we have, on a personal level, then, see where it leads. We retired our clothes dryer several years ago and don’t miss it

at all. Wind, sun and, in the winter, heat rising from the registers behind a clothes rack, have sustained all our laundry-drying needs. Last winter, we added lots of insulation to our old, drafty house and immediately noticed a difference in comfort, heating fuel consumption and money saved. Just for kicks and to see if we could tolerate it over the winter we turned the thermostat permanently down to 61 degrees, and, what do you know? We got used to it! Prior to this winter we're pulling the old oil furnace and looking to geothermal heat. We're settling for no less than double the fuel efficiency on the next vehicle we purchase this fall. Solar panels, too. Know any truly "green" financial planners? Exxon/Mobil, BP and their ilk are no longer welcome in our portfolio!

-Jim McGrath

FEEDING FRENZY SUNDAY

Sunday, August 5
1 to 5pm \$5/person



Watch our two-year-old hognose snake eat a live toad!.

With over 100 Michigan reptiles and amphibians of 42 species, plus a red-footed tortoise and a bearded dragon, plus huge, hungry giant silk moth caterpillars, there will be a LOT of feeding going on all day. Throughout the day, our staff will mingle with visitors, giving everyone up-close opportunities to watch snakes, turtles, frogs, salamanders and lizards eat a wide variety of foods – fruits and vegetables and many kinds of small animals, including worms, slugs, insects galore, fish, frogs, toads and even mice.



- Watch your own insects around the yard and on the trails to feed to individuals of the only complete collection of 13 Michigan frog species in the state!
- Feed food sticks, worms and fish to 16 aquatic turtles as they swim in small pools on the patio. Some of the small ones can take food right out of your hand!
- Learn to identify all 3 species of garter snakes found in Michigan, then watch them gobble up live worms, fish and frogs.
- Watch a hognose snake eat a toad.

- Hold large, medium and small specimens of Michigan's largest snake, the black rat snake, then watch some of them eat frozen-thawed mice.
- Pick wild berries for box turtles and our ever-hungry red-footed tortoise.
- Watch huge Polyphemus, Cecropia, Luna and Promethea Moth caterpillars devour leaves of a variety of native trees.
- Arrange to take caterpillars to rear at home with written care instructions for a small donation.
- Our staff is always on hand to help you make the most of your visit!

Enroll Now for Insect Collecting Camps in Late August



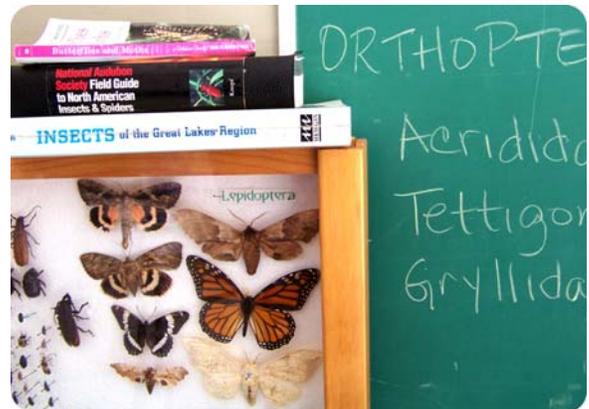
Insect Collecting for 9 yrs & older August 20-23; 9am to 3pm

This intensive camp offers a combination of indoor instruction and outdoor collecting. Students will identify insects and learn how to classify them to their taxonomic orders. They will also learn correct pinning and mounting techniques. At the week's conclusion, each student will take home an impressive, scientifically displayed collection. Materials fees include a box of insect pins, a mounting board, a killing jar, and a 15x24 finished wooden and plexiglass display box.

FEE: \$180, plus \$50 for materials (\$100 NR dep).

Insect Collecting for Middle & High School Students August 27-30; 9am to 3pm

Some middle school and high school students are given insect collecting and classification assignments as part of a biology or zoology curriculum. Get a huge jump on the project by taking this intensive camp of field collecting, in addition to classification, pinning and mounting instruction. See the above Insect Collecting description for more details. Feel free to contact us about fulfilling specific assignment requirements. Any interested student is welcome regardless of whether it is a required assignment in school. **FEE: \$180, plus \$50 for materials (\$100 NR dep).**



To Enroll Call or email us!



Nature Discovery on WLNZ Radio's morning show, Coffee Break, August 30

Nature Discovery's next monthly appearance is on Thursday, August 30 at 9:45am. The show airs weekdays from 9 to 10am on 89.7 FM. There is also a TV simulcast of the show on Comcast stations 15, 21 or 31. Listen live online at lcc.edu/radio/onair/ or watch it live online at lcc.edu/tv/watch. We'll post a Facebook reminder prior to the show.

Around the State in August



Look for the huge and gaudy Pandorus Sphinx larva now on wild grape vine or Virginia creeper.

- ❖ Friday, August 3: 7:00pm. MI Turtles Presentation; Hartwick Pines State Park, Grayling.
- ❖ Saturday, August 4: 2:00pm. MI Snakes Presentation; Hartwick Pines State Park, Grayling.
12:00pm. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Presentation; Leila Arboretum, Battle Creek.
- ❖ Saturday, August 11: 10am & 1pm. MI Wildlife Presentations; Mitchell State Park, Cadillac.
10:30am. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Presentation; Huron Co Nature Center.
12:00pm. MI Butterflies & Moths Presentation; Leila Arboretum, Battle Creek.
- ❖ Monday, August 13 to Wednesday, August 15: 11am-8pm. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Exhibit; MDNR Pocket Park, UP State Fair, Escanaba.
- ❖ Saturday, August 18: 11am. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Exhibit and Presentation; Riverfest, Middlebury, IN.

Become a fan of *Nature Discovery* on Facebook!

Check out the latest video, *Tremors Lite: What's Moving Under the Soil?* on our Youtube channel, ***Wild Williamston***.

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