



A snapping turtle can be removed from the road in a way that's safe for the turtle and for your fingers. You can practice with our turtle during this Sunday's open hours.

should be mainstream stuff, not relegated to peripheral or optional learning, as is the case with the vast majority of wildlife education today. We are losing much of our natural diversity, one species at a time, largely because the general populace is clueless about the creature in question, as well as about what he or she may be doing inadvertently to hasten its demise.

We believe that most citizens, enlightened to the identification, behavior and ecology of a given native bird, butterfly, frog or even snake, would want that species to continue to survive and thrive in the world. They would then also be more inclined to alter their activities in the environment to help ensure that creature's survival.

A perfect example is visible almost any day this month. Everyone, and most certainly every driver, should know that June is turtle egg-laying month. If the Secretary of State added a section (and it should) to the Rules of the Road booklet entitled, "Things Every Driver Should Know About Wildlife," this information would top the list.

A short paragraph could identify the problem then suggest a potential solution. For instance: "On their way to or from laying eggs, female turtles often need to cross a road or highway and are struck by an unaware motorist. If you see a turtle ahead of you on the road, immediately turn on your hazards, slow down and steer the tires safely away from the turtle. When doing so, be aware of motorists behind you as well as oncoming traffic so as to not put yourself or them in danger. If you feel inclined to help the turtle off the road, pull to the shoulder with hazard lights flashing, check that oncoming traffic is clear and step out to assist the turtle across the road. If traffic approaches while you are attempting to move the turtle, wave your arms to warn oncoming motorists to slow down or stop. Please take a responsible role in protecting our state's vulnerable wildlife."

Once the eggs are successfully laid and buried, you may assume that the next turtle generation is securely on its way. Not quite. The environment we've created around homes, parks, farms, landfills and other locations to make our lives easier is perfect for the survival and spread of another mammal that has a keen appetite for turtle eggs and a keener nose to find them.

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Open Hours Sunday, June 10

Cars & Coons Perilous to Mother Turtles and Their Eggs

According to MSU herpetologist, Dr. James Harding, well over half of all turtle eggs laid this month will be sniffed out, dug up and eaten by a raccoon within a few days of deposition. There are more raccoons in Michigan than ever before. In fact, over a century ago, raccoons did not even occur here.

With a bit of knowledge, a bit of ingenuity and enough personal concern to propel yourself into action, you can easily keep a raccoon from dining on turtle eggs laid in your yard or elsewhere.

The scent is strongest on the ground immediately after the eggs are deposited, but it dissipates over time. Indeed, nearly all eggs are sniffed out and discovered by a raccoon the first night or two after deposition. Here's how to stop them...

While the female is laying, mark the spot so you can locate it when she leaves. Lay a piece of plywood or a similar flat object centered on top of the spot. It should measure at least 3x3 feet. Place a couple of heavy bricks on each side of the plywood so a raccoon is incapable of lifting or pushing it. The board can also be firmly fixed by hammering pegs around the perimeter. If you leave the board in place for about a week, the scent will have had enough time to dissipate. The eggs will be safe until hatching time in late August or September.



Coon-proofing turtle eggs is easy.

All ten species of turtles in our state are declining at varying rates. While some are dwindling due to man-made issues beyond cars and coons, these two factors play a major role in all turtle declines.

Pass the word!

-Jim McGrath

Enroll for Summer Day Camps Now



Go to our website and click on the 2012 Summer Day Camps link for all the details. Here is a list of the weeks, topics and recommended age ranges.

June 18-21	Michigan Birds & Birding (9 yrs & up) Nature Discovery (7-9 yrs)
June 25-28	Birding for Visually Impaired (10 & up)
July 9-12	Nature Discovery (7-9 yrs)
July 16-19	Budding Naturalists (5-6 yrs) FULL
July 23-26	Free-Range Naturalist (11 yrs & up)
Jul 30-Aug 2	Okemos Nursery School Week
Aug 6-9	MI Reptiles & Amphibians (9 yrs & up)
Aug 20-23	Insect Collecting (9 yrs & up)
Aug 27-30	Insect Collecting for MS & HS Students

Around the State in June

- ❖ **Saturday, June 9: 10am & 1pm. MI Wildlife Presentation; Mitchell State Park, Cadillac.**
- ❖ **Friday-Sunday, June 22-24: 10am to 5pm. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Exhibit; DNR River Days, Mulliken State Park, Detroit.**
- ❖ **Saturday, June 23: 12pm. MI Wildlife Presentation; Leila Arboretum, Battle Creek.**
- ❖ **Saturday, June 30: 2pm. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Presentation; Ludington State Park.**

Finding & Rearing Giant Silk Moths

SUNDAY, JUNE 10

*Our home-based nature center is open
from 1 to 5pm. \$5/person.*



Mating Prometheus Moths. The female and male of this species differ greatly in color and pattern.

At 2pm, we will present **Finding & Rearing Giant Silk Moths**. The largest, most impressive moths on the continent can be found right here in Michigan, yet, their numbers have declined dramatically over the past few decades. Beautiful photographs enhance this Powerpoint presentation featuring the life cycle and ecology of Cecropia, Polyphemus, Prometheus and Luna Moths. Over the past couple of weeks, females have emerged from cocoons, attracted mates, and laid eggs. All paying participants are welcome to take home a few newly-hatched larvae (or fertile eggs) of their choice. An information sheet offers detailed instructions on how to rear them successfully. Take advantage of this unique opportunity for enthusiasts of any age. This is an AWESOME summer project.

Come early or stay late to walk our trails or to interact with the largest collection of live Michigan reptiles and amphibians in the state, including two unprecedented “grand slams” – all 10 turtles and all 13 frogs found in Michigan!

Our staff is always on hand to help you make the most of your visit.

Red Admiral butterfly larvae are thick this year on stinging nettle. (See Jim’s essay in the May issue.) We’ll show you how to find them on the nettles out back. These larvae are easy to raise. Take one home!



Become a fan of *Nature Discovery* on Facebook!
Check out our Youtube channel, *Wild Williamston*, too!

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