



UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT UNION HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH NATURE CENTER



2020 Summer Newsletter

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Nature Almanac

June

- 1 Young American Toads leave the water for life on land
- 5 Full Strawberry Moon
- 20 Summer Solstice

July

- 1 Wild Bergamot is blooming
- 5 Full Buck Moon
- 27 Bumblebees and other pollinators reach their peak abundance

August

- 3 Full Sturgeon Moon
- 17 Check milkweed plants for the summer's last generation of Monarch caterpillars
- 24 Walk the Nature Center's power line corridor to enjoy the native plants in bloom

September

- 2 Full Harvest Moon
- 14 Monarch butterfly migration peaks
- 22 Autumnal Equinox

The John T. Huston – Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center

Mission Statement:

The John T. Huston - Dr. John D. Brumbaugh Nature Center provides and supports opportunities for enjoying and learning about our natural and cultural heritage.

Staff:

Jamie Greiner, Sustainability and
Campus Outreach Manager
Michael Greiner, Site Manager
R. Chris Stanton, Director
Karen Santee, Facilities Manager
Bonnie Twaddle, Community Outreach
Coordinator
Lin Wu, Ecologist
Adam Zorn, Program Manager

Visit:

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center
16146 Daniel St. NE
Minerva, Ohio 44657

Contact:

The John T. Huston - Dr. John D.
Brumbaugh Nature Center
University of Mount Union
1972 Clark Ave.
Alliance, OH 44601
Phone: (330) 823-7487
Email: naturecenter@mountunion.edu
Website: mountunion.edu/nature-center
Facebook: facebook.com/
HustonBrumbaughNatureCenter
Instagram: @JMNatureCenter



Good Luck, Karen!

Dr. Chris Stanton

This summer we have to say “good-bye” to Karen Santee, our facility manager, who will be retiring after 24 years at the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center. Karen started in July of 1996 as one of the original staff members. Through the years, she helped to develop the Children’s Garden program, established and maintained educational gardens, and offered very popular workshops on flower arranging, gardening, wreath-making, and other arts and crafts. Her experience with dairy farming improved the Nature Center’s barnyard and its animals and helped to earn “Barn of the Year” from The Friends of Ohio Barns in 2008. Karen has been key to keeping the Nature Center a vibrant and welcoming place as it has grown over time.

When asked about her experiences at the Nature Center, Karen said, “It was a lot of fun working with guests that were willing to learn with me. I was able to meet so many wonderful people!” And the most rewarding aspect of her time at the Nature Center? “It would definitely be the staff I work with. We just seem to click! We have our individual strengths and skills that get things done. At the end of the day I can go home without stress and worry. It seems most people don’t have that today.”

Karen plans to stay busy with her six grandchildren and with building a new house. She also hopes to pursue her dream of raising and working with flowers. Karen’s easy-going nature and friendliness will be missed by everyone, especially the Nature Center staff and the attendees of her numerous programs.

New Species Found at Nature Center

Adam Zorn

On a mild afternoon in early April, I was out exploring the Nature Center's trails. I started the day in search of ephemeral wildflowers before turning my attention to the array of coverboards around the property. Coverboards are low-tech but indispensable pieces of research equipment made of any number of materials such as metal roofing, plywood, hardwood boards, or round slices of logs. The Nature Center's coverboards are three feet by three feet square pieces of green metal roofing and plywood placed in pairs in various locations around the preserve. They provide shelter for many varieties of wildlife just like a fallen log or large pieces of bark. Coverboards are strategically placed where Nature Center staff can check on them and are much easier to look under with minimal disturbance to their inhabitants.

During the summer of 2019, a Mount Union student used coverboards across the Nature Center to investigate which species of snakes may be residing on the property. It was the first organized survey in recent memory designed to search for resident snake species. If you have walked the trail system since May 2019, you have likely seen at least a pair of the coverboards described above. Species located last summer included Common Garter Snake, DeKay's Brownsnake, and Northern Watersnake. Other species previously observed by Nature Center staff include Gray Ratsnake and Eastern Milksnake. Use of the coverboards to monitor snake species residing at the Nature Center continues, which brings me back to that early April afternoon.

When I lifted the tin coverboard, I was hoping to find a garter snake. I had not seen one yet though there had been plenty of warm spring days to encourage their emergence from hibernation. To my surprise, there was a small snake neatly curled up on top of the dry grasses under the tin. My first thought was, "Oh, not a garter snake. But a brownsnake is a good find!" After picking up the little snake, I quickly realized I may have found something different.

The snake was about eight inches long with a body diameter like a pencil. It was a brownish color with faint markings on its back. The size and color triggered the memory of DeKay's brownsnakes I have seen around the Nature Center. But the belly of this snake was a brilliant orange-red color and that was very different than any brownsnake I had ever picked up before. I maneuvered my cell phone from my pocket and took several photos from various angles to review later when I could have a field guide in my hands.

After reviewing a field guide and several online resources, I was certain the little snake was a Northern Redbelly Snake. They are close relatives to the DeKay's Brownsnake which may explain their similar appearance. This was a new species for me and the Nature Center; how exciting! Further investigation about the

species indicated how infrequently it is encountered due to its secretive lifestyle under bark, logs, rocks, and leaf litter in the forest where they feed on slugs and earthworms. Furthermore, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources *Reptiles of Ohio Field Guide* shows the species has been documented in only 23 of Ohio's 88 counties. Stark County was not one of the 23 counties with a verified observation. We may have a first county record!

A few days later, a response from the Ohio Department Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife confirmed that the Nature Center's Northern Redbelly Snake was a first observation for Stark County, thus a new county record. I try to learn something new or find something new every day. Most of my new discoveries are things that I have not personally seen before but are well-known by others. Occasionally my observations are new to the Nature Center's database of plants or animals. It is uncommon to find something new for an entire county, so I feel like I have been rewarded for my personal curiosity three times over. Never stop exploring. You never know what you may find...it could be the next new county record!



Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center's Schedule of Events

Notice

These events may be canceled due to prescribed COVID-19 protocols and stay-at-home orders. If programs go on as scheduled, participation may be limited, and participants may be expected to wear a face covering and respect six feet of physical distance among other CDC and Ohio Department of Health guidelines.

June 22-28

National Pollinator Week

Stop by the Visitors Center during open hours to learn about pollinators and celebrate their free and essential pollination services. Free activities too! See page 5 of the newsletter for details.

Wednesday, June 24

***Breeding Bird Blitz 7-10 a.m.**

Over the last ten years, 81 species of birds have been recorded at the Nature Center during the breeding season. Join us for a leisurely walk around the Nature Center to see how many of these we can see/hear or add new species to the list. Bring binoculars. Canceled in event of rain or high winds. ***Registration is required. Attendance is limited.**

Sunday, June 28

***It's Not Just A Garden: Pollinator Habitat 2-4 p.m.**

You would be surprised by how much your outdoor space provides for pollinators already! We will discuss what you currently provide for pollinators (without even realizing it!), and simple steps you can take to make your outdoor space more pollinator-friendly. FREE seeds, plants, pollinator home and safe water dish will be available for those that want to add any or all of these to their own outdoor space. ***Registration is required and opens on Tuesday, June 2 at 9:00 a.m. Attendance is limited.**

Friday, July 3

***Firefly Hike 8-9:30 p.m.**

Fireflies should be at their peak of flashing this week. We will head outside to observe their behaviors, collect some individuals, and document how many species are living at the Nature Center. The information collected will help us to determine how well these interesting insects are doing in our area. Canceled for rain. ***Registration is required and limited.**

Wednesday, July 10

***Bat Roost Monitoring 8:30-10 p.m.**

Bats are a critical part of our ecosystem and an important component of the agricultural economy. As the main predator of night-flying insects in Ohio, bats keep insect populations in check and reduce impacts on humans. Unfortunately, bat numbers have drastically declined over the last few years. Bring a lawn chair and assist the staff in counting bats that

leave the roost in the Huston Barn. Bring a flashlight. Canceled for rain. ***Registration is required and limited.**

Sunday, July 12

***Summer Haiku Writing 2-4 p.m.**

Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry that describes nature in a short, three-lined observation. Come outside with us as we observe summertime at the Nature Center and share our haiku observations. No experience is necessary and all ages are welcome. ***Registration is required and limited. Register by July 10.**

Sunday, August 2

Summer BioBlitz 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

A bioblitz is an intense period of biological surveying to record all the living species within a designated area. Help us bioblitz the Nature Center and contribute data to our biodiversity project. This is a self-guided activity that only requires use of the iNaturalist app on your smart phone. See the article "Enjoying Nature In Your Backyard" on page 7 for a quick overview of the iNaturalist app. No registration required.

Saturday, September 19

***Shorebird Excursion 8-11 a.m.**

Every fall, thousands of shorebirds migrate through Ohio. The mud flats of nearby reservoirs are a great place to observe the birds. Several species may be seen including sandpipers, plovers, ducks, gulls and herons. We may be walking in muddy areas so please wear appropriate footwear. The location of the program will be determined a few days prior based on local conditions. ***Register for notification and directions to the site.**

Sunday, October 4

Relax and De-stress Event 1-5 p.m.

EVERYONE needs to manage their stress these days. Take advantage of some relaxing activities such as a free 10-minute shoulder massage, strolling through the peaceful woods, walking the labyrinth, relaxing by the pond, listening to live music and more. Come alone or bring the family – there is something for everyone! No registration required.

Saturday, October 10

The Big Sit! 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

It's a "tailgate party for birders" with the objective to tally as many bird species as can be seen or heard inside a 17-ft count circle. Last year we tallied 34 species from our lawn chairs at the North Woods! Join us for a couple of minutes or a couple of hours during this annual, international, noncompetitive birding event. No registration required.

Recurring Programs

Acoustic Jam

2-4 p.m. on June 7, July 5, Aug. 2, Sept. 6, Oct. 4

Join us at the Nature Center for a music jam. Bring an instrument or just come to listen. Beginners are welcome. Make new friends, have fun, and learn a new tune or two! No registration required.

Bird Banding with Al Eibel

8 a.m.-noon on Sept. 12, 26 and Oct. 10

See live, wild songbirds in the hand and learn why bird banding is an important tool for bird and wildlife conservation. Drop in any time between 8 a.m. and noon. Meet Al outside on the east side of the Visitors Center. Banding sessions canceled in the event of rain.

General Information

- All events begin at the Visitors Center and are held rain or shine unless otherwise indicated.
- Events marked with an asterisk (*) require registration. All other events are informal, open to adults and families, and are available without registration.

To register or inquire about events, call (330) 823-7487 or email naturecenter@mountunion.edu.

National Pollinator Week

Bonnie Twaddle

Pollinator Partnership is proud to announce that June 22-28, 2020 has been designated National Pollinator Week! National Pollinator Week is a time to celebrate pollinators and spread the word about what you can do to protect them. Twelve years ago, the U.S. Senate's unanimous approval and designation of a week in June as "National Pollinator Week" marked a necessary step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. Pollinator Week has now grown into an international celebration of the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles.

Stop by the Visitors Center during open hours June 22-28 to take items home that you can easily add to YOUR outdoor area to help improve pollinator habitat!



COVID-19 Impact on the Nature Center

Since March, proactive measures from the University of Mount Union, the Ohio Department of Health, and National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) have had their impact on the Nature Center's operations and outreach activities. The Nature Center is very fortunate to have the support of the University and the Brumbaugh Endowment to provide the resources needed to maintain facilities, grounds, and trails. Thanks to the vision and generosity of Dr. John D. Brumbaugh, the Nature Center is well positioned to navigate these trying times and to continue to provide a respite for the community.

Due to uncertainty related to future state orders and guidelines about COVID-19, our schedule of programs and events is limited for the summer months. When programs are permitted to resume this summer, they will be limited to outdoor settings, smaller group sizes, and participation will likely require use of a face covering and observance of physical distancing.

Though our community outreach has been limited, the Nature Center staff continue to be on site daily. We recognize that there has been an increase in visitation and trail use since the statewide restrictions were issued. Trail surface improvements have continued this spring to fix some wet and muddy areas. While we do our best to keep up with seasonal maintenance, we continue to ask our visitors to follow the trail rules and do their part to ensure a safe, courteous, and pleasant experience for all visitors and wildlife.

Nature Center research activities have and will continue, although student participation was halted. Dr. Stanton is monitoring vernal pool hydrology and researching the variety of native bees residing on the property. Bonnie is monitoring bird nest boxes and submitting data to Project Nestwatch. Adam is continuing to document the Nature Center's plants and animals by collecting observational and photographic evidence. Much of the wildlife and plant data are publicly available on eBird.org and iNaturalist.org if you are interested to see what we have documented so far. Interested individuals are welcome to add their observations to these data sets by using accompanying smart phone apps.

In lieu of formal programs this spring, we have increased our use of social media to share educational content. These materials can be found on our Facebook and Instagram pages. Videos are also hosted on the University's YouTube page. We encourage you to view and share this information if you find it of value. This material does not compare to the hands-on experiences we have traditionally offered, but it is something we can present under the current circumstances. We look forward to continuing to provide these resources and sharing the beauty of the Nature Center with you.

Photography Contest Awards

The 2020 Nature Photography Contest and Exhibit hosted by the Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center received and displayed 145 photo entries. Formal judging was completed prior to the gallery opening, and judges awarded ribbons for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Honorable Mention, and Best of Show. People's Choice ribbons were awarded based on 114 ballots from the public from February 28 through March 11. Congratulations to the photographers named below, and thank you to all of the participants that submitted photos and members of the community for casting ballots for this year's contest and exhibit.

Youth: 1st - John O'Donnell, 2nd - John O'Donnell, 3rd - Hailey Zorn, People's Choice - Hailey Zorn

Seasons: 1st - Gregory Mummert, 2nd - Matt Hoffman, 3rd - Bruce Begue, Honorable Mention - Amy O'Donnell, People's Choice - Matt Hoffman, Amy O'Donnell, Suzanne Lux

Wildlife (Vertebrates): 1st - Hannah Eller, 2nd - Bruce Hixon, 3rd - Michelle Wittensoldner, Honorable Mention - Bruce Hixon, Dan Heatherly, Michelle Wittensoldner, Scott Watkins, People's Choice - Michelle Wittensoldner

Wildlife (Invertebrates): 1st - Dan Lux, 2nd - Bill Roloff, 3rd - Michelle Wittensoldner, Honorable Mention - Linda Chen,

Michelle Wittensoldner, People's Choice - Dan Lux

Wild Plants: 1st - Dan Lux, 2nd - Suzanne Lux, 3rd - Linda Chen, Honorable Mention - Matt Hoffman, Patricia Rickard, People's Choice - Linda Chen

Landscapes: 1st - Matt Hoffman, 2nd - Dan Heatherly, 3rd - Dan Lux, Honorable Mention - Scott Watkins, Jr., People's Choice - Dan Lux

Black & White: 1st - Suzanne Lux, 2nd - Hannah Eller, 3rd - Dan Lux, People's Choice - Dan Lux

Nature Center: 1st - Marni Ayers, 2nd - Fran Hall, 3rd - Adrienne Bock, People's Choice - Fran Hall

UMU Campus: 1st - John Hill, 2nd - Christian Hanson, People's Choice - Rita Pollock

Open Category: 1st - Hannah Eller, 2nd - Hilda Mathis, Honorable Mention - Linda Chen, June Brown, People's Choice - Gregory Mummert

Best in Show: Dan Lux - Wildlife (Invertebrates) category

Summer Sustainability Tips – 10 Simple Things You Can Do to Protect the Earth

Jamie Greiner

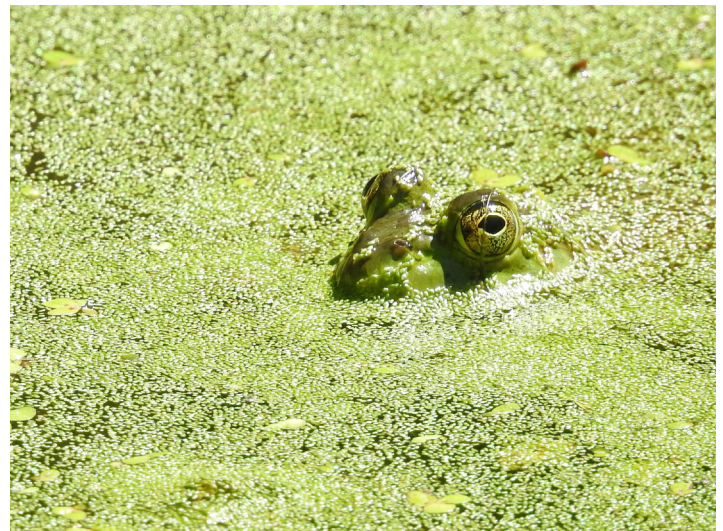
- 1. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle** - Cut down on what you throw away. Follow the three "R's" to conserve natural resources and landfill space.
 - a. Ditch the straw - In the season of iced tea and lemonade, it's time to get serious about that extra harmful additive – the plastic straw. Use a glass, metal, or silicone straw.
 - b. Use a BPA-free reusable water bottle - Keep hydrated but not with endless plastic water bottles.
- 2. Grill Green** - Who doesn't love a good BBQ? Propane burns much cleaner than either wood or charcoal briquettes. If you can't resist charcoal, try a natural product like Cowboy Charcoal.
- 3. Shop Wisely** - Buy less plastic and bring a reusable shopping bag. Remember to visit your Local Farmer's Market.
- 4. Sun Dry** - Instead of running the dryer and wasting energy, take advantage of the warm weather, sunny skies, and summer breeze by air drying your clothes outside on a line.
- 5. Conserve Water** - The less water you use, the less runoff and wastewater that eventually end up in the ocean. Collect rainwater in a rain barrel to use in your garden.
- 6. Keeping your Home Cool** - If AC is necessary, pick a unit that is energy-efficient. Close your blinds (especially on south-facing windows) to reduce the need for an AC. Set your thermostat at a higher temperature during the day when no one is home.
- 7. Use LED bulbs** - Energy efficient light bulbs reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also, take advantage of natural light

and always flip the light switch off when you leave the room.

8. Plant a Tree - Trees provide food and oxygen. They help save energy, clean the air, and help combat climate change.

9. Bike More. Drive Less.

10. Leave your Destination Better than you Found it - When you are out camping, hiking, and enjoying nature, clean up after yourself before you leave. Follow the principles of "Leave No Trace."



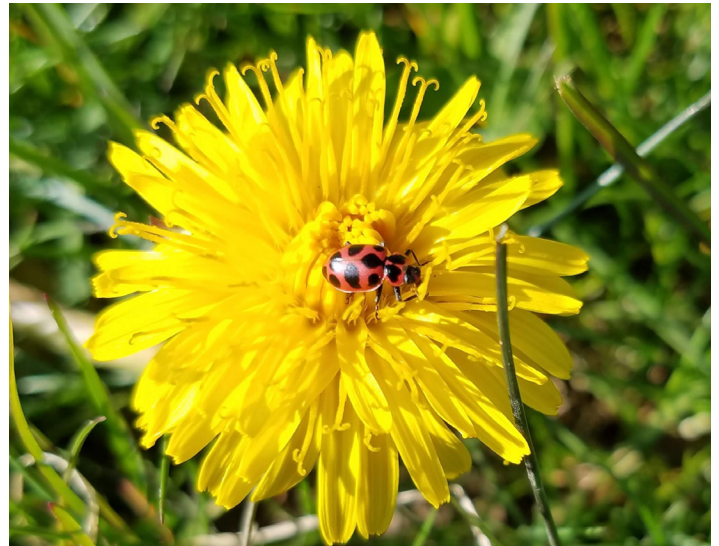
Enjoying Nature in Your Backyard

Adam Zorn

Everyone has spent a lot of time at home over the past few months. We have been at home for more time than we may have ever expected before the onset of COVID-19 protocols, school closures, business closures, and travel restrictions. Like everyone else, I spent most of the first two weeks of the transition working at home figuring out how to balance work life and home life. As the new routine became more routine, I began to look for ways to maintain my connection with nature in some way, form, or fashion that resembled the connection I had at the Nature Center.

Spending time outside is great for people of all ages. There are physical, emotional, and psychological benefits for everyone from children to adults. Contact with nature is important, so how do we maintain that connection in a world where we are asked to stay at home to flatten the curve? Nature is everywhere: outside your home, on your home, in your home. Find a place where you can see it, hear it, feel it. It might be in a chair near a window, on the steps of a porch, in a driveway, on a sidewalk, in a lawn. Find a spot where you can see the sun, feel the breeze, and hear the sounds of the season.

You made it outdoors, so now what? As little as 20-30 minutes of time outside has its benefits. Take a seat, relax, and repeat daily. Need something else to do? Read a book, take a nap, stretch, or eat a meal outside. If you need something less sedentary to do, take a walk around your home or go for a walk around your neighborhood. If you need something to do while you walk, try to keep track of how many kinds of birds, insects, trees, flowers, or other organisms you can find during your walk. You do not have to know the names of everything you find to compare them and decide if you find something new. If curiosity needles you to know the names of the things you find, there are some great resources available for smart phones, tablets, and computers. Many of the newest apps and websites have features that utilize artificial intelligence and computer learning to help identifying creatures that are unfamiliar to you.



My favorite app (and website) is iNaturalist. Both the app and website are easy to navigate, upload photos, and view your submitted observations. The help section is very good for anyone who needs help with any of the platform's features. Not only can the app or website help you identify the object of your photo, other iNaturalist users can assist with identification as well. All life forms on planet Earth are supported, so you can get that plant, insect, bird, or any other known organism identified if the photo is adequately clear.

A similar app is Seek by iNaturalist. It works very similarly to iNaturalist, however identifications can be made right on the screen of your phone without needing to take a picture. It basically turns the camera of your phone into a dynamic field guide using the artificial intelligence of iNaturalist. There is no registration required to use the app, location data is obscured, and no data is stored in the app or sent to iNaturalist, all of which make this a great app for kids, families, and anyone exploring in the privacy of their backyard.

Enjoying nature in your backyard is a great way to get acquainted with the common organisms living with us, to spend time with your family, and to improve your well-being.

Volunteer Recognition

We extend a sincere thank you to our December, January, February and March Volunteers! Our outstanding Volunteer staff assists us in maintaining high-quality programming and a beautiful facility. Thank you for all that you do!

Linda Bezbatchenko
Adrienne Bock
Phyllis Case
Mark Clough
Fred Cockrill
Shirley DeMaiolo

Elayne Dunlap
Al Eibel
Jane Heater
Ann Hendel
Paul Hobe

Amy Hosking
Kevin Kern
Tom Liggett
Chris Marks
Kate McMahon

Sarah McMahon
Blanche Moore
Carter Poe
Rachel Poe
Ben Stanton

Sarah Stanton
Ann Sutton
Rich Sutton
Brenna Walker
Carol Wearstler

SPECIAL THANKS! Additional gratitude is extended to Rock Salt and Nails for providing music and sing-a-longs for our Holiday Celebration in December. Once again, we thank the Canton Audubon Society for helping with this year's Great Backyard Bird Count.



The John T. Huston-Dr. John D.
Brumbaugh Nature Center
1972 Clark Ave.
Alliance, OH 44601

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 218
Alliance, Ohio

Discover the Wonder of Nature's Ever-Changing Story

Visitors Center and Bird Observatory Hours

April through October
Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday, 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays

November through March
Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays and Saturdays

Our trails are open from dawn to dusk every day.

**The Nature Center is located six miles south of
the University of Mount Union on Daniel Street, just off Route 183**



Contact us at:

Phone: (330) 823-7487

Email: naturecenter@mountunion.edu
mountunion.edu/nature-center