

AROUND THE BOG



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OWL SPOTTING

There are eleven species of owls to look for in the state. Spotting owls can be tricky since most species are not active during the day. And owls, by nature, are shy and elusive creatures.

Our feature article on page 2, by renowned birder and nature author Scot Stewart, examines the owls found in the Upper Peninsula. Check out the owl hunting field trip in the Calendar.



Great Horned Owl



Northern Saw-whet Owl

THE ELUSIVE OWL

GETTING PERSONAL WITH MAJESTY

OWLS IN THE UPPER PENINSULA

Article and photos by Scot Stewart

Winter months keep many inside the house, especially at night. Nighttime, though, may be the best time to check for owls in the neighborhood. During winter the calls of two year-round owls, the barred and great horned, can break the silence of a cold night. Both have strong calls and may be calling to stake out their territory for nesting during the latter part of winter.

All told, there are eleven owls known to be seen in Michigan, but their appearances are very different.

The rarest is the barn owl, known to appear only occasionally in the southern Lower Peninsula. Eastern screech owls occur across most of the eastern U.S., except for Maine, and there are occasional reports of them in the southern tier of central U.P. counties.

Northern hawk owls and boreal owls live year-round across most of Canada and Alaska in aspen-jack pine forests. The former are day-hunting owls, seen a little more commonly in winter in the U.P., mostly in the eastern counties. But they have appeared in the Chassell area and recently in Marquette's old compost area off Lakeshore Boulevard.

OWLS IN THE U.P. (cont.)

The boreal owls are much rarer here, despite their range extending down through the northern half of the Rocky Mountains. Snowy owls spend their summers in the tundra of Canada and Alaska and wander south when lemmings and other rodents grow scarce there. Summers with good lemming production are often the ones producing the largest number of young owls that head south when they have reduced those prey numbers.

Northern saw-whet owls are relatively common, small owls of the U.P. They live in places like cedar swamps hunting mice and insects alike. Short-eared owls are frequently found in grasslands and open fields, mostly in the eastern U.P. Long-eared owls are citizens of the conifer forests. All three are more common in summer and are apt to migrate southward in winter.



Great Gray Owl

The largest owls of the U.P. are great horned, barred, and great grays. All do nest in the U.P. but great grays are quite rare, nesting in the Seney area and Chippewa County in recent years. Great horned and barred owls are common in the Marquette area, and both are more often heard than seen in the city limits. They are the owls that actually hoot, unlike most of the others.

Owls are important parts of their biological communities as predators of insects, rabbits and rodents, like mice and voles. Their hearing is excellent and allows them to be effective hunters for prey in the dark and under the snow. Because of their mostly nocturnal habits, they are more frequently heard than seen, unless spotted by a murder of noisy crows. The sound of owls though adds a special magic to the night. Visit Cornell's *All About Birds* website (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>) to see maps, hear sounds and learn more.

Around the Bog is a publication of the MooseWood Nature Center located at Presque Isle Park in Marquette, Michigan.

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HIBERNATION

SURVIVAL IN THE NORTH

Article and photo by Carl Wozniak

In 1924 A. A. Milne, wrote a poem about a chubby bear who was upset about his weight. That bear eventually became *Winnie the Pooh*, the charismatic and cuddly yellow fuzzball entertaining almost a century of young readers. Chubbiness in northern mammals is a common sight in autumn, and it serves a purpose. It helps these critters survive the cold of winter. However, survival for some takes more than extra mass, and nature has developed a way to help.

Hibernation is an annual rite for many animals, from insects to groundhogs. It's a time when animals go dormant, and it aids survival during extended adverse weather conditions, where temperatures may be extreme and food resources limited. For many hibernating animals, internal metabolism might be reduced to less than five percent of normal, so a small mammal that normally has a heart rate of 300 beats per minute in summer may have only 10 or 15 in hibernation.

Hibernation is very different from sleep... even deep sleep. Brain function is reduced to essentially nothing and breaths may occur only every 10 minutes. But most mammal hibernators don't stay in their comatose state all winter. They occasionally wake to eat and eliminate.

"A bear, however hard he tries,
grows tubby without exercise."

–*Teddy Bear*, A. A. Milne

Animals store food they've eaten as fat prior to hibernating. The fat is used to keep low-level bodily functions going during hibernation. Smaller mammals also hoard food for their waking times.

Lumbering obese raccoons and scurrying jowly chipmunks are common late fall sights in the northern forest, as are occasional sightings of chunky non-yellow bears. These aren't "unfit" animals at all, but rather just the opposite. They represent the culmination of millennia of physical and social adaptations that ensure survival of the species.



Eastern Chipmunk

AROUND THE FEEDER

WINTER VISITORS TO THE CENTER

Article and photos by Scot Stewart

Planning a trip to MooseWood Nature Center, or a birding expedition in town? Check out the bird feeders next to the Center at Presque Isle Park. A large feeding station attracts a great diversity of birds throughout the year. During the winter months, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and black-capped chickadees are regulars. Hairy, red-bellied and pileated woodpeckers usually begin calling before they get to the suet, providing a heads-up to their arrival.

Ground feeders like wild turkeys may join dark-eyed juncos, and red and gray squirrels to sweep up spilled seed below. Winter finches, like American goldfinches, are common, and the much rarer hoary redpolls begin to move in as winter becomes more challenging for seed eaters. Toward the end of winter pine and evening grosbeaks may stop by on their way to summer nesting ranges.



Hoary Redpoll

Because of the frequent human visitors to the Center, most of the birds coming to the feeders are relative tame, including the pileated woodpeckers, providing excellent viewing opportunities that may be appreciated most by children seeing them for the first time at close range. So stop by and enjoy their visits.



Hairy Woodpecker



Pileated Woodpecker

2023 PHOTO CONTEST

NEW COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

The MooseWood Nature Center invites amateur photographers to enter our 2023 Nature Photo Contest.

First through third place winners will be selected in two separate categories and age levels.

The categories for this year's contest are:

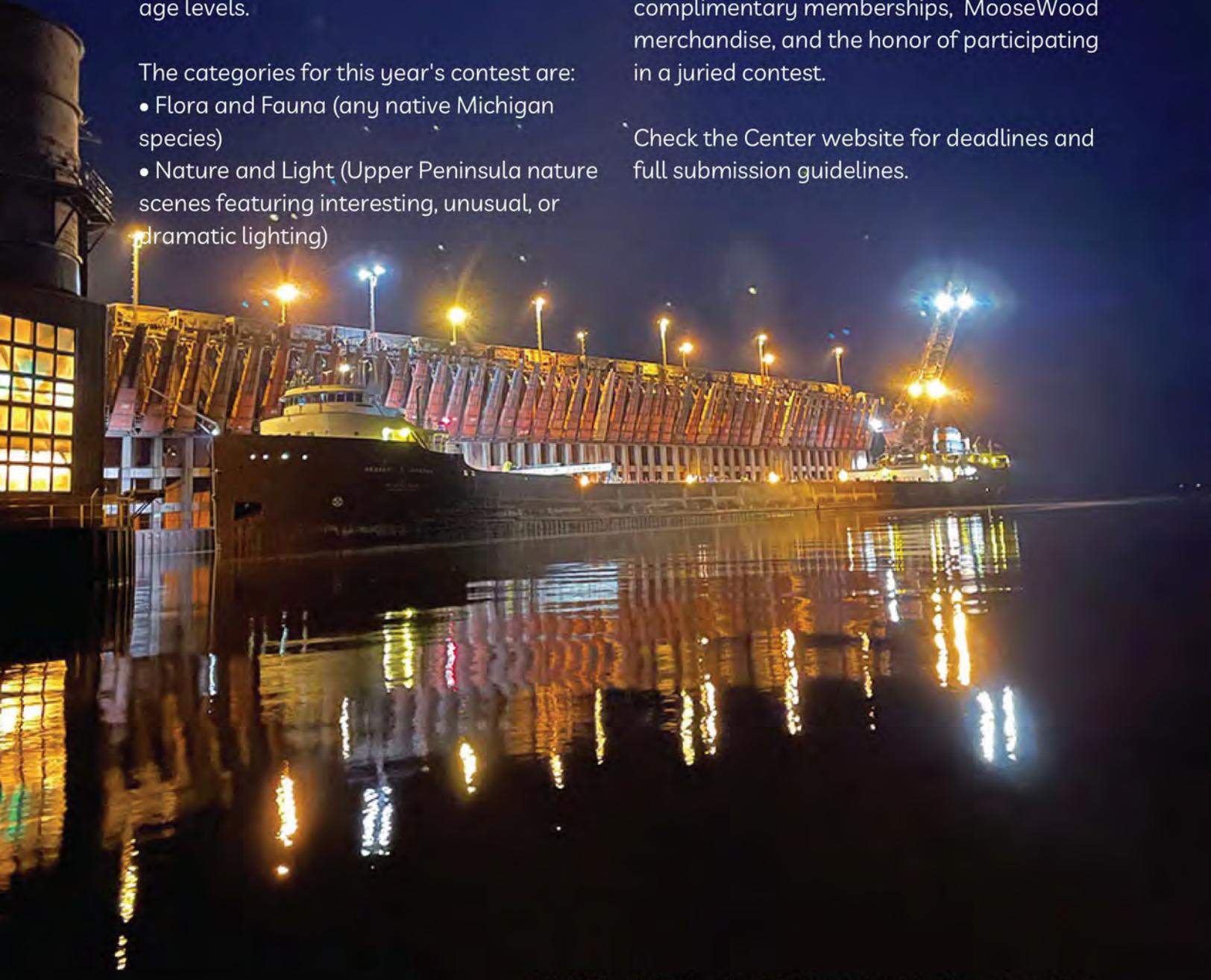
- Flora and Fauna (any native Michigan species)
- Nature and Light (Upper Peninsula nature scenes featuring interesting, unusual, or dramatic lighting)

Age groups are:

- Elementary and middle school
- High school and beyond

Contestants will vie for cash prizes, complimentary memberships, MooseWood merchandise, and the honor of participating in a juried contest.

Check the Center website for deadlines and full submission guidelines.



Nightlife at the Ore Dock, 2020-21 Best in Show, Anna Nagy

CALENDAR

MooseWood Nature Center is open to the public Saturdays and Sundays from noon until 4:00 P.M. See below for special events.

In Search of Evening Owls

Friday, January 13, 6:00 P.M.

Members and friends are invited to join us for a presentation and winter walk to explore wild owls in Marquette.

Bird enthusiast and nature photographer Scot Stewart leads the session with a brief introduction to owls followed by car pooling from the Center to off-site location(s) where owls have recently been active. We will call to the owls and listen for their replies.

This program is recommended for adults and families. Please dress for the weather. Please register by Thursday, January 12.

Winter Bird Adaptations and Pine Cone Craft

Sunday, January 29, 2:00 P.M.

Are you astonished at the wide variety of winter birds that visit your feeders even on the coldest days? Do birds get cold? There are many superb adaptations that allow our flighted friends to survive the coldest UP winters.

After reading a short children's book about winter birds and exploring bird cold-weather survival, participants will create pine cone feeders to take home. This program is recommended for adults and families. Please dress for the weather. Please register by January 28.

Suggested donation for the programs is \$5 for adults and \$10 for families.

Register via email at moosewoodnc@gmail.com.

Check the MooseWood website or Facebook page for last-minute programs.



Photo by Brett McQuarter

Cans for Critters

During open hours

Please consider supporting the care and feeding of the Center's animals by donating your returnable cans and plastic bottles. These can be dropped off at the front door at the Center located on Peter White Drive, Presque Isle Park in Marquette during open hours only.

CALENDAR (cont.)

Storytime at MooseWood Nature Center

Saturday, February 4, 10:00-11:00 A.M.

Saturday, February 18, 2:00-3:00 P.M.

Looking for a fun family activity? Join us for storytime at the MooseWood Nature Center. Enjoy a relaxing time with a seasonal or animal themed nature story and craft. Recommended for ages 3-8, but all are welcome.

Check the MooseWood website or Facebook page for specific story topics and crafts.

To support the nature center, suggested donations are \$5/child or \$10/family. Registration is not required, but appreciated. Please send an email to moosewoodnc@gmail.com with the number of people planning to attend.

FIELD TRIP

EBEN ICE CAVES

If you're looking for a great way to spend a winter afternoon with a little exercise consider a trip to the Eben Ice Caves outside of Eben Junction east of Marquette. In winter, water trickling down the cliff face freezes and forms beautiful cascades of ice.

The hike to the cave is energetic, with some steep, slippery climbs. Consequently, ice cleats on your boots are really essential equipment.

Jesse Land of *Things to do in the U.P.* has authored an excellent guide to the caves, including driving instructions, at <https://www.michigan.org/article/trip-idea/exploring-eben-ice-caves-michigans-upper-peninsula>.



Photo by Carl Wozniak

FUN FOR ALL

COLOR ME



2021 PHOTO CONTEST

A SELECTION OF WINNING ENTRIES



Flower Fly, Jennifer Barring



Sunset on Teal Lake, Matt Schroderus



Sleepy Snowy Owl, Melanie Nibbling



Windy Day, Josie Becker

Published with artists' permission. Next issue: Spring images.

To share your photos for future editions send them to moosewoodnc@gmail.com.

MooseWood Nature Center Membership

The MooseWood Nature Center at Presque Isle in Marquette, Michigan provides members and visitors with animal encounters and nature-related activities, programs, and contests. Your membership helps support the care and feeding of Center animals, educational talks and field trips, and provides the funds to keep the Center operating.

Benefits of Membership

- Advanced notice of activities
- Electronic newsletter
- Special rates for fee services
- 15% discount on merchandise

Memberships are for the calendar year. Please renew your membership now.

MooseWood Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Basic Membership Levels (select your choice)

- New member
 - Renewal member

- \$15 Student (Jr. High, High School, NMU)
- \$20 Individual
- \$25 Family

Supporting Membership Please consider becoming a supporting member to further the mission of MooseWood.

- \$50 Aspen
- \$100 Birch
- \$500 Cedar
- \$1,000 Pine
- \$2,500 Oak
- \$5,000 Maple
- \$10,000 Striped Maple

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Print and mail to:

MooseWood Nature Center, PO Box 773, Marquette, MI 49855

Or join online at <http://moosewood.org/membership-3>