



Fair Hill Nature & Environmental Center

habitats

Spring 1994

Fair Hill Environmental Foundation, Inc.

Vol. 5 No. 1

Are You Ready For Spring?

After a busy summer and fall, the Nature Center has been quiet for a few months, patiently weathering the ice and snow and cold, watching over the marsh and creek, the woods and rolling meadows of Fair Hill Natural Resources Area. Like all of us, perhaps the hunting lodge is also anxiously looking for signs of spring, but in its own way—sunlight that warms slate roof tiles, soft breezes that flow through open windows, and the sound of excited and enthusiastic students hopping off school buses, ready to explore and learn within its walls, and out in nature's classrooms.

Though the Nature Center itself has been in hibernation, the staff, board members, and various committees have been busily planning for the coming months.

Nature School

In early March Holly Hannum, Education Director, along with educators Doris Anderson, Janet Hokuff and Karen Aspinwall, will be training 45 Cecil County first grade school teachers in the use of the Regional Environmental Education Program (R.E.E.P.) curriculum as part of a grant provided by the Pennsylvania Electric Company. Funding from this grant also provides all Cecil County first grade students with a free field trip to the Nature Center in the fall of 1994.

Late winter also is the time when the entire education staff, which includes Erlene Michener and Katie Fitzgerald as well as the instructors named above, develops new curriculum, clears the nature trails and prepares to open the Center

doors for its spring semester. All second, third and fourth graders from the county, as well as several out-of-state and private school groups, are scheduled to visit throughout the coming spring months, and the calendar is just about full!

Members Programs

The Board of Directors has made it a priority to expand programming for members and the general public this year, even though budgets are lean and staffing is low. A calendar inside this newsletter describes the programs scheduled for March, April, and May. Though planning is already underway for the summer and fall, we would like to know the kinds of programs you would be interested in attending. Please help us plan with you in mind by filling out and sending in the enclosed survey. We look forward to seeing you at the Nature Center soon!



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Froggy Weather Ahead

Adapted from *Understory*, the newsletter of the Irvine Natural Science Center, Vol. 18, No. 2, with permission of the author, Sandy Glover

When the first warm rains of spring arrive, it's time to listen for the evening music of frogs and toads. They have spent winter under leaves and logs, underground and underwater, some with their bodies partially frozen. Now they are awakening to Nature's call to reproduce.



Spring peeper

Most of us are familiar with the lovely chorus of the spring peepers—tiny frogs whose voices carry for 1/2 a mile. During peak breeding days, they will sing day and night, living on stored fat reserves, for there is little a frog can eat this early in the season.

Toads breed during a two-week period in April. Follow their soft trilling calls to temporary and permanent ponds and you will find a mating frenzy. Toad eggs are unmistakable: long double strands containing thousands of tiny black eggs.



American Toad

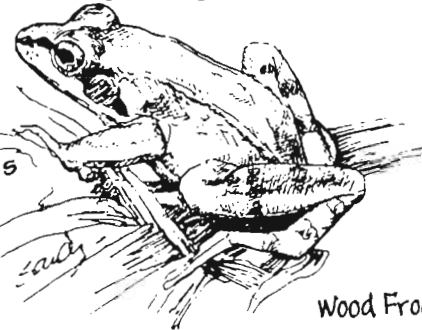


eggs + tadpoles

Gray treefrog voices can be heard in the evenings from April-August. It is said that they sound like a loud cat's purr, only more musical. Treefrogs migrate, calling all the while, from the trees to pools of water, just before rain storms. Eggs are laid singly or in small clusters on plants at the water's surface. Treefrog tadpoles hatch in 2-3 days, are very tiny with orangish tails.



Woodfrogs are our most terrestrial of frogs. They've developed long legs and extraordinary leaping skills. The woodfrog's range extends into the Arctic Circle. Their short breeding season is marked by loud "quacking" as frogs gather at temporary woodland ponds.



Wood Frog

Leopard Frog



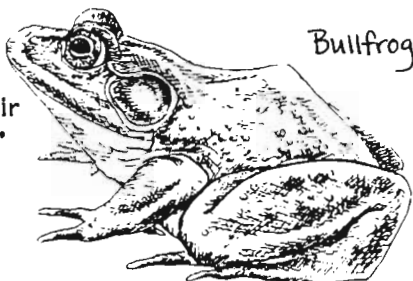
Leopard and pickerel frogs have many similarities but the former breeds in March, the latter in May. Both may be found hunting in meadows far from water.



Pickerel Frog

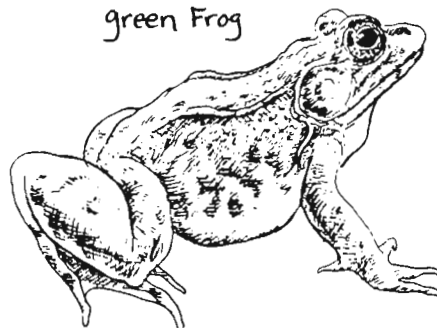
Bull and green frogs are more aquatic than most frogs, sometimes lying on the bottom of the pond or lake for many days. The tadpoles mature slowly, some not until their second or third summer.

Bullfrogs don't breed until late May to June. Their deep "jug-a-rum" calls are heard throughout the summer.



Bullfrog

Green Frog



Green frogs begin breeding much earlier than bullfrogs. Their voices sound like the plucking of a rubber band.

SPRING PROGRAMS AT FAIRHILL NATURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

Take a family field trip to the Nature Center this spring! There is limited enrollment for these programs, so be sure to register early! If you register for a program but cannot attend, please contact Karen Aspinwall at the number below so that we may fill your space with a name on the waiting list.

REGISTRATION

Advance registration and pre-payment are required for all programs. Call **Karen Aspinwall, Program Coordinator, at 398-8082** before the specified registration deadline to insure a space; and please contact her if your plans change and you can no longer attend.

CANCELLATION

Outdoor programs may be canceled because of inclement weather. In marginal weather, verification may be made by calling 398-8082 one hour before the scheduled program time. If minimum registration is not met, those who have registered will be notified.

FEES

Members are entitled to a discounted program fee for all programs, and several free programs throughout the year. To take advantage of these opportunities, become a member! Ask for a membership form when you register for programs. Program fees are listed under the descriptions below.

LOCATION

Except for bus excursions, which will depart from a downtown location, or unless otherwise indicated, all programs begin at the Nature Center. Please arrive on time!



MARCH

SAT. 5

BLUEBIRDS COME HOME! 10:00 A.M. TO 12 NOON

Learn about bluebirds and help one find a home in your backyard in this hands-on workshop. A video and artifacts will introduce you to the natural history of bluebirds and how to recognize a bluebird nest and eggs. After building one to take home, hike out to examine bluebird houses around the Nature Center and learn how to place and keep them clean. Children under 12 must be accompanied by a parent.

Leader: Jerry Newman

Registration Deadline: March 1

Cost: \$4.00 Members/\$6.00 Non-members

SAT. 26

NATURE SONGS AND STORIES WITH TOM & CATHIE VINCENT

3 P.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

Join professional songwriter/singer Tom and storyteller Cathie for an entertaining and educational program featuring wild animals seen in your backyard and exotic species from around the world. Their unique blend of environmental songs, nature stories, and fables delight children of all ages.

Registration Deadline: March 23

Cost: \$3.00 Members/\$5.00 Non-members

APRIL

SAT. 30

THE GREENING TIME 10 A.M. TO 12 NOON

Investigate the natural world and ways to care for it during the freshest time of year. Participants will hike out in search of spring animals and early flowers, and create useful treasures out of trash from home. Children under 12 must be accompanied by a parent.

Leader: Karen Aspinwall

Registration Deadline: April 20

Cost: \$2.00 Members/\$4.00 Non-members

SAT. 30

THE CHESAPEAKE BAY CONNECTION 2 P.M. TO 4 P.M.

The water quality of Cecil County rivers and streams affects the overall health of our downstream "neighbor," the Chesapeake Bay. Discover where Cecil County streams and rivers come from and learn how to analyze the health of a stream by testing the waters of the Big Elk Creek. Participants will also collect and identify typical animals found in our local waters.

Leader: Karen Aspinwall

Registration Deadline: April 20

Cost: \$2.00 Members/\$4.00 Non-members

MAY

SAT. 7

EARLY MORNING BIRD WALK 7:30 A.M. TO 9:30 A.M.

Enjoy the beauty of a spring morning as we search for resident and migrating birds in the woods and hedgerows of the Natural Resource Area. Following the walk, all "early birds" will be treated to a continental breakfast at the Nature Center.

Leaders: Charlie Gant and Gary Griffith

Registration Deadline: May 4

Cost: Members FREE/\$2.00 Non-members.

SAT. 14

RAINDATE FOR EARLY MORNING BIRD WALK

SAT. 21

A DAY AT THE BEACH 7 A.M. TO 6 P.M.

Travel by motorcoach to Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware for an unusual day at the beach. While there you will witness the extraordinary horseshoe crab mating ritual and participate in a horseshoe crab census and tagging program conducted by the University of Delaware Marine Advisory Service. We'll also collect and identify common Mid-Atlantic animals, beachcomb for "treasures" and play some sandy games! Price includes bus transportation, pre-trip info packet and activity book. BYO lunch—we'll supply drinks and snacks. Pre-payment is required to hold your reservation.

Leader: Karen Aspinwall

Registration Deadline: April 15

Cost: \$23.00 Members/\$28.00 Non-members

Help Our Wildlife--Back Our Bay

Check Line 63 On Your Maryland State Income Tax Form

Thanks to grant writing efforts of Cecil County teachers and the Nature Center staff, half of the \$4.00 program fee for most of this school year's visiting students has been generously paid for by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Where does the Trust get its money to fund education programs like those offered at the Fair Hill Nature Center? Most of it comes from the thousands of Marylanders who take advantage of Line 63 on the Maryland State Income Tax Form. Checkoff donations are divided evenly between the

Trust's Bay restoration grants program and DNR's protection programs for nongame and endangered species. Since its inception in 1989 over \$5 million has been raised through the tax checkoff. When you check off Line 63 you are not only helping the Trust fund over 800 programs statewide, but you are also helping us reach Cecil County students with quality environmental programs. Please continue to support these efforts by checking off on Line 63 at tax time!

I'd like to: become a member of the Fair Hill Nature and Environmental Center renew my membership
 \$20 individual \$25 Family \$50 Nonprofit Group

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____

Please make check payable to:
Fair Hill Environmental Foundation, Inc.
Mail to: 630 Tawes Drive, Elkton, MD 21921
Your membership is tax deductible.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY: PROGRAMS FOR MEMBERS

What kinds of programs would you like to see offered by the Nature Center? Check off all that interest you below, and add any that you don't see. Please send to: Karen Aspinwall, Programs Coordinator, Fair Hill Nature Center, 630 Tawes Drive, Elkton, Maryland 21921. *Thank you!*

- Children's programs
 - (ages 3-5) (ages 6-8) (ages 9-12) (young adult)
- Adult programs
- Lectures
- Family-oriented programs
- Naturalist-led nature walks
- Excursions to other places of interest (include any specific locations)
- Camp-overs
 - Children only Family-oriented
- Other: _____

Topics of interest: _____

- Art Astronomy Biology
- Botany Citizen action Conservation
- Geology Natural history Nature crafts
- Specific topics: _____

Planning weekend programs around all the other activities children are involved in is challenging. Please check off below the time(s) and days which would be most convenient for your child (children) to attend a 1 1/2 to 2 hour program at the Nature Center.

- A.M. (for example, 10-12 noon) P.M. (for example, 1-3, or 2-4)
- Saturdays Sunday afternoons

habitats community

Generous financial support from the following individuals and organizations in 1993 has been instrumental in the continued success of the Nature Center. A grateful thanks to all from the staff and Board of Directors.

Charles E. Adelman, Inc.
John and Joyce Bowlsbey
Reid Cameron
Dorothy and Jim Campbell
Cecil Federal Savings Bank
Cecilton Lions Club
Chesapeake City VFW
The Chichester Foundation
Conowingo Power Co.
County Banking and Trust Co.
The DuPont Co.
Caroline DuPont
Patsy DuPont
Mrs. Richard C. DuPont
Leon Ewing
Fair Hill Auto Center
Sam and Judy Fletcher
Charles and Jane Gant
Joyce and Dick Hall
Betty Moor
N'tl Assoc. of Retired Fed.
Employees, Chapter 1522
North East Builders Club
Peoples Bank of Elkton
Philadelphia Electric Co.
Patsy and Louie Richardson
Soil Conservation Service
Thiokol Corporation
Fran and Ralph Young
Arthur and Charlotte Worthington

A special thanks also to those who have donated time, energy and materials to the Nature Center:

Community Service students from Elkton High School, under the direction of Cindy Harrington, for making our boot box, fence gate and library shelving.

Community Service students from Rising Sun High School, for various outdoor projects.

Steve Lucas and his Boy Scout troop, for repairing bridges.

Ed Walls, Manager of Fair Hill NRMA, and his staff, for road improvements, ground maintenance, and responding to our occasional calls for help!

Office Volunteers Suzanne Delano Dunn and Diane Thompson

Members Program Instructors Charlie Gant, Jerry Newman, Parke John, Bob Willmann, Seth McCauley

And of course, a hearty thank you to all of our members, who support the Center through annual membership dues!

Fair Hill Environmental Foundation, Inc.

630 Tawes Drive, Elkton, MD 21921

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Is it time to renew? Please check mailing label for membership expiration date.