



BEREA COLLEGE FORESTRY OUTREACH CENTER

May 2020 Friends of the Forest Newsletter--Part 1



May Migration

Warblers and Thrushes and Grouse, Oh My!

Migratory songbirds are the sight to see and songs to hear in May. Many warblers can be seen passing through as they head even further north to their summer grounds. Thrushes, tanagers, orioles, and humming birds can also be seen returning to their old Kentucky homes...

Berea is a hotspot for birdwatching thanks to our responsible forest and watershed management. Through the use of selective "worst-first" harvest using horses instead of heavy machinery, and the use of prescribed fire to thin out the understory, we are actively improving the habitat for wildlife. The Pinnacles and the habitat around Owsley Fork Reservoir support almost 200 bird species seen throughout the year, with many nesting in the spring.

Cerulean Warblers have been heard singing in several locations in the Berea College Forest. These little sky blue birds typically nest in the Appalachian Mountains. They prefer to nest in large mature trees with an open understory. Due to surface mining, clear cutting and poor forest management practices throughout their breeding range Cerulean Warbler populations have declined 70% since the 1960's. They are currently listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened and Endangered Species and their population continues to decline. We are excited about the possibility that these birds are nesting in our forest and serving as an indicator that our forest management practices are creating valuable habitat for wildlife.



The Forestry Outreach Center and the College trails are currently CLOSED.

Follow us on our social media for fun, educational posts as well as the most accurate, up-to-date information.

We hope you're enjoying the solace nature can provide.



Berea College Forestry Outreach Center



@bereacollegefoc



Citizen Science Project: Biodiversity of the Berea College Forest



Seek app by iNaturalist, great I.D. tool for kids and families

<https://forestryoutreach.berea.edu/>

Anting Antics

Interesting Bird Behavior

Do you ever see a bird doing an unusual movement? Or do you hear them making odd sounds? Birds are complex critters that are intriguing to watch if you stop and look. Here are a few bird behaviors we find interesting!

Anting: A bird will rub itself with insects like ants or millipedes either by rolling in them or using their beaks to rub the insect on their bodies. This might have many benefits: adds formic acid (insecticide, fungicide, miticide, bactericide) to feathers, supplements bird's preen oil, makes insects more edible by removing the acid



Play: It has been documented that multiple bird species behave in ways that seem playful. Among the most playful are common ravens that can be seen somersaulting in the air and using sticks as "toys."

Nest building: Did you know that different bird species have nests so distinct that a skilled eye may be able to tell who built which nest? Preferences in material, shape, nest location, and timing are all clues!

Share with Us!

As you spend time outdoors, if you take pictures, write, or just experience nature, we would love to hear about it! Send us a direct message or post on social media and tag us! We will feature wildlife pictures in our upcoming newsletters or Instagram and yours could be one of them!

Also, if you have any questions about what you're seeing, email our Naturalist at john_abrams@bera.edu

Wildlife Spotlight



From Our Staff:

What we're reading

Nature-Based Therapy: A Practitioner's Guide to Working Outdoors with Children, Youth, and Families by Nevin J. Harper, Kathryn Rose, and David Segal "addresses [the] disconnection between humans and their ecological home, exploring theories and therapeutic practices undertaken with children, youth, and families." (Goodreads)

What we're watching

"Takayna/Tarkine in northwestern Tasmania is home to one of the last tracts of old-growth rainforest in the world...this documentary unpacks the complexities of modern conservation and challenges us to consider the importance of our last wild places." (Amazon)



Night Skies Over the Pinnacles

Much is happening in the skies over the Pinnacles in May. This month we'll be treated to two celestial dances by the planets and an introduction to a nearby planet that you've probably never even seen...Mercury! If you have binoculars, you even will have a chance to catch a comet!

May 3-5: Eta Aquariid Meteor Shower

mid-May: Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter visible

May 15: Venus appears larger and crescent shaped

May 21: Mercury visible

For the May moon phases and more info on all of these events and how to view them on our website, thanks to Jeff Hutton:

<https://forestryoutreach.bera.edu/skies-above-the-pinnacles/>

