

Kickapoo Valley Reserve

SPRING UPDATE

2024

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

ONLINE CANVAS AUCTION

ONLINE AUCTION CLOSES MARCH 24TH AT 5PM

Celebrating the Night Sky
2024 Theme:
Nocturnal



Canvas # 24195



Canvas # 24295



Canvas # 24203

INSIDER TOPICS

4 & 5 - EDUCATION CORNER

8 & 9 - FEATURED EVENTS

10 & 11 - CELEBRATING THE NIGHT SKY

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT KVR

- MARCH 19** | Spring Equinox
- NOW - MAR. 24** | **Ends at 5pm** - Creative Communities Canvas Online Auction
- MAR. 21** | **6pm** - KRMB Meeting
- APR. 2-8** - International Dark Sky Week
- APR. 3, 10, 17, 24** - Homeschool Workshops
- APR. 5, 12, 19, 26** - Forest Fridays
- APR. 8** | **9am** - Finance Committee
- APR. 11** | **5:30pm** - Ed & Tourism Meeting
- APR. 15 - JULY 31** - All dogs must be on leash during bird nesting season
- APR. 18** | **6pm** - KRMB Meeting
- APR. 20** - Earth Day Celebration
- APR. 20-27** - Garlic Mustard Gathering
- APR. 20-27** - Annual Roadside Clean-up
- APR. 27** | **11am** - Driftless Dialogue: Invasive Jumping Worms
- MAY 1** - Equestrian & Bike Trails Open (weather permitting)
- MAY 1, 8, 15, 22** - Homeschool Workshops
- MAY 3, 10, 17, 24** - Forest Fridays
- MAY 18** | **1-3pm** - Body Ecology, Spring
- JUNE 1** - National Trails Day

DIRECTOR'S DISCOURSE

PRESERVING AND PROTECTING

A Lifelong Steward

Jason Leis - Executive Director

I would like to take the time to acknowledge and appreciate the life of Bernice Schroeder. Bernice passed away recently at the age of 104. I am amazed at the changes that she saw over her lifetime. Bernice, like many others, had a deep connection with the land which is now the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. She immersed herself in capturing what would prove to be a poignant history of the US Army Corp of Engineers La Farge Dam Project. I first met Bernice in 2004 and appreciated her direct conversations. You didn't have to guess where she stood on an issue. I am grateful for Bernice and the many others, that had the foresight to create what is now the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Many areas on the KVR have Bernice's touch; the KVR Friends Community Garden in the Visitor Center loop and the Star Valley Memorial, where she transplanted plants from the old homestead sites. With the unremitting care of many friends and volunteers, these areas continue to flourish and are a testament to Bernice's stewardship. I remember fondly the days of seeing her pull up to the Visitor Center loop in her sedan that she used like a pickup, the trunk loaded down with gardening tools, plants and dirt, ready to get to work. Bernice was a tireless steward of the land, and it's history. Her legacy grows each spring as the trees she planted bud and the flowers bloom.



Thank You to these Tree Sponsors



- David and Karen Theis
- Tim and Laurie Ott
- Don and Carol Nelson
- Diane Retzlaff
- Maureen and Robert Fox
- Terry Nilles
- Phyllis Hytinen
- Art Syth
- Chris & Sue Baudhuin
- Amy Hansen
- Betsy Boone
- Pam Saunders
- Mary Dresser
- Thomas & Sylvia Weber
- Eric Newman
- Emily Lasko
- Sharon Meissner
- Steven Hanson
- Elizabeth Lange
- Ryan & Nichole Alderson
- Chris Abrahamson
- Brad & Carolyn Steinmetz
- Kerry Barnett & Mandy McGree
- Amy Lund
- Vicky Eiben
- Peggy Sitter
- Kathleen Hoffland
- Brian & Karen Rude
- Ron & Donna Johnson
- Charles & Patricia Klower
- Beth Unger
- Heidi Knapp
- Lori Stromski
- Viroqua Food Coop
- Mark Kastel
- Dave & Pat Fisher
- Mary Szepi
- James Marvin
- Richard Lowe
- Jon & Amy Wedell
- R. Michael Elkin
- Snowtrekker Tents
- Edward Marien
- Leanne & Mark Bentzen
- Avanelle Major
- Leota Chadwick
- Larry & Susan Arttus
- Nathan & Amber Hamilton
- Jodi Peehetti
- Douglas Detrick
- Kickapoo Valley Forest School
- Joan Peterson
- Kelly Scheder
- John and Rita Hoffmann
- Kevin and Linda Hagen
- Bonita Dorschied
- Charles & Gwendolyn Hatfield
- William & Joanne Thoftne
- Kevin and Patsy Alderson

REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR 2024 ANNUAL PERMIT!

20 24

FRIENDS OF KVR MEMBER

INDIVIDUAL

FAMILY

BUSINESS

USER ID _____

- No glass on the river
- Permit not valid for camping
- Check trail status prior to use

Permit valid through December 31

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE
 S3661 STATE HWY 131
 LA FARGE, WI, 54639
 kickapoovalley.wi.gov
 608-625-2960

To purchase or renew your annual KVR permit, stop by the Visitor Center or visit our website: <http://kvr.state.wi.us>



Non-invasive, non native Snowdrops - Galanthus spp in KVR Friends Garden

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

SPRING INTO ACTION

Lending a hand

Volunteer groups and individuals are a welcome and key part of successful projects and events on the KVR. Local youth and other volunteers work to support land management efforts, education programs and events. Recently, volunteers helped build new display columns for the Creative Communities Canvas Exhibit, cleared firebreaks for spring burns, assisted in preparing 5 acres for planting additional habitat for pollinators, and spent time checking the trails.



Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve members put in countless hours behind the scenes, volunteering time, efforts, expertise, knowledge and financial support to programs, projects and events on the KVR. Anyone can volunteer and/or become a KVR Friend, it is a great way to support the KVR. You can learn more about volunteering at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve here: [Volunteer](#)



Westby Student Volunteers assist with invasive species removal

Volunteer Opportunities

- Events
- Invasive Species Control
- Adopt A Trail
- New Visitor Center Pollinator Education Prairie
- Education Program
- Trail work
- Prairie Seed Collection
- 30 acre Pollinator Habitat Project



Jeff W. volunteering in the shop.



The KVR Crew and volunteers work to fortify a firebreak around a new pollinator habitat area.

EDUCATION CORNER

POLLINATOR HABITAT

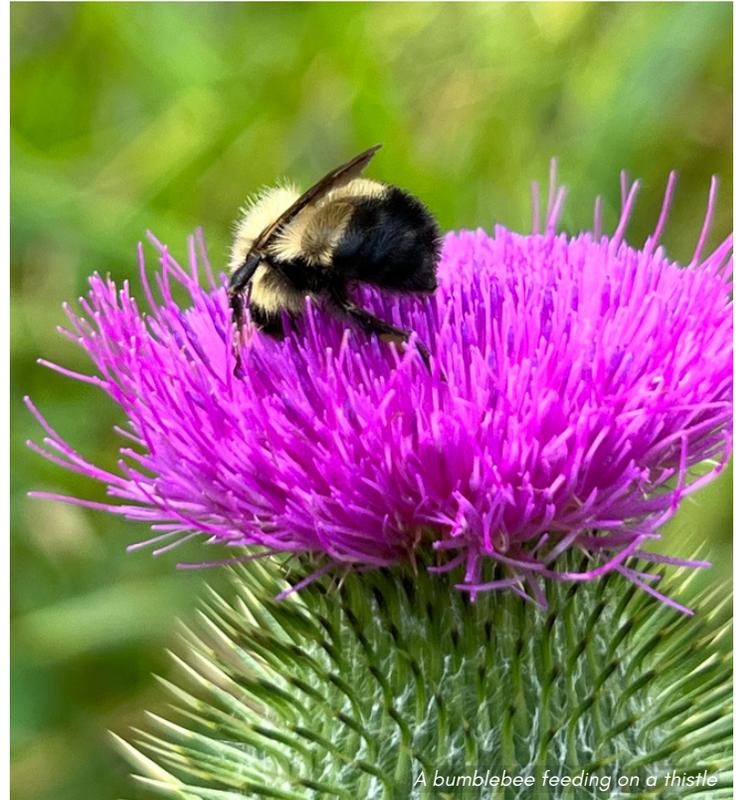
Helping the Bees in Spring

by Maggie Schultz, KVR Education Coordinator

Bees are an essential pollinator, and one that needs our help. There has been a lot of news about declining bee populations, all over the world. Honey bees in particular are being studied, but our native bees need help too. The good news: there are things you can do to help them in your own backyard!

Many species of bees that are native to Wisconsin are solitary, meaning that they don't live in hives or colonies like honey bees do. They exist mostly on their own. This makes it harder to protect them, in some ways, because they are not as easy to spot.

In other ways, it is really easy to help protect them. Many of these species will hibernate or nest in hollow stems, dead wood, or other natural debris. To help the bees, one of the best things you can do is leave the old stems in your garden as long as possible. Instead of cutting back the dead material, leave it out for the bees and other insects to use. This provides them a safe space to rest and build their homes.



A bumblebee feeding on a thistle

Another way to help native bees is to plant native wildflowers. Spring can be an especially hard time for bees, with less flowers available. 'No-mow May' has become a trend nationwide, but is not as beneficial as simply planting a diverse group of native species that will bloom from late spring through fall.

Native species that provide important food sources for bees include: pussy willow, anise hyssop, wild bergamot, prairie blazing star, and leadplant. Some common herbs like spearmint, oregano, and basil are also very attractive to bees.

If you want to learn more on how you can conserve habitat and support native bee populations, consider Citizen Scientist work. Here is a great place to start: Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade <https://wiatri.net/inventory/BBB/>



We're Hiring!

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!

- [Summer Education Intern](#)
- [Police Officer](#)
- [Field Crew members](#)
- [Education Instructors](#)
- [Customer Service](#)

[MORE INFO HERE](#)

EDUCATION CORNER

OUTDOOR EDUCATION
FOR ALL AGESYouth Summer Adventure
Camp Registration is now
OPEN!

Summer Camp is back! Many of your old favorites, and some new exciting offerings are open and ready for registration.

For more information, visit our website:
kickapovalley.wi.gov/education/summer-camp



Photo by: KVR



Photo by: KVR

NEW! Backcountry Basics

Adult summer camp geared toward women but open for anyone to experience.

We are excited to offer a new program this summer, called 'Backcountry Basics'. This three-day, two-night adventure for adults only, focuses on wilderness skills, safe outdoor recreation, as well as map reading and navigation. This program is designed for people who want to be more comfortable in the outdoors, especially on their own. There will be lessons on 'Leave No Trace', pack animals, campfire basics, planning a trip, getting the right gear, and more!

Learn more and register! Limited to 20 people



WISCONSIN
Master Naturalist



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

Wisconsin Master Naturalist
Training - Returning to the
KVR this fall!

For more information & to register, visit:
wimasternaturalist.org/training/volunteer-training/kvr2024

ON 8600 ACRES

LAND MANAGEMENT



Using Fire as a Management Tool

by Jackie Yocum – KVR Natural Resources Technician

While visiting the KVR or other managed natural areas in the spring, you may notice pockets of seemingly charred landscape. At first glance we might say, thank goodness that wildfire didn't go out of control. We hope this is never the case, however the KVR does intentionally conduct controlled burns.

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is one of many properties, both public and private, that contain areas managed in support of native prairie and for the control of invasive species. In certain instances, it is appropriate and effective to use prescribed burns as a conservation management tool.



Photo by: KVR

What is a prescribed burn? A prescribed burn is accomplished by a crew trained in wildland fire suppression and lead by someone who has more intensive training and experience, this person is the burn boss. Fire crews use a controlled application of fire to burn a designated area. All prescribed fire activity follows strict weather condition guidelines that include, wind speed, relative humidity, and temperature. Sometimes controlled burns are ironically used as fire suppression tools in wildland fires that are out of control.

Areas on the KVR that have been burned show a marked reduction in invasive species and an increase in desirable native plants. Ho-Chunk Nation and KVR burn crews worked collaboratively on a woodland burn along the West Ridge Trail 4.5 years ago. Recent surveys in show positive results toward a successful oak regeneration effort. They are growing slowly, as oak do, but growing. Prescribed burns are usually done in the spring on the KVR. While burn crews are highly trained and experienced in wildland fire suppression, interested volunteers regardless of experience, are also welcome to assist. If you would like to be on the volunteer list for prescribed fire on the KVR, [reach out to us for more information.](#)



Photo by: KVR



Photo by: KVR

Kickapoo Valley Reserve Mission

The land in the Kickapoo Valley Reserve shall be protected, preserved, and enhanced so that its unique environmental, scenic, and cultural features provide opportunities for the use and enjoyment of visitors to the Reserve. The Reserve will be promoted as a unique example of the Driftless Area Ecoregion and as a destination for low-impact tourism and education.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board acknowledges that the state and federal lands that comprise the Reserve fall within the ancestral homelands of First Nations people including the Hooçak Nation. We recognize the sovereignty of the Hooçak and other First Nations and will work towards a shared future by continuing to create collaborative opportunities to protect and preserve these lands.

ON 8600 ACRES

SPRINGTIME PHENOLOGY

What species are blooming & roaming about?

Phenology is ‘the study of appearance’ or the timing of seasonal events in nature.

by Joan Peterson - KVR Naturalist

Spring has lots of phenological events to watch for, like flowers blooming, birds building nests, and animals having babies. Here are some spring arrivals to look for when you visit the KVR and fun facts about them.

PLANTS



SKUNK CABBAGE

Where to find: wet ground near water, Warner Creek, in March.

Fun fact: The earliest blooming wildflower in Wisconsin, even when snow is still on the ground.



COLUMBINE

Where to find: near woodland edges and cliffs, along the Kickapoo River in April.

Fun fact: this plant has existed for 40,000 years.



HEPATICA

Where to find: shady forests, on the Wintergreen Trail in May.

Fun fact: it's named for its three-lobed leaves that resemble the human liver.

BIRDS



GREAT BLUE HERON

Where to find: marshes and ponds, along the Old 131 trail near Bridge 18 in March.

Fun fact: Can eat up to 2 lbs. of fish a day.



CATBIRD

Where to find: likes to hide in shrubbery and trees, try the Old Harris Road trail in April.

Fun fact: its call sounds like a cat's meow.



INDIGO BUNTING

Where to find: bushy wood edges, Hay Valley trail in May.

Fun fact: migrates over 3,000 miles to South America for the winter.

ANIMALS



BIG BROWN BAT

Where to find: Look for them just after dusk flying over streams, like Weister Creek in March.

Fun fact: can fly up to 40 mph



PICKEREL FROG

Where to find: emerging from cold streams and moving to breeding grounds in warmer ponds.

Fun fact: Listed as a species of Special Concern. This pic was taken at a cold stream off of West Ridge Trail.



DEER FAWN

Where to find: like to huddle on the ground in forests, try Little Canada Trail in May.

Fun fact: born with about 300 white spots.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FEATURED EVENTS

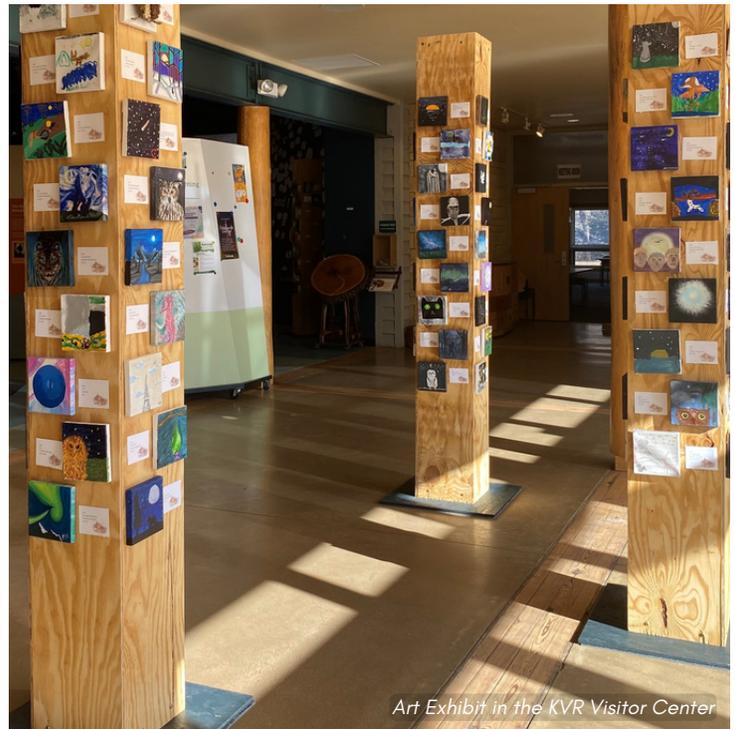
**Creative Communities
Online Canvas Auction
OPEN!**

Beginning in January each year, 6x6 inch blank canvases are distributed throughout our local communities.



The multi-generational project features high school art students, community members of all ages, and professional artists who create pieces that depict a theme. The theme in 2024 is Nocturnal. During the month of March, canvases are on exhibit inside the KVR Visitor Center and offered for sale on an Online Auction. The online art auction closes this year on March 24, 2024 at 5pm. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to view and bid on the art.

[VIEW AND BID ON NOCTURNAL ART](#)



Art Exhibit in the KVR Visitor Center

**Creative Communities
Student Art Experience**

On March 8, in conjunction with KVR Creative Communities Art Project, 70 area high school art students and 9 professional artists spent the day at the Visitor Center, networking, sharing techniques and celebrating art in many mediums. Students experienced sculpture, watercolor, collage, mixed media, fiber arts, oil paint and creating comics with sumi ink and watercolor. This is an annual program that the students look forward to each spring.



Creative Communities Student Art Experience participants

Participating Schools:
Kickapoo
La Farge
Hillsboro
Youth Initiative High School

WHAT'S HAPPENING

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE STEWARDSHIP EVENTS

APRIL 20-27
CELEBRATE EARTH WEEK

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE
STEWARDSHIP & VOLUNTEERING
PRESERVE & PROTECT
EVERYONE WELCOME!
KICKAPOOVALLEY.WI.GOV

**GARLIC
MUSTARD
GATHERING**



APRIL 20-27

**ANNUAL
ROADSIDE
CLEANUP**

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE & SURROUNDING ROADWAYS
STOP IN THE VISITOR CENTER, GRAB GARBAGE BAGS, SAFETY VEST & THANK YOU GIFT
EVERYONE WELCOME!
KICKAPOOVALLEY.WI.GOV



**NATIONAL
TRAILS DAY**

JUNE 1, 2024
SUNRISE TO STARRY SKIES

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE
STEWARDSHIP, HIKES, LEARNING
PRESERVE PROTECT EXPLORE
EVERYONE WELCOME!
KICKAPOOVALLEY.WI.GOV

FIND YOUR TRAIL




Earth Day Celebration
ALL WEEK!

April 20-27, 2024

Kickapoo Valley Reserve will be hosting activities all week in celebration of Earth Day

- Garlic Mustard Gathering
- Annual Roadside Cleanup
- Collaborative stewardship activities with Ho-Chunk Nation
- Children's Poetry Contest Readings
- Guided Spring Immersion Hike
- Signing of the Earth Day Tapestry
- Zero Waste Potluck Meal
- Froggy Starry Stroll
- Stars and Sips on the Deck



[LEARN MORE!](#)

JOIN IN! EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

These stewardship activities are made possible by:



CELEBRATING THE NIGHT SKY

INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY WEEK (APRIL 2-8)

Relating to the Night Sky

by John Heasley - KVR Instructor & founder of Driftless Stargazing LLC



International Dark Sky Week is a worldwide celebration of the dark and natural night. This season, I would like to indulge my fascination with words from my previous careers as an English teacher and as a research assistant with the Dictionary of American Regional English and offer three words for your consideration.

NOCTALGIA “sky grief”

Aparna Venkatesan and John Barentine proposed this term in a letter to the journal *Science* last year “for the accelerating loss of the home environment of our shared skies, a disappearance felt globally.” It is what we feel when we see light pollution spreading year by year. When we remember how “there once was a sky full of stars.” When we learn how the children born today will find it challenging to see the Milky Way and will have far fewer stars to wish upon. When we confront more and more studies showing the health risks of artificial light at night. When we discover the harm being done to the ecosystem of our one home as circadian rhythms are disrupted, pollinators confused, plant cycles altered, and migratory patterns disturbed. “Our diminishing ability to view the nighttime sky due to rapidly rising human-made light pollution is part of the palpable keening of all that is passing each day.”

NYCTOPHOBIA “fear of the dark”

This one runs deep in the human psyche. Through our stories and our language, we pass on from generation to generation that night is dangerous. And we try to banish it by turning night into day with

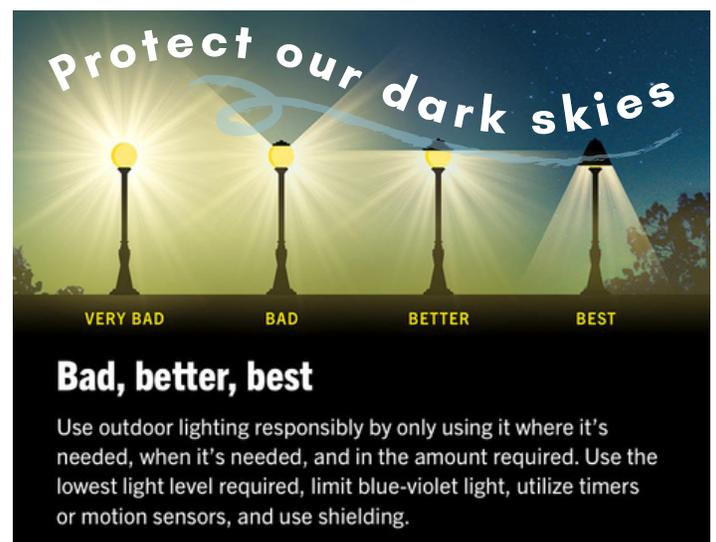
more and more artificial light. We equate light with safety, reason, virtue and civilization. Yet we cannot find the evidence that more light is making us safer and reducing crime. We do find evidence that light that is harsh, unshielded and misdirected does make it harder to see at night. We deny ourselves and our children the chance to discover that we are pretty good at seeing in the dark once our eyes adapt, that we can navigate the dark safely, and that there is a world full of wonder and awe to be discovered in the natural night.

NOCTCAELADOR “love of the night”

Psychologist William E. Kelly introduced this word twenty years ago to describe an “emotional attachment to, or adoration of the night sky”. Humans have been sky watchers for thousands of generations. It’s only in the last few that we have disconnected ourselves. Watching the cycles of Sun, Moon, and stars, we learned to tell time and create calendars. We looked up at the stars, created constellations, and filled the night sky with the stories that would pass on our experiences and wisdom to the next generation. By studying the stars, we learned how they are born, live, and die and how we are part of an ecosystem that extends far beyond our planet.

We can regain what we have lost. International Dark Sky Week is a time to take a look at the artificial light we use and make it smarter. Responsible outdoor lighting is useful, targeted, low level, controlled, and warm-colored. But more importantly, International Dark Sky Week is a time to head out and to discover the night together. We will only conserve for ourselves and descendants what we know and what we love.

To find out more, visit: <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Dark-Sky>



CELEBRATING THE NIGHT SKY

NIGHT TIME, SPRING MIGRATION

Navigating the night

by Barbara Duerksen - KVR Naturalist & Birding Expert

The cold stillness of long winter nights has given way to the great, mostly unseen, drama of millions of songbirds flying north through the night sky, on their way to the nesting grounds. They call in flight, doing short chirps, tweets and buzzes. We'll hear the more familiar calls and songs in the early morning and late evening. Among the first to arrive are robins and blackbirds, followed by cranes, Killdeer, meadowlarks, and Song Sparrows - migrants that spend the winter in the southern U.S., and are able to withstand some cold weather by relying on seeds when insects are scarce.

Why migrate at night? According to the National Audubon Society, "The stars and the moon aid night-flying birds' navigation."

Free of daytime thermals, the atmosphere is more stable, making it easier to maintain a steady course, especially for smaller birds such as warblers that might fly as slowly as 15 miles per hour. Cooler nighttime temperatures also help keep hard-working birds from overheating. And for birds that frequently wind up on the menu of hawks, cats, and other daytime predators, flying under cover of darkness can be a lifesaver.

Bird migration is visible on radar. Scientists began to use radar to study movements of birds in the 1940's. Now there is a website that depicts the nightly movements of birds in the United States and the intensity of the migration, which is weather dependent.

Some bird species use the night sky for their courtship rituals. The sky dance of the American Woodcock begins when they arrive in March and goes on for several months. About 15 minutes after the sun sets, the male begins the ritual on the ground in an open area near woods. It starts with a repeated call, a low peent, followed by a circular flight with twittery sounds from the wings, and ending in a chirpy descent. He repeats the peenting and flight for maybe 45 or so minutes, longer on a moonlit night. The sky dance is also done pre-dawn.



American Woodcock - Photo by Jack Bartholmai

Weighing about as much as a robin, woodcocks are odd-looking short-tailed brown birds with long beaks and large eyes that are positioned high up and near the back of the skull. Their diet is mostly earthworms. They make their nest on the ground in woodlands near the edge.

Wilson's Snipe is another March arrival with an aerial flight display. A marsh bird, also brown with a long bill, it makes a sound with its tail feathers in flight. This sound, called winnowing, is a fast, rising hu-hu-hu...., done both day and night.

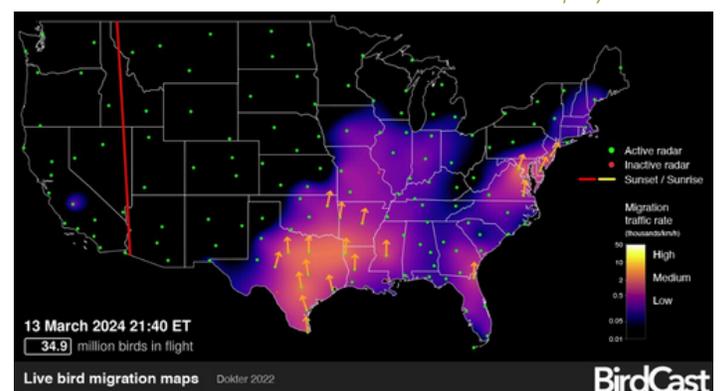
Celebrate the night sky by stepping out the door at night to look and listen. Check out the Birdcast radar website for a good migration night to go listen for the chirps, tweets, and buzzes of birds in flight. Welcome back the migrants that survived a long, perilous journey.

RESOURCES:

To see the afore mentioned live bird migration & forecast maps, visit <https://birdcast.info/migration-tools/>

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/september-october-2013/listening-migrating-birds-night-may>

Map by Bird Cast



CALL TO ACTION

In the last 3 years the amount of light pollution in the Kickapoo Valley has increased beyond admissible levels required to sustain a dark sky park. Together, we can reduce this light trespass by using appropriate outdoor lighting and encouraging our local communities and businesses to do the same. Please consider your part in this community wide conservation effort.

Learn how KVR and our conservation partners are protecting dark skies:
<http://kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Dark-Sky>

Dark Sky Conservation resources you can use to take action:

- Watch the Driftless Dialogue: [Protecting our Dark Skies](#) – Scott Lind
- Visit this website: [Dark Sky International](#) for information and how to guides on responsible outdoor lighting.
- Like, follow & share the [Kickapoo Valley Dark Sky Initiative Facebook page](#).



Dark Sky Conservation Partners in the Kickapoo Valley

Kickapoo Valley Reserve
 Wildcat Mountain State Park
 Mississippi Valley Conservancy



Campsite on the KVR under starry skies



INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY WEEK

Discover the night

April 2-8, 2024

Celebrate & take action to protect the night!

To learn more visit darksky.org