



# Wetland Word Newsletter



Volume 7

SPRING-SUMMER 2011

Issue 1

Banner photo, Rose gall  
Credit: Carrie Karl

## Summer 2011 News

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The *Wetland Word* is a publication from WREN. If you prefer to receive an electronic version, or have any questions or comments please contact WREN. We greatly appreciate your feedback!  
 Edited by Sara van Dyck Chesluk and Jules Abbott

### Contact us!

info@wewetlands.org  
 WREN  
 751 S. Danebo Ave  
 Eugene, OR 97402



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## Family Fun at Wetlands!

By Sara van Dyck Chesluk

"It feels soft," said eight-year-old Anya Maruschak as she gently stroked a woolly-bear caterpillar. Jonathan, her four-year-old brother, stooped to watch little black tadpoles darting in a pool. Anya, Jonathan, and other kids and their families were enjoying the April 23 Family Exploration Day at the West Eugene wetlands, wandering the trails and spotting ducks, spiders, and a garter snake. WREN continues "Celebrate American Wetlands 2011" month throughout May with programs for kids and adults (see p. 2 for list). [cont.]

## North American River Otter (*Lontra Canadensis*)

By Judith K. Berg

Although the semi-aquatic river otter is a visually appealing and charismatic species, it is more importantly a 'flagship species' to water quality. Because otters are susceptible to pollution, they are considered a bio-indicator for the environmental health of fresh-water habitats.

Otters feed primarily on fish, and where available, crayfish. To a lesser extent they also feed on other aquatic vertebrates and invertebrates. They can dive to a depth of 60 feet, remain underwater three to four minutes, and swim 6 to 7 MPH. Otters use their vision to find prey in clear waters on bright days, but use their vibrissae to assist them when hunting in murky waters or on dark nights. [cont.]

## Little Brown Bats: Built to Hunt

By Sara van Dyck Chesluk, with contributions from Carrie Karl

On a summer evening you may spot little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) hunting over the wet prairie. The bats weigh not much more than a quarter, but they are built to find, catch, and crunch their prey. ~Little brown bats eat insects that live on or near water, such as midges, mosquitoes, caddisflies, and moths. They use echolocation to zero in on the insects and dive after them. [cont.]

**Join eScrip!** It is a no-hassle, free program for you that sends money to WREN whenever you shop at a participating merchant. Log on to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) to register and add WREN as one of your organizations!



## President's Message

By Mike Shippey, WREN Board President

With Earth Day 2011 just past I would like to share a few resources I find very useful and encouraging in challenging times. First, I have discovered an excellent book, *Plan B* by Lester Brown, which examines many of the environmental and social ills plaguing our world today. Plan A (status quo) hasn't worked so well, so Mr. Brown proposes a number of alternative strategies, including fiscal estimates of costs to implement. My favorite quote from the book: "Saving our civilization is not a spectator sport." Second, a new internet tool has been developed.[cont.]



Artist: Barbara Gleason

## Family Fun at Wetlands! (cont.)

The next Family Exploration Day will be held at Golden Gardens on May 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thanks to a generous grant from REI, families can check out a backpack with an insect net, binoculars, and other observing gear. WREN staff and volunteers will be on hand to help you figure out – just what was it we saw?.

### WETLAND SCAVENGER HUNT

#### So much to see at the wetlands! See if you can find:

- Snakes sunning
- Spider or spiderweb
- Sound of frogs calling
- Bird on the wing
- Duck touchdown on a pond
- Animal track or trail (perhaps a place where the grass is flattened)
- A shrub or tree taller than you are
- A purple flower
- Plant with thorns

#### Sharp-eye specials! Look carefully for these:

- Bird box on a post
- Tree gnawed by beaver
- Bird nest in shrub or on tree
- Scat!



### North American River Otter (*Lontra Canadensis*) (cont.)

One to three otters are born during March or April after a long 10 to 12 month gestation, due to a process called ‘delayed implantation’. The kits are born blind and helpless weighing in at 3 to 6 ounces. They do not emerge from their natal den for the next 6 to 8 weeks.

Otters have been observed in Amazon Creek. Although active primarily during the nocturnal or crepuscular hours, they have been seen at various hours of the day. Look for this animal

### Little Brown Bats: Built to Hunt (cont.)

The echolocation tells them exactly what’s ahead and how fast it is moving, so a bat won’t accidentally bump into you! ~To catch their prey, little brown bats use the tail part of their wings called the uropatagium (YOOR-uh-puh-TAY-jeeum) . It forms a cup to trap the insects as the bat flies, and then scoops them into the bat’s mouth. ~Sharp teeth help bats chew through the tough exoskeleton of their prey. They eat half their weight in food each night. ~The wetlands offer a great habitat for little brown bats, yet scientists do not know a great deal about them. How many are at the wetlands? Where do they roost? WREN is applying for a grant to research these questions.

### President’s Message (cont.)

...by the State of Oregon in conjunction with many University / college / municipal libraries, the **Oregon Digital Library project**. This spectacular tool makes almost all of its digital information available over the internet, free in most cases, and includes **the Oregon Explorer**, a Geographic Information System that operates online. The Explorer includes aerial photographs, terrain models, as well as more specific information (extremely detailed in many cases), and incorporates the digital information from the above agencies. One of the most powerful environmental education tools I have ever seen.

So how can you spend your Earth Day - or any other day? I suggest some caretaking / gardening, some time simply watching the world around us (sunsets are perfect for this), enjoying the simple pleasures of life. The world is a great place to be. Thank you and Best Wishes.



### **New & Renewing Donors and Members since Fall 2010:**

Cascades Raptor Center, Sara Chesluk, Joni Dawning and David Hicks, Eugene REI, Buffalo Exchange, Janet Naylor, Nearby Nature, Alison Snyder, CMGS Landscape Architects, Larry Fried and Natural Choice Directory, Sally Ross, Susanne Twight-Alexander, Mark Horney and Sharon Reed, David and Judy Berg, Bankoff Blanchet Family Foundation, Kenneth Anderson, Charlie Quinn and Dana Abel, Dave Walp, Rick Ahrens, Vicki Singer, David Von Hippel, Houghton Mifflin, Market of Choice via eScrip

### **Current Members:**

Coyote Creeks Ecological Services, Sarah Dryfoos, Paul Brown, Ron Leonard, Robert Georgette Silber, Megan Bernatzki, Paula Graff, Steve Gordon, Stacy Rathbun, Michael Roberts, Holly McRae, Mary Minniti and Mike Shippey

**Our Thanks to REI:** WREN is most grateful to the Eugene REI for sponsoring the Family Exploration Day Spring 2011. Their generous \$10,000 grant is providing three days of discovery for families, where they can borrow an "exploration pack" with bug nets, binoculars, and guide books, and explore the wetlands on their own, with help from WREN guides. The Eugene REI has been a steady supporter of WREN events.

## **Volunteer Spotlight**

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **5/21 Walkin' & Rollin'**

10 am – 2 pm. Fern Ridge Bike Path between Bailey Hill and Greenhill Rd.

#### **5/28 WREN Family Exploration Day**

10:00AM - 2:00 p.m. Golden Gardens

#### **July (Date TBA) Dragonfly Walks**

Special WREN event with experts Steve Gordon & Cary Kerst

See our Facebook for details of these and other events at Facebook: WREN in the West Eugene Wetlands.

For more information visit us @ [www.wewetlands.org](http://www.wewetlands.org)



WREN thanks our enthusiastic volunteers and volunteer interns, who contribute energy and talent in support of the wetlands. Volunteers organize wetland walks, lead walks for community members, present classroom programs, work as citizen scientists, monitor birds or invertebrates, raise funds, and help represent WREN at public events.

Rick Ahrens, Mieko Aoki, Megan Bernatzki, Melanie Brown, Patrick Bruce, Mylece Burling, Bruce Campbell, Sara van Dyck Chesluk, Kimberly Cullen, Heather Cyrus, Angie Duncan, Alexis Geil, Richard Hand, Gawain Harman, Lauren Holtan, Joel Krestik, Alicia Lajeunesse, Ron Leonard, Lauren Marx, Holly McRae, Caitlin Mills, Molly Myers, Megan O'Driscoll, Kat Plakos, Isabel Shankelford, Kelly Sky, Ted Shriro, Terra Smith, Tom Spofford, Carrie Taff, Greig Thompson, Susanne Twight-Alexander, Larry VonSeeger, Marilyn VonSeeger, Dave Walp, and Sarah Whitney.



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