

DNR eDigest

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The Bureau of Education and Information's goal is to publish "The E-Digest" bi-weekly on paydays. The bureau will publish additional issues, as needed. Contact "E-Digest" editor Diane.Brinson@wisconsin.gov or at 608/266-5215 to submit stories, story ideas and photos that communicate internally the department's work, policies and issues that matter to DNR employees.

October 22, 2009

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Furbearer ecologist Olson receives Wildlife Society honor

By: Jim Bishop, Northern Region

The national Wildlife Society has presented its prestigious Jim McDonough Award to DNR furbearer ecologist **John Olson**. The event took place at the organization's national meeting in California in mid-September.

The award recognizes wildlife biologists who've done outstanding work in implementing and developing new techniques, procedures or approaches in their profession. Nominees for the award are selected by fellow biologists.



John Olson (left) received the Jim McDonough Award from Tom Franklin, president
WDNR Photo

"Everyone who knows John admires the many contributions he has made to further the management of our natural resources," said **Mike Zeckmeister**, Northern Region wildlife program manager. "John is an exceptional and highly effective leader in the conservation movement. I cannot think of a better person to be this year's recipient of this prestigious recognition."

Some of Olson's contributions to Wisconsin's wildlife program include chairing the DNR's Technical Furbearer Advisory Committee; working with researchers to develop better surveys for otters and beavers; and developing a "fur school" training program, where participants learn all aspects of furbearer management through a hands-on approach to education.

Among Olson's other accomplishments are:

- Developed educational materials for trap placement that reduce the risk of harming non-target species and domestic animals;
- Coordinated a track training class to help biologists be more effective in using furbearer track surveys to index populations;
- Worked with the Wisconsin Trappers Association to develop and improve a mandatory trapper education course;
- Assisted nationally on the management of Canada lynx; and
- Coordinated a cable-restraint best management project that has been adopted as a nationwide model.

Olson is stationed at Ashland and has worked for the DNR for 36 years serving at various duty stations across northern Wisconsin as a forest habitat coordinator, wildlife biologist, area wildlife supervisor, wildlife tribal liaison, wildlife county forest liaison and furbearer ecologist. In his time off, Olson can be found harvesting wild rice; training for and competing in the Birkebeiner cross-country ski marathon; kayaking; canoeing; and, hunting and trapping.

Footnote: *Jim Bishop is the public affairs manager for the Northern Region.*

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From the biologist's desk: a report on wood duck banding

By: Becky Roth & Greg Matthews, South Central Region

It's an early morning in late summer and the DNR's Tower Hill duck banding crew made up of me, Spring Green wildlife technicians Al Cornell and Meg Ziegler, as well as supervisor Bill Ishmael, Dodgeville, meets at Tower Hill State Park at 4:45 a.m. Coffee in hand, we jump into the trucks and drive to the banding site. I crawl into the duck blind, while the rest of the crew waits quietly in the woods. I peer through a small opening, wondering if we'll get some woodies (wood ducks) today. A little bit before 6 a.m., I hear the "oo-eek" of a female, and they start to fly into the slough.



Wildlife biologist Becky Roth carefully removed a female wood duck from a net for banding and release.

WDNR Photo

My heart starts to race. The ducks climb on the bank and look at the pile of food that Al put out a few days before. They're a bit cautious and slowly come up the bank. They stop half way, and I wonder if they're going to fly off. Nope, they march like an army to the corn. I put my finger on the button, when most are at the corn, and push.

Hands-on biology

Bang! The rockets go off and the net launches through the air. I run out of the blind and through the smoke to see if I've captured some. I get there and a few escape from under the net. The rest of the crew runs towards the site carrying the banding supplies and helps me secure the net. The thrill of hands-on biology work!

We sex and age the wood ducks and put metal leg bands on them. Our banding effort is important to the management of migratory game birds in the Mississippi Flyway. Other states and providences across North America also band birds. The information collected helps in determining harvest rates, survival rates, distribution and movement.

Some of the ducks the Tower Hill crew has banded have been recovered in 16 states, even as far away as Alabama and Kansas. This year we banded a record number for the office, 469 wood ducks.



DNR wildlife technician Al Cornell holds a colorful male wood duck, recognizable by its iridescent green and purple crested head.

WDNR Photo

Wood ducks breed across most of the central and eastern United States, with the highest breeding densities in the Mississippi River Valley. They prefer riparian habitats, wooded swamps and freshwater marshes. Males are recognizable by their crested iridescent green and purple heads.

When someone recovers a banded bird, they should report it right away. There is information on how to do that on the band. Either call 1(800)327-BAND or go online at U.S. Geological Survey's "[Reporting Encounter of Marked Bird with a Metal Federal Band](#)" website. Once a person reports a banded bird, they'll receive information about the bird, including the providence or state where it was banded, the banding date and the species.

Footnote: *Becky Roth is a wildlife biologist stationed in Spring Green. Regional public affairs manager Greg Matthews assisted Roth in writing this story.*

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Kurowski and Hoffman win UW Arboretum Leopold Awards

The Friends of the University of Wisconsin's Arboretum on October 8 bestowed 2009 "Leopold Restoration Awards" on DNR state natural areas ecologist **Randy Hoffman**, Bureau of Endangered Resources, and **Ron Kurowski**, natural resources educator at the southern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, as "individuals who care about the environment and believe it is possible to make a difference."

"While bad news about the environment is easy to find, our Leopold Award winners are success stories that inspire and energize those of us who believe in the principles and practice of ecological restoration. Sadly, they often go unnoticed," begins the news story.



Randy Hoffman, recipient of the John T. Curtis Award chatted with Kim Wright, financial assistance specialist with the DNR Stewardship Grant Program.

WDNR Photo

The Friends of the Arboretum and the Aldo Leopold Foundation created "The Leopold Restoration Awards" in 2000. The awards single out those whose dedication has led to successful restoration of the land.

Hoffman given John T. Curtis Award

In awarding Hoffman The Friends piece explains how Hoffman looks forward to Monday mornings, both because he's a morning person and because a week of working for Wisconsin's natural areas lies ahead. It's just one of the reasons the Friends group awarded him the "John T. Curtis Award for Career Excellence in Ecological Restoration."

During his 30 years with the DNR, Hoffman has developed management plans for over 300 natural areas.

Kurowski received John Nolen Award



Linda Bochert, Friend of the Arboretum and former DNR executive assistant, presented Ron Kurowski with the 2009 John Nolen Award.

WDNR Photo

The Friends of the Arboretum believed that Kurowski deserved this year's "John Nolen Award for Excellence in Ecological

Restoration Practices,” because of his many years doing resource protection, public education and applied management in the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine and nearby lands, where he was able to rescue areas considered beyond repair because invasive species had done so much damage.”

Read more about how DNR’s Hoffman and Kurowski have turned their passions for Wisconsin’s natural resources into sustainable conservation of the state’s most critically important habitats at the [Friends of the Arboretum](#) website.



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As elsewhere, central office seasonal flu clinic is postponed

Vaccine shortages felt everywhere

As is occurring at virtually every venue in Dane County where seasonal flu shots were scheduled, the flu clinic set for October 29 in the central office has been postponed to December 3 because of a shortage of the vaccine. Home Health United, the organization that will conduct the clinic, is unable to get enough of the vaccine to meet the projected demand from GEF 2 employees.

Clinics and hospitals throughout Wisconsin and across the country are experiencing similar shortages.

The September 24 “DNR Digest” story [“Flu shot clinic returns to GEF 2 this fall”](#) told of the clinic originally to be held at the end of October. The same information pertains to the clinic rescheduled for Thursday, December 3. If you haven’t yet pre-registered with [Marty Karow](#), do so now and put the clinic on your calendar for December 3.

The clinic is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in room G09 of GEF 2. If you’ve already registered, but need to change your time or cancel your appointment, email [Karow](#) or call her at (608)246-7998. Otherwise, just show up on December 3.

If you have Dean Health Care, WEA, Unity, Physician’s Plus or Group Health insurance, your insurance company will cover the cost of the shot. If you’re not covered by one of the above insurance plans, you’ll be charged \$30 for the shot when you come to the clinic. You’ll receive a receipt to send to your insurance company for reimbursement.

Prior to December 3, Karow will send those registered a confirmation/reminder and a “Consent Form” to be completed and brought with you the day of the clinic, along with your insurance card.

More information available on seasonal flu and H1N1 flu

You can access the following materials on the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu on “MyDNR” at the [Bureau of Human Resources](#) website. New on this Intranet page are:

- 2009 H1N1 vaccine-related key points from the Centers for Disease Control, as of October 13.
- “Flu Myths and Realities” from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, October 15.

You’ll also find a link on “MyDNR” a link to the state’s flu/pandemic website, which includes information from all state agencies and actions at the Department of Health Services. At [“Wisconsin’s Flu Pandemic Resources,”](#) you’ll find more information on the different types of flu and what the state’s various levels of government, businesses and schools are doing to attempt to control the spread of these diseases.



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Daily reports required if H1N1 or seasonal flu pandemic occurs

By: Tom Joestgen, Division of Customer and Employee Services

In the event of an H1N1 (swine) or seasonal flu pandemic this fall, the Department of Administration (DOA) is requiring that all state agencies report on employees who are unavailable and services that temporarily can’t be maintained. Every agency, including the DNR, will provide the status of every state employee to DOA by 10 a.m. each day. This report has been creatively dubbed “the Morning Report.”

DOA will direct the days when “Morning Reports” are required. For the DNR’s part, the administration will ask each supervisor to account for all assigned staff listed on the payroll system on any given day, as well as indicate what services, if any, won’t be in operation that day. In the DNR, supervisors will submit their reports by 9 a.m. to allow ample time to summarize the data for DOA.

The good news is that the DNR is finishing work on an automated system for use in completing this report. The “Morning Report” is E-Form 9100-843. Supervisors eventually will be able to access this report through “DNR Tasks” on the “MyDNR” Intranet homepage.

Only supervisors may enter a “Morning Report.” If a supervisor is absent, another supervisor will enter the “Morning

Report" in their absence.

DOA will require the following information in the report each day:

- Number of employees on the payroll working today.
- Number of employees absent.
- Number of employees absent with confirmed H1N1.
- Number of employees recovered and returned to work after having a confirmed case of H1N1.
- With the absences, supervisors will be asked "are their services under your supervision that will not be in operation today?"

The "Morning Report" is linked with the departmentwide staff directory database, which means much of the information is pre-populated. Included will be the names of staff supervised, phone numbers, regions, divisions and locations, etc. It's not expected that a supervisor will have to spend much time filling out their report.

The department is working on other reports to provide managers with information on the percent of supervisors who've submitted their "Morning Reports." Another report will list the supervisors who haven't reported by the 9 a.m. deadline.

The management report function will be available to all supervisors to look at the information by program or by region.

Managers may find this helpful in making decisions on staffing issues.

CAES managers already have "test driven" the "Morning Report" A departmentwide three-day test is being planned. For supervisors, the "Morning Report" process likely will make more sense when all DNR supervisors get involved in this test.

Footnote: *Tom Joestgen is chief of the CAES division's Risk and Fleet Management Section.*



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State Game Farm is breeding for success

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

Staff at the State Game Farm in Poynette recently selected the ring-necked pheasant breeder flock for 2010, just as integral a part of the fall season as releasing the colorful birds for hunting on public lands.

Birds are driven into a catch pen, where about a dozen Game Farm staff and volunteers from other wildlife programs evaluate them for weight, color and physical abnormalities.



Jim Trublic, Game Farm wildlife technician holds a pheasant waiting processing.

WDNR Photo

"We look for such characteristics as full coloration (roosters) and those that look like they came right out of the field (rather than captivity). No fat birds here," said Game Farm hatchery technician **Mark Frank**. Ideal weight for hens is 2 to 2.5 pounds and 3 to 3.5 pounds for roosters.

Altogether, almost 6,500 birds – about 6,000 hens and 435 roosters – were selected over seven work days. The crew selected 2,445 hens and 272 roosters for indoor breeding, clipping their wings and affixing blinders to prevent them from picking on each other. All received an inoculations for avian cholera.

"We have an indoor flock so we can put them into production by adjusting light schedules. We need them to produce eggs early in the spring to meet our production goals," explained Game Farm director **Bob Nack**. "If we only relied on the

outdoor flock, then we would get all our eggs in one condensed time period.”
“The indoor flock allows us to spread production out a bit and also serves as a back-up in case something happens to the outdoor flock (snow, ice storm or disease),” he added.



Game Farm wildlife technician Jenny Krause shares a “lighter moment” with a ring-necked pheasant that already has received its blinders. This bird will be an indoor breeder.

WDNR Photo

Each breeder hen will lay about 46 eggs next spring. Game Farm staff collects eggs beginning in early March, with weekly hatches occurring from early April through the end of June. The eggs incubate in the Game Farm hatchery for about 24 days before hatching.

A typical hatch day could include handling as many as 20,000 chicks. The sex of each chick is determined when they’re a day old. Many of these chicks will be reared on the Game Farm, with others going to conservation clubs that participate in the popular Day-Old Chick program. About 330,000 eggs are incubated annually, producing approximately 250,000 chicks by the end of the hatching season.

The department releases old breeders on public hunting grounds the following fall. The Game Farm will release about 42,000 ring-necked pheasants on state properties before and during the 2009 hunting season.

Footnote: *Greg Matthews is the public affairs manager for the South Central Region.*

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October 23 deadline to include domestic partners under health insurance

A reminder about tomorrow’s deadline

The October 8, 2009 “DNR Digest” included stories on enrolling domestic partners and adult children until age 27 in health insurance and Anthem (DentalBlue) Dental Insurance, two new provisions for 2010 coverage. Those already enrolled in one or both of these programs will need to re-enroll to assure coverage for a domestic partner.

The deadline for enrolling domestic partners in these health insurance plans is tomorrow, Friday October 23.

Open enrollment began on October 5.

Those carrying Anthem Dental Insurance who want to add a domestic partner have until November 13.

Participating health plans are set to mail a letter and “Adult Child Eligibility Form” to those with dependents age 19 or older the week of October 26. The deadline to return the form is December 1. Missing this deadline may mean loss of coverage for adult children as of December 31.

Go to [“General questions about benefit eligibility for adult children up to age 27”](#) on the Department of Employee Trust Funds website for questions and answers about eligibility and tax implications.

Read the complete “DNR Digest” stories in the October 8 at [“Enroll online in October for health insurance coverage”](#) and [“Anthem Dental Insurance open enrollment begins October 5.”](#)

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Eighth annual silent auction will benefit Partners in Giving

By: Sherri Voigt, Bureau of Finance

On Wednesday, November 4, room 213 in GEF 2 will be filled with frenzied bidders trying to nab unique items during a silent auction that will raise additional funds for this year's Partners in Giving campaign. As side benefits of this event, those participating will learn of their co-workers' talents and have a little fun on the job.

The 2008 Partners in Giving auction netted about \$1,026 with bids on 73 separate donated items. We're sure that we can do even better this year, with your help.



Just some of the many gift bags and baskets donated to the Partners in Giving 2008 auction.

WDNR Photo

At this time, the search is on for items to auction. To help inspire donations for this year's auction, following are some from the last few years. Don't limit your imagination, though.

- variety of cookies
- movie night kit (movie/popcorn/snacks)
- breakfast tray (with jams and mixes)
- carvings and framed prints
- Starbucks gift card
- handmade jewelry and other accessories
- George Foreman grill
- dining gift certificates and dinner basket
- Avon basket
- hand-crocheted kitchen towels
- maple syrup
- mystery bags

Auction items can be goods to take home the day of auction, or items to be delivered later.

If you have any questions or would like to donate auction items or services, email me at [Sherri Voigt](mailto:Sherri.Voigt@state.oh.us) or call me at (608)267-9818 by Tuesday, October 27. We've been getting a nice stream of items without even asking and hope to have a full room for the auction.

Watch for a list of auction items and guidelines that will be posted by the GEF 2 elevators by November 2, so you can plan your bidding strategy.

Footnote: *Sherri Voigt is a management accountant in the Bureau of Finance.*

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Back in session, legislators hard at work for next three weeks

By: Paul Heinen, Office of the Secretary

The Legislature returned to the floor on Tuesday, October 20. During the preceding weeks, they held hearings and meetings, drafted and introduced new legislation. Both houses will complete the 2009 floor period on November 5, returning on January 19 to begin the 2010 session.

The "[2009 Bill Tracker](#)" contains a complete status report on DNR-related Senate and Assembly bills introduced for fiscal years 2009-2011.

Recent hearings and meetings

- Sen. Julie Lassa's Open Burning Citation bill **SB 119** was heard by the Senate Environment Committee. No vote was taken, and the Assembly companion bill **AB 114** still awaits a full vote by that body.
- Rep. Spencer Black and Sen. Mark Miller are holding weekly meetings of the Groundwater Working Group. The group is looking at the current groundwater law to determine if changes or additions are needed.
- The Legislative Council introduced **SB 279**, the Bioenergy Bill, which then went to a hearing before both houses' Renewable Energy Committees. This bill would jumpstart the biofuels industry in Wisconsin.

Recently passed bills

- **SB 241**, Sen. Jim Holperin's bill expanding the width of legal ATVs to 50 inches, passed the Assembly Tourism Committee. It's now ready for a final Assembly vote.

Recently introduced legislation

- Two new Natural Resources Board (NRB) membership requirement bills have been introduced and will be heard by the Assembly Natural Resources Committee this week. Rep. Sue Vruwink introduced **AB 470**, requiring that at least one member of the NRB have "an agricultural background."
Rep. Chris Danou introduced **AB 495**, requiring that beginning in 2014, at least three members of the NRB have held a hunting, fishing or trapping license a minimum of seven of the ten years before the year they were nominated to sit on the board.

- The Climate Change Drafting group also is meeting regularly to draft a bill for this legislative session.

Recently signed into law

- Gov. Jim Doyle signed into law the Mercury Reduction Bill, **SB 200**, introduced by Sen. Robert Jauch. It's now **Wisconsin Act 44**.

Footnote: *Paul Heinen is a policy initiative advisor for the Secretary's Office.*



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New carcass movement restrictions in southern CWD zone

By: Greg Matthews, South Central Region

Hunters and motorists are reminded that new regulations governing the transport of hunter-harvested and vehicle-killed deer from the chronic wasting disease–Management Zone (CWD-MZ) of southern Wisconsin took effect on September 1. The new rules, approved last year by the state Natural Resources Board, DNR's seven citizen-member policy making body, aim to "prevent the tissues most likely to contain CWD from being brought to areas of the state where CWD does not occur and introducing the disease there," noted CWD project leader **Davin Lopez**, Madison.

Under the new regulations, whole deer carcass movement from the CWD-MZ to elsewhere in the state is banned.

Hunters and motorists will be allowed, however, to move whole, registered carcasses of deer shot or hit by a vehicle within the CWD-MZ into a deer management unit (DMU) adjoining the CWD-MZ.

The rule affects carcass movement in 22 DMUs located in all or parts of Adams, Crawford, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Juneau, Kenosha, Lafayette, Marquette, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, Walworth and Waukesha counties.

Also beginning Sept. 1, Wisconsin will restrict the importation of whole cervid carcasses (deer, elk and moose) into the state from areas within states or Canadian provinces that have CWD. The disease has been discovered in wild deer or elk herds in 11 states and two provinces.

There are a number of parts from legally possessed deer, to which the restriction doesn't apply, that can legally be transported anywhere in Wisconsin. These include:

- Meat that's cut and wrapped, either commercially or privately;
- Quarters or other portions of meat to which no part of the spinal column is attached;
- Deboned meat;
- Hides with no head attached;
- Finished taxidermy heads;
- Antlers with no meat or brain tissue attached;
- Skulls with attached antlers, but no meat or brain tissue attached;

- Upper canine teeth;

CWD is an always fatal nervous system disease known to naturally infect whitetailed deer, mule deer, moose and elk. It belongs to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) or prion diseases. Though it shares features with other prion diseases, like mad cow disease in cattle and scrapie in sheep, it's a distinct disease known only to affect members of the deer family.

Footnote: *Greg Matthews, as public affairs manager for the South Central region, has done a lot of work on the CWD issue.*



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Women in Government announces fall Leadership Seminars Unique leadership development opportunity for state's women

Wisconsin Women in Government's (WWIG) new venture will encourage Wisconsin women at all stages of their careers to participate in a series of one-day leadership seminars scheduled across the state this fall. Focusing on creating a more optimal work life, the leadership seminars will help working women learn how to navigate within their organizations, as well as provide tips for better communication, time management, networking, team building and negotiation.

"We are excited to offer this unique leadership development opportunity for women throughout Wisconsin that builds on efforts we've undertaken to advance women in government," said Grace Cudney, WWIG President. "With these new seminars, WWIG is further expanding its reach, providing opportunities for women statewide to gain management, networking and leadership skills and further their careers."

The Thursday seminar series is scheduled in six cities across the state. The La Crosse and Eau Claire sessions already have happened. The remaining venues include:

- **October 27** at the Westwood Conference Center, 1800 Westwood Center Blvd. in Wausau
- **October 29** at the Foley and Lardner Offices, 777 East Wisconsin Ave. in Milwaukee
- **November 5** at the Foley and Lardner Offices, 150 East Gilman St. in Madison
- **November 12** at Heritage Hill State Historical Park, 2640 S. Webster Ave. in Green Bay

Registration will begin at 8 a.m. at each of the locations, with the seminars running from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$30, which includes the seminar fee, lunch and light refreshments throughout the day. The remaining cost of the seminar, which is being presented by Shift Worldwide, is underwritten by WWIG. Women interested in attending can call (608)848-2321 or visit the [Wisconsin Women in Government](#) website for more information and to register.

The work of Wisconsin Women in Government

Founded in 1987, WWIG raises money to support and encourage women to choose a career in government service.

Every year, the organization awards scholarships to women pursuing undergraduate study in government; sponsors the Graduate Seminar to help women managers advance their careers; sponsors the Bonnie Reese Legislative Scholarship; provides scholarships to the young woman elected governor of Badger Girls State and 22 girls attending Girls State; and sponsors five women to attend the National Education for Women Leadership Conference in Milwaukee.



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