



5 RIVERS

TRIBUTARY

Summer 2009

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center
518-475-0291

www.dec.ny.gov (search for Five Rivers)

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Coyotes

The unlucky Wile E. Coyote could have benefited from the characteristics of real coyotes. They are intelligent and resourceful animals—in fact, they are so adaptable that they can live in large numbers near urban areas. The population of coyotes in New York State during the summer is estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000 individuals. They live throughout upstate New York, have been sighted in parts of New York City and are common in the suburbs north of the city.

Their scientific name, *Canis latrans*, means “barking dog.” Coyotes howl to communicate with each other when hunting. In winter, you can often hear their musical chorus after dark.



Coyotes arrived in this part of the country as many New Yorkers abandoned land that had been farmed for generations. No longer used for growing crops and grazing animals, farmland became overgrown with brush and shrubs, providing

excellent coyote habitat. Coyotes moved into the food-web position held by gray wolves and mountain lions in pre-Colonial times.

The omnivorous coyote will eat whatever is available but prefers rabbits and mice. They also eat birds, fish, insects and fruit. Occasionally, coyotes will kill and eat domestic livestock and pets, earning themselves a negative reputation.

An average litter of six to eight pups are born in early spring and are nursed for about six weeks. Then, the parents will bring meat and eventually live prey to enable pups to learn to hunt. Pups may stay with the parents into the following year and help to raise younger brothers and sisters.



Coyotes provide many important environmental benefits. They act as natural sanitation engineers by eating disease-spreading animal carcasses. They also keep the rodent population in check in both agricultural and urban settings.

by Sarah Conley

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
David A. Paterson, Governor Pete Grannis, Commissioner

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center Summer 2009 Program Schedule

Programs are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Participants should dress for the weather. We regret that we cannot accommodate organized youth groups at these programs. In the event of severe weather, programs may be cancelled.

We welcome people with disabilities to all of our programs; call ahead to let us know your needs. For further information, contact Five Rivers at 518-475-0291, or send an e-mail to 5rivers@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

Five Rivers Environmental Education Center is located at 56 Game Farm Road, Delmar, NY 12054.

Tuesday July 7, 7:00 PM

HARD to SWALLOW?

Take part in an outdoor walk to watch the evening feeding flights of swallows as they dip and soar gracefully over the ponds.

Saturday, July 11, 10:00 AM

A DIP (NET) in the POND

Ponds support a fascinating array of animals, from insects to fish and many things in between. During this introduction to the variety of life in and around a pond, we will collect, identify and release pond critters.

Saturday, July 11, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: STREAM STROLLING

Discover the variety of life in and around a stream. We will collect and release stream organisms. Wear water-friendly shoes—please, no sandals or bare feet.

Tuesday, July 14, 7:00 PM

PLANT POSSE

Bring gloves and hand clippers to help us cut phragmites (tall reed grass), an invasive species that is threatening Five Rivers' wetlands. With your help we can beat it back!

Saturday, July 18, 10:00 AM

REMEMBERING CCC CAMP S-72

Seventy-five years ago, Civilian Conservation Corps Camp S-72 was established to create the Delmar Experimental Game Farm. Join us on an historical tour to study this enduring legacy of the Great Depression.

Saturday, July 18, 2:00 PM

Creature Feature: BEAVER

In summer, there's no such thing as an eager beaver. No seasonal floods require dam repair, the kits are being weaned, and there's plenty of succulent new growth to enjoy. Join us on an outdoor foray to monitor summer "activity" of beaver and other pond inhabitants.

Tuesday, July 21, 7:00 PM

NIGHTWALK: BATS

We'll enjoy an indoor presentation on the bats of New York State, followed by an evening stroll ending at the Jones Barn, where we will watch bats emerge for their nightly foraging.

Saturday, July 25, 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM

Family Fun: HOME TWEET HOME

Join us for a nature walk with activities about bird nests of all shapes and sizes. Fun for the whole family! Register by July 21.

Tuesday, July 28, 7:30 PM

FIREFLY WATCH

Remember catching fireflies as a kid? Join us for an evening walk to take a census of fireflies, and learn about how we can better manage habitats to help these magical beetles.

LIVING ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE

❖ Invasive Plants and Wildlife ❖

"The Good, the Bad and the Really Bad"

Monday, August 3 through Friday, August 7

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM each day

During this week of hands-on science for teachers and youth group leaders, we will look at native, non-native and invasive plants and animals and consider how they affect our environment. Field trips include seining the Hudson River and walking at Thatcher Park, the Pine Bush and along the Erie Canal/Mohawk River. Speakers from NYSDEC, the NY State Museum and Five Rivers will present the program and will be available as a resource for participants throughout the school year.

Participants will receive field guides and other materials for use with their classes. Dress for the outdoors, and bring a lunch. Beverages and snacks will be provided. 25 hours of in-service credit available. \$40 materials fee.

Call 518-475-0291 by July 28 to register.

Saturday, August 1, 10:00 AM

ANIMAL OPEN HOUSE

Come get up close and personal with some of the center's residents. Learn about what they eat and how they are cared for. Then take a walk to visit their native habitats.

Saturday, August 1, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: LADYBUG PICNIC

Bring your picnic blanket to sit on while we play nature games and make a ladybug craft you can take home. Please register by July 28. \$2 materials fee.

Tuesday, August 4, 7:00 PM

NIGHTWALK: BATS

Join us for an indoor presentation on bats of New York State, followed by an evening stroll ending at the Jones Barn, where we will watch bats emerge for their nightly foraging.

Saturday, August 8, 10:00 AM

Family Fun: EDIBLE GEOLOGY

We'll start indoors to see and touch examples of different types of rocks. Then we'll make edible replicas! The program will finish with an outdoor rock hunt. Register by August 6. \$2 materials fee per family.

Saturday, August 8, 2:00 PM

GEOLOGY of the VLOMANKILL

Take part in a geology walk down the Vlomankill valley to look at the unusual rock formations and get hands-on with specific rocks found in the area.

Tuesday, August 11, 7:00 PM

TURTLES in the POND

Meet some live turtles up close, and then go for a walk to search for turtles in and around the ponds at Five Rivers. Learn why these ancient reptiles are important and how we can help them.

Saturday, August 15, 10:00 AM

Watchable Wildlife: WATERFOWL

In addition to raising upland game birds, the Delmar Experimental Game Farm dabbled in waterfowl propagation. Join us on an outdoor survey of our ponds as we take a gander at common ducks and geese.

Saturday, August 15, 2:00 PM

Family Fun: BUTTERFLY COUNT

Join us for a close-up look at common butterflies of the Capital District as we continue our catch-and-release bio-monitoring. Nets or binoculars welcome. Register by August 11.

Tuesday, August 18, 7:00 PM

GOLDENROD MAGIC

Learn to appreciate the golden beauty of goldenrod. Five Rivers is home to several of New York's two-dozen-plus species of goldenrod. No need to fear--they don't cause hay fever! We'll discuss historic uses of goldenrod for magic and medicine and look at other wildflowers as well.

Fri-Sat, August 21-22, 6:00 PM until 10:00 AM

FAMILY CAMPOUT

Our annual campout here at the center is a gentle and safe way to introduce your family to tent camping. You provide Friday supper, and we provide Saturday breakfast and lots of experiences, including a nature walk and a campfire. We have a few tents and sleeping bags to loan. Register by August 1. Friends of Five Rivers members, \$10 per family; non-members, \$15 per family.

Saturday, August 22, 10:00 AM

SQUIRRELS

This area is home to six species of squirrels. Join us for an indoor presentation on these resourceful rodents. A walk to look for signs of these surprisingly complicated critters will follow.

Saturday, August 22, 2:00 PM

WORLD of WEASELS

New York is home to seven members of the weasel family: striped skunk, marten, fisher, river otter, shorttail and longtail weasel and mink. Come and learn about some of the world's unique weasel species, and then join us outdoors for a walk to discuss weasel habitats and prey.

Tuesday, August 25, 7:00 PM

Family Fun: INSECTS

Take a walk to find, catch and learn about some of the insects that make Five Rivers their home. Then we'll release our finds back into their habitat.

Saturday, August 29, 9:00 AM

ROGER TORY PETERSON'S BIRDS

Through his *Field Guide to Birds*, Roger Tory Peterson launched our national preoccupation with bird watching and bird conservation. Join us on a commemorative field study of birds, the "environmental litmus paper," as we celebrate the date of the late Dr. Peterson's birth 101 years ago.

Saturday, August 29, 2:00 PM

BERRIED TREASURE

Wild fruits are important food sources for wildlife at this time of year, and the competition is keen. Join us on an outdoor survey of nature's bounty, and see who's eating what.