

*Public Is Invited*

# Marietta Natural History Society

**Winter 2003**

## ***There is a Kroger Wetland in Our Future***

*Thursday, January 9, 6:00 PM*

*Potluck Dinner*

*St. Lukes Lutheran Church  
4<sup>th</sup> and Scammel Sts.*

**Presenter: Doug Bensman**

Marietta is the proud protector of the recently acquired Kroger Wetland. Doug Bensman, Wildlife Specialist, Washington Soil and Water Conservation District, will be talking to us about the future of this important wildlife refuge. MNHS will provide soup and crackers. If you would like a sandwich with your soup, bring it with you. If you are a passionate potluck, bring some dessert to share.

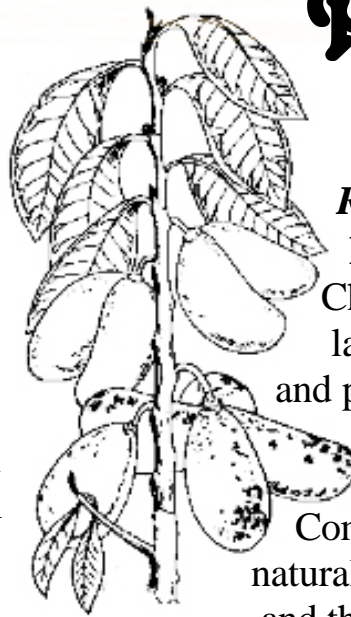
## ***Eastern Spadefoot Toads of Ohio***

*Thursday, March 13, 7:00 PM*

*Thomas Hall, Room 124*

*Marietta College*

**Presenter: Dr. Scott Moody**  
**Zoology Department,**  
**Ohio University**



## **Pawpaws**

*Thursday, February 13,*

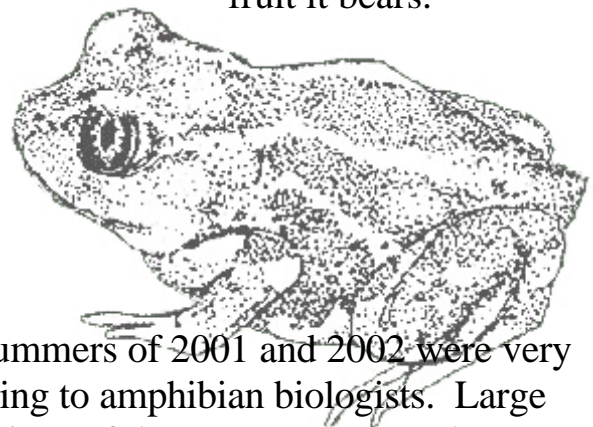
*7:00 PM Thomas Hall,*

*Room 124 Marietta College*

**Presenter: Chris Chemiel**

Chris Chemiel is the world's largest producer of pawpaws and pawpaw products and is the founder of the Ohio Pawpaw Growers Assn.

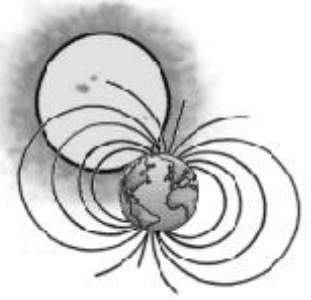
Come and hear about the natural history of the pawpaw tree and the economic potential of the fruit it bears.



The summers of 2001 and 2002 were very exciting to amphibian biologists. Large populations of the State Endangered Eastern Spadefoot Toad were discovered in Athens and Lawrence Counties and a small breeding population was confirmed in Reno (in our own 'backyard'). Come learn more about these interesting denizens of their sandy habitat.



*Night Lights.* "Aurora Borealis" means "northern dawn" in Latin and describes the aurora of the northern hemisphere. Also called the Northern Lights, this atmospheric display is most evident in the darkness of the dayless polar winter, and occasionally as far south as the northern United States. The phenomenon is created when charged particles from the sun are pulled into the atmosphere by the earth's magnetic field near the magnetic poles. When these particles collide with atmospheric gases such as oxygen and nitrogen at an altitude of several kilometers, some of the energy is converted into visible light. The 'curtains' of light observed in the Aurora reflect the patterns of the magnet fields. The Aurora Borealis is well illuminated at the Northern Lights web site, a joint venture between Andøya Rocket Range, Norwegian Space Centre and Nordlyssenteret; <http://www.northern-lights.no>.



## Bird Feeder Watch Time

Despite the dearth of pertinent information in the previous newsletter, there is still plenty of time to participate in this winter's bird feeder watch. Its very easy, and a great activity for kids and adults. Every other weekend record the types and numbers of birds that frequent your feeders. A handy form is available from the MNHS (contact Ava Bradley at 373-5790). You don't have to make observations every counting weekend for your counts to still be valuable. Any good bird identification book will make it easy for you to learn to identify the birds that are common in your yard.



### Amended Membership

Oops... the following names were left off the MNHS membership list in the previous newsletter:

Barbara Tabor  
 Cynthia Ting  
 Bill (II) & Elsa Thompson  
 Bill (III) & Julie Thompson  
 Anita Wall  
 Dianne Veza

## Multiflora Rose: The Tenacious Invasive by Marilyn Ortt

The invasive, non-native plant species that has had the most impact on life, the environment and the economy of southeastern Ohio is probably multiflora rose. For this reason, its name is not usually spoken by landowners without a few carefully selected and heartfelt adjectives.

This rose is a native of East Asia and was introduced to this country in the 1940's. It soon became the darling of several agricultural agencies and departments of natural resources here in the eastern part of the country.

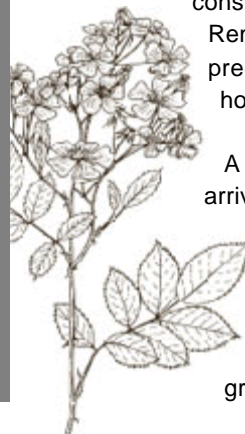
Farmers can remember being sent bundles of whips to plant – this was going to be the ultimate 'living fence', which is how it was promoted by nurseries, and back covers of magazines. No more barbed wire – instead lines of this beautifully mounded rose would delineate the perimeter of the pasture.

The arching canes would provide cover for wildlife and the abundant fragrant white flowers in spring would be aesthetically pleasing. Even better, those abundant flowers develop into abundant rose hips that provide winter food for wildlife. Beats dealing with barbed wire any day.

And everyone likes plants that are easy to grow. Unfortunately, it is sometimes a thin line between 'easy to grow' and 'rampant, aggressive growth' – something to consider when buying nursery stock.

Removed from the natural controls such as predators, climate and diseases in its homeland, there was no holding it back.

A few recipients did exercise caution. A friend once told me his multiflora plants arrived when he didn't have time to plant them so he healed them in near a shed and sort of forgot about them. When he saw how enthusiastically they were growing later in the year, he eradicated them then and there. Just the rate of growth alarmed him.



See Rose, page 4

# January 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day	2 ●	3 Peak Of Quadrantid Meteors	4 Earth At Perihelion
5	6	7	8	9 MNHS Meeting	10 ●	11 ☾
Tie Down Old Christmas Tree Near Bird Feeder For Wildlife Cover						
12 ☾	13	14	15	16	17	18 ○
Have You Cleaned Out Bird Houses?						
Red-Tailed Hawks Scanning For Field Mice						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 ☾ ●
Thistle-Heads Still Standing Tall in Fields						
26 ☾	27	28	29	30	31	
Beavers Begin breeding						
Freezing Nights & Warm Days Start Maple Sap Flowing						

Bird Silhouette Indicates Bird Feeder Watch Days



# March 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 ●	4	5	6	7 ☾	8 ☾
Earliest Warblers Herald Massive Spring Migration						
9 ☾	10	11 ●	12	13 MNHS Meeting	14	15
Vultures Scavenging Winter's Harvest						
16	17	18 ○	19	20	21	22 ☾
Migrating Bluebirds Are Arriving Daily						
23 ☾	24	25 ●	26	27	28	29
Temperatures Above 60 Degrees, Rabbits Start Breeding						
30	31 Red Maples Flowering?	 Recycled Paper 50% Total Recovered Fiber 20% Post-Consumer				

**Suggestions, Comments or Contributions for the MNHS Newsletter?**  
 Send them to the Editor:  
 625 5<sup>th</sup> St Marietta, OH 45750  
 374-8778 spilatrs@marietta.edu

# February 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February 1 is the Chinese New Year – designated to occur on the day of the second new moon after the winter solstice.						1 ●
2 Ground-hog Day	3	4	5	6	7	8 ☾
Keep Bird Feeders Stocked						
Groundhogs Breed Through March (Still In Underground?)						
9 ☾ ●	10	11	12	13 MNHS Meeting	14	15
Moles Active Underground						
16 ○	17	18	19	20	21	22 ☾
Try Using Non-Salt Deicer						
Mourning Cloak Butterflies Out On Warm Days						
23 ☾ ●	24	25 Peepers Peeping Yet?	26	27	28 (Guess Whose Birthday?)	
If Snow On Ground Look For Animal Tracks						

Dinner with the speakers



**We will meet at 5:30 at the Oak Star Restaurant**

Check first with Diane (373-8031), Marilyn (373-3372) or Elsa (373-5285). to be sure speaker will be there. Members should make their own reservations.

**Rose, Cont.**

But that did not stop multiflora rose from becoming a dominant plant in the fields he allowed to go fallow. Many of his neighbors didn't recognize the threat so there was a ready source of seed.

Germination studies evidently raised no red flag but apparently no one thought to scarify the seed coating, which is what happens when the seeds pass through the craw of birds. The smooth hard covering of the seed is scarred sufficiently that the seeds sprout readily. This does not just happen in the fencerows but in the middle of pastures and in woodlands – wherever the bird happens to be when it is eliminating the seed from its digestive system complete with a small packet of fertilizer. Scientists say it takes food an average of ten minutes to pass through the digestive system of a bird so the species probably spread in 10-minute flight-distance increments.

In woodlands, the plants tend to be gangly and not develop into quite the dense mound that it does in the open. It does continue to grow and if there is sufficient light can clamber up into surrounding trees – I have seen it fifteen feet above the ground. It can certainly crowd out woodland wildflowers by physical displacement and by altering the amount of sunlight or nutrients.

In the open, however, multiflora rose develops to its full potential. Forming impenetrable mounds of thorny canes cascading from the center, up to ten feet tall and ten feet wide, it becomes a monster.

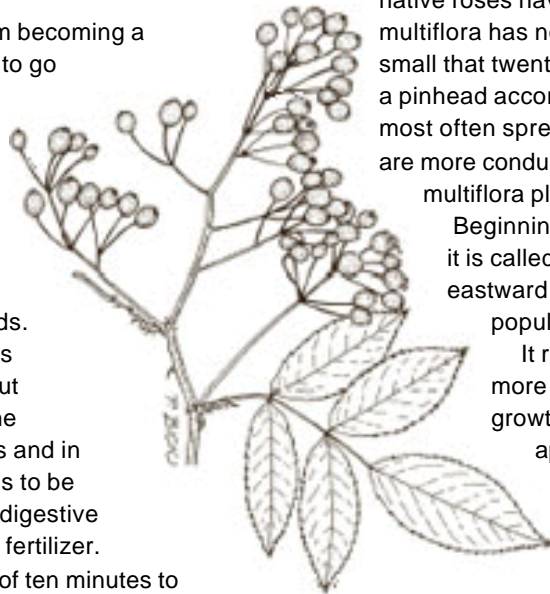
Several of these monsters in a pasture can impact forage production for livestock.

The threat to local farmers was not readily understood in agency offices most of which are located in the glaciated part of the state. They were advised that control could be achieved by mowing pastures once a year. Good advice on flat land but not a safe option in the hill country. Besides there was all the fallow land where the rose was becoming established and providing a seed source.

Hand-to-hand combat is time consuming and usually results in loss of blood on the warrior's part. An easier way was to use herbicide. Hundreds of thousands of tax dollars as well as personal investment have been spent trying to control multiflora rose. The species is unusually resistant to a number of herbicides and it is sobering to examine the history of herbicides recommended during the past fifty years.

Many are no longer on the market because of the extreme toxicity to aquatic life and surrounding vegetation. Some apparently caused health problems for the person applying them. Barbed wire is looking better all the time.

The good news is that as multiflora rose moved westward it reached an area that had a latent virus that



native roses have developed resistance toward but multiflora has none. The virus is spread by a mite so small that twenty of them could stand side by side on a pinhead according to one source. The mites are most often spread by wind so warm sunny summers are more conducive to its spread. Once infected, a multiflora plant will usually die within three years.

Beginning in 1985, the rose rosette disease, as it is called, began to be tracked working its way eastward and northward from Missouri through populations of multiflora.

It reached our area in the late 1980's and more of the typical red, stunted spring growth of the leaves and red canes are apparent each year.

New plants are still getting started so it is not unusual to see the huge mounds of dead shrubs with younger plants nearby that have not yet

contacted the virus. Their time will come.

After fifty years of battle, tons of herbicides and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on research and possible solutions, we may be saved by a mite!

One more bit of irony – there is concern in Japan about what will happen to their roses if the virus should arrive in that country.

## The BookWorm

### *Recent Acquisitions on Natural History at the Washington County Public Library*



**Gould, Stephen Jay. *I have landed: the end of a beginning in natural history*. Harmony Books, 2002. Call # 578**

This fascinating posthumous collection of essays from naturalist Stephen Jay Gould's writings for *Natural History* magazine is an intellectually thrilling journey into the nature of scientific discovery. This is Gould's most personal work to date and one that reflects the complexity, breadth of knowledge, and optimism that characterized Gould himself.

*Thanks to the Washington County Public Library*

**Note: many of us will mark the recent passing of Stephen Jay Gould as a great loss to the study and description of natural history.**

## Winter activities at *the Wilds*

Explore the 14-square miles of the Wilds with a naturalist. Programs run from 10 am to 4 pm and are limited to 20 people (first come, first serve), so please call or email ahead and reserve a spot. Fees are only \$6 for kids and \$7 for adults and Wild's members get a \$1 discount. Note: prices subject to change.

### Jan 11 – Winter Hawk – Watching Birds of Prey

The Wilds is home to many types of raptors in the wintertime. The open grasslands attract short-eared owls, harriers, rough-legged and red-tailed hawks, and even golden eagles are seen in the winter. Bring your binoculars and spotting scopes if you have them.

### Feb 8 – Hungermoon – Survival and Bushwakin

February is the month when many animals are the hardest pressed to find food. Wander some of the out back areas of the Wilds and learn about how people can survive the tough rigors of wild winters.

### Mar 8 – Bison-Tennial

Celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Ohio with one of the native large animals at the Wilds!

*To make reservations or if you have questions about these activities, contact Al Parker, Conservation Educator at the Wilds, at [aparker@thewilds.org](mailto:aparker@thewilds.org) or call 740-638-2116.*

## Frog Biodiversity Bonanza

Discovery of new populations of the Eastern Spadefoot Toad in our area is good news. Even more remarkable is the recent discovery of over 100 new species of frogs in a patch of rain forest in Sri Lanka. The discovery came from a wildlife survey of Sri Lanka's diminishing rainforest (only 750 of an original 15,000 square miles remain).

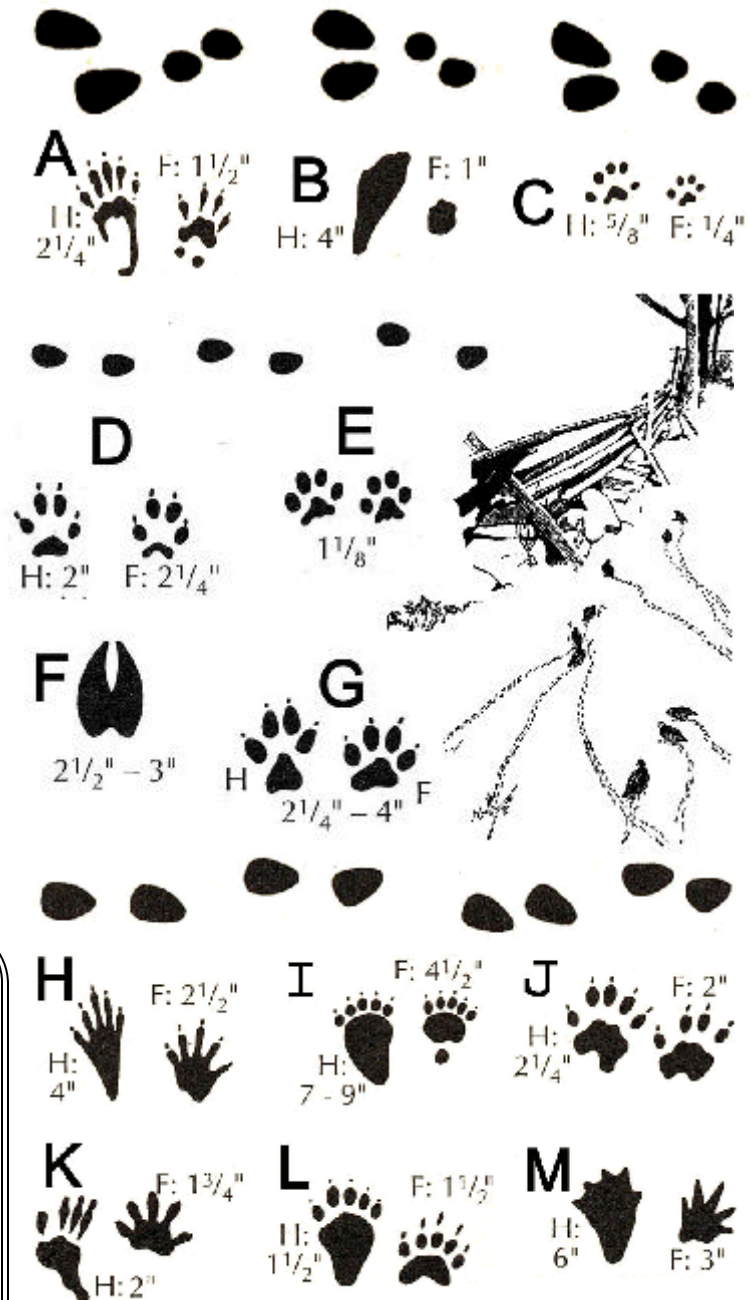
The frogs fall into two groups. One group includes only five species, all of which lay eggs in a foamy mass on leaves, branches or rocks extending over water. After hatching and growing to a size that puts them out of danger from many aquatic predators, the tadpoles slide into the water to complete their development.

The majority of the species form a second group that hatch as miniature adults, skipping the tadpole stage, and are able to mature without 'getting their feet wet', so to speak.

There is much evidence that many frog species have already been driven to extinction. Hopefully, these and others can yet be saved.

## Leaving A Good Impression

A light snow covering or muddy ground will readily preserve evidence of animal visitation. While not all of these animals will be active in the winter, why not test your ability to identify the tracts shown below. Answers are given below.



### Animal Track Quiz Answers

A - gray squirrel	G - dog
B - cottontail rabbit	F - deer
C - white footed mouse	D - fox
E - cat	K - opossum
I - black bear	J - woodchuck
H - raccoon	L - skunk
M - beaver	

# Invite a Friend to Join the Marietta Natural History Society



Benefits of

Membership

Monthly programs

Field trips

Quarterly newsletter

Educational experiences  
for kids and adults

Conservation Projects

Wood Thrush — Individual \$15

River Otter — Family \$25

Monarch — Friend \$50

Why not give a gift membership?

Mail check to address given below

## *The MNHS Mission*

- i To foster awareness of and sensitivity to our environment and its biodiversity
- i To provide a place where people with these interests can gather for information and activity
- i To create a presence in our community representing these ideas



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