



# Preserve!

FRIENDS OF THE LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE

FALL 2023

## Barred Owls: Lakeshore Nature Preserve's Woodland Natives

Yara AL-Rayyan

The UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve serves as a sanctuary for a diverse array of bird species, including the captivating barred owl (*Strix varia*). These predatory birds are a common sight in the wooded landscapes of Wisconsin, finding an ideal habitat in the Preserve's blend of woodlands and water bodies.

Known for their preference for mature forests, barred owls are often found near wetlands, swamps and rivers. Their favored nesting spots are cedar, fir, spruce and pine trees. Old-growth forests offer abundant large cavities in trees for nesting, providing these owls with the

spaces they need. The owls also seek out trees with dense foliage, ensuring ample protection for themselves and their offspring. While their primary nesting choice is tree cavities, they have been observed repurposing abandoned nests of other large birds, such as hawks or crows, to raise their young.

The name "barred" refers to their distinctive pattern of bars or stripes on their plumage. These alternating light and dark bands are prominent on the bird's chest, belly, and lower part of their wings, which give the owl its name. Barred owls primarily prey on small mammals, but they also consume fish, snakes, crawfish and frogs. The Preserve, with its diverse habitats, furnishes both aquatic and terrestrial prey, ensuring ample food sources for the owls.

Barred owls tend to be sedentary, remaining in the same general area throughout the year if resources are sufficient. However, their populations can be negatively impacted by habitat loss due to deforestation, urbanization and increased human activity. Thus, preserving their natural habitats, including the diverse tree species found in the Preserve, is crucial for maintaining their populations.

During the breeding season, which usually occurs during late winter and early spring, barred owls lay two to four eggs. Both parents share the responsibility of incubating them for approximately one

month. Once hatched, the young owlets remain in the nest for several weeks, during which time they are cared for and fed by their parents. As they grow, the young barred owls gradually gain independence and begin exploring the surrounding trees, including oaks and conifers found in the Preserve.

While barred owls are not currently classified as threatened or endangered in Wisconsin or the US, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has controlled their populations in the Northwest to aid in the recovery of threatened spotted owl populations. Nevertheless, barred owls are still commonly found in the Madison area, contributing to the region's biodiversity and offering a thrilling sight for birdwatchers.

The presence of barred owls in the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve highlights the importance of conserving mature forests and wetlands. By protecting these habitats, we ensure the continued existence of these captivating native birds and contribute to the overall health of the ecosystem, securing a thriving future for both barred owls and the Preserve's natural spaces.

### BABY OWL RESCUE!

See page 2 for a dramatic story of a baby owl rescue in the Preserve



A mature barred owl watches human activity far below.  
Photo: Heidi Sonnenburg, April 2023

## Adventures of a Daring Baby Barred Owl

Glenda Denniston

On April 11, 2023, as I arrived at the Frautschi Point parking lot, I noticed a man unloading from his van what looked like a live trap. When I asked what kind of animal he was trapping, he told me he was there to pick up a baby owl. Of course I followed him far into the Preserve.

On a trail in Second Point Woods, Heidi Sonnenburg was waiting with their dog, Athena. She had been walking Athena on a path she took regularly when the dog alerted her to what looked like a pile of feathers. On closer inspection she found it to be a baby owl, almost unresponsive at first but gradually more and more active. She called her husband for help and he came to join her.

They then called Dane County Humane Society, specifying their location and promising to stay until an expert arrived. The wildlife expert considered the owl too small to be out of the nest yet, even though an adult owl was in the vicinity, watching every human move and obviously looking after the youngster. The expert tried to locate the nest hole from which the owl had fallen but could not find it. His job was to take the owlet to the rehabilitation station, have it checked for injuries, and if in good shape, have a trained arborist return the next day to replace it in its nest. I remembered

having been told of a barred owl nest in the area the previous year. I thought it possible that the owls had used the same nest hole, so I said I'd try to track down the tree and would tie pink flagging tape around the base of the tree with last year's nest hole.

As it turned out, nobody seemed to know the location of last year's nest tree. Since I had said I would mark the tree, I felt obligated to find it myself, so I spent quite a long time, slowly inspecting with binoculars the trunk of every big tree in the area. These included large pines as well as oaks and basswood. I could see no indication of a hole in any tree but kept imagining I saw an owl. When I scanned once again, I found that the owl was not imaginary! What I had been seeing was the very top of an adult barred owl's head. The nest hole could not be seen from the ground, but a portion of the owl head could. It was very high up in a massive red oak. I tied pieces of tape together and marked the tree.

Laura Wyatt, Interim Director of the Preserve, approved the arborist, and the Humane Society then notified Heidi. She was there the next day when he climbed high up the tree and carefully placed the owlet back in its hole. He also snapped a photo of the nest; and another baby owl

appeared at the back of the nest hole! The parent owls had even placed two small dead rodents inside. Mission accomplished – or so we thought!

The next day, Heidi and Athena once more walked the same path. Uh oh. The owlet was again on the ground. Again, she called the wildlife people. This time, though, the rescuers conferred with Preserve staff and received permission to install a box near the nest hole. It was put up on the opposite side of the tree trunk and the adventuresome owlet placed in it. The problem seemed to be that there were few suitable tree limbs on the side with the nest hole, so the babies had difficulty performing the "branching" behavior that they normally would do, gradually jumping and fluttering from branch to branch until they were capable of longer flights. Instead, one brave owlet had jumped straight out into nothingness and fell to the ground far below. Because this baby owl was possibly mostly cartilage and feathers instead of mature bone, the falls were not dangerous.

The opposite side of the tree where the box was installed had more nearby branches. There were no further mishaps. Many people who had heard about the owls tried to see them, but



*The escapee.*

Photo: Heidi Sonnenburg, April 2023



*Safe in a newly-placed box.*

Photo: Heidi Sonnenburg, April 2023



there were no further sightings reported. Heidi, however, was walking Athena about a week after the box was installed; when she looked up, she noticed a baby owl in the box. On another day she saw an adult owl and both babies in a tree not far from the box. Since that time, other passersby too have reported barred owls in the vicinity. This successful rescue operation depended on insight and expertise from Preserve visitors, the Dane County Humane Society, wildlife experts, an arborist, the UW Preserve Office and a Preserve Steward. Perhaps we should also include Athena, who first found the daring owlet.



*The immense red oak, home to a barred owl family, and the box.*

Photo: Glenda Denniston, April 2023

## Harmonious Noise: Us, Everything Else, and the Preserve Audio Trail

*Will Vuyk*

Out in the Preserve, there's a lot to listen to: birds, bugs, amphibians, traffic, marching bands and emergency medevac helicopters.

This remarkable soundscape keeps us grounded. The Preserve is an urban natural area enmeshed within our collective, spontaneous noisiness. With all this competition for our eardrums, it can be easy to miss one of the Preserve's most marvelous audible features. The Preserve Audio Trail harmoniously weaves science, history and art together across 37 "story spots" from Muir Woods to Eagle Heights. The human and the non-human collide into a singular outdoor auditory experience you can only find in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

As of this summer, the Preserve Audio Trail now features original nature poetry live recorded at our "It's in Our Nature" open mic events. The nine different writers who contributed their work and their voices to the trail range from award-winning authors to first-time presenters. The empathy and artistry of poetry complements the instructional tone of the rest of the audio trail, inviting listeners to observe and experience in their own way. In his poem "In Sight," poet Paul Noeldner implores listeners to open up and receive the outside world as it is:

The immediacy and the power of spoken word captures a peculiar magic in the human experience. We are fleeting, loud creatures who find awe, insight and solace in the world beyond ourselves. The Preserve exists at this noisy interface between what is ours and what is more than any of us. In telling stories both human and greater-than-human, the Preserve Audio Trail situates itself right at that boundary – and blurs it.

Look for discretely placed signs throughout the Preserve and have your phone handy to call the listed number. Whether you seek guidance or individual insight in your wanderings, give the audio trail a listen. Open yourself up to the contradictions, the reality, the harmonious noise. You never know what you might find!

More information about the trail is available at:

<https://lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/preserve-audio-trail-class-of-1918-marsh-audio-field-trip/>

<https://www.friendslakeshorepreserve.com/poetry.html>

### *In Sight*

*Paul Noeldner*

You always see more  
Of what you're looking for  
If you're looking for a window  
You might not see a door  
In that flock up on the line  
There's one bird another kind  
So keep an open mind  
You never know what you might find



# Fall & Winter Field Trips

## September

### 1 Centipedes, Millipedes and Spiders, Oh My!

*Friday, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.*

Join Ben Klementz, UW Integrative Biology graduate student in the Sharma Lab, on a tour of the Preserve to meet many-legged arachnid and myriapod (centipede and millipede) species, including soil-dwelling pseudoscorpions, arboreal spiders and daddy longlegs. We will learn how to identify each group and their unique adaptations for foraging, reproduction and defense. Since many of our charismatic arthropods are nocturnal, our trip will be in the evening, so come prepared with flashlights or headlamps. If you would like to flip logs or stones, you may want to wear clean work gloves. Avoid any bug spray because even a little can repel our “animals of interest.” Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk (2000 University Bay Drive). Leader: Ben Klementz (bklementz@wisc.edu).

### 17 Fall Migrating Birds

*Sunday, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.*

Join birders Jill Feldkamp and Roma Lenehan as they search for fall migrants, including fall warblers, flycatchers and sparrows. Enjoy hiking through woods, prairies and gardens. Meet at the Frautschi Point parking lot, 2662 Lake Mendota Drive. Leaders: Jill Feldkamp and Roma Lenehan (rlenehan@charter.net, 608-238-5406).

### 24 Fascinating Fungi (FUN)

*Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.*

Join Marie Trest with the UW Department of Botany for a free guided outing to look for and learn about some of the amazing varieties of colorful and fascinating fungi; also see common species that you might find along the trails. Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Marie Trest (mttrest@wisc.edu).

## October

### 8 Forest Bathing

*Sunday, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.*

Spending time in nature is known to elicit many beneficial changes in the

## LOOK OUT FOR POP-UP FIELD TRIPS!

Would you like to look for mud puppies or enjoy the views of tundra swans through spotting scopes—with experts? Watch for emails from the Friends and check our website for these pop-up field trips this fall. And we will again host an open mic poetry session in February and a nature writing workshop. Look for announcements in your email inbox and on the web.

body and mind. The practice of being mindfully immersed in the forest atmosphere (called forest bathing) can be a portal to better health and well-being. On this walk we'll explore the concept of forest bathing and discuss the science behind the healing power of nature. Group size is limited to twenty people. Reserve your place early by registering at <https://tinyurl.com/FLNPFforestBathing>. Meet at the Frautschi Point parking lot, 2662 Lake Mendota Drive. Leader: Seth McGee (seth.mcgee@wisc.edu).

### 22 Poetry in the Preserve (FUN)

*Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.*

In the beauty of autumn, a poem hides under every leaf and behind every snowflake. Experience poems collected from our annual “It's In Our Nature” open mic event and bring your own poem or reading to share! Join Friends President Will Vuyk and Friends of Urban Nature (FUN) ambassador Paul Noeldner for this literary excursion. Take a walk on your own and write a short Haiku about the beauty around you! Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leaders: Will Vuyk (wvuyk@wisc.edu) and Paul Noeldner (paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com).

### 29 Trees of the Preserve

*Sunday, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.*

Join Paul Quinlan, former board member and Conservation Resource Supervisor for the City of Madison Parks, to learn how to identify various tree species. Hear about their ecological context and also observe their site preferences as we walk through diverse habitats. Bring a tree ID guide and binoculars, if you wish, but they

are not necessary. Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Paul Quinlan (paul\_quinlan@att.net, 608-469-2164).

## November

### 4 Effigy Mounds on the UW-Madison Campus

*Saturday, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.*

Archaeologist Amy Rosebrough will lead us on a mile or so walk from Observatory Hill to Willow Drive, sharing her knowledge of the history and nature of effigy mounds created a thousand years ago on what is now the UW-Madison campus. The tour will include a stop at the Ho-Chunk Clan Circle sculptures, installed in May, 2023. The coauthor of *Indian Mounds of Wisconsin*, second ed., Amy Rosebrough is both authoritative and approachable. Meet at the Washburn Observatory, 1401 Observatory Drive. Leader: Amy Rosebrough. (amy.rosebrough@wisconsinhistory.org).

### 5 Geologic History of the Preserve and Madison Lakes

*Sunday, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.*

Philip Fauble, geologist with the Department of Natural Resources, will reveal the stories the rocks can tell us, from tropical Paleozoic seas to our current landscape as it was left by glaciers 25,000 years ago. Walk with him from the Lake Mendota shore at Raymer's Cove up to the vistas in Eagle Heights woods. Carpool to and meet at Raymer's Cove parking lot, 2900 Lake Mendota Drive. Leader: Philip Fauble (Philip.Fauble@wisconsin.gov).

**26 Fun Fall Birding (FUN)**  
*Sunday, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.*

Join birders Chuck Henikson and Paul Noeldner along with other experienced and beginning birders for a free, family-friendly guided bird walk. Enjoy the wonderful variety of migrating birds that visit the lakeshore and large natural areas of the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve. University Bay is an important rest stop for waterfowl during fall migration. We will look for large white tundra swans, beautiful buffleheads, comical chattering coots, diving grebes and mergansers as well as common loons making their wild calls. The Preserve also hosts year-round residents like black-capped chickadees, nuthatches, barred owls, tree sparrows and juncos, moving south to Wisconsin for the season. Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leaders: Chuck Henrikson (ckhenrikson@gmail.com) and Paul Noeldner (paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com).

**December**

**9 Are You There, Insects? It's Me, Winter!**

*Saturday, Noon – 2:00 p.m.*

Have you ever wondered where insects are in the cold winter months or how they survive? Join Gigi Melone, graduate student and member of the Insect Ambassador Group, for a talk

and scavenger hunt for overwintering insects. We will learn about the clever mechanisms insects use to survive freezing temperatures and how we can engage in insect conservation beyond planting gardens and avoiding pesticides. Lecture room TBA. Leader: Gigi Melone (gmelone@wisc.edu).

**24 A Holiday Walk: The Friends' Favorite Places (FUN)**

*Sunday, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.*

Need a nature break from the festivities? Join Master Naturalist Paul Noeldner and Friends board members for a family-friendly guided walk on easy hiking paths through the Preserve. Learn about the places they love and hear about Friends' citizen science and volunteer projects. Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Paul Noeldner. (paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com).

**January**

**28 Winter Wonderland (FUN)**

*Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.*

Enjoy a winter walk at the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve in January. Join Master Naturalist Paul Noeldner and take in some of winter's magic! Stop to reflect on the small, surprising beauty of green moss peeping from a log or rock. Look for amazing ice sculptures along the shoreline. Watch for animal tracks! Meet at the Picnic Point

entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Paul Noeldner (paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com).

**February**

**25 Winter Birds (FUN)**

*Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.*

Join our birding guide Chuck Henrikson for a walk in the Preserve to see winter birds. Even with ice and snow, there are beautiful, bright noisy birds to encounter at the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve: blue jays, cardinals, tufted titmice, woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, wild turkeys, owls and more! Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leader: Chuck Henrikson. (ckhenrikson@gmail.com).

**March**

**24 Early Migrants (FUN)**

*Sunday, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.*

Join our birding guides Chuck Henrikson and Master Naturalist Paul Noeldner for early spring magic! The equinox says that spring has sprung. The bays, shorelines, woodlands, marshes and prairies of the Preserve offer food and shelter for a variety of bird species. This means the Preserve is a great place to find returning migrants. Meet at the Picnic Point entrance kiosk, 2000 University Bay Drive. Leaders: Chuck Henrikson and Paul Noeldner (paul\_noeldner@hotmail.com).

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*Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*





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# Monitoring Amphibians (Frogs), Then and Now

Yara AL-Rayyan and MJ Morgan

The Friends are collaborating with the Jessica Hua Lab and other nature organizations around Madison in an exciting new citizen science initiative. The Friends of Amphibians will collect data on amphibian species diversity and water quality, especially noting impacts of pollution, pathogens and human presence. This can involve listening for frog calls and trills, eye-witness counts and sightings, assessment of tadpole populations and water sampling. Diverse methods of collection ensure a more robust monitoring.

Interest in amphibian populations has evolved slowly. In 1965, Michigan researchers into leopard frog movements were using spools of thread mounted on frog backs; the thread unwound as the frogs darted and hopped through underbrush, mainly at night. Tracking the thread produced a physical schematic of frog movements but was limited and problematic. Radio telemetry and the recording and analysis of frog calls emerged in the next half century and are now widely used. Concern for amphibian populations in

Wisconsin has yielded some modest gains in frog status. See student board member Yara AL-Rayyan’s carefully researched chart below on frog species and DNR status in the Preserve, 2001-2022. Frog populations are often used to assess the health of a particular ecosystem; abundant and diverse frogs signal a healthy food chain, as frogs eat a plethora of insects and invertebrates and are themselves important prey for many birds and mammals. Consider participating in the Friends of Amphibians’ monitoring program through the Friends. Contact President Will Vuyk or board member Josh Sulman to join this citizen science initiative.



UW Preserve staff captured this leopard frog in its favorite hangout of plant debris.

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\*Indicates new members

## FROG AND TOAD STATUS IN THE UW LAKESHORE NATURE PRESERVE: 2001 VS. 2022

Data Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Kapfer, J. M., & Brown, D. J. (2022) Amphibians and Reptiles of Wisconsin

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	WI STATUS IN 2001	WI STATUS IN 2022
American Bullfrog *	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>	Locally common but rarely abundant	Rare to uncommon, but locally abundant where present
Boreal Chorus Frog *	<i>Pseudacris maculata</i>	Common	Common
Cope's Gray Treefrog	<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>	Locally common but declining	Common
Eastern American Toad	<i>Anaxyrus americanus</i>	Common	Common
Eastern Gray Treefrog	<i>Hyla versicolor</i>	Common and increasing	Common
Green Frog	<i>Lithobates clamitans</i>	Common and stable	Common
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Lithobates pipiens</i>	Common but significantly declining	Common but declining
Spring Peeper *	<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>	Common but declining	Common

Frogs marked with a \* likely were present but have not been documented in the Preserve in recent years.

## Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve

P.O. Box 5534  
Madison, WI 53705

Ideas and *Friends* announcements for our newsletter and website are welcome. If you'd prefer to go paperless and receive your newsletter electronically, please email us at [preserveFriends@gmail.com](mailto:preserveFriends@gmail.com)

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Please visit our website: [www.FriendsLakeshorePreserve.com](http://www.FriendsLakeshorePreserve.com)

## Preserve Planning Moves Forward: an Outreach Center

*Laura Wyatt, Interim Director, UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve*

Thanks to all who joined with Preserve staff to complete the Advanced Plan for a proposed Outreach Center and the updating of the Preserve Master Plan. Hundreds of hours have been devoted to research and planning in addition to considering hundreds of comments received.

A Preserve Outreach Center would provide a single home for Preserve staff and a common meeting area for the thousands of visitors who use the 300-acre outdoor learning laboratory. The new Center is intended to serve as a meeting space for students gathering before an outdoor class; provide public restrooms and a water bottle filling station; include a multi-purpose/community meeting room; and furnish an interpretative space to share information about the extraordinary work happening in the Preserve every day and to celebrate the cultural richness of the Preserve's history. Thanks to a generous million-dollar gift from W. Jerome Frautschi, the Kubala Washatko Architects have designed a sustainable structure that honors the history and mission of the

Preserve. The initial design is pictured below and has received enthusiastic support. The proposed site for the 10,000-square foot Outreach Center is southwest of the historic stone wall/gate on land that is already disturbed from the existing parking lot, roadway and ped/bike path. All of this will be relocated within the previously disturbed area. The project avoids known archaeological sites and would showcase

advanced sustainable design and building principles. The university administration and Mr. Frautschi are currently reviewing initial plans. If approved, the next steps are construction plans and fundraising. Learn more at <https://lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/>. If you have questions, please contact Interim Director Laura Wyatt ([laura.wyatt@wisc.edu](mailto:laura.wyatt@wisc.edu)).



*The Kubala Washatko Architects' vision of a new entrance to the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve.*