



**Fall
2026**

Monarch Butterfly Journey Program

The Monarch Butterfly is the only known butterfly that makes a round-trip migration. Hundreds of Monarchs make their way through Wisconsin during the summer-fall in their journey south to spend their winter in Mexico. Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge is a great stopping point for these small creatures. During the Monarch migration we hosted the Monarch Butterfly Journey Program. This is our third year hosting the program!

Visitors participate in assisting refuge staff in catching Monarchs to tag them. Tagging monarch butterflies help us to track their long-distance migration routes, have a better idea of their survival rates, and hopefully guide conservation to help the species. During the event we welcomed 190 visitors and with their assistance we were able to tag 449 Monarch Butterflies. We would also like to thank everyone that joined us tagging Monarch Butterflies. Our hearts are happy seeing many enjoying the outdoors here at the refuge. We are looking forward to next year's tagging season!

Dana M. Schelling
Refuge Ranger



Fun Facts About Our Local Wildlife

By Scott Lee

“ Fall Critter Hink Pinks”

It's been quite a few years since I challenged you with 'Hink Pinks'. So just what is a hink pink? They're two rhyming words that fit for the definition given. For example, a large hog (1) would be a “Big Pig” or my bathroom (2) would be “Scotty's Potty” or my happiness (1) would be “Lee's Glee”. (The number after the clue tells you how many syllables in each word). OK, try these, all of which refer to fall critters you might find in the refuge:

- 1) a sandhill's owie (1)
- 2) an uncaged Canadian waterfowl (1)
- 3) a hilarious rabbit (2)
- 4) a royal raptor (2)
- 5) a baby deer's grassy hangout (1)
- 6) a masked mammal's music (1)
- 7) a smelly mammal's elephant-like proboscis (1)
- 8) a tiny songbird's cage
- 9) a flat-tailed rodent's high body temperature (2)
- 10) a small, biting insect's favorite Mexican food (3)
- 11) a big, white waterfowl's bathroom (1)
- 12) poke it with your paw, bunny! (2)
- 13) a whitetail's phobia (1)
- 14) the spin of a gray, bushy-tailed mammal (2)
- 15) a dessert made of rattlers (1)

Ranger Tucker Mills with Monarch Butterfly Journey Program
participants by Jean Bohlinger / USFWS

As many of you know if you have visited the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge recently, the seasonal bird migration has already begun! Below is an excerpt from Chris Wood, a program director from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Migration: majestic but dangerous

One of my favorite rituals during migration (besides visiting the Refuge) is stepping outside before dawn to listen to the calls of birds passing overhead. Those calls are small clues to an enormous movement of millions of birds crossing the night sky. It's a magical way to experience one of nature's great spectacles. But in these moments, I am also reminded of how much these journeys depend on the world we create for birds along the way.

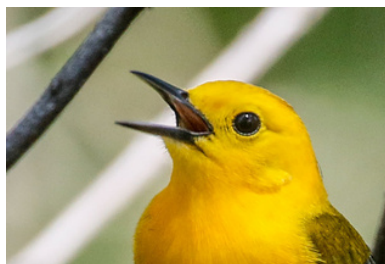
One example is BirdCast, a collaboration that uses decades of weather radar data, machine learning, and information from eBird and other sources to reveal bird migration across the continent. BirdCast allows us to understand when and where hundreds of millions of birds are moving. And it helps researchers investigate where migrants stop, how migration is changing, and how threats such as artificial light affect birds along the way. Those connections stretch across continents. A bird we hear passing overhead tonight may depend on forests and stopover habitat hundreds or thousands of miles away. Birds depend on places thousands of miles apart to complete their journey.

The next time I step outside before dawn and hear migrants calling overhead, I'll be thinking about the incredible journeys still ahead of them-and about the community of people working together to give them the best chance to complete those journeys.

Many of our members are aware of this wonderful resource available to us from Cornell Labs. Try birdcast.org. You will not be disappointed!

Jim Welander

President - Friends of Trempealeau Refuge



Here is some good trivia about recent bird migration:

Each spring, roughly 3.5 billion birds enter the United States through our southern coastlines and across the border with Mexico. Around 2.5 - 3 billion birds continue north through the United States and into Canada. Another estimated 1- 2 billion birds begin spring migration from wintering areas within the United States, and some may complete their entire annual cycles without crossing either international border. Most migration happens at night: more than 80% of migratory bird species in the U.S. move under the cover of darkness! Texas recorded the highest bird migration total of any state in the spring of 2026, with more than 1.3 million birds passing through the state.

1) Crane's Pain 2) Loose Goose 13) Funny Bunny 4) Regal Eagle 5) Fawn's Lawn 6) Coon's Tune 7) Skunk's Trunk 8) Wren's Pen 9) Beaver's Fever 10) Mosquito's Burrito (or Tostito) 11) Swan's John 12) Jab it, Rabbit! 13) Deer's Fear 14) Squirrel Twirl 15) Snake Cake



Photo credit and description: Six butterfly enclosures with Monarch Butterflies inside by Tucker Mills / USFWS

Would you like to contact the refuge?

Here's how! Call 608-539-2311

For more information visit our website:

www.fws.gov/refuge/trempealeau/

Or the refuge Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/TrempealeauNWR

And "Like" us!

Friends of Trempealeau Refuge

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The Friends of Trempealeau Refuge is committed to providing an independent citizen voice for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.