

Winter in the La Crosse Marsh

As temperatures drop the water in the marsh will freeze over but many creatures will still be active



Photo by John Sullivan

Active winter birds:

- Northern Cardinal
- Downy Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- Owls
- Bald Eagles
- Hawks

Active winter mammals:

- Muskrats
- Mink
- Foxes
- River Otters

Animal Adaptations

Multiple animals have found ways to deal with the harsh temperatures and low food resources of winter.

Reptiles and Amphibians: These animals will often burrow in mud or sand- some even freeze in the ice.

Bats and Groundhogs: Considered true hibernators, these mammals' temperatures drastically drop, and they decrease their heartrate up to 95%.

Bees: The queen of bumblebee and ground bee colonies will hibernate over winter. Other bees in the hive do not survive and alone the queen will start a new colony in the spring.



Photo by Roger Averback

Migratory Birds

What Is the Mississippi Flyway?

The Mississippi Flyway is a route many birds use to migrate from their breeding grounds in North America to their wintering grounds in the south.

Over 325 species of birds migrate every year and many can be seen in La Crosse.

The brightly colored wood duck uses the La Crosse marsh as a breeding spot and can often be seen with the mallard duck, which calls the La Crosse marsh home all year.



Photo by Edward Jones

The American White Pelican is one species that uses the Flyway to migrate from Canada to the southern states. They often make a stop around the La Crosse area in the Mississippi River.

To view the Flyway Cam and see live footage of the Mississippi River, open the QR code below.



Photo by John Sullivan



Visit Friends of the Marsh on Facebook

www.facebook.com/friendsofthelacrossemarsh

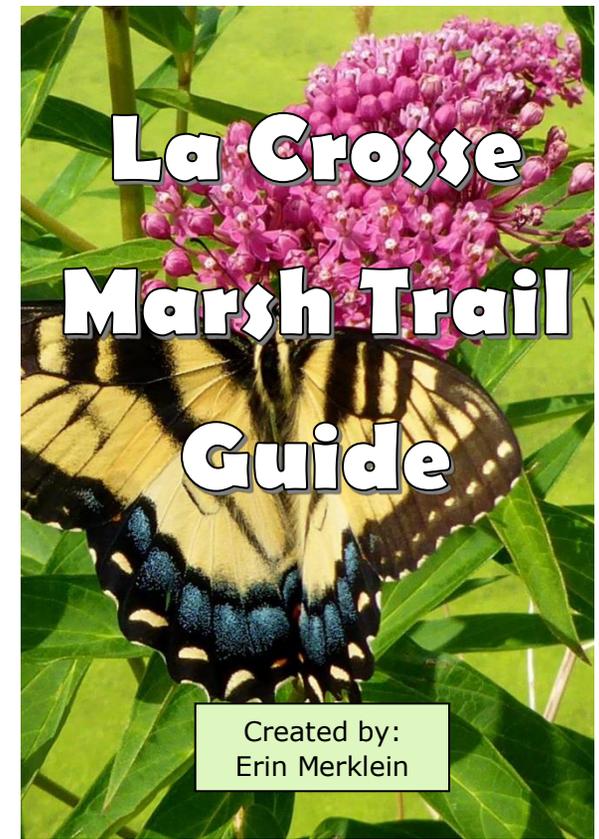


Photo by John Sullivan

Inland Freshwater Marsh

This wetland ecosystem remains waterlogged at all times and floods in wet seasons.

This system protects and improves water quality, provides a habitat for many species, and stores floodwaters.



Using QR codes

Open your camera app on your smart phone. Hold it over the QR code and a link will pop up.

The Great Blue Heron

Found throughout the marsh, these large long-legged birds populate the La Crosse area during the summer. They are often found in shallow waters waiting to quickly strike a fish with their large sharp bills. These herons are solitary birds except for mating season when a mated pair will aggressively guard their nest together. The nests can be up to 100 feet in a tree and are built together by the pair with the male gathering supplies and the female building the nest.



Photo by Nature-Pix from Pixabay

The North American Beaver



From this spot you can view the home of the local beaver family located east of the trail about 50 yards out. These

vegetarians are most known for being environmental engineers—that being they change their environment to better suit their needs by damming the flow of water. To watch a video of beavers building a dam open the QR code.

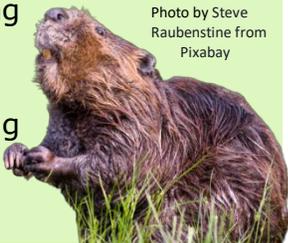


Photo by Steve Raubenstine from Pixabay

Please pick up after yourself and watch for bikers, runners or other signage



What's that green stuff on the water?

Sometimes there may be a covering of green on the water in the La Crosse Marsh that varies by season. This is a mixture of duckweed, a small floating plant, and filamentous algae. This is a source of food for many species.



Photo by Roger Averback

Turtles

There are multiple species of turtles in the La Crosse area. The most common turtles include snapping turtles and painted turtles. You will often see turtles and other reptiles basking in the sun as they are cold blooded and use the environment to regulate their body temperature.



Photo by Roger Averback

The Leopard Frog

These frogs may be hard to spot as they are often camouflaged in their surroundings. They are regularly found in shallow water or tall vegetation. Even if you don't spot a leopard frog you may hear one during the springtime. To hear their call, open your phones' camera and place it over the QR code.

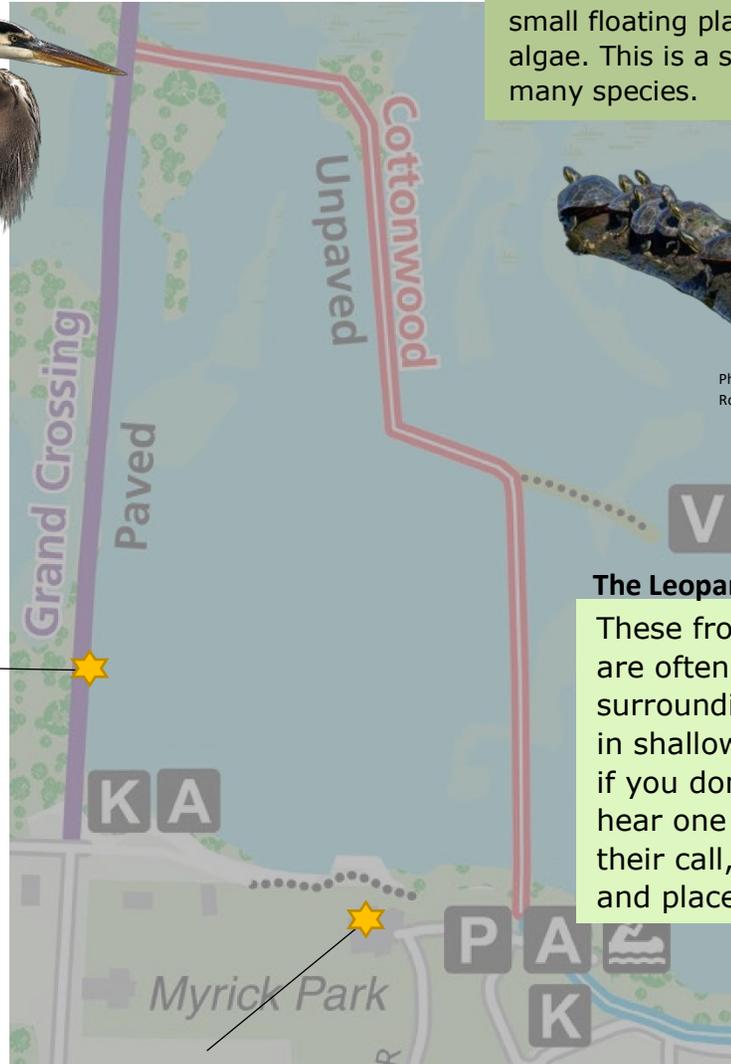


Photo by John Sullivan



Nutrient Problems

High levels of nitrogen and phosphorus can lead to the growth of thick surface mats of duckweeds or filamentous algae. These mats will block sunlight and reduce surface aeration. These conditions can lead to low dissolved oxygen levels which may contribute to summer fish kills.



The Bald Eagle

Here you will find a lookout area with telescopes where you may be able to spot bald eagles. These large carnivores at one time only had around 400 breeding pairs across the United States. Fortunately, with help from the Endangered Species Act, bald eagle populations are healthy again.