



Congratulations, *Pyrectomenda angulate!*

By Jeff Ormiston

After over 200 years as a state, Indiana now has an Official State Insect! On February 27th, 2018 Gov. Holcomb signed bill SAE 236 declaring the Say's Firefly the official Indiana State Insect. The Say's Firefly was first suggested to the state legislature in a letter by then second grader Kayla Xu during the 2014–2015 school year. Kayla was a student at Cumberland Elementary School in Lafayette, Indiana.

Say's Firefly (*Pyrectomenda angulate*) was first described, identified and named by Indiana entomologist and naturalist Thomas Say in 1826. Thomas Say was born in Philadelphia in 1787 and moved to New Harmony, Indiana in January of 1826, as part of the famous "Boatload of Knowledge," after several expeditions to Florida, Georgia, Mexico and the Rocky Mountains. Say also served as Professor of Natural History at the University of Pennsylvania. Say is credited with describing over 1000 new species of beetles, more than 400 orders of other insects and seven species of well-known snakes, as well as the Say's Phoebe.

The firefly, sometimes called a "Lightning Bug", is neither a fly nor a bug but a true winged beetle. Fireflies produce their light by a chemical reaction using enzymes, magnesium ions and oxygen known as "bioluminescence". This flashing light is a means of attracting a mate and starts at sunset and lasts for several hours. Firefly larvae, commonly known as "glow worms", also have the ability to produce a light and Fox Island Park Manager Ron Zartman leads a late September hike looking for these little "jewels of the night".

The Say's Firefly was picked as the state insect largely due to the firefly's popularity with most Indiana residents and the connection with Posey County resident Thomas Say. There are few people who have not caught "lightning bugs" as a child and marveled at their ability to flash their tiny lights as we hold them in our hands. It was through the persistence of the young students at Cumberland Elementary that the Say's Firefly became the State Insect.



REMINDER

The Fox Island Alliance will hold its Annual Meeting on May 4, 2018.

Live music performed by The Kitchen Table Players
Catering by Jamison Meats

Who: Members of the Fox Island Alliance

Where: Fox Island County Park

Time: 6:00-9:00pm

Cost: FREE but an RSVP is required!

All members planning to attend must RSVP with Barb Bauer by April 14. Please call (260) 459-1742 or e-mail cbbcbauer@gmail.com to make your reservation. Spouses welcome.

Is Serviceberry Blooming Yet?

By Carol Gaham



As winter loosens its tight grip on Mother Nature, we anxiously begin looking for signs of spring in the woods and meadows: red winged blackbirds and killdeer, spring peepers, blood root and spring beauty. But don't forget serviceberry. It heralds spring's arrival with a bright display of blooms.

These smaller trees are generally found in moist woodlands and along streams, but can be found in shaded areas, as well as hillsides, roadsides, and open forests. Their delicate white flowers are some of the first to appear in spring and make the trees easy to spot in the leafless forest. They are also an important source of nectar for early pollinators. They grow from the Canadian border regions to the Southern Appalachians and from the west coast to the east coast.

Serviceberry, scientific name *Amelanchier*, actually has many common names. Given the name serviceberry, or sarvis, in 19th century New England, the tree is also known as shadbush, shadwood, shadblow, Juneberry, Saskatoon (Cree), and even others depending on the part of the country you are in.

There are about 20 species of serviceberry in North America. Two species occur in Asia and one in Europe. They typically grow from 8 to 20 feet tall, and 4 to 15 feet wide depending on the species.

The downy serviceberry, or shadblow, is common to this area. Some say its name came from the fact that it blooms in April, typically when spring thaw finally made roads passable to allow priests and judges to visit rural areas. It was then that funerals were held and the past season's dead were buried. Weddings and christenings were also held during this time, as well as legal proceedings and transactions.

For those who preferred to go fishing instead of to church, the tree is said to bloom when the shad migrate upstream from the ocean to spawn, thus giving it the name shadbush. And the name Juneberry was used because the fruit ripens around June.

Serviceberry trees are a member of the rose family and closely related to pear and apple trees as well as crabapples, hawthorns, cherries, peaches, and plums. As such, they are susceptible to a number of fungal diseases and blight. If you choose to plant one in your yard, planting in the sun will prevent many of the diseases that can plague the tree. Insects can also be a problem for the serviceberry. Aphids, borers, Japanese beetles, scale and spider mites can bother the tree. Deer don't seem to bother it much, but do sometimes browse on its branches. And it can tolerate being a neighbor to black walnut trees.



Serviceberry is a single or multi-stemmed tree, and sometimes referred to as a shrub. Its delicate clusters small flowers with 5 white petals appear in April or May. The leaves that follow are oval and 1-3" long. The leaves turn a vibrant red-orange in the fall. The fruit is a berry, turning from red to purple, then almost black at maturity, reaching between 1/4" and 5/8" in size.

The berries are edible. Birds love them so much that they are generally gone within a week or two after ripening. The berries can be eaten raw and taste much like blueberries. They are an excellent source of iron and have a higher concentration of proteins, carbs, and lipids than blueberries.

Serviceberries also contain potassium, and large amounts of magnesium and phosphorous, folate, riboflavin, and vitamins A, C, E, B-6.



The berries can be used in pies, puddings, and muffins. They can be dehydrated into raisins. Jams, wine, and syrup are made from the berries. Native Americans made what they called Pemmican using dried meat, fat, and dried, ground juneberries. This high-calorie, long-lasting food was taken on long hunting trips and was later adopted by Europeans as they explored the wilderness.



In folk medicine, teas were made from bark and twigs and used to aid mothers after childbirth. Used in combination with other plants, parts of the tree were used as a contraceptive. Native peoples of Canada would steep the bark in a tea to ease stomach troubles. Recent studies have found that the phenolic compounds in serviceberries play an important role in cancer prevention and treatment.

Serviceberry wood was used by Native Americans to make tool handles, fishing rods, and arrow shafts. Members of a tribe in California even used the wood to make a type of body armor.

Serviceberry hosts lepidoptera, songbirds, pollinators, and other wildlife. It provides interest to landscapes, providing beautiful white blossoms in spring, vibrant foliage in the fall, and edible fruits in summer. Its smooth, gray bark adds interest to the winter landscape. And, most importantly for me, it tells me that spring has finally come back to my world.

Fox Island Sol Fest

May 5, Saturday, and May 6, Sunday 12:00 noon to 7 p.m. both days.

The birds are back, the wildflowers are blooming, and there's music in the air. Celebrate the sun and the environment with a full weekend of music and activities. Enjoy live bands, hayrides, children's activities, and visit environmental groups' activities and displays. Paddle a canoe or kayak, shop vendors, munch festival foods, or relax in the Mad Anthony Brewery beer and wine garden.



Because Sol Fest is a fundraiser, annual passes are not honored on May 5 and 6. Admission \$5.00; kids 11 and under free. Children's activity fees may apply.

Turkey Vultures

By Ed Powers

When most people think about the beauty of birds, they aren't thinking of Turkey Vultures. To be sure, seen soaring overhead, they are graceful, even elegant. But face-to-face is another matter; in fact, they look scary. They have other unappealing characteristics. For one, they eat carrion, preferably some that's been sitting in the sun for a while. They defecate down their legs. If you disturb them, they will vomit at you.

It must be said, however, that these features have redeeming qualities. The scary looks come partly from their featherless heads. But the lack of feathers prevents soiling while they are feeding. The scariness is anyway a delusion. Since they eat things that already dead, they don't attack things that are living. They are not equipped for preying on living animals because they lack strong talons or beaks. Anyway, by eating the dead, they are providing a service, by removing rotting meat which might harbor disease. In fact, the family name of vultures is *Cathartidae*, which means "cleansing."

The business of defecating down their legs is just a means of cooling themselves, and since they don't have strong beaks or talons, the vomiting is just a means of defense. Would you approach a bird that is vomiting rotten meat at you?

Robins are hailed as harbingers of spring, but they are not very good ones; a few can be found even in the dead of winter. But when Turkey Vultures show up around mid-February, you can be sure that spring is on its way.



Stockbridge Audubon Society Birding Field Trip, April 21 , Saturday 8 a.m. till about noon.

Join local bird enthusiasts at the Vera Dulin building parking lot as they search for spring migrants and resident birds.

Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Park entry fee, or use your pass. Beginners welcome!

Park Programs coming up:

Trail Guide Training for Adults—Geology by Jeff Ormiston

May 17, Thursday 1 p.m.-2:30 p.m. At the Nature Center.

For new and experienced trail guides; no charge for Park trail guides and volunteers.

Preregister by May 11, Min. 5, Max 30.

Dragonflies and Damselflies: June 16, Saturday 1-3 p.m. Dulin Observation Building

Free with park admission \$2 or use your pass. Preregister by 6/8, Min. 5, Max 30

Learn about Fox Island's most common Odonata and try your luck at netting a specimen.

Ron's Preschool Discovery Hours: Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m. \$3/child, \$2/adult

Animal Tracks, April 10

Tadpoles and Frogs, May 15

Bug Hunt, June 12

Natalie's Fox Kit Club Adventures for pre-schoolers and their families or teachers.

Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m., cost \$3/child, \$2/adult

Animal Sounds, April 10

May Bird Hike, May 15

Daylight to Dark Hike, April 13, Friday 8-9:30 p.m. with Ron Zartman

Enjoy a sunset as we watch for evening activities of birds and mammals. Observe the courtship flights of the American Woodcock at dusk. Then walk back in the dark, listening for owls, coyotes and amphibians.

Pre-register by 4/8.

Tai Chi is meeting Wednesday evenings 6-7, \$50 for 8 weeks or you can drop in for \$8.

Starts March 28, till May 16. Call Ron to preregister 449-3186

Scrapbooking/Craft Nights, April 27 and May 18; \$10/class, call Natalie 449-3778

(no class in June /July)

Check the park newsletter, **The Wild Grapevine**, for more details on park programs.



Kit Kapers: Fox Island Park for Kids

By Pam George



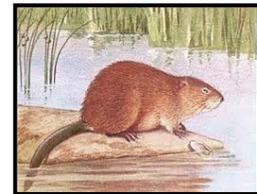
Furry Foragers @ Fox Island

As the snow melts and ponds and streams fill with fresh, clear water, many furry creatures start to emerge, having spent the winter hidden away from nature's chilly wrath in a warm spot, secured for eating and sleeping. Two such creatures are permanent residents @ Fox Island and have a lot in common:

American
Beaver



Muskrat



When a furry fact below describes a beaver, place a check under the "B"; when the fact describes a muskrat, place a check under the "M".

B	M	
—	—	has a waterproof, furry body, but a hairless tail.
—	—	has hard front teeth that just keep growing if not worn down by chewing.
—	—	has very strong, orange front teeth because the enamel contains iron instead of calcium.
—	—	has teeth that stick out in front of its checks & lips so it can chew under water with its mouth closed.
—	—	is mainly a plant eater.
—	—	hunts for food around ponds or slow-running streams.
—	—	is constantly on alert for Fox Island predators, like hawks, owls, foxes, raccoons, minks, or coyotes.
—	—	is a swift swimmer using its hind feet like paddles.
—	—	can stay underwater for over 15 minutes without taking another breath.
—	—	is an excellent tunnel-digger using its hand-like front feet as shovels.
—	—	slaps its tail on the water as a warning to others of danger.
—	—	builds a lodge in the water with an underwater entrance that leads to a living platform inside.
—	—	marks its trails and territory using scent glands on its rear end that give off a musky smell.

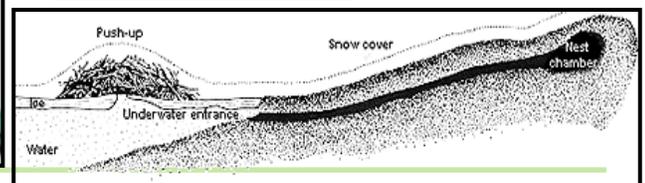
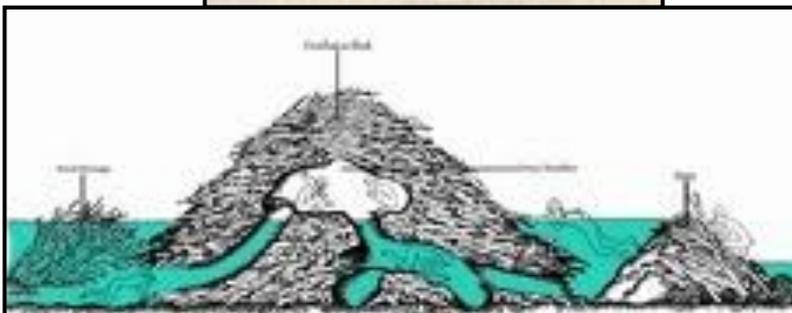
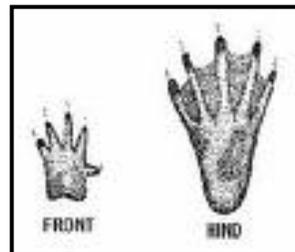
If you placed a check on all the lines above, you were RIGHT!!! But read on to discover how different they really are!

BEAVER

- * the second largest rodent in the world
- * has a wide, flat tail used as a rudder.
- * grows up to 32 inches long
- * eats mainly bark & stores a winter supply
- * builds its lodge behind a dammed up log jam

MUSKRAT

- * a rodent, but more closely related to a vole
- * has a flat-sided, skinny tail held out of the water to swim
- * grows up to 25 inches long
- * eats mainly cattails, sedges, bulrushes and other pond plants
- * builds its lodge either in a pond or into a bank of water



Summer Day Camps at Fox Island

Fox Fish and Canoe Camp

June 18-22, Monday-Friday 9:30-3:30 p.m.

Camp activities include: canoeing 101, how to pack a canoe for long trips, how to rig and bait your own fishing pole, practice casting, fishing, canoe races and more! Preregister by 6/6.

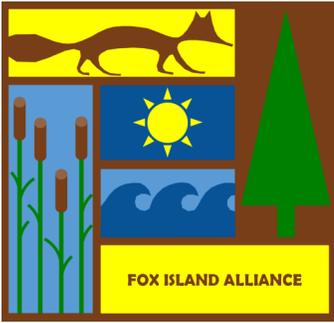
Fox Survival Camp

June 25-19, Monday-Friday 9:30-4:30 p.m.

Includes canoeing 101, debris shelter-building, snares and water skills, fire safety and so much more! Preregister by 6/15.

Register at www.allencountyparks.org. or at the nature center. Cost \$100 for either camp.





Fox Island Alliance

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12206 W. Yoder Road
Roanoke, IN 46783

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Cynthia Powers

The **Fox Island Alliance** is a volunteer not-for-profit organization. Its purposes are to help preserve the natural features of Fox Island County Park, to assist its orderly development as a nature preserve, to raise funds to facilitate its development, to promote Fox Island's use as an educational center, and to coordinate volunteer efforts.

MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE ON MARCH 31

Fox Island Alliance Membership Application __New__ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Check if you would like to receive your Fox Tale by email

Check if you do not want your name published

Check if you are interested in volunteering

Membership Category (Please Circle One)

Students \$5 - Senior \$5 - 2 Seniors \$10 - Indiv. \$15 - Family \$20

Sustaining \$30 - Patron \$50

Additional gift (Please Indicate Amount)

Education Exhibits Conservation General

Total Dues and Gifts \$ _____

If this membership is a gift, enter donor's name:

Will your employer match your gift to FIA?

Check with your Human Resources/Personnel Department.
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