



# Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network Newsletter

Summer 2017

## Summer CBM Projects

Citizen-based monitoring is in full swing here in Wisconsin, and there are a number of active projects in need of more volunteers. If you are looking for a project to join, consider the ones below. They can be done throughout the state, and volunteers can make one-time observations or conduct regular monitoring.

- **Wisconsin Mussel Monitoring Program**

Have you seen any of Wisconsin's 51 native mussel species while canoeing, fishing, or collecting water quality data? Snap a photos of the mussels you see and submit it to the [Wisconsin Mussel Monitoring Program](#) (WMMP), so that we can better understand and protect these amazing animals! If you want to learn more about mussels or how to monitor them, attend an upcoming [WMMP event](#).



Bobolink carrying food. Photo: Jack Bartholmai

- **Wisconsin First Detector Network**

With the Wisconsin First Detector Network (WIFDN), you can learn about and monitor invasive species in the state. From Eurasian water milfoil to garlic mustard to gypsy moths, be on the lookout for invasives and report them from your computer or with the Great Lakes Early Detection Network (GLEDN) app. Watch a recent WIFDN [webinar](#) on invasive species citizen science opportunities and visit their [website](#) to learn how you can get involved.

- **Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas**

This project is recording the abundance and distribution of all the birds that breed in the state. Birders of all skill levels, from beginners to experts, can contribute. In this, the third year of the five year Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas (WBBA), there is a strong push to collect nighttime observations and visit priority areas, but all reports of breeding birds are welcome and important. Visit the [WBBA website](#) to learn how you can get involved or to find an atlasing event being held near you.

Stay in Touch with the  
WCBM Network

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## Partner Updates

### • Wisconsin Bat Program Events

The Wisconsin Bat Program has several exciting events planned for this summer.

The Great Wisconsin Bat Count is a set of weekends during which everyone in the state is encouraged to get out and count bats emerging from a bat roost near them. The counts occur in early June (before baby bats are flying on their own) and late July (after the babies have begun to fly). The June count was held over the first weekend of the month. Mark your calendars for the next Great Wisconsin Bat Count on July 28-30, and visit the [Wisconsin Bat Program website](#) to learn how you can get involved in roost or acoustic bat monitoring throughout the summer.

The [Wisconsin Bat Festival](#) will be held on Saturday, August 26 at the Mitchell Park Conservancy in Milwaukee. This is a fun, family-friendly event with information and activities on all things bat-related, including citizen-based monitoring. **You won't want to miss it!**



Some roost monitoring occurs at bat houses like the ones shown here.  
Photo: Wisconsin Bat Program, Wisconsin DNR

### • River Alliance of Wisconsin Hosts AIS Events

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are spreading throughout many of Wisconsin's waters, making it crucial that Wisconsinites look for and report invasive species. The River Alliance of Wisconsin is organizing several [upcoming events](#) at which volunteers can get involved in monitoring for

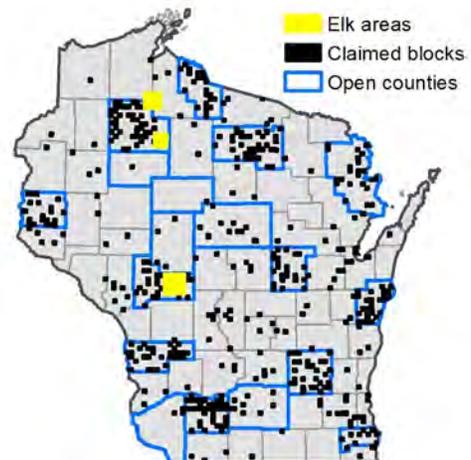
invasive species.

For those who live around the Rock River in Southern Wisconsin, The Rock River Snapshot Initiative has local events scheduled June 10-24. During the events, volunteers will get trained on searching for and reporting AIS, and then they will conduct monitoring on their own.

On August 5, individuals and groups throughout Wisconsin will be participating in the Statewide AIS Bridge Snapshot Day. Volunteers are still needed to look for and report invasives during this event.

### • Snapshot Wisconsin Expands to Six More Counties

Snapshot Wisconsin uses a network of trail cameras, hosted by volunteers, to monitor wildlife throughout the state. The program is now looking for trail camera hosts in Dane, Grant, Rusk, Taylor, Marathon and Clark counties! This brings the total area for open enrollment to 18 counties (see the map below); additionally, educators and tribal members/affiliates in any county may apply. Volunteers with access to at least 10 acres of private land can apply to host a trail camera at [www.SnapshotWISignup.org](http://www.SnapshotWISignup.org). Training and equipment is provided and no previous experience is required. Even if you cannot host a camera, you can [classify](#) the project's wildlife images online!



Have an update or announcement you'd like to share in our newsletter? Email [eva.lewandowski@wisconsin.gov](mailto:eva.lewandowski@wisconsin.gov).

## Network Updates

- ### Partnership Program Contracts Announced

The Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Partnership Program is a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the WCBM Network to fund citizen-based monitoring efforts throughout the state. Since 2004, more than 1.2 million dollars in contract funding has been shared by 261 projects working to better understand our animals, plants, and **habitats. This year's projects include efforts to monitor water quality, pollinators, native fish, and much more!** To view a complete list of the projects and organizations receiving funding, visit the [WCBM Network website](#).



With funding from the WCBM Partnership Program, volunteers in Ozaukee County will be conducting fish monitoring in 2017 and 2018. Photo: Ozaukee County Planning & Parks

- ### Event Calendar Still Busy

Summer is a busy time for citizen-based monitoring in Wisconsin, as evidenced by the plethora of events listed on the [WCBM Network calendar](#). With 30-40 events per month during **spring and summer, it's easy to find a way to get involved.** Projects and organizations that are hosting events are encouraged to email Network Coordinator Eva Lewandowski to have the event posted on the calendar.

- ### WCBM Network Partners Attend International Conference

18 members of the Wisconsin citizen-based monitoring community joined hundreds of citizen science researchers, practitioners, and volunteers from around the world for the Citizen Science Association Conference in Saint Paul, MN in May. Conference-goers shared their work through talks, poster sessions, and public tabling events, and they attended workshops, symposia, and networking events. Below, we share a few highlights from the conference, and you can view many posters and presentation slides [online](#).

#### Citizen Science Day

The second annual Citizen Science Day was celebrated over five weeks in April and May 2017, at over 100 events throughout the country. The goals of Citizen Science Day are to celebrate citizen science, connect people to citizen science projects, and increase the profile and recognition of the citizen science. A task force was put **together at the conference to plan next year's** celebration, including decisions on the timing and duration of Citizen Science Day, and what resources need to be provided in order to ensure success.

#### Role of Volunteers

One of the biggest topics being discussed at the conference was the role that volunteers should have in citizen science. *(Continued on Page 4)*



A Wisconsin attendee discusses monitoring equipment at the Citizen Science Association Conference. Photo: Marilu Lopez Fretts

## Network Updates, Continued

### • WCBM Network Partners Attend International Citizen Science Conference *(continued)*

Many projects are led by professional scientists, with volunteers focusing on data collection or classification (like classifying wildlife in Snapshot Wisconsin images). Other projects involve volunteers in the entire research process, from developing research questions and designing methods to analyzing and sharing results. Some conference attendees passionately argued that relegating volunteers to the role of data collector is disrespectful and leads to less successful projects, but others countered that many volunteers prefer to assist with data collection **and aren't overly interested in designing methods** or statistical analysis. A general consensus emerged that there should be a place in citizen science for any type of volunteer role; all forms of participation are valuable and not all volunteers are interested in the same forms of contribution.

#### Diversity in Citizen Science

Diversity among citizen science volunteers was also a hot topic at the conference. Erika Barthelmess, a professor at St. Lawrence University, presented research showing correlations between census data and participation in citizen science. Areas with higher percentages of people living in deep poverty or people of color were less likely to have citizen science participation, while areas with informal science centers or a higher level of education among the public were more likely to have participation in citizen science. She discussed ways to remove barriers to participation in areas without many active citizen science volunteers. Several speakers discussed the importance of involving volunteers in the development stages of a project and asking research questions that directly impacted local populations; their work suggested these are ways to increase diversity among citizen science volunteers. Another attendee, Louis Liebenberg, discussed the citizen science [research](#) being done by hunters in the Kalahari Desert. Many cannot read or write, but

they can collect data using a pictorial smartphone application and are able to make important contributions to the analysis and dissemination of the results that emerge from their work.



Wisconsin attendees enjoy a quick break between sessions at the Citizen Science Association Conference. Photo: Marilu Lopez Fretts

#### New Citizen Science Tools

A number of conference presenters shared information on new tools that citizen science projects and practitioners can use. Here are just a few:

- ◆ [Open ROV](#)- You can purchase or build your own underwater drone to take photographs, scout monitoring sites, or even collect data.
- ◆ [Zooniverse Project Builder](#)- Zooniverse is home to many online citizen science projects, including Snapshot Wisconsin. Now you can easily create your own citizen science project to classify and analyze photos, videos, or sounds.
- ◆ [Wildlife Acoustics](#)- This company offers acoustic bat detectors and a smartphone app to record and identify bird songs.
- ◆ Clip-on macro lenses for smartphones- These are a new take on the classic hand lens familiar to many naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts. Now you can purchase a lens (some are as inexpensive as \$10) that clips onto a smartphone, allowing you to view and photograph magnified images on your phone.