



Volume 30, Issue 4

Winter 2012 – 2013

## EHD Has Affected Whitetail Deer in Iowa

By Laura DeCook

Naturalist

Wildlife populations rise and fall over the years for a variety of reasons. Hunting and trapping pressure, severe weather such as blizzards and floods, loss of habitat and disease are among some of the reasons. This summer and fall, it has been noticeable to some people in the Midwest that the Whitetail deer population has dropped. A causing factor in the change in deer population is due to a virus called *Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease* (EHD) which is transmitted by the *Culicoides* biting midge.

EHD has an incubation period of approximately one week, during which the affected deer may transmit the virus to biting midges. These infected midges can then infect other deer. The deer may die within 8 to 36 hours after becoming infected and experiencing a variety of symptoms. Infected deer become physically weak, dehydrated, develop a high fever, and even experience cellular breakdown in the cell walls in their heart, lung and diaphragm which results in internal hemorrhaging.



*A significant number of deer have been affected by EHD in localized areas across Iowa.*

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Dr. Tom Litchfield, the Iowa DNR Deer Biologist, has shared some of his findings about EHD affecting the deer population in Iowa. He stated that in 1998, a total of 457 deer deaths due to EHD were reported to the Iowa DNR. This year, 2,867 deer have been reported to have died from EHD. Many of the people that reported were bow hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts. It has been common to find dead deer affected by EHD lying in or near water trying to rehydrate and cool off from their fever. The 2,867 dead deer reported this year is likely only 10-20% of the total number of deer that actually died from EHD. Not every sick or dead deer was found was reported to authorities. Some areas within the counties across

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Iowa seemed to have a localized significant impact on deer populations. Mahaska County has not appeared to have been affected by EHD as much as other counties. Only 22 dead deer were reported and verified having EHD, with the latest report on November 15th. Mahaska County also appears to be on the northeast edge of the Iowa's most affected counties. The disease is also showing up in Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, Missouri and Michigan. With the cold weather and frost setting in, the most of the midges will die and no longer actively feed on hosts.

If you hunt deer and harvest one that has been affected by EHD, the meat will not harm humans. If the harvested deer has been stressed from the virus, the meat may appear the same way as if it was stressed by any other causes.

### Facts About the Culicoides Midge

- Mouthparts are developed with cutting teeth and are adapted for blood-sucking in females, but not in males.
- Females lay their eggs in large masses in a range of habitats such as water vegetation, slow running streams, damp soil or piles of manure.
- The eggs hatch into tiny, white larvae with four pairs of anal gills.
- Adults emerge after 3–7 days.
- They are also known as “no-see-ums”.



# Nature Notes

## Woolly Mammoths

(*Mammuthus primigenius*)

LATE PLEISTOCENE: 150,000 - 10,000 years ago

By Laura DeCook, Naturalist



Deep in the ground in rural Mahaska County lay bones to an incredible animal species that lived nearly 13,000 years ago – the Woolly Mammoth. This last summer and fall, many bones were dug up and verified to have belonged to a woolly mammoth. The dig has recently ended for the winter, but not without exciting news! A few days before the dig ended for the season, a large tooth was extracted from the ground that belonged to a second woolly mammoth. Now with winter setting in, we must wait and wonder what will be discovered when the dig resumes next spring.

What is a mammoth? The mammoths are extinct animals closely related to the living elephants, especially the Asian elephant. Woolly mammoths are a species of mammoths that were large in size; ranging from 10-12 feet at the shoulder and weighed 6-8 tons as adults. These animals were thought to have been primarily grass eaters. Mammoths may have used their tusks as shovels to clear snow from the ground and reach the vegetation buried below.

Woolly mammoths had a number of adaptations to the cold, most notably their fur. Their fur covered all parts of the body and consisted of an outer layer of long, coarse “guard hair”. They also had a dense inner layer of shorter, slightly curly underwool. The woolly mammoth had many sebaceous glands in their skin which secreted greasy fat into their hair, improving its insulation from cold weather. It is likely the woolly mammoth molted their fur seasonally, and that the heaviest wool was shed during the spring.

There are many more interesting facts about mammoths. Look for more information in upcoming Prairie Star newsletters!





## John White

**Thank You for Serving On  
the Mahaska County Conservation Board!**

John White has served on the conservation board since January 1996. His dedication toward MCCB over the years has been greatly appreciated. John lives near Oskaloosa with his wife Carol Jean. We wish you the best, John!

*The new MCCB board member will be featured in the spring issue of the "Prairie Star" newsletter.*



### MCCB Event Photos



# Winter Public Programs



## Winter Day Camp

Friday, December 28  
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area

Kids, get out of the house during your winter break and come out to the conservation center to have fun and learn about nature on a winter day! Dress for the weather because having fun in winter is spending some time outdoors. Indoor activities (including a movie and popcorn) will also be held so we can warm up our fingers and toes. *This event is for all ages. Please pre-register by calling (641)673-9327.*

## Jr. Naturalist Party Featuring the Artwork of Russell Wildlife Animals

Monday, January 7  
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area

Kids ages 6-12 and their families are invited to come out to a party to kick off the New Year and start earning Jr. Naturalist patches for 2013. This party will also honor all the kids that have achieved an Iowa Jr. Naturalist patch for the year 2012. All participants will be able to create a painting with one of the snakes or turtles that live at Russell Wildlife Area. *Please pre-register by calling (641)673-9327.*



## MCCB's Annual Bird Food Giveaway

Saturday, January 12  
8:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area

Bring your buckets out to the conservation center to get free cracked corn for bird feeding. Each family will be limited to 10 gallons of cracked corn. Information about bird feeding and bird houses will be available. For more information, call MCCB at (641)673-9327.



## After School Fun: *Winter Hike*

Wednesday, January 16  
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area

For many schools in the area, school is let out early on this day. So come out and join the naturalist on a winter hike adventure. Please dress for the weather! *This event is for all ages.*



## Mahaska Fan Club NWTF Banquet



Saturday, January 19  
Center Court Area at Penn Central Mall, Oskaloosa  
Doors open at 5:30 p.m.  
Dinner begins at 7:00 p.m.

Come out and support a local conservation organization in a fun, family atmosphere! Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for raffle games, silent auction bidding and dinner will be served buffet-style at your own leisure from 6:00 – 8:00 pm, at which time the live auction will begin. *For tickets, more information and how to reserve a table, contact Roger DeMoss at (641)204-2450.*

## Ice Golf A Fundraiser for Friends of Mahaska County Conservation



Saturday, January 26  
Tee times at 9:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area

The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation is hosting a fundraising event for the Environmental Learning Center that will be built at Caldwell Park near Oskaloosa. An Ice Golf Tournament will be held at the ponds at the Russell Wildlife Area. Equipment will be provided. For more information, read the article on page 6 or check out the website [www.friendsofmccb.weebly.com](http://www.friendsofmccb.weebly.com). *Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 for questions and registration.*

## Izaak Walton League Wild Game Feed

Saturday, February 4  
Doors open at 5:00 p.m.  
Oskaloosa Eagles Lodge  
215 High Ave. E, Oskaloosa



For more information about this event, contact Ron VanPolen at (641)295-1860, Larry Gay at (641)295-0331 or Steve Heaton at (641)660-3798.

**Would you like to volunteer at a  
program or event for MCCB?**

**Contact Laura DeCook, Naturalist  
at (641)673-9327 or  
[decook@mahaskacounty.org](mailto:decook@mahaskacounty.org).**



# Winter Public Programs



## After School Fun: *Turtle Races*

Wednesday, February 6  
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area

For many schools in the area, school is let out early this day. So come out and join the naturalist on a winter hike adventure. Please dress for the weather! *This event is for all ages.*

## Basket Class

Saturday, February 23  
8:00 a.m. - Noon  
Russell Wildlife Area



Naturalist Laura DeCook will share her hobby of hand-weaving baskets with you. She will teach participants the history of basketry and the art of creating a basket with a wooden base and mold. Class size is limited to 10 people. *Pre-registration is required and the cost is \$20.00 per person. This class is for ages 10 and older. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*



## Maple Syrup Festival

Saturday, March 2  
Noon - 4:00 p.m.  
Eveland Access

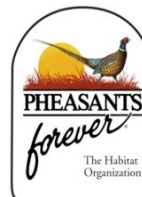
Throughout the afternoon, MCCB staff will demonstrate how to tap trees, and boil it to make maple syrup. You can explore the black maple sugar bush, the old barn and Native American sugaring camp. Park at the Eveland Access Campground and catch a hayride up the hill to the sugar shack. The hay ride leaves every half hour. Bring your appetites for fresh maple syrup on ice cream! *This event is for all ages.*

## Turkey Hunting & Safety Seminar

Saturday, March 23  
10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area



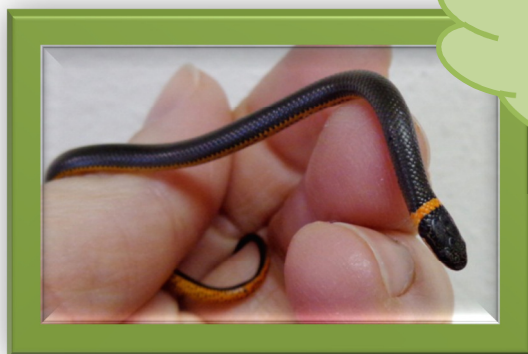
Are you interested in learning about hunting wild turkeys this spring? MCCB is offering this seminar to help turkey hunters of all skill levels learn about turkey biology, turkey hunting laws and ethics, preparing for the hunt, calling, hunting techniques and field dressing. There is no cost to attend. Lunch is provided by the Mahaska Fan Club NWTF chapter through a free-will donation. Space is limited. *For questions, call MCCB at (641)673-9327. Pre-registration is required at the website [www.iowadnr.gov/training](http://www.iowadnr.gov/training).*



## 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Mahaska County Pheasants Forever Banquet

Saturday, April 6  
Center Court in Penn Central Mall, Oskaloosa  
Doors open at 5:00 p.m.  
Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m.

Come support our local PF chapter on this evening! For tickets and more banquet information, contact Jeff VanDerBeek at (641)660-2671 or go to their website at [www.mahaskacountypheasantsforever.org](http://www.mahaskacountypheasantsforever.org).



*I'm a new Prairie Ringneck Snake in the Conservation Center. Come visit me at the Russell Wildlife Area!*

# Friends' Update

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Jennifer Peterson, President  
Friends of Mahaska County Conservation

The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation have been very busy in the recent months. We have enjoyed showing "Movies on the Barn" during the summer months at Caldwell Park. It is our closest thing to a drive-in movie theater around this area. Jason Brown put on a wonderful acoustic concert for us in early September. He is looking forward to coming back to Oskaloosa in the future.

The Friends board members have been busy preparing a presentation to share with local businesses as we start the fundraising process for the new Environmental Learning Center. The new ELC will be at Caldwell Park just east of Oskaloosa on Hwy 92. If you want more information about giving donations toward the ELC or fundraising activities hosted by the Friends, please contact the Friends board by emailing [friendsofmahaskacounty@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmahaskacounty@gmail.com) or call the Mahaska County Conservation Board at (641)673-9327.

We welcome anyone wanting to join us for our monthly meetings. The Friends meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month at 6:30 pm in the conservation center at the Russell Wildlife Area. Feel free to check out our website <http://friendsofmccb.weebly.com/> and "Like" us on our Friends of Mahaska County Conservation Facebook page. We hope to see you at our next activity in January – golfing!

Jennifer Peterson  
President of FMCC

## ***Ice Golf***

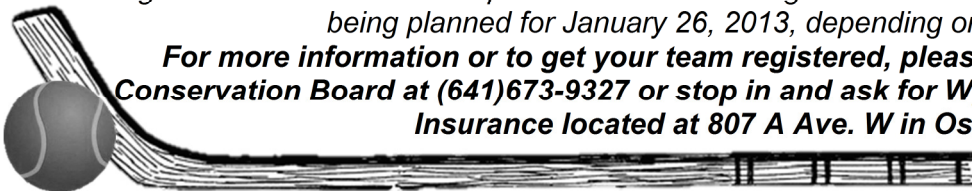
*A Fundraiser to Help Build the New  
Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park*

*January 26, 2013  
at Russell Wildlife Area*



*Attention golfers and winter sports enthusiasts! The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation will be hosting an Ice Golf outing at the Russell Wildlife Area to raise money and awareness for the future Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park just east of Oskaloosa. It will be a nine-hole tournament with two sets of shotgun tee times; one at 9:00 am and the second at 1:00 pm. The holes will be set up on all five ponds on the property. Hockey sticks and tennis balls will be provided as your "clubs" and "golf balls". There will be 2 person teams with a registration fee of \$10 per person. The event is being planned for January 26, 2013, depending on ice conditions.*

**For more information or to get your team registered, please call the Mahaska County Conservation Board at (641)673-9327 or stop in and ask for Wyndell Campbell at State Farm Insurance located at 807 A Ave. W in Oskaloosa.**



## MCCB Mission Statement

The primary mission of this organization shall be to create an awareness of our natural environment, encourage a state of harmony between people and their natural communities, develop and implement public conservation policy, maintain the public's investment in our natural resources, and strive diligently within the budget restraints to provide adequate services for the environmental education and enjoyment of the citizens of Mahaska County.

## The Prairie Star

The Prairie Star is the quarterly newsletter of the Mahaska County Conservation Board and is mailed to those persons on our mailing list. There is no charge of the newsletter, although contributions to help defray printing and mailing costs are greatly appreciated. Please help us keep our costs down and make sure you get your newsletter on time by keeping us informed of any change of address.



"Winter is the season in which people try to keep the house as warm as it was in the summer, when they complained about the heat."

~ Anonymous

# A Big Thank You!

The Mahaska County Conservation Board wishes to extend their deepest thanks to the following people and businesses for their donations and volunteer time.

Ross Nilson – donation  
Ben Hoskinson Family – donation  
Chris Versteegh - donation

### Halloween Hike:

Walmart  
Mahaska County PF  
Andrew O'Day  
Jacob Mason  
Ellie Snyder  
Nancy Tresslar

### Hunter Safety Education Class:

Alan Crouse & other Iowa DNR officers in Iowa  
Mike Ryan, Iowa DNR officer (Mahaska Co.)  
Richard Adams  
Bill Benson  
Rick Flander  
Ben Hoskinson  
Regina Hoy  
Jim Ide

Curt Jager  
Jim Marshall  
Marj & Marion Striegel  
Eric Sytsma  
Barry Versteegh



### Youth Outdoor Field Day Volunteers:

Larry Anderson  
Ben Ashland  
Jane Bambrook  
Bill Binns  
MaryAnn Bond  
Randy Conover  
Conrad Cunningham  
Roger DeMoss  
Austin Ehlers  
Mike Goudy  
Lake Heaton  
Steve Heaton  
Mark Hedge  
Ron Hoy  
Scott Hummel  
Wes Johnson  
Susan & Glenn Knox  
Mark Little  
Spencer Little  
Jim Marshall  
Kendal Marshall  
Lyman Marshall  
Cole McDonald

George Mesa  
Ross Nilson  
Leroy Nugteren  
Cody Nurdyke  
Duane Nurdyke  
Ashley Pilcher  
Triston Roe  
Josh Rupe  
Mike Ryan  
Caleb Schlesselbaum  
Zack Slack  
Ken Smith  
Wade Smith  
Marj & Marion Striegel  
Billie Summers  
Terry Thomas  
Nancy Tresslar  
Virginia & Barry Versteegh  
Cole Waite  
Barb & Bill Walker  
Kurt Wendl  
Jacob Wies  
Chandler Wiese

### Youth Outdoor Field Day Sponsors:

Mahaska County Pheasants Forever  
Mahaska Fan Club NWTF  
Mahaska County Ducks Unlimited  
Mahaska County Izaak Walton League  
Iowa Bowfishing Association  
Catfish Charlie Baits  
Oskaloosa Hy-Vee  
Bank Iowa  
Striegel Communications  
Marj & Marion Striegel  
Susan & Glenn Knox  
Clow Valve Company  
Pella Rollscreen Foundation  
VanderBeek Truck Accessories  
Swim Sports & Awards



## MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

*Note: Dates and times are subject to change.  
Call MCCB at (641)673-9237 for updates.*

January 3	Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area
January 21	Friends of Mahaska County Conservation 6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area
February 7	Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area
February 18	Friends of Mahaska County Conservation 6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area
March 7	Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area
March 18	Friends of Mahaska County Conservation 6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

## MAHASKA COUNTY CONSERVATION CENTER HOURS



:30 p.m. Monday through Friday  
or by appointment.

The Mahaska County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public. Visitors are always welcome and encouraged to attend. The board meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Conservation Center. Please note: these dates are subject to change.

**A large-type version of this  
newsletter is available on request.**

Mahaska County's programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Mahaska County Conservation Board or the office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 29240.

## Mahaska County Conservation Board

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**T.B.A.**

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Vice Chairperson

**Curt Jager**, Eddyville

Secretary

**Peggy Wright**, New Sharon

Member

**Barry Versteegh**, Cedar

Member

### STAFF

Dave Sedivec

Director

Laura DeCook

Naturalist

Carrie Bond

Park Ranger

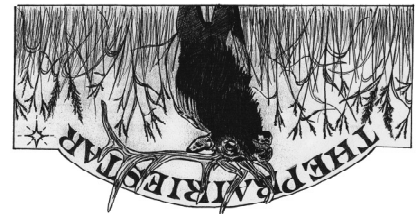
Cole Nilson

Park Ranger

Jenny Snyder

Administrative Assistant

Winter 2012-13



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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New Sharon, IA 50207  
Phone: (641) 673-9327  
Email: [mccb@mahaskacounty.org](mailto:mccb@mahaskacounty.org)  
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