

May 23 is World Turtle Day

By Tom Emery

Every terrapin, snapper, and slider can pop his head out of his shell and smile.

Sunday, May 23 is World Turtle Day, and there are plenty of reasons to celebrate in Illinois. The state is home to seventeen turtle species, though seven are either state-threatened or state-endangered. Biologists are working to ensure the long-range future of Illinois turtles, and note that the general public can do much to help.

"Turtles are generally long-lived animals," said Scott Ballard, the state herpetologist for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. "Habitat destruction or alteration is probably the number-one concern for the future of turtles. Once you destroy or encroach upon a good habitat, you've reduced the habitat available for turtles to forage and exist in."

Species of turtles are found statewide, with a slightly higher diversity in the southern half of the state. By far, the most common species of turtle in Illinois is the red-eared slider, known by its bright red patch on the sides of heads of juveniles and females.

However, the painted turtle, a colorful species described as a "classic pond turtle," holds the title of official Illinois state reptile, an honor awarded in online voting in July 2005.

The largest of the state turtles is the alligator snapping turtle, which can reach up to 155 pounds. That species is one of six that are classified as "state-endangered," joining the river cooter, smooth softshell, Illinois mud turtle, Blanding's turtle, and spotted turtle. Another, the ornate box turtle, is listed as "state-threatened."

Turtles play valuable roles in Illinois ecosystems. "Aquatic turtles help maintain the health of lakes and ponds by eating diseased or dying fish," remarked Ballard. "Box turtles contribute to forests and prairies by assisting in plant reproduction, by eating vegetation and distributing seeds from those native plants. Turtles are good long-term natural stewards of the environment, without question."

As elsewhere, Illinois turtles face a number of challenges, including the Ranavirus, an illness that can kill turtles in large numbers. "We have literally found dozens of dead turtles in certain areas because of this virus," said Ballard. "But we're fortunate to have a good partner in the University of Illinois Veterinary School, who is working on testing and treating specimens with the virus."

Humans may also help with several other threats to Illinois turtles. "Pollution reduces the quality of aquatic and terrestrial habitat for turtles," remarked Ballard. "Collecting for the pet trade also leads to declines in turtle populations."

The turtle pet trade, hunting and trapping, and other threats to turtles have been addressed by the state legislature at various times, particularly in the Illinois Herpetological Code (510 ILCS 68/), or "Herp Code" for short.

Auto traffic also kills a number of turtles, mainly because they are always found on the roads in warmer weather. "Being cold-blooded, turtles' temperatures take on the temperature of their surroundings," said Ballard. "Therefore, when they come out of hibernation in the spring, they like to find areas to warm their body temperatures up. Roads and highways hold heat, and they like that."

"Helping to move turtles off roads is one way to protect them," added Ballard. "But make sure it is done safely, and doesn't result in accidents." Simply straddling turtles on highways is another method, again within the limits of safe driving.

There are many other ways for the average citizen to protect turtles across the state. "Controlling native plant species is also important to maintaining a higher-quality habitat for turtles," said Ballard. "Also, leaving turtles in the wild assures that adult turtles will be left to reproduce, and not be plucked out as pets."

"If deciding to get a turtle as a pet, obtain one produced in captivity, and make sure that you realize a commitment of 20 years or so," he continued. "If you can't make that commitment, then don't get a baby turtle."

Anyone who is aware of illegal collecting or selling of turtles, especially endangered or threatened ones, may report it to the Department of Natural Resources.

Overall, the outlook for turtles in Illinois is optimistic. "I would say that as long as the concerns for turtle protection stay on people's radars, and are attended to, turtles will continue to thrive for generations," concluded Ballard. "Maintaining a healthy environment will allow the turtle diversity of the state to continue to exist."

Task Force looking for public input in the ongoing State Water Plan update in three public meetings

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced a second round of three public meetings as the State Water Plan Task Force continues to revise the state's outdated water plan. The live question and answer sessions, which will be held virtually, are slated for May 25, 26 and 27.

"IDNR, along with other members of the State Water Plan Task Force, are again asking for public input to gather feedback on the state's draft water plan so far, as well as answer any questions stakeholders may have concerning draft recommendations developed at this stage," said Colleen Calla-

han, director, IDNR. "Agencies included in the task force are on track to revise our current, 40-year-old water plan at the end of this year. To ensure the drafted plan recommendations make sense to all stakeholders, we need honest and abundant feedback."

The meetings will be held at varying times to maximize public participation. Each meeting will cover the same information, allowing participants to choose the day and time which best accommodates their schedules.

Further, while the introduction and wrap-up sections of the meetings are open to all meeting attendees, breakout sessions will be provided

Joy M. Barcus

Joy M. Barcus, 81, of Urbana passed away peacefully in her sleep on Friday (April 23, 2021) at home after battling COPD for many years.

Joy was born Nov. 29, 1939, in Tompkinsville, Ky., and was one of eight daughters of Herman and Lily Mae (Davis) Brandon. She has been lost without her husband, Ward Barcus, who recently passed away on July 29, 2020. They were married on Aug. 22, 1964, sharing 56 years together.

Surviving are their three children, Judy (Joe) Grindley of Tuscola, Mark (Carla) Barcus of Champaign and Sheri Barcus of Monticello; five grandchildren, Marci, Cory, Haylie, Brett and Cale; three great-grandchildren, Ethan, Jordynn and Braesen; and a sister, Toni White of Fort Pierce, Fla.

She grew up in Arcola, where her family moved when she was very young. She moved to Urbana and held several waitress jobs, which is where she met Ward. After they married, she cared for their home and children. She did embroidery work from the basement of their home for Denny's Cleaners for many years, while raising the kids.

When the kids were older, she worked at Barcus Industries, taking care of the bookkeeping for the family business. After Ward retired, she worked in the home department of Herberger's, and then Bergner's in both Urbana and eventually Champaign. She worked there for over 10 years and really enjoyed helping customers.

There was no job she took more pride in than caring for their home and their children. Her home was always clean and tidy, the laundry was done, the lawn was mowed, and there was always hot coffee and home-cooked meals. Her grandchildren were especially fond of her small, round, thin pancakes, and her cookie jar that was always full for each of their visits. She made sure that each family gathering had two pans of brownies, one with and without nuts.

In years past, Ward and Joy treasured many fun years spending time with close friends and playing cards. In recent years, they enjoyed taking long country drives and visiting with friends. They are both missed by their little dog, Toby, who went everywhere with them.

Visitation was held in honor of both Ward and Joy Barcus on Thursday, May 6, from noon until a 2 p.m. service at Renner-Wikoff Chapel in Urbana. Graveside services followed at Woodlawn Cemetery in Urbana. Pastor Hank Sanford officiated. Military rites were accorded for Ward's time in service.

Memorials may be made to the COPD Foundation. Condolences may be offered at renner-wikoffchapel.com.

Jo Ann Carr

Jo Ann Carr, 68, of Urbana passed away April 10, 2021, at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana. Jo Ann was born Oct. 24, 1952, in Tuscola, the daughter of John Thomas and Viola Lucille (Van Zant) Lloyd.

Jo Ann was a 1970 graduate of Tuscola High School. She attended and graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 1973. She most recently worked as a sales clerk for Walmart. Jo Ann was a member of Vineyard Church of Urbana. She held a strong Christian faith and would often volunteer her time with the church.

She enjoyed spending time with her cherished family. Surviving are her children, Sara Beth Carr (Michelle) of Decatur, Laura Kristin Hogan (Tim) of Decatur, and grandson, Jackson Hogan. She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Marlene Harris; and one infant brother.

Graveside memorial service was held 11 a.m. Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at Morrisonville Cemetery, Morrisonville.

Memorials: Champaign County Humane Society.

The Graceland Fairlawn Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Jo Ann. Condolences may be left to Jo Ann's family at www.gracelandfairlawn.com.



Obituaries

Margaret Duffy

Margaret Duffy, whose given name was Alice Margaret Reinhart, passed away March 19, 2021, in Orange County, Calif., at the age of 92.

Margaret was born in Tuscola in 1928. She and her siblings were raised on a farm in Pesotum by her father, Wendell, and mother, Leila Reinhart. Her formative years coincided with the Great Depression, which had great influence on her worldview.

As a young woman, Margaret was a talented singer and dancer who had hopes for a career in country music. But as often happens, marriage and family interfered with that dream and Margaret spent her life devoting herself to her family and church.

She met her husband, Wayne, in Victorville, Calif., in the early 1950s.

Margaret was a creative person who applied her creativity to multiple aspects of her life. She loved to draw, paint, sew and was an exceptional cook. Her recipes are famous among her children and grandchildren to this day.

She brought to California her flair for midwestern hospitality. She was a wonderful nurturer of small children and was especially known for her creative children's birthday parties.

But above all, she loved the Catholic Church and was active in it throughout her life. Not content with just attending services, she participated in church festivals, fundraisers, religious education and music, despite her busy life. She and her husband, Wayne, sacrificed their own material well-being in order to send all five of their children to Catholic school.

She was widowed in 2013 after 61 years of marriage.

Margaret and Wayne Duffy are survived by all five of their children, Stephen, Cynthia, Michael, Emily and Patrick. They have six grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Margaret also has five surviving siblings, Bette, Pat, Shirley, John and Sandy.

Margaret will be greatly missed by her family and many friends.

She will be laid to rest alongside her husband, Wayne, at Queen of Heaven Mortuary and Cemetery in Roland Heights, Calif. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.



Department of Revenue to issue tax refunds for eligible residents

Automatic refunds will be sent to eligible taxpayers who filed electronically before March 15, 2021

Springfield — Governor Pritzker announced today that the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) will begin issuing refunds to eligible taxpayers who filed their 2020 Illinois Individual Income Tax Return prior to a newly enacted federal unemployment tax exemption.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 included a retroactive provision making the first \$10,200 per taxpayer (up to \$20,400 married, filing jointly) of unemployment benefits nontaxable for returns with a modified Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of less than \$150,000. The provision was enacted after tax filing season opened on February 12, 2021. Approximately 376,000 Illinois taxpayers who filed returns electronically prior to ARPA may qualify to receive a refund.

"With the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the retroactive provision dealing with unemployment compensation,

Illinois taxpayers who received unemployment benefits in 2020 may be in line for an additional refund," said David Harris, Director of the Illinois Department of Revenue. "For most eligible filers, no additional action is required. However, I encourage all taxpayers eligible for this tax exemption to review their return to determine if additional action is necessary to claim this valuable tax benefit."

The Illinois Department of Revenue has begun recalculating electronically filed 2020 individual income tax returns and will notify taxpayers who filed before March 15, 2021 of the systematic adjustment of their AGI and the amount of any refund due. Eligible taxpayers can expect to receive their refund checks approximately two to three weeks after they receive a notification letter from IDOR.

IDOR will also notify an estimated 3,300 paper filers who filed prior to the implementation of the federal unemployment exclusion

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to allow for discussion of specific issues. Attendees will have the opportunity to choose which breakout session they prefer and may enter and leave breakout sessions at their discretion so that they may attend multiple sessions.

Virtual meeting dates and times are as follows:

- Tuesday, May 25 at 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 26 at 2 p.m.
- Thursday, May 27 at 10 a.m.

Links to each meeting, call-in numbers and meeting passcodes, and a recorded presentation outlining the draft water plan can be found

at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/WaterResources/Pages/StateWaterPlanTaskForce.aspx>. It is recommended participants review the recorded presentation prior to the virtual meetings so they can have questions and comments prepared in advance.

Additionally, links to meeting recordings will be posted for anyone who was unable to attend the virtual meetings. Finally, anyone who wishes to provide additional comments and input to the State Water Plan Task Force may do so by emailing DNR.OWRPlanning@Illinois.gov by June 30, 2021.

self-assessment by completing the COVID-19 Campus Visit Screening Form prior to arrival.

- Wear face masks covering the nose and mouth.
- Maintain social distancing of 6' from others at all times.
- Follow all applicable guidelines in accordance with Lake Land College's

See LLC page 5

LLC Board of Trustees to hold special meeting

The Lake Land College Board of Trustees will conduct a special meeting (Board Retreat) on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, in room 101, Foundation and Alumni Center, Mattoon, from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. A teleconference will also be provided for members of the public wishing to participate in the meeting remotely: dial 1-866-806-7140, when prompted enter conference

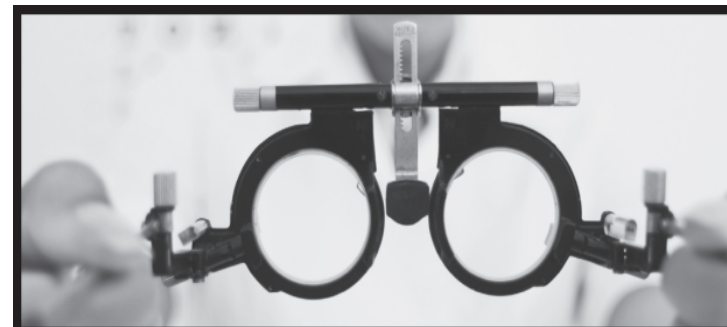
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The agenda may be viewed at the following link: <https://www.lakelandcollege.edu/wp-content/laker-documents/laker-bot/051921%20Agenda%20Special%20Meeting%20Board%20Retreat.pdf>

Trustees and members of the President's Cabinet will be physically present at the meeting location. Due to the COVID-19 health pandemic

and following the guidelines in Governor Pritzker's Restore Illinois plan, in-person attendance by members of the public will be limited so that no more than 73 people will gather in this room. Seating will be arranged to support appropriate social distancing. Additionally, any person attending the meeting by being physically present will be expected to:

- Conduct a health



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