

**JULY 2020**



# **LAKE ROLAND**

## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

1000 Lakeside Drive, Baltimore, MD, 21210

### **COVID-19 Updates and Recommendations**

COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019) currently has no vaccine and is mainly spread through close human contact.

The best way to help stop its spread is through social isolation and distancing. Try to avoid going out if you can.

If you can't, attempt to keep 6ft of distance between yourself and others. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands, and be sure to wash your hands regularly. Disinfect items that are frequently touched in your household (i.e. door knobs, light switches, counter tops, phones, and faucets). If you're feeling sick, visit your doctor as soon as you can. For more information please visit the Center for Disease Control website at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Lake Roland is now accepting Pavilion Rental requests; please visit our website for details. The Nature Center has been reopened with a few restrictions. For the safety of staff and park patrons occupancy will be limited, masks must be worn at all times while in the Nature Center, and guests must observe 6 feet social distancing rules. Prior to entry a questionnaire relating to COVID-19 exposure must be completed. The success of our reopening will rely heavily on visitors following our procedures and guidelines. More detailed instructions will be posted at our Nature Center entryways. Unfortunately, portable restrooms are still closed. We'd like to thank everyone for their patience in these trying times.

### **What to Look For in July!**

#### **The Cicada Buzz**

Unlike the famous 17 year locusts, annual cicadas emerge every year during the dog days of summer. After feeding on root sap and growing underground for 3 years the wingless nymphs will emerge out of the dirt. They will climb onto a tree or a post, molt, and emerge as winged adults. Males make the distinctive loud, buzzing noise to attract a female, who will then deposit her eggs in a twig. The eggs will hatch and the nymphs will fall to the dirt, starting the cycle all over again!

#### **Local, Wild Carrot**

Queen Anne's Lace is a biennial flower belonging to the carrot family. In its first year, it is a cluster of deeply lobed leaves that smells like carrot. In its second year, it shoots up 3 feet and has flat, circular cluster of tiny white flowers, called an umbel, with a single red flower in the center to attract insects. It is said that the seeds of this flower can prevent pregnancy, but we don't recommend trying this!

#### **Joe Pye Weed**

Joe Pye Weed is one of the larger, more showy native plants at Lake Roland. It can get up to 12 feet tall, and the pale purple cluster of flowers can be as big as a basketball. Extract from Joe Pye Weed was used by Native Americans to reduce fever, reduce anxiety, and help improve appetite. Look for Joe Pye in our butterfly garden adjacent to our bee hives!

# Instagram Highlight



Thank you to everyone for mentioning us or tagging us in photos from Lake Roland with #lakeroland. We love to see how the community enjoys the park!

This month's photo comes from @TJSmithBaltimore, who enjoyed a nice bike ride with his son.

Please continue to share your park experience on instagram.

*Follow us on Instagram @lake\_roland for program information, park updates, daily activities, and more.*

*Tag us in your own posts from the park for a chance to be featured in next months newsletter!*



## Summer Safety Tips

*Drink, drink, drink!*

With temperatures increasing the risk of dehydration is getting higher and higher. Dehydration occurs when your body loses more water than it is taking in. During hot or humid weather, your body loses more water due to sweating, so you need to drink more than normal in order to to make up for the loss. Humans are about 60% water, and when your body's water content falls below this percentage, you can really start to feel the effects. When water gets too low it can alter the balance of salts and sugars needed for many bodily functions. This can cause stress on many organs like the heart. Blood gets thicker when you are dehydrated, so the heart needs to work harder to pump that blood. Some signs of dehydration are lightheadedness, dizziness, confusion, thirst, dry mouth, tiredness, dark and smelly urine, and less frequent urination. To avoid dehydration, drink water frequently throughout the day. If you find that you're often not drinking enough water simply because you're forgetting to, try setting a few alarms throughout the day as a reminder! Diluted squash and fruit juice can help replenish salts and sugars as well. If you feel thirsty, then chances are you're already dehydrated, so it's critical to address it soon after to prevent severe dehydration, which can often require medical attention. Currently, the water fountains in the Nature Center are closed due to COVID-19. However, the spigots located throughout the park supply Baltimore City tap water. Be sure to fill up your water bottle whenever you can!

## Lake Roland Wish List

*If you are able to, Lake Roland will gladly accept donations of any of these items!*

- Newspaper
- Crayons
- Colored Pencils
- Construction Paper
- Markers
- Acrylic Craft Paints
- Plastic 1 Gallon Milk Jugs

*Links to our Amazon Wish List and Amazon Smile Account can be accessed by selecting the Donate to Lake Roland tab on our website at [LakeRoland.org](http://LakeRoland.org) or by clicking the links at the bottom. AmazonSmile is a nonprofit division of Amazon that will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the Lake Roland Nature Council. It is a safe and secure way support the park without any cost to you.*

[Amazon Wish List](#)  
[AmazonSmile Account](#)



## *Little Known Local Rodent*

Looking a lot like over-sized rats, Muskrats are a semi-aquatic rodent native to North America. When fully grown, they can weigh between 1 and 4 pounds, and can range from 16 to 28 inches long, with an additional 7 to 11 inches of tail. They are adept swimmers who use their webbed feet and long, keeled tails to cruise at speeds of up to three miles per hour. They can also hold their breath underwater for up to 17 minutes! They are commonly found in marshes, swamps, and wetlands, where there is at least 4 to 6 inches of water. Muskrat fur is dense, and contains oils that help keep them warm and dry. Historically, this has made their pelts very valuable for use in the production of hats, coats, and gloves. Muskrats dig burrows or construct lodges made from cattails and other vegetation. Their burrows are usually



*A native muskrat swimming. Notice the smaller size and black whiskers on it's face.*

into the mud banks of streams, rivers, and lakes, and feature an underwater entrance. Lodges can be up to 3 feet high, and though muskrats do not store food, they have been known to eat the vegetation they used to build the walls during food shortages. Their lodges can block waterways which causes some people to view them as pests. However, muskrats play an important role as ecosystem engineers. By eating and collecting vegetation they create more open areas that allow for waterfowl to nest. Furthermore, the blocked waterways can form larger streams and pools that provide habitat for more fish and wildlife. Muskrats consume roughly one third of their body weight daily. In addition to plants, their diet includes small animals like mussels, crustaceans, fish, frogs, salamanders, and even small turtles. Muskrats are sociable and seldom stray farther than 150 feet from their burrows. They tend to live in large families; females can give birth to 3 to 8 kits at a time, up to 3 times per year. The kits reach full maturity in six months and often remain with their families as adults. Their lifespan in the wild is around three years, though they have been known to live up to ten years in captivity. Muskrats are often confused with their non-native look-a-likes, Nutria. Nutria resemble muskrats in almost every way except that they are larger, have round tails as opposed to keeled, and their whiskers are white instead of black. They are native to South America and were brought up to farm for their pelts. When it was no longer a profitable business, the



*A non-native nutria. notice the larger size, round tail, and white whiskers on it's face.*

farmers released them into the wild. Nutria and muskrat share a similar niche, that is, they play similar roles in how they function in the environment. A big difference however, is that muskrats are omnivores, and will typically only eat the stem of a plant which can allow it to regrow. Nutria are strictly vegetarian, and will often completely consume a plant. Because of this, nutria are often very harmful to marsh and wetland vegetation. This is a case where a beneficial, native animal is often confused for a non-native, ecologically damaging one. Fortunately, we haven't seen any nutria at Lake Roland, but we have seen the occasional muskrat. Look for them in the marshy areas around the Pink and Blue Trails on your next visit!

# Pileated Woodpeckers



## Hard Heads and Barbed Tongues

Old timers call the pileated woodpecker the “Ginseng bird.” This is due to the fact that both species usually can be found within the same mature forests up and down the eastern United States. “If you see the pileated, then there must be Ginseng around.” There is no science to support that belief, yet both species do exist in mature forests. The pileated woodpecker is a sight to behold and one cannot help but marvel at its grace and confidence. Being the largest woodpecker in the state, and with its echoing rattles, it is hard to miss this woodpecker flying above you.



*A female pileated woodpecker laps up insects from a tree*

Pileated comes from its latin name pileatus, which means "capped." This refers to the red coloration on the top of the bird's head. Males and females look almost

identical, save for a red cheek stripe on male that is absent on females. A pileated woodpecker’s diet mainly consists of carpenter ants. They can excavate a tree by drumming their heavy beak into the wood and can then utilize their barbed, hooked tongues to lap up ants, termites, and beetles. Whilst drumming on the tree the woodpeckers take advantage of the hyoid bone in their head. It acts as a kind of "seat belt" for their brain. It helps stabilize the spine and cranium, preventing excessive vibration and movement. Without the hyoid bone, the woodpecker could encounter severe brain damage! Supporting local pileated woodpecker populations can effectively control carpenter ants and termites within a region. Look for falling bark and loud calls on your next visit!

## Identification Station: Learn What's Around You!

### Cicada Killers: Scary in Name, Calm in Nature

Cicada killers (*Sphecius speciosus*) are a solitary wasp species that closely resemble yellow jackets in appearance. Despite their threatening names, cicada killers are non-aggressive and unlikely to sting humans. Only females are equipped with a stinger and they typically only use them to paralyze cicadas, which they bring back to their nests and use to lay their eggs. Males are extremely territorial around nests but unable to sting. They tend to create their nests by digging holes ~12 inches into the ground in sunny spots with dry, well-drained soil. This can be a nuisance to home owners and landscapers!



The most effective way to tell the difference between a yellow jacket and a cicada killer is by their body patterns and wings. Yellow jackets have more translucent wings and a primarily bright yellow body with black stripes. However, the wings of a cicada killer have more veins and a yellowish tint, while their bodies are primarily black with a few pale yellow stripes. Keep an eye out for cicada killers in late June and early July when they emerge to help reduce our cicada populations.

## Join Lake Roland!

We rely on membership fees and donations to fund the Lake Roland Nature Council’s efforts and projects in the park. Every dollar of your membership goes to support those efforts.

Please join us in supporting Lake Roland.

*To become a member:* Visit us at [lakeroland.org](http://lakeroland.org) - Join Lake Roland

*For any questions and/or concerns:* Please contact us by email at [LakeRol-RP@BaltimoreCountyMD.gov](mailto:LakeRol-RP@BaltimoreCountyMD.gov) or by phone at 410-887-4156.



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NATURE COUNCIL