



FEBRUARY 2021

WHAT'S UP AT UP YONDA FARM

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Weekend Snowshoe - Guided Naturalist hikes are now offered each Saturday and Sunday in February! Naturalists will be leading small group snowshoe hikes around the property. Learn the basics of snowshoeing, try your hand at winter tracking and birding, and enjoy the beauty of the forest overlooking Lake George. Weather permitting, a bonfire and hot cocoa will be provided after the hike in a socially distant, outdoor setting. Snowshoe rental and group rates are available. Reservations required, and COVID-19 guidelines will be followed.

Reserve your spot at www.upyondafarm.com



February Break - Explore Warren County on snowshoes with Up Yonda Naturalists on February 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th. You'll learn about snowshoeing, winter tracking and birding, and the ecology of some diverse properties nearby. We'll be visiting Amy's Park in Bolton, Meadowbrook Preserve in Queensbury, Harris Preserve Nature Trail in Luzerne, and Pack Forest in Warrensburg. Snowshoe rentals will be available for each event. Reservations required, and COVID-19 guidelines will be followed.

Reserve your spot at www.upyondafarm.com



Winter Junior Naturalist Program - The Up Yonda Farm Winter Junior Naturalist program is in full swing! Download your Winter Workbook from the Junior Naturalist page on our website and check out some of the great activities that Naturalists have compiled. There's all sorts of indoor and outdoor activities to try, and make sure that you email photos or a scan of your completed work to Up Yonda at uyfeec@gmail.com so that we can mail you your Winter Junior Naturalist badge and certificate.



NOTE TO TEACHERS



You may not be able to have a field trip to Up Yonda Farm this spring, or to have our Naturalists visit your classroom, but that doesn't mean that your students can't have an Up Yonda experience. Up Yonda Farm is offering both pre-recorded and live videos between 5 and 30 minutes long for classroom teachers to bring the wonders of nature into your classroom. Our pre-recorded content is available on our website in the Educational Resources tab along with downloadable supplements, and we have our own YouTube channel that has a growing library of videos and shorts. Take a look at our pre-recorded offerings and we'd be happy to Zoom in with your class to do a question and answer session after. Or if your students would like to do a live program, we're happy to set up our webcams and do a live streamed program with your class, play virtual nature Jeopardy, or fill in any way we can. Please reach out to us with questions or ways that we can help in your science education this spring at uyfeec@gmail.com.

NEW NATURALIST

Up Yonda Farm welcomed new Naturalist Anna Moreau this winter! Anna graduated in May from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, where she majored in Environmental Studies. She brings her experience working with students outdoors at the Environmental Studies Summer Youth Institute and leading backpacking groups with the Pre-Orientation Adventure Program. Anna is excited to lead programs in the field and work with groups of children and the public, when it can be done safely! Her favorite Adirondack animal is the Great Blue Heron, and would love to one day see a moose in the wild.



NEW MUSEUM DISPLAYS

As we move into 2021, we're working on some new displays in the museum. Last summer the Friends of Up Yonda Farm purchased a Bonterra Bees observation beehive, and we are currently working with the Warrensburg Jr./Sr. High School art club to create a mural on the wall around it to show off our local pollinators. With the help of Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District, CWICNY, Lake Champlain Basin Program and NEIWPCC, we were able to install a TopoBox. The TopoBox is an augmented reality sand table that will allow us to bring 3D, real-time changes to a watershed and observe the effects. This has been a really exciting tool to experiment with as we've been getting it online, and will be a popular hands-on exhibit! We've also been restructuring our bird observation area, adding a new touchscreen bird identification program, more seating for observations, and lots of new feeders to entice the local birds to visit. We can't wait to show off all this new stuff once we've got the ok to bring guests inside again!



WHO COOKS FOR YOU?

ALL ABOUT: BARRED OWLS

By Karin Badey

While mostly nocturnal, owls like this Barred owl, can sometimes be seen during daylight hours. Barred owls often hunt during dusk and dawn. But winter is a more challenging time to find food especially if the snow is deep. While owls have excellent hearing and can hear a mouse tunneling under a foot or more of snow, sometimes the snow is too deep for them to be able to actually catch their prey. For young owls, who may be experiencing their first winter, this can be especially difficult.



Because it can be a challenge for owls to find food in the winter, many owls are hunting closer to roads, and are often hit by cars. If you see an injured owl, call DEC or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. If you can stay nearby to help the rehabilitator find the bird that would be helpful, otherwise try and be as exact as possible so it can be located.

Another obstacle for owls can be poisons. Keep in mind that many owls succumb to poisons that people have put out to get rid of their house pests. This poison travels through the food chain, and owls and other animals can get very sick from eating poisoned mice.

February is usually the beginning of mating season. If you're outside in the evening, you may hear the distinctive "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?" call of the Barred. It is worth taking a short walk at night near the woods to hear owls call during the mating season. Great Horned Owls have more of a "hooting" call: it usually starts with a long hoot followed by two or three short hoots. A moonlight walk might be just the thing to try something different during COVID and the excitement of hearing an owl might make it well worth it. (Unless you're a Barred Owl. They don't like dining with the Great Horned, because they're often the meal.)

If you're not a night owl (pun totally intended), you could try keeping an eye out for Snowy owls that often migrate this way during the winter. The Fort Edward Grasslands are an excellent place to see different birds, especially the Short-eared Owl which also hunts during the daytime. If you take pictures, remember to respect the bird and keep your distance. They're hungry, and if they have to watch out for big predators with cameras, then they neglect what they're supposed to be doing- hunting.

See an owl? Went for an awesome walk in the moonlit woods? Send us a picture! Tell us about your adventure! We'd love to hear about it!