



The Wild Grapevine

Vol. 21 No. 3 July 2025

The Wild Grapevine will provide you with nature-related articles and upcoming event information four times per year. All annual pass holders will receive this newsletter free as part of their benefits. Send your email address to [metea@allencountyparks.org](mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org) for free e-mailed copies.

Allen County Parks website:  
[www.allencountyparks.org](http://www.allencountyparks.org)

Fox Island Alliance website:  
[www.foxislandalliance.org](http://www.foxislandalliance.org)

Friends of Metea Facebook:  
[FOM Facebook](#)

### ***Your Allen County Parks***

**Fox Island County Park**, 7324 Yohne Road, southwest Fort Wayne (260) 449-3180

**Metea County Park**, 8401 Union Chapel Road, at State Route 1, Leo-Cedarville (260) 449-3777

**Payton County Park**, 13928 Dunton Rd. just east of Huntertown between Gump and Hathaway Roads

**Cook's Landing County Park**, corner of Shoaff and Coldwater Roads

**Deer Run Wilderness Area** – near the NE corner of Allen County, access by permission only

**Allen County Hanauer Reserve** – Easterday Road rental facility



[www.nistem.org](http://www.nistem.org)

**Allen County Parks is a partner in the NISTEM network**



[www.allencountytrailblazers.org](http://www.allencountytrailblazers.org)

**Allen County Parks is a partner in Allen County Trailblazers**

## Who's Your Daddy (Longlegs)?

By Bob Dispenza, Park and Education Manager, Allen County Parks

In the last newsletter, the article about Nature Misconceptions mentioned daddy-longlegs/harvestmen “spiders” and how they are different than common knowledge says they are. We’ll dive a little deeper into the subject now.

These animals are in the order Opiliones, which includes over 6,650 species worldwide organized in five suborders. While they are in the Class Arachnida with spiders, and though they might look like spiders, they are more closely related to scorpions and horseshoe crabs. Unlike spiders, most only have one pair of eyes located in the middle of their back, and they don’t have a definite cephalothorax and abdomen like spiders do. In spite of what the internet says, they have no venom glands at all, nor can they make silk. Some species of true spiders, like cellar spiders, are also called daddy longlegs in some areas.



The second pair of legs is often longer, and functions as antennae. While spiders can eat only liquids, harvestmen can swallow both chunks and liquids. They eat a wide variety of foods both living and dead, everything from smaller insects to plants and fungi to scat. All species lay eggs, and all have defensive scent glands ward off predators.

In addition to noxious secretions, harvestmen have other defenses. Some will fall to the ground when disturbed. Some will drop legs, which will continue to twitch after separation, attracting predator attention while the harvestman escapes. Losing legs is costly, though, since they cannot be regenerated. So, use care when handling harvestmen.



In some species, the male cares for the eggs, cleaning and protecting them from predators. The eggs may hatch within three weeks to six months. The young molt about six times as they grow. Adults may hang out together near favorable habitats, in groups ranging in size from less than 100 up to 70,000 individuals. These aggregations can be quite scary to people with arachnophobia, but harvestmen are harmless.

Daddy longlegs are another fascinating part of nature that you can find at you Allen County Parks.

## Upcoming Programs for Summer

*Program fees are usually \$2.00 per person unless otherwise stated, and are used to provide operating funds (which are not supported by tax revenue) for Allen County Parks. Most programs require pre-registration to allow resource and staff allocation planning. There may be requirements for a minimum number registered to offer the program. You will be notified at least 1 day before the program if it has been cancelled due to minimum registrations not being met.*

Full “Buck” Moon Drum Circle & Hike		Fox Island County Park
July 9, Wednesday	7 PM (Drum Circle) 8:15 pm (Hike)	Vera Dulin Wildlife Observation Bldg. Nature Center
Meet at the VDWOB for the Drum Circle and Meet at the nature center for the Hike with the environmental educator. Friendly dogs on a leash are welcome on the hike. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: Free w/ Park entry or \$3 Pre-register by: 7/8 Min. 5, Max. 20	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

Nature Story Time		Metea County Park Nature Center
July 9, Wednesday	10:30 AM	
Butterflies and Bugs Join Jennifer from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 7/5	To register or for more information: <a href="https://acpl.libnet.info/event/">https://acpl.libnet.info/event/</a> or Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Full Buck Moon Hike		Metea County Park Nature Center
July 10, Thursday	9:30 PM	
Deer antlers are growing now, so we'll look for signs of our largest animal as we tread softly along our twilight trails. We'll learn about deer biology, management and habitat requirements.	Cost: \$3.00 Pre-register by: 7/6 Min. 5 Max. 45	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

Lightning Beetle Fest – Celebrate Indiana’s State Insect		Metea County Park Nature Center
July 12, Saturday	9 PM	
Learn all about our favorite natural night light! We will have an evening of programs and hikes to “enlighten” you. Park and Education Manager Bob Dispenza will share about what lightning beetles live here, how to attract and identify them, and then go out in the park to see them in action. We might even try to catch a few to observe closely. Natural fireworks!	Cost: \$3.00 Pre-register by: 7/9 Min. 5 Max. 25	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Wild Roots Summer Camp</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>Week of July 28- August 1<sup>st</sup>, Monday through Friday</b>	<b>8:30 AM – 3:30 PM</b>	<b>VDWOB</b>
Email Michal for more information: <a href="http://wildrootsnbl.com/">http://wildrootsnbl.com/</a>	Cost: \$190/camper	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Morning Hike</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>July 29, Tuesday</b>	<b>9-10:15 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Meet at the nature center. The environmental educator will lead a hike. Friendly dogs on a leash are welcome. Call, FB message or email <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> to register.	Cost: Free w/ Park entry or \$3 Pre-register by 7/28 Min. 5, Max. 20	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Trailblazers Hiking Program KickOff Event!</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>July 30, Saturday</b>	<b>6-8 PM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Come sign up for this hiking challenge! Upon completion, you will be eligible to get a hiking stick with special medallion. Call, FB message or email <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> to register. Meet at the Nature Center.	Cost: Park entry fee (\$3) or showing park pass Pre-register by: 7/29	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Preschool Story Time &amp; Hike</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>August 5, Tuesday</b>	<b>1030 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Join environmental educator, Eva, for a nature themed story time about “M is for Monarch Butterfly.” Songs, a story, and a hike are included. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3/person Pre-register by: 8/1 Min. 5	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Tuesday Morning Hikes</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>August 5, 12, 19, 26, Tuesdays</b>	<b>9-10:15 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Beat the heat! Join in for a hike with the Environmental Educator, Eva. Meet outside the nature center.	Cost: \$3/person or free w/ park pass Pre-register by: (3 days before program) Min. 5, Max:30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Mid-Day Drum Circle</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>August 8, Friday</b>	<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>Vera Dulin Building</b>
Build community and learn about nature while drumming.	Cost: Park Entry fee Pre-register by: 8/4	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Full “Sturgeon” Moon Drum Circle &amp; Hike</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>August 9, Saturday</b>	<b>7 PM (Drum Circle) 8:30 PM (Hike)</b>	<b>Vera Dulin Building Nature Center</b>
Meet at the VDWOB for the Drum Circle and Meet at the nature center for the Hike with the environmental educator. Friendly dogs on a leash are welcome on the hike. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3/person or free w/ park pass Pre-register by: 8/6 Min. 5, Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Full Sturgeon/Corn Moon Hike</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>August 9, Saturday</b>	<b>9 PM</b>	
Hike by the light of the August Full Moon. We’ll be listening to animal and insect sounds that summer nights bring.	Cost: \$3 Register by: 8/5	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org">metea@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Nature Story Time</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>August 13, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	
Down By The Pond Join Jennifer from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 8/10	To register or for more information: <a href="https://acpl.libnet.info/event/">https://acpl.libnet.info/event/</a> or Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Monthly Birding Walk</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>August 16, Saturday</b>	<b>9-10:15 AM</b>	<b>VDWOB</b>
Join fellow birders for a birding walk. All levels of experience welcome. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3/person or FREE w/ Park Pass Pre-register by: 8/13 Min. 5, Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Women's Lake Swim</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>August 16, Saturday</b>	<b>11 AM</b>	<b>Meet at the Lake Pavilion by beach</b>
Join environmental educator, Eva Webb, on a Women's Lake Swim. Bring a friend or come meet a new one. Bring a floaty (or not) so we can swim across the lake. Call or FB message Fox Island County Park to register.	Cost: \$3 or FREE w/ park pass Pre-register by: 8/13 Min. 5, Max. 25	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Trailblazers Hike</b>		<b>Payton County Park</b>
<b>August 30, Saturday</b>	<b>2 PM</b>	
Meet at Payton on Dunton Road for a short hike through the old forest that qualifies for Allen County Trailblazers trail credit. Find out more about the park and the hiking program.	Cost: FREE	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org">metea@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Morning Hikes</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 2 and 9, Tuesday</b>	<b>9-10:15 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Meet at the nature center. The environmental educator will lead a hike. Friendly dogs on a leash are welcome. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3 Pre-register by: 9/1 Min. 5 Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Full "Corn" Moon Drum Circle &amp; Hike</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 6, Saturday</b>	<b>6 PM (Drum Circle) 7:30 PM (Hike)</b>	<b>Vera Dulin Building Nature Center</b>
Meet at the VDWOB for the Drum Circle and Meet at the nature center for the Hike with the environmental educator. Friendly dogs on a leash are welcome on the hike. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3 Pre-register by: 9/16 Min. 5, Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Woodworking Class</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 7, Saturday</b>	<b>9 AM-12 PM</b>	<b>Vera Dulin Building</b>
Come learn how to carve a holiday themed wooden piece. Tim Ormiston will be guiding participants on the steps to accomplish a small, festive art piece. Call or FB message Fox Island County Park to register.	Cost: \$5 Register by: 9/4.	

<b>Full Corn/Harvest Moon Hike</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>September 7, Sunday</b>	<b>8:30 PM</b>	
Hike by the light of the Harvest Moon – traditionally the closest full moon to the autumn equinox, though this year the September and October full moons are about equally far. Learn about the moon and our nocturnal animals, and what can be harvested from our forests and fields.	Cost: \$3 Register by: 9/4	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org">metea@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>G is for Great Blue Heron Preschool Story &amp; Hike</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 9, Tuesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Bring your preschooler to learn about Great Blue Herons through story, songs, movement and a hike. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3 Pre-register by: 9/5 Min. 5 Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Library Partnership Preschool Story &amp; Hike</b>		<b>Aboite Public Library</b>
<b>September 10, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:15 AM</b>	
Bring your preschooler for a nature themed story time on C is for Community. There will be songs, a story, and movement.	Cost: FREE	

<b>Nature Story Time</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>September 10, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	
Nuts and Seeds Join Jennifer from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 9/7	To register or for more information: <a href="https://acpl.libnet.info/event/">https://acpl.libnet.info/event/</a> or Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Mid-Day Drum Circle</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 12, Friday</b>	<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>VDWOB</b>
Join environmental educator, Eva Webb for a community drum circle in the Vera Dulin Wildlife Observation Building. Call or FB Message Fox Island County Park to reserve your spot. Come, relax, drum, build community, and learn about the natural world.	Cost: \$3 or FREE w/ Park Pass Pre-register by: 9/9 Min. 5 Max. --	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>C is for Community Preschool Program</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 17, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Nature Center</b>
Meet at the nature center. Bring your preschooler for a nature themed story time on C is for Community. There will be songs, a story, movement and a hike. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3 Pre-register by: 9/16 Min. 5 Max. 30	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Monthly Birding Hike</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 20, Saturday</b>	<b>9 AM</b>	<b>Meet outside the VDWOB</b>
Join fellow birders for a birding walk. All levels of experience welcome. Call or FB message to register.	Cost: \$3 or FREE w/ Park Pass Pre-register by: 9/18	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Women's Lake Swim</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 20, Saturday</b>	<b>11 AM</b>	<b>Meet at Beach Pavilion</b>
Join environmental educator, Eva Webb, on a Women's Lake Swim. Bring a friend or come meet a new one. Bring a floaty (or not) so we can swim across the lake. Call or FB message Fox Island County Park to register.	Cost: \$3 or FREE w/ Park Pass Pre-register by: 9/18	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Autumn Equinox Poetry in the Park</b>		<b>Fox Island County Park</b>
<b>September 20, Saturday</b>	<b>1 PM</b>	<b>Vera Dulin Building</b>
Come enjoy some nature poetry marking the beginning of Autumn. There will be an open mic and an invitation to hike a trail that has fall themed nature poetry and art.	Cost: \$10 Pre-register by: 9/18	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:ewebb@allencountyparks.org">ewebb@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-3184 Eva Webb

<b>Autumn Equinox Hike</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>September 21, Sunday</b>	<b>8:30 PM</b>	
We will explore the fact and fiction, notions and numbers of the fall equinox. We'll hike out during the last summer/first fall day to see what's changing and who's getting ready for winter. The equinox will actually at 2:19 PM on the 9/22, so we can celebrate a bit early!	Cost: \$3 Register by: 9/18	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org">metea@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Full Hunters/Harvest Moon Hike</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>October 7, Tuesday</b>	<b>8 PM</b>	
Hike by the light of the Hunter's Moon. Learn about the moon and our nocturnal animals, especially the ones that are hunted in Indiana and how they are managed.	Cost: \$3 Register by: 10/4	To register or for more information: Email: <a href="mailto:metea@allencountyparks.org">metea@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza

<b>Nature Story Time</b>		<b>Metea County Park Nature Center</b>
<b>October 8, Wednesday</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	
Deer Over Here Join Jennifer from the Grabill Branch Library and Bob Dispenza from Metea County Park as we learn about the great outdoors! Each session will focus on a nature theme with stories, activities and hands-on learning. We'll meet in the Nature Center then do a little outdoor exploring if weather permits.	Cost: FREE Pre-register by: 10/5	To register or for more information: <a href="https://acpl.libnet.info/event/">https://acpl.libnet.info/event/</a> or Email: <a href="mailto:bdispenza@allencountyparks.org">bdispenza@allencountyparks.org</a> Call: 449-8619 Bob Dispenza