



# NCRN Natural Resource Quarterly

SPRING 2011

## Springing Up—Dryad's Saddle

By John Paul Schmit

One of the few large fungi species that can be found in the NCR during spring, dryad's saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*) is a wood-decay fungus that can grow to be a foot or more across. Most fungi in NCR do not produce mushrooms or other fruiting bodies until the summer or fall when a combination of factors, including warmer weather and rain, promotes fungal reproduction.

The upper surface of dryad's saddle is a brownish color and is typically covered in large dark-brown to black scales. The pattern is somewhat similar to the coloration of a pheasant—which is why this fungus is sometimes also called pheasant's back. A dryad is a mythological tree nymph. The name dryad's saddle comes from the sometimes saddle-shaped cap of the fungus—depressed in (*Cont'd next page*)



NPS Photo

Technically dryad's saddle is an edible fungus—eating it will not hurt or kill you—however, no one thinks that it tastes very good. It is only tender enough to eat when it is very young, so I can't recommend it. An indication of its palatability might come from the fact that it is often used by amateur paper makers who make pulp from the fruiting body to produce a thick, stiff paper.

## Coming to Your Park this Spring...

**Forest Vegetation Monitoring**-The I&M forest vegetation monitoring crew led by botanist John Parrish will be doing field work in all parks from May through September, monitoring forest vegetation along with forest insect pests, invasive/exotic plants, and soils.

**Macroinvertebrate Monitoring**-A macroinvertebrate monitoring team from Versar (who also does monitoring for the state of Maryland) will do field work from March through May in PRWI on the North Branch of Chopawamsic Creek, the Middle Branch of Chopawamsic Creek, Carters Run, Mawavi Run, North Fork Quantico Creek, Orenda Run, Taylor Run, and Mary Bird Branch.

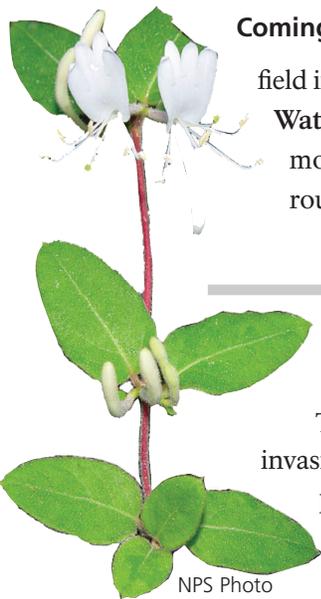
**Amphibian Monitoring**-An amphibian monitoring team from the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center will be working in CHOH and ROCR from March through June.

An I&M staff team will monitor amphibians in MANA during the same period.

**Forest Bird Monitoring**-A forest bird monitoring team from the University of Delaware will be in the (*Cont'd next page*)

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### Coming to Your Park this Spring *continued*

field in all parks from May through August.

**Water Monitoring**-NCRN I&M water monitoring continues in all parks year round.

**Exotic Invasive Plants**-This spring the NCR's Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) will treat lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and other invasive exotics throughout the region.

## Invasive Exotic Plants Resource Brief Available

The NCRN I&M program monitors invasive exotic plants at more than 400 forest plots across the region. A new resource brief helps describe the basics of the monitoring strategy, the most com-

mon invasives in forest plots in the region, and whether the biggest challenge for each park comes from trees, vines, shrubs, or herbaceous invasives.

To read or download a copy, visit [http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ncrn/network\\_products.cfm#Briefs](http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ncrn/network_products.cfm#Briefs).

## 2009 Amphibian Report

The 2009 NCRN Amphibian Report is now available. It covers the results of four years of amphibian monitoring (2005-2009) in CHOH, ROCR, and PRWI. Overall,

- despite abnormally dry years (2006-2009), amphibian populations are stable
- no disease outbreaks were detected
- permanent wetlands showed the highest variety of species (species richness), compared to semi-permanent and temporary wetlands

The 2009 report and other information on NCRN amphibian monitoring are available at [http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ncrn/monitoring\\_amphibians.cfm](http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ncrn/monitoring_amphibians.cfm).



Pickerel frog (*Rana palustris*)

### Dryad's saddle *continued*

the middle and rising towards the edge. The underside of this fungus is white and composed of numerous small pores where spores are produced. The pores are found all down the stem except for the very bottom where it is smooth and black. The fungus will grow in a mushroom shape from downed wood or as shelves coming out of standing dead wood.

The fungus consumes dead wood from the heart rot of living trees. Most flowering trees have a living wood underneath their bark, but at their core contain dead wood that helps support the tree. A heart-rot occurs when a fungus decays this



dead wood, making it more likely that a storm or wind will knock the tree over. As a result the appearance of dryad's saddle on a living tree can be taken as warning sign that a tree is weakened and could be a hazard if near a building or road.

*Polyporus squamosus* occurs on a wide variety of trees in the eastern US—most frequently on the dead wood of

elms (*Ulmus*) and maples (*Acer*). It is also found on buckeyes (*Aesculus*), alders (*Alnus*), hackberry (*Celtis*), tulip poplars (*Liriodendron*), cottonwoods (*Populus*), willows (*Salix*), and basswoods (*Tilia*). Given this wide variety of host trees, it is no surprise that this fungus is common throughout the NCR.

# Spring Wildflower Walk

I&M Botanist John Parrish will lead a spring wildflower walk on April 15, 2011, at Manassas National Battlefield. Participants will walk along Bull Run and surrounding areas to identify spring wildflowers, shrubs, and trees along the floodplain, slopes, and adjacent fields. Expect to see lots of Virginia bluebells, bluets, spring beauties, redbuds, and many uncommon wildflowers too!

All are welcome, but space is limited. The walk will take place from 9:15 am to 2:45 pm. Participants should

bring their lunch. To sign up or for more information contact John Parrish by email or at 202-342-1443 x203.

Yellow violet (*Viola pubescens*)



NPS Photo

# Chronic Wasting Disease Found in Maryland

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received laboratory confirmation February 10, 2011, that a white-tailed deer harvested in Maryland tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). This is the first confirmed case of CWD in Maryland. A hunter in Allegany County reported killing the deer on November 27, 2010, in Green Ridge State Forest. Maryland now joins 20 other

states and Canadian provinces with CWD documented in deer, elk, or moose.

More information on this new finding of CWD is online at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/dnrnews/pressrelease2011/021011a.asp>. The Maryland DNR's CWD response plan is online at [http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Hunt\\_Trap/deer/disease/cwdinformation.asp](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Hunt_Trap/deer/disease/cwdinformation.asp).

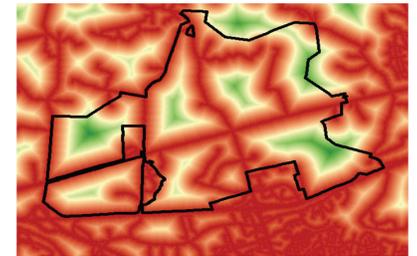
# New GIS Data

The NPScape program (the NPS landscape dynamics monitoring project) has released their "Phase 2" products and methods. This phase includes new road density, area-weighted road density, and distance to road metrics for the two LCCs (Landscape Conservation Cooperatives) that cover the entire National Capital Region Network. All of the NPScape products are available on NR Info, and can be most easily accessed using the links on the NPScape project page at <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor/npscape/index.cfm>.

Additionally, the 2006 version of the National Land Cover Database has been released and includes not only

landcover, but improved impervious surface information and landcover change products. Find out more at <http://www.mrlc.gov/>.

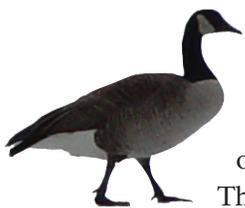
Some of these datasets can be quite large, making downloads difficult. If you are interested in a regional or park "clips" of these datasets contact Mark Lehman.



NPS Image

Sample of the "Distance from Roads" GIS layer for Manassas.

# Goose Count Help Needed



NPS Photo

Volunteers are needed for counts of resident Canada geese at NACE parks. Counts will be done every day for approximately one week, sometime in late May or early June. This is not an all day activity. The support of a major partner in this effort was lost so any and all help is appreciated.

Volunteers are also welcome to assist with egg oiling in early April. For details contact Mikaila Milton by email or at 202-690-5167.

## Park Acronyms

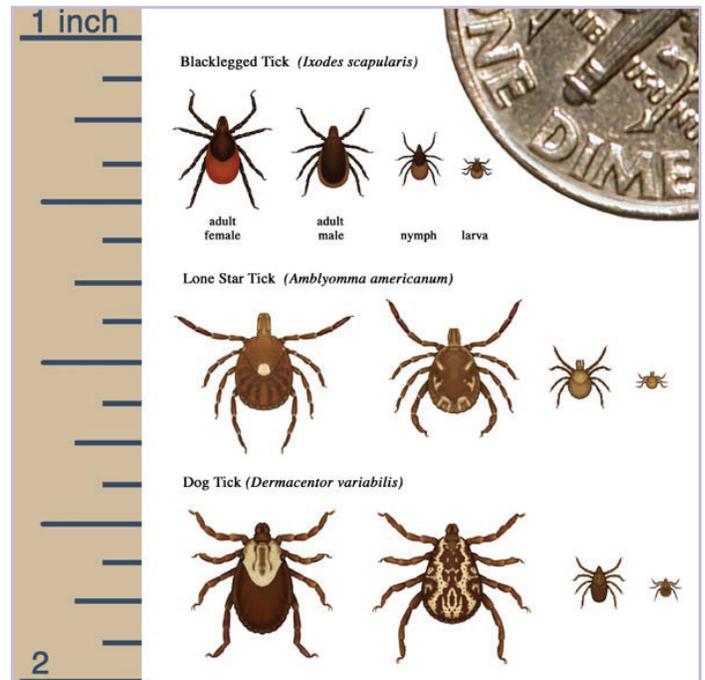
- ANTI = Antietam National Battlefield
- CATO = Catoctin Mountain Park
- CHOH = Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park
- GWMP = George Washington Memorial Parkway
- HAFE = Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
- MANA = Manassas National Battlefield
- MONO = Monocacy National Battlefield
- NACE = National Capital Parks - East
- NAMA = National Mall and Memorial Parks
- PRWI = Prince William Forest Park
- ROCR = Rock Creek Park
- WOTR = Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

## Ticks and Lyme Disease Safety

We are not the only creatures slowly emerging from winter dormancy right now. Spring marks the beginning of tick season and it's never too early to check regularly for ticks and know the symptoms of Lyme disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Take extra precautions in May, June, and July. This is when ticks that transmit Lyme disease are most active.
- If a tick is attached to your skin for less than 24 hours, your chance of getting Lyme disease is extremely small. But just to be safe, monitor your health closely after a tick bite and be alert for any signs and symptoms of tick-borne illness.

For information on ticks and Lyme disease, visit [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/ld\\_prevent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/ld_prevent.htm) or [http://inside.nps.gov/publichealth/intra/info/factsheets/fs\\_ticks.pdf](http://inside.nps.gov/publichealth/intra/info/factsheets/fs_ticks.pdf).



Lyme disease is transmitted by the blacklegged tick (also known as deer tick) shown along the top of this image.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Calendar

2011

### MARCH

14-18. **George Wright Society Conference.** New Orleans, LA. <http://www.georgewright.org/gws2011>. (Can't go to New Orleans? Come to the George Wright Society Roadshow April 13 instead!)

31. Dan Sealy Retirement Reception. 2 p.m. Great Falls, VA.

### APRIL

13. NCR George Wright Society Roadshow. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. ROCR Nature Center Auditorium.

15. Wildflower Walk at MANA. 9:15 am to 2:45 pm. Contact John Parrish by email for details.

21. NAT (Natural Resources Advisory Team) Meeting. CATO.

### JULY

21. NAT (Natural Resources Advisory Team) Meeting. WOTR.

### OCTOBER

20. NAT (Natural Resources Advisory Team) Meeting. Location TBD.

#### National Capital Region Network Staff

Program Manager: Patrick Campbell

Botanist: John Parrish

Data Manager: Geoff Sanders

GIS Specialist: Mark Lehman

Hydrologic Technician: Jim Pieper

Hydrologic Technician: Tonya Watts

Quantitative Ecologist: John Paul Schmit

Science Communicator: Megan Nortrup

Water Resources Specialist: Marian Norris

Visit NCRN I&M at:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units.ncrn/index.cfm>

<http://imnetsharepoint/NCRN/default.aspx>

*NCRN Natural Resource Quarterly* offers updates on the status of park natural resources and Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) "vital signs" for the NPS National Capital Region Network (NCRN).

Questions or comments? Contact Megan Nortrup by email or at 202-342-1443 x214.