



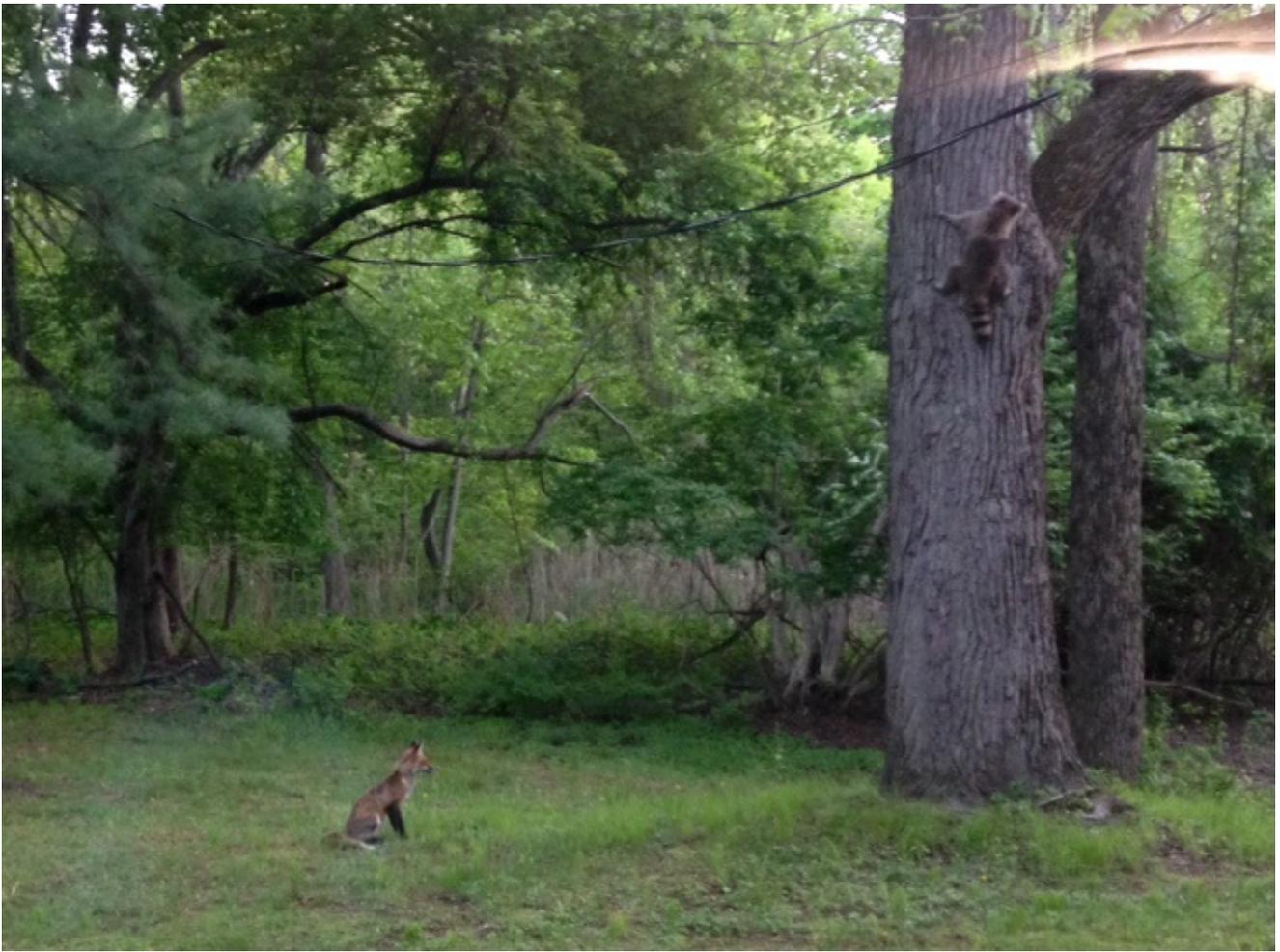
### **Featured Sighting**

5/3/2017/2017- A coyote patrols one of the trails at the Vassar Farm under the cover of darkness. As many as 3 coyotes have been captured in a single image at the preserve, but there are likely more. One night, I actively watched 3 hunt in an old field and heard at least one other nearby. Most observations of coyotes made are at night. They are generalist predators, and will take a wide range of prey, sometimes even including fruits and berries in their diet as well.



### **Featured Sighting**

5/16/2017/2017- On the evening of May 16th we spotted a fox who had treed a raccoon in the backyard of our house on Dean's Lane. The fox waited around for a bit (for the raccoon to descend) but was chased off by a number of crows. The crows called loudly and flew aggressively towards the fox and he (or she) finally took off. Photo and submission by Lois Horst.



Want to submit to VC Nature?

Email [vcnature@vassar.edu](mailto:vcnature@vassar.edu) with your observation, the date, and any relevant photos or descriptions!

Submissions:

4/24/2017- Groundhog on the curvy path near the Deece by Laura Vidano.



4/24/2017- A mink ran by while I was looking at this Solitary Sandpiper. Unfortunately the mink was too fast for me to catch a picture of. - Margaret Phillips



4/27/2017- Observation of a Garter Snake near the beaver pond at the Vassar Farm from two weeks earlier. By Madeline Bankson.



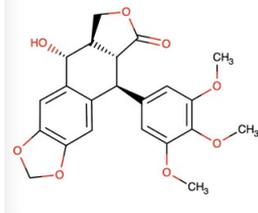
4/28 /2017 Rose-breasted grosbeak at a bird feeder off of Raymond Avenue. Photo by Dave Jemiolo.



5/3/2017 - On my way back from the athletic center this morning I saw a fox chasing a cat on the road just below the Wimpfheimer Nursery School. In my car, as I approached the concrete bridge below the nursery school I saw a black cat run out of the brush on the west side of the bridge, cross over the bridge, and jump back into the brush. Right behind the cat on the west side of the bridge was a red fox. When the fox saw my car it stopped chasing the cat, crossed the road and went into the woods. I had heard that a red fox will not bother with a cat but perhaps this is untrue. - Dave Jemiolo

5/4/2017- While walking in the woods I came across this patch of mayapple, *Podophyllum peltatum*. The fruits are poisonous for most of its growing season but apparently becomes edible in late fall. The poison is podophyllotoxin a cancer drug and antimicrotubule agent whose structure is shown. -Dave Jemiolo

## Mayapple



5/4/2017- At 11:45 AM today (May 4) I saw a female Northern Flicker from the kitchen window of my TH. She was poking around in the dirt and then jumped up onto a tuliptree trunk and poked around before flying away. -Lydia Gold

5/4/2017- *Polyporus squamosus* (Dryad's Saddle or Pheasant Back Saddle) was observed on the Ecological Preserve on May 4th. - Keri VanCamp



5/5/2017- Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), is named for the red-orange liquid that oozes from its stem. A spring ephemeral, its single flower emerges for only a day or two before withering away. -Dylan Finley



5/7/2017- Great blue heron spotted on Vassar lake at 7:47 PM. By Lydia Gold



5/8/2017 - Four wild turkeys were hanging around the field station. They crept into the edge of the forest when I approached the weather station. (they were also seen in the rain on the afternoon of the 6th of April)

We saw a few kingbirds out at the beaver dam. They were perched low on sticks and reeds.

There were at least two or three muskrat sightings located by the pond by the brown trail, a bit south of the beaver dam area, and further down the creek. - Ryn Davison

5/9/17 - I saw this little "bumbler" (as my friend Sean termed it) on the cleared part of the phenology trail. -Ryan Logue



5/10/2017- Two garter snakes were found over at the Wimpfheimer Pollinator Garden this morning. So cool! - Ryn Davison



5/11/2017- Morel mushroom at the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve. By Dave Jemiolo.



5/11/2017- I found what I think is a small patch of ramps on the farm. I broke off a piece of one leaf and it had a garlic odor to it confirmed by my wife and son. - Dave Jemiolo

5/12/2017- Two red foxes on the VC golf course by Dave Jemiolo



5/16/2017- I observed *Geranium maculatum* near the Collin's Field Station. - Keri VanCamp



5/16/2017- I observed this brown cup fungi, *Peziza* sp., on the Swain Trail -Keri VanCamp



5/16/2017- Common snapping turtle in Sunset Lake. Photo by Charlotte Ells.



5/16/2017- Keri and I saw a Philadelphia Vireo off the brown trail yesterday (Tuesday, 16 of May). It was pretty awesome! They're found around wet areas. - Ryn Davison

5/16/2017- No good photos, but Keri and I found red spider mites on trees near the field station and back on the red trail. These little guys consume plant sap, pollen, you name it. But they don't have a taste for humans. - Ryn Davison

5/17/2017- A week ago we saw a fox in the yard that had mange so badly you could barely tell it was a fox (mange is caused by parasitic mites that get under the animal's skin). A couple of weeks ago we saw a fox chasing a turkey in the backyard--that fox was magnificent! Beautiful coat, lovely tail, very healthy. Hopefully, he is resistant to mange. - Lois Horst

5/17/2017- Great Blue Heron seen flying over the PFP and then over the drumlin. - Ryn Davison

5/21/2017- I saw a fully grown beaver on Sunday, 21st a bit after sunset. It was in the flooded forest swimming slowly towards the dam. I followed it for a good two minutes until I couldn't anymore. I then saw it down by the dam about half an hour later. I didn't get a pic. - Addison Tate

5/21/2017- Green Heron at the Vassar Farm by Addison Tate



6/2/2017- Garter Snake by Dave Jemiolo.



**Features From Abroad: A Vassar Environmental Studies Class Trip to Iceland:**

A great skua, a large predatory seabird, attempts to intimidate an unsuspecting wildlife photographer. Most skuas will pirate food from other seabirds, forcing them to give up their catch. Great skuas, however, are so large and powerful that they routinely kill and eat other birds, including puffins, gulls, and ducks. They also attack those who get near their nesting territory, and it is kind of scary. I had no idea there was even a nest nearby! Photo by Stephen Kovari



The Atlantic puffin is one of the most common seabirds in Iceland, but we actually didn't see too many. Apparently they have been moving more to the northern portions of the island. Photo by Stephen Kovari



The rock ptarmigan is a bird of open tundra environments, and is the only game bird in Iceland. The male takes longer than the female (right) to change out of its snow white winter plumage, but soon both birds will be in their darker summer plumage. By Stephen Kovari



They're called reindeer, not caribou, because they have been introduced to the island. In fact, Iceland's only native land mammal is the arctic fox. Still, the reindeer in Iceland are a protected part of the ecosystem and are hunted through careful management. By Stephen Kovari



I was told arctic foxes are very skittish. No joke there. But I was able to spot one and get a photo. The fog kind of helped ruin any chances of a good picture....but it's identifiable at least! This was at about midnight. Since it is basically always bright there at this time of year, the foxes take advantage of the few hours of slightly dimmer light to hunt. By Stephen Kovari



And lastly...check out that landscape from the top of a mountain in the eastern fjords of Iceland. I'm sure gonna miss it.



**Relevant Events at Vassar:**

All events meet at the newly renovated barn, across from the Poughkeepsie Farm Project

**Friday, June 16th 2017- Night Walk at the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve**

Meet us at the newly renovated barn at 8 pm for a nighttime walk in the woods, and learn about some of the local wildlife at the preserve. Bring a flashlight if you have one!

Email [vcnature@vassar.edu](mailto:vcnature@vassar.edu) if you have any questions! Hope to see you at the preserve!

**Help Protect Our Wildlife:**

Wild animals living in urban regions face many threats, including poaching, habitat degradation, litter and pollution. If you notice anything that may be harmful to wildlife, do not hesitate to contact Vassar Security or the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve.



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Email questions, comments, and submissions.