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medinacountyparks.com
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Leaflet

Your Connection to Nature  Medina County Park District

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Animal Moms

By: Natalie Dubiel, Naturalist

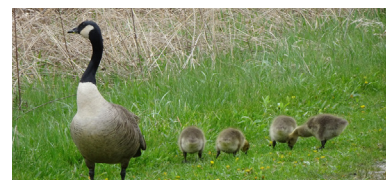
As Mother's Day approaches, we take a moment to celebrate mothers and anyone who may fill that place in our lives. While nature does not stop to celebrate moms, there are many animal moms deserving of celebration. In fact, there are many more than this article can hope to cover, so follow along for a few highlights.

Expert Backpackers

Similar to humans, several animal moms hoist their children onto their backs. The trick is that many of these moms aren't lifting one or two, but rather several children as they trek from place to place. Wolf spider mothers carry their egg sacs with them wherever they go. Upon hatching, they carry dozens of young on their backs for up to two weeks. Virginia opossum moms may birth up to 25 babies but can only feed up to 13. After carrying those babies for between two and three months, the babies leave the pouch, and if they aren't in a den, then they can be found clinging to mom's back for another month or more. Opossums and spiders are two very different creatures, but both are skilled at moving their young from place to place.



Killdeer protects her eggs.



Some animal moms adopt babies.

A Mom to Many

Not only do some animals have many young, but some animal moms also adopt babies. In the event that goslings find themselves without a family, if they fall in line with other similarly sized goslings, Canada goose moms will adopt them. Adoption is risky in the animal world. It means more little ones to protect and more mouths to feed, but Canada goose moms take this risk willingly.

Family Safety Patrol

Safety is the name of the game for many animal parents. Raccoon moms maintain multiple den sites. If one becomes unsafe, they will move their young one at a time in their mouths to the next safer den. The irony is that their strong maternal drive is often misunderstood. These long hours on safety patrol coupled with foraging for extra food can result in late nights that turn into days. Raccoon moms are often seen outside of their normal nocturnal hours when caring for young. Similarly, killdeer parents lay, incubate, and protect a surprisingly well camouflaged, but sometimes poorly placed, ground nest. Parents are able to do an impressive "broken wing" act when potential predators get too close. They droop a wing and run in the opposite direction of the nest to look injured and lure predators away. Long days, sleepless nights, and potential self-sacrifice are the name of the game for these safety-conscious families.

Parenting is Hard Work

There is no doubt about it, parenting is hard work. Whether you're hauling dozens of babies on your back, welcoming the young of another into your flock, or steering potential danger away from your nest, being a mom or dad is no small feat. In honor of all of the hardworking human and animal parents out there, Happy Mother's Day!

Now Through June 19, 2024

Get outside and fish at your Medina County parks this spring. This self-guided program is the perfect way to spend time with family and friends and can be completed at your convenience.

Participants who fish at five or more designated fishing areas between March 19 and June 19 and turn in their completed forms to the Oenslager Nature Center between June 20 and July 7, 2024 will receive an award (while supplies last). This program is open to all ages; one award per person. Download the form at www.medinacountyparks.com. Click on the *Programs* menu, then on *Public Programs and Events*, then on the *Special Events* icon. You can also pick up a form at Oenslager Nature Center, Susan Hambley Nature Center, or the park office.



Now Through June 30, 2024

Complete five or more of the designated trails between April 1 and June 30 to qualify for an award. Hikes and awards are FREE for all participants! The award for all hikers is a unique commemorative art print created by local artist and long-time park volunteer George Parmelee. Download the form at www.medinacountyparks.com. Click on the *Programs* menu, then on *Strolling Through Spring*. Forms are available at Oenslager Nature Center, Susan Hambley Nature Center, or the park office.

DONATION CORNER

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Disabled American Veterans #72

In Memory of Ed Miller

Robert and Jeanine Haney

Oenslager Nature Center

Correlle dishes
Sandy Reinker
Michelle Weigel

Correlle dishes and silverware

Debbie Ensor

Children's books

Jessica Gorey

Susan Hambley Nature Center

In Memory of JoAnn Meuler
Rene Niemoller
Yoland Niemoller-Van Der Burg

Other

Monetary donation to Park Police Department
Lake Medina Open Water Swim Group