



## HALLOWEEN IN THE GREAT SWAMP



Sketch by Judy Kelley-Moberg



Swamp cryptids, Clockwise from left: Jenny Greenteeth, Bunyip (illustration by HJ Ford in *The Brown Fairy Book* ©1904), Bigfoot, Creature of the Black Lagoon, Grootslang.



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*Friends of The Great Swamp* was founded in 1990, as a non-profit volunteer organization. Our mission is to preserve and protect the health of The Great Swamp watershed through research, education and conservation.

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# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

By Ken Luhman

“It's Duck Season!” says Bugs Bunny to Elmer Fudd. “Wabbit Season!” counters Daffy Duck in the famous Warner Bros. cartoon. Well, the reality is this year's hunting season kicks off on October 1. Safety while hiking and paddling is something we would like you to be aware of.

Bow season (deer) is the first season to open, which really doesn't present any severe threats to hikers and paddlers, but reflective orange is still recommended while out and about. November 18 is the opening day of gun season in our neck of the woods, which includes Putnam and Dutchess counties. This includes deer, bear, small game, and duck seasons.



Gun season poses safety concerns and caution must be taken while hiking or paddling. Orange clothing is a must while hiking from November 18 through December 19 until gun and muzzleloader season ends. The first duck season is November 18 to 26 and then it reopens December 9 to January 26. If you decide to paddle on The Great Swamp, mid-day is best during duck season. Hunters usually only hunt in the early morning and evening, just before dark. All the different hunting seasons open and close from October 1 through February 29. It's

best if you check the New York state hunting season schedule on the DEC website before going out.

On another note, The Great Swamp has been used for duck and bird hunting for many years. But over the past few years, safety concerns have been brought up on the distances from the shooters and residences. Developments and homes are being built closer to The Great Swamp, and our neighbors have experienced bird shot landing on their roofs and cars. This indicates that some duck hunters are not meeting the required minimum distance of 500 feet inline of their shot from residences. Reports also have come in of folks seeing motorboats in the Swamp, especially during duck season. Powered vessels are prohibited on The Great Swamp and on the Swamp River. If you see or experience any of these issues, please report them to the DEC (hotline: 844-332-3267) and keep the Swamp healthy and our neighbors safe.

Enjoy the fall season, be safe and thanks for your support.

## FrOGS Board of Directors 2023

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Friends of the Great Swamp is an organization dedicated to preserving The Great Swamp through educational programs, scientific research, conservation, and by making all aware of this wonderful resource in our midst.

## FrOGS Needs *Your* Help!

### JOIN ~ VOLUNTEER ~ DONATE

The generosity of our members and supporters extends FrOGS' reach and effectiveness.

Please fill out and return this form or visit [frogs-ny.org](http://frogs-ny.org)

<b>DONATION</b>	Remember your donations are tax deductible! Send yours to: <b>Friends of The Great Swamp, P.O. Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564</b>		
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# SIGHTINGS IN THE SWAMP

By Mary Rice, Paul Andrews, and Judy Kelley-Moberg

**B**ats! Creatures of the night, flying in silence. Darting near our heads while hunting, some drinking the blood of other mammals. In the 1500s, bats were seen as a symbol of witchcraft and sorcery. It's no wonder bats became a scary Halloween icon.

The reality is that bats are critically important to the environment and agriculture (e.g., as essential pollinators of bananas, mangos, avocados, and agave). Bats are the second largest order of mammals with more than 1400 species in the order *Chiroptera* (derived from Greek for 'hand-wing'). Bats are the *only* flying mammal and one of the oldest living mammals, with a lineage that stretches back more than 50 million years. Only three bats feed on blood and all three inhabit Central or South America. In North America, bats are valued insectivores, pollinators (only in the southwest), and agents of seed dispersal. There are 6 species of cave bats and 3 species of tree bats found in New York. Little brown bats (a cave bat) are the most common hibernating bat species in New York and The Great Swamp.

Bats are seasonal breeders, mating in the fall before hibernating. Males and females roost separately in the spring and summer, but in the fall congregate in the same roost in a behavior known as "swarming". Although they mate in the fall, the sperm are stored and fertilization does not occur until the spring. Cave bats bear a single pup weighing up to 30% of the mother's weight, which makes them relatively huge newborns. The pup starts flying by 21 days after birth and is totally weaned by 26 days. The average lifespan of a little brown bat is 6.5 years, but they can live over 30 years.

Although they have excellent vision, about half of all bats find their prey through echolocation. Up to 200 pulses per second are generated by their larynx and emitted from their mouths at frequencies well above human hearing (basically high-pitched screaming). The reflected echoes are received by specialized receptors in their inner ears that are extremely sensitive to frequency changes. In order to avoid being deafened by the intensity of their own calls, the middle ear muscle contracts to separate the hammer, anvil and stirrup bones and reduce hearing sensitivity as the larynx generates the echolocation pulse. In addition to



Little brown bats ready to fly for a night of insect gobbling. Note how the bats interleave the direction they are facing when shoulder to shoulder. Photo by Paul Andrews.

echolocation, bats also use their larynxes to communicate with each other through chirps, screeches, songs, purrs, clicks, and buzzing that can be heard by humans.

Bats are very fast and agile hunters, with some species flying up to 100 mph. Their wings are formed by slender arm bones and 4 fingers that support a double layer of skin with blood vessels, nerves, and muscles that can curve the wing. In addition to catching insects with their mouths, the interfemoral membrane between their legs forms a basket or pouch to help catch and hold insects captured in flight. Little brown bats can consume up to half their body weight (9 g) in insects every night. That equates to 4.5 g of insects, or 1800 mosquitos nightly. Bats' main predators are owls, raccoons, snakes, and cats.

White-nose syndrome is a fungal disease introduced in 2006 that affects the bat's mouth, nose, ears, and wings. It's more of a problem with cave dwelling species as they cluster together to hibernate. Bats are tiny animals and unlike bears can't store enough calories to overwinter if their rest is disturbed. If the fungus irritates the bat enough to rouse it from hibernation, the bat will expend precious energy, and may starve before it can feed again in the spring. White-nose syndrome in New York has decimated populations of the Indiana, Eastern pipistrelle, northern long-eared, and little brown bats. By 2017, little brown bats had suffered a population loss of 90% in the surveyed hibernacula (roost caves).

Bat Appreciation Week will be celebrated this year on October 24 to 31. To honor Bat Appreciation Week, why don't you install a bat house on your property? Be sure to buy one that is approved by Bat Conservation International. Let's value and enjoy these remarkable animals that provide pesticide-free insect control and pollination for important crops.



Sketch by Judy Kelley-Moberg

# CRYPTIDS OF THE SWAMPS

By Paul Andrews

Why do swamps, marshes, and bogs scare us? When you hear the word “swamp!”, does your heart rate increase as your imagination immediately conjures up thoughts of leg-trapping muck, massive snapping turtles latching on to your ankles, 20-foot snakes eager to make you their next meal, carnivorous spiders, and mutant humanoid creatures ready to drag you off to their slimy lairs? Folk tales of malicious or mischievous beings that inhabit wetlands are a common theme across many cultures around the globe, from northern Europe to Japan to Australia to Africa. What is it about the human brain that so many unconnected cultures have created such similar myths about scary creatures inhabiting their wetlands?

When I think of a swamp or marsh, I think of the filtered shafts of misty sunlight morphing into shape-shifting shadows; the rich, musty, earthy, odors of dank decay; the sounds of myriad unseen birds hooting, chirping, quacking, and mocking human intruders; the splashes and gurgles documenting the ongoing interplay of life and death beneath the surface; the countless tones of green overwhelming my eyes; and the tenacious bugs and cobwebs startling my skin. It is a primeval world where you are on your own against

the seen and the unseen. Don't we all sense we're being watched by both animals real and monsters imagined?



Vodyanoy of Slavic

Cryptids are animals that are believed to exist somewhere in the wild, but whose existence is unsubstantiated by science. The king of cryptids in North America is the Bigfoot or sasquatch that roams

the northern forests. In addition to the many swamp creatures of folklore, Hollywood has also produced a few classic cryptids for our entertainment such as the Creature of the Black Lagoon, Meg Mucklebones, and Swamp Thing.

The following table (next page) shows a small sampling of the many mythical wetland denizens across the globe. Jenny Greenteeth is well known as a green-skinned hag in Britain with a taste for children.

She is so ever present in wetlands that duckweed is named after her! Kappa in Japan is an amazing hybrid animal with a turtle's carapace, frog's skin, and a humanoid skeleton about the size of a child. Should a Kappa confront you, you can greatly weaken it by knocking the water out of a depression in its head. The bunyip of Aboriginal mythology is another creature with amazing adaptations to wetland life, with descriptions including flippers, fangs, tusks, one eye, shaggy fur, scales, or horns. The myth may have arisen from encounters with the fossilized bones of large, now-extinct wetland marsupials or perhaps the carcass of an elephant seal that wandered far inland and died on a riverbank. In addition to those listed, there are many more swamp cryptids such as Heqet (the frog-headed Egyptian fertility goddess), Tiddy Mun (little old marsh man of England), and Grootslang (huge serpent of South Africa).

Clearly, the plethora of cryptid myths throughout the many cultures of the world speaks to the common fears instilled in humans when entering a swamp. Anthropologists suggest that many of these stories originated from the real-life concerns of our ancestors, few of whom could swim even though they often lived near water. Tales of spirits and monsters probably helped impart due caution about wetland dangers in both children and adults.



Kappa of Japanese folklore



Wendigo of Algonquin folklore

If you are skeptical that any of these swamp monsters actually exist, just remember this maxim – absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. It's Halloween and I want to believe!

## Swamp Monsters (Cryptids) From Around the World

Name	Location	Description	Antisocial Behavior
Jenny Greenteeth and Peg Powler	Britain  (Peg lives in the River Tees)	Sharp-toothed crones with pale green skin, green teeth, very long green locks of hair, green fingers with long nails, a pointed chin, and very big eyes.	Pulls unwary wanderers, especially children, into the depths of stagnant pools and devours them. In parts of England, "Jenny Greenteeth" is another name for duckweed.
Marsh King	Denmark	A malignant animated alder stump with long miry branches.	Rules the world beneath the bog.
Näkki and Nixie	Finland  Germany	A shape-shifting water spirit.	Grabs at children who lean a little too far over the dock or the edge of a pond while gazing at their reflection.
Kappa	Japan	Humanoid turtle with a shell, frog skin, and webbed feet. The only thing a Kappa enjoys more than a tasty child is cucumbers, so some Japanese parents would inscribe their child's names on a cucumber and throw it in a pond or stream as an offering to ensure safe swimming.	Kappa is a mischievous trickster whose behavior runs the gamut from loud farting and peering up women's kimonos to kidnapping, drowning, and eating people.
Bunyip	Aboriginal Australia	An amphibious beast that acts as a wetland guardian. Physical descriptions vary greatly, most often resembling fanged seals or swimming dogs. Bunyip eggs are allegedly laid in platypus nests.	Portrayed as bloodthirsty predators of humans, particularly women and children. As a result, Aborigines purposely avoid unfamiliar waters in case there are bunyips lurking.
Mokele-mbembe	Congo River basin	Most often described as a large quadrupedal herbivore with smooth skin, a long neck and a single tooth or horn resembling a dinosaur. Believed to be inspired by the black rhino.	Mokele-mbembe is Lingala for "one who stops the flow of rivers". Attacks canoes and kills occupants.
Wendigo	Algonquin and Wabanaki First Nations territories of North America	Giants that look half-starved and are covered with dirty hair matted with sap and leaves. Often bearing antlers, they are 8 – 10 feet tall but can increase their size as needed. An unseasonable chill might precede their approach.	Cannibals with a monstrous appetite for human flesh. Greatly feared by lumbermen in the Northeast. Can invoke the desire to cannibalize other humans and commit murder in those that fall under its influence.
Vodyanoy	Eastern Europe	Resemble tiny old men with algae-covered hair and beards, often with frog-like features.	When not loafing on sunken logs and smoking their pipes, they drown human invaders of their watery territories and keep their souls in porcelain cups.
Rusalki	Russia	The ghosts of drowned Russian maidens.	Entice bachelors with their singing and dancing, and then drown them or tickle them to death.
Bigfoot, Sasquatch	North America	Large, muscular, bipedal ape or human-like creature covered in black, dark brown, or dark reddish hair.	Shy and elusive creatures, they are not a threat to humans. Reported to kill dogs that attack them and throw rocks at you if you come close to their nesting area.
Skunk Ape	Florida	A Bigfoot adapted to the Southeast, especially the Everglades.	
Honey Island Swamp Monster	Louisiana	A Louisiana Bigfoot, accompanied by a putrid odor.	
Creature of the Black Lagoon (Film Culture)	Amazon basin (Brazil)	Piscine and amphibian humanoid with gills and webbed fingers and toes.	Easily enraged, prone to homicide when attacked or threatened.
Swamp Thing (Comic books and Film Culture)	Southeastern US	Anthropomorphic mound of vegetable matter. An avatar of "The Green" (the plane of existence for the hive-mind and life force of all plant life on Earth). The Swamp Thing can inhabit and animate vegetable matter anywhere.	Fights to protect his swamp home, the environment in general, and humanity from various supernatural or terrorist threats.
Meg Mucklebones (Film Culture — "Legend")	Marshes leading to the underworld	Meg resembles a giant green-skinned hag. Grotesque in appearance with lank black hair, a pointed warty nose, a hunched back, and long fingers that end in sharp claws.	Lurks beneath the surface and drags unwary travelers down into the water where she feasts on her drowned victims.

# 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FALL CELEBRATION OF THE GREAT SWAMP

Friends, supporters, members, and all residents in the surrounding communities are invited to join FrOGS for a weekend celebrating the awesome beauty, incalculable value, and prominent benefits of The Great Swamp. Each year this premier event is full of fun, educational, and inspirational activities for the whole family. The “27<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of The Great Swamp” will take place on Saturday and Sunday, October 21 and 22, 2023, at Christ Church on Quaker Hill (17 Church Road, Pawling, NY). The Celebration will be open from 11:00 am until 5:00 pm on Saturday and Noon until 4:00 pm on Sunday. Admission is free to all.

The event will feature educational exhibits as well as many hands-on activities for children, who will receive a Game Pack booklet and a “Passport to Fun” to document their travels through the event. Activities will include Master Falconer Jim Eyring’s popular “Birds of Prey” demonstration (both days). Exhibits include a hands-on watershed demonstration table, live swamp animals, a macro-invertebrate display (insects, worms, crayfish), a clay animal sculpting table, and a matching animal-to-habitat game. The drawing for a Kayak Raffle and other prizes will occur Sunday afternoon.



A highlight of the Celebration is a juried Art Show and sale. Last year, the Art Show featured more than 60 artists with over 100 works of painting, drawing, collage, and photography competing for cash prizes. It has been considered to be the finest autumn show of painting, plein air work, collage, textile art and photography in the Lower Hudson Valley. Colorful and inventive interpretations of the plants and animals of The Great Swamp created by students from local schools will greatly enliven the show. There will also be a vendor section with local arts and crafts for sale, including pottery, silk and woven scarves, and jewelry.



This annual event celebrates The Great Swamp, a 6,000-acre wetland stretching 20 miles through a valley at the eastern edge of the Hudson Highlands, from Dover in Dutchess County to Brewster in Putnam County. Although one of the largest freshwater wetlands in the state and called one of New York’s “last great places”, it remains mostly unknown to people who live beyond the watershed’s borders. FrOGS hosts the Celebration to bring attention to the value of The Great Swamp and to encourage its conservation as a source of clean water, a site for recreation, and a home for diverse and rare wildlife.

The Fall Celebration is FrOGS’ major fund-raising event of the year. The money raised will be used to further educational efforts, purchase land, and promote and protect The Great Swamp. For more information on The Great Swamp and FrOGS, the schedule of events for the “27<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration of The Great Swamp”, or other upcoming events such as hikes and paddles, visit [www.frogs-ny.org](http://www.frogs-ny.org).

## WHERE IN THE GREAT SWAMP?



## NEWS IN THE GREAT SWAMP

### FrOGS Wins!

Surprisingly, there was only one response to our challenge in the Summer Newsletter to identify the body of water in the photo, and they guessed incorrectly! The location is Turtle Pond, formerly Mendel Pond, taken from the dam at the corner of Route 164 and Cornwall Hill Road. The pond was likely created by farmers who dammed a stream circa 1900, to provide ice for a growing dairy business. Details of its history and flora and fauna were taken from old Newsletters (Spring 2004 and Fall 2008). The pond is part of the Laurel Ledges Natural Area owned and managed by the Putnam County Land Trust.

Hopefully, the following challenge will be easier. This scenic overlook on one conservation area views another preserve that was donated by the Nature Conservancy in 1973. You can easily see the hemlock forest (green) in that preserve. Around 1900, the Knickerbocker Ice Company had a large commercial ice operation on the shores of the central body of water that serviced the icy needs of New York City.



If you can name this location, write us at P.O. Box 373, Pawling, NY 12564 or send an email to [info@frogs-ny.org](mailto:info@frogs-ny.org). Please describe what special meaning or remembrance the location has for you. The Editors will choose their favorite response and send the winner a free T-shirt or cap from our donation site (<https://friends-of-the-great-swamp.square.site/>).

At the corner of Cricket Hill Road and Route 22 in Dover you may have noticed that the majority of the trees disappeared on the property last Spring in preparation for a proposed electrical substation to be built by NY Transco. An automotive junkyard that operated for many decades on the property was closed in the 1990s and was never remediated. The site borders one of FrOGS' properties and directly drains into the north flow of The Great Swamp — one of the largest freshwater wetlands in the state, an important habitat to rare and endangered species, and a critical source of drinking water for the region.

Concerned that construction of the electrical substation could profoundly impact the local ecosystem by mobilizing legacy soil contamination, FrOGS, the Concerned Citizens of Dover, and The Oblong Land Conservancy (the Petitioners) filed an Article 78 lawsuit shortly after construction began. The lawsuit challenged that the Town of Dover's Planning Board approved the project without thoroughly considering all the evidence supporting the need for an Environmental Impact Statement as required under New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the Hon. Thomas R. Davis of the Supreme Court of New York agreed with the Petitioners, nullifying the Planning Board's approval of the project and remanding the project back to the Planning Board for it to take a "hard look" at areas of environmental concern and reconsider whether an Environmental Impact Statement needs to be prepared.

The efforts of the Petitioners were bolstered by the overwhelming support of local residents, environmentalists, and concerned individuals who rallied behind the cause. Their petitions, commentary at public hearings, and analyses all played a pivotal role in raising awareness about the potential adverse effects of the proposed construction on the location's delicate ecosystem. Although subject to potential Appeal, the decision to overturn the Town of Dover Planning Board's approval of the Transco project is a powerful demonstration of the power of community engagement and activism in safeguarding the environment for current and future generations.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Gordon Douglas Reserve (West) Fall Hike**

*Saturday, October 7 (9:30 am)*

Branching off the Appalachian Trail we will walk roughly 6.3 miles over 4 hours through the Reserve using very few trails. This is considered a challenging hike intended for experienced hikers. We will be exploring rocky cliffs, passing a large glacial erratic, and hiking diverse terrain to the mountain top for a spectacular view. Packing lunch is recommended along with plenty of water. We will meet at the Metro-North Appalachian Trail parking lot off Route 22 at 9:30 am.

*For all hiking and paddling events, please contact Ken Luhman at [frogspaddle22@gmail.com](mailto:frogspaddle22@gmail.com).*



### **Last Hurrah Fall Paddle**

*Sunday, October 8 (9:00 and 11:30 am)*

We will depart from the DEC launch site on Wheeler Road in Wingdale. We will paddle up river (south) on the Swamp River and then back north to visit the great blue heron rookery. No children under 16 allowed. Paddle is dependent on weather and a good water level.

### **artEast Studio Tours**

*October 14-15 (11:00 – 5:00 pm)*

*October 21-22 (11:00 – 5:00 pm)*

Visit local artists at their studios in Patterson, Homes, Pawling, Wingdale, Dover, and Amenia. Support the artist community that enriches our towns and hamlets along The Great Swamp.

### **Art Show Submissions Due!**

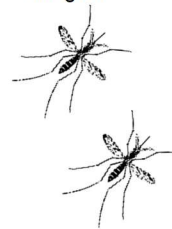
*Monday October 2*

See the Call for Artists for details.

### **Fall Celebration of The Great Swamp**

*Saturday – Sunday, October 21 – 22*

At Christ Church on Quaker Hill. Mark your calendars now! Premier Art Show, raptor flying, educational exhibits and talks, games for children, swamp animals, kayak raffle. Fun for all ages!



Sketch by Judy Kelley-Moberg

The most up to date list of events can always be found on our Facebook page: [facebook.com/FrOGS.NY](https://facebook.com/FrOGS.NY)

You can also sign up for email updates via our website: [frogs-ny.org](http://frogs-ny.org)