

The Backyard Explorer

by Will Adams Shelton-Mason County Journal



Do you ever get bored with computers and the internet? Sometimes even games seem like just the same old thing. Did you know that there's a whole world of wonder just outside your door? Especially this time of year, when Summer is here, and plants and animals (including cool bugs) are making changes to their lives.

A Backyard Murder Mystery

For all its beauty and wonder, nature can be a puzzling thing when it comes to the end of life for its creatures. I remember when I was about ten years old coming across the remains of a racoon while exploring near a swamp. It was a startling but educational event. Nature has amazing ways of recycling the matter that make up its plants and animals who have reached the end of their

life cycle. Nothing is wasted. The molecules that make up an animal or plant either go back to the soil or are used as food for the wondrous chain of creatures that share our planet. Recently, I found a circle of feathers in my yard that had obviously been a bird of some sort. How had it met its end? Most likely it became the prey of a local domestic cat who was on the prowl. Yet... it remains a mystery.



SUSPECT
MR. NEELIX (CAT):
 Domestic Feline
 (Felis Catus)

Booked on suspicion of intent to commit avicide.

Has since been cleared of all charges and has entered witness protection program.

NOT GUILTY



SUSPECT
SCRAPPY (CAT):
 Domestic Feline
 (Felis Catus)

Sought in connection with the untimely demise of "The Pigeon"

Kitty of interest has not been seen since missing his recent probation appointment.

AT LARGE



SCENE OF THE CRIME — In reality, it's no crime at all. The natural world is a source of much curiosity.

Assignment:
 Look up some of the great naturalists of American history.

John Muir
John James Audubon
Florence Merriam
Rachel Carson

These are just a few of the "Backyard Explorers" who made a difference.




The Backyard Explorer is brought to you in part by the HAPPY TREE VILLAGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 Crafty Time will be back next week at this locale.