

# How to Identify Wild Rice

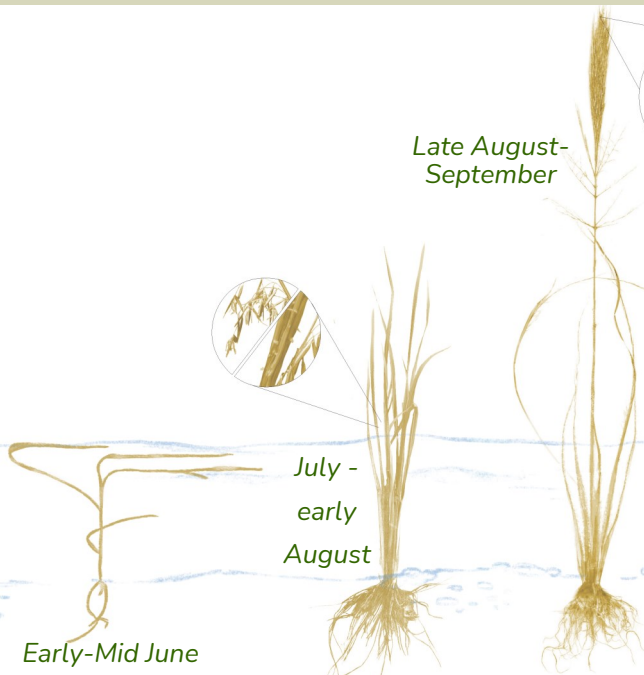
**Early summer-** The rice's long thin leaves emerge from sediment and float on the surface. Young rice plants are very vulnerable to disturbances.

**Mid-summer-** Stems 2-6 feet emerge from the water, with flower heads beginning.

**Late summer-** Depending on the species, rice tops out at 3-12 feet above the water with light green flowers followed by red or yellow grains in bundles.

*Below: Life stages of Mayom, wild rice.*

Graphic created by Wisconsin Sea Grant and Chroma Press



# About the Project

Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin's largest inland lake, connects major rivers to Lake Michigan. Historically this watershed supports diverse wetlands, wildlife and fisheries. The waterways and connecting lakes have been altered by dams and other development. Wild rice persists and continues to offer habitat for fish, wildlife and waterfowl. The InterTribal Lake Winnebago Connectivity Project convenes Tribes, InterTribal, state and federal agencies, non-profits, fishing clubs, and universities in partnership for sustaining fisheries, traditions, and healthy food and water for watershed communities.

In winter and spring of 2022, Brothertown and Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies undergraduates worked together on projects for research, community education, and policy. The goal of the projects is to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge & western science through community engagement.

## Contact Information

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# Wild Rice Benefits for Hunting and Trapping



Image: Muskrat swimming among wild rice beds  
D. Gordon and E. Robertson



Learn more about  
how Wild Rice  
benefits wildlife  
habitat.

## Habitat and Harvest

- Wild Rice beds have long been used as prime hunting and trapping grounds because of the rich diversity of wildlife they support.<sup>2</sup>
- Wild Rice is a cultural resource and important food for Tribes in Wisconsin and throughout the western Great Lakes.

## Indigenous language names for Wild Rice



**Mayom** (Mohegan)

**Wąqkšik sji** (Ho-Chunk)

**Manoomin** (Ojibwe)

**Mnomen** (Potawatomi)

Oneewe, thank you, to Tribal language divisions in WI for contributing their languages to our project.

## Species Highlight: Muskrat

- Muskrats eat the stalks of Wild Rice and use rice straw to build houses.<sup>1</sup>
- Muskrat foraging creates openings in Wild Rice beds. These opening provide habitat for waterfowl like Mallards, Wood ducks, and Canada Geese.<sup>1</sup>



Above: A muskrat house in Wild Rice bed<sup>1</sup>

- Muskrats are part of a healthy wetland ecosystem; however, too high of a population can make it difficult for newly planted Wild Rice beds to get established.<sup>3</sup>

## Hunting and Trapping Helps Wild Rice

Hunters and trappers play a key role in the success of Wild Rice ecosystems by:

Trapping muskrats in newly restored Wild Rice beds to help control populations.<sup>3</sup>



Hunting Canada Geese to lower populations and control herbivory in Wild Rice<sup>4</sup>

## Resources

- 1) David, P, et al. 2019. Manoomin, Version 1.0. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. 158 pgs.
- 2) NOAA Office for Coastal Management & ABT Associates. (2021). *Lake Superior Manoomin Cultural and Ecosystem Characterization Study*.
- 3) Thompson, A. L., & Luthin, C. S. (2004). Wild Rice Community Restoration. In *Wetland Restoration Handbook for Wisconsin Landowners* (pp. 117–122).
- 4) Nichols, T. C. (2014). Integrated damage management reduces grazing of wild rice by resident Canada Geese in New Jersey. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 38(2), 229–236. <https://>