

Night Into Day

6 Tracks — 68 minutes total



Night Into Day features six tracks that provide a sampling of nature's music beginning at dusk and then moving through the night and into the day. We begin with a relaxing insect chorus after rain, and then move into the night with owls hooting at a beaver pond and coyotes howling near a woodland lake. At dawn we visit a peaceful northern wetland and then a prairie marsh seething with sound. Our journey ends in deep forest next to a gently gurgling brook, where we are serenaded by the uplifting songs of birds.

1. After The Storm

It is late summer. We have just arrived at Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge in southern Arkansas, a land of swamps and forest. At dusk, a thunderstorm passes by in the distance. The storm recedes, darkness prevails, and rain begins to fall.

We walk into a pine stand and sit quietly on a moss-covered log. Raindrops hit shrub leaves and plop softly upon the spongy bed of needles below. Crickets trill, their gentle songs are soothing to our ears. We close our eyes and allow the sounds to flow around and into us. So calm and peaceful, here in the pine woods, after the storm.

August 6, 2016 at 9pm. Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge near Moro Bay, Arkansas.

2. Beaver Pond Nightscape

It is late September. We are in a wild area not far from where we live. At dusk, we set up camp next to a marshy pond created by beaver. As night unfolds, dark clouds roll in and light rain

begins to fall. We sit next to the water, listening to occasional splashes made by beaver, set against the constant trilling of crickets and the lovely pats and pats of the raindrops.

In the distance we hear the repeated hoots of a barred owl. Soon, a spring peeper sounds off from shrubs at the edge of the marsh. Then, to our delight, yet another owl calls nearby, with others hooting way off in the distance. Such depth and resonance! And finally, the high point of our night: a pair of owls start hooting together, their excited monkey-like hoots and yowls echoing across the hollow. We are breathless, spellbound by this otherworldly mixture of night sounds!

September 25, 2017 at 11pm. Shindagin Hollow near Brooktondale, New York. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

3. Maumee Wetlands

During a recent expedition, we visit the Charles Deam Wilderness Area in southern Ohio. Mostly a land of densely forested hills, there are also numerous wetlands and we soon stumble upon a grassy lake. We decide to spend the night there, camping next to the small brook that drains the marsh.

Serenaded by the resonant calls of bullfrogs and green frogs, set against the gentle gurgle of the brook, we soon fall fast asleep. Hours later, a little before dawn, we are drawn awake by the distant wail of a coyote. At first, we're not sure what we're hearing, but then others join in. Such soulful music, the mournful cries of coyotes in the dead of the night!

May 31, 2016 at 4am. Charles Deam Wilderness Area near Maumee, Ohio. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

4. Dead Tree Pond

One of the most beautiful spots on earth, at least in our minds, is a remote lake in the Adirondack Mountains that we call Dead Tree Pond. In mid-June not long ago, we sat on sphagnum moss under spruces at the edge of the pond, and greeted the dawn with open arms and open ears.

The gurgle and hiss of water flowing over a long, meandering beaver dam provides a spacious atmosphere in which all the other sounds reside. The throaty *gunks* of green frogs ground the soundscape, while numerous birds excite it with their treble melodies. We delight in the sweet, pure whistles of white-throated sparrows and the *quick-three-beers* of olive-sided flycatchers. We smile at the *witchety-witchety* of a common yellowthroat and the high-pitched chipping trills of swamp sparrows. So many sound-makers ... did we forget to mention the spring peepers? And are those the howls of distant coyotes? Such a magnificent and uplifting chorus, ushering in the day!

June 14, 2013 at 5:30am. Madawaska Lake area near Paul Smiths, New York. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

5. Prairie Marsh

During our first trip to the prairie states, we discover the Missouri Couteau region of North Dakota. Dotted with thousands of pothole lakes and ponds, it is a virtual wonderland for wetland birds.

At dawn we hide among reeds along the shore of a large lake. Marsh wrens chatter loudly from the cattails and an American bittern gives resonant pumping calls, *pumplunk, pumplunk, pumplunk*. A duck breaks from the water, quacking as it flies away. Suddenly there's an outburst of whimpering whinnies from several sora rails. And there ... the sharp *bek* of a gadwall and the *chux* of a shoveler. And isn't that a willet, calling repeatedly as it flies overhead?

The marsh is so incredibly alive with sound. Oh my ... a duck flies right in front of us, and then lands. There's just no end to the action in this super-charged primordial soup, so utterly and completely full of life.

May 17, 1993 at 6am. Chase Lake area near Pettibone, North Dakota. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

6. Thrush Glen

We gravitate toward the sound of water. For us, it is an elixir, a magical potion that calms us within, helping to settle our minds and invigorate our spirits.

In mid-summer, shortly after dawn, we saunter along a small brook in the rolling hills of upstate New York. The gurgles and burbles excite our ears. We delight in the ringing, flutelike melodies of a nearby wood thrush, set against the oft-repeated phrases of a more distant red-eyed vireo. Several minutes pass, a magnolia warbler joins in the chorus, and finally we become entranced by the ethereal songs of a veery thrush, its downward spirals subtly interweaving with the myriad voices of the brook.

We are grateful to drink-in this powerful tonic of wildness, flowing so freely and unimpeded from the earth beneath our feet.

July 10, 2014 at 6am. Shindagin Hollow, near Brooktondale, New York. Recorded by Lang Elliott.