



# Habitat Herald

*A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy*

Volume X, Issue 3

Fall 2005

## In This Issue:

- 2 A Word from the President**
- 4 Snowbirds — Winter Visitors**
- 5 ANS Water Quality Programs**
- 7 LWC Program Calendar**
- 11 ANS Environmental Education Programs**
- 17 Recycling Is For The Birds**
- 17 Fall Wildlife Calendar**
- 20 Insect ID: Millipede**
- 20 Native Plant: Jewelweed**
- 21 Featured Friend: Turkey Vulture**
- 23 Fall Gourd Fun**

**[www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org)**

*Articles in the Habitat Herald are published for the information of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy members.*

Newsletter *Karen Coleman*  
Staff: *Leslie McCasker*

Printed by: *MR. Print, Purcellville, VA*

©2005 Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. To reprint any or all of the Habitat Herald, please contact Leslie McCasker. Permission will generally be granted if appropriate credit is given.

## Migration Sensation

*This article is composed of a series of smaller articles dedicated to migration.*

Migration is one of nature's greatest mysteries. Every year birds, mammals, fish, butterflies and other insects move to climates where temperatures are more hospitable and food is more abundant, to set up new homes and breed or raise their young. Migration may last as long as an entire lifetime or as short as a few weeks.

### ***Bird Migration*** *by Leslie McCasker*

One of the most impressive feats is the ability of birds to travel hundreds or even thousands of miles to distant lands where they breed and spend the winter. We tend to think of migration as the seasonal movement of birds each fall and spring, when actually, these are just the peak times. Any month of the year you'll find some of the western hemisphere's five billion birds in the process of migrating. Their journeys can take weeks or months to complete, depending on the species and the difficulties they encounter along the way.

Roughly half of the breeding species in North America travel substantial distances every year for the winter months. According to recent data, 338 species of North American birds — including more than 75 percent of the forest-dwelling birds that breed in Virginia — migrate south of the Tropic of Cancer (an area known as the "neotropics," which includes the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America) for the winter. The majority are songbirds (such as warblers, thrushes, tanagers, and vireos), but there are also many shorebirds (such as plovers, sandpipers, and terns), raptors (such as hawks, kites, and vultures), and a few waterfowl (cranes, ducks, geese, and teal).

*Continued on page 3*

*The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is a non-profit 501(c)(3) group of volunteers who share a common goal of protecting and perpetuating natural habitats for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.*

*The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Board meets the first Tuesday of each month. Board meetings are open to all members. For more information, or to suggest topics for discussion at upcoming meetings, contact Nicole Hamilton.*

You can also visit us at:

**[www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org)**

#### **Contact Information:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>
<b>President</b>		
Nicole Hamilton	(540) 882-4839	nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Vice President</b>		
Vacant		
<b>Secretary</b>		
Elizabeth Evans	(540) 822-5438	e.evans@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Treasurer</b>		
Leslie McCasker	(540) 882-9234	lmccasker@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Children's Programs Committee Chair</b>		
Vacant		
<b>Loudoun Watershed Watch Liaison</b>		
Darrell Schwalm	(703) 430-4180	dschwalm@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Membership Committee Chair</b>		
Vacant		
<b>Publications Committee Chair</b>		
Leslie McCasker	(540) 882-9234	lmccasker@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Programs Committee Chair</b>		
Joe Coleman	(540) 554-2542	jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Public Relations / Publicity Committee Chair</b>		
Bertie Murphy	(540) 822-9269	bmurphy@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Public Policy Committee Chair</b>		
Otto Gutenson	(540) 882-3205	ogutenson@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Stream Monitoring Program Committee Chair</b>		
Gem Bingol	(703) 771-1645	gbingol@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>		
Nicole Hamilton	(540) 882-4839	nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org
<b>Webmaster</b>		
Nicole Hamilton	(540) 882-4839	nicole@gilandnicole.com

# A Word from the President

by Nicole Hamilton

Late one afternoon when I was 12 years old, I was wandering along the edge of some woods near our house in Gloucester, MA. It was a wonderful location for migrating birds and butterflies alike, and I was often outside exploring and investigating, making up games, and doing whatever else 12-year olds do. This one particular day, however, was different. As I was walking, Monarch butterflies kept crossing my path, gliding and fluttering as they do, but this time they did so with such a clear and common destination in mind. Without a thought, I followed in their direction, and not far along the path I saw something that I had never seen before or since. I had come upon a Monarch migration roost. Hundreds of Monarchs were clasping the leaves and branches of a huge old maple tree. Their orange and black colors were vibrant against the dark green leaves. The rustling of their hundreds of wings sounded like leaves brushing back and forth against each other. While it only lasted for that evening, it was a sight and sound that stay with me today as fresh as 24 years ago.



I thought of this experience recently as I was reading *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv. In this book, the author describes how over the past 30 years, children have become increasingly more disconnected from nature. We structure their play time in settings that are formalized and controlled through organized sports and other supervised activities. We teach them fear of nature – fear of getting bitten, getting stung, touching something “dirty”. We take away the wild areas and transform them into tame, sterile places that are “clean” and “safe”. We don’t allow children to wander or take a bike ride all day

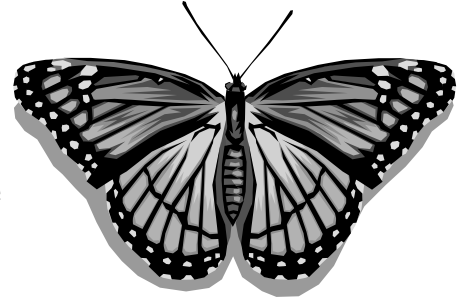
*Continued on page 3*

**A Word...***continued from page 2*

because we are afraid, and perhaps in some cases rightfully so. Increasingly, children have learned to prefer to stay inside, “play” on the computer, watch television. The wild child is tamed, but the truth remains: children need nature and nature needs our children.

Louv explores the implications of this distancing from nature and its impacts on health, mental development, and growth. Being in nature allows children to let their curiosity run free. It opens new experiences and enlivens all the senses like no video game ever can. Louv tells us of the wonderful opportunities for exploration right outside our door: in our back yards, by the roadside, even in simple places like ditches and fields. He offers ideas on how we can migrate ourselves and our children back to nature, not making it an event of a family trip to somewhere far away but rather by exploring the wonder right here around us.

I feel fortunate to have had my experience with the Monarchs because it cemented my curiosity, admiration and love for nature and ignited my commitment to conservation. Regardless of our age, I hope we all find ourselves walking alone in a forest, picking up leaves, looking at spiders, peeking under rocks, letting nature be our guide. I hope we all experience that moment that ignites a spark of wonder and care for the wild, but I especially hope this for our children. Nature needs our children and whether we are adults or children, we need nature.



In the days following my encounter with the Monarchs, I wrote a poem. It began: *“Butterflies flutter, I watch them go by. So silently they utter their words of the sky.”* Today, I grow milkweed in my gardens, raise monarch caterpillars and release them as butterflies – what an amazing experience! It is because of those Monarchs 24 years ago that I first decided to do this. And now, I’ve received another gift from them. I’ve found that, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, there is nothing more calming and centering than watching a butterfly on your finger – looking around, testing its wings, preparing to take its first flight....and then lift-off.....for a journey all the way to Mexico. Amazing.

---

**Migration Sensation...***continued from page 1*

For those migrants that live in the southern part of the US their migration may be only as far as a few hundred miles, while others may travel as far as 10,000 miles each way. Some of the birds we see around here that make these amazing long-distance journeys include: Chimney swifts (5,000 miles each way), Bobolinks (5,000-6,800 miles), Scarlet tanagers (600-4,350 miles), Ruby-throated hummingbirds (2,000 miles).

Different species fly at different altitudes during migration. They seek the altitudes with the best wind conditions for their flight. Using tailwinds (winds blowing in the direction the bird wants to fly) to make the trip shorter and therefore requiring less energy. The birds fly higher when there are tailwinds to take advantage of their speed, and lower when there are headwinds because the headwind will be less strong closer to the earth. Birds that migrate at night are typically flying at higher altitudes. The air is calmer and the chance of a tailwind will be found at higher altitudes. Birds also fly higher over large bodies of water.



*Continued on page 9*

# Snowbirds — Winter Visitors

by Ginger Walker

Loudoun County provides a unique wintering environment for migrating birds. While our area certainly isn't a tropical haven, it doesn't experience the harsh winter weather of New England or the Midwest, either. As a result, Loudoun residents can anticipate migrant visitors each winter as well as enjoy some "summer" birds year-round. Northern states lose their bluebirds and robins in winter, while our populations of these birds can actually increase during the winter months. Catbirds will fly south, but mockingbirds will stay. Grackles will leave, but starlings will remain. House wrens will go, but Carolina wrens will stay and may even visit a birdfeeder if you offer peanuts or suet.

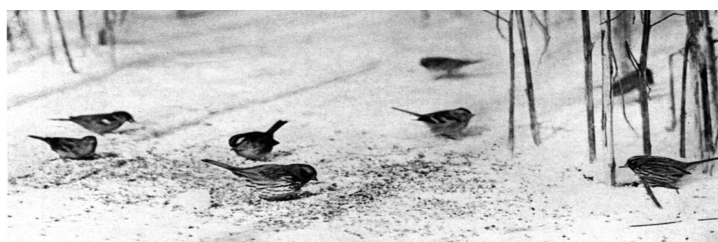
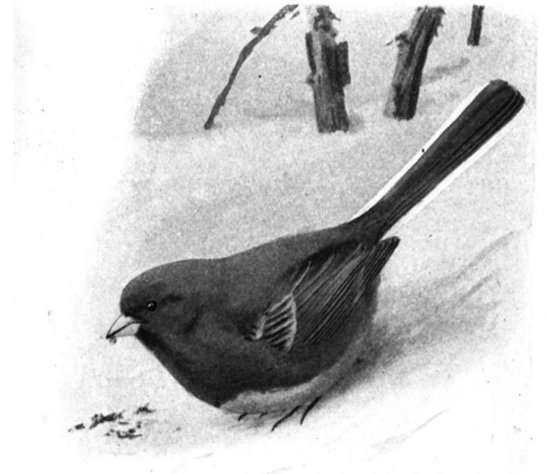
We can look forward to the arrival of wintering finch and sparrow species in October and early November. Pine siskins (plain, brown-streaked finches with bright gold wing bars) and purple finches (recognized by the male's bright red-wine coloring and the female's distinctive white eyebrow) may join your house finches and goldfinches at a thistle feeder. Sparrow species prefer to eat millet seeds scattered on the ground. In this family you're likely to see the white-crowned sparrow and the white-throated sparrow. However, the most populous migrating member of the sparrow family is the beloved "snowbird," or dark-eyed junco, which returns to our area in October and typically remains until late March.

The species known as the dark-eyed junco is actually made up of five different sub-species: slate-colored, Oregon, pink-sided, dark-headed, and white-winged. In the past these five sub-species were considered separate until it was discovered that Oregon and slate-colored juncos were crossing the Rocky Mountains and interbreeding with each other. The juncos we'll see in our area are the slate-colored sub-species.

At the feeder, these small birds in their dapper black ostensibly appear docile. However, wintering juncos have one of the strictest hierarchy structures among flock birds. Each flock has a dominant male. Fights break out between birds when the dominant male is challenged. The "zipping" sound and flashing white tail feathers are signs of alarm among juncos. In the flock, the older males dominate younger birds as well as the females, which are easily identified by their rusty color. The farther north the flock, the higher the number of males as females and first-year birds are pushed south by aggressive males.

Simply tossing some millet or other small seeds on the ground in mid October will help attract juncos. These birds return to the same wintering area each year. If you feed juncos consistently every year, then you're likely to have repeat visitors choose your yard as their winter home. Dense evergreens provide an ideal roosting habitat for juncos.

Feeding juncos year after year is a special delight precisely because they are only present during the winter months. These sparrow relatives are not as skittish as other feeder birds, allowing us the chance to closely observe how a community of birds interacts. While the autumn months can't offer a birdwatcher the thrills of spring, the arrival of winter migrants brings quiet pleasures that are as unique to the season as the smell of the first frost and the sound of dry leaves rustling in the October wind.



## AUDUBON NATURALIST SOCIETY WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS

The water quality of Loudoun County's streams is integral to the well-being of local wildlife and is an indicator of overall ecosystem health. Most of Loudoun County's streams support diverse communities of aquatic life, but in the nation's third-fastest growing county, these irreplaceable resources are under daily threat of destruction and need constant vigilance. Streams and shoreline habitats provide food, shelter, and travel corridors for animals and many of the migratory bird species that make their seasonal journeys across our landscape.

Stream Monitoring classes are taught by Cliff Fairweather of Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS). As our volunteer base grows, the LWC, in partnership with ANS, Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District and the North Fork Goose Creek and Catoctin Watershed Committees, plans to establish stream monitoring teams for every watershed in Loudoun County. These programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Please join us for one of our sessions.  
They are educational, good for the environment, and fun for the entire family.

Classes are held at the **Rust Sanctuary** in Leesburg, VA — ***Reservations for these programs must be made at least two weeks in advance using the registration form on page 6.***

### MACRO-INVERTEBRATE IDENTIFICATION I: ORDER LEVEL

**Section 1.4R: Saturday, October 15 (10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.) — Classroom**  
**Section 1.5R: Saturday, November 5 (10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.) — Field**

Benthic macro-invertebrates, boneless creatures that live under flowing water are important indicators of stream health. Learn how to identify the major groups of these organisms, including aquatic insects and crustaceans, to the taxonomic level of order (e.g., *Ephemera* or Mayflies). When registering, specify a single section or any combination of sections. Prospective monitors should sign up for and take at least one classroom and one field class.

### MACRO-INVERTEBRATE IDENTIFICATION II: FAMILY LEVEL

**Section 2.1R: Sunday, January 15 (1:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.) — Classroom**  
**Stoneflies & Megaloptera**

Join us to develop your knowledge and identification skills for aquatic insects to the family level. Since the tolerance level of particular families can vary widely within an order of insects, family level identification gives a more precise reading on stream health. *These classes are only available to current ANS monitors with at least one year of monitoring experience and a good grasp of order-level identification.*

### MONITORING PROTOCOL PRACTICUM

**Section PP.1R: Saturday, November 12 (10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.) — Classroom**

Master the skills of abiotic data (temperature, pH, and several habitat assessments) gathering, and fine-tune your techniques for capturing stream organisms. Learn the data collection protocol developed for the ANS Water Quality Monitoring. New monitors should attend this class prior to their first monitoring session, and current monitors are encouraged to attend this class periodically as a refresher.

For more information go to [www.audubonnaturalist.org](http://www.audubonnaturalist.org).

## PROTECTING LOUDOUN'S STREAMS AND WATERWAYS

If you are interested in becoming a stream monitor, please fill in the following form and mail it to:

Stream Monitoring Project  
c/o Audubon Naturalist Society  
ATTN: Cliff Fairweather  
Rust Sanctuary  
802 Children's Center Rd, SW  
Leesburg, VA 20176

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone:** (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

List the Classes and Dates you are interested in:

Class	1st Choice	2nd Choice

List the Stream you are interested in monitoring:

1st Choice	2nd Choice

If neither of those streams is available, are you willing to help monitor a site designated by the Project?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

Are you interested in being one of our Team Leaders?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

Would you be interested in helping us with some of our administrative functions (typing, maintaining our database, or record-keeping)?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

**For more information on any of the programs please contact:**

Audubon Naturalist Society — Cliff Fairweather      (703) 803-8400

# LWC PROGRAM CALENDAR

*Space is limited for many of these programs.*

Please call the designated program contact for further information and to reserve your spot.

**BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, October 8, 8:00 a.m.** Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Friends of Banshee Reeks at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve for the monthly bird walk. Because of its rich and varied habitat, this part of the county is a birding hot spot. Please bring binoculars. *Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.*

**FAMILY STREAM DAY — Saturday, October 8, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** at the Broadlands Community Center. Join the Loudoun Watershed Watch for an *X-Stream-ly Awesome* event including guided walks; tree planting program; water quality monitoring demos; "Stream and Meadow — Growing Native;" environmentally-smart landscaping; games and crafts for kids; and more! *For more information contact Gem Bingol at 540-955-9000 or gbingol@pecva.org.*



**SUNDAY IN THE PRESERVE — Sunday, October 16, 2:00 p.m.** Join Phil Daley of the Friends of Banshee Reeks and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for an informal, family walk around the preserve. Search for the many natural wonders that make this such a special place, especially during the beautiful fall season. *For information call the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve at 703-669-0316.*

**BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER — Saturday, October 22, 8:00 a.m.** On the fourth Saturday of each month (except December) the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy leads a bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES). This beautiful 900-acre preserve is located on Harpers Ferry Road, Rt. 671, in northwestern Loudoun County. Only a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, the property includes meadows in the valley and heavily forested slopes on the Blue Ridge. Meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 8:00 a.m. *Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.*

**IDENTIFYING HAWKS: A CLASS AND FIELD SESSION — Saturday, October 29, 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** Sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Bears Den Trail Center. Beginning in the fall and continuing through winter, the number of hawks in our area greatly increases. Liam McGranaghan, an experienced falconer, licensed bander of raptors, and educator, will describe how to identify and find hawks. After a short classroom session at the Bears Den Trail Center (18393 Blueridge Mountain Rd, Bluemont, VA), we will visit nearby locations where several different hawks will likely be seen. Please bring a bag lunch. *Registration and fee are required (\$10/members or \$15/non-members) — contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org to sign up.*



**BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, November 12, 8:00 a.m.** See the October 8 listing for details.

**NATURAL HISTORY OF OWLS — Tuesday, November 15, 7:00 p.m.** at the Rust Library in Leesburg. During the winter, local owl populations swell as our resident species are joined by northern migrants. Looking for owls and understanding their specialized adaptations is an exciting winter activity. The illustrated slide show by Paul Engman will cover field identification techniques, basic adaptations, and the natural history of owls, as well as tips on where and how to find owls in the field. This free program is sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. *Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.*



*Continued on page 8*

**Calendar...***continued from page 7*

**BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER – Saturday, November 26, 8:00 a.m.** See the October 22 listing for details.

**BIRDING BANSHEE – Saturday, December 10, 8:00 a.m.** See the October 8 listing for details.

**9th ANNUAL CENTRAL LOUDOUN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – Wednesday, December 28.**



Join us as we participate in the National Audubon Society's Annual Christmas Bird Count. Started in 1899, these surveys are held all over the country, and the results are used to better understand bird populations and dynamics. Our count-circle has a 15-mile diameter and covers 177 square miles of Loudoun's countryside: north to Waterford, south to Aldie, east to Ashburn, and west to Purcellville. Everyone is welcome, both beginners and expert birders (amateurs are teamed with experienced birders). *If you are interested in participating for the whole day or just part of the day, contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or [jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org).*

**BIRDING BANSHEE – Saturday, January 14, 8:00 a.m.** See the October 8 listing for details.

**WINTER'S WONDERS: WOODS AND FIELDS IN THE COLDEST MONTH— Monday, January 16, 10:00 a.m. Registration Required.**

Join Phil Daley as he explores the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship during winter. While many people stay indoors during the cold months, others enjoy the beauty of a season when the sky is so clear you can see forever and the sun casts the longest shadows. During this free winter hike, watch for the many birds and mammals that winter-over here and examine some of the plants to see how they adapt to temperatures that dip below freezing. The Blue Ridge Center comprises 900 acres on the west side of Harpers Ferry in northwestern Loudoun County. Meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 8:00 a.m. *To register contact Phil Daley at 540-338-6528 or [pdaley@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:pdaley@loudounwildlife.org).*



**BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER – Saturday, January 28, 8:00 a.m.** See the October 22 listing for details.

Questions about the above programs —  
contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or [jandkcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jandkcoleman@loudounwildlife.org).  
For up-to-date information on our programs check our web site at [www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org).



*Migration Sensation...continued from page 3*

## Why do Birds Migrate?

Long distance migrants have an internal clock that controls the onset of migration and the pre-migration preparations. Environmental factors set this clock – certain changes in a bird's environment stimulate the production of hormones, which in turn leads to changes in behavior and physiology, preparing them for migration.

Impending cold weather is one of a number of factors that encourage birds to migrate. The main trigger is food depletion, such as when insects go into hibernation or when snow cover makes seeds inaccessible. Decreasing daylight means that there is less time to feed, and birds begin to have difficulty maintaining sufficient energy stores to cope with lower temperatures. This cause-and-effect relationship creates another signal that it's time to head south. Once the instinct to migrate is triggered, activities such as feeding, resting, and aggression are often suppressed, allowing the bird to focus on little else but reaching their destination.

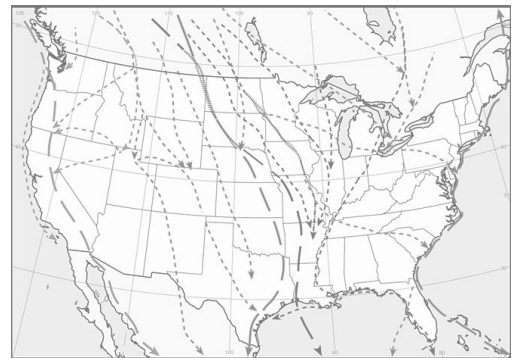
One reason many of us don't notice migration is that much of it occurs at night when conditions are more favorable – the temperature is cooler, the air calmer and there are fewer predators. Warblers, vireos, thrushes, and tanagers are all nighttime flyers, as are shorebirds. Daylight migrants include ducks, geese, cranes, loons, as well as the birds that feed on flying insects such as swallows, swifts, and nighthawks. Soaring birds, such as hawks and vultures, must migrate during the day to take advantage of the warm thermal updrafts created by heat from the sun.

## Navigation Tools

Most long distance migrants are born genetically programmed to fly in a certain direction for a certain period of time. Their first migration is completely under genetic control. But as the birds gain experience, they incorporate that learned behavior.

Although the intricacies of how birds navigate during migration remains a mystery, all migratory birds use a variety of cues, and different species seem to rely on some cues more than others. These cues seem to include the pattern of stars, the earth's magnetic fields, location of the setting sun (and light patterns), topographic features of the landscape (coastlines, rivers, mountain ranges), and prevailing wind patterns (which are seasonal – during migration, the wind tends to blow in the direction of the migration route).

Overcast or foggy nights can hamper the progress of birds that rely on the stars for navigational cues. Birds receive assistance from seasonal wind patterns that blow in the general direction they need to travel. Whatever the means of navigation, it is extraordinary that many species are capable of returning not only to their home ranges, but to their exact nesting or winter feeding sites.



North American Bird Migration Flyways

## Threats to Migrating Birds

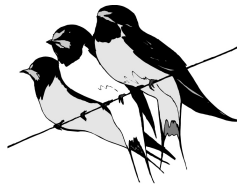
Migrating flocks have declined by nearly 50 percent since the 1960s. Death during migration takes a heavy toll. It is estimated that half of all migrants heading south for the winter will not return to breed in the spring.

*Continued on page 10*

**Migration Sensation.....continued from page 9**

Birds face many hazards during migration. Some may get blown off course or get caught in a storm. Some birds don't have enough food or fat stored to complete the trip. Predation and bad weather are two natural causes of mortality during migration. Collisions with tall buildings, windows, and other structures, being shot or trapped by hunters, and getting struck by automobiles are but a few of the numerous human-influenced dangers to migrating birds.

However, the greatest threat is loss of habitat. Changes in forestry, agriculture (overuse by livestock) and urban development greatly impact migration. These changes affect the habitats of birds (as well as other wildlife). Migrating birds depend on the forests and wetlands and sometimes cannot adapt to the changes. In addition to the disappearance of habitat in seasonal ranges, migratory birds are losing their "rest stops." About half of all birds depend on wetland habitats to some degree, and Neotropical migrants look for remnants of forested areas. Snow geese, for example, rely on marshy areas for aquatic plants and invertebrates – they may fly day and night before finding their next stopover point.



**Lights:** Many bird species, especially small insect-eaters, migrate at night. They navigate using the stars and are attracted to lights shining from skyscrapers, lighthouses, and other tall structures. Birds either flutter about the lights until they drop from exhaustion or actually hit the object. Fog, rain and low clouds may cause birds to fly lower and collide with structures.

**Windows:** Modern homes and office buildings often use insulated and reflective glass. These windows may be aesthetically pleasing to humans, but often they are lethal to birds. Unfortunately, many birds cannot distinguish the difference between real sky and a reflection of the sky in a window, resulting in the death of millions of birds each year. One out of every two window strikes results in the death of a bird. Scientists estimate that between 1 and 10 birds are killed each year for every building containing plate glass in the US.

These collisions can be minimized by breaking up the reflection on the outside of the window with a non-reflective window coating, window screens, and flash tape. Planting trees and installing window awnings to block the sun from hitting the window may eliminate some reflection. Putting a bird feeder on or within a few feet of a window helps to slow birds down and lessens the effect of impact.

**What We Can Do?**

We need to protect wetlands, forests, and other valuable habitats that birds need during their journeys. We also can help migratory birds by adding water, natural food sources, and cover in our backyards and community green spaces, so that they can serve as stopover points. The natural challenges of migration are many. If we can eliminate or minimize the hardships that we've created, birds may be able to more easily make their spectacular journeys between distant lands.

**References:**

*Neotropical Migratory Bird Basics*, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, National Zoo, Washington, DC

*Across the Gulf*, Nature Conservancy, Spring 2004, The Nature Conservancy

*National Wildlife*, National Wildlife Federation

The Humane Society of the United States



*Continued on page 12*

## ANS Environmental Education Programs

*The following classes are given by the Audubon Naturalist Society at the Rust Sanctuary in Leesburg, VA.  
Please contact Cliff Fairweather at [cliff@audubonnaturalist.org](mailto:cliff@audubonnaturalist.org) or 703-669-0000  
for more information or to register.*

### Family Programs (For beginners of all ages)

**Fees:** *ANS members: \$7 per child (\$5 for each additional child); nonmembers: \$10 per child (\$7 for each additional child). Please note that additional child discount is for siblings only. Adult participation required; adults do not pay fee unless otherwise noted. All programs require registration, but drop-ins are welcome!*

#### Nature for Toddlers Ages 2 & 3 years (with adult)

**Wednesday, July 6 (9:30 — 10:30 a.m.)**  
**Friday, August 26 11 (9:30 — 10:30 a.m.)**  
**Tuesday, September 27 (9:30—10:30 a.m.)**

Come and explore nature with your toddler! Join us for a single day or several days and learn how to teach your child about nature. Each day we will read a story and investigate an animal that lives at Rust. A craft and a short hike will be included during our time together. If your toddler needs a ride during our hike, please bring a backpack (strollers are not appropriate for the trails).

### Free Program

#### Beginner Bird Walks

**October 15 (8:00 — 9:00 a.m.)**  
**November 12 (8:00 — 9:00 a.m.)**  
**December 10 (8:00 — 9:00 a.m.)**  
**January 7 (8:00 — 9:00 a.m.)**

These one-hour walks are for bird watching beginners and are led by an experienced birder. Learn about what to look and listen for and tips on identification. Bring your binoculars and field guide if you've got them; if not, we've got some to loan. For reservations and more information, call the Rust Sanctuary office at 703-669-0000.

### Special Adult Programs

#### Nature Journaling with Colored Pencils

**November 1 (9:00 a.m. — noon)**

Brighten up your sketchbook with colored pencils! Scott Jinks will show you how to add inexpensive, quick and easy color to your nature journal. Learn blending techniques, wet and dry use and other ways to spice up your nature sketches. Class is for participants who have already started a nature sketchbook. Materials list will be sent to participants before the program. **ANS members: \$10 Nonmembers: \$14**

#### Birding Hotspots in Loudoun County

**Saturday, November 5 (8:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.)**

Join two of Loudoun County's top birders (Joe Coleman and John Drummond) on a daylong search for sparrows, hawks, waterfowl, and other seasonal birds some of the County's richest birding destinations. The group will meet at the Rust Sanctuary then move on to Beaver Dam Reservoir, Banshee Reeks, and the Dulles Wetlands before ending the day at Lucketts. All levels of birders are welcome. **ANS Members: \$28 Nonmembers: \$39**

*Migration Sensation...continued from page 10*

## **Mammal Migration**

Some of the mammals follow a specific route during the course of a migration, while others may follow a path less direct. Many stops may be made along the way depending on the breeding or feeding preferences of the migratory animals. Some examples of migrating mammals include marine mammals (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), and terrestrial mammals such as the pronghorn. The most recognizable and local mammal that migrates are bats.

Whales are marine mammals known for their long migrations. Often whales embark on seasonal migrations in search for more favorable conditions of temperature, food or water. In many cases, the primary reason for a seasonal migration is to find suitable grounds for reproduction. These areas may not always be the most suitable places for feeding or other daily activities of adult whales. Whales typically migrate thousands of miles from cool waters, where feeding takes place, to warm waters, where breeding occurs.

Dolphins and porpoises have been known to migrate, although their migration routes are usually not as well defined as whales. While many dolphins stay in the same area throughout their lives, some populations have been known to move over great distances. These marine mammals form transient groups, which travel long distances, and resident groups, which remain local and follow predictable migratory paths. Like whales, dolphins migrate in search of food and better environmental conditions.

The migration of pronghorn in and out of Grand Teton National Park, with movements up to 170 miles, is the longest terrestrial mammal migration between Argentina and Canada. Currently, the migration, and thus the viability, of pronghorn in Grand Teton National Park is jeopardized by large-scale energy development, increasing development, and imbalanced predator/prey relationships.

### **Bats**

*by Nicole Hamilton*

We have approximately 10 species of bats here in Loudoun and while most of them hibernate through the winter in tunnels, hollowed logs, and caves, at least two of our bat species migrate. Our migrants are the Hoary bat and the Eastern Red bat. Eastern Red bats typically live alone or in small family groups of just a mother and her young through the summer. They live in dense foliage, tree hollows and under loose bark of trees. In fall they form groups and fly southward together although it is thought that the sexes migrate in separate groups. The migration occurs primarily after a cold front passes through and they generally follow the same routes taken by migratory birds. During the winter months, the Eastern Red bat seeks flying insects such as beetles, cicadas and flies for food.



Hoary Bats also migrate. In early fall they begin their migration traveling in waves that often consist of hundreds of bats. Although they are night fliers generally, during migration they are often seen during daylight hours in flocks of birds also headed south. Similar to the Eastern Red bat, the Hoary is solitary except during just prior to and during migration when the males and females mate. They overwinter in coastal areas ranging from South Carolina through Florida and into Mexico. The spring migration is slower and more predictable than that of the fall. During the spring, the females, pregnant with young, migrate northward with the males migrating northward just behind them.

*Continued on page 13*

*Migration Sensation ...continued from page 12*

## ***Fish Migration***

*by Leslie McCasker*

Many types of fish migrate on a regular basis, on time scales ranging from daily to annual, and with distances ranging from a few yards to thousands of miles. The purpose usually relates to either feeding or breeding; in some cases the reason for migration is still unknown.

Migratory fish are classified as:

**diadromous** fish travel between salt and fresh water

**anadromous** fish live in the sea mostly, breed in fresh water

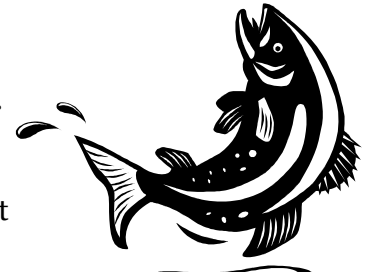
**catadromous** fish live in fresh water, breed in sea

**amphidromous** fish move between fresh and salt water during some part of their life cycle, but not for breeding

**potamodromous** fish migrate within fresh water only

**oceanodromous** fish migrate within salt water only

The best-known anadromous fish are salmon, which hatch in small freshwater streams, go down to the sea and live there for several years, then return to the same streams where they were hatched, spawn, and die shortly thereafter. Salmon are capable of going hundreds of miles upriver, and human dams must install fish ladders to enable the salmon to get past them.



The most remarkable catadromous fish are freshwater eels, whose larvae drift on the open ocean, sometimes for months or years, before travelling thousands of miles back to their original streams.

Vertical migration is a common daily behavior; many marine types move to the surface at night to feed, then return to the depths by day.

A number of large marine fishes, such as the tuna, migrate north and south annually, following temperature variations in the ocean. These are of great importance to fisheries.

Freshwater fish migrations are usually shorter, typically from lake to stream or vice versa, for spawning purposes.

## ***Insect Migration***

*by Nicole Hamilton*

In the world of insects—specifically butterflies and dragonflies, it takes two generations to complete a round trip migration. Adults migrate south in the fall and their offspring return north in the spring.

Generally when people think about migration, they think of birds. Rarely do butterflies or dragonflies come to mind. But some of these insects also make amazing migrations. The most common insects that migrate are Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) butterflies and Green Darner (*Anax junius*) dragonflies. While both migrate, they differ in their migration style.

*Continued on page 14*

*Migration Sensation...continued from page 13*

## **Butterflies: Monarchs, Painted Ladies, Admirals and more!**

Monarchs are one of the most well known butterflies in North America. Their migration is now quite well understood. Monarchs begin to move south in the late summer. These migrants make it all the way to Mexico where they spend the winter. That is a distance of over 2,000 miles! In the early spring they will begin to head north. They migrate so that they can have greater access to the milkweed plant, which is necessary as food for their young. As they move north, there is also less competition for flower nectar. Birds that migrate in the fall are seeking an abundant food supply and warmer conditions. However, the Monarch is seeking the opposite. Since they do not really feed over winter, abundant food is not important. And while they need to avoid freezing, they prefer a cool, moist area for the winter. They find this in the mountain regions of Mexico. Here, they can rest from their long journey.



While they seem fragile, Monarchs are actually strong fliers, able to fly at up to 20 miles per hour and at altitudes of over 10,000 feet. As a result of monarch tagging programs, it's been determined that Monarchs can fly as many as 80 miles in a single day. Cape May is a terrific place in our area to view the monarch migration. In 1999, over 85,000 monarchs were counted between September 22 and November 21, and over half of these were sighted in a single day in October.

Once they arrive in Mexico, the monarchs mature and mate and by early winter, they begin their journey north, laying eggs along the way and typically finishing their journey by the time they reach Texas but nonetheless, imprinting in their babies with the information to travel north, back to our gardens as well as points even further north. The success of this migration is depended on the nectar and larval food sources that can be found along the way. Unfortunately, pesticides, genetic engineering and destruction of "weedy" habitats where wildflowers and milkweed plants thrive have had a negative impact. At the current rate of loss of both the habitat here in the US and the loss of wintering forests in Mexico due to illegal logging, it has been suggested that Monarch butterflies could be extinct within the next 30 years – a sad story that will play out in our lifetimes, for better or for worse, depending on our action or inaction.



In addition to the Monarchs, there are other species of butterflies in our area that migrate. These species include: the Painted Lady, American Lady, Red Admiral, Common Buckeye, Long-tailed Skipper, Clouded Skipper, Cloudless Sulphur, Mourning Cloak, Question Mark, Fiery Skipper and Sagem. Often, these migrations go unnoticed but in the fall, Cloudless Sulphurs, Mourning Cloaks, and Question Marks can be found flying southward on the soft tailwind of a passing cold-front in groups of thousands like the Monarchs do. Exactly where all of these butterflies go is not known although many will overwinter in Southeastern and Gulf states and Painted Ladies will go as far as northern Mexico.

In addition to the two-way migrations, there are also some butterflies that perform a one-way emigration whereby in the late summer or early fall, when there has been a particularly good breeding season, the butterflies will have an irruption and emigrate northward rather than stay in their usual southern areas. Most of these butterflies that fly northward in the fall will die because they cannot withstand the colder temperatures of winter but especially in this time of global warming, this is the means they use to gradually expand their range. For butterfly watchers, irruptions are part of the excitement of fall and in Cape May, for example, people keep their eyes peeled in hopes of seeing species as the Cloudless Sulphur, Little

*Continued on page 15*

**Migration Sensation...***continued from page 14*

Yellow, Sleepy Orange, Clouded Skipper, Fiery Skipper, Sachem, and even such rarities as the Gulf Fritillary, Long-Tailed Skipper, Eufala Skipper, and Ocola Skipper which typically live further south or even as far as Mexico.

**Dragonflies: The Green Darner**

Dragonfly migration is less understood. Like Monarchs, they begin to travel south in late summer. Dragonflies find their way south using natural landscape features, such as seacoasts and large rivers. Migration takes place in large swarms. In the swarm there is no actual leader, just many of the same insect traveling together. One of the interesting features of dragonfly migration is that it seems to follow the passage of cold fronts. It has been noted that even in two separate geographic areas, two separate swarms of dragonflies began to migrate in response to the same cold front. Much like the Monarch, the adults that head south in the fall will not be the same ones to return in the spring. It will be their offspring completing the trip.



The majority of dragonflies do not migrate. They live their lives around the ponds where they were born and they lay their eggs in the same areas for future generations to follow them. But, across the US there are about a dozen that species that do migrate and the Green Darner dragonfly, which we have in our area, is one that does. That is not to say that all Green Darners migrate. There is a resident population that will stay in our area, breed, and lay its eggs in our ponds for the following year; but there is also a migratory population that heads south in the fall. While very little is known about this migration, the timeframe has been recorded as being between late July and early October and it typically follows a cold front. Sometimes the migration takes place in huge mass flights of hundreds of thousands or millions of dragonflies that congregate along seacoasts or lakeshores and then fly enmasse, while other times it takes place in smaller groups or as scattered individuals moving along parallel lines but with no aggression towards each other. Other dragonflies of our area have been identified in these large groups as well but not in the same numbers as the Green Darner. These lesser migrants include the Eastern Pondhawk, Blue Dasher, Black Saddlebags, Twelve-Spotted Skimmer, Calico Pennant and others.

Birders have often observed the dragonfly migration when watching Kestrels that migrate with the dragonfly swarm, snacking along the way. It's thought that the dragonflies serve as an important food source for the Kestrels, especially for juveniles, because they are inexperienced with catching insects. Frank Nicoletti studied this Kestrel/dragonfly relationship and noted that the timing of the juvenal Kestrel's first migration coincides with the peak of the dragonfly migration.

Very little known about the migration of Green Darners because they move over such a broad area, but it is recognized that the migration is a one-way trip. Those that head South to Florida or Mexico will not make the return trip. Another interesting point is that these migratory dragonflies seem to alternate years between breeding in the north before migrating versus and breeding in the south after arriving in the wintering grounds. When the breeding occurs in the south, this new generation of dragonflies migrates back in the Spring.

While information on dragonfly migration is limited, an effort called The North American Dragonfly Migration Project was established in 1992. The findings of this group can be found online at: [http://www/hsrl.rutgers.edu/BOB/migrant/may\\_txt.html](http://www/hsrl.rutgers.edu/BOB/migrant/may_txt.html).

*Continued on page 16*

**Migration Sensation...***continued from page 15*

The rhythms of nature are amazing to observe yet each has its particular beat. Unlike the quickening pace of springtime when migrating animals seem hurried to meet their breeding companions, the pace of fall seems steady and measured. Birds, bats, butterflies, dragonflies joining in flocks moving towards points south; turtles and frogs moving to their wintering forests. Fall progresses, our landscapes change and the orange and gold turns brown. The drum beat slows, and the breeze sighs.

**To Learn and Do More:**

**Winged Migration:** For those who haven't seen this movie yet – definitely check it out. This is not your Disney “talking goose” movie. This is an amazing film that tells the story of migration that takes place across our planet and it is told from bird's eye view, weather flying at 10,000 feet or arriving in a new country 5,000 miles from where they started. This story is told through incredible imagery and music.

**Learn more about bird migration:** The bird information provided in this article came primarily from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, National Zoo, Washington DC and from a book entitled, *How Birds Migrate*, by Paul Kerlinger. Both of these sources have a wealth of information on bird migration.

**Journey North:** “A Global Study of Wildlife Migration”. This is a terrific online source of information and activities on migration of all sorts of species. You can even submit your own sightings and observations and view maps of other reported sightings. <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

**Gardening for Birds:** Fall is a terrific time to watch migrants making pit stops in your gardens for food and water. With birds, they are attracted to feeders for nuts and seeds, but they are also attracted to the berries and other fruits found on bushes, trees and vines.

**Gardening for Butterflies:** From *The Butterfly Gardener's Guide*, by Pat and Clay Sutton: “Understanding the complexities of butterfly migration is a major aspect of butterfly watching, and attracting migrants is one of the greatest pleasures of butterfly gardening. They may be here today and gone tomorrow, but a healthy and diverse butterfly garden can be an important pit stop where migrating butterflies can refuel for their continuing journey. This is particularly true for Monarchs and other “two-way” migrants such as Red Admiral and Painted Lady, but important even for emigrants. Nectar-rich fall-blooming flowers, such as goldenrod, *Solidago*, provide migrating Monarchs with much-needed nutrients to sustain them during their long journey to Mexico. While it is vitally important to support conservation efforts in Mexico, gardeners along the migration route can help Monarchs by growing milkweeds. The plants are sought for egg laying by northbound females in spring and by ensuing generations of Monarchs through the summer, while milkweed nectar attracts many species of butterflies, including Monarchs. As the last generation of Monarchs for the year makes its arduous journey south in the fall, individuals can cover long distances in a day. They need an energy boost from nectar-rich flowers that bloom late in the season, such as joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium*), asters, goldenrods (*Solidago*), and sedums. At night, they look for safe roosting spots in the branches of trees and shrubs. Join with your neighbors to create safe-travel wildlife corridors of pesticide-free milkweeds, nectar plants, hedgerows, and trees.”





# Recycling Is For The Birds

by Leslie McCasker

Recycling is for the birds, literally and figuratively. There are so many ways to use materials that no longer are needed in the house but can be, with recycling, used for other things.

- You can cut off the bottom of a plastic half-gallon milk jug, screw the top on tight and use it for scooping out bird seeds. Take another plastic milk container and cut the bottom off then use it to funnel the seeds into small opening in your bird feeders. This works well for me.
- Instead of throwing out spoiled pieces of fruit, cut grapefruit and oranges in half, throw away the spoiled part, and tack the good part on a tree for birds. Orioles, catbirds; etc., love them.
- Use old pieces of wood from fruit shipping crates to make bluebird nesting boxes.
- When donuts or sweet rolls get too hard to eat, consider tacking them on a tree for the birds and squirrels as a treat.
- Don't throw away string and yarn that isn't needed. Cut it up into small pieces and place them out in the yard for the birds to use in nesting.
- Instead of throwing away old newspapers, use them for mulch around your tomato plants in your garden.
- Cut the bottoms off cans and place them around your young plants. This protects them from the wind and cut worms.

Of course, you can recycle much of the material mentioned above in recycling bins, but these are just a few ideas to help the birds, plants and animals in your yard. Perhaps, you, too, have some other ideas that you would like to share.

---

## Fall Wildlife Calendar

### Birds:

As early frosts begin to kill insects and brown the vegetation, many birds begin their migration south, where food resources are still plentiful. Noisy flocks of migrants may descend on your yard to feast on wild berries and grain for a few days. One morning when you wake, they will be gone. Wetlands along traditional migration flyways are great viewing areas, offering food and rest to hundreds of thousands of ducks, geese, and swans.

### Mammals:

Hibernators are busy gorging on the fall crop of nuts and berries, gaining the fat they will need to live on for the next several months. Squirrels, beavers, chipmunks, and raccoons are busy stockpiling enough food to get them through the coldest, snowiest days. Male moose and deer are in rut, pawing through the woods, antlers full with velvet, and ready to fight for the right to mate with a doe.

### Amphibians and Reptiles:

Frogs and salamanders are moving overland and across roads, heading for their winter quarters (hibernacula). They burrow beneath roots, rocks, or in the mud at the bottom of ponds – deep enough so that frost doesn't reach them and they can keep ice from forming in their tissues. Turtles burrow under ponds and in the soil, while snakes crawl into rock crevices and ant mounds.

**Source:** *The Field Guide to Wildlife Habitats of the Eastern United States,*  
Janine M. Benyus

# Ninth Annual Butterfly Count

by Nicole Hamilton

Our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Count was a wonderful time! The weather was perfect – sunny enough for butterflies but not too hot for the counters. Twenty-six of us went out in four teams, covering a very large area of our count circle that ranged from the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, down through Appalachian Trail Road, over to Lincoln and points south, through Leesburg and over through Waterford. We identified 5,042 individual butterflies and 50 species. This is the highest number of individuals seen in our nine years of counting, suggesting that conditions must have been the right mix of rain and sun through the season to give us such robust numbers. In terms of percentage changes in our observations, Meadow Fritillaries really stand out. Last year they were approximately 1% of the butterflies we identified, while this year their numbers made up 17% of the total. Pearl Crescents, while it seemed as if we were seeing them everywhere, were 15% of our total, which is on track with last year at 14%. Silver Spotted Skippers were down this year at 3% of our total, versus 7% last year.

Special thanks to all of our participants:

Jon and BJ Little  
Dee Leggett  
Patsy and Ken Hunter  
Ron Staley  
Iona Popper  
Phil and Ellie Daley  
Tom Raque  
Mona Miller  
Bob Lyon  
Bill and Regina Cour  
Michelle and Dave Hanson  
Lisa and Rhiannon Taylor  
Harry Pavulaan  
Tamara and Scott MacDonald  
Desiree DiMaura  
Sonya, John and Maria Hunt  
Nicole Hamilton (*compilier*)

We will post the data from this year's count on our website, [www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org), so you can compare this year's sightings with that of past years.



**We hope you will join us next year for the butterfly count!**

## 2005 Butterfly Count Data

9th Annual Butterfly Count, August 6, 2005																	
	Summary	Ida Lee Park	Rust Sanctuary	Hamilton Property	Driving, Rte 15 area	Rockland Farm	AT Road, Van Hyuck Property	BRCS	MacDowell property	Butterfly Hill Farm	Waterways Nursery	Franklin Park	John Deere Nursery	Alder School Rd	Field of Flowers	Hirst Rd	Lincoln South
Pipevine Swallowtail	2										2						
Zebra Swallowtail	23				1		3		3		16						
Black Swallowtail	15							8		2		1			1	3	
Giant Swallowtail	1				1												
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	496	23	14	26	2	2	215	158	13	4	2	11		4	1	2	19
Spicebush Swallowtail	273	3		1	1		125	94	7	4		1		15	2	2	18
Cabbage White	1128	47	25	27	2	9	145	187	28	32	31	53	11	237	86	35	173
Clouded Sulphur	200	11		1		1	25	63	1	18	1	11		14	28		26
Orange Sulpher	35	3		1			14	3	2	3		1		3	2		3
Cloudless Sulphur																	
Sleepy Orange	2										2						
Harvester																	
American Copper	3																3
Coral Hairstreak																	
Banded Hairstreak	1	1															
Striped Hairstreak																	
Juniper Hairstreak																	
Gray Hairstreak	4								1					1	1		1
Red-banded Hairstreak	4	2										2					
Eastern-tailed Blue	177	17	16	7		1	14	28	6	10	7	8		3	8	5	47
Sping Azure	14	1	1			4	1	1	1		1						4
American Snout																	
Variegated Fritillary	37	7		1			2	6	1		2	1			14		3
Great Spangled Fritillary	6							3	1							2	
Meadow Fritillary	813	14		24		3	1	14		7					58		692
Silvery Checkerspot	230			28				1	25					14	4		158
Pearl Crescent	932	31	1	18		7	54	226	1	25	15	28		41	51	21	413
Question Mark	9						2								1	6	
Eastern Comma	8								2					6			
Mourning Cloak																	
American Lady	1								1								
Painted Lady	7			1					1			3	1		1		
Red Admiral	4			2			1		1								
Common Buckeye																	
Red-spotted Purple	51	2		2			19	14	2	2	1	1		1			7
Viceroy																	
Hackberry Emperor	11		4				1	3	1					1			1
Tawny Emperor	8		3		2				1	2							
Northern Pearly-eye	21								13					8			
Appalcian Brown	2						2										
Little Wood-Satyr																	
Common Wood-nymph	1		1														
Monarch	65	2	3	6			15	5	1	3	4	9		4	1	6	6
Silver-spotted Skipper	166	6	5	13			8	63	3	11		16	3	8	6	2	22
Southern Cloudywing																	
Northern Cloudywing																	
Hayhurst's Scalopwing	3									1							2
Juvenal's Duskywing																	
Horace's Duskywing	9	6	1	2													
Wild Indigo Duskywing	23											12				11	
Common Checkered Skipper	2							1							1		
Common Sootywing	2							1									1
Swarthy Skipper	3							3									
Least Skipper	23					1	1	4	4	3	3			5			2
Fiery Skipper	2	1						1									
Peck's Skipper	149	6	3	15		1	4	22	1	8	6	36		3		6	38
Tawny-edged Skipper	14								1			7			1	1	4
Crossline Skipper	3									3							
Northern Broken-dash																	
Little Glassywing	9		3	4					1								1
Sachem	16			3					1			5					7
Hobomok Skipper	1							1									
Zabulon Skipper	31		5	5					7	2	1	3		1			7
Dun Skipper	2							1									1
Number of Butterflies	5042	183	85	187	9	29	652	911	131	140	94	209	15	369	267	102	1659
Number of Species	50	18	14	20	6	9	20	25	29	18	15	19	3	18	18	13	26
Hours on foot	21.75	2	2	1	0	1	1	3	2.75	1	1	1.5	0.25	0.75	0.75	0.25	3.5
Miles on foot	11.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0.1	0.5	1	2	1	1	1.5	0.25	0.5	0.75	0.1	1
Miles driving	37.35	0	0	0.25	5	0	5	5	8	4	1	2	0.2	6	0	0.9	0

## INSECT ID:

### Millipede (*Diplopoda*)

Millipedes are often seen around our houses in gardens, in heavily mulched flower beds and in compost piles. In the woods, they can be found under stones, under leaf litter and under logs. They generally lead a hidden life, but when conditions become too hot and dry, they will come out to find moisture. Similarly, when it is too wet and soils become saturated, millipedes will come to the surface to find higher ground. We will often see them during these times on siding and along concrete foundations. Another time that we see them is in the fall as they migrate to their over-wintering sites. Sometimes these sites include our basements or crawl spaces, but they often die here after a few days since they cannot find the proper moisture. The best thing to do is send your millipede guest back outside to find a better winter spot under the leaf litter. Millipedes overwinter as adults and lay their eggs in moist soil in the springtime.



While they do indeed have a lot of legs, millipedes do not really have a thousand as their name implies. In fact, they have up to 260 legs, which is still a lot of legs to coordinate and get moving. In order to grow, millipedes molt, and each time they do, another pair of legs is added. Each leg pair has its own body segment. The legs do not necessarily move simultaneously, so it is difficult for the insects to move quickly. Instead, if threatened, the millipedes may roll up into a ball and/or release a stinky spray from their sides to deter enemies. This spray is not poisonous, however, just unpleasant to smell. Millipedes do not bite. They eat decaying materials such as leaves and dead wood, and they prefer damp, cool, dark places. Individuals can live for several years. Millipedes grow to about 1" long.

---

---

## NATIVE PLANT HIGHLIGHT:

### Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*

Jewelweed is a wonderful plant, both for the medicinal benefits for those of us who react to poison ivy and for the benefit it provides to our hummingbirds as they migrate south in the fall. Jewelweed is an annual plant, spreading and repopulating through seeds. Interestingly, the Jewelweed has two types of flowers – one that is a showy orange flower that is pollinated by bees, wasps, flies and Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds, and another that is green and kept closed. This second flower is self-pollinated, giving the plant two means for carrying on its genes.



The orange flower attracts our hummingbirds, serving as a critical food source when other nectar plants from the summer have gone to seed. Each Jewelweed flower produces 2.5 ml of nectar, containing 40% sugar, per day. This nectar and the tiny insects it attracts are critical to the hummingbirds as they work to put on weight. Hummingbirds learn where Jewelweed populations are, and they incorporate these locations into their migration routes and teach them to their young. Planting Jewelweed in your gardens and near feeders is a sure way to enjoy Hummers through the fall.

*Continued on page 21*

**Native Plant...***continued from page 20*

Jewelweed is also known by the common name “Touch-Me-Not.” This is because the seed pod from the orange flower has a coil inside and when triggered by being touched or disturbed, it explodes, sending the seeds up to four feet from the parent plant. By expelling the seeds, the plant is able to spread to new soil and sun conditions that may be favorable to this new cross-pollinated seed. The seeds produced through self-pollination within the green flower do not have this explosive capability. They are deposited close to the parent, taking advantage of the conditions where the parent plant survived.

Another interesting feature of the Jewelweed plant is that the leaves are unwettable. They have microscopic hairs that trap a very thin layer of air on the surface of the leaf. If you put a leaf into water, it will appear to take on a grayish color because of the trapped air. However, when removed from the water, the leaf will be dry. The purpose for this water proofing is unknown.

As alluded to earlier, Jewelweed is also a wonderful antidote to poison ivy rash and insect bites. The leaves need to be mashed to allow the juices to come out. This mash is then put on the skin to take away the itching and pain. Fortunately, Jewelweed is often found growing wild near poison ivy, so it can be a quick remedy.

---

---

## FEATURED FRIEND:

### Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*

Turkey Vultures....they get a mixed response around here, but in certain parts of the country, namely Hinkley, OH and Kern, CA, they are celebrated through festivals and gatherings. Turkey Vultures truly are amazing, and they play a critical role in our environment. Turkey Vultures are scavengers and sanitarians – they help recycle the bodies of dead animals but also sanitize the area for us. The corrosive enzymes in their stomachs and sophisticated immune systems are able to kill a number of deadly organisms, including salmonella and bacteria that cause anthrax, hog cholera, and botulinal toxins. At present, Turkey Vultures are the only animal in the world known to have this ability. If we did not have Turkey Vultures, we would be overrun with disease and polluted waters. This very scenario occurred in India, South Africa and Spain when vulture populations plummeted due to poisoning, shootings and an avian virus. Realizing they needed the vultures, the governments of these countries established captive breeding programs to reestablish the populations and bring the environment back into balance. Today, “vulture restaurants” have been created to ensure that these wonderful custodians are healthy and are able to thrive.



Turkey Vultures are very social birds that mate for life. They are slow breeders but live to be 40-50 years old. The birds soar together in groups, sometimes forming large spiraling kettles as they catch updrafts. We can watch them as they play tag, follow-the leader and engage in speed soaring as they fly straight up into the sky beyond our eyesight and then dive back down. When they are not flying for fun, they are flying in search of food. Their eyesight rivals that of hawks, and this allows them not only to see dead animals by roadsides and elsewhere but also to watch the movements of other vultures who may identify a meal. One study estimated that vultures canvas an area of 11,000 acres in search of food. Turkey Vultures eat dead animals, and their favorite food is dead snakes. However, when food is scarce, they have also been known

*Continued on page 22*

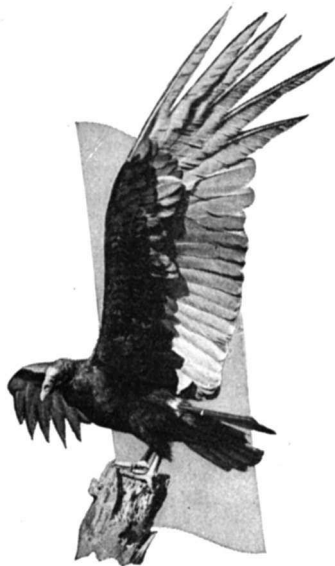
***Turkey Vultures...continued from page 21***

to eat vegetables such as rotting pumpkins and sometimes fruit and grasses.

In addition to sight, Turkey Vultures use their sense of smell to locate food. In fact, they are one of the few birds that actually have a sense of smell. However, the carrion needs to be at least 12 days old for them to smell it; and, as anyone would, they prefer freshly dead animals to those that are more decayed. Vultures tend to feed through mid-day and spend the later afternoon searching for the next day's meal.

At night, Turkey Vultures roost communally, joining together about an hour before sunset to sleep in tall trees or on towers. They maintain fidelity to their roosting sites, passing on the location from generation to generation. Some roosting locations have been used for over 100 years. The roosts are thought to serve as information centers where the birds share information about where food has been found. Because they have no syrinx (the equivalent of a bird's voicebox), they communicate quietly through a series of hisses and grunts. In cases where the food is plentiful, such as the site of a dead deer or cow, the birds will even communicate to other flocks that a meal is present.

In the morning, Turkey Vultures are often seen standing on tree limbs with their wings outstretched to the sun. They are a very lightweight bird with long hollow bones filled with air. As the sunshine warms them, the air in their wing bones expands, warming them up and making it easier to fly. During this warming time, a bird may fly up only a few hundred feet to test the air and look for thermal currents. If the conditions are not right, they will return to their spot to warm in the sun some more.



In the fall, Turkey Vultures from northern areas migrate southward, congregating in large groups through September and October. Here in Loudoun County, we have Turkey Vultures that stay with us year-round, but in the fall we see our numbers swell for a few weeks as migrators pass through, stopping for a few days along their journey. Those that continue southward will fly in large kettles that circle steadily southward through Mexico and Central America reaching Panama and other points further south. Peak flights over Panama City in November have reached over 2,000 Turkey Vultures per day.

For those that migrate, their winter is spent cruising the rainforest canopy searching for food. In late winter, they begin their movement northward and travel by day from Panama back through our area and into the Midwest and other points north, covering over 3,000 miles in ten days without stopping for food. On this trip, they often ride the winds of storm fronts, flying at over four miles high. They arrive at their destinations in the Ohio area on or about the

Vernal Equinox (around March 20<sup>th</sup>) each year at numbers reaching over 50,000, right in time for the Turkey Vulture festival! Because many migrating Turkey Vultures will fly through our area during this spring migration, we see our numbers swell for a few weeks just as we do in the fall, although certainly not to the numbers experienced in Ohio.

*Cathartes aura*, the Latin name for Turkey Vultures, translates as Golden Purifier or Cleansing Breeze. American Indians called these birds the "Peace Eagles" and regarded them as a symbol of strength in accepting difficulty. Here in Loudoun, Turkey Vultures have not received the respect and gratitude that they have in other parts of the country, but they certainly deserve it. These birds should be welcomed for the incredibly important service they provide. If not respect and appreciation, they should at least receive our tolerance. For those interested in learning more about Turkey Vultures, The Turkey Vulture Society has a website with additional information and resources: <http://vulturesociety.homestead.com/>.

## In Your Backyard: Fall Gourd Fun!

by Nicole Hamilton

Fall is a great time to gather and dry gourds. If you do not grow gourds yourself, you can often pick some up at a local pick-your-own farm or at a farmers' market. To dry the gourds, you just put them in a cardboard box and leave them in the garage or basement. Over the winter they will mold and turn black, but as long as there is some air circulation, they will not rot. In the spring, they will be hard and hollow sounding, and you will know they are ready when you can hear the seeds rattling around inside. Once dried, you can wash them in the sink or a bucket. Fill the sink with water and some dish detergent and bleach and put in the gourds. They will float, so you will need to weigh them down with a lid from a pot. Use a scrub brush with brass bristles to scrub off the mold and old skin from the gourd. After the gourds are cleaned, they will cut like wood and can be painted. If the gourd is big enough, you can use a 1 ½" - 2" drill bit to make two holes in the gourd (one for entry, one for exit), fill it with birdseed and hang it from a tree. The birds will love it.



### YES, I want to become an LWC Member!

#### Membership Benefits Include:

- \* Subscription to *Habitat Herald*
- \* Volunteer Opportunities
- \* Classes and Workshops
- \* Regular Membership Meetings and Programs

Mail this form along with your payment to:

*Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy  
PO Box 2088  
Purcellville, VA 20134-2088*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your membership level:

(\*membership runs from January 1- December 31)

☐ \$10 Student\*

☐ \$30 Family\*

☐ \$200 Individual Lifetime

☐ \$20 Individual\*

☐ \$75 Corporate\*

☐ \$300 Family Lifetime

☐ Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Renewing Member

☐ New Member

## **Programs at a Glance**

(see pages 5-8 and 11 for complete descriptions)

### **October**

- 8 Family Stream Day (W)
- 8 Birding Banshee (L)
- 15 Macro-Invertebrate ID I (W)
- 16 Sunday in the Preserve (L)
- 20 Identifying Hawks (L)
- 22 Birding the Blue Ridge Center (L)

### **November**

- 5 Macro-Invertebrate ID I (W)
- 12 Birding Banshee (L)
- 12 Monitoring Protocol Practicum (W)
- 15 Natural History of Owls (L)
- 26 Birding the Blue Ridge Center (L)
- 20 Butterflies and Dragonflies (L)

### **December**

- 10 Birding Banshee (L)
- 28 9th Annual Christmas Bird Count (L)
- 26 Nature for Toddlers (A)
- 27 Birding the Blue Ridge Center (L)

### **January**

- 14 Birding Banshee (L)
- 15 Macro-Invertebrate ID II (W)
- 16 Winter's Wonders (L)
- 28 Birding the Blue Ridge Center (L)

A = ANS      L = LWC      W = Water Quality



**Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy**  
**P.O. Box 2088**  
**Purcellville, VA 20134-2088**

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG  
 US POSTAGE PAID  
 PURCELLVILLE, VA  
 PERMIT NO. 6

Please check your mailing label  
 carefully and report any errors or  
 changes to Leslie McCasker at  
 (540) 882-9234 or  
 lamccasker@loudounwildlife.org

