



Habitat Herald

A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy ■ www.loudounwildlife.org

Volume XII, Issue 4

Winter 2007

Irruptions: A Very Special Kind of Migration

by Joe Coleman

Most birds migrate on a regular basis and more or less follow a regular route. However, a number of species which inhabit and spend most of their lives in the tundra or boreal forest in North America irrupt out of their normal wintering grounds every few years. Incidentally, as Scott Weidensaul explains in his *Living on the Wind*, "this is not a misspelling. The departure of the birds from their normal range is an eruption, but their arrival somewhere else is the reverse — an irruption, a bursting in." As I write this article in late November, it looks like this is going to be an irruption year. Many of us are already seeing at our feeders larger numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins, and Purple Finches than normal, along with an occasional Black-capped Chickadee, a very rare visitor to northern Virginia (our Carolina Chickadees are year-round residents). And, there have even been one or two reports of Evening Grosbeaks.

There are two basic groups of irruptive migrants to the northern U.S. — seed and tree-fruit eaters and predatory birds — which occasionally dip this far south. We discover the first group,



Pine Siskin - Debra Breton

boreal finches and other songbirds, when they show up at our feeders. The second group depends on cyclically fluctuating rodent populations. While some of the predatory hawks and owls are very secretive, some are

not because they may never have seen a person before. Because of their lack of contact with humankind, these predators have little or no fear of people. Some, such as the Snowy Owl, will hunt in open areas during the day where they can be easily watched.

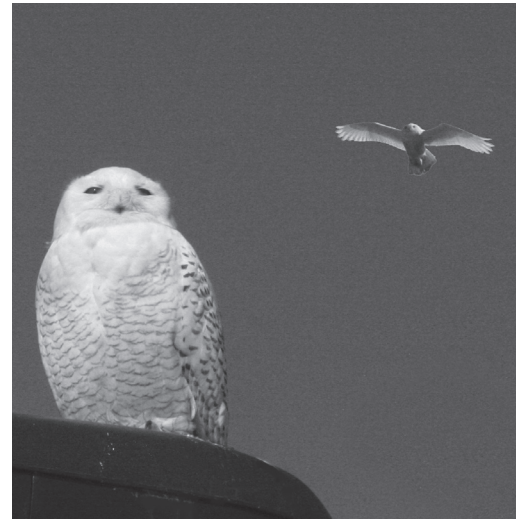


Photo composite. Snowy Owl, Dulles Airport 2006 - Del Sargent

Birds leave their normal wintering grounds not because it is going to be a bad winter but because they cannot find enough food. The seed and fruit crops the boreal finches depend on fluctuate from year to year. When their food crops drop to a low level, they move hundreds or even thousands of miles to another area. Some seed crops are cyclical in nature, and the irruptions that coincide with them can often be predicted. Others vary according to weather conditions and are difficult to predict.

While many people think of migration as a north-south or south-north phenomenon, irruptive species are nomadic with their movements linked to food supplies. Their migration can

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A Word from the President

by Nicole Hamilton

Happy New Year to you! As we roll into 2008 we have some great opportunities — the most significant of which is a new Board of Supervisors with whom to work. With four years ahead of them, we look forward to helping shape the environmental agenda in Loudoun and working to promote the preservation of wildlife habitats, looking at ways to bring back the Green Infrastructure, promoting more passive parks, and instituting more protections for wetlands, especially those elusive yet so ecologically important, vernal pools.

"In the birding arena, we will be starting up a 5-year project to develop a birding atlas for Loudoun County. This will be a terrific tool in understanding local bird populations and a great guide for use in the field."

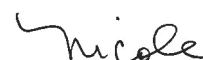
Another great opportunity is in the area of environmental education. In 2007, LWC and other organizations concerned about the lack of environmental education in our schools got together to look at ways to raise the bar in this important area.

In the near future, you will hear more about this organization, the Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA). As we move into 2008, ideas are being developed, expanded and acted upon. Giving our young people the opportunities to engage in and learn about our natural world is the first big step in protecting habitat. With knowledge and experiences to draw upon, our young people can be good stewards of the environment well into the future.

I'm excited for 2008. Our amphibian monitoring is going into its second year, and our bluebird trail monitoring really has a lot of buzz around it. We have a great new Stream Monitoring Coordinator, Meg Findley, who is full of ideas and great experience to lead us into the streams and understand what is in our water. In the birding arena, we will be starting up a 5-year project to develop a birding atlas for Loudoun County. This will be a terrific tool in understanding local bird populations and a great guide for use in the field.

Thank you for all of your support to LWC over the years — as members, as volunteers and as advocates. Let's make it a great 2008!

See you along the trails,




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Layout: Lorrie Bennett

Printed by: Mr. Print, Purcellville, VA

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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 current members. For more information, or to suggest topics for discussion at upcoming meetings, contact Nicole Hamilton.

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■ *Irruptions, continued from pg. 1*

as likely be east or west. As a result the details of these nomadic movements vary from species to species and from year to year. In some cases they involve nearly all the immature birds leaving the poorest territories, while in other cases virtually the entire population of a species may move. If they did not move they would suffer very high mortality rates. This may still occur if their travels bring them to areas which also lack sufficient food sources.

Crossbills, which rarely show up in our area, are an excellent example of a highly nomadic species as they are dependent on cone crops in their native boreal forests. Christopher Leahy writes



Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Illinois Raptor Center

that cone crops "vary according to irregular tree growth cycles tied to such climatic factors as rainfall and temperature," and that crossbills move to where they can find a healthy cone crop. And according to

the Vermont Center for EcoStudies, nomadic species rarely return to the same breeding area in successive years in contrast to most other bird species.

Not surprisingly, irruptions often occur *after* the prey base or seed crops have been especially large, and the birds that depend on them have been highly successful during nesting. Scott Weidensaul, in his book *Mountains of the Heart*, points out that while Snowy Owls "are not migratory in the normal sense ... their food supply — lemmings and voles, mostly — suffers a cyclical population collapse. When that occurs, the owls with the poorest territories," generally the youngest, must leave to find food. Some wander south as far as our area (remember the Snowy Owl that spent the winter of 2005 at Dulles Airport). Others that only leave home when their food supply is low are Northern Goshawks, Boreal Owls, Great Gray Owls, and Northern Hawk Owls. A few winters ago a large number of the latter three appeared in northern Minnesota, and birders from all over the country flocked to the area around Duluth.

While Snowy Owls are easy to see because they hunt in the daytime and show little fear of people, Northern Saw-whet Owls, a tiny owl that weighs only 2.8 oz. and stands 8" high, are highly secretive. They show up in our area during migration, but their

■ *Continued on page 4*

Interview with New LWC Board Member Meg Findley

by Karen Strick

LWC is pleased to introduce and welcome Meg Findley as the newest member of its Board. Meg will serve as LWC's Stream Monitoring Program Committee Chair and brings vast experience and enthusiasm to this role.

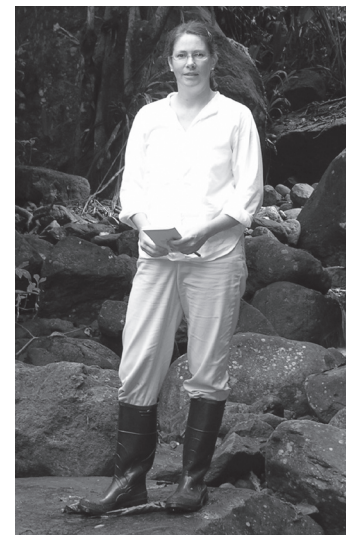
Meg, I understand that you are an integrated water resources management specialist; what is that exactly?

The principle of integrated water resources management (IWRM) recognizes that water resources within a catchment or watershed serve a variety of vital functions including supporting natural ecosystems and wildlife, serving industrial water requirements, supplying drinking water, and supporting recreational activities and agriculture needs, to name only a few. An IWRM specialist works to integrate the needs of a variety of different stakeholders—each requiring water for these different functions—into a sustainable resource management program. IWRM is a means of managing the resource so that all stakeholders—and I'm considering nature as a stakeholder—can enjoy an equitable share of good-quality water from the supply that's naturally available.

LWC's involvement in stream monitoring and outreach is an excellent example of IWRM in action. Members (stakeholders) voice concerns about water pollution, availability, and the richness of aquatic organisms and habitats at public meetings and events. They participate in education and outreach, monitor water quality, and communicate concerns and science-based findings to government authorities to keep development and polluting sources in check.

What led you to become an IWRM specialist?

My father is a limnologist—a freshwater ecologist. He spent his summers collecting water samples and doing research on lakes and rivers all over the state of Idaho where we lived. My family followed him with his work, camping alongside the places he studied. I followed him everywhere I could at a very early age, holding sample bottles for him to fill, holding up clumps of goo and mud for him to photograph, and pressing plants. He used to give me a penny for every sample kit I would put together, complete with label, plastic bag, envelope, and jar. As I grew older I would write for him in his log book while he was busy or his hands were covered with muck, and he would explain the science behind his notes as I would ask. It seemed quite natural for me to study a related field in college.



■ *Continued on page 4*

■ *Irruptions, continued from pg. 3*

numbers vary considerably from year to year. The large number captured and banded at banding stations this fall confirms 2007 is an irruption year. Interestingly, Ron Pittaway, a field ornithologist in Ontario, predicted in mid-September that “there will be a strong flight of Northern Saw-whet Owls this fall” since deer mice were declining rapidly in central Ontario due to poor seed crops this summer. When deer mice decline, red-backed voles, a forest vole, also decline. Red-backed voles are a favorite food of Northern Saw-whet Owls.

Species, that tend to make periodic irruptions, although most do not make it to Northern Virginia, are:



Willow Ptarmigan
Northern Goshawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Thick-billed Parrot
Snowy Owl
Great Gray Owl
Northern Hawk Owl
Boreal Owl
Northern Saw-whet Owl
Long-eared Owl
Short-eared Owl
Three-toed Woodpecker
Black-backed Woodpecker
Northern Shrike
Stellar's Jay
Blue Jay

Pinyon Jay
Clark's Nutcracker
Black-capped Chickadee
Boreal Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Bohemian Waxwing
Pine Grosbeak
Cassin's Finch
Purple Finch
Red Crossbill
White-winged Crossbill
Common Redpoll
Pine Siskin
Evening Grosbeak



I don't know about you, but I'm going to listen carefully for the call of a Northern Saw-whet Owl and also look for Snowy Owls hunting in Loudoun's fields. Of course, as a result of this year's drought, it is likely that our seed crops are in short supply and our small mammal populations have also crashed. If this is the case, we can expect that these northern visitors will move on to greener pastures.

For more information on irruptions, please refer to the sources used to compile this article:

The Birdwatcher's Companion: An Encyclopedic Handbook of North American Birdlife by Christopher Leahy, Gramercy Books, 1984.

Living on the Wind; Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds by Scott Weidensaul, North Point Press, 1999.

Mountains of the Heart: A Natural History of the Appalachians by Scott Weidensaul, Fulcrum Publishing, 1994.

Vermont Weekly Bird Notes: Prepare Yourself for an Irruption in News and Notes from the Vermont Center for EcoStudies, October 31, 2007 at http://vtcostudies.blogspot.com/2007_10_01_archive.html

Winter Finch Forecast 2007 – 2008 by Ron Pittaway, Ontario Field Ornithologists, 15 September, 2007.

■ *Meg Findley, continued from pg. 3*

I read that you worked for USAID in developing countries. What have been some of the major observations and conclusions of your work?

I have worked primarily in Asia—Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Indonesia, and East Timor. I have also worked a little in El Salvador, Jamaica, Dominica, and Venezuela. I had a short-term assignment on a USAID project in Cambodia and was very impressed with the way the project was working to share some of the U.S. experience in environmental management to help people manage their water supplies and natural wetlands of the Tonle Sap Great Lake. I have learned that community environmental interest groups and grassroots awareness or monitoring movements are very powerful forces. I often work in situations where governments have failed or are in the process of being rebuilt, and environmental management is weak. Yet communities much less privileged than our own in Loudoun County organize themselves to effectively raise their concerns, build parks and protection features, educate others, and come up with the labor and money to do so in the absence of government support. It is

really quite profound. I often work with such communities, but I am not a part of them because I do not live there. I wanted to be part of such a group in my own neighborhood to help look after our natural assets and teach others about their value. That's where LWC comes in.

Could you tell us a little bit about yourself—your education, interests, past work experiences?

I obtained a BA in Zoology from the University of Idaho. I love languages, and earned a BA in French at the same time. I earned my PhD in Aquatic Ecology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. My doctoral thesis was on food web dynamics of benthic macroinvertebrates in a North Carolina piedmont stream. I learned anything and everything about the identification, biology, anatomy, feeding behavior, and seasonality of aquatic insects and the foods they eat. It was so much fun!

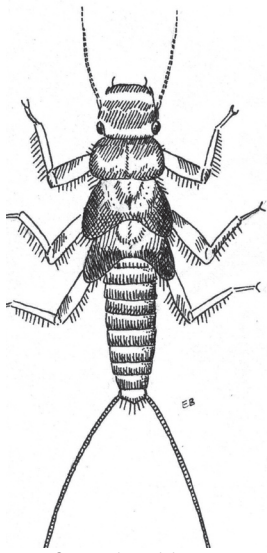
I love gardening and quilting, and practicing yoga. Together my husband and I like to cook and scuba dive. I've had to scale back on these activities since our son was born two years ago, as you can imagine!

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Life in Winter Streams

by Emily Bzdyk

As winter takes its icy grasp of a stream, organisms have some choices. They can leave behind dormant eggs or seeds to carry on their legacies before they succumb to the cold, or they may become dormant themselves in hibernation. Frogs such as the wood frog freeze almost solid. In the fall they take refuge in inches of mud or under logs or other debris. As the temperature drops, the frog's liver converts its blood to glucose. This does not freeze like water and provides protection for the frog's cells. And since most free-flowing streams will not freeze completely (the water remains at around 4° C), another option is to continue alive and active throughout the winter.



Stonefly - Emily Bzdyk

Organisms in the water have certain adaptations in their physiology or behaviors that allow them to survive the cold. Many animals decrease activity; their metabolism and other bodily functions slow down to conserve energy. Fish swim to the bottom, where the water is warmest, to wait until spring. Some, such as the bullhead catfish, can withstand freezing solid and will thaw out with the ice in the springtime. Snapping and painted turtles can be seen moving around under solid ice.

Beavers, otters, and muskrats continue activity among the ice and snow. With their thick coats and fat layers, they are well equipped

for the cold season.

Many insects and other invertebrates hibernate in mud or debris, but some, such as sowbugs and many beetles, remain active. How can these seemingly fragile organisms keep going in such bleak conditions? There are many reasons these organisms are able to survive. For one thing, colder water holds more oxygen. Additionally, in the fall massive amounts of organic matter enter the stream environment as the trees defoliate. Litter decomposition from the leaves provides rich organic matter which stream invertebrates can reside in and subsist on. Some even secrete a kind of antifreeze to preserve their bodies.

The main winter invertebrates that demonstrate life in the winter stream are the winter stoneflies of the families Taeniopterygidae and Capniidae. These insects hatch out of eggs as nymphs and live in the water for most of their lives, like many other aquatic insects. They are small and inhabit the hyporheic zone, which is the area of flow beneath rocks and gravel at the bottom of the stream or river. They remain close to the substrate prior to emergence. This is why they are often not represented in benthic sampling (unless it is conducted in the winter), despite their numeric and ecological importance. In the coldest part of the winter, the small adults emerge and can be seen walking on the snow. Their bodies are dark to absorb heat. They have one mission: To mate and lay eggs, to pass on their genes. The nymphs hatch soon after the eggs are laid, and then as the weather warms they enter diapause (a hibernation-like state) from mid-spring until fall. Then they awaken to continue their lives in the familiar and comforting cold.

Resources:

- C. Cochrane and S. Falkowski, *Aquatic Habitats in Winter Creek Connections*. Meadville, 2000.
- D. R. Maddison and K.-S. Schulz (eds.), *Tree of Life Web Project*

■ Meg Findley, continued from pg. 4

Have you done work at the local level in Virginia? What do you hope to achieve for Loudoun County as LWC Stream Monitoring Chair?

I had been musing about the power of grassroots communities and my need to get involved locally when I came across an ad in the paper inviting volunteers to join LWC's monitoring programs. It seemed like the perfect thing to do.

I see my involvement in LWC's Stream Monitoring Program as a long-term commitment. I'd like to work toward the goal of increasing awareness throughout Loudoun County for watershed protection, and show people that ecological monitoring can be fun and interesting. I hope that the data we collect can help inform policy makers and strengthen habitat conservation.

Stream Monitoring

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is launching an exciting stream program this spring, with the introduction of new resources and training opportunities for volunteers to monitor the health of local streams and rivers. Now is the time to express your interest in joining our program as we begin to organize events for the spring! No experience is needed – just an interest in exploring our local waterways and learning about the tiny creatures that inhabit them. If interested, please contact Meg Findley at 703-349-2831 or mfindley@loudounwildlife.org.



Featured Friend - The American Crow

by Molly Darr

The approaching chill in the air brings to mind an array of autumnal images: radiant foliage, crunching fallen leaves, crisp blue skies, and the subtle but distinctive flurry of wildlife preparing for the approaching winter. One species in particular presents itself as one of the more iconic faces of fall: the American Crow. The reason for its overwhelming presence during this season lies with its unusual social structure. American Crows are cooperative breeders. This means that they may stay close to the place where they were born to help raise young and defend the area against predators. This defense applies to both breeding and nesting territories, even into the winter months. Winter roosting behavior begins in autumn and peaks in mid-winter. Large numbers of crows, from tens to hundreds of thousands, will assemble in the late afternoon hours in an area with large trees.

American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) are completely black, including the head and feet. The feathers are glossed with a purplish tint. Fairly large in stature, they stand 43–53 cm and have a relatively diverse habitat, occupying woodlands, farmland, agricultural fields, river groves, and shores. This species prefers open areas with nearby trees, and agricultural areas are ideal for foraging. Incredibly versatile, the American Crow even flourishes in urban and residential settings. Being omnivores, this species will eat virtually anything. The diet consists of anything from worms to insects to nuts and berries. Additionally, they hunt small mammals and birds. The American Crow can be distinguished from their closest look-alike, the raven, most easily by size (ravens are

much larger), by voice (ravens are hoarser), by the bill (ravens have heavier bills), and by the shape of the wings and tail (which come to a point in ravens but not crows).



Photo by Jim Gilbert

Overall, the American Crow does not serve any special purpose in the greater ecosystem. However, they do help with seed dispersal by caching nuts and eating fruit. Furthermore, because they feed on carrion, they assist with the disposal of dead animals. People often consider these birds a nuisance, due to noise, crop destruction, mess, and disease from feces. Realistically, the American Crow prevents just as much damage by eating harmful insects. These fascinating birds are intelligent and fun to watch in their day-to-day activities.

Sources:

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/corvus_brachyrhynchos.html. Author: Cynthia Simms Parr.

Peterson, Roger Tory, Peterson Field Guide, Birds of Eastern and Central North America.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/jggilbert/130473516/in/set-72057594112542153/>

Green Business Award

LWC is soliciting nominations for its second annual Green Business Award. Nominees must satisfy three criteria to qualify for the award:

- Education and Outreach: promoting sound environmental stewardship through awareness and community participation
- Impact on Ecosystem: conducting activities that protect, preserve or restore habitat
- Ongoing Commitment: having a sustainable program for habitat preservation and restoration

Judging will be conducted in April by an awards committee consisting of volunteers from LWC membership. Awards will be handed out in May at LWC's annual meeting and widely publicized. The purpose of the awards is to recognize businesses that have demonstrated outstanding leadership in habitat protection in Loudoun County on an annual basis.



To be eligible for the award, businesses must also operate within Loudoun County, and projects must demonstrate progress during the previous year. Recipients of the previous year's award(s) are not eligible. Organizations may nominate themselves or be nominated by others.

For additional information or to submit a nomination, complete the online form at www.loudounwildlife.org/Green_Business_Awards.htm and mail it to Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, P. O. Box 2088, Purcellville, VA 20134.

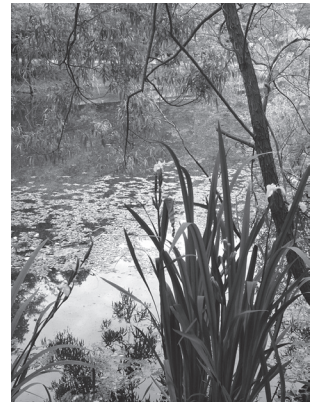
Amphibian Monitoring Report for 2007

by Nicole Hamilton

We kicked off our first full year of the amphibian monitoring program in 2007, and by all accounts it exceeded our expectations! We had over 50 people participate in the orientation and sign up for the monitoring activities. We have three tracks to the monitoring program: site survey, frog call driving survey, and migration mapping. Some volunteers participated in one track while others participated in two or more in order to try things out. Overall 33 sites were surveyed, 19 routes were driven, and 9 volunteers scouted for "big night" events for the migration mapping. Throughout the early part of the spring when activity was high, we shared our observations in the LWC Yahoo Discussion Forum. It was great to get reports from fellow volunteers on what they were seeing and hearing. The wood frogs were out and about on March 11th and the spring peepers weren't far behind them. We discovered some amazing vernal pools in the Lucketts area and were made aware of some large amphibian populations along Limestone Kiln Road. Sylvia and Bob Shuey and some other volunteers identified some key amphibian migration routes, and this coming spring we will focus on those locations to try to do a road assist. The data continues to roll in. We are looking into the Virginia Wildlife Mapping Tool as a possible data repository since it is searchable and the data becomes available to others doing research on amphibian populations and habitat.

Many thanks to all of those who volunteered during the 2007 season: Beth Arsenault, Diana Baquero, Kathy and Hank Becker, Marianne Bernhard, Richelle Brown, Marlene Burkgren, Wade Burkholder, Jo-Ann Burlew, Germaine Connolly, Casey and Candi Crichton, Cathy Darby, Helen DeGroot, Charles Delaney, Clarice and Charles Dieter, Ellie Florance, Chris Frear, Roger Gwinn, John and Jane Haugh, Tammy and Craig Himelright, Jim Hodges, Douglas and Allison Hubbard, Susan Jacob, Bruce and Jill Johnson, Jane Kolias, Lori Kosko, Nan McCarry, David McCarthy, Joe Modolo, Mark Miller, Barbara Morehead, Paul Nawrot, Alexander Oshiro, Amy and John Reynolds, Kathy Robbins, Kim and Greg Roberts, Sylvia and Bob Shuey, Diana Sigsbee and her family, MJ Smiley, Je Smith, Melanie Snyder, Richard Spaulding, Liz Stutz, Lynn Webster, Mary Weeks, Matt and Jolie Williams, Robin Williamson, and Beth Wilmore.

To those who signed up in 2007, we hope you will continue with the monitoring program for 2008, and we welcome newcomers to join the fun!

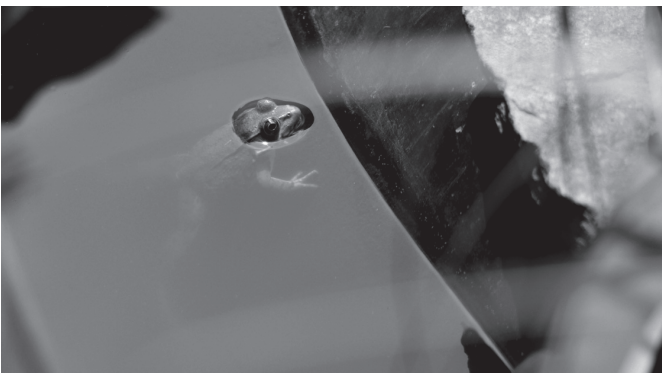


Jump In — Become an Amphibian Monitor!

It is time to get ready for the 2008 Amphibian Monitoring season! Wood frogs will begin calling in March and moving into vernal pools. Jefferson Salamanders will start their traverse of snows and woodlands to reach their breeding pools. Spring peepers and toads will soon be out and about. The busy time for monitoring is from March through July, and we need your help to build our knowledge base of where the animals are and the state of their habitats.

We have three methods for monitoring amphibians:

Frog Call Survey: Conducted by driving along an



established route with set monitoring spots. At each stop, monitors record data on the environmental conditions and frogs heard. This survey typically occurs at sunset and into the evening when frogs and toads are actively calling.

Site Surveys: Conducted by visiting an established monitoring location either on your own property or at a public wetland area. This approach uses both visual and auditory senses to survey the area. These surveys occur during the day or evening.

Migration Mapping: Two types of volunteer roles: "Volunteer A": participates in one or more night crossings to monitor and rescue individual amphibian crossing roads; "Volunteer B": scouts a selected area for "Big Night" events (large amphibian migrations).

For more information and to sign up to monitor for 2008, contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638. Check the programs calendar for information on our program orientation. More information and the signup form can be found on our website: http://www.loudounwildlife.org/Amphibian_Monitoring.htm

Bluebird Monitoring Program for 2007

by Nicole Hamilton

Our 2007 monitoring season began early and ended late. Our first report of eggs started on March 31 at Brambleton Park and ended with our last fledging on September 16 at Temple Hall Farm. The weather was likely a factor in this extended season. Overall, our numbers were up slightly from past years, although monitors did note that the drought seemed to have an impact with increased predation and reports of adults sometimes found dead. We had 14 trail teams gathering and reporting data this year. One trail was a home trail maintained and monitored by the Arsenaults. Across all of the trails we fledged 637 bluebirds, 237 tree swallows, 8 chickadees, and 101 house wrens. And, at Banshee we continued to have bats take up residence in a couple of the houses towards the end of the summer. Please check our website for the 2007 trail data and the 1999–2007 trail summary.

New trail activity in 2007 centered on David Mitchell's work with the managers of Franklin Park to retrofit predator guards onto about 20 new boxes that were installed. Towards the end of the summer, we worked with Kirby Calder to set up a new trail at the Dulles Wetlands as his Eagle Scout project. We will start monitoring this trail in the 2008 season.

Monitoring of the nest boxes was done by a great team of 56 volunteers, 21 of whom were new to nestbox monitoring this year. Special thanks to everyone who participated: Beth Arsenault, Dale and James Ball, Jim Baney, Larry and Gaye Barbour, Wade Burkholder, Debbie Burtaine, Rhonda Chocha, Roger Clapp, Cathy Darby, Molly Darr, Mary Dorsey-Lee, Terry Dunnigan, Elizabeth and Lily Evans, Ellie Florance, Pam Forbes, Chris Frear, Jennifer Fulcher, Mike Garcia, Mary Ann Good, Debra Gutenson, Nicole Hamilton, Craig Himelright, Jill and Bruce Johnson, Steve Johnson, Scott Livingston, Janet Locklear, Denise

Kirwan, Tamara and Scott MacDonald, Deb MacLean, Sarah McDade, Frank and Patty McLaughlin, Diana Menefee, Linwood and Sue Mishler, David Mitchell, Nancy Reaves, Pete Rundel, Christine St. John, Brian Shiflett, MJ Smiley, Melanie Snyder, Dale Thornton, Ginger Walker, Lynn Webster, Marcia and Laura Weidner, Mimi Westervelt, Pat Whittle, Dave Williams, and Bob Wybraniec.

On the educational front, Cathy Darby, Lynn Webster, and Ginger Walker put together a great class for the Mountain View Elementary School Science Olympiad in the spring, where they taught students about our local bluebirds and other cavity nesters and showed them the monitoring techniques. Many thanks to these great ladies for that effort!

As our Bluebird Monitoring Program grows, so too does our core group of volunteers to coordinate the effort. Nicole Hamilton, Elizabeth Evans, and Debra Gutenson will be working together in 2008 to coordinate activities. Our plans include working with Loudoun schools to get existing trails up to specs (proper nestbox design and spacing, predator guard usage) and establishing one to two new trails, as well as bringing on new trail leaders and monitors to take care of the trails. We are also expanding the program to enable homeowners to set up and report data on their home bluebird boxes and trails. More information on registering your home trail can be found on our website. If you are interested in helping set up a trail or joining a nestbox monitoring team, please sign up online or contact Nicole Hamilton at 540-882-9638 or nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org.



Bluebird Trail Monitoring

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy in partnership with the Virginia Bluebird Society is looking for a few more trail volunteers to help out with monitoring the bluebird trails in Loudoun County this season. Trail monitoring teams generally consist of 3-4 volunteers, each of whom take one weekend a month to walk the trail, peek in the boxes, and record the data. The season lasts from April through August, and walking the trail generally takes about an hour depending on the trail. No experience is needed — just an interest in cavity-nesting birds. In addition to bluebirds, we often get to see tree swallows, chickadees and titmice using the boxes. Trail leaders provide you with an orientation and training at the trail. If you are interested, please contact Nicole Hamilton, 540-882-9638 or nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org

Native Plant ID: American Holly

by Kerry Bzdyk

While our Loudoun landscape is beautiful in any season, if you're like me, you find joy in any plant that looks green and alive during the gray winter months. One of these welcome green shrubs is the American Holly. While not as widespread here in Loudoun as it is in some areas of its very large range, it is still a beautiful part of the winter landscape.

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*), with its dark green evergreen leaves and bright red berries, is an attractive ornamental landscaping plant. These same attributes make it a sought-after Christmas decoration. As an added bonus, the dense, spiny foliage makes a useful cover for many songbirds, and the berries are eaten by white-tailed deer and squirrels as well as 18 different species of birds. Birds are largely responsible for its distribution—especially large migrating flocks of songbirds—and it grows from Massachusetts to Florida and west to Texas and Missouri. It is most successful in low-lying coastal areas of the humid Southeast and thrives in sun and well-drained soils; however, it is an adaptable plant and can tolerate shade and poorly drained soils. It can reach a height of 40 feet in ideal conditions.

The leaves of the American Holly are dark green, shiny, and smooth with large spines. Small greenish-white flowers bloom from April to June, followed by berries that ripen from September to October. These bright red berries persist on the plant into the winter months. All hollies are dioecious, and berries only form on females if a male of the species is located within 40 feet.

Before laws were passed in Maryland and Delaware protecting American Holly, it suffered from being vandalized and cut on public lands for sale as Christmas decorations. Until Virginia enacts similar protections, we in Loudoun should give ourselves and our wildlife the benefits of this lovely plant by planting a pair (or more) in our own backyards.



William S. Justice - Smithsonian Institution @ USDA NRCS PLANTS

When the Pilgrims landed on the coast of Massachusetts the week before Christmas in 1620, they found that the dark evergreen leaves and red berries of American Holly reminded them of English Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), which had been used as a Christmas decoration for centuries before. I would imagine the sight of this familiar cheerful plant must have been a welcome one for the Pilgrims in those cold winter days, and it continues to be a bright spot in the winter landscape for us today.

Resources:

http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_ilop.pdf
http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/silvics_manual/Volume_2/ilex/opaca.htm

Conservation Issues

by Joe Coleman

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is looking for someone to regularly report on conservation issues for the Habitat Herald. If you are interested please contact me at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.

A New Board of Supervisors— A New Agenda: The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy plans to meet individually with the new Board of Supervisors. We want to discuss different ways to protect and preserve the rapidly disappearing wildlife habitat which remains in the county, especially in eastern Loudoun County. We also want to encourage the new Board of Supervisors to deal with a number of environmental issues that the previous Board of Supervisors neglected. They include protecting

- riparian buffers along our rivers and streams,
- mountain slopes,
- the limestone districts of the county,
- and utilizing conservation design.

For the most part, these discussions are going to be based on the Campaign for Loudoun's Future's platform, which can be found at www.loudounsfuture.org. The Campaign is an organization of groups and individuals concerned with Loudoun's future.

We are looking for volunteers from each magisterial district to join us on these visits as we prefer that the visits be made by the supervisor's own constituents. If you are interested, please contact either Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638 or Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.

Ridgewater Park: By the time you read this, we hope that the proposed Ridgewater Park development will have been laid to rest. However, if it is still viable, we will be asking for your help to let the new Board of Supervisors know how destructive this 1,000 house subdivision would be to Goose Creek and the hundreds of acres of forest which remain in that area.



Programs and Field Trips



Space is limited for many of these programs and field trips. Please call the designated program contact for further information and to reserve your spot.

LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY BOARD MEETING

— LWC's Board meets the first Tuesday of every month at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary. All LWC members are welcome. Pre-meeting discussion begins at 7:00 p.m., with the meeting itself beginning at 7:30 p.m. *Contact Nicole Hamilton (540-882-882-9638 or nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org) for additional information.*

BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, January 12, 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.

SEARCHING FOR BIRDS OF PREY — Saturday, January 19, 2:30 p.m. Registration Required. Join Liam McGranaghan and others on a winter raptor search sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. After meeting at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg, we will drive the back roads of Loudoun County with frequent stops to find and identify the many hawks, and an owl or two, who winter over here. Co-sponsored with the Audubon Naturalist Society. **Sign-up required — contact Laura Weidner at 540-554-2747 or lweidner@loudounwildlife.org.**

SUNDAY IN THE PRESERVE — Sunday, January 20, 1:00 p.m. Join the Friends of Banshee Reeks and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a free informal, family walk around the preserve. Search for the many natural wonders that make this such a special place. *For information call the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve at 703-669-0316.*

BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER — Saturday, January 26, 8:00 a.m. On the fourth Saturday of each month (except December) the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy leads a free 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.*

WILDLIFE RESCUE AND REHABILITATION — Sunday, January 27, 2:30 p.m. Join us at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary as Wildlife

rescue expert Gretl Learned of the Fern Wildlife Refuge (FWR) describes her work, talks about wildlife rehabilitation, and explains the importance of public education's impact on habitat conservation. Ms. Learned founded the FWR in 1993 and is the director of the nonprofit refuge. The 23-acre refuge provides rescue and rehabilitation services for orphaned, injured, and displaced wildlife. This free program is sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. Come at 2:00 p.m. to meet the speaker and have refreshments. **Questions: contact Laura Weidner at 540-554-2747 or lweidner@loudounwildlife.org.**

WOODS AND FIELDS IN THE COLDEST MONTH — Sunday, February 3, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.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 10:00 a.m. **To register contact Phil Daley at 540-338-6528 or pdaley@loudounwildlife.org.**

BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, February 9, 8:00 a.m. See the January 12 listing for details.

AMPHIBIAN MONITORING PROGRAM ORIENTATION — Sunday, February 10, 10:00 a.m. - noon. Pre-registration Required. Join us at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg as LWC kicks off its 2008 Amphibian Monitoring Program! At this meeting, we will discuss the program's three different monitoring tracks: site surveys, frog call surveys, and migration mapping. We will review the monitoring protocol, answer your questions, and give you the materials you need to get started. No experience is needed to become a monitor, just an interest in learning about our local amphibians and their habitats. Volunteers planning to monitor for the 2008 season will be provided with the program notebook, which is a complete reference for the Loudoun Amphibian Monitoring Program, as well as other monitoring tools such as the frog and toad call and identification guide. These materials will be provided at the orientation. Advance sign-up is required. **To register for this orientation Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638.**

MID-WEEK NATURE WALK IN THE LINCOLN AREA —

Wednesday, February 20, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy on a mid-week, general nature walk along Crooked Run, a tributary to NF Goose Creek. The walk will be along a riparian area on private properties and may include some stream crossings. Wear warm clothing and shoes that are waterproof and bring binoculars. We will meet at the Goose Creek Friends Parking lot in Lincoln. *Questions: contact Phil Daley at 540-338-6528 or pdaley@loudounwildlife.org.*

TRIP TO THE EASTERN SHORE — Friday, February 15 through Monday, February 18. Watch our web site for details!

SUNDAY IN THE PRESERVE — Sunday, February 17, 1:00 p.m. See January 20 listing for details.

BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER — Saturday, February 23, 8:00 a.m. See the January 26 listing for details.

SEARCHING FOR BIRDS OF PREY — Saturday, February 23, 2:30 p.m. *Registration Required.* Join us on a winter raptor search sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. After meeting at the McDonalds in Marshall, we will drive the back roads of northern Fauquier County with frequent stops to find and identify the many hawks, and an owl or two, who winter over here. Co-sponsored with the Audubon Naturalist Society. ***Sign-up required — contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.***

BLUEBIRD MONITORING PROGRAM ORIENTATION — Sunday, February 24, 10:00 a.m. - noon. *Pre-registration Required.* Nicole Hamilton, who also serves as Loudoun County Coordinator for the Virginia Bluebird Society, will provide an orientation at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve on nestbox monitoring and the protocol used here in Loudoun for collecting and reporting data. She will give an overview of the program, discuss the current trails being monitored around Loudoun, and take us through a slide show about bluebirds, their nesting habits and habitat needs, and preferred foods. Tips on gardening for bluebirds will be discussed as well as the use of natural cavities and nestboxes. A typical nestbox system with predator guards will be set up for demonstration. Those interested in joining a monitoring team for the 2008 season can sign up during the meeting. Those interested in monitoring a home nestbox or trail and providing data to LWC can register their trails/boxes during the meeting as well. Monitoring materials will be handed out during the orientation. Advance sign-up is required. ***To register for this orientation Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638.***

BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, March 8, 8:00 a.m. See the January 12 listing for details.

BLES PARK BIRD WALK — Saturday, March 15, 8:00 am. Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy at Bles Park in Ashburn for a free bird walk at which all ages are welcome. Bles Park contains a wetland and is bordered by the Potomac River and Broad Run. A mostly level, gravel path allows fairly easy walking. Please bring binoculars. We will meet in the parking lot on Riverside Parkway. Directions can be found at <http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=924> *Questions: contact Andy Rabin at stylurus@gmail.com, or 703-723-6926.*

VANISHING VERNAL POOLS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AMPHIBIAN WORLD — Classroom Session, March 6, 7:00 p.m. to be followed by a field trip on March 9, 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. *Registration Required.* Come celebrate Mike Hayslett's 10th Anniversary Vernal Pool Exploration with the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy! As the hours of daylight lengthen and temperatures begin to rise, animals that have spent the winter in hibernation begin to stir. Some of the earliest to become active are certain frogs and salamanders that use vernal or temporary pools for breeding. Unfortunately, these pools and the creatures that use them for breeding are facing many threats. The program will include an indoor session on vernal pool ecology on March 6 at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg, followed by an outdoor exploration of vernal pool habitats on March 9 at nearby locations. ***To register for this wonderful celebration Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638.***

SPRING POOLS INSTITUTE — March 14-16. *Registration Required.* Mike Hayslett's popular "crash-course" workshop on vernal pools will be hosted in Loudoun County this spring. This hands-on training will begin at 1:00 pm on Friday with background instruction indoors and examination of the unique Rust Wetland at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg. Saturday and Sunday will be all-day explorations in the field, including visits to numerous vernal pools and other isolated wetlands around Leesburg, at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, and to the Lucketts sinkholes. Optional night forays are also possible, depending on rainfall. Participants will receive take-home materials and spend ample time outdoors experiencing a variety of wetland habitats. We will likely encounter four or five species of obligate wildlife fauna, including Spotted and Jefferson Salamanders, Wood Frogs and Fairy Shrimp. Cost for this three-day foray is \$49.00 for LWC members, \$69.00 for non-members (meals not included). Registration is limited to 20 participants. Registration deadline: Feb. 15, 2008. Full details (schedule/itinerary, what-to-bring list, background info, etc.) will be provided upon registration with LWC. ***To register***, sign up and make payment online at www.loudounwildlife.org or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638. For more information about the *Spring Pools Institute* visit the **Virginia Vernal Pools** web site at: http://www.lynchburgbiz.com/virginiavernalpools/spring_institute.htm.



■ Continued on page 12

■ Programs and Field Trips, continued**SPECIAL EVENT: AMPHIBIAN ROAD-CROSSING ASSIST —**

Date is weather dependent. Have you heard about the great amphibian migrations that take place each spring? The events occur on good froggy nights when it's dark and rainy. The woodlands start to stir as frogs, toads, salamanders and newts move from the woods where they live ninety percent of their lives to the streams, ponds, and vernal pools where they breed. These "Big Night" migrations occur in large numbers, and unfortunately the migration paths are often across roads that separate the animals from their breeding spots. Last year our amphibian monitors identified some areas where these amphibian road crossings occurred and found that the mortality rate for these tiny creatures was very high. This year, we hope to conduct a road assist where we will work with local authorities to conduct a safe road crossing. Our ability to do one of these events is weather dependent, but if you would like to be "on call" to participate, contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or call 540-882-9638.

SUNDAY IN THE PRESERVE — Sunday, March 16, 1:00 p.m.

See January 20 listing for details.

MID-WEEK NATURE WALK AT BANSHEE REEKS — Wednesday, March 19, 8:30-11:00 a.m.

Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy on a mid-week, general nature walk at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. 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.*

BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER — Saturday, March 22, 8:00 a.m.

See the January 26 listing for details.

BIRD WALK AT BLANDY — Saturday, April 5, 8:00 a.m. Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy at the Blandy Experimental Farm/Virginia State Arboretum in Boyce, VA for a free bird walk at which all ages are welcome. Because of its rich and varied habitat, this is a birding hot spot. Please bring binoculars. We will meet in the main parking lot near the Quarters Building. Directions can be found at www.virginia.edu/blandy *Questions: contact Andy Rabin at 703-723-6926.*

BIRDING BANSHEE — Saturday, April 12, 8:00 a.m. See the January 12 listing for details.

SPRING BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS, THEIR INTERWOVEN WORLD — Tuesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m.

Spring wildflowers are at their height as spring bird migration is beginning. Join us at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary as well-known local naturalist Stanwyn Shetler, past president of the Audubon Naturalist Society and Curator of Botany Emeritus at the Museum of Natural History, describes and shows slides of the many different wildflowers and birds found in our area in the spring. The program includes a discussion of the fascinating relationship between wildflowers and birds. Come at 7:00 p.m. to meet the speaker

and have refreshments. This free program is sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Audubon Naturalist Society. *Questions: contact Laura Weidner at 540-554-2747 or lweidner@loudounwildlife.org.*

MID-WEEK NATURE WALK ALONG THE GOOSE CREEK

— Wednesday, April 16, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Registration Required. Join Christine Perdue Smith and Joe Coleman on one of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's mid-week birding trips as they explore an area along the Goose Creek near St. Louis in western Loudoun County. We will look for late winter and early spring migrants as well as any early wildflowers that are already blooming. **Sign-up required** — *To register and find out meeting location, contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.*

WATERFORD 10K RUN-HIKE-WALK — Saturday, April 19, 9:30 a.m.

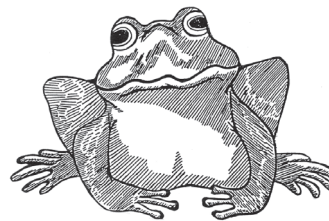
Join us as we help a pair of fellow, local nonprofits with a fundraising event. The event is being organized to raise funds for the Waterford Foundation to further their mission to preserve and protect the Historic Landmark and for the Briggs Animal Adoption Center to support their efforts to help homeless dogs and cats. The entire event will take place on historic Talbot Farm (a privately owned property within the Historic Landmark District). The route meanders across a creek, up and down hills, and along the property boundaries. The run route is approximately 10K, the hike route 6K, and the walk about 3K. Race day registration begins at 8:30 am, with a 9:30 a.m. start time. LWC will play a role in the walk part of the event. The 3K (about 2 miles) walk will be a bird walk led by our very own Phil Daley. Walkers will observe the many birds and other natural wonders that populate this locale. Fun for all! *For more information, visit www.WaterfordVa.org.*

SUNDAY IN THE PRESERVE — Sunday, April 20, 1:00 p.m.

See January 20 listing for details.

BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER — Saturday, April 26,

8:00 a.m. See the January 26 listing for details.



**Questions
about the
above programs?**

Contact Laura Weidner at lweidner@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2747.

For up-to-date information on our programs check our web site at

www.loudounwildlife.org

Programs and Field Trips Sponsored By Our Partners

♦Audubon Naturalist Society Rust Nature Sanctuary

802 Children's Center Rd, Leesburg, VA 20175
703-669-0000

Come and enjoy the Rust Nature Sanctuary anytime from dawn to dusk, seven days a week, any day of the year. Our 68 acres encompass meadows, forests, and ponds where you will find a variety of wildlife and plants.

Rust Nature Walks for Adults -- Starting February 2008

Free nature walks for adults and older children with an interest in expanding their understanding of the natural world. Walks meet at the information shed. Call 703-737-0021 for more information.

Rust Nature Walks:

Naturalist-led walks, 1st Sunday of each month, 1-2:30 p.m.

Midweek Rust Rambles:

Explore Rust with a naturalist, 2nd Wed. each month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Rust Bird Walks for Beginners:

Learn birding basics, 3rd Sat. each month, Sept. through June 8 – 9 a.m.

Special Winter Walk: Winter Birds

Mon., Jan. 21 (10 – 11:30 a.m.) with Bill Cour

How do birds get through the winter? Join local naturalist Bill Cour at the Rust Nature Sanctuary for a look at birds in winter.

Rust Nature Talks

ANS brings speakers to the Rust Nature Sanctuary to highlight current issues in natural history and conservation in the metropolitan area. Free but please RSVP at 703-737-0021.

Living With the Trickster: Coyotes in the East — Wed., Jan. 23 (7:30 - 8:45 p.m.)



Coyote researcher Shannon Pederson will discuss how and why coyotes came east, what that means for other wildlife and humans, and how we can adapt to their presence. Please RSVP.

Rust Family Programs FREE!

On the First Tuesday of every month, starting February 2008: 10:00 – 11:00 am. Space is limited for these free programs so please register ahead of time by calling 703-669-0000 or emailing jgurnee@audubonnaturalist.org.

Ages 3-5, with an adult:

February 5, Nature Detectives:

While some animals may elude us, they always leave signs that they have been here. Grab your magnifying glass, and we will look for clues that animals have left behind.

March 4, Animal Babies

Despite the chilly weather, many animal babies are born by March. Find out what animals have been born and how their parents keep them warm and fed.

April 1, Adventures Under a Log

There is a *big* world lurking under a little log. Roll logs and discover roly polys, wiggly worms, slimy slugs and more. Learn about how these animals find food, water and shelter in their unique home.



♦Claude Moore Park Fall Nature Programs

Visitor Center: 21544 Old Vestal's Gap Road, Sterling, VA 20164

www.loudoun.gov/prcs/parks/claude.htm

Visitor Center/Discovery Room: Daily 9:00A-5:00P

Park Hours: Daily 7:00A-Dusk

Shake off winter's chill and enjoy the outdoors. Do some birding, check out the winter trees or have an encounter with a deer or a squirrel as you hike the forests, fields and ponds of the park. Or join our naturalist-led hikes, nature programs for preschoolers and school children, scouts and others. Visit the Discovery Room and Frogshackle Cottage hands-on nature centers. Call 571-258-3700 for information about these and other activities or to register, or visit our web site at www.loudoun.gov/claudemoorespark. Here is a sample of the park's upcoming nature programs.

Foxes, Coyotes and Wolves—Oh my! (Ages 3-6)

Explore these relatives of dogs' furry coats, their footprints, their families and their food. Help us track a fox through the woods!

Monday 1/7 or Thursday 1/17, 9:30AM-11:00AM or 12:30PM-2:00PM, \$10.50/child

■ Continued on page 14

■ *Programs and Field Trips Sponsored By Our Partners, continued*

Winter Days and Winter Ways (Ages 3-6)

Discover what animals do when it's cold. Explore snow and play in it (if we have some!)

Monday 1/28 or Thursday 2/7, 9:30AM-11:00AM or 12:30PM-2:00PM, \$10.50/child

Frozen Fun (Ages 6-8)

Discover ice and snow and how snow can keep you warm! Make an ice sculpture.

Wednesday 1/16, 3:30PM- 5:00PM, \$10.50/child

Oh Deer! (Ages 6-8)

Search for the largest animal in the park! Discover what deer eat, where they sleep and how they survive in the forests and fields.

Wednesday 2/6, 3:30PM- 5:00PM, \$10.50/child

Bear Cub Scouts—Sharing Your World with Wildlife Achievement

Saturday 1/12 or Saturday 2/23, 10:00AM-11:30AM, \$4.00/scout

Webelos Geologist Badge

Saturday 1/12, 1:00PM-2:30PM or Saturday 1/19, 10:00AM-11:30 AM, \$4.00/scout

Groundhog Day Wildlife Walk (All ages)

Search the forests and fields for winter wildlife. Will the groundhog show himself? Enjoy cookies and hot chocolate at the hike's end. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday 2/2, 11:00AM-12:30PM, \$4.00/person

Earth Day/Keep Loudoun Beautiful Park Clean-up

(All ages)

Help maintain CMP's natural beauty. We'll pick up trash, clear out alien species and more.

Saturday 4/19, 8:00AM-12:00PM, free, please register

Raptors Over Loudoun

The Snickers Gap Hawkwatch is on the Loudoun County/Clarke County line where Rte 7 crosses over the Blue Ridge Mountains. It is one of several hawk-monitoring sites in the eastern U.S. which is monitored from Labor Day through early December by volunteers. As of the first of December, 12,674 birds of prey were seen migrating south.

These included:

Osprey 184
Bald Eagle 224
Northern Harrier 168
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1653
Cooper's Hawk 267
Northern Goshawk 12
Red-shouldered Hawk 150
Broad-winged Hawk 8110
Red-tailed Hawk 1625
Rough-legged Hawk 0
Golden Eagle 17
American Kestrel 133
Merlin 46
Peregrine Falcon 21
Unknown Raptors 63
Short-eared Owl 1

Through December 1, the **Blue Ridge Raptor Banding Station**, a few miles north of Snickers Gap, captured and banded 294 raptors (its second best year), including:

Sharp-shinned Hawk 15
Cooper's Hawk 34
Northern Goshawk 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 4
Broad-winged Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 231
Golden Eagle 1
Merlin 3
Peregrine Falcon 4



Are You Missing the Monthly Email Announcements?

Around the first of each month, an email that lists our programs, activities and special announcements is sent to all LWC members. This includes programs or events that did not make it into the Habitat Herald, as well as the occasional action alert. If you are not on the distribution list but would like to be, please send an email to Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org. If you need to change your email address, please send corrections to Nicole at this same address.

Time to Renew Your Membership for 2008



It's time to renew your Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy membership for 2008. By renewing now, you will continue to help us make a difference in promoting the preservation and proliferation of healthy wildlife habitats.

Your membership and donations make it possible for us to offer free programs and field trips, publish the quarterly Habitat Herald and other publications on the wildlife of Loudoun County, speak out for wildlife, and educate people on the importance of preserving wildlife habitat in Loudoun, one of the nation's fastest growing counties.

To renew, please use the form on the back page or go to www.loudounwildlife.org/Join.htm

Volunteer Appreciation

by Lynn Webster

We Really Appreciate Our Volunteers! ... We can't do our work without you

Because the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is an all-volunteer organization, any accomplishment, large or small, is due to the efforts of volunteers. Beginning with this issue of the Habitat Herald, in appreciation of our volunteers, we will list those who have actively helped us out during the past quarter.

This list covers the time period from mid-August to the end of November 2007 but does not include the bluebird monitors or amphibian monitors as they are listed in articles elsewhere in this issue.

Lorrie Bennett
Daniel Biggs
Gem Bingol
Kevin Boles
Lisa Borbe-Haught
Deborah Burtaine
Emily Bzdyk
Kerry Bzdyk
Joe Coleman
Karen Coleman
Ellie Daley
Phil Daley
Sue Davy
Helen deGroot
Bonnie Eaton

Elizabeth Evans
Meg Findley
Scott Findley
Michael Friedman
Andrea Gaines
Ann Garvey
Mary Ann Good
Otto Gutenson
Gil Hamilton
Nicole Hamilton
Debbie Harrison
Tammy Himelright
Dan James
Michelle James
Susan MacWhorter

Brian Magurn
Caroline McCarry
Nan McCarry
David McCarthy
Liam McGranaghan
Jean McTigue
Bill Oscanyan
Jeffrey Pfoutz
Andy Rabin
Karen Reed-Lowe
Marc Sagan
Darrell Schwalm
Stan Shetler
Bob Shuey
Sylvia Shuey

Ray Smith
Charley Stafford
Sharon Stephan
Karen Strick
Lisa Taylor
Helen Van Ryzin
David Ward
Linda Weaver
Matthew Weaver
Lynn Webster
Laura Weidner
Marcia Weidner
Kelly Wenner
Mimi Westervelt
Jeff Wolinski

We apologize if we have omitted anyone's name. If we have, please contact Lynn Webster, our Volunteer Coordinator, at lwebster@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-3823.



Yes, I want to become an LWC Member!

Membership Benefits include:

Subscription to Habitat Herald • Classes and Workshops
Volunteer Opportunities • Regular Monthly Meetings and Programs

**Mail this form along with your payment to: Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy,
PO Box 2088, Purcellville, VA 20134-2088**

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City, State, Zip: _____

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Please indicate your membership level:

- | | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student * | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual * | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family * | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Corporate * |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Individual Lifetime | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 Family Lifetime | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Donation \$ _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | (* membership runs from January 1 - December 31) | |

Join online: www.loudounwildlife.org



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