

# HABITAT HERALD

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

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THE LOUDOUN  
WILDLIFE  
CONSERVANCY  
IS A NON-  
PROFIT GROUP  
OF  
VOLUNTEERS  
WHO SHARE A  
COMMON  
GOAL OF  
PROTECTING  
AND  
PERPETUATING  
NATURAL  
HABITATS FOR  
THE BENEFIT  
OF BOTH  
PEOPLE AND  
WILDLIFE.

PRESIDENT:  
JOE COLEMAN

VICE-  
PRESIDENT:  
ANNE HOCKER

NEWSLETTER  
STAFF:  
BARBARA  
HOLLAND  
&  
KARIN SCOTT

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

A little over a year ago, a group of us, concerned about Loudoun County losing one of its most precious resources, its wildlife, formed the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. Many of us had moved here to be in the country, to enjoy the scenery and the plentiful wildlife around us. But over the last couple of years, we noticed that the wildlife was disappearing as its habitat shrank. With diminishing shelter and food, the remaining creatures sometimes became a nuisance.

We decided that we wanted to do more than just preserve wildlife habitat, we wanted to encourage its proliferation. We believe that man and animals can live together in harmony, to the benefit of all of us.

To accomplish our mission, we held a series of monthly meetings on a variety of topics. We've learned about hedgerows and butterfly gardens. We've had a hawk join us, and discovered how many hawks not only migrate through the county, but live here. With an average attendance of 50 people at each meeting, we've

learned that Loudoun's citizens are interested.

On our various well-attended field trips, we've observed the many critters that inhabit Loudoun's healthy streams, identified many of Loudoun's nesting and migrant birds, learned more about our common and not-so-common wildflowers, visited the wild swan program at Airlie, and much more.

In the coming year, we will continue our field trips and monthly programs and become even more active in the community. We hope our popular butterfly garden at the Lincoln Elementary School can serve as a model for other schoolyard habitat programs. We're going to work with a number of other local groups to keep our streams healthy. And because we believe that wildlife doesn't need to be a nuisance, we're co-sponsoring the creation of a wildlife information hotline.

And there's more to come. We hope you'll join us in our mission to minimize the impact of population growth and help people and animals live together in harmony here.

Joe Coleman, President

## Help Us Help Streams and Waterways

The Stream Rehabilitation Committee of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is watching our waterways. Their quality is a major factor in the health of our environment and the balance of our ecosystem. Streams and their banks offer shelter, forage and movement corridors for our local wildlife and refreshment for passing migrants. Working in concert with other groups and individuals, we're looking for volunteers to help monitor and maintain our healthy streams and improve those that need help. Training programs are provided.

We hope to collect baseline data on quality and biodiversity for all Loudoun's waterways and to monitor them on an ongoing basis. We'll work with the county government to incorporate the data into its computer-based geographical information system to support assessment and resource management.

Won't you join us? Call Dave Harrelson at (540) 668-6879 to find out more about the program.

## HAVE YOUR OWN HABITAT

There's nothing like owning a little piece of nature of your own. A hedgerow, even in suburban areas, is easy to grow and maintain, restful to look at, and a rich pleasure to children and grownups alike, as it develops into a home for rabbits, box turtles, butterflies, toads and birds. You can use an edge or corner of your own property, or join with neighbors to divide your land with these friendly natural fences. A string of interconnected hedgerows provides a corridor where wild creatures can live, move around, shelter and feed. It's a great way to solve the problem of too much grass to mow - not to mention the boredom of too much grass to look at.

For trees, the Virginia Native Plant Society recommends box elder, cherry, crabapple, dogwood, hackberry, hawthorn, holly, maple, mulberry, oak, paw paw, persimmon, scrub pine, red cedar, sassafras and serviceberry. For shrubs they suggest black haw, blackberry, blueberry, elderberry, huckleberry, the sweet-scented and graceful spicebush, sumac and winterberry. Climbers like the scarlet-flowered trumpet vine and purple-berried Virginia creeper add a graceful fringe. For low-growing plants at the edges, try asters, black-eyed Susans, butterfly weed, violets and wild bergamot.

If that sounds ambitious, it isn't. Any number of these may appear of their own accord as soon as you turn off the lawnmower and welcome them. They'll be joined by white Queen Anne's lace, blue chicory, purple coneflowers, yellow jewelweed, and an astonishing panorama of volunteer growth that changes and evolves each season, luring the birds and butterflies and small creatures that keep us humans company.

If you think only dandelions happen when you stop mowing, you have a beautiful surprise coming.

*Freckled nesteggs thou shalt see  
Hatching in the hawthorn tree  
When the hen-birds wing doth rest  
Quiet on her mossy nest...*

*John Keats "Fancy"*

**IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER: SPECIAL PLANTINGS FOR BUTTERFLIES & HUMMINGBIRDS.**

## POEMS FROM LINCOLN SCHOOL



### TREES

Trees. There is nothing as cool these.

Some have flowers, some have leaves.

Trees need to be treated with care, for they're the ones that give us air.

Some people don't like trees, just like dogs don't like fleas, so they cut them down and make people frown.

A lot of kids like to climb trees.

Sometimes they fall and scrape their knees.

Trees. There is nothing as cool as these.

Ian Good,  
Miss Brackin's Second Grade Class

### NATURE

Nature makes me feel happy because it is always quiet.

The grass is always turning green and flowers are blooming on the trees.

Animals are running around and sometimes even underground.

Fish are swimming in the water and jumping to make them hotter.

Peter Bergen  
Miss Brackin's Second Grade Class

## IN MEMORIUM: MOLLIE BEATTIE

Mollie Beattie, the first woman to head the Fish and Wildlife Service, died this summer of a brain tumor at 49.

According to an article in The Washington Post, she was "selected to hold aloft the tattered banner of conservation and the Endangered Species Act, which she viewed less as an act of civil legislation than divine ordination."

In her three years at the helm, she left a lasting mark on the landscape. Another 15 wildlife refuges were added, over 100 habitat plans were worked out between landowners and the government, and the gray wolf, one of her favorite animals, came back to the Northern Rockies. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to give her name to eight million acres of wilderness reserve in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Above all, though, during her brief tenure she defused the angry tensions between conservation and business interests. As she put it, "I believe there's only one conflict, and that's between the short-term and the long-term thinking. In the long term, the economy and the environment are the same thing."

Her early death was a great loss. We can only hope her legacy will live.

### HELP, PLEASE!

Volunteers are needed to staff the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's information booth at the Bluemont Fair on September 21 and 22. If you can help us spread the good word, even for an hour or two, please call (540) 554-2403.

## EYE DISEASE SPREADING IN HOUSE FINCHES

Eyelid inflammation of house finches has been spreading since its first reports in October 1994. Caused by bacterial infection, its symptoms are red, swollen, crusty eyes, which can cause vision problems that prevent the birds from finding food. So far the finch population has been holding steady and there has been no evidence that the disease will spread to other bird species at backyard feeders. Still, it can't hurt to be careful.

To keep the problem from spreading, clean your bird feeders regularly with a mild bleach solution, one part bleach to nine parts water. Dry the feeders well before filling them. Wooden feeders benefit from drying for several hours in sunlight.

If necessary, prevent overcrowding by adding extra feeders to your yard, as the disease spreads when birds are in close contact.

### HOW'S YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

*The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy needs you. If you haven't joined us, please do. If you're already a member and haven't yet sent us your check for this year, please pop it in the mail. Where would we be without you?*

*Yes, I would like to join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and help my neighbors keep the county a place where people and animals can live in harmony.*

NAME

STREET

TOWN

TELEPHONE / HOME

WORK

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES:

\$20 single	\$200 single lifetime	
\$30 family	\$300 family lifetime	\$75 corporate

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, Sept. 17, 7:30 p.m.** at the Rust Library in Leesburg. A free program on "Helping Wildlife and People Live Together". Wildlife in Loudoun County is losing the wetlands, meadows and woodlands that was its home. As food and shelter disappear, dispossessed wildlife can become a nuisance. John Handidian, Ph.D., head of the Suburban Wildlife Protection Program of the Humane Society of the United States, will present a program on how homeowners can deal with "nuisance" wildlife and how to landscape for areas in suburban developments that still welcome the original tenants.


**Saturday, Sept. 21, 8:00 a.m.**, a bird walk near Leesburg, led by John Chambless, will look for and identify some of the many fall migrants that move through our area this month. With favorable weather we should see warblers in their fall plumage as well as hawks. Call (540) 554-2542 to sign up.

**Tuesday, Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m.**, a free public program on a subject to be announced in the near future.

**Wednesday, Nov. 20**, we hope to present a program on wolves, with, perhaps, wolves in attendance. Details forthcoming.

**Next year:** A program on bringing back quail and also one on encounters with swans. Join us for these and many more events.

*FOR DETAILS, CALL JOE COLEMAN (540)554-2542.*

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**LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY  
19410 EBENEZER CHURCH ROAD  
ROUND HILL, VA 20141**