
Habitat Herald

A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

Volume VII, Issue 3

Summer 2002

Snake Tales...

by Sharon Kearns

"...Looks like a copperhead day or looks like a copperhead night..." These words were well known to our family after we moved to our small farm. Being conscious of your surroundings and what or who is in it applies to the country as well as the city.

Copperheads, *Agkistrodon contortrix* and Timber Rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus* are the two poisonous snakes found in the Northern Virginia area. Copperheads live in forested ravines, rock outcroppings and edges of floodplains. Our farm is prime habitat for copperheads as well as other snakes. We live midway up a hill in

the middle of two ravines surrounded by old growth woods with lots of rotted logs, rocks and with a stream nearby. We were disturbing things by building a house. The children were quickly taught not to walk outside barefoot in high grass, not to stick their hands or feet carelessly under rocks or logs and to look where they were going. I made a snake stick, a piece of plastic pipe with some macramé rope through it with a loop on the end to pick up and move any poisonous snakes that were nearby the house. The hardest person to convince to move snakes was my husband who had stepped on a cottonmouth as a young Marine in training. He had a real loathing and fear of snakes because of his experience of being bitten.

Many people have a fear of snakes without having been bitten and the first thing they do when they see one is to want to kill it. How many snakes have you seen thoughtlessly run over in the road? It was important that our children be taught about snakes so they knew which ones were safe to handle if they wished and which should be admired from afar. It was also important for my husband. Ring neck snakes were always the favorite and handled by

In This Issue:

- 2 A Word from the President
- 3 Summer Wildlife Calendar
- 4 Hawks: Masters of the Air
- 5 Stream Monitoring Classes and Programs
- 7 Mark Your Calendar
- 11 Winter's Roadside Raptors
- 13 Your Support is Needed
- 15 New Nature Education Opportunities

www.loudounwildlife.org

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 Leslie McCasker

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Continued on page 9

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 Phil Daley.

You can also visit us at:

www.loudounwildlife.org

A Word from the President!

by Bruce McGranahan

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Those of us that live, work, or even pass through Loudoun County are very fortunate. I spent nearly twelve years living in the Colorado Rockies. The Rocky Mountain views were certainly spectacular, but I'm not sure they match the beauty of the rolling hillsides, farms, trees, and backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains that we Loudouner's enjoy daily. We are indeed fortunate to share such a wonderful place with such natural beauty, diversity of plants and wildlife, and so many opportunities for bird and wildlife watching.

In future *Habitat Herald's* it is our hope to highlight some of the many special places that Loudoun has to offer. The geology and landscape, rock outcrops, soils, river and stream valleys, trees, and vegetation occurring in various combinations make for a variety of interesting habitats – each inviting its own special community of species. These future articles may open your eyes to a new adventure or simply refresh a remembrance of a past one. In either case we hope you will explore, learn, and grow in your appreciation of outdoor Loudoun.

In July 2001 the Loudoun County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors took a bold step in the adoption of the new Revised General Plan. Within that document are policies that will help preserve some of those precious resources that are so vital to our mission of "Protecting and perpetuating natural habitats for the benefit of both

Continued on page 3

A Word...continued from page 2

people and wildlife". Right now the Board is in the final phase of adopting revised zoning ordinances and regulations intended to implement those protections. Among the proposals are protective measures for river and stream corridors that will set aside these special places and prevent many of the encroachments we have seen in the past. The stream corridor protections will benefit water quality in our streams and ponds, help protect vital wetlands and vernal pools that occur in stream valleys, limit clearing and grading of floodplains and adjacent slopes, and help retain vegetated stream buffers along our larger watercourses. Likewise the Mountainside and Limestone Overlay District regulations will help protect those unique areas. We urge you to voice your support of these new measures by contacting your Planning Commissioner or Board Supervisor and letting them know we believe protection of water quality and wildlife habitat is paramount if we are to preserve the quality of life in Loudoun.

As the new president I am excited about the coming opportunities we have to enrich our knowledge and enjoyment of wildlife. I am also concerned about the ever-present threats to habitat in this rapidly growing area. Our initial brochure stated the population of Loudoun County as about 100,000 people. Our recent reprint of the brochure brought to mind that the County's population has now nearly doubled since that original printing. The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy will continue to offer stimulating evening programs and nature walks. And, as a continuing partner in the stream quality programs, we will fully support volunteer monitoring and efforts to keep our streams clean and healthy.

Until next time, here's to great days afield! ✿



Summer Wildlife Calendar

Birds:

Late arriving birds begin to nest, taking advantage of the fuller leaf cover. After one or more broods, they spend the summer foraging, becoming noticeably quieter. In late summer, some waterfowl shed their flight feathers and retreat to dense marshes where they can hide from predators. Early migrants begin to stage together in late summer, fueling up for the long journey south. Their restlessness at this time of year is called "zugunruhe," which means travel urge.

Mammals:

Young mammals are being raised and taught to fend for themselves. Summer is a good time to see family groups traveling together. White-tailed deer are feeding heavily in brushy openings in preparation for the autumn breeding season (called the rut).

Amphibians and Reptiles:

Many amphibian adults leave their breeding pond and disperse into woods and fields, most of them sticking to moist, humid places where they can keep their permeable skin moist. Young salamander (newts) and tadpoles spend several weeks in the water metamorphosing into adults that will seek land later in the summer. Watch the highways during warm winter rains; the moisture encourages frogs and salamanders to go out foraging.

Snakes spend the summer eating, shedding skin, basking, and avoiding predators. Land snakes may seek deep shade or burrows during the hottest part of the day. Turtles that grow too warm atop their basking logs simply slide into the water to cool down.

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

Hawks: Masters of the Air

This article was written by Bruce Hopkins for the National Park Service and is printed here with their permission.

The Blue Ridge along Loudoun's western border offers wonderful opportunities to observe fall migrations of hawks and other raptors.

Hawks migrate along the Blue Ridge—and other Appalachian ranges to the north and south—because of thermals and deflection air currents associated with the ridges. The thermals and deflection currents help the birds conserve energy as they travel between eastern North America and their wintering areas in northern South America.

Simply put, hawks primarily use the deflection currents to propel themselves forward and use the thermals for uplift.

The deflected air currents, or updrafts, are caused when northwesterly winds in the fall—and occasional southeasterly winds in the spring—are forced up and over the Blue Ridge. With outstretched wings, the birds glide on these updrafts at an average speed of 40 miles per hour and as fast as 60 mph. In heavy winds, some hawks fly close to the ridge to avoid turbulence.

Thermals result when relatively warm air from the south side of the Blue Ridge rises and is trapped by cooler air from the north side. Moisture and dust are drawn into the rising air, which helps form cumulus clouds above the thermals.

The hawks move forward by circling upward in a thermal, gliding down to the next thermal, circling upward, and on and on. Riding thermals, obviously, is not as fast as riding deflection air currents, but it is better than waiting around in a treetop for conditions to change.

In the fall, get out your binoculars, fill up a Thermos with coffee or hot chocolate, and venture out to Snickersville Gap and other spots along the Blue Ridge to watch the migrating hawks and other birds of prey. If you are lucky, you might see a "kettle" of hawks numbering in the hundreds. ❁

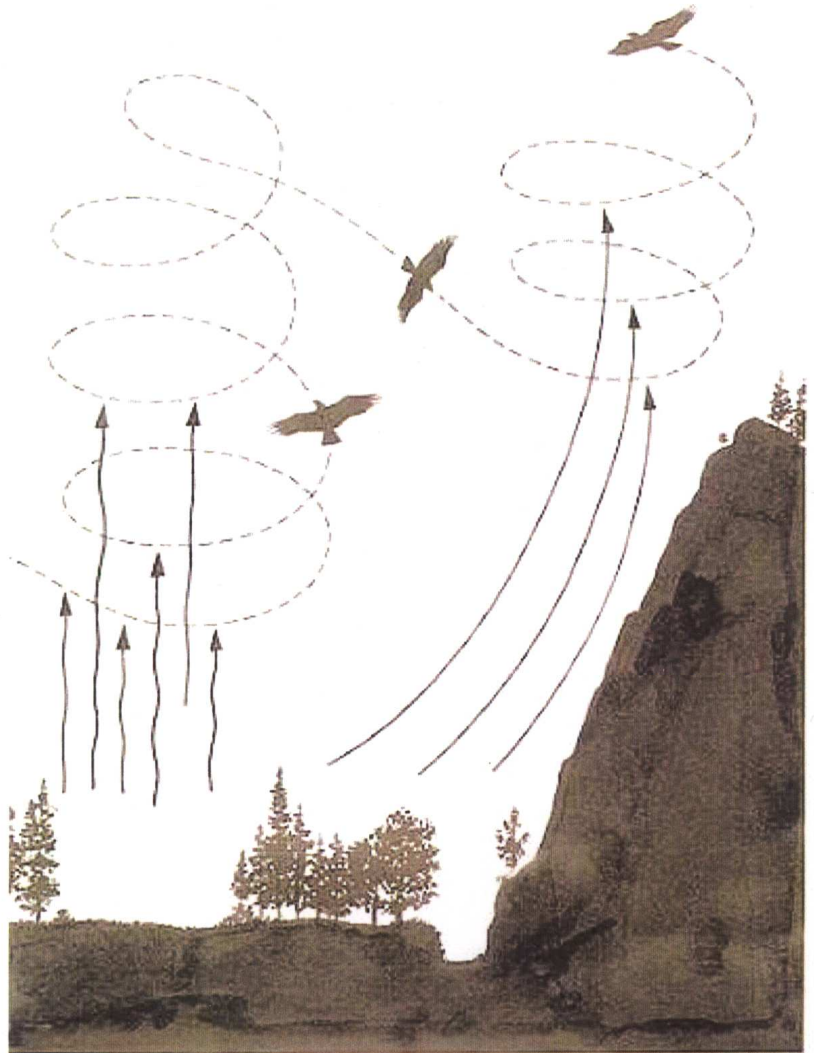


Diagram Provided Courtesy of the National Park Service

LOUDOUN STREAM MONITORING PROJECT

Classes and 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 Dave Harrelson of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and 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 — *Sign up is required.*

To register for any of the classes, contact Cliff Fairweather at (703) 803-8400 or cliff@audubonnaturalist.org.

MACRO-INVERTEBRATE IDENTIFICATION I: ORDER LEVEL

Sunday, October 13 (1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.) — classroom

Saturday, October 26 (10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.) — field

Tuesday, November 19 (7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.) — classroom

Benthic macro-invertebrates, boneless creatures that live under flowing water are important indicators of aquatic ecosystem 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).

STREAM MONITORING PROTOCOL PRACTICUM WITH HABITAT ASSESSMENT

Saturday, November 23 (10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.)

Using the data collection protocol developed for the ANS Water Quality Monitoring Project, participants will learn how to gather abiotic data (temperature, pH, and several habitat assessments) and use a D-frame net to collect stream organisms. The Habitat Assessment portion of this class will focus on measuring physical data and evaluating key habitat features that help identify healthy stream habitat and warning signs of declining stream quality and will be useful for completing the stream evaluation forms used throughout our monitoring season. *We will carpool to a nearby stream. Please bring boots or sneakers for wading.*

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 Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District
 30-H Catoctin Circle, SE
 Leesburg, VA 20175
 FAX: (703) 443-0187

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:

Loudoun Soil & Water Conservation District (703) 777-2075
 Audubon Naturalist Society — Cliff Fairweather (703) 803-8400

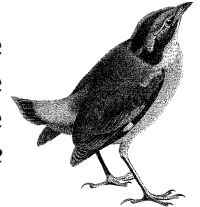
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Space is limited for many of these programs.

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

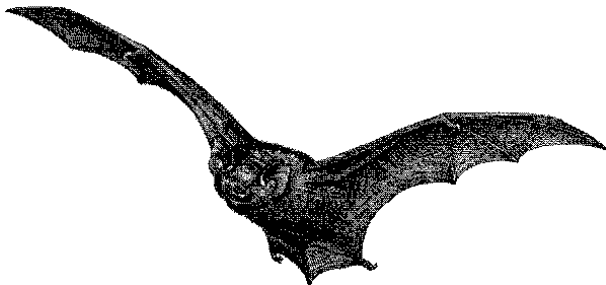
SEPTEMBER 11 : A TIME TO REMEMBER **Wednesday, September 11, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.** at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. During these turbulent times, many have found solace in the beauty of a natural place. Join us as we gather on the hillside around the Springhouse Pond to remember and honor each person lost on September 11. If you wish to sit, please bring a blanket or lawn chair. For information call the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve at 703-669-0316 or visit their website at www.bansheereeks.org.

BIRDING BANSHEE **Saturday, September 14, 8:00 a.m.** Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve for the regular 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 jandkcoleman@erols.com*.



SNAKES ALIVE **Tuesday, September 17, 7:30 p.m.**, at the Rust Library in Leesburg. Meet some of our scaly neighbors at this family program on snakes presented by Alonso Abugattas, well-known local naturalist and storyteller. In this entertaining program for everyone, Alonso will describe, up close and personal, the natural history of our local snakes. This free program is sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy.

BATS OVERHEAD: A FIELD TRIP **Friday, September 20, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.** **Registration is required for this fee-based adult program: \$5.00 for members of either the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy or Audubon Naturalist Society; \$8.00 for nonmembers.** Join Tammy Schwab to observe bats as they fly overhead at the Audubon Naturalist Society Rust Wildlife Sanctuary in Leesburg. Watch these fascinating creatures as they dart through the evening sky catching hundreds of insects. *For more information or to register please contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com*.



AUTUMN NATURE WALK **Sunday, September 22, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society for an early autumn walk around the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. On this leisurely walk, we will examine the many different wildflowers, butterflies, and birds that make this wonderful place home.

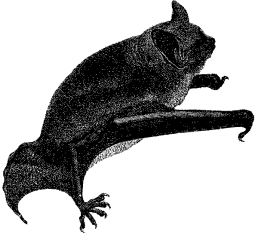
STOPPING CRIMES AGAINST WILDLIFE **Tuesday, October 8, 7:30 p.m.** at the Rust Library in Leesburg. Bruce Lemmert, state Game Warden for Loudoun County, will describe the forensic methods used to stop crimes against wildlife and catch the perpetrators of those crimes. Bruce is the Virginia winner of the 2002 Guy Bradley Award presented by the Fish and Wildlife Foundation for "outstanding leadership, extended excellence and a lifetime commitment to wildlife enforcement and protecting the nation's natural resources."

BIRDING BANSHEE **Saturday, October 12, 8:00 a.m.** See the September 14 listing for details.

Continued on page 8

Calendar...continued from page 7

BIRDING BANSHEE Saturday, November 9, 8:00 a.m. See the September 14 listing for details.

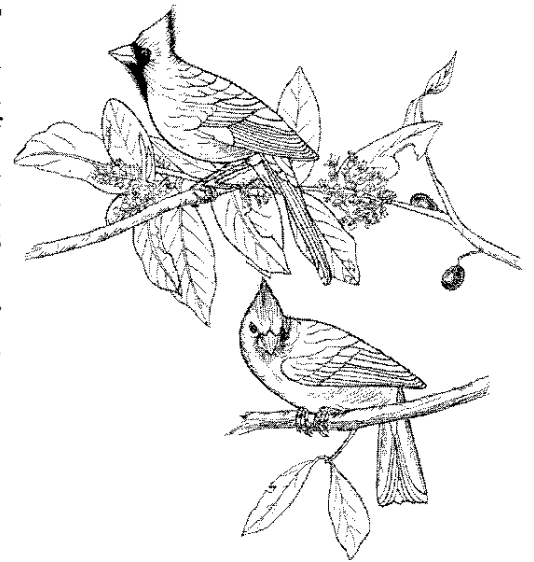


BATTY ABOUT BATS Tuesday, November 19, 7:30 p.m. Location to be announced. Tammy Schwab, the naturalist at the Audubon Naturalist Society Rust Sanctuary, will describe the fascinating world of nature's only flying mammals. Virginia is home to 16 different species of bats, some of which are common and some rare. While describing their habits and behavior, Tammy will teach us about the ones we usually see.

THANKSGIVING WALK AT THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP Saturday, November 23, 10:00 a.m. Walk off that turkey dinner on a leisurely two-hour walk at this stunning nature preserve near Harper's Ferry. *For more information contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com.*

BIRDING BANSHEE Saturday, December 14, 8:00 a.m. See the September 14 listing for details.

SIXTH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT Sunday, December 29, 2002 Join us as we participate in the National Audubon Society's Annual Christmas Bird Count. Started in 1899, these surveys are held in all parts of 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. Note the date on your calendar and look for upcoming registration information as the day approaches.



Keep your eyes open for announcements on our many activities, or even better, join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy so you can be the first to hear about all our great programs and field trips!

Check out our web site at www.loudounwildlife.org. Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com with any questions you might have about the above programs.

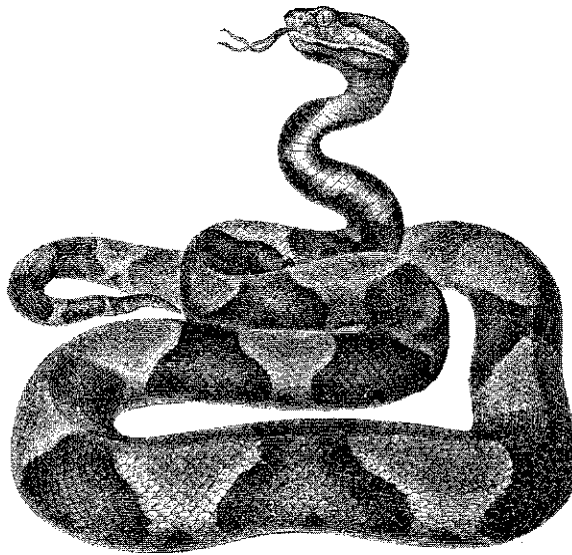
Snake Tales...continued from page 1

everyone even though they sometimes left a musky odor. Queen snakes found down in the stream were beautiful to watch while they fished in the water. Garter snakes were seen eating frogs, and black snakes, both the racer and the black rat snake most often were seen on trails or roads.

Copperheads are beautiful snakes. They have a thick, stocky body and their head is diamond shaped. Their coloring is pinkish beige with a repeating hourglass pattern of darker brown-black surrounding a dark copper coloring. Young copperheads resemble the adults. They have the hourglass or bowtie patterning although below the tip of the tail is bright yellow and the young are paler.

The easiest way to remember poisonous snakes from non-poisonous snakes in our area is to look at the eye. The copperhead has a vertical pupil—up and down like a cats eye in bright sunshine. Non-poisonous snakes have a round pupil. Once you have seen and really looked at a copperhead, they are easy to remember. What occurs most often is mistaking other snakes for copperheads.

I wanted to know how aggressive copperheads could be in case the children were ever near one. I saw one on the road one day and stopped. I found that copperheads are not aggressive snakes. They are also not fast snakes; they like to stay where they are. It takes a lot of disturbance to get them to strike and their striking distance is not long. If you are familiar with their habitat and look where you are going, it's highly unlikely you'll ever get bitten.

**Here are some of our snake tales:**

- Our neighbor was remodeling his old house. He always slept with shotgun by his bed. One night he woke up to see a snake on the bedroom floor and picked up his gun and shot a hole through snake and the floor. If he'd had a snake stick, it would have saved his floor and the snake.

- I was planting an apple tree one day with Noodle our friendly yellow lab nearby, about five feet away. Not once but three times Noodle bent down to sniff something. On the third time she ran backwards ten feet yelping all the way. Checking her over revealed two dripping fang marks on her muzzle, otherwise she was normal. I called the vet who said to observe her. We finished

planting the tree and started walking up the hill when Noodle started to stagger and lay down. We went to the vet for an examination and antibiotics. Noodle's head swelled up about three times normal size. She was in a lot of pain and garnered lots of sympathy and love. She is fine other than a large series of scars on her face and some loose skin on her throat. I learned once again that it really does take a lot for a copperhead to bite. Since Noodle received a lot of venom she had lots of swelling and pain. But she didn't die and Noodle never got bitten again.

- Our son Josh was loading garbage into the van for the monthly run to dump, picked up the garbage bag from outside bin (designed to keep bears, dogs, raccoons and possums out but evidently not snakes and mice) "Mom, Mom there's a snake in one of the garbage bags, I

Continued on page 10

Snake Tales...*continued from page 9*

think it's a copperhead". I got my trusty snake stick and indeed did find a copperhead. We moved it down into the woods away from the house. For weeks afterwards I worried about going to the dump and finding a snake en route to the dump loose in the van. I appreciate them, I enjoy seeing them but not loose in the vehicle I'm driving! The snake stick goes to dump with me and trash bags are examined carefully. The trash bin is finally deserted for storing trash in our house. It smells sometimes, but there are no surprises!

- One hot muggy day, we had our windows open on the top floor. As we were leaving we looked up to see a snake on our trellis, probably having just eaten the baby cardinals that had been nesting nearby but were now nowhere to be found. A closer look revealed the snake to be a copperhead. Since it was near our bedroom window, we shook the snake down. Needless to say the window got closed, air conditioning got turned on and the trellis was removed.

These tales are not meant to scare anyone but to explain that it is possible to live in an area with poisonous snakes, or any snake, and not be harmed by them. Because of where we live, we have had the privilege of seeing many different types of snakes and other wild animals. Snakes react like humans; in fact they act like many living things. If cornered or stepped on, they tend to react aggressively while trying to get away; if left alone they go harmlessly about their business.

Even if you find snakes frightening, remember the poisonous snakes in our area are non-aggressive. Also, because of the pests they eat, these creatures are very beneficial. If you see a snake on the road, please do not run over it; it may be shedding its skin or crossing the street to hunt. Snakes are fascinating to observe — just be aware, prepared and appreciative of all of nature's wonders.

To learn more about snakes come to Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's *Snakes Alive* program at The Rust Library on September 17th at 7:30 p.m.

For more about copperheads and go to an article by the Conservation Commission of Missouri: www.conservation.state.mo.us/1995/05/4.html. ❁

For Snakes Sake

by Leslie McCasker

Snakes are important links in the natural environment and should be treated as such. Snakes have a very bad reputation because people seem to inherently fear them. This is a shame because they are beneficial to man in one way or another. Several species are important because their diet consists mainly of rodents, including voles, moles and mice. Assisting the home gardener with pest control.

Of the 35 species and subspecies of snakes in Virginia only 3 are poisonous — Northern Copperhead, Eastern Cottonmouth (found only in the southeastern corner of Virginia), and Timber Rattlesnake.

Most non-poisonous snakes actively hunt their prey, while venomous snakes lie in wait for their prey to save energy.— making themselves invisible. Because they are not readily visible— don't reach into places where you cannot see.

The best advice is to never handle a snake unless you are sure it is non-poisonous. Even then, unless you have a very good reason, it is best to leave them alone — they will avoid you if it is at all possible.

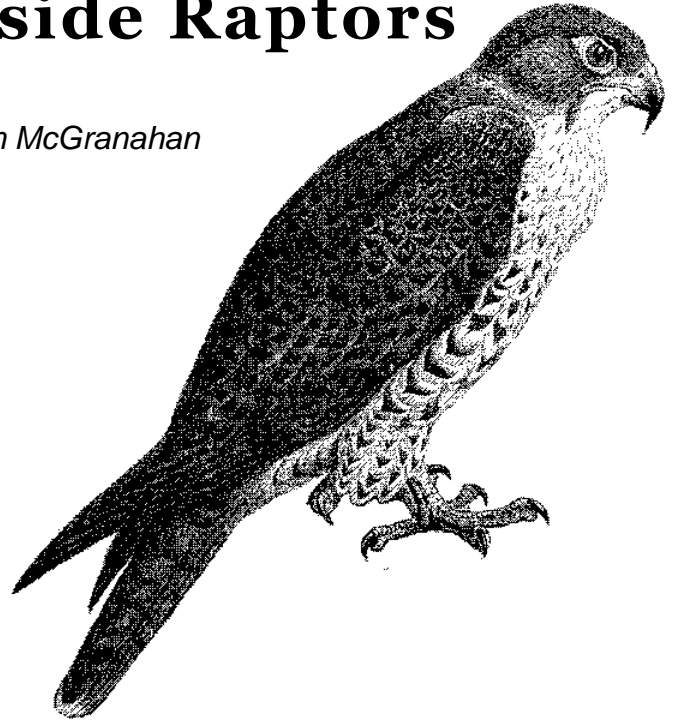
A yard full of wildlife is one which you should enjoy but is also one which you need to be alert and mindful.

Winter's Roadside Raptors

by *Liam McGranahan*

Have you ever wondered why you see so many hawks along the roadsides of Loudoun County during the winter months or wondered what type of species they are? Well, you are not alone. Many people have asked the same questions.

One of the simplest explanations for the greater number of hawks during winter is that the trees have lost their leaves, making it much easier to see the hawks that have been there all along. Another reason is that the immature hawks, born in the spring, are out hunting on their own. These young hawks increase the population by nearly threefold. But perhaps the greatest reason is the unique topography and rural nature of Loudoun County itself. On the western edge of Loudoun lie the Blue Ridge Mountains. During the fall, the topography of this north/south mountain ridge serves a vital role as a major migratory path for birds of prey. In fall, the winds that so effectively sweep the leaves off our deciduous trees also help to channel thousands upon thousands of raptors along this windswept ridge to the south. The sheer number of raptors moving along this thin corridor is awe-inspiring. For example, just three years ago, the greatest concentration of Broad-winged hawks ever seen in a single day in the United States -19,000 strong- passed over Snicker's Gap. Many of the migrating hawks and falcons stop and hunt in Loudoun along the way. In fact, because of its rural environment, Loudoun County lays out the welcome mat and becomes the winter home to many hundreds if not thousands of these migrating raptors. They settle here to take advantage of the mild weather and huge prey base (mostly field mice) found in fallow fields around the county.



What type of raptors are you seeing? If you thought most of the hawks along the road might be red-tailed hawks, you are correct. The Red-tailed hawk is the most commonly seen raptor in North America and, indeed, in Loudoun County. Although highly variable, Red-tails are most easily recognized by their large size, a prominent white breast, and dark belly, not to mention the red tail of the adults.

Red-tails are not the only hawks to call Loudoun home. Some of the hawks you see may actually be Red-shouldered hawks (slightly smaller, with a black and white barred tail and a redder chest than the Red-tail) or the more secretive Cooper's hawk, one of the three forest raptors found in North America. Both of these hawks take advantage of the abundant prey feeding in the grassy edges and medians of the roadsides.

Some of the smaller hawks might not be hawks at all, but a colorful type of falcon called the Kestrel. They often hunt by perching on branches a few

Continued on page 12

Winter Roadside...continued from page 11

feet above the grass or by sitting on power lines. If you look closely, you may see one pump its tail back and forth, a key behavioral characteristic of the Kestrel.

Other raptor species can be seen from the road as well. Northern Harriers, formally called Marsh hawks, often hunt large grassy areas near the roadsides and further afield. Their low, coursing flights across meadows, along with a white rump patch above a long thin tail, make them easy to identify. In late winter, an occasional Rough-legged hawk may drift down from its tundra haunts to hunt here as well. Like the harrier, it has

a white rump patch above the tail, however the tail is not as long, nor do Rough-legs fly in the same manner, as do harriers. Rough-legged hawks are more likely to hunt by sitting on the thinner outer branches of a small tree or “kiting” into the wind over an open field.

The next time you’re driving, enrich your trip by taking stock of Loudoun County’s winter raptors. With thirteen species of diurnal raptors and seven species of owl, Loudoun County is teeming with raptors during the winter months. Should you decide to venture away from the main roads you might be surprised how many species you can find. ✱

Give Wildlife a Brake

Be especially watchful for wildlife at dawn, dusk, and in the first few hours after darkness falls. Many wild animals are particularly active at these times.

Edges of roads that are bordered by natural habitat or agricultural fields are places to be especially watchful for wildlife.

Assume that animals you encounter do not know to get out of your way. Young animals, in particular, don’t recognize that cars are a threat.

Look for the reflection of your headlights in the eyes of animals near the road as an early warning that you may need to brake for an animal crossing. Lowering your dash lights slightly will increase the likelihood that you’ll see this reflection.

Each mid- to late-fall, be especially watchful for deer. This is not only their breeding season, but the start of hunting season; both make them more active.

Remember to watch for other animals following the first one you see; there may be a male in pursuit of a mate or young animals following their mother.

Try to slow down, especially when driving after dark. Many animals become victims of cars driven too fast.

Fall is a prime time to drive with deer in mind...

White-tailed deer are one of the largest and now most familiar wild animals encountered in our communities, attracted by the veritable “salad bars” in our gardens and yards. Even on the trail of a tasty azalea, most deer are careful crossing roads – but not in the fall. With the onset of the “rut” or mating season, bucks chase does or other bucks, paying *no* attention to where they are going; hunting season also opens, and guns fire, causing deer to panic and run; and young adult deer disperse to find new territories. Keep these facts in mind as you “Steer Clear of Deer!”

Source: Humane Society of the United States

Your Support is Needed for Better Environmental Protection in Loudoun County!

Adopting a New Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance

Step One: The Loudoun County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors should be applauded for their move to adopt the Revised General Plan, which occurred in July 2001. That marked the first important step in protecting Loudoun's precious natural resources.

Step Two: Better laws are being developed. The Planning Commission Public Hearings were held Aug. 14 & 17, 2002 followed by the Board of Supervisor's Public Hearing in October 2002. The Board of Supervisors intends to adopt new ordinances before the end of the year.

Step Three: The final step is implementation and enforcement. These regulations will not be effective without effective enforcement. Urge the Board of Supervisors to establish a Department of Natural Resources with the authority to carry out the Board's smart growth goals that are embodied in the general plan and new ordinances.

Why is your support critical?

The new regulations will include measures to help protect valuable natural resources that support wildlife and our opportunity to enjoy Loudoun's wildlife.

Support the Conservation Design Ordinance. These important regulations will:

- Require developers to identify natural resources on a property early in the process so that the development patterns account for protection and avoidance of key land features such as streams, floodplains, wetlands, forests, meadows, and critical wildlife habitat.
- Create awareness of the importance of Loudoun's natural and biological resources so that roads, utilities, and buildings will be located to reduce environmental impacts.
- Result in more usable open space set-asides that better protect wildlife habitat.

Support the proposed River and Stream Corridor Overlay District. These regulations will:

- Eliminate many destructive land use activities that have previously been allowed to occur within floodplains and stream valleys.
- Support saving trees and vegetated buffers along streams and rivers for water-quality protection.
- Help preserve valuable wildlife travel corridors and floodplain habitat.

Continued on page 14

Your Support is Needed...continued from page 13

Support the Steep Slope Standards. These regulations will:

- Help preserve forest cover and native vegetation on steep slope areas.
- Restrict clearing and grading of steep slopes, which contributes to high rates of erosion and sedimentation in our streams.
- Help protect unique habitat that is found in steep slope areas.
-

Support the Limestone Overlay District and Mountainside Development Overlay District ordinances. These regulations will:

- Offer better protection against clearing of mountainside forests and the resulting erosion and sedimentation problems.
- Improve forest cover protection in the mountainside areas.
- Require performance standards for development in the Limestone Conglomerate area north of Leesburg.

Two other ordinances are not being considered at this time. We believe that a **Tree Preservation Ordinance** and a **Lighting Ordinance** should be included as part of this re-write. Urge the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to include the Tree Preservation and Lighting Ordinance in this phase of the ordinance revisions.

Public support for the new laws is critical!

Development interests are mounting their opposition to these critical protective ordinances.

YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT! Send e-mail comments to: zoningupdate@loudoun.gov and ask that the comments be made part of the Public Record.

For more information contact the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's at gr8habitats@runbox.com.

New Nature Education Opportunities

These classes designed for and originally offered to Loudoun County teachers (credit is available) are now open for registration to the public. These classes will cover basic natural history knowledge for each topic and will cover ways these topics can be interpreted to children through activities and projects. Classes are ideal not only for teachers for but also for home schools, scout leaders, summer camp leaders, and those wishing to become naturalists. All workshops will be held at the Rust Sanctuary cost \$40 per registrant (including materials and fees). These programs will include both classroom and field work. The fieldwork will go in light to moderate rain, so dress for the weather. Bring insect repellent, drinking water, and wear long sleeve shirts and long pants to protect against poison ivy. Please register at www.audubonnaturalist.org/eereg.htm.

Workshop Title: Water Quality and Stream Ecology
Instructor: Cliff Fairweather, Audubon Naturalist Society
Date & Time: Fall Session: Sat., Sept. 28, 9:00 a.m - 1:30 p.m.

Learn how to assess the health of local streams using aquatic macroinvertebrates as water quality indicators. We'll cover the taxonomy of aquatic invertebrates, equip you with the skills to identify these animals to the taxonomic level of class and/or order, and learn what the presence or absence of various forms tell us about stream health. Along the way, we'll learn how these animals are adapted to aquatic life, how local stream ecosystems function and how human activities affect the health of local streams. This biological system has components that can help you meet VA SOL's.

Continued on page 16

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:

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

Name: _____

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City, ST, Zip: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ E-mail _____

Please indicate your membership level:

(*membership runs from January 1- December 31)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Individual Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Corporate* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 Family Lifetime |

Additional Donation \$ _____

**For new members only - please do not use to renew membership.*

Nature Education...*continued from page 15*

Workshop Title: Mammals: The Science Behind The Fur
 Instructor: Tammy Schwab, Audubon Naturalist Society
 Date & Time: Fall Session Thurs., Sept. 12th, 7-9 PM and Sat., Sept. 14th, 9 AM-12 noon

Mammals are great example animals for teaching about life processes. Their diversity is great and they are inherently attractive to young people. This class will include subtopics such as classification of mammals, mammals of VA, bats, endangered species, and mammals as examples for teaching about habitat, adaptations, food webs, and ecological interactions like predation and competition. Participants will receive a resource guide and activity ideas. The topics covered in this workshop will help teachers with VA SOL's .

Workshop Title: Using Your Schoolyard for Science Enrichment: A Real Cheap Field Trip
 Instructor: Tammy Schwab, Audubon Naturalist Society
 Date & Time: Fall Session: Saturday, October 5th 10 AM-3PM

This workshop will be a basic introduction to the skills of environmental education. Participants will hone their skills in nature observation and use of field guides. Explore books, the WWW, and other resources that will help you quickly build a working knowledge base of natural history. Learn about developing and leading nature programs and field trips that meet specific SOL's. Try out the tips and tricks that make a nature program successful. This class is great for teachers who are looking to integrate nature study into their classrooms. This class will include subtopics such as using nature as an integrating piece in all subjects, using your existing school yard as a mini laboratory for science experiments, creating habitat in your schoolyard, and resources and tips for overcoming the barriers of taking students outside. Participants will take home a nature study and interpretation resource packet.

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

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