



Habitat Herald

A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

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Winter 2012



Spotted Salamander
Photo by Liam McGranaghan

The Big Night

by Liam McGranaghan

The weather forecast called for heavy rains and warming temperatures in the days ahead. I felt an excited chill along my spine—not just with the hope that the long winter might be ending, but also in anticipation of the “Big Night.” I hurriedly emailed my wife, Laura, and told her the forecast, and we hastily scheduled a date night for the following evening.

By morning, a red sunrise greeted the new day, and I could sense change in the air. The temperature had risen considerably during the night, and the air was thick with moisture. I could feel and smell rain about to arrive. All day I looked out the window. By mid-day the rain had begun to fall. I could barely contain myself, feeling like a foxhound just before a hunt. Within an hour of arriving home, the truck was packed, and we were ready for our date night. We had flashlights, rain coats, umbrellas, containers and, last but not least, cameras. Minutes later the windshield wipers were flapping, and we were headed for one of the hilly, forested sections of the county. Our mission involved cruising roads adjacent to low wooded areas—these were places where spring rains draining off the hillsides would fill depressions on the forest floor, creating deep puddles and pools, also called vernal ponds. Such spots would attract the special animals we were seeking.

“Pick it up!” I yelled out the window for the second time with a greater sense of urgency. In the distance I could see a pair of headlights growing brighter. “Now!” That was my final plea. Laura quickly picked up a 7-inch Spotted Salamander from the wet road and sprinted over to the wood edge, depositing it in nearby leaf litter. Seconds later, the car flashed by, the driver seemingly oblivious to Laura standing on the side of the road and to the small creatures also on the pavement. Did the driver of the car wonder what I was doing parked in the pouring rain? Perhaps. But one thing is certain. The driver did not realize he had narrowly missed killing a 20- to 25-year-old salamander compelled to cross the road by a powerful maternal need to create the next generation. This driver—no doubt like countless others—was lost in his thoughts or perhaps busy talking on a cell phone. He had no idea this warm rainy evening was a “Big Night.”

■ Continued on page 3



Jefferson Salamander, a species in decline
Photo by Liam McGranaghan

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A Word from the President

by Nicole Hamilton



Wow, here we are at the beginning of another new year, with hope and possibilities abounding! It's a chance for us to take a look in the rear view mirror to reflect on where we've been, as well as look forward to the things we want to do in the coming year.

I believe Loudoun can be a model for other communities to follow. Granted, we have our troubles with habitat

loss running at a crazy pace, "dead zones" (lawns) proliferating, and use of pesticides and herbicides by HOAs increasing. However, we also have many people who really care about our environment and want to be strong stewards of a healthy environment that benefits people and wildlife.

With that in mind, two areas that will be highlighted this coming year are going native with your landscaping and focusing on the

plight of the Monarch Butterfly. We'll be developing new avenues for you to use not only to learn about native plants and landscaping with natives but also to make sure that you have access to sources of native plants. We'll be offering a Native Plant Sale twice a year and information on local nurseries that stock natives. We'll engage as many people as are interested in teaching others about gardening for wildlife, creating healthy habitats, and raising Monarch Butterflies galore – demonstrating just how much we can give to our communities and to wildlife.

We won't be alone in doing any of this. There is great power in partnerships. Over the past few months, we've been brainstorming ideas with our long-time partners, reinvigorating old partnerships, and starting up new partnerships we're excited to see blossom. The strengths of our different organizations are magnified when we work together. We fill in the gaps for each other, we leverage capabilities rather than duplicating efforts, and we all move forward in making a difference for Loudoun.

An exciting year lies ahead, and I look forward to working with you on every aspect of it!

See you along the trails,

Nicole



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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.

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■ *The Big Night, continued*

To a naturalist, the “Big Night,” which is actually a series of nights, is an extraordinary time of year. It’s a time when hundreds, sometimes thousands, of a few select species of amphibians, such as mole salamanders and wood frogs, emerge from their long cold slumber of hibernation and migrate downhill to natal vernal pools where they fulfill an eons-old instinct to reproduce. If the weather cooperates and the pools stay full, a new generation of their kind will hatch in water and eventually move to the terrestrial world. The timing of their awakening and migration is a true wonder of nature. A unique set of meteorological conditions—such as air and soil temperature, rainfall amounts, ambient light levels and perhaps other factors naturalists are not privy to and known only to these highly specialized amphibians—determine when the “Big Night” occurs.

Naturalists do know that warm late winter rains bring on a creature’s urge to reproduce, which is so strong that many of these amphibians will travel a quarter of a mile or more to get to vernal pools. Most face incredible odds in their journey to get there. Imagine a gravid female salamander or frog weighed down with the burden of hundreds of unfertilized eggs in her belly. Moving at little more than a snail’s pace, she will slowly work her way through the forest floor trying to reach the pool where she was born. Along the way she will encounter a gauntlet of obstacles imperiling her travels. Predators such as Barred Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks stalk from above, while raccoons and skunks may lurk behind every tree. The terrain itself is difficult to traverse; fallen logs, large rocks and crevices impede her progress. She may have to migrate in sub-freezing temperatures over snow and ice, yet she forges ahead. Males face the same challenges, but without the burden of eggs. They travel faster and navigate the course more readily; perhaps this is why more males than females are seen at the pools. This drama has played out for tens of thousands of years every spring on “Big Nights.” In spite of the overwhelming odds against them, amphibians have survived, and their species still grace our woodlands.

To witness and be part of this journey provides a wonderful occasion for a naturalist. Secretive mole salamanders—such as Jefferson and Spotted Salamanders, and Wood Frogs, known as “vernal pool obligates” because they require fish-free time in water to breed—can be readily observed as they go about their courtship and breeding. These amphibians are usually tucked away beneath the forest floor or hidden in the leaf litter and are rarely, if ever, encountered. Other species may be observed as well. They are not true “vernal pool obligates,” but nevertheless take advantage of the pools. This group includes Spring Peepers, Chorus Frogs and American Toads. Upon

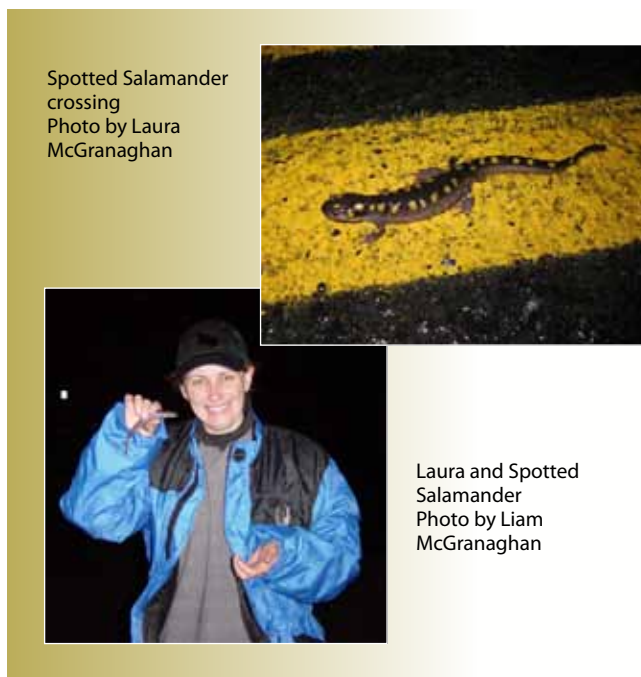
arriving at the pools, the frogs burst forth in a raucous chorus, inviting others to take part in their jubilation. Soon the duck-like clucking of hundreds of Wood Frogs and the piercing “peep, peep, peep” of countless Spring Peepers are joined by the long trills of toads, each species heralding in their new year. It is an astonishing experience to behold, and while it may at times be a bit deafening, it’s hard not to smile and even laugh while amid this celebratory cacophony.

Unfortunately over the years this spring symphony is becoming more muted and the amphibians less numerous. Fewer mole salamanders take part in the annual trek, and each year their numbers dwindle further. Pesticide and herbicides take their toll, while habitat destruction and wetland loss play an even larger role. Progress has its price. But there is still a phantom menace where woodlands are intact and vernal pools remain. It comes in the guise of a sinuous and sinister black ribbon cutting across the path of amphibian migration. This dark menace consists of the roads and highways people travel each day. Where better to build a road than on a flat valley floor where cost can be minimized? It is a cruel and unfortunate coincidence that this is the very same place where nature allows water to puddle and form life-giving pools to an amphibian. Roads are now almost everywhere and few places remain inaccessible by car. To a salamander or frog, a road is just another obstacle to cross on the journey to reproduce. The consequences for them are, of course, deadly. Evolutionary change comes slowly to animals and does not work in the timeframe of technological advances. Amphibians will never evolve

to cross roads safely, and without human intervention, amphibians will die where roads cross their path.

Fortunately, there is good news. There is a growing number of dedicated groups of citizens committed to saving amphibians and their vernal pools. Locally, those at the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy are strong advocates in protecting wetlands and sponsoring the Loudoun Amphibian Monitoring Program (LAMP), in which members keep track of area amphibian populations and assist at amphibian road crossings on warm, rainy nights. In a few states, citizen groups have petitioned highway divisions to install highway barriers. These barriers channel migrating amphibians to roadway underpasses and deliver amphibians safely to their breeding grounds. Nationally, Frog Watch USA and others have programs to protect migrating amphibians.

After that initial car flashed by on the rain slick road, I parked the truck and donned on my orange vest. My wife and I walked back and forth on the 200-yard section of the road where most of the frogs and salamanders seemed to be crossing. We worked quickly, moving frogs is pretty simple, as they quickly hop out of the way and off the road as people approach. An occasional toad, with a short-legged hop,



Spotted Salamander crossing
Photo by Laura McGranaghan

Laura and Spotted Salamander
Photo by Liam McGranaghan

■ *Continued on page 4*



Red-breasted Nuthatch
Photos by Jim Clark

Red-breasted Nuthatches Venture South

by Mary Ann Good

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is a bird of northern woods and western mountains. However, during occasional years, known as “irruption years,” these tiny sprites will favor us in the mid-Atlantic region with visits to our woods, backyards, and feeders. Their appealing behavior, attractive plumage, and confiding nature make their irregular fall and winter visits a reason for great cheer among birders and feeder watchers alike. This fall/winter is shaping up to be such an irruption year, as they have shown up in good numbers throughout our region. Since their venturing farther southward means that their normal food sources were not sufficient in their usual wintering range, be sure to put out the welcome mat for these tiny visitors, and hopefully they will return the favor with up-close views of their delightful ways!

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is a much smaller cousin of the White-breasted Nuthatch, which is a year-round resident in Loudoun County. It can easily be distinguished by its bright rust-colored underparts, strong black stripe through the eye, white stripe above the eye, narrow black cap, and blue-gray back. With a relatively long bill and short tail, they search along trunks and branches for hidden insects in bark furrows. Like their cousins, they are just as comfortable upside-down as upright – their antics at my bottom-accessed suet feeder are always fun to watch. They often travel in mixed flocks with chickadees, titmice, kinglets, and woodpeckers, especially in coniferous stands. During irruptive winters, they often use deciduous habitats such as orchards, scrub, parks, and shade trees. They make their presence known with an excited “yank, yank” that is higher-pitched than the White-throated, often described as sounding like a toy tin horn.

Not surprisingly, since their favored food is insects, Red-breasted Nuthatches readily visit suet feeders as a substitute protein. They also eagerly consume sunflower seed, especially the smaller and richer black oil sunflower. Whether you enjoy birds this winter from the comfort of your living room or get out onto the frozen trails, chances are good that you’ll have one of these spritely visitors pop into view or earshot.

■ The Big Night, continued

sometimes needed encouragement with the soft touch of a shoe. We hurriedly picked and moved every salamander we came across, better to be safe than sorry and potentially lose one. After a couple of hours, the rain stopped and stars began to appear. The once-steady stream of vernal pool obligates slowed to a trickle. So we headed home, our date night with amphibians over. While we didn’t save them all—which was heart breaking—we saved many.

A few days later, Laura and I returned during the daytime and were greeted by the joyous clucking of wood frogs emanating from the forest near the roadside. Upon entering the woods, the frogs went silent and sank into the pools’ leaf litter, but we knew they were there.

We could see the salamanders made it, as evidenced by the dozens of translucent and opaque egg masses stuck to submerged sticks and branches in the vernal pools’ clear water. Life was regenerating, just as it always had. As it turned out, our date night was truly a “Big Night.”

How can you help? Become a Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy amphibian monitor. And, as always, drive cautiously, especially on a warm springtime evening—it could be a “Big Night.”

Links:

www.loudounwildlife.org/Amphibian_Monitoring.htm
www.aza.org/become-a-frogwatch-volunteer/



Spring Peeper
Photo by Liam McGranaghan

Still Here

Softened by a glass or two of Cabernet,
I left my neighbors' crowded table,
our bursts of laughter, and dour conversation
about man and his dangerous antics
in our only world, and went to the kitchen

for more bread. There, through the window,
a sweep of damp air and wild spring calls
of peepers and wood frogs rushed in
like the Holy Ghost and made me pause.
Their piercing chorus of voices

mixed into such a deep soup of sound
that one frog was indistinguishable from
another. And for one long moment
I was held there in the world's big hands,
and everything that mattered was evening

with its early, scattered stars, the fragile
smell of daffodils and boggy water,
and the mating calls of a population
of those finely-tuned, permeable animals
(indicators of the Earth's well-being)

so much older than we are, that have survived
ice ages and the shifting of continental plates,
but are now disappearing — though still here
thriving in woods beyond my neighbor's lawn
in this hollow where we are all clinging

to the slippery edge of wildness, where
I was allowed a rush of such sweetness
and grief, those fraternal twins who are born
in us again and again, though perhaps
not forever, singing whether or not we listen.

Elizabeth Tibbetts

First published in the *Beloit Poetry Journal*
As printed in *Science and Conservation of Vernal
Pools in Northeastern North America: Ecology and
Conservation of Seasonal Wetlands in Northeastern
North America*, by Aram J. K. Calhoun, August 2007.

Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*)

by Emily Cook

If you have ever taken an early spring walk through the woods, perhaps you've been fortunate enough to hear the melodious serenade of the Wood Frog chorus. Once temperatures remain consistently above forty degrees, male Wood Frogs emerge from the leafy forest floor to nearby vernal ponds or wetland areas to attract females for mating. Gathered together en masse around the water source, the males' song, which can only be described as a loud chatter or clucking, draws the females from the water. It is a sound that represents the coming of spring and the emergence of life from the forests.

Rising from a cold winter's nap and making that trek to the water for breeding is not an easy process for the Wood Frog to make each spring. Both male and female Wood Frogs are coming out of the deep hibernation of winter, which sometimes means they have literally been frozen solid during the cold winter months. If even the smallest frost particle touches the Wood Frog as it is nestled down deep in the leaf litter or wedged under a rock or piece of dead wood, a process is triggered deep within the frog that slowly freezes it, encasing the inner organs in the frog's blood sugar. This sugary substance protects the organs until the spring thaw. The Wood Frog performs this miraculous feat, remaining completely still, with no detectable heartbeat for days, weeks, or even months, only to come back to life in the spring ready to seek out his or her mate.

Now, finding a mate can sometimes be a bit of a challenge for the Wood Frog as it is not able to determine the sex of another frog unless it "hugs" the other frog, a behavior known as amplexus. If the suitor hugs another frog, he can determine if that frog is a female already full of eggs, a female ready for breeding, or a male, in which case the offended male will croak loudly and be released without delay.

Once they have mated, the female will lay up to one thousand eggs on the surface of the water. She will gently anchor them to some grass or a tree branch. Her eggs will soon be joined by all of the other female's eggs, forming an "egg matt." The mass of eggs will begin to grow a layer of algae, which is easily mistaken for pond slime on the surface of the water. Surrounded by a gelatinous substance and closely nestled together, eggs are kept warm by the sun and insulated until the tadpoles hatch.

After hatching, tadpoles take approximately two months to become adult frogs. They survive by eating the pond algae, later transitioning to small insect larvae. Once they are fully grown, they will leave the water and move deep into the forest where their distinct coloring helps to camouflage them among the leaves. Mostly brown in color with a white underbelly, the Wood Frog has dorsolateral ridges running down each of its sides and a distinctive black band that runs from its mouth, across the eye, and ending near its eardrum. The adults are usually about two to three inches long.

As with most frogs, the typical diet of the Wood Frog consists of beetles, worms, slugs, caterpillars, and other small insects. The frogs often become prey to raccoons, birds and other small mammals. Thanks to their coloring, however, they are difficult to see when nestled into their woodsy surroundings and are often overlooked. It is when these busy little creatures are out hopping about that they are most vulnerable.

As the temperatures begin to warm this spring, take a leisurely walk through the woods. If you listen, you may hear the serenade of the Wood Frog, having just awakened from his frosty, winter nap.

Sources:

www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/wood_frog.htm

www.vernalpool.org/inf_wf.htm

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fjr3A_kfSPM (Video of Wood Frog Freezing)



Wood Frog
Photo by Nicole Hamilton



Announcements

Audubon at Home in Loudoun!

Interested in creating environmentally-friendly landscapes, attracting beneficial wildlife, designing native plant habitats or learning more about your habitat? Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is teaming up with the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia to bring you **Audubon at Home**, a program designed to provide residents with advice and guidance on restoring habitat right at home. In coming months, we'll offer the Audubon at Home Ambassador training class. Once we have our cadre of Ambassadors in place, we will start offering consultations and help residents with their home habitat certifications. Watch our website and blog for more information.

Your Help Is Needed

Annual Report Layout/Designer: Volunteer needed to pull together our 2012 Annual Report. Content (write-ups and photos) will be provided by Board Members by January 30, with a target publication date of March 31. Past annual reports are available to use as basic layout.

Annual Meeting Coordinator: Volunteer needed to coordinate agenda, catering and silent auction and work with Board Members on logistics for speaker program and awards. This role also includes coordinating set-up/clean-up volunteers and preparing write-up to publicize the event; event takes place in late May.



Next season's milkweed
Photo by Liam McGranaghan

Calling All Monarch Butterfly Enthusiasts!

Drought in the Midwest, habitat loss at home and in Mexico wintering grounds, and use of "Round-Up Ready" seed crops are taking their toll on the Monarch population. In fact, the North American Monarch migration is recognized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to be an "endangered biological phenomenon". But, there is still time and we can help.

Hope lies in the future generations. Each female can lay over 200 eggs and has the potential to help rebuild their numbers. Whatever population survives this difficult period – however long it lasts – will be the individuals that can rebuild the population to its once great numbers. But there must be habitat, milkweed and fall nectar plants to support them. Our job is to make sure these exist to support current populations and so future generations have the best possible chance to bring back the magic.

In 2013, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is kicking off a Monarch butterfly campaign. We will criss-cross the County with educational programs, habitat restoration activities, native plant sales, artistic endeavors, blogging from the Monarch Sanctuaries, and setting a challenge to raise and release more than 2,013 Monarchs in Loudoun. But we need your help to pull this off!

If you would like to be a part of the organizing committee for this campaign, please email Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org. We'll meet in January to get things rolling. Please help keep Monarch magic alive!



Globally Rare Wetland and Rich Field Habitat Protected!

by Nicole Hamilton

It was March 2007 and we had just started our Loudoun Amphibian Monitoring Program. With the excitement of the program launch, people started telling us about special spots where amphibians may live and breed. One of the leads I got was from Liam McGranaghan for an area in Lucketts known for its undulating forest habitat and sink holes.

After asking for permission to visit Gum Farm, Mike Hayslett of the Virginia Vernal Pools Program, John DeMary and I ventured out. It was 10:00 p.m., 45 degrees, and there was a cold steady rain coming down. This was my first official night foray for amphibian monitoring, and I will never forget it.

The three of us met at the Lucketts Community Center. It felt like we were on a mission — and indeed we were. With headlamps donned and winter coats zipped, we carpooled to the site and headed into the woods. As we approached the vernal pools, what we encountered was simply magical.

Over a thousand eyes reflected back at us through the darkness of the pool. The calls of Wood Frogs and Spring Peepers filled the night. Salamanders swam through the water. The woods, and the ephemeral wetlands kept secret in their midst, were alive, and a rhythm of life that has gone on for thousands of years in this forest was playing out before us.

In days that followed, we determined that these woods and pools were home to Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers, Jefferson Salamanders, Spotted Salamanders, Marbled Salamanders and Fairy Shrimp. It was magnificent both in species diversity and the sheer number of individuals thriving here. We also discovered that this property was in the midst of being developed; pink tape ringing the trees around the pools told the story.

Mike Hayslett and I stood at the edge of one of the pools. Knowing that these amphibians spend 360 days of the year living in the forest habitat, I asked him, "How much of the forest needs to be saved to save these amphibians?" He gazed at the habitat and said, "All of it." My heart sank. I had seen other special places developed and knew the likelihood of this property being preserved was slim.

Nonetheless, we looked at options, offered ideas, and even looked at ways to purchase at least the forested wetlands. We worked with

David McCarthy, Mike Kane of Piedmont Environmental Council, and others and helped keep the dialog going.

I share this story because today, 5½ years later, something amazing has happened. Susan Lee and her son Jeremy Lee, who own Gum Farm, engaged the Land Trust of Virginia to discuss conservation. Working with John Magistro of the Land Trust, the family put not only the 42 acres of wooded wetlands (identified as a Globally Rare Wetland Habitat) under conservation easement but their entire 239 acres! These additional acres are rich with bird life that includes Savannah Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows, Field Sparrows, Barn Swallows, Scarlet Tanagers, Wood Thrushes, Wild Turkeys, Red-tailed Hawks,

vireos, flycatchers, orioles and more. The milkweed in the field supports Monarch Butterflies, and insects in the grasses provide food for many.

The property is also rich in cultural significance. Situated on James Monroe Highway (Rte 15), it is part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area and protects one of Loudoun County's oldest known cemeteries, the Oxley family cemetery, which has been cared for by the family since Isaac Dyer and Gertrude Yeager Gum purchased the property more than 100 years ago. Indeed, this is one of Loudoun's Great Places.

The Land Trust of Virginia, with input from Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and Piedmont Environmental Council and widespread support from the community, filed the conservation easement just before Thanksgiving. This easement marks a historic move by the Lee family that should be celebrated by all of Loudoun. It is a gift to the future generations of Loudoun that we applaud and is a model for conservation and historic preservation that I hope other families and developers will follow.

Please read the press release from the Land Trust of Virginia here: www.loudoun-wildlife.org/PDF_Files/Gum_Farm_Easement_PR.pdf. If you know of great places in Loudoun that should be protected, refer landowners to this example as a model to follow.

And, join us in our monitoring programs as we identify more special habitats (www.loudounwildlife.org/Environmental_Monitoring.htm). The beauty and richness of nature surrounds us, and through efforts like this, it will into the future. Thank you, John Magistro, for leading the negotiations and process for establishing the easement. Thank you, Jeremy and Susan Lee, for this precious gift!



Globally rare wetland on Gum Farm
Photo by Nicole Hamilton



Eyes looking back at us in the night
Photo by Nicole Hamilton



Chirps

by Donna Quinn

"They regard me as their mother, a strange, huge, earthbound, flightless mother, but a source of sustenance and even comfort. This is deeply fulfilling to me. It is knowing what they know that utterly beguiles me, that has me humming with joy along the invisible lines that connect us."

- Julie Zickefoose



"What does a bird know about gratitude? I can only say he followed me singing and, in singing, touched an inarticulate place in my heart."

-Julie Zickefoose

***The Bluebird Effect, Uncommon Bonds with Common Birds* by Julie Zickefoose**

Hummingbird nestlings fall out of a tree... A beach goer collects Piping Plover eggs to eat... A sparrow is attacked by a cat... The 23 stories in ***The Bluebird Effect, Uncommon Bonds with Common Birds*** are about the ripples set in motion when Julie Zickefoose's world and a bird's world intersect. We see the consequences of our actions on their lives, and their lives on ours. Through Julie's extraordinary relationships with birds, a window opens allowing us a glimpse into the complexities facing wildlife and humans today. We are touched by the beauty, tragedy, humor, joy and sadness in their stories. Julie writes, "I live for the moment when my gaze meets a bird's — that exchange of awareness of the 'who' in each of us, the spark of understanding leaping from the bright bead of its eye to mine."



Mourning Dove and Julie Zickefoose
Photo by Phoebe Linnea Thompson

Julie's luminous artwork brings her subjects to life in sketches and paintings. By the tilt of a head, the gleam of an eye, the slant of a wing, we are deeply moved by her vision of birds doing what birds do, but are seldom allowed to share in such an intimate way. Readers will find delight on every page of *The Bluebird Effect*. Each story educates, entertains, charms and becomes the new favorite; each illustration reflects the wonders of birds and Julie's passionate attentiveness.

In *The Bluebird Effect*, Julie's life and the lives of other humans and birds intersect by luck or tragedy. These stories lead us to a greater understanding of birds as well as ourselves and how we are connected. We recognize birds cannot truly fulfill their destiny without flying freely in the wild, and birds need our help to ensure they remain wild and free. Julie inspires us to protect and nurture the natural world and start our own ripples. Whether it is a bluebird, butterfly, salamander or native wildflower, even our smallest actions can have wide-spread consequences. The possibilities are endless!

Chirps Recommends:

The Virginia Society of Ornithologists Annual Meeting, April 26-28, 2013: Meet Julie Zickefoose in person and hear *The Bluebird Effect* presentation! Julie Zickefoose is an artist, writer, naturalist and wildlife rehabilitator who lives in the Appalachian foothills near Whipple, Ohio. Her first book, *Letters from Eden*, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 2006. She contributed natural history commentaries to National Public Radio's All Things Considered from 2005-2010. Julie Zickefoose on Blogspot entertains around 20,000 visits per month. *The Bluebird Effect: Uncommon Bonds With Common Birds*, published in March, 2012, was quickly chosen as Book of the Week on Oprah.com and is receiving wide acclaim for its blend of science, storytelling, humor and art.



2013 Virginia Society of Ornithologists Annual Meeting: Leesburg, Virginia, April 26 - 28

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is honored and excited to be hosting the 2013 Annual VSO Meeting from April 26 - 28. The weekend will include engaging programs, exhibits, vendors, presentations, and, of course, great birding! Spring birding in the northern Piedmont is always exhilarating with local specialties and unexpected rarities, as well as migrants, amidst beautiful spring wildflowers in a wide range of habitats.

After a brief business meeting on Friday evening, three past Presidents of the Montgomery County Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society will present, *Identifying Warblers — The Jewels of the Eastern Forest*. This presentation will cover nearly every warbler species that breeds in or migrates through Maryland and Virginia. Identification pointers and songs of birds in spring will be emphasized.

We are also pleased to announce the guest banquet speaker on Saturday night will be **Julie Zickefoose**. Julie is a widely published natural history writer and artist. Her observations on the natural history and behavior of birds stem from more than three decades of experience in the field and as a wildlife rehabilitator. Julie's most recently published book, *The Bluebird Effect: Uncommon Bonds with Common Birds*, is about the unexpected mental and emotional capacities of birds, especially songbirds, which we tend to underestimate and overlook.

And, of course, there will be many **field trips** Friday, Saturday and Sunday, which will take advantage of our varied area. Bordered by the Potomac River on the north and the Blue Ridge on the west,

our region includes a number of hot spots, including the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, the Dulles Greenway Wetlands, Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, Algonkian Regional Park, Bles Park, Sky Meadows, Huntley Meadows, Occoquan National Wildlife Refuge, and more. Early birders will appreciate a hot breakfast buffet available from 6 - 8 am on April 27 and 28.

Hotel Reservations:

Holiday Inn at Historic Carradoc Hall
1500 East Market Street, Leesburg, VA 20176
A block of rooms has been reserved at a special rate of \$99, plus tax. Don't wait! Reservations must be made by **March 26** to secure this special rate. Reservations can be made by calling 703-771-9200 or visiting the website at www.holidayinnleesburg.com and using the group discount code, **VS1** (please use the numeral one). If you prefer, there are other hotel options in the vicinity.

Registration:

To register for the conference, banquet and/or breakfast, use the registration form on this page or visit www.loudounwildlife.org/Event_VSO_Mtg_2013.html and pay with PayPal. **Registration deadline is April 15.**

In addition to good birding, Loudoun County offers historical highlights while enjoying wonderful local dining, wineries, and many shopping options. Plan to come early or stay an extra day to make the most of your visit to Loudoun County!

Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.



Virginia Society of Ornithology • 2013 Annual Meeting April 26-28, 2013

Registration Form - This form may be used to register one or two participants



Name 1: _____ Name 2: _____

Mailing address: _____

Primary phone _____ Secondary phone: _____

Email address: _____

Registration fee: Number (1 or 2) ____ X \$40.00 = _____

Saturday morning buffet: Number (1 or 2) ____ X \$12.00 = _____

Saturday evening banquet: Number (1 or 2) ____ X \$35.00 = _____

Sunday morning buffet: Number (1 or 2) ____ X \$12.00 = _____

Total Payment: _____

Please make check payable to **Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy**. Mail completed form and check to: Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, P.O. Box 2088, Purcellville, VA 20134 or go to www.loudounwildlife.org and click on VSO Annual Meeting.

Your registration form must be received by April 15, 2013 to guarantee registration for meals.

Registration fee includes all field trips and meeting activities except the banquet and buffets. Participants are responsible for their own lodging. A limited number of rooms are available at a reduced rate at the Holiday Inn Leesburg at Historic Carradoc Hall. **Room reservations must be made by March 26, 2013.** Please visit loudounwildlife.org for news and updates.



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.



LWC Board Meeting — The Board normally meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. All LWC members are welcome. *Contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org for additional information.*

Children's Nature Book Club — Starting Friday, January 11, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. The Children's Nature Book Club welcomes young nature lovers three to six years old, accompanied by a parent or caregiver, for its Winter session every Friday from January 11 through March 15 (except for January 18). The group will meet at the Rust Nature Sanctuary to listen to a story, take a nature walk, and participate in a music/arts/craft activity with a nature-based theme. Leaders are LWC volunteers, previous preschool teachers, and Master Naturalists. Cost \$3.00/child per class; enrolment is limited.

Registration required: *Contact Ellie Daley at pedaley@verizon.net or 540-338-6528, or ANS at sortmann@audubonnaturalist.org or 703-669-0000 x1. For more information, visit www.audubonnaturalist.org/index.php/about-ans/sanctuaries/rust-leesburg-va. Co-sponsored by Audubon Naturalist Society and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy.*

Searching for Birds of Prey — Sunday, January 20, 1:00 p.m.

Join Liam and Laura McGranaghan on a winter raptor search. After meeting at a location to be determined, 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 here. Space is limited so please register early. Registration required: Sign Up Online. Questions: Contact Laura McGranaghan at lmcgranaghan@loudounwildlife.org.

Discovering the Wild in Winter — Saturday, February 2, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Join Phil Daley and Jim McWalters on Groundhog Day to explore 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, family-friendly winter hike, watch for the many birds and mammals that over-winter here and examine some of the plants to see how they adapt to temperatures that dip below freezing. BRCEs comprises 900 acres on the west side of Harpers Ferry in northwestern Loudoun County. Meet at the Education Center. **Registration required:** *Sign Up Online or contact Phil Daley at 540-338-6528 or pdaley@loudounwildlife.org.*

Loudoun Amphibian Monitoring Program (LAMP) Kickoff — Wednesday, February 13, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Location TBD.

Interested in frogs, toads and salamanders? Amphibians are not only an important indicator of environmental health, they are great fun to watch, listen to and learn about. We need your help to monitor them. Become a part of LAMP and learn about our monitoring protocol, gear needed and species that you will encounter. This is a great activity for adults and families. New monitors will receive the Monitoring Handbook for recording and reporting data, CD of frog and toad calls, and photographic species identification guide.

Registration required: *Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org.*

Why Natives, Why Now? — Sunday, February 17, 2:00 p.m., Location TBD.

Come hear Janet Davis, owner and principal designer for Hill House Farm and Nursery, explain the how's and why's of befriending butterflies, beckoning birds and pampering pollinators by using native plants in your garden. This will occur in time for you to work on your plant list before the Spring Native Plant Sale on April 6. **Registration required:** *Sign Up Online or contact Ann Garvey at ahgarvey@aol.com.*

Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring Program Kickoff — end of February, Location and Time TBD.

Janet Locklear, coordinator of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's bluebird monitoring program, will provide an orientation on nestbox monitoring and the protocol used 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, 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 2013 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. **Registration required:** *Sign Up Online or contact Janet Locklear at jlocklear@loudounwildlife.org.*

Birding Banshee

Join 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, it is a birding hot spot. Please bring binoculars. **Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

**Saturdays: January 12, February 9,
March 9 and April 13
at 8:00 a.m.**



Stream Monitoring Spring Kickoff — Saturday, March 2, Location and Time TBD. Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for the kickoff of its 2013 Stream Monitoring Program. At this event, we will present how monitors collect data on stream habitats and aquatic insects, as well as introduce our new nets and equipment that are fun and easy to handle. We will review the monitoring protocol, answer questions, and provide the hands-on training volunteers need to get started. No experience is needed, just an interest in learning about our local streams and their habitats. Bring boots or toe-covered shoes suitable for wading in streams. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Robert Bavis at rcbavis@gmail.com.

Vanishing Vernal Pools — Class March 8, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Field Trip March 9 or 10. This hands-on training will begin with a classroom session (location TBD) on Friday evening where we will discuss the amphibians that use seasonal pools, streams and permanent wetlands. We'll cover amphibian migration and breeding tactics, the different types of habitats, and unique features present in Loudoun. Participants will gain an introduction to identifying wetlands and recognizing the signs of vernal pool presence during dry season. Participants will then join us for one of two full-day field sessions where we will explore vernal pools and other isolated wetlands around Loudoun. Optional night forays are also possible depending on rainfall. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org. When you sign up, please indicate which one of the two field trip days you would like to be in.

Night Hike — Monday, March 11, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Location TBD. Join us for an evening walk around a local wetland. Listen for the calls of early spring frogs, watch their activity at night, and see what wildlife are up to when we are generally tucked away inside our homes. Location will be in Loudoun but will be determined as we get closer to the date. Dress for the weather, which may include rain. If it does rain, we may launch an amphibian road crossing assist as well. This is a family friendly event. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org.

Woodcocks at the Institute Farm — Tuesday, March 12, Time TBD. Witness the incredible courtship display of the woodcock, one of our most fascinating avian residents. We will watch and listen for the woodcock "peent" at the Institute Farm near Aldie, VA. The program will begin shortly before dusk. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Emily Southgate at ewbsouthgate@gmail.com.

Exploring the Wetlands at Morven Park — Saturday, March 16, 9:00 a.m. – noon. Morven Park is home to a number of interesting wetlands that range from streams to ephemeral spring pools. On this walk, we'll hike the wooded trails up into the forest to explore the ridge top, visit the different wetland habitats along the way, and discuss the different species that use them – from birds to frogs and salamanders to mammals like coyotes and deer. We'll look for animal tracks and signs, listen to their calls, talk about the plants and habitat we see, and do some frog spotting. This is a family friendly event. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org.

Taking Flight: Migratory Birds and Their Journey — Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 p.m., Location TBD. Alicia King, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bird Migration Program, offers insights into the mysteries of bird migration. More than 300 bird species migrate, and almost half of those that nest in the United States and Canada are

Birding the Blue Ridge Center

**Saturdays at 8 a.m.:
January 26,
February 23
and March 23**



On the fourth Saturday of each month (except December), Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy leads a free bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES), a 900-acre preserve is located on Harpers Ferry Road, Rte 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 education center. BRCES is located just north of Neersville, at 11661 Harpers Ferry Road, Rte 671. Detailed directions can be found on the website, www.brces.org. **Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

migratory. This program will examine bird migration routes, critical habitats, migration strategies used, as well as climate change impacts that affect bird migrations. Signup is not required but is requested for planning purposes. **Questions: Contact Karen Strick at kstrick2004@yahoo.com.**

Mid-Week Nature Walk and Vernal Pool Exploration — Wednesday, March 20, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., at Horsepen Preserve. Join Mike Hayslett for an exploration of the vernal pools of Horsepen Preserve, one of Loudoun's very special natural areas where vernal pools thrive with wood frogs, spring peepers and salamanders. We'll discuss the life cycles of the animals that use vernal pools for breeding and the importance of the forests that surround them. Space is limited as we are mindful of the impact of human foot traffic in these sensitive habitats. This is a family friendly event. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org.

Discovering the Wildlife and Habitats of Willowsford — Sunday, March 24, 2:00 p.m. Willowsford is a new community in eastern Loudoun where natural areas are being preserved and protected. Join us as we explore the woods and fields, identify birds, look for

■ Continued on page 12



■ Programs & Field Trips, continued

frogs and salamanders in the vernal pools and other wetlands, identify animal tracks and talk about the relationships between these varied habitats and wildlife residents. Meet at the farm shed which is located across from the pool. Park on Founders Drive or in the pool parking area. Please bring binoculars if you have them. This is a family friendly event. Space is limited so please register early. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org.

Native Plant Sale — Saturday, April 6, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Location TBD. Native plants are beautiful and grow better because they are adapted for our weather conditions and soils; they also provide greater benefit to our native wildlife because plants and animals evolved

together. Hill House Farm and Native Nursery (www.hillhousesnative-plants.com) and Nature-By-Design (www.nature-by-design.com) will be selling plants. To see plants each nursery carries or to place orders ahead of time (all nursery stock is not present), visit their websites. For more information as the time approaches, visit the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy website at www.loudounwildlife.org.

Spring Wildflowers — Sunday, April 7, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., at Balls Bluff. Join John DeMary, well-known local naturalist and retired teacher, on a field trip to explore this beautiful, wooded riverside park for the early spring wildflowers that enrich the Potomac River Valley. We will also watch for early migrating birds. If you own binoculars, please bring them. **Registration required:** Sign Up Online. Questions: Contact Laura McGranaghan at lmcgranaghan@loudounwildlife.org.



Questions?

Contact Jim McWalters at jmcwalters@loudounwildlife.org. For up-to-date information on our programs, check our web site at www.loudounwildlife.org.



Remembering Barbara Chambers 1929 – 2012

by Janet Locklear, Loudoun County bluebird coordinator

The local bluebird monitoring community was shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Barbara Chambers after a short illness on Oct. 15. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to her husband Charlie and family. She will be sorely missed by so many of us dedicated to the cause of bluebird conservation.

Barbara was a tireless advocate for wildlife, especially for birds. As a founding member of the Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS), Barbara played many roles within the organization including serving on the board and editing the newsletter. She was the driving force for establishing county coordinators throughout the state in order to facilitate the training of monitors and the establishment of bluebird trails. Indeed, I owe my current position as Loudoun County coordinator to Barbara's gentle nudging!

Barbara also served on the board of the North American Bluebird Society and was active with the Northern Virginia Bird Club and the National Wildlife Refuges. She held a passerine bird banding permit, banding birds at Mason Neck and Occoquan



Barbara Chambers, 1929-2012

Bay, and was the recipient of numerous awards.

Barbara will most be remembered as a mentor and educator to countless people throughout Virginia. Nicole Hamilton, Loudoun's prior bluebird coordinator, and I include ourselves in her group of students. I first met Barbara in the mid-90's when I answered an ad seeking bluebird monitors at Pohick golf course. She was my trail leader for many years when I lived in Fairfax and taught me most of what I know about bluebird monitoring. She also helped Nicole start one of VBS's first bluebird trails in Loudoun at Crooked Run. She continuously traveled the state giving presentations and was a valued resource to anyone seeking bluebird advice.

Perhaps numbers paint the best picture of what she helped accomplish. VBS started in 1996 with 32 bluebird boxes, out of which 83 bluebirds and 13 other species fledged. In 2011, VBS had a total of 4,352 boxes which fledged 14,423 bluebirds and 7,226 other native birds. Please consider joining VBS and helping to protect and nurture bluebirds at www.virginiabluebirds.org. Or contact me (jlocklear@loudounwildlife.org) about volunteering as a bluebird monitor on one of Loudoun's many trails. And think of Barbara the next time you spot a bluebird.

The Blue Ridge Wildlife Center: Saving Lives

by Belinda Burwell, DVM, Director, Blue Ridge Wildlife Center

Located in a tiny cottage on the Burwell-van Lennep Foundation Island Farms in Boyce, VA, the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center (BRWC) assists native wildlife in a mission that began 12 years ago. This mission includes the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured, orphaned and sick wildlife; research into threats to native wildlife and the environment; and education of the public about the importance of preserving wildlife. Washington D.C. suburbs are some of the most rapidly developing areas in the nation, resulting in the destruction of huge amounts of wildlife habitat. This development has created increased "human-wildlife" conflict, resulting in increased need for help with injured, orphaned and sick native wild animals, as well as other wildlife issues and concerns.

All too often, human activities, including land development, vehicular traffic, roaming pets and environmental toxins, have a detrimental and sometimes deadly effect on wildlife. This year alone, the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center has rescued 1,700 mammals, birds and reptiles. Staff have provided veterinary care, nursed orphan mammals, hand-fed baby birds, performed surgery on broken wings and legs, and provided a safe and nurturing place for recovery and transitioning back to life in the wild. When someone brings an animal to the Center, not only is the animal given a second chance at life, oftentimes the rescuer is profoundly affected. Each rescue provides a valuable teaching opportunity for humans to see themselves as part of a larger overall ecosystem, and to more deeply consider their role and responsibility in it. Causes of problems that threaten animals are documented and solutions can be taught.

BRWC has experienced an almost ten-fold increase in demand for its services since it opened, not only in the number of animals treated, but in requests for educational and outreach programs. One of the Center's primary missions is to educate and inspire people to become more observant, informed and responsible stewards of wildlife and the environment we share. The Center reaches thousands of adults and children each year through public programs, appearances at events, and through its wildlife hotline. But we are limited in fulfilling our rescue and education mission by our current facility.

We must build a new facility to replace our antiquated, tiny cottage. The new facility will allow for expanded and better care of rescued wildlife and provide enhanced educational programs for the public as well as increased opportunities for student internships and research. It will permit members of the public, including students of all ages to study and learn about wildlife. Fundraising for this new facility is currently underway.

The Blue Ridge Wildlife Center is a 501c3 charitable organization that receives no federal, state or local government funding, and depends entirely on donations from concerned citizens, businesses and private foundations. We do not charge for any of our services, and we are completely dependent on donations to pay for food, housing and medicine for animals in need. Sick and injured animals need your help! Please visit www.blueridgewildlife.org/donate.html to learn how you can make a donation.

Be a friend and follow us on Facebook or on our webpage at www.blueridgewildlife.org for the latest updates on our rescues.



Bandaging an injured Bald Eagle



Great Horned Owlet orphans



One of our educational animals: Lucy, the Red-shouldered Hawk

Photos provided by Blue Ridge Wildlife Center



Wildlife emergency information:

Call us at 540-837-9000

Email us info@blueridgewildlife.org.

For important information about wildlife emergencies visit:
www.blueridgewildlife.org/Wildlife%20Emergencies.html

Cut out and save



Nooks and Crannies: Let's hibernate

by Meghan Meyers

Planning a hibernation activity near a child's nap time is a great way to explore how black bears protect themselves against the cold. Did you know that black bears can slumber for over three months? They sleep in "dens" — small, cozy spaces lined with leaves and twigs. A den may be in a cave, a tree — even under a porch! Want to build your own "den"? Here's how:

What you'll need:

- A table
- An old sheet or tablecloth
- Markers
- Sofa cushions, pillows and blankets

First, have your little bear cub sniff out a suitable place for the den. Will it be between rocks? Or in the base of a tree? Once you've decided, use your markers to decorate the sheet or tablecloth like a proper bear shelter! Drape your creation over a table and, presto! instant bear nest. Finally, have your wee ones scavenge for cushions, pillows — even old t-shirts or towels — to pad their sanctuary. Once your tots emerge after their (long) nap, enjoy a bear-friendly snack, like fresh fruit or berries.

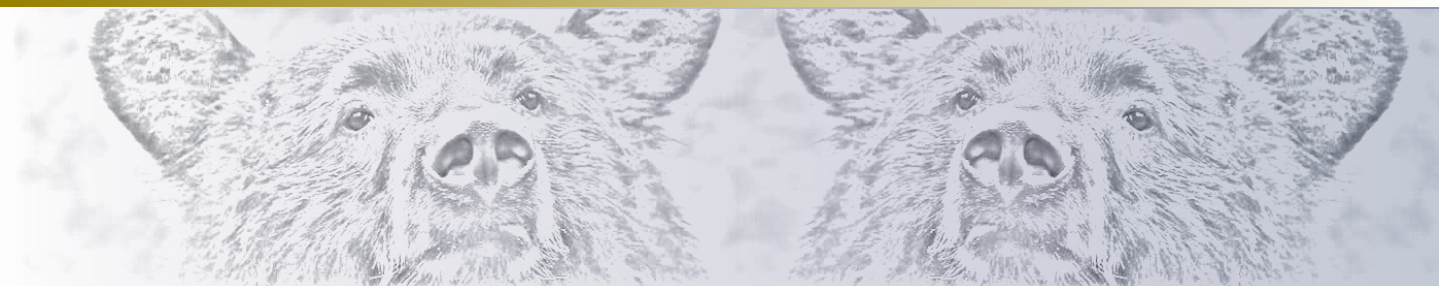
10 Fun Facts about Black Bears:

1. Bears eat mostly berries, nuts, grasses, carrion and insect larvae.
2. They are good tree climbers and swimmers.
3. Bears have a keen sense of smell and excellent color vision.
4. Bears can run up to 35 miles per hour.
5. On average, bears weigh between 120 and 600 pounds.
6. Bears are intelligent and curious.
7. Bears can go without food for up to 7 months during hibernation.
8. They give birth every other year.
9. Bears are very shy and easily frighten.
10. On average, bears live over 25 years in the wild.

Source: The American Bear Association

For more information about black bears in Loudoun: www.loudounwildlife.org/HHBlack_Bears_Loudoun.html

For more information about hibernation: www.exploringnature.org/db/detail.php?dbID=5&detID=2280





Share special times **Learn important literacy skills** **Foster a love for nature and reading**

The **Children's Nature Book Club** invites three to six year old children accompanied by a parent or caregiver to listen to a story, take a nature walk, and participate in a music/arts/craft activity with a nature theme.

Where: Rust Nature Sanctuary, 802 Children's Center Rd., Leesburg

When: Starting Friday, January 11, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. every Friday (except January 18).

Cost: \$3.00/child per class

Registration required: Contact Ellie Daley at pedaley@verizon.net or 540-338-6528, or ANS at sortmann@audubonnaturalist.org or 703-669-0000 x1.

For more information: Visit www.audubonnaturalist.org/index.php/about-ans/sanctuaries/rust-leesburg-va.

Co-sponsored by Audubon Naturalist Society and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy



Please Join or Renew Your Membership for 2013!

The wild places around Loudoun are full of natural richness and wonder, from the mountains of the Blue Ridge to the wetlands of the Potomac. They quack with ducks, croak with frogs, flutter with butterflies and hoot at night. Together, we can explore, protect and restore our wild places. **We can make a difference!** But to do this, **we need you as a member.**

Memberships start at just \$20 for an individual for the calendar year and are tax deductible.

Please Join or Renew Today! Visit www.loudounwildlife.org/Join.htm or mail in this membership form to the address below.

I wish to become a member of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy:

☐ \$10 Student ☐ \$20 Individual ☐ \$30 Family ☐ \$200 Individual Lifetime ☐ \$300 Family Lifetime ☐ \$75 Corporate

I wish to make a donation to Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, enclosed is my check in the amount of: _____
(All contributions are tax deductible.)

Note: Memberships run from January 1 through December 31. (If you join or renew after September 1, your membership will run through the end of the following calendar year.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please make your check payable to Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and return with this form to:
Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, P.O. Box 2088, Purcellville, VA 20134



Opposum in the snow
Photo by Liam McGranaghan



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Join or Renew Your Membership Today!

Your Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy membership goes a long way:

- It funds more than 100 programs and field trips offered throughout the year.
- It buys equipment and educational materials for environmental monitoring programs.
- It pays for hundreds of trees and shrubs and expert guidance for Habitat Restoration projects.
- It pays for publications like this Habitat Herald.
- And, it raises our voice for wildlife, showing support for the wildlife and natural habitats of Loudoun.

All memberships expire at the end of this year, but we often keep you on the mailing list beyond that because we think you enjoy being a part of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. **We need you as a current member!** Your \$20 as an individual member or \$30 as a family member makes a big difference.

Please renew or join today and save us the cost of mailing the renewal reminder. Your membership will run through 2013.

Join or Renew Online: www.loudounwildlife.org/Join.htm

Thank You!



Jefferson Salamander crosses the road
Photo by Liam McGranaghan