

# Habitat Herald

A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

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## Are Insects Near the Breaking Point?

by Tami Carlow

I was talking on the phone with my dad the other day when he said something that was quite striking. He relayed some observations without a prompt or question from me.

My dad, like so many of us, sleeps with his bedroom windows open. He mentioned that he has been sleeping through the early-morning hours for the past few years, and it has taken him a while to figure out why. He used to be woken up and actually a bit annoyed by the chirping of the birds in the early morning as the sun was rising. He is no longer awakened by the chirping of the early morning birds.

Many of us have heard about or read an article on the decline in insect mass and biodiversity. What will be the breaking point that will cause ecosystems to collapse?

When most people think of animals that are in trouble due to human activity, they think of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles or amphibians. Most would not think of insects as being in trouble or even care unless it is the honeybee, Monarch butterfly, or a few other "cute" or "lovable" insects. We tend to take insects for granted, or sometimes get annoyed by them.

The fact is, insects make life on this earth possible. They are the keystone that holds the arch of life together. Insects are the dominant animal on this earth, with approximately one million identified species. There may be an equal number or more species yet to be described (estimates run from 1.5 to 30 million total species), without enough entomologists to tackle the challenge of naming and describing them all.

Insects are incredibly important to us. They pollinate our food crops, break down materials, clean up our environment, provide food for birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and mammals, keep weeds and destructive insect populations in check, and so much more.

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*Monarch butterfly by Jack Brennan*



## Executive Director's Message

It's been a really exciting first year for me in Loudoun County. It's really inspiring to be around so many dedicated and passionate people. I've learned so much about our wonderful members, volunteers, programs, and the natural world here in Loudoun County. My lifelong quest for knowledge of nature has been rejuvenated thanks to being surrounded by so many enthusiastic individuals.

This past year, my wife and I have been living on a quiet property south of Round Hill, and it has been an amazing introduction to the area. We've been constantly visited by wildlife throughout the year. Now we're on to a new adventure, having recently moved into Leesburg. We will definitely miss living in the rural part of the county, but we are excited for this next chapter in our lives. While I have gotten the opportunity to explore parks and green spaces throughout Loudoun during this past year, our new location will make it

even easier to get to natural gems such as Algonkian, Bles, and Claude Moore Parks.

We've had a busy spring and early part of the summer, filled with some great Celebrating Birds events including our annual Birdathon. It's been a treat for me to be able to get out into the field and learn from some of the birding experts within our ranks. We also had some other very successful fundraising events in addition to our Birdathon, including the Native Plant Sale, Milkweed Sale, Give Choose, and the Dulles Greenway's Drive for Charity (over \$42,000 this year!), all of which were quite successful. Thank you for supporting Loudoun Wildlife!

Our Annual Meeting was well-attended, and it is always enjoyable to hear Alonso Abugattas share his wisdom and passion with everyone. You can find more details about the meeting and our various award winners in this issue. Our 2018 Annual Report is complete, and is available now on our website.

I would like to take a moment to give you an update on a few ongoing efforts. The Board of Supervisors has approved the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. Even though there were some significant edits and updates from earlier drafts of the plan, we were hoping for stronger green infrastructure language to be included in the plan. However, our work is not done, and we will continue to educate and advocate for wildlife habitat protections to be included when the zoning ordinances get revised.

We're still raising funds for JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. The more we've studied the property over the past year, the more excited we are to be protecting the unique attributes for future generations. Please consider a donation to assist with the purchase and future stewardship of this incredible property. As always, we have a lot of great programs and events coming up. I look forward to continuing to learn and explore Loudoun County with you!

Happy Trails,  
Michael

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The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is a nonprofit 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 bi-monthly. Board meetings are open to all current members. For more information, or to suggest topics for discussion at upcoming meetings, contact Julie Borneman.

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## What's Next for Conservation Under Loudoun's New Comprehensive Plan *by Cheri Conca*

On June 20, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted 8-1 to adopt a new comprehensive plan, which will guide land use planning for years to come. While the new plan's environmental protections are generally weaker than the previous plans, there are some bright spots: a new section of policy was added to address sustainability, and the Board of Supervisors improved the Planning Commission's draft version by adding several additional environmental policies. Loudoun Wildlife thanks its members and other concerned citizens who emailed and called their supervisors, sent postcards, rallied their neighbors, and attended public hearings. Your concerns were heard, and your influence is evident in the final plan.

The new plan takes a drastically different approach to planning that uses a development-focused framework, in contrast to the previous plan's conservation-based framework. As stated in the previous plan, "the framework of the Green Infrastructure will guide where and how development and redevelopment occurs." That forward-thinking concept has been touted as a best practice by the American Planning Association. Green infrastructure planning acknowledges that an irreplaceable network of streams, forests, slopes, meadows, and wetlands should first be identified and protected, around which development can occur.

The new plan's framework for land planning "consists of four types of policy areas — Urban, Suburban, Transition, and Rural — and several smaller planning areas designated as Joint Land Management Areas (JLMA) and Rural Historic Villages. These areas represent distinct planning communities with specific policies, strategies, and actions tailored to address the needs of each area." Unfortunately, this type of framework ignores the fact that the waters and lands that comprise our natural assets function together as a connected

system, rather than within arbitrary, man-made boundary lines. To top it off, environmental protections are scarcely mentioned in the policy areas' policies, strategies, and actions.

Despite the new plan's weaknesses, there are several worthwhile highlights:

- Zoning regulations and development standards will first identify and preserve natural and heritage resources prior to development.
- Best practices to reduce impervious surfaces will be studied. The stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as rooftops and roadways negatively impacts drinking water quality and contributes to flooding. With approximately 13.5 million square feet of data centers in place and many more to follow, a policy to address impervious surfaces is critical.
- Natural, environmental, and heritage resources will be considered in the Suburban Policy Area, where many data centers are located.
- Native vegetation is prescribed for re-naturalization along streams.

Maintenance of a countywide prime agricultural soils map, and inclusion of a 200-foot transitional buffer along the Broad Run, were reinstated in the new plan after initially being deleted from the draft version.

Now that the comprehensive plan has been adopted, the county will begin a review and overhaul of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance. This process presents a new opportunity for Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy to advocate for regulations to protect essential habitats. With a planning approach that has changed so drastically, it is more important than ever to protect natural assets through zoning policies. Along with our members and other engaged citizens, Loudoun Wildlife will continue to be a voice for the protection of wildlife and habitat.



Bee on purple coneflower  
Photo by Sharon Plummer



Yellow garden spider (*Argiope aurantia*)  
Photo by Steve Allen

### Insects, *continued from page 1*

I live in Northern Virginia on about four acres of mostly wooded land and have a garden and some other natural areas that have not changed much in the 19 years since I have lived here. I have noticed in the last few years a dramatic decline in bumblebees, solitary bees, beetles and flies.

I have had a healthy Butterfly Weed plant at the edge of my garden for 19 years, and I do not use any chemicals in my garden. Up until two years ago, I had so many insects on the Butterfly Weed they were all fighting for their positions. Today, I'll be lucky to see one bumblebee and a few solitary bees.

Are you experiencing the same problems? I worry that my garden won't be pollinated, but somehow, I am still getting a crop. I don't know what the breaking point will be, but I think about it every day.

What are we to do? Some studies have been done and articles have been written,

but there is not a known answer to why the insect population is in decline. Certainly there is a lack of baseline data on insect populations, and it may be a combination of factors that is affecting the decline, such as the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, warming temperatures, habitat loss, etc.

I find it a bit disconcerting that my yard has not really changed in 19 years, but I have seen a dramatic decline in certain insects. Some species seem to be just fine (carpenter bees, paper wasps, black flies), while others have all but disappeared.

We can't get the problem remedied until we know the cause. I hope that entomologists and other scientists can get to the root of the problem before we reach that breaking point.

***Tami has a degree in Entomology from Cornell University.***



## Loudoun Wildlife Celebrates Many Successes at Annual Meeting

by Michael Myers

On June 2, over 125 members gathered at Ida Lee Park to celebrate Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's successes and to look forward toward our future.

This year, our keynote speaker was well-known local naturalist Alonso Abugattas, who writes the popular "Capital Naturalist" blog, who gave an inspiring presentation, "On Insects and Our Natural World." One of the many takeaways from his talk is the need for more habitat for pollinators. As we know, we can all help create habitat for pollinators by planting native plants.

Special guest Chuck Kuhn also spoke about how he got involved with conservation, and how he is working to place more lands in conservation easements across Loudoun County. We look forward to continuing to partner with Chuck and JK Moving Services to protect and restore more habitat throughout Loudoun County.

We celebrated those who make our organization so great, including our Volunteers of the Year, the Loudoun County Public Schools Science Fair scholarship winners, and the Roger Tory Peterson Young Naturalist award winners. During the Peterson Young Naturalist awards, Dr. Miriam

Westervelt, an environmental science educator and Science Department chair at Tuscarora High School, introduced the \$5,000 grant we recently received from Loudoun County to expand the Peterson Young Naturalist program by training more teachers, particularly to assist Title 1 schools. We look forward to reaching even more youngsters and having more award winners next year.

During the meeting, the Dulles Greenway presented us with a check for our donation from this year's Drive for Charity. Loudoun Wildlife received over \$42,000 from the May event!

Copies of our 2018 Annual Report were made available during the Annual Meeting, and the report can also be found online on our website.

Volunteers staffed tables highlighting the publication of our book *Birds of Loudoun*, our work to preserve JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary, and ongoing conservation advocacy efforts. The Annual Meeting is always a great opportunity for members to come together supporting the work that we do to make the community a better place, and this year was no exception.



### \$42K from Drive for Charity

Since 2006, the Dulles Greenway has hosted its annual Drive for Charity to give back to local community organizations. The Drive for Charity is a day when the tolls collected on the Greenway are donated to seven nonprofits and a scholarship fund for local students.

In 2019, the event raised \$326,806, bringing the 14-year total to over \$3.7 million. We are grateful to be one of the recipients of these funds, receiving \$42,200 this year. Each year these funds provide vital support for Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's education, citizen science, habitat restoration, and advocacy efforts.

We look forward to continuing our successful partnership with the Dulles Greenway, which also includes serving as stewards of the Dulles Greenway Wetlands. Many of the birds detailed in *Birds of Loudoun* are found in Loudoun County thanks to the incredible habitat provided by the Dulles Greenway wetlands.



# Plant the ‘Super 9’ for Pollinators and They Will Come

by Anne Owen, Coordinator, Audubon at Home Program

General awareness is growing of the crisis facing our native pollinator insects and butterflies, and the knock-on effects for our environment. Encouragingly, more homeowners are becoming interested in replacing sterile, traditional landscaping with native plants that can nourish and support these critical members of our ecosystems.



As interest has grown, so has the amount of great educational material out there, accessible through the internet as well as through concerned organizations such as Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Plant NOVA Natives Campaign. Here in Loudoun County we are also fortunate to have ready access to several native plant nurseries where we can be assured of buying pesticide-free plants and receiving excellent advice.

For those of us just trying to get started, it sometimes can seem that there is just too much information out there! How to make sense of it all and choose a few reliable plants to get started?

Audubon at Home’s Ann Garvey took the lead last year to identify the absolute top picks for plants to support pollinators, native bees and butterflies here in Loudoun County, and with support from Sheila Ferguson, our brochure “Super 9” Nectar and Host Plants for a Pollinator Garden has been published.

The plants were selected to provide nectar for pollinators from spring through to fall. They are all tolerant of a range of growing conditions, so will do well in most yards in the county and are widely available at our native plant nurseries and native plant sales.

To start your pollinator garden, we suggest:

- Choose a location that will get summer sun for six hours per day or more. This is where the insects will be most active.
- Depending on your space and budget, select at least one plant to flower in each season and get advice from your native plant nursery about which varieties will be best for you as some may be smaller and more compact than others.
- Plant in groups of three together at the spacing recommended by the nursery. Insects will find a cluster of plants more readily than a single one. Tall plants go at the back, with shorter plants in front.
- In dry weather, water once a day for the first week, then once per week for a month after planting. After that, water only if you see them wilting.
- Add a small dish of water or bird bath and keep the water clean. Water is essential for all our wildlife.
- Native plants don’t need fertilizer.
- In the first year, your pollinator garden may look a little sparse and you may need to put down mulch to suppress weeds. Even when the plants are small, however, the insects will start to come! Once the plants are established, they will quickly spread and fill in the gaps depending on the type of plants.
- Leave the seed heads and dried stems standing through the winter. Birds like Goldfinches will appreciate the seeds, and some of our native bees will overwinter in the hollow stems.

Once you have some thriving plants and are enjoying the visiting wildlife, you will most likely feel motivated to try some new things. We recommend that you “graduate” to Plant NOVA Native’s fully color-illustrated guide, Native Plants for Northern Virginia, which is supported by an extensive website ([plantnovanatives.org](http://plantnovanatives.org)). There you will find information about many more plants that are native to our region and suitable for garden cultivation. There are also suggestions for common issues, such as deer browse, erosion control, and ground cover.

You could also consider contacting Audubon at Home for an at-home visit. We are not landscape designers, but we can provide suggestions for enhancing your property as wildlife habitat. If you meet the criteria for habitat features and the number of sanctuary species that you have recorded, we can certify your property as an Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary.

**References:**

- Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy / Audubon at Home’s “Super 9” brochure: <http://bit.ly/2Manhgv>
- Plant NOVA Natives website and Native Plants for Northern Virginia: <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/>
- Audubon at Home: <https://loudounwildlife.org/habitat-restoration/audubon-at-home/>

## Rain, Birds, and More Birds: Ligi Nestlings' Birdathon Report

by Spring Ligi

This year the cards seemed stacked against us. Our first attempt at a Birdathon ended 12 minutes in when our littlest nestling threw up. After passing the sick bug to everyone in the family, we rescheduled for Mother's Day, but, as luck would have it, the weather forecast was lousy (a jinx of being a meteorologist's daughter). Not just a rain shower here or there, but over 48 straight hours of rain. We made a last-minute decision to head out Saturday afternoon in between raindrops and soccer games. We've been doing Birdathons for the past 10 years so I guess it was only a matter of time before we ran into some bad luck.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, we managed to have an exciting and fun Birdathon! At Claude Moore Park the girls enjoyed fantastic views of a pair of Green Herons and counted the families of Canada Geese. Watching the goslings try to keep up with their parents reminded me of my nestlings. A noisy Red-shouldered Hawk flew right over our heads, which caught everyone's attention. I taught Addison that if you pick a good place and stand quietly long enough, the birds will often come to you. That's how we saw an Eastern Kingbird, Northern Cardinal, American Crow, and Eastern Bluebird. We heard the whee-eep of a Great Crested Flycatcher, which we confirmed together by checking the Cornell bird app (the girls love any excuse to play on my phone). After getting drenched at Bles Park, we drove by the Great Blue Heron Rookery, then headed for one final stop at White's Ford Park. Thankfully the rain cleared up long enough for the girls to play along the river. Mud equals fun, and there was mud everywhere. We ended our Birdathon with a life bird for the entire team — great views of three Common Nighthawks foraging overhead. Not a bad way to end a long, soggy day!

Unlike most Birdathon teams, our goal isn't necessarily how many birds we find (we found 32 species!), but finding teachable moments to inspire a lifelong love of nature. McKenzie identified several species all by herself and so did dad — all those years of training have paid off! Addison took great pride in recording the species as we saw them. She recorded mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and insects, too! Catherine took a liking to the toad we found in the grass. A special thanks goes to dad for corralling the girls, keeping the special treats flowing, and being our biggest fan.

Thanks to the generous support and encouragement of our sponsors, we raised over \$1,050 for Loudoun's birds! Thank you!

*The author, right, and her daughters point to a pair of Green Herons perched in a distant tree. The birds were among the 32 species the Ligs spotted during their 2019 Birdathon outing.*

Here are the species in the order we saw them:

- European Starling (60, Addy spotted the first one)
- American Robin (6, identified by Addy)
- Mourning Dove (16)
- American Goldfinch (1, identified by dad)
- House Finch (5)
- Blue Jay (3)
- Eastern Bluebird (4)
- Canada Goose (33, Catherine counted the babies)
- Mallard (5, identified by McKenzie)
- Northern Cardinal (8, 5 boys and 3 girls)
- Green Heron (2, identified by McKenzie)
- Tree Swallow (5)
- Red-winged Blackbird (6)
- Turkey Vulture (4)
- Gray Catbird (1, Addy identified by sound)
- Eastern Kingbird (1)
- American Crow (5)
- Red-shouldered Hawk (1)
- Northern Mockingbird (2)
- House Sparrow (2)
- Great-crested Flycatcher (1)
- Great Blue Heron (4, flying into the rookery)
- Great Egret (1, flyover)
- Common Grackle (2)
- Chipping Sparrow (2)
- Downy Woodpecker (1)
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1)
- Cedar Waxwing (1)
- Chimney Swift (6)
- Double-crested Cormorant (2, flying down the river)
- White-throated Sparrow (1)
- Common Nighthawk (3, life bird!)





## Celebrating Birds With an Astounding 150 Species

by Bryan Henson and Joe Coleman

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy celebrated bird migration this year with several walks, our first Big Sit, a Birdathon, and the publication of the book *Birds of Loudoun*. Between the six Birdathon teams, the eight walks, and the Big Sit, we found an astounding 150 species of birds! To put that into perspective, our teams and groups found nearly 73% of the 206 birds seen in Loudoun County in an ENTIRE YEAR as documented by eBird.

The six different teams who participated in the Birdathon ensured that it would also be a success:

- Together, the Birdathon teams raised almost \$13,000, considerably more than during any previous year.
- Shrike Force raised the most money, more than \$4,800, but every team raised a substantial amount, contributing to the best total the Birdathon has ever raised.
- The Raven Loonatics observed the most bird species, 115.
- The six Birdathon teams together found 141 species, several of which were true rarities.

Outside of the Birdathon, participants in the various walks and other events found a total of 117 species. Interestingly enough, while the Birdathon teams found all four of the owl

species that nest in the county, the walks didn't find a single owl.

All of us were impressed with Loudoun's stunning natural beauty and richness — from the Potomac River as it flows



by Algonkian Park, to the lushness of the Dulles Greenway Wetlands at dusk with a violent and intense storm approaching from the west, to watching both the rising and setting sun turn the Blue Ridge Mountains a beautiful greenish blue. Two of the teams were lucky enough to see Blue-gray Gnatcatchers building their beautiful lichen-covered nests; others got to see a Bald Eagle on its nest. Three of the Birdathon teams observed Cerulean Warblers, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan.

All of us were also reminded that while some of these areas are protected, many others are not, and without our continuing efforts and

your assistance, they could be lost.

The Birdathon teams and all the walk leaders thank you for helping the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy protect the homes of Loudoun's wildlife.

*Members of the six Birdathon teams spotted all four of the owl species that nest in Loudoun County, including the Barred Owl (pictured above). Each Birdathon team chose a 24-hour period between late April and mid-May to conduct its watch.*

*Photo by Laura McGranaghan*



# Bold, Beautiful, Big Red-tails *by Liam McGranaghan*

“Kee-eeee-arr!”

The scream coming from the sky causes you to look up and see a beautiful hawk soaring overhead. As the hawk turns in the sunlight after a few more screams, you get a glimpse of a brilliant orange tail and immediately recognize an adult Red-tailed Hawk. Her scream is a warning call, alerting her mate and young of a possible threat while at the same time letting you know that she sees you in her territory.

Surveying the surroundings, you notice an old farm field adjacent to rich woodland. This type of habitat is one of the favorite haunts of our eastern Red-tailed Hawks. It provides food, shelter, and nesting sites, all important ingredients for their survival.

Looking back up at the Red-tail, you can't but help notice how big it is. Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) are one of the largest hawks in North America. Wingspreads may be up to three feet across, and the largest may weigh up to three and a half pounds, far more than the diminutive Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), weighing in at four ounces. Only the western Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) is larger.

Red-tailed Hawks, along with Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatis*) and Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*), are referred to as soaring hawks belonging to the genus *Buteo*. As one of the largest of the group, Red-tails have tremendous strength, an adaptation that allows them to catch and eat a wide variety of game. Red-tails are known to eat anything from grasshoppers to snakes, field mice (their favorite), and even larger prey such as rabbits and gray squirrels. In fact, Red-tailed Hawks are one of the greatest threats to gray squirrels. It would be safe to say that the squirrel's evolutionary adaptations of camouflage, slipping behind trunks, and quickly seeking holes when threatened may be due to the pressure placed upon them by Red-tails. The Red-tail's versatility when it comes to hunting is perhaps the reason it is the most wide-spread and adaptable species of raptor in North America.

Identification of all raptors can be rather tricky, but there are several ways to identify a Red-tail. First, of course, is the tail itself. Adults sport an upper tail surface that is deep reddish



An adult Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) soars above its Loudoun hunting grounds.

Photo by Liam McGranaghan

orange tipped with white and highlighted with a black sub-terminal band about half an inch from the end. The top of the body is chocolate brown, broken with mottled patterns of white. Particularly noticeable is the light V that appears on the back between their wings when perched. Their lower body feathers tend to be cream-colored but may on occasion show a hint of red on the chest. Sometimes the belly and legs are splashed with streaks of reddish brown.

The trouble with identifying Red-tails has to do with the immature birds. Lacking a red tail, look for a belly sprinkled with bold, dark splashes of brown that give the appearance of a "belly band" when seen from a distance. In flight, all Red-tails sport diagnostic dark patches on the forefront of their open wings known as patagial marks. No other *buteo* has these marks, so they make identification of Red-tails easy if you know what to look for.

On rare occasions one may see white color morphs of the Red-tailed Hawk. These white color morphs are often referred to as albinos, but in actuality many of these birds are only partially white and it is probably incorrect to refer to them as albinos. A better term might be leucistic. Every few years one will show up in Loudoun or surrounding counties.

Wild adult Red-tails have a life span that can range up to 20 years, although 10 to 15 years is more likely. In captivity they may live up to 35 years. Although Red-tails gain their





adult plumage at the start of their second year, breeding maturity usually begins at age three. Courtship generally commences in mid-February with aerial displays by the male, diving down from above toward the female and then rocketing back up again. The action is reminiscent of a roller coaster going up and down.

By mid-March the pair will be well into nest building and laying two to three eggs. Incubation of the eggs lasts 28 to 32 days, and when the young hatch they will be covered with white, fluffy down that is slowly replaced by body feathers. By five weeks the young are strengthening their wings with continuous flapping on the nest, a prelude to their first free flight. Fledging occurs around seven weeks of age (42–46 days), which generally occurs around mid-June. The parents will continue feeding the young for another four to six weeks or longer as they become proficient enough to hunt on their own.

Hunting, either for the chicks or for themselves, may be done in several ways. The easiest method for the hawk is to perch in a suitable area and watch quietly for prey such as field mice to move about below. Once a mouse is spotted, the Red-tail simply flies or dives out of the tree to catch it. It should be noted that Red-tails like to perch hunt from high in trees whereas Red-shouldered Hawks often hunt much closer to the ground. Often Red-shoulders will sit on the top rail of wooden fences or the lowest thick wire between power poles to hunt. Rarely will a Red-tail take such a low perch.

When trying to identify hawks, it is not just what they look like that helps but their behavior as well. Red-tails don't just perch hunt. Often they become much more energetic, particularly when trying to pursue something more active, like a squirrel. These chases can last for several minutes as

the hawk pursues its quarry up, down, and around trees and across the forest floor. The hunt ends in one of two ways: with the squirrel escaping into a hole which is its only safe hideaway, or being caught.

Soaring is another method of hunting employed by Red-tails. Using a good thermal updraft, a Red-tailed Hawk can stay above a field almost indefinitely as it searches for mice and other prey. Once it spots something, the Red-tail will swoop down to capture the unsuspecting victim. That method is also used over wood-lots to hunt squirrels and chipmunks. This type of hunting is often seen in Red-tails while on migration, when they don't have time to hunt from a perch.



Three young Red-tails perch in a White Pine tree. Photo by Liam McGranaghan

Migration is also a great time to see Red-tails. During the fall thousands of northern Red-tailed Hawks will stream down the mountain tops in search of better winter feeding grounds. One of their migration pathways is along the Blue Ridge Mountains on the western border of Loudoun. On cold,

blustery days of late October and early November hundreds will pass by, flying just above the treetops — a spectacular sight. Snickers Gap hawk watch on Route 7 is one such place to observe them, but there are several other sites too, such as Waggoner's Gap and Hawk Mountain.

Fortunately, you don't often have to wait until migration to see Red-tailed Hawks here in Loudoun. Sometimes all you have to do is take a walk outside to find one. Even as Loudoun County changes from an agrarian landscape to that of a more urban environment, Red-tails are adapting to fit in. This bold and beautiful hawk should grace our skies for a long time to come.

**Liam McGranaghan is a local raptor expert and Environmental Ed teacher for Loudoun County Schools.**

# Stay Vigilant to Prevent Spread of Spotted Lanternfly *by Kerry Bzdyk*

In the year since we first reported on the arrival of the Spotted Lanternfly in our region, its numbers have grown. This invasive insect was found in Winchester in January 2018. Since then the area of detection has grown from one square mile to 16 square miles, prompting the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to issue a quarantine this past May. That quarantine regulates the movement of items on which the Lanternfly or its eggs may be attached. Homeowners and businesses alike are required to inspect any items that are stored outdoors before they are transported out of the quarantine area. Businesses within the quarantine are required to obtain a permit to be allowed to self-inspect before moving goods.

The Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) is a plant hopper that is native to Asia, where it primarily feeds on Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). Adults measure about an inch long and a half-inch wide with their wings folded. The forewings are mainly gray with black spots near the base and a darker region at the tip with lighter veins. The hind wings are a bright scarlet at the base, with an area of black with a white band. The abdomen is yellow, with black bands down the center. Since it was first detected in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 2014, it has shown a remarkable ability to thrive and spread. Its habit of laying eggs on any outdoor surface (including trucks, lawn furniture, play equipment, etc.) has

contributed to its spread. It is a particular threat to agriculture in our region, feeding on commercially valuable crops such as grapes, apples, and other foods. In addition, the Spotted Lanternfly is also a notable pest to homeowners. Lanternflies feed on ornamental and native vegetation and secrete honeydew, which is a sticky sweet

liquid that attracts the growth of mold and the interest of ants and other insects.

The possibility of this insect finding its way to Loudoun County is real, but there is much you can do to help prevent a full invasion. By familiarizing yourself with the description and life cycle of the Spotted Lanternfly and its preferred host tree, and remaining observant in your daily routine, you may be able to detect this invader and report your find quickly. For detailed descriptions with photos go to <https://www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly>, where you will also find a link for reporting any sightings. If possible, take photographs or capture specimens. Be extra vigilant when transporting outdoor items that may be purchased for home use. Last, spread the word. Tell friends and neighbors about this invasive species. With awareness and vigilance we can help prevent the spread of this harmful pest.



**Adult Lanternfly**  
Photo by Virginia Cooperative Extension



**Immature Spotted Lanternfly**  
Photo by Virginia Cooperative Extension

Resources:  
<https://loudounwildlife.org/2018/08/threat-of-the-spotted-lanternfly/>  
<https://www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly>  
<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/ENTO/ENTO-319/ENTO-319.html>  
<https://ext.vt.edu/agriculture/commercial-horticulture/spotted-lanternfly.html>



## Paddling Through Loudoun: Find Fish, Birds, Scenery, or Adventure by Kayak by Dan Sill

Kayaks are narrow, highly maneuverable boats powered by a double-headed paddle and used by anglers and recreational boaters worldwide. They were originally developed by hunters in the arctic regions of the Northern Hemisphere.

Kayaks were originally made of seal skins stretched over a frame constructed from wood or whale bones, and were custom-built by the hunters based on their needs and family traditions. These boats shielded the paddler's lower body, with the paddler sitting inside the kayak and decking around the opening. This also added stability through a lower profile on the water and allowed for easier recovery to roll the kayak upright if it flipped over.

Kayaks are relatively easy to paddle due to their sleek profiles and lightweight construction, making them efficient for traveling long distances. With kayaking becoming widely popular in recent years, kayak designs have changed dramatically, while retaining their lightweight and easy-to-manuever traits.

Kayaks come in many types and sizes today, with the primary design being either sit-on-top or sit-inside. Some of the different types of kayaks and their built-for functions are listed below:

- Recreational — Ideal for beginner paddlers, what you might see at local parks and rentals. Usually wide and stable, with both sit-inside (closed deck) or sit-on-top styles (open deck).
- Touring — Long length that tracks well in the water, used for longer trips.
- Whitewater — Stiffer, harder shell for quick maneuverability in extreme water conditions. Short length at 8 or 9 feet, with a rounded hull.
- Sea — Built for stability and speed, with flat hull and hard chines (sharp, angled sides rather than rounded) for cutting through waves.
- Surf — Like sea kayaks, with the addition of bottom fins like a surfboard.
- Fishing — Broad beam for extra lateral stability. Sit-on-top design often featuring storage compartments and fishing-rod holders. Some models use foot-pedal propulsion.
- Inflatable — Easier to store and transport than a hard-shell kayak but of course needs to be inflated and could be punctured. Sometimes includes a clip-on rudder.

Fishing kayaks are designed for anglers and their equipment. Modern fishing kayaks are roto-molded using durable plastics to make a hard, hollow shell to support the angler, while also being somewhat flexible and impact-resistant. "Sit-on-top" is the standard design for fishing kayaks due to the flexibility needed to paddle, cast a fishing rod, and manage assorted fishing equipment. Built-in dry storage compartments and other features allow for storage of tackle, provisions, and other

items you want to keep dry.

Some fishing kayaks even have live bait compartments built into the shell. As kayak fishing grows in popularity, anglers are demanding more and more add-on equipment to customize their boats for any number of conditions and tactics, including multiple rod holders, anchor kits, mounts for fish finders and cameras, and specialized carts.

Depending on the type of kayak and custom gear you want, you can spend a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Some power boat owners have learned the meaning of "the two best days are when you buy the boat and when you sell the boat," partly because of expensive ongoing maintenance and storage and insurance costs. Kayaks by

comparison are fairly low-maintenance as long as you don't bang them up too much.

There's also the cost of whatever transport setup you need, whether it be basic V-shaped or saddle-shaped racks and straps for your vehicle rooftop or something more custom or expensive. A kayak can usually also fit in a truck bed or the back of a full-size SUV with the seats folded down or removed.

In our local area, Algonkian Park, Riverbend Park, Goose Creek (at Kephart's Landing), Lake Frederick (south of Winchester), and Beaverdam Reservoir (currently closed for renovation) all offer kayaking venues with a boat ramp or in the case of Kephart's Landing a trail leading down to a cleared area on the creek bank for easy put-in.

Life vests or a personal flotation device (PFD) are a must, as are dry bags for holding

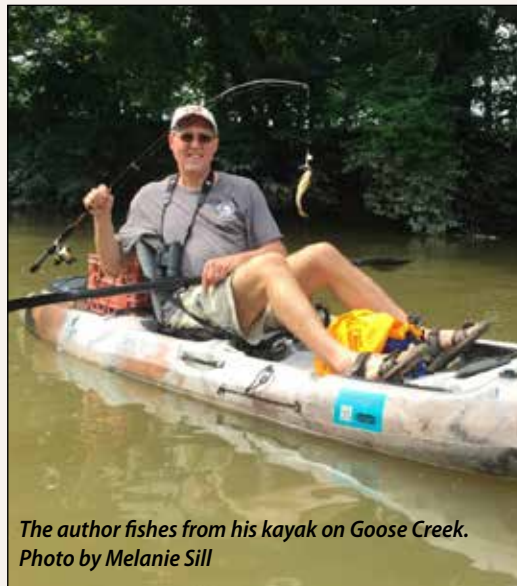
electronics, wallet, keys, snacks, and trash. Note that temperatures are always more extreme on the water: if it's cloudy or chilly on land, it will be even cooler and breezier in the kayak, so layers are always a great idea. Pack a hat, sunscreen, water, and sunglasses on sunny days to counter the glare off the water.

Birding by kayak is a great way to view waterfowl, and you can also scan the banks to watch for an assortment of shorebirds, swallows, warblers, and orioles. Different waterways offer different experiences, with rivers and streams keeping you moving, perhaps watching for birds of prey, while the stillness of lakes, reservoirs, and bays gives you time to more closely scan the water and shoreline.

Guided kayak tours are available on portions of the Potomac and Goose Creek and at nearby state parks such as Delaware Canal State Park in Pennsylvania, which offers a morning kayak paddle on the Delaware Canal featuring the history of the canal while looking and listening for birds and other wildlife.

My wife gave me a trolling motor for Christmas — now when I've had enough exercise paddling I can more easily head upstream to that favorite fishing spot.

Kayak — fun spelled forward or backward!



*The author fishes from his kayak on Goose Creek.  
Photo by Melanie Sill*



# Programs and Field Trips



Space is limited for many of these programs and field trips. For up-to-date information on our programs and to sign up, visit our website at [www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org). Unless otherwise specified, contact [info@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:info@loudounwildlife.org) with questions.

**Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Board Meeting — The Board typically meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. All Loudoun Wildlife members are welcome. Contact Joe Coleman at [jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org) for additional information.**

**Birding Bles Park — Third Sundays: Sept. 15, Oct. 20, and Nov. 17, 8:00 am.** Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is pleased to announce a new regular bird walk at Bles Park located along the Potomac River in eastern Loudoun. More than 175 different species of birds have been observed at Bles Park in a great mix of habitat. Everyone is welcome, whether you are an experienced or beginning birder. Bring binoculars if you have them. *Questions: Contact Bryan Henson at [bhenson@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:bhenson@loudounwildlife.org).*

**Let's Count Butterflies! — Saturday, August 3, 9:00 am – ?** Beginners and experts alike are welcome to help count butterflies during Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's 23rd annual Butterfly Count! You will visit locations such as butterfly sanctuaries, roadside wildflower areas, and parks. We have seen as many as 50 species and counted more than 2,000 butterflies in just this one day in past counts! Our count circle stretches from White's Ferry in the east to the Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Center in the west and south to Lincoln. All ages are welcome. There is a \$3 fee per adult; Loudoun Wildlife members and children under 18 participate for free. Fees and data are submitted to the North American Butterfly Association. *Registration required.*

**A Seasonal Garden & Meadow Tour in 2019, Session 3 — Saturday, August 10, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.** This is the third in a series of garden and meadow tours in Waterford offered by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy in partnership with Susan Abraham of Conservation Landscapes. We will walk through each site and discuss the seasonal aspects of these gardens and meadows, designed and planted with native species and conservation principles in mind. Light refreshments will be served. Fees: Individual sessions: \$20 members, \$30 non-members. This program is full. *Questions: Contact Ann Garvey at [agarvey@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:agarvey@loudounwildlife.org).*


**Birds, Butterflies, and Dragonflies at Bles Park — Sunday, August 18, 8:30 am.** Join the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a walk at Bles Park, located along the Potomac River in eastern Loudoun. We'll look for birds, butterflies, and dragonflies in this hidden gem of a park with a great mix of habitat. Everyone is welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. *Questions: Contact Bryan Henson at [bhenson@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:bhenson@loudounwildlife.org).*

**Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Yoga Fundraiser at Salamander Resort, Middleburg — Sunday, August 18, 9:00 – 10:00 am.** Work out with a mission to do good! Enjoy a one-hour outdoor yoga workshop in a tranquil forest clearing, with 100% of the proceeds benefiting Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. This is a healthy and engaging opportunity for our Loudoun community to learn about and conserve the nature we value and want to preserve. \$30 per person. *To register, call 540-326-4060.*

**Birds, Butterflies, and Wildflowers at the Blue Ridge Center — Sunday, September 1, 9:00 am – noon.** Join several leaders from Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy at the beautiful Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES) in northwestern Loudoun County for a fun-filled outing discussing the abundant and diverse wildlife that exists at the center. We'll walk through fields

full of late-summer wildflowers and the extensive woods that border Butterfly Alley, discussing the many insects, birds, and wildflowers that thrive in this rich area, which will become the first state park in Loudoun County. Meet at the parking lot at the end of Sawmill Road. There are restrooms at the Education Center if you wish to use them before driving to the meeting spot. Bring binoculars if you have them. BRCES is located just north of Neersville at 11661 Harpers Ferry Road (Route 671); detailed directions at [www.blueridgecenter.org](http://www.blueridgecenter.org). *Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or [jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org).*

**Fall Native Plant Sale — Saturday, September 14, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, main parking lot, Morven Park.** Native plants add beauty and interest to your garden year-round and provide important habitat for wildlife. Flowers, shrubs, trees, vines, and ferns will be available for purchase from a trio of Virginia-based vendors: Watermark Woods Nursery in Hamilton; Hill House Farm and Nursery in Castleton; and Nature by Design in Alexandria. The sale, sponsored by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, is staffed by volunteers who are knowledgeable about native plants. Other community groups will also participate, sharing information on how to support local wildlife.



## Birding Banshee

Whether you're a beginning birder or an expert, you'll be dazzled by the many bird species you'll find at the **Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve** south of Leesburg. Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the Friends of Banshee Reeks for the monthly bird walk at this birding hot spot. Bring binoculars if you have them. *Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or [jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org).*

**Second Saturdays: August 10, September 14, October 12, and November 9, 8:00 am.**

**Forest Soaking Hike — Sunday, September 15, 2:00 – 4:00 pm, Salamander Resort, Middleburg.** This leisurely 2-hour hike, sponsored by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, is designed to give each participant the benefits of being in nature through a contemplative walk we are calling Forest Soaking. Our experience, led by yoga instructor Cathy Norman, will take place on a fairly level path in the Salamander Resort forest. The hike will include using all five senses, moments of silence, and will culminate with a brief experience of connecting to nature through the practice of mindful eating. Please leave phones, field glasses, and cameras behind, and bring water and a snack. Limit 15. *Registration required.*



**Snickers Gap Hawk Watch and a Walk on the Appalachian Trail — Saturday, September 21, 8:30 & 11:00 am.** At 8:30 we will meet at the Snickers Gap parking lot (intersection of Rtes. 7 and 601) and take a short walk on the Appalachian Trail with Gerco Hoogeweg of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. Limit 12. Registration required. At 11:00 we will meet in the parking lot at Snickers Gap, where we will spend a few hours of hawk watching and hopefully see a major push of Broad-winged Hawks. Bring lunch and a chair. *No registration required.*

**Visit Us at the Bluemont Fair — Saturday & Sunday, September 21 & 22, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm.** Visit Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's booth at the 50th annual Bluemont Fair! We'll be talking about Loudoun nature and wild places and have some cool exhibits to learn more about our local wildlife. We'll have free information and brochures for you to take. We're happy to answer any of your questions about our programs, activities, or general nature questions. If you've been wanting to pick up a Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy t-shirt or a copy of the new Birds of Loudoun, we'll have those for sale, too. *For more information about the fair, check out their website: <http://bluemontfair.org/>.*

**Writing in Nature: Down by the Water — Saturday, October 5, 10:00 am – noon, Rust Nature Sanctuary.** Nature is in full swing in summertime. The habitat where that is most evident is a pond. Plants and animals thrive in or near the water. A moment of silence at water's edge is quickly filled with sights and sounds that assure us we are not alone. We discover how nature finds what is needed to survive: food, safe shelter, and a place to raise a family. Nancy Morgan will lead a Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy workshop that combines the health benefits of being in nature and writing. Ann Garvey will guide us down to the pond, pointing out flora and fauna along the way and at the pond's edge. We will see our reflection in the pond and in our writing, letting our senses lead the way. Writing journals provided. Dress for outdoor weather. Limit 12. Fee: \$20 members, \$30 non-members. *Registration required.*

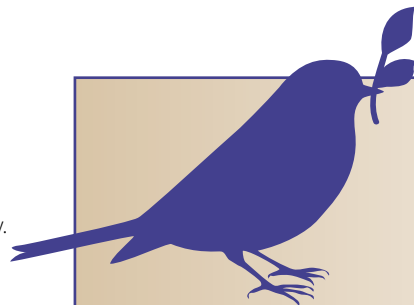
**Getting Ready for Backyard Birds in Winter — Sunday, October 6, 2:00 pm, Brambleton Library.** Will feeding birds stop them from migrating in winter? What can you do to best help backyard birds make it through winter snows, ice storms, and less food from insects, plants, and trees? Join Sherri Bartlett, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Ashburn, as she addresses these and other questions you might have about birds in winter. This talk is sponsored by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy.

**A Seasonal Garden & Meadow Tour in 2019, Session 4 — Saturday, October 12, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.** This is the fourth in a series of garden and meadow tours in Waterford offered by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy in partnership with Susan Abraham of Conservation Landscapes. We will walk through each site and discuss the seasonal aspects of these gardens and meadows, designed and planted with native species and conservation principles in mind. Light refreshments will be served. Fees: Individual sessions: \$20 members, \$30 non-members. This program is full. *Questions: Contact Ann Garvey at [agarvey@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:agarvey@loudounwildlife.org).*

**Hail to the Trail — Sunday, October 20, 1:00 – 4:00 pm, Chapman DeMary Trail, Purcellville.** Hail to the Trail celebrates environmental recreation, exploration, and education. Hail to the Trail — the annual Purcellville Green Expo — is hosted by the Town of Purcellville's Tree and Environmental Sustainability Committee. Free and open to the public, this is a great event for families, students, and scouts. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy will be leading a hands-on activity about the environment. Come for guided nature walks, tree plantings, the town's annual Arbor Day celebration, live animals, plastic bag collection, live music, nature art projects and games, displays, energy activities, and more. Visit their Facebook page, Hail to the Trail – Purcellville Green Expo, for more information.

**Conservation Movie Night — Saturday, October 26.** Save the Date! Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is partnering with Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains to host an inspirational conservation film event at the Hill School in Middleburg. Stay tuned for more details.

**Changing Seasons Nature Walk — Sunday, November 3, 1:00 pm, Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES).** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Phil Daley to explore the varied habitats of the Blue Ridge Center, a future state park, during late fall. While many people stay indoors during the cooler 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 hike, watch for the many birds, mammals, and insects that overwinter here, and examine them and some of the plants to see how they adapt to temperatures that dip below freezing. The Blue Ridge Center consists of almost 900 acres south of Harpers Ferry in northwestern Loudoun County. Meet at the Education Center. Limit 25. *Registration required.*



## Birding the Blue Ridge Center

**T**his monthly walk at the **Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES)**, sponsored by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, takes us through fields, woods, and other wildlife-friendly habitat. We will explore parts of this beautiful 900-acre preserve and enjoy the varied birdlife. Meet at the Education Center; bring binoculars if you have them. BRCES is located just north of Neersville at 11661 Harpers Ferry Road (Route 671); detailed directions at [www.blueridgecenter.org](http://www.blueridgecenter.org). Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or [jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org).

**Fourth Saturdays: August 24, September 28, and October 26, 8:00 am.**

**Fall Explorers: A Beginner Photography Workshop for Kids and Families — Sunday, November 3, 3:30 – 5:00 pm, Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve.** It's amazing what you can see when you are staring through the eye of a camera. Do you have a young photographer at home who wants to learn some tricks of the trade? Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and professional wildlife photographer Jeff Mauritzen, who will guide us on a walk while teaching young photographers about perspective and how to best compose a quick photograph of various subjects in a fall landscape. Kids should bring a camera they can use on their own with ease... this is a beginner's class, so it's all about getting a good shot on an everyday camera or smart device. Space is limited to 15 children, ages 8+, with accompanying adult. NOTE: No strollers or pets. *Registration required.*

**Forest Bathing, A Guided Nature and Forest Therapy Walk — Saturday, November 9, 9:30 am – noon, Morven Park.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Kim Strader for a facilitated combination of wandering, sitting, and resting that welcomes us to notice our surroundings. Through a sequence

*continued on page 14*



*continued from page 13*

of gentle sensory-opening invitations, we will reconnect or deepen our connection with the natural world in a way that supports overall health and wellness. This slow-paced walk will cover no more than 1–2 miles in 2.5 hours. Nature and forest therapy walks are inspired by Shinrin-Yoku, a term coined in the 1980s in Japan, where it is a prominent feature of preventative medicine and healing. Medical and scientific evidence finds that connecting with nature helps alleviate stress-related illnesses such as high blood pressure while boosting the body’s immune system. Kim is a Nature and Forest Therapy Guide in practicum with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs. Limit 20. **Registration required.**

**Fall Colors and Tree Walk — Saturday, November 9, 10:00 am, Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship.** As the days get cooler and frost is in the air, deciduous trees and shrubs put on an autumn show in all shades of red, yellow, orange, and purple. Join Emily Southgate and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a walk in the woodlands of this beautiful reserve in northwestern Loudoun County to enjoy all the colors that Mother Nature provides this time of year. We’ll discuss various tree species and why trees change their color in the fall. Limit 20. **Registration required.**

**Adventures with Raptors — Date TBD, Brambleton Library.** Join raptor rehabilitator Liz Dennison and Belinda Burwell of Wildlife Veterinary Care in Boyce for an informative Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy program about raptors and their place in our natural world. The program will be followed by an opportunity for everyone to personally visit, interact with, and take photos with their ambassador birds. All are welcome.

**Sparrow Identification Field Trip — Saturday, November 16, Time and Location TBD.** The clear “bouncing-ball” trill of the Field Sparrow is a familiar sound in brushy fields and roadsides. Join Larry Meade and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy as we survey the various sparrow species that can be seen in our region in the fall and winter months, with an emphasis on how to identify them in the field. Limit 15. **Registration required.**

**For up-to-date information on our programs and to sign up, visit our website at [www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org).**

## Volunteer of the Quarter — Ann Garvey *by Kim Strader*

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy inspires, motivates, and engages people to protect, preserve and restore wildlife habitat. Many of our volunteers naturally gravitate to one or two of these mission areas, while a few seem to embody them all. Ann Garvey is one of those people who embodies every single mission!

Ann has been sharing her time, energy, talent, experience, and knowledge with Loudoun Wildlife since 2007. In 2009 she began volunteering with our Habitat Restoration program, which continues to be near and dear to her heart. Over the last year, Ann spearheaded the meadow restoration planting on a portion of the W&OD Trail along Harrison Street in Leesburg.

Ann’s enthusiasm and love for native plants, wildlife, and people resulted in the adoption of two of our most popular programs — the biannual native plant sales and the Audubon at Home program.

Ann started the Native Plant Sale in Loudoun County in 2010 and moved it under the umbrella of Loudoun Wildlife in 2012. Thanks to Ann’s vision, not only are residents able to select and purchase plants to enhance wildlife habitat in their own backyards, they can also learn what it means to be good stewards of nature due to the strong educational component she ensures is included in every sale. The sales continue to be held each spring and fall at Morven Park. Ann has retired from being the lead coordinator of this program, but we are committed to continuing the sales with the vision she has set in place.

Ann started Loudoun Wildlife’s Audubon at Home program in partnership with Audubon of Northern Virginia in 2012-13. She served as the program coordinator for six years and continues to be involved as an Audubon at Home ambassador by making home visits to advise people on how their yards can become certified wildlife habitats.

Ann’s friendly, outgoing, and welcoming ways have been invaluable to Loudoun Wildlife in networking and attracting folks to all levels of our organization. It seems that nearly everyone involved with Loudoun Wildlife first heard about us from Ann. Her positive influence

is appreciated and admired by all who come in contact with her. This has made Ann’s behind-the-scenes contributions immeasurable to the various committees she has sat on. From bird counts to staffing outreach tables, Ann has done it all, and she is not afraid to jump into new projects.

Along with Ann’s many personal accomplishments, she has done a great deal through others. She is always one to chime in with an encouraging word and empowers others to be and do their best. Ann embodies what it means to be a volunteer. Her passion and expansive knowledge of birds and plants have inspired wonder in everyone who works with her.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is fortunate to have many dedicated and passionate volunteers, so choosing one to honor as Volunteer of the Quarter can be difficult. This quarter was no exception, but Ann Garvey seemed to stand out among the crowd. Many thanks to Ann for bringing the Loudoun Wildlife vision to life in all that she does by creating a place where people and wildlife thrive!



## Saluting Some Devoted Volunteers *by Kim Strader*

Volunteers have been the lifeline of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy since the organization started in 1995. Even though we now have paid staff, we still rely on volunteers to accomplish almost everything we do and will continue to do so well into the future. Volunteers are the key to our success as an organization! For this reason, it's important to take a moment each year to recognize the outstanding contributions made by volunteers.

One of the highlights of the 2019 Annual Meeting held June 2 was presenting the Volunteer of the Year Awards for 2018. With so many dedicated folks involved in our organization, it can be difficult to decide who to recognize. With input from the Board of Directors and Volunteer Operations Team, the Awards Committee chose the following individuals for their continued commitment to Loudoun Wildlife's mission and vision:

The Joe Coleman Award, given to either a Board member or program coordinator, was formerly referred to as a Volunteer of the Year Award. The Awards Committee chose to change the name of the award for 2018 and going forward to honor Joe Coleman, outgoing president and founding member, for his many years of dedication to our organization.



**Dave Manning**, recipient of the first Joe Coleman Award, was key to initiating the revival of the Stream Monitoring Program by opening the door to participation on the committee. He continues to be an active voice and supporting presence in the program while also becoming more involved with other Loudoun Wildlife programs. Dave is instrumental in planning Habitat Restoration Projects, and with shovel in hand, is always ready to plant. He also monitors bluebird nest boxes on the Loudoun Wildlife trail at 50 West Winery and often lends a helping hand at outreach events. Last but not least, Dave is an invaluable member of the JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary Committee.



**Sheila Ferguson** received the 2018 Volunteer of the Year Award, given annually to someone who is not a Board member or program coordinator. Sheila is always a huge help with the Native Plant Sale, where she draws the map for vendor and Loudoun Wildlife table layout, helps distribute posters and cards advertising the event, makes volunteer name labels, and organizes the volunteer check-in area. Sheila is also very active with the Plant NOVA Natives program, volunteering for a variety of outreach events. She designed the popular "Super Nine" brochure — always a favorite — to encourage people to use the native plants that attract the most pollinators. Additionally, Sheila regularly visits the JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary, surveying the plants and wildlife that make this rare vernal pool forest such a special place.



**Tycho Svoboda** is the recipient of the 2018 Youth Conservation Award, which has been presented to someone under the age of 18 since 2017. Tycho is active in Environmental Conservation and Education through both his school and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. He is a founding member of the Riverside High School Environmental Club, which he started with his science teacher in his freshman year. Now a sophomore, Tycho often recruits his classmates and fellow club members to participate in Loudoun Wildlife stream monitoring events. Himself a certified stream monitor, he has participated in or led a number of monitoring events this past year. Tycho also developed a smartphone app to collect stream monitoring data and automatically calculate stream health using the Virginia Save Our Streams (VASOS) protocol. He then began coordinating with VASOS to test and validate the

quality of the results. The VASOS liaison was impressed with this app and opened up an interface to allow the app to directly upload to the VASOS database. VASOS has stated that it would like to release the app statewide! The Stream Monitoring Committee believes this app will help entice a new, younger wave of monitors to experience citizen science through stream monitoring. Dave Manning, the 2018 Joe Coleman Award recipient, said that "Tycho Svoboda is an amazing young man and a tremendous role model for his generation."

**Congratulations to our 2018 award recipients! Many thanks to the awardees and to all our volunteers for everything you do to make Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy a successful organization.**



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“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” – Albert Einstein



*Great Spangled Fritillary (Speyeria cybele) on Butterfly Weed (Asclepias tuberosa)  
Photo by Sharon Plummer*