

Habitat Herald

A Publication of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

Volume XXXI, Issue 1, Winter 2026



Winds Bring Winter Count to an Early End for Birds and Observers

by Joe Coleman, Birding Coordinator, and Bryan Henson, Birding Assistant

December 29 started as a promising day for the Central Loudoun 2025 Christmas Bird Count (CBC), with comfortable winter temperatures, light winds, and some drizzle. But around lunchtime, the weather quickly deteriorated. By early afternoon, there were wind gusts well into the 30 mph range and most birds had disappeared — and shortly thereafter, so did most of the counters. The result was a count below our average for both species found (87) and individual birds observed (27,439) despite the 158 observers (our third highest for a CBC) in the field.

The most impressive find of the count was made by the team at the Loudoun County Landfill, who found and photographed three Iceland Gulls. During last year's Christmas Bird Counts in Virginia, only three Iceland Gulls were found in the entire state, so finding three in one location is fantastic!

While this year's 70 Bald Eagles is well below our high of 91 in 2023, it is the second highest in our almost 30-year CBC history. Unfortunately, the number of Red-shouldered Hawks (66) and Red-tailed Hawks (34) was far below what we usually find. That may be because very few teams stayed out after the winds started gusting in the afternoon.

A Carolina Chickadee, carrying a seed in its beak, was one of 316 counted during the Central Loudoun CBC. Photo by John Klimavicz

We were pleased to find all three falcon species on this CBC for the fourth year in a row. While two Peregrine Falcons and two Merlins were not high counts and American Kestrel numbers continue to trend lower than in our earlier years, all now appear to be regulars in the county, at least in the winter.

This Iceland Gull and two others spotted at the county landfill were an exciting find. Photo by Pat Whittle

The following species, found on half (or less) of our previous counts, were also observed this year: Wood Duck (1), Red-breasted Merganser (1), Peregrine Falcons (2), and Pine Siskins (2). Red-breasted Nuthatches are not found every year, so we were pleased to find 12.

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Executive Director's Message



Hello, Loudoun Wildlife family!



As we embrace 2026, we officially conclude the 30th anniversary celebration we held throughout 2025. When last year began, we set our sights on honoring the proud legacy of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy by setting as many organizational records as we could, and that's exactly what we did ... thanks to *you*.

In 2025, we welcomed more than 750 volunteers (up from a record 625 in 2024), the most in our history. We're still counting the total hours donated by these selfless and passionate supporters, but we anticipate all-time highs there, too, at more than 15,000. Our Stream Monitoring Program conducted a record 50 stream surveys and released our first "Loudoun Streams Report Card." (Spoiler alert: We scored a C+.) Our Bluebird Monitoring program — the largest in Virginia — monitored 63 trails and 753 nest boxes, both records. Our Peterson Young Naturalist Program, with the support of our first-ever director of education, trained more than 80 teachers to deliver outdoor education to nearly 10,000 K-12 students. We held our biggest Birdathon ever (the 2026 edition is just around the corner), expanded our Amphibian & Reptile Monitoring Program, held the largest spring Native Plant Sale in our history, and saw five bills we supported through our advocacy efforts signed into law at the Virginia General Assembly.

What makes those numbers so inspiring is what they represent: real, tangible impact for our natural world. Achieving that impact is why Loudoun Wildlife was founded in 1995 and why we're still here today. Whether you volunteered, donated, attended an event or program, liked a post on social media, told a friend about us, or all of the above ... you made our 2025 successes possible and set the stage for an even more impactful 2026. Thank you!

As we kick off the next 30 years of Loudoun Wildlife, we do so from a new home. By the time you read this, our offices will have moved from the Gatehouse at Morven Park in Leesburg to the Old Waterford School Building in Waterford, a space we'll be sharing with our friends at the Waterford Foundation. We're so thankful to Morven Park for providing us a home since 2017, but we're excited to start a new chapter at a location that will provide some great new opportunities for our programs and events. Stay tuned for more details.

On a personal note, I can't adequately express how deeply inspired I continue to be by the passion, knowledge, and tenacity of our members and volunteers who continue to give so much to sustaining this important work. You motivate our entire staff each and every day.

To all of you, happy New Year, thanks for an unforgettable 30th anniversary, and we can't wait to see you throughout 2026 as we continue to do what we were made to do: protect, preserve, and restore wildlife habitat right here at home.



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Printer: Mr. Print, Purcellville, VA

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Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. We protect, preserve, and restore wildlife habitat, shaping a Loudoun where people and wildlife thrive together. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by 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 Amy Ulland at aulland@loudounwildlife.org.

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Conservation Advocacy: 2026 Brings Renewed Focus on Existing and New Issues

by Trinity Mills, Conservation Advocacy Specialist

We are closely involved in efforts to oppose the Lucketts Bypass project that would negatively impact JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. This is a complex and rapidly evolving issue engaging multiple community sectors, and we remain committed to advocating for Route 15 fixes that would have far less detrimental effects on the Lucketts community and environment. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors is expected to take next steps on the design phase of this project with a vote in the first quarter of 2026. Check our webpage for updates and more information.



Proposed Paris Mountain Resort

We're opposing the upcoming development application for a resort on Paris Mountain. Developers Eastwinds Blue Ridge and Mountain Resort LLC propose to build a hotel complex with a spa spanning 146 acres of steep slopes across Loudoun, Clark, and Fauquier counties, with the construction located in Loudoun's far southwest corner. We're working with the Paris Mountain Alliance, a coalition of organizations (including the Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Piedmont Environmental Council, Save Rural Loudoun, Land Trust of Virginia, and others) to oppose this effort. At publication time, we were still awaiting the official filing of the development application in Loudoun County.



Lovettsville Wetlands

A new subdivision, Schoene Farm Place, is coming to the Lovettsville area, and a new road being constructed off Lovettsville Road as part of the project



Current plans for the Lucketts Bypass could endanger vernal pools, mature forests, and other sensitive habitats at JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo by Gerco Hoogeweg

will needlessly destroy wetlands and stream buffers. A viable alternative location for the road, one that avoids the severe stream and wetlands impact of the current plan, has been suggested to developer Lennar, which hasn't indicated it will consider the alternate route. (See maps and further details at <https://loudounwildlife.org/2025/12/lovettsville-wetlands/>.) We're working with concerned community members to advocate to protect the habitat and wildlife in danger from this project's impact.



Active Recreation in the Floodplain

At the December 2 Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board forwarded to the Transportation and Land Use Committee (TLUC) an item concerning adjustments to county policy about recreation uses in the floodplain.

A push to allow for active recreation such as ballfields (including associated parking) in the floodplain manifested in September when the county's Zoning Ordinance Committee recommended proceeding with a study that would investigate the feasibility of allowing such uses as a way to resolve current inconsistencies between the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. We were still awaiting the TLUC's review of this issue when the *Habitat Herald* went to press.



Westpark

The site plan application for the new Westpark property was submitted to the Town of Leesburg. After reviewing the materials, we saw fewer issues with the project plan; several of our initial concerns about the stream restoration efforts have been addressed. However, we are closely monitoring and prepared to give input on outstanding issues, including input on trail location and maintenance for the disc golf course.



General Assembly 2026

Data centers are expected to be a hot-button issue during this session of the Virginia General Assembly, and we will be tracking that issue and other issues and related bills impacting Loudoun's wildlife. The session began January 14 and ends March 14, and we are preparing for involvement in efforts to influence state-level policy that will directly affect Loudoun. In February, Loudoun Wildlife will attend the Virginia Conservation Network's and the Data Center Reform Coalition's lobby days in Richmond.



2025 Report: Bluebirds Decline, Tree Swallows Surge

by Rich Wailes, Volunteer Data Coordinator

The 2025 nesting season brought significant shifts in Loudoun County's cavity-nesting bird populations, as prolonged June heatwaves and hyperlocal environmental conditions reshaped breeding outcomes across the county. The Loudoun Wildlife Bluebird Monitoring Program's 2025 nest-box results report was compiled from 62 of the county's 63 monitored trails and 742 of our total of 753 nest boxes. Volunteer monitors documented 3,159 total fledged birds this year — a complex mix of gains, losses, and changing species dynamics.

The headline finding: Eastern Bluebird fledging declined sharply, while Tree Swallows surged, hinting at how these two species may be responding to rising temperatures.

Bluebird fledging fell by 314 birds compared with last year. At the same time, monitors recorded 85 fewer Bluebird nest-building attempts, signaling that the species may be reducing breeding activity during harsh conditions.

The report identifies prolonged heat as a key factor. From June 22-26, temperatures exceeded 100°F in parts of Loudoun County — dangerously near the threshold known to threaten Bluebird survival. Temperatures inside nest boxes can be much higher than outside the boxes. Scientific studies and prior experience show that Eastern Bluebird eggs and nestlings cannot survive temperatures above 107°F, and extended exposure can even cause temporary infertility in male Bluebirds.

That combination appears to have struck hard in 2025. "Heat adversely affects Bluebirds," the report states plainly, underscoring how temperature extremes may increasingly shape the species' long-term viability in the region.

Data compiled by our volunteer nest-box monitors shows that Eastern Bluebird fledging numbers were down in 2025, likely as a result of prolonged summer heat in Loudoun County. Photo by Larry Tipton



In contrast, Tree Swallows flourished. The species produced 1,329 fledglings, an increase of 230 over last year, with 70 more nest-building attempts recorded.

The data suggests not only resilience but possible adaptation to changing climate conditions. Research cited in the report notes that Tree Swallows employ both behavioral and physiological strategies to withstand heat. These include panting, spreading wings to shed heat through convection, and increasing cellular heat-shock proteins and antioxidants to protect against temperature stress.

This may explain why Tree Swallows did not merely maintain previous levels but expanded their presence during the very same heatwave that suppressed Eastern Bluebird activity. The report's summary for Hanson Park illustrates this contrast clearly: fewer Bluebirds this year, but more Tree Swallows, with the latter potentially better adapting to higher temperatures.

Beyond the headline species, the county's nest boxes also supported 432

House Wren, 53 Chickadee, and 64 other native cavity-nester fledglings. Total fledging success rates — measured as birds fledged per eggs laid — remained similar to last year for Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and House Wrens, despite the environmental challenges.

The stability of smaller cavity-nesting species suggests that the year's ecological stresses did not uniformly affect all bird populations, reinforcing the idea that heat tolerance varies significantly across species.

Volunteers Drive Monitoring Efforts

The 2025 season once again depended heavily on the dedication of Loudoun's 240 volunteer trail leaders and monitors, who recorded activity across the county's vast network of nest boxes. Their observations contribute to one of the most robust, community-driven bird-monitoring systems in Virginia.

The near-complete coverage enables comparative year-to-year analysis and helps reveal early signals of the impact of environmental change.

While countywide Bluebird numbers declined, some trails still saw strong success. The top three Bluebird trails and the trails' leaders were:

- Morven Park, Cathy Lemmon – 95 fledglings
- Bolen Park, Thomas Letonja – 68 fledglings
- Zephaniah Vineyards, Diane Nastase – 54 fledglings

Tree Swallow productivity was even more striking, with four trails topping the list:

- Temple Hall Farm, Scott and Tamara McDonald – 103 fledglings
- Algonkian Golf Course (Front 9), Luke High – 83 fledglings
- Brambleton Northstar, Paul Thamasset – 69 fledglings
- Lovettsville Park, Keith Nusbaum – 69 fledglings

The high Tree Swallow counts at multiple trails further illustrate the species' rising resilience and population strength in years with periods of hotter temperature.

Unwelcome Visitors: Snakes and House Sparrows

The 2025 report also tracks predation attempts from nest-box visitors, important metrics for trail managers. This year, Claude Moore Park, led by longtime trail leader Norman Gresley, reported the most snake predations, 13. Three other trails tied for second place, each with four snake encounters — the Academies of Loudoun and Loudoun Aquiry, both monitored by Conrad Varblow, and the 1757 Golf Course, led by Anne Cho.

On the invasive-species front, House Sparrows, a nonnative competitor that often displaces native birds, were deterred in high numbers thanks to diligent monitors on these trails:

- Dobbins Creek, Betty Hedges – 84 sparrows deterred
- Ida Lee Native Tree, Jesse Edwards – 76 sparrows deterred
- Ashby Ponds, Bill Davis – 31 sparrows deterred

House Sparrow control is a critical component of maintaining nest-box programs, and these leaders and their teams played an essential role in protecting native species during a challenging year.

Hanson Park: A Microcosm of 2025's Climate Story

Hanson Park, where both temperature and rainfall data were paired with bird records, provided a valuable snapshot of how heat extremes shaped species differently. The park recorded fewer Bluebirds and more Tree Swallows, matching countywide patterns but also offering early evidence that Tree Swallows may be adjusting to warming conditions at a micro-habitat level.

That adaptability could make Tree Swallows a pivotal species in understanding how local bird communities respond to climate change.

Looking Ahead: Climate, Conservation, and Community Science

The 2025 results raise important questions for future management of nest-box trails across Loudoun County. As heat waves become more frequent and intense, Bluebirds — once the defining success story of nest-box conservation — may face increasing reproductive pressure.

Meanwhile, the surge in Tree Swallow activity hints that some species may adapt to changing conditions, reshaping local bird community dynamics.

What remains constant is the value of the county's volunteer-based monitoring network. With 240 monitors tracking nearly 750 boxes, the program continues to generate one of the most detailed annual snapshots of cavity-nesting bird health in the region.

As Loudoun County heads into the 2026 season, conservationists, scientists, and community volunteers will be watching to see whether this year's trends represent a temporary anomaly — or the early stages of a broader shift driven by rising temperatures.



Tree Swallows like these may be better at adapting to higher summer temperatures brought by climate change than Eastern Bluebirds are. Photo by Michael Sciortino



Shaping Our Wildlife Sanctuary Program: How Can You Help Wildlife?

by Brian Magurn, Wildlife Sanctuary Ambassador



A monarch butterfly nectars on native asters. Nurturing native plants to benefit native wildlife is among the hallmarks of a certified home Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo by Janet Hensley

Doug Tallamy's latest book is titled "How Can I Help? Saving Nature With Your Yard." Those sentiments are the core of the Wildlife Sanctuary Program (formerly known as Audubon at Home). The Wildlife Sanctuary program is a partnership between the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance and Plant NOVA Natives that is delivered through Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. It is a volunteer-based program drawing from trained Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners. The program is a conservation project of the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, which promotes conserving and restoring local natural habitat and biodiversity by educating property owners and certifying properties as a "Wildlife Sanctuary" when they include all the required elements for a healthy wildlife habitat.

Entomologist Tallamy, co-founder of the Homegrown National Park movement (<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>), emphasizes that private property is crucial for conservation because

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

approximately 78 percent of the U.S. — and 85 percent of U.S. land east of the Mississippi — is privately owned. Your own property is a great place to start creating habitat for wildlife by planting native plants, removing invasives, and taking other steps to improve the ecological function of your landscaping to support wildlife. Any property is eligible — not only homeowners, but also schools, faith communities, HOAs, businesses, government, and parkland.

Site Visit

Our volunteer Wildlife Sanctuary Ambassadors schedule no-cost, in-person site visits where they meet with the client and visit the property. On the site visit, they talk about the client's goals for the property and take stock of the current plants, geology and soils, habitat features and practices, and water conservation. They gently educate the client on best practices for wildlife habitat: removing invasive plants; planting natives; leaving the leaves that fall in autumn; and avoiding human-made hazards to wildlife like pesticide use, glue traps, and light pollution.

During the site visit, Ambassadors help identify plants: the good, the bad, and the ugly. Again, this is done gently, as most homeowners are unaware that the landscaping that came with their house is often a collection of non-native and sometimes invasive plants that can't be eaten by local insects and don't provide habitat and food for birds and other wildlife that depend on them. Ambassadors also evaluate the habitat layers and make recommendations for maximizing them to increase biomass and shelter.

Site visits are available at any point in the process. Whether a client is just

starting with native plants or ready for certification, Ambassadors will work with them to develop suggestions to reach their goals and improve the quality and quantity of habitat.

After the site visit, the client receives a written site report that includes the invasive species that were identified and links to fact sheets from Blue Ridge PRISM for info on identifying and removing them. The report also includes native plants that were identified and info on their wildlife value. (For example, when I had my property certified in 2015, I learned that violets were a host plant for three species of fritillary butterflies in our area.) The report also provides a list of suggested native plants that will do well given the conditions, as well as any additional recommended habitat practices.

Certification

To be certified, the following criteria must be met on your property:

- Observation of at least 10 sanctuary species, not counting flyovers.
- Adoption of at least two of the habitat practices on the "healthy yard" pledge, with plans to adopt them all.
- Inclusion of at least two required habitat features.

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Steve and Peggy Carter display the sign that marks their Loudoun County property as one of many certified by our Wildlife Sanctuary Ambassadors. Photo by BJ Lechrone

Ready to Celebrate Birds?

Gather your flock and join Loudoun Wildlife's Birdathon!



1 Form a team with friends, family, or fellow birders.

2 Choose a 24- or 48-hour window between April 18 and May 17.

3 Count as many bird species as you can.

4 Raise funds to protect, preserve, and restore wildlife habitat!



From beginners to seasoned birders, everyone can join the fun and make a difference! Learn more at: <https://bit.ly/LWC-Birdathon>





If We Kill It, Will They Leave? A Spotted Lanternfly Story

by Tracy Whittington, Virginia Master Naturalist



Why eradicate Tree of Heaven? It is the favorite host plant for the destructive Spotted Lanternfly – pictured here on Trees of Heaven as breeding adults (left) and as red and black nymphs. Photos by Tracy Whittington

In the spring of 2025, the Ashburn Village Community Association (AVCA) discovered it had millions of new residents — invasive planthoppers who arrived in the United States in 2014 and migrated south to Virginia over the next decade. AVCA residents, like most of their Loudoun County neighbors, began seeing tiny black and white nymphs blanketing trees and shrubs, decks, sidewalks, houses, and cars. By June, the nymphs became adults, and it felt as if the millions had become trillions. Everyone had the same question: How do we get rid of them?

Any schoolkid in Loudoun can identify the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), and most will stomp on any of the bugs they can catch. But as any homeowner can tell you, a thousand more will take their place ... and go after the plants in your garden. Common (and bad) advice on

how to deal with the SLF abounds. Ring your trees in sticky tape? You'll likely catch not only SLFs, but also mortally wound beneficial insects, bats, and birds. Spray them with insecticides? You'll also kill the creatures you want to welcome. Squirt them with dish soap? Sure, if they don't hop away first — and also, how many hours of the day do you want to spend squirting?

Yet for every 1,000 people who have heard of SLF, perhaps one or two have heard of the *Ailanthus altissima*, commonly known as the Tree of Heaven. If you are in this majority, the Tree of Heaven is an invasive plant that has been in the U.S. since the 18th century. *Ailanthus* spreads very quickly and aggressively, producing hundreds of thousands of seeds per year; and it can sprout from both roots and stumps, often several yards from the mother

tree. It's also the Spotted Lanternfly's favorite host plant, and it allows the insects to multiply at seven times the rate of any other plant they feed on. On Tree of Heaven, they produce more eggs, those eggs are more likely to survive and hatch, and the feeding offspring will have natural protection due to a bitter taste acquired from the sap that dissuades birds and carnivorous insects from eating them. So while Tree of Heaven has always produced allelopathic chemicals that prevent the growth of other plants near them and transform the nearby area into a foul-smelling grove, it was when the SLF arrived in North America that things got really bad.

Which brings us back to Ashburn Village last spring.

Loudoun Invasives Removal Alliance founder Mike Littman and Virginia



An Ashburn Village volunteer applies the hack-and-squirt control method to a Tree of Heaven in the neighborhood. Photo by Tracy Whittington

Trees of Heaven in this grove were treated by AVIRT volunteers, who now wait to assess whether further action will be needed to eradicate them. Photo by Tracy Whittington

Master Naturalist Tracy Whittington, both AVCA residents, had teamed up earlier in the year to create the Ashburn Village Invasives Removal Team, or AVIRT, designed as a volunteer-led effort to address invasive plant issues in the community. One of their first major initiatives was to complete the Tree of Heaven removal that had been started the prior year. In June 2024, Littman had arranged through the HOA for training from the Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM), specifically to work on a few stands of Tree of Heaven. Blue Ridge PRISM taught volunteers the hack-and-squirt, cut stump, and basal bark methods of controlling Tree of Heaven and other invasive plants (see "Resources" below for a link to their Fact Sheet detailing these methods). Littman had simultaneously learned

that Zephaniah Winery in Leesburg had removed the Trees of Heaven surrounding its vineyard in 2023 and saw a marked reduction in lanternflies the following year. It made sense: If you take away the tree that the SLF thrives on, it should mitigate the situation.

Wanting to get ahead of the problem in AVCA, Littman and Landscaping Committee Chairman Randy Bargiel then scoured AVCA's 500 common ground acres and identified several large stands of Ailanthus. After teaching the community's tree service how to properly treat the trees using the Blue Ridge PRISM training they had received, AVCA management gave the tree service workers their marching orders. Littman estimated they treated and then removed 70 percent of the Trees of Heaven in the Village in 2024.

That's when Whittington got involved and wanted to help finish the job. In May, AVIRT continued the citizen science experiment that Littman and Bargiel had started: What if they tried to remove all the remaining Trees of Heaven within AVCA's 500-acre boundaries? Operating on the assumption they had already killed most of the SLF host trees, AVIRT began by asking residents to report any Tree of Heaven sightings. More than two dozen people reported Ailanthus trees in their neighborhoods.

Next, Whittington mapped the sightings. First came the bad news: The prior years' efforts had treated, at most, 30 percent of the mature Trees of Heaven in Ashburn Village. It turned out it takes more than a couple of well-intentioned residents and a tree service to find every Tree of Heaven; it takes a Village. The

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Tree of Heaven continued from page 9

good news, however, was most of the AVCA was Ailanthus-free. There were a handful of trees that had been planted and mulched by the HOA (as well as one of the elementary schools within the Village's borders) and a smattering of one-off or small groups of trees, perhaps started by birds dropping seeds. The remainder of the invasive trees radiated out from two hot spots — the shore of Ashburn Lake, and a wooded remnant of the pre-Ashburn Village farm that abutted local church and school grounds.

As confirmation of the connection between the SLF and Ailanthus, AVIRT noticed the strongest concentrations of SLF nymphs and adult insects were where Trees of Heaven were located. In homes in or near the hot spots, large infestations of SLF nymphs began in the spring and grew into large infestations of SLF adults, with damage to even non-Ailanthus trees, bushes, and forbs. In areas of the HOA half a mile or more from a Tree of Heaven, SLFs were much less numerous and not seen in sufficient numbers to be destructive. What really stood out: The area where the very first stand of Ailanthus were treated and removed in June 2024 during the Blue Ridge PRISM training, and where the very first SLF adults were spotted, showed no signs of SLF. They were gone!

From June through August, AVIRT held five workdays, with Littman, Whittington, and others also working additional weekends. More than 60 volunteers were trained and used hack-and-squirt for large trees, cut stump for saplings, and hand pulling, where appropriate, for any sprouts after rainy periods. As of September, AVIRT had treated more than 1,300 Trees of Heaven, including 300 mature trees. Except for a few very large "mother" trees that required multiple treatments, all of the treated Ailanthus groves died after one attempt. Since the cost of tree removal can be expensive, only standing dead trees that could impact property or pedestrians were scheduled for removal by the tree service (the biggest expense of the entire project) this fall.

Now Ashburn Village waits until spring to find out how the science experiment went. The hope is that, like Zephaniah Winery, the community will see a dramatic reduction in SLF from what they might have been.

Open questions include:

- How extensive will resprouting of treated areas be?
- How will regrowth differ between areas where mature trees were removed and areas where there were only saplings or previous regrowth?
- Which of the methods used produced the least regrowth — hack and squirt, or cut stump?
- Will regrowth diminish with each passing year of treatment?

2025 CBC continued from page 1

Because of the efforts of our observers, we now have almost 30 years of data showing winter bird populations and how they have changed over the years.

Three groups are invaluable to the success of the count — the sector and team leaders, the many participants who join those leaders in the field, and the numerous landowners who give us permission to visit their properties. The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy thanks all of them as, without them, this count would not be the success it has been for so many years.

To see our totals and how they compare with previous years, check out <https://loudounwildlife.org/citizen-science/bird-counts/christmas-bird-count/>.

We look forward to seeing you for the next Christmas Bird Count on Monday, December 28, 2026.



CBC observers found 590 Cedar Waxwings before high wind gusts brought an early end to the local count.
Photo by John Klimavicz

- And most important, when their host plant is gone, will the Spotted Lanternflies leave?



Resources:

Blue Ridge PRISM Invasive Plant Fact Sheets: Tree of Heaven (including a list of effective removal methods) – <https://blueridgeprism.org/factsheets>

"Living With the Spotted Lanternfly" by BJ Lechrone, Habitat Herald, Volume 30, Issue 3, Summer 2025 – <https://loudounwildlife.org/2025/07/living-with-the-spotted-lanternfly/>

Loudoun Invasive Removal Alliance – <https://www.loudouninvasives.com>

'The Moth Man' Who Brought the Night to Life

Remembering David Adamski (1950–2025)

by Madison Allen, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator



Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. David Adamski, a beloved educator, volunteer, and friend whose passion for the natural world left a lasting mark on our community. David passed away peacefully on October 25, 2025, after a long illness. He leaves behind a legacy rooted in curiosity, generosity, and a lifelong commitment to teaching.

Affectionately known to many as "The Moth Man," David had a rare ability to make the unseen unforgettable. Through his programs with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and partner organizations, he introduced generations of volunteers, families, and naturalists to the beauty, diversity, and importance of moths and other often-overlooked insects.

David's programs with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy were memorable from the very beginning. During summer Moth Nights at Morven Park and other locations, he invited people to step outside after dark with curiosity rather than hesitation. He opened each evening with an engaging and easy-to-follow introduction to *Lepidoptera*. As night fell, David would set up a black light and white sheet among the trees. Before long, moths and other insects began to appear.

"What seemed like a hundred different moths and insects filled up the large white sheet David had hung," recalled Jim McWalters, former president of Loudoun Wildlife's Board of Directors, longtime program coordinator, and volunteer. "Each one different, but David knew them all by name. One of those times it makes you appreciate the diversity and beauty of nature. David helped bring that to life."

Even when weather or conditions made outdoor observation difficult, David never lost his audience. He could make a room feel just as alive with stories, knowledge, and quiet enthusiasm.



Dr. David Adamski and friend, a Luna moth (*Actias luna*). Photos courtesy of Paul Kreingold

Adamski examines a moth with a young fellow naturalist.

Those who learned from David often spoke about how comfortable he made them feel. As Paul Kreingold — conservation director of the Loudoun County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and a Virginia Master Naturalist with the Banshee Reeks Chapter — put it, David was "avuncular," like an uncle to everyone. "Everybody loved that guy. He was a great teacher. He loved teaching people and talking to people."

Whether he was working with children, volunteers, Master Naturalists, or professional scientists, David had a rare ability to translate deep expertise without relying on dense academic or scientific jargon. He never talked down to people, but he never made them feel lost either. Learning with David felt collaborative, human, and grounded in shared curiosity.

A Life of Science, Shared Generously

David was an internationally respected lepidopterist who devoted his career to the study of moths, particularly the *Gelechioidea* superfamily. He spent many years working at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Systematic Entomology Laboratory in Washington, D.C. Over the course of his career, he authored more than 80 scientific publications and described many previously unknown species.

Despite his deep expertise, David never treated knowledge as something to guard. Through nearly

a decade of volunteer programs with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, along with Smithsonian tours, workshops, and youth education, he shared what he knew freely and patiently.

"The depth of his knowledge about *Lepidoptera* was astounding and inspiring," McWalters said. "There was no question that was too simple. He could explain things in such a way that made you want to learn more."

David was especially passionate about educating young people. Through his Young Entomologists program, he believed in giving children the chance to do meaningful, hands-on work.

"He would have these kids go out and do real work," Kreingold said. "One kid, about 12 years old, studied Jack-in-the-pulpits and gave a presentation on it. I saw the presentation, and it was terrific. It was college-level work under David's guidance."

That same spirit carried through his work with the Virginia Master Naturalists. Classes were scheduled to end in the afternoon but often did not. When the formal session wrapped up, participants stayed, and David stayed with them — people gathered around tables identifying specimens, asking questions, and listening as David talked through what they were seeing. Learning continued because no one wanted it to stop.

David's generosity as a teacher was matched by the respect he earned from the institutions he worked with. After he retired from

the Department of Agriculture, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History offered him an office so he could continue his work there. He was also given a parking spot, a small but telling detail in a city where parking is notoriously scarce and highly coveted. For those who knew him, it reflected how deeply valued he was as a scientist, colleague, and educator.

At the same time, David remained grounded in community education, showing up with the same enthusiasm whether he was leading a museum tour, teaching a workshop, or hosting a moth night outdoors.

A Lasting Legacy

Reflecting on his friend, Kreingold described David as "intrepid," someone who believed you had to be willing to explore deeply and keep a sense of humor along the way. David approached his work and his life with that same spirit. He had a large presence, almost larger than life, because of the energy, curiosity, and generosity he carried with him wherever he went.

David Adamski helped countless people see the natural world more closely and with greater appreciation. His legacy lives on in the volunteers he inspired, the students he mentored, the colleagues he supported, and the many people who now pause to notice the small and remarkable creatures around them.

As McWalters reflected, "David helped bring the wonders and beauty of nature, specifically the world of *Lepidoptera*, to life."

We are deeply grateful for David's years of service to Loudoun Wildlife and to the broader naturalist community. His work, his teaching, and his spirit will continue to inspire curiosity and care for the natural world.

A memorial service celebrating David's life and achievements will be announced at a later date. His obituary can be found at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/david-adamski-obituary?id=60010971>.



Wildlife Sanctuary continued from page 6

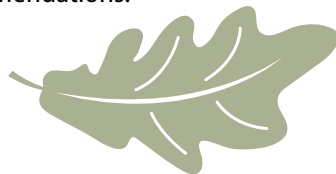
More details are available in the application form on our website at <https://loudounwildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Wildlife-Sanctuary-Application-Aug-6-2024.pdf>.

Once a property is certified, the property owner may purchase a Wildlife Sanctuary sign to display on their property at a cost of \$35, including tax. Displaying a sign celebrates their efforts, lets others know about the program, and is a great way to start conversations about best practices for wildlife habitat and encourage neighbors to join in!

How Can You Help?

We need more passionate native plant enthusiasts to volunteer with the program. To join the Wildlife Sanctuary Program as a volunteer, email wildlifesanctuary@loudounwildlife.org. Have no fear; we have an orientation for volunteers and will pair you up with experienced Ambassadors for site visits. If you're not able to volunteer, please consider having your property certified through the program.

Remember, even if you're just starting with natives, you can start the process and request a site visit from an Ambassador who will come and offer suggestions. To sign up, go to <https://loudounwildlife.org/2016/12/wildlife-sanctuary-program/>. And please share information about this program with anyone who would like to help improve the wildlife value and biodiversity supported by their property. I think this is a wonderful program, and other than the optional sign, it's completely free to you. It's really great to have someone come to your property, help you assess and identify what's there, and offer recommendations.



Nature-Based Learning Takes Root

by Tracey Baroody, Director of Education

Did you know that kids today spend an average of 5 to 9 hours a day (varying with age) engaged in noneducational screen time, leaving little or no time for outdoor play activities? Let that — and everything it represents — sink in for a moment.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Peterson Young Naturalist Program (PYNP) is committed to improving those statistics, and it's been bringing the proven benefits of nature-based learning to Loudoun County students since 2010. Nature-based learning provides benefits related to mental health, academic performance, social skills, environmental literacy, and much more. On August 14, we trained 51 Loudoun County Public School teachers from 30 schools to bring those benefits to over 4,100 more K-12 students this year.

The PYNP concept of nature journaling is integrated into a teacher's curriculum across all subjects. Observation, recording, and reflection are brought to an outdoor setting, where evidence supports a strong correlation to curiosity and an overall sense of well-being. These social-emotional effects combined with improved academic skills make the PYNP a sought-after training among a growing number of teachers, and the post-training comments offered a glimpse into teacher excitement for getting involved.



Miriam Westervelt, who leads Loudoun Wildlife's PYNP, coaches a teacher on using the iNaturalist app for plant identification. Photos by Tracey Baroody

Comments included, "Everyone should be required to take this course," "I absolutely loved this session," "Thank you so much — leaving inspired and ready to get outside with my students," and many more.

Each year, students who keep exceptional Peterson journals earn awards and recognition from Loudoun Wildlife, and their teachers receive "Peterson Packs" full of outdoor classroom equipment. Learn more about the Peterson Young Naturalist Program — inspired by the life of famed ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson — at <https://loudounwildlife.org/education/peterson-young-naturalist-program/>.

And stay tuned for more to come as Loudoun Wildlife grows this and other life-shaping Nature-Based Learning programs made possible by your support!



In addition to some classroom time, participating teachers spent as much time as possible outdoors, practicing the skills they use to bring the Peterson Young Naturalist Program to their students.



Programs and Field Trips



Unless otherwise specified, contact info@loudounwildlife.org with questions.

Dates and locations are subject to change. For up-to-date information on our programs or to register, visit www.loudounwildlife.org or contact info@loudounwildlife.org.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

Board Meeting — The Board typically meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. All Loudoun Wildlife members are welcome. Contact President Amy Ulland at aulland@loudounwildlife.org for additional information.

Writing in Nature — First

Thursdays: February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Rust Sanctuary (new location). Join Nancy Morgan, director emeritus of the Georgetown Lombardi Arts and Humanities Program, for this monthly opportunity presented by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy to enjoy the combined health benefits of time spent in nature and writing thoughts and feelings. Writing is often considered a solo, reflective practice, but writing in the company of others can be a supportive, community-building activity that encourages regular practice. Each session is a stand-alone event; come when you are able. Registration for each session is open through the morning of the workshop. **Registration required: [Sign Up Online.](#)**

Waterfowl of Loudoun: Field Trip

— **Saturday, February 14, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm.** Because winter generally brings a variety of attractive waterfowl to our area, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is offering a field trip so you can get to know

these beautiful birds. The field trip will visit several local hotspots where we should be able to find many of the species that regularly visit the county. **Limit 12. Registration required: [Sign Up Online.](#)**

Young Birders Walk at Algonkian

— **Sunday, February 15, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Young Birding Program for a bird walk for young birders at Algonkian Regional Park, the county's best birding hotspot, where over 230 species of birds have been observed. We'll look for year-round and winter residents, and hopefully a surprise or two. Meet at the boat ramp; bring binoculars if you have them, or we will have some to share. *This walk is exclusively for young birders ages 10–18; a parent/guardian is welcome.* **Registration required: [Sign Up Online.](#) Questions: Contact Patrick Lewis at plewis@loudounwildlife.org.**

The Disappearance and Persistence of Bees

— **Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 pm, Virtual.** The demise and disappearance of bees is well documented, yet bees still persist. Wildlife biologist Sam Droege shares a more nuanced look at the current state of native bees based on his research. This presentation is co-sponsored by the Loudoun County Public Library and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. **Registration requested.**

Read! Plant! Grow! Book Club

— **Tuesday, February 24, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, Birch Tree Bookstore, Leesburg.** Join partners Watermark Woods Native Plants, Loudoun County Public Library (LCPL), and Birch

Birding Banshee

Whether you're a beginning birder or an expert, you'll be thrilled by the many bird species you'll find at 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 hotspot.

Registration required: [Sign Up Online.](#) Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.

Second Saturdays: February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9, 8:00 am.



Birding Algonkian

Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy on a search for birds at Loudoun's top birding hotspot, Algonkian Regional Park in eastern Loudoun, for the monthly bird walk. Combining extensive frontage along the Potomac River, rich bottomland forests, wetlands, and extensive grassy areas, this can be a very productive place to bird. **Registration required: [Sign Up Online.](#) Questions: Contact Bryan Henson at bhenson@loudounwildlife.org.**

Third Sundays: February 15, March 15, April 19*, 8:00 am.



Birding Sweet Run

Sweet Run State Park has 894 acres of diverse habitat, consisting of rich oak-hickory forest, meadows, ponds, streams, and vernal pools in northwestern Loudoun. It borders the Appalachian Trail and is only a couple of miles from the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers. Sweet Run is a wonderful sanctuary for Loudoun wildlife, with numerous bird species utilizing its richness. These walks are sponsored by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. Sweet Run is located just north of Neersville; detailed directions at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/sweet-run>. **Parking Fee:** The fee for a standard vehicle is \$10. View fee information at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/parking-fees>. **Registration required: [Sign Up Online.](#) Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

Fourth Saturdays: February 28, March 28, April 25*, 8:00 am.



* A Celebrate Birds! event

Tree Bookstore for the Read! Plant! Grow! Book Club, which focuses on native plants. We'll discuss the book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver. Both memoir and journalistic investigation, this book explores how the Kingsolver family took on a new challenge: to spend a year on a locally produced diet, paying close attention to the provenance of all they consume. Concerned about the environmental, social, and physical costs of American food culture, they hoped to recover what Kingsolver considers

our nation's lost appreciation for farms and the natural processes of food production. To obtain a copy of the book, contact Allison Forbes (Allison.Forbes@loudoun.gov; she will send one to your nearest library for pickup) or purchase it at Birch Tree. Attend in person or online by going to the LCPL website (<https://library.loudoun.gov/>) and clicking Event Calendar to get the link.





Let Nature Win: The Pollinator Victory Garden Revolution — Wednesday, February 25, 7:00 pm, Virtual. Join Julie Borneman of Watermark Woods Native Plants for an inspiring, down-to-earth talk on creating pollinator victory gardens that thrive right here in Loudoun. Julie will share practical, locally relevant strategies for turning yards, gardens, and shared community spaces into vibrant habitats that support native bees, butterflies, birds, and other essential pollinators. Drawing on ecological insight, real-world examples from our region, and contagious enthusiasm, this Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy talk will empower you to take meaningful action at home while contributing to the health of Loudoun's landscapes and waterways. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, you'll leave with fresh ideas, renewed hope, and simple steps to help nature win. This presentation is co-sponsored by the Loudoun County Public Library and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. **Registration requested.**

A Croak in the Night: Introduction to the Frogs and Toads of Loudoun — March, TBD. If you've ever sat outside listening to the sounds of nature and wondered what species of frog or toad you were hearing, then this program is for you! Learn how to identify them both visually and by their calls, and learn what you can do to help protect the habitats of this fragile group of amphibians. This presentation is co-sponsored by the Loudoun County Public Library and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. **Registration requested.**

Birding Gilbert's Corner — Sunday, March 1, 8:00 am, Gilbert's Corner Regional Park. Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a bird walk at this relatively new park in Aldie. With a combination of scrub, brush, and meadow, it can be a great place to bird. **Limit 14. Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#). Questions: Contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

Young Birders Walk at Gilbert's Corner — Sunday, March 1, 8:00 am, Gilbert's Corner Regional Park. Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Young Birding Program and Matt Felperin of NOVA Parks for a bird walk for young birders at this relatively new park in Aldie. With over 115 bird species observed here, Gilbert's Corner is one of the best birding hotspots in southwestern Loudoun. Bring binoculars if you have them, or we will have some to share. *This walk is exclusively for young birders ages 10–18; a parent/guardian is welcome. Limit 14. Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#). Questions: Contact Patrick Lewis at plewis@loudounwildlife.org.*

Woodcock Walk at Institute Farm — Tuesday, March 3, 6:00 pm. Witness the bizarre courtship displays of the American Woodcock, one of our most fascinating avian residents. On this Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy outing, we will listen for the woodcock's "peent" and watch its aerial acrobatics at the Institute Farm near Aldie. **Limit 10. Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#).**

Save the Bluebells: Garlic Mustard Pull — Thursdays, March 12 thru April 16, and Saturday, March 28, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Ball's Bluff Regional Park. Garlic Mustard is an invasive species that began taking over Ball's Bluff several years ago. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy mobilizes a crew in early spring to pull the invasive plant before it causes damage to the spring ephemerals that make the park so beautiful. Each invasive plant removed, no matter how small, makes an impact because the millions of seeds from the removed plants never get a chance to fall into the soil seed bank. Be part of this important habitat conservation project. **Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#). Questions: Contact BJ Lechrone at bjlechrone@loudounwildlife.org.**

Woodcock Walk at Broad Run Stream Valley Park — Thursday, March 19, 7:15 pm. Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for an early-evening walk on this special property looking for birds; then, as dusk settles in, we'll hope to hear the "peent" of the American Woodcock

and see its incredible courtship display flight. **Limit 15. Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#).**

Give Choose — Tuesday, March 24. Give Choose is 24 hours of giving organized by the Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties to benefit local charities serving our community. The goal is to inspire our community to come together to give generously to charities that make our community the best place to grow up and grow old. With a donation as little as \$10, you can support wildlife habitat and help make Loudoun a place where people and wildlife thrive together. To learn more and to support Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy on this day, visit the event page on our website.

Creek Critters — Sunday, March 29, 1:00 pm, Chapman DeMary Trail. Join the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Purcellville Tree and Environment Sustainability Committee, and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy to get up close and personal with the tiny creek critters living in the South Fork of the Catoctin Creek at the Chapman DeMary Trail. Loudoun Wildlife Stream Team members will discuss the natural history of these critters, help participants learn how to identify them, and explain how they can help us determine the health of a stream. Family-friendly. **Registration required through Purcellville Parks and Recreation (<https://www.purcellvilleva.gov/720/Parks-Recreation>), available in March. Questions: Contact Amy Ulland at aulland@loudounwildlife.org.**

Spring Wildflowers of Northern Virginia — Thursday, April 2, 7:00 – 8:00 pm, Rust Library. As winter eases into spring, one of the first signs is the blooming of forest wildflowers. Some make dramatic carpets, some are tucked away in inconspicuous nooks; some are beautiful, and some are peculiar looking; many have interesting stories. Join Bill Cour for this presentation to inspire you to get out and see them for yourself. Bill leads our weekly spring habitat restoration event, Save the Bluebells: Garlic Mustard Pull at Ball's Bluff Park. This program is co-sponsored by

the Loudoun County Public Library and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. **Registration requested.**

JK Black Oak Workday — Saturday, April 4, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for habitat restoration projects that include invasive plant removal, protecting trees, and planting. Please be aware that you may encounter poison ivy and ticks at the work site. Long sleeves and pants, gloves, and insect repellent are recommended. **Limit 20 (minimum age 16). Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#). Questions: Contact Sheila Ferguson at sferguson@loudounwildlife.org. Note: Due to the environmentally sensitive habitat and rare species, JK Black Oak is not open for general public access.**

Spring Wildflowers at Ball's Bluff — Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am, OR Friday, April 10, 1:00 pm, Ball's Bluff Regional Park. Join John DeMary, well-known local naturalist and retired teacher, on April 4, or Virginia Master Naturalist Bill Cour on April 10 for a Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy field trip to explore this beautiful wooded riverside park for the early spring wildflowers that enrich the Potomac River Valley. Sign up early for one of these popular events. **Limit 15. Registration required: [Sign Up Online](#).**

Native Plant Sale — Saturday, April 11, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, Morven Park main parking lot. Native plants add beauty and interest to your garden year-round and provide habitat for wildlife. At Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Spring Native Plant Sale, you'll find a diverse selection of flowers, vines, trees, shrubs, and ferns from five outstanding local nurseries: Hill House Farm & Nursery, Nature By Design, Seven Bends Nursery, Watermark Woods Native Plants, and Yellow House Natives.

Our knowledgeable volunteers will be on hand to help you choose plants suited to your space and goals. Be sure to visit the Native Plant Information Center for expert talks offered throughout the day on topics like native plants for beginners, transitioning to a native





garden, and managing invasive species. Enjoy a cup of coffee from a local vendor while you explore tables hosted by nonprofit partners working to protect and restore native ecosystems. You'll also learn about our programs and how to get involved in local conservation efforts. To learn more, visit <https://loudounwildlife.org/event/spring-native-plant-sale/>. **Questions:** Contact nativeplantsale@loudounwildlife.org.

Spring Wildflowers at Rockland Farm — Sunday, April 12, 1:00 pm. Join the Piedmont chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a field trip to explore this beautiful area near White's Ferry for the early spring wildflowers. Sign up early for this sure-to-be-popular event. *Limit 15. Registration required: Sign Up Online.*

**** Celebrate Birds! and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Birdathon — Saturday, April 18, through Sunday, May 17.** Join us for our annual celebration of birds and bird migration. Loudoun Wildlife will offer a number of Celebrate Birds! walks visiting birding hotspots throughout the county. Some are listed on this page (look for the **!). To see a complete list of these walks and register for them, visit <https://loudounwildlife.org/celebrate-birds-go-birding/>.

The **Birdathon** (April 18–May 17) is our largest fundraising event of the year and a fun way to get outside! We invite you to either form a team or support an existing one. For more about the Birdathon, see the ad on page 7; visit <https://loudounwildlife.org/citizen-science/bird-counts/celebratebirds-birdathon/> for full details.

**** Birding Broad Run Stream Valley Park — Saturday, April 18, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy in search of birds at this surprisingly rich park along Broad Run, which combines several different habitat types, including rich floodplain on both sides of the stream, edge and meadow habitat, and multiple ponds. The varied habitat should provide the group with a good variety of migrating birds from shorebirds to warblers, as well as residents. Parking information

will be emailed to registered participants. *Limit 15. Registration required: Sign Up Online.*

**** Young Birders Walk at Bles Park — Sunday, April 19, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Young Birding Program for a bird walk for young birders at Bles Park. This park is a birding hotspot with a mix of water habitats that attract a diverse mix of species. Bring binoculars if you have them, or we will have some to share. We'll meet at the parking lot near the playground. *This walk is exclusively for young birders ages 10–18; a parent/guardian is welcome. Registration required: Sign Up Online. Questions: Contact Patrick Lewis at plewis@loudounwildlife.org.*

**** Birding Izaak Walton League — Sunday, April 26, 8:00 am.** The Loudoun County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League manages a rich natural property in western Loudoun that contains a wide variety of habitats and, as a result, supports a lot of birds, especially during migration. In partnership with the Chapter, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Allison Gallo and Bryan Henson will lead a bird walk there. *Limit 8. Registration required: Sign Up Online. Questions: Contact Bryan Henson at bhenson@loudounwildlife.org.*

**** Birding Morven Park — Sunday, April 26, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Carol Sottili and Molly Pinson Simoneau on a bird walk to explore Morven Park, a 1,000-acre preserve that hosts a mosaic of natural habitats rich in wildlife, including a wide variety of birds. *Limit 14. Registration required: Sign Up Online.*

**** Birding Goodstone Inn — Tuesday, April 28, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a bird walk at this beautiful private country estate in southwestern Loudoun. Goodstone has trails along Goose Creek and in surrounding fields and old woods just a couple miles north of Middleburg. *Limit 12. Registration required: Sign Up Online.*

**** Birding Beagle Club/Institute Farm — Wednesday, April 29, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Emily Southgate and Linda Millington who, with special permission, will visit the Institute Farm, home of the National Beagle Club of North America and on the National Register of Historic Places. The farm's brushy, scrubby intermediate habitat, bordered by mature forest, is home to many thicket-loving bird species. The group will also visit a nearby large farm that includes a large lake and extensive fields. *Limit 12. Registration required: Sign Up Online.*

Loudoun Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS) — Wednesday, April 29, 5:00 – 8:00 pm, Academies of Loudoun. SEAS is an annual event that brings students together to amplify their voices in environmental problem-solving. Individual presenters, green/eco-action teams, and youth groups share their projects on reducing waste, conserving energy, conducting citizen science, improving water quality, and preserving natural habitat in their schoolyards and communities. The event shows truly meaningful contributions to environmental stewardship in Loudoun. As a SEAS partner organization, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy has the opportunity to engage students and faculty in hands-on activities that highlight our environmental education and volunteer opportunities. See past winners, categories, and pictures at <https://www.loudounnature.org/seas>.

**** Birding Camp Highroad — Date TBD (likely Friday, May 1, or Wednesday, May 13), 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's Christine Perdue and Linda Millington at Camp Highroad in southwestern Loudoun, which has extensive fields, rich woodlands, and deep ravines through which the North Fork of Goose Creek and its many tributaries flow. In the spring it is home to a number of nesting birds, as well as many migrants. *Limit 12. Registration required: Sign Up Online.*

JK Black Oak Workday — Saturday, May 2, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. See April 4.

Run the Greenway — Sunday, May 3. We're excited to participate in the Dulles Greenway's Run the Greenway race. This event offers a unique opportunity for runners to raise money for Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and give back to Loudoun! Participants can choose between a 5k, 10k, Kids Fun Run, or virtual race. You can sign up as an individual or as part of a team and raise funds for Loudoun Wildlife; 100 percent of the funds raised on behalf of Loudoun Wildlife will come directly to us. Sign up at <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Dulles/RunTheGreenway>. The cars will be making way for runners, joggers, and walkers of all ages from our great community! Get ready to make a difference this year at Run the Greenway, see the toll road as you've never seen it before, and "May the forest be with you!" To learn more, visit <https://loudounwildlife.org/event/run-the-greenway/>.

**** Birding JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary — Wednesday, May 6, 8:00 am.** Join Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for a bird walk on this special property near Lucketts. Over 130 species of birds have been documented in its forests, meadows, and brushy areas, and there is always the chance of discovering more during spring migration. *Limit 15. Registration required: Sign Up Online. Note: Due to the environmentally sensitive habitat and rare species, JK Black Oak is not open for general public access.*

iPhone Photography — Thursday, May 7, 7:00 – 8:00 pm, Middleburg Library. Professional wildlife photographer Jeff Mauritzen will share technical and creative techniques to become a better iPhone photographer and visual storyteller. For over 13 years, Jeff has been guiding and lecturing as a photography expert for National Geographic Expeditions. This program is co-sponsored by the Loudoun County Public Library and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. *Registration requested.*





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Birders walk a snowy trail at Algonkian Regional Park. Photo by Bryan Henson