



Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage  
The Old Railway Station  
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# Habitat CHESAPEAKE WILDLIFE HERITAGE works

*The newsletter about building habitat for wildlife  
Spring 2002*



CWH President, Larry Albright, helps tag migrating Monarch butterflies at Barnstable Hill Farm.



*Habitat Works is published by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to creating, restoring and protecting wildlife habitat and establishing a more sustainable agriculture, through direct action, education and research, in partnership with public and private landowners. We welcome your comments and contributions.*

## CWH Helps Purchase Farm on Blackwater River

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage and the Biophilia Foundation recently purchased the 290-acre Riverbend Farm in Cambridge, Maryland to restore and protect wildlife habitat. This beautiful farm has one mile of waterfront on the Blackwater River and is located less than a quarter of a mile away from Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. The farm currently has 160 acres of agricultural land, 60 acres of woodlands and 70 acres of tidal wetlands.

Purchased for the purpose of restoring and protecting habitat for wildlife, CWH's initial management plan calls for the restoration of approximately 80 acres of nontidal wetlands, the establishment of about 40 acres of wooded buffers, and the creation of 20 acres of warm season grass meadows. When the restorations are completed, the property will be placed in a conservation easement that will permanently protect both the restored and currently existing habitat from development, logging, and conversion to agriculture. Twenty to forty acres will remain in agriculture and future owners will be restricted to two house sites on the property.

The Riverbend Farm project is a terrific example of how CWH's Chesapeake Care Habitat Restoration Program and Landowner Services Program work with landowners to restore and protect wildlife habitat. Our Chesapeake Care Program designs and builds wildlife habitat while the Landowner Services Program works with landowners to permanently protect wildlife habitat. The program also helps identify conservation acquisition properties and recruits conservation investors to help restore and protect these properties. CWH's Landowner Services Manager, Richard Pritzlaff, coordinated the acquisition. Pritzlaff commented, "This project will once again demonstrate that landowners can manage their property for wildlife and water quality, maintain their farm income, and have a return on their investment."

The restored wetlands at Riverbend will benefit a wide diversity of wildlife and help improve water quality in the Blackwater River. Researchers at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center found that within five years of restoration, a CWH wetland can provide favorable habitat for more than 60 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects, and over 100 species of plants. In partnership with CWH, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center has documented that our restored wetlands filter up to 70% of the pollutants that would otherwise foul the water of the Bay. Similarly, the woodland buffer and protection of the existing forest will benefit wildlife in and out of the river. These benefits will be especially important for the population of Delmarva Fox Squirrels currently inhabiting the property. The easement, which will protect the Riverbend woodland from logging, will greatly benefit this endangered fox squirrel as the species relies primarily on old growth forests for habitat. CWH wildlife ecologist Ned Gerber noted, "If we want our future generations to enjoy wildlife experiences, we must ensure that our wildlife have habitat. CWH is dedicated to working with landowners who want to help pass our wildlife heritage on to future generations."

*(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1)

The Riverbend project also helps realize numerous goals of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. This agreement provides the framework in which Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and the federal government will work to help improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. The goals include restoring and protecting wetlands and woodlands, and permanently protecting 20% of the land in the watershed. The preamble of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement states: "...we recognize the importance of viewing this document in its entirety with no single part taken in isolation of the others." We believe the Riverbend Farm project will be an excellent example of this statement.



# The Journey of the Monarch

Andi Pupke

For the past two years, CWH's Andi Pupke has been tagging migrating Monarchs along the Chester River. We have been taking part in a large study headed by the University of Kansas' Department of Entomology.

Why are we tagging these beautiful butterflies? We are trying to help clear up the mystery of how inexperienced Monarchs from all over the U.S. and parts of Canada end up in the same roosts in Mexico every year. In the process, we will help preserve habitat along their migration route.

Unlike most other insects in temperate climates, Monarch butterflies cannot survive a long cold winter. Instead, they spend the winter in roosting spots in a warmer climate. Monarchs west of the Rocky Mountains travel to small groves of trees along the California coast. Those east of the Rockies fly farther south to the forest high in the mountains of Mexico. The Monarch's migration is driven by seasonal changes, day length and temperature changes.

No other butterfly migrates as far as the Monarch of North America. Masses of Monarchs fly to the same winter roosts each year, some traveling up to three thousand miles. They are the only butterfly to make such a long, two-way migration. Their migration is more the type expected only from birds and whales, but unlike birds and whales, individual Monarchs can only make a two-way trip once, making it only partially "round trip." It is the "grandchildren" of the Monarchs that left the East Coast in the fall, that return there the following spring.

In the late summer and early fall the last brood of Monarchs for that year, emerge from their chrysalides. They are biologically and behaviorally different from those emerging during the summer. Even though these butterflies look like summer adults, they won't mate or lay eggs until the following spring. Instead,

they prepare for a strenuous flight.

These late summer adults store fat in their abdomen, which is a critical element of their survival for the winter. This fat not only fuels their flight of up to 3,000 miles, but it must last them until the following spring when they begin their flight back north because they do not nectar while in Mexico. As they migrate northwards, Monarchs will stop to nectar and actually gain weight during the entire trip.

The first generation of Monarchs returning from Mexico, will stop along the Gulf Coast from Texas to Florida, lay eggs and die. The eggs hatch, and the second generation Monarchs head for the Great Lakes region, lay eggs and die. Later, the third generation of Monarchs hatch and fly to the East Coast, where they breed and die.

Depending on the climate, there may be many broods during the summer months. The butterflies produced during this time are only living a short period of time and are concerned only with eating and breeding.

Given the great numbers of Monarchs (up to 100 million) that gather to migrate each fall, it is hard to imagine them facing any threat of extinction. In reality, however, Monarchs and their annual migration are seriously threatened by human activities in both their summer and over-wintering sites. The vast prairies that once were full of milkweed have been plowed under for many decades. U.S. farmers and road crews use an estimated 620 million pounds of herbicides yearly to stifle the growth of these types of native plants.

In the U.S., Monarchs are facing direct habitat destruction caused by humans. New roads, housing developments, and agricultural expansion all transform the natural landscape in ways that make it impossible for Monarchs to live and reproduce there.

CWH has been working with private landowners since 1980 to restore and protect wildlife habitat on private and public lands. Our wetland and meadow restorations are directly benefitting Monarchs and many of our other native wildlife.

# CWH In Action



From Top to Bottom:

CWH Agricultural Wildlife Ecologist, Robin Haggie, pulls the "Nitrogen Side Dress Injector," a piece of equipment used in our Sustainable Agriculture Program which limits fertilizer runoff by injecting nitrogen right next to the plant instead of broadcast spraying.



CWH Wildlife Technician, Geordie Newman puts down a wetline during a controlled meadow burn.



Volunteers build Wood Duck Boxes at the National Aquarium in Baltimore for the CWH annual box building event.



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# CWH and Conectiv Partner for Wildlife:

## *Habitat Diversity in Power Line Rights of Way*

Electric right-of-way (ROW) corridors are often looked upon as a necessary evil to supply the energy needs of today. However, as agriculture has intensified and “old field” habitat has become increasingly rare, power line corridors have assumed tremendous importance as the “last refuges” of suitable habitat for many rare plants in Maryland. Many of these species not only thrive in these ROWs but actually require perturbed and non-forested areas to survive. With over 600 miles of power line rights-of-way on the Delmarva Peninsula, some 6,600 acres of great wildlife habitat are right under our very nose.

Until only two decades ago, most of Delmarva’s power lines ROWs were periodically mown to keep tall trees from growing into the electric lines and interrupting service to customers. Conectiv discovered that mowing a ROW for

maintenance purposes is both expensive and dangerous as well as very destructive to wildlife using the ROW. Mowing in the spring and early summer destroys the nests of ground nesting birds like the Northern Bobwhite and kills mammals and reptiles, like rabbits and box turtles.

Not only is mechanical cutting disruptive to wildlife, it also allows nature’s power of regeneration to flourish. Within only two years a single Red maple stump can resprout more than 30 new trees from it’s established root system. These fast growing resprouts are often more dense than the previous stems, making it even harder to get rid of them as they out compete other plants for available growing space.

The judicious use of herbicides is another method used in ROWs to manage plant species and control the regrowth of established, yet unwanted, species.

Through selective herbicide treatments, unwanted vegetation is eliminated in favor of the preferred low growing plants. Once these low growing plants are established, less maintenance is needed because the shrubs and grasses slow down the growth of trees by competition.

Since 1983, Conectiv Power Delivery has gradually implemented an integrated vegetation management (IVM) system, which included hand-cutting, mechanical control, herbicide treatment, cultural methods, and biological control. These methods have not only produced a significant cost savings to the company, but have also created thousands of acres of potential wildlife habitat along ROWs in Maryland, Delaware and Virginia.

Recognizing the unique habitat of these ROW areas, Conectiv and CWH have partnered for over 10 years to carry out several ROW succession studies



### Ask Andi

By  
Andi Pupke

*The wildflower meadows along the roadside and in the medians are gorgeous in the spring. I am thinking of putting a small meadow in my yard. What benefits to wildlife do these meadows have and what type of seed should I use?*

The wildflower meadows along the roadsides are typically established using non-native mixes of wildflowers as well as a good deal of chemical. The blooms are so plentiful and pretty, because those meadows are often replanted each year, which requires a lot of time and money. The seed alone can cost as much as \$500 per acre.

As far as wildlife is concerned, a meadow with just wildflowers (like the roadside meadow) does not provide as much habitat as it could if it has native warm season grasses included. These grasses will produce more seed and come back year after year. The quantity of wildflower blooms, however, will decrease each year and will have to be over seeded every 2-3 years to maintain maximum bloom.

A warm season grass and wildflower meadow offers assorted birds and small mammals cover and seed during the Fall & Winter. It also attracts beneficial insects to pollinate flowers and feed young broods of ground nesting birds during the growing season. Of course, a meadow is almost always better for wildlife than a well manicured lawn.

If you decide to create a wildflower meadow, it is best to use wildflowers native to our area. The seed you use should come from a licensed and reputable seed provider, not from a discount retail store. Many times the wildflower seed mixes from discount stores have a poor species mix, and are

### Questions & Answers about wildlife

poor in quality despite how nice the picture of the meadow looks on the box. A certified seed provider should be able to tell you the seed’s purity and germination rate as well as the source of the seed.

The success in planting and maintaining a wildflower meadow is mostly in the establishment stage. It can take up to a full year to prepare the site correctly. If your yard is currently in fescue, the area to be planted should be sprayed with Round-up in the early spring and left alone throughout the summer. When the fescue begins to grow again near the end of the summer, it should be sprayed again. Do not turn over the soil, as it will only expose weed seeds to the sun, causing them to germinate. Plant your meadow with a no-till drill in late fall or early winter depending on the weather.

CWH includes wildflowers in our large-scale warm season grass meadows, however, we do not plant strictly wildflower meadows since they do not benefit wildlife as much as warm season grass meadows. Good Luck!

throughout the Eastern Shore to determine the effects of clearing and maintenance methods on plants and wildlife. Some of these study areas include ROWs through the Delaware Nature Society sanctuary at Abbott’s Mill in DE and along St. Michael’s Road in Talbot County. Most recently, Conectiv and CWH are conducting several long and short term studies of plant succession in and near the New Jersey Pine Barrens.

For years, the NJ Pinelands Commission has had a “no herbicide” rule in controlling plants in ROWs and have been using mowing and cutting methods instead. In partnership with Conectiv, CWH’s Agricultural Wildlife Ecologist, Robin Haggie, is comparing several herbicide treated ROWs adjacent to the Pinelands, with mechanically cut ones within the Pine Barrens.

Data from this study will show what plant and wildlife diversity appears and becomes established after herbicide treatment versus what species are found in the ROW within the Pinelands that are mechanically cut. The data will also show that a well planned and carefully thought out management plan can have great applicability in utility ROW management keeping wildlife and their habitat in mind as a foremost utility objective.

After Johnstone, R.A. & Michael R. Haggie 2001.

### BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BACKYARD WILDLIFE ENTHUSIAST

- *Peterson Field Guides, Birds’ Nest* by Hal Harrison
- *Butterflies of Delmarva* by Elton Woodbury
- *Newcomb’s Wildflower Guide* by Lawrence Newcomb
- *The Birder’s Handbook: A Field Guide to Natural History of North American Birds* by Ehrlich, Dobkin and Wheye
- *Dragonflies Through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America* by Sidney W. Dunkle
- *Chesapeake Bay: A Field Guide* by Christopher P. White

# CWH In Action



Top to Bottom:  
CWH Wildlife Ecologist/Director, Ned Gerber, and Austin Jamison, CWH Wildlife Technician, use a laser level to survey a site for a future wetland.

Foxwell’s Land Improvement use a “pan” to move earth for a 36 acre wetland at Canterbury Farm.

Mike Rajacich, CWH Senior Wildlife Technician, fills a Wood Duck Box with fresh nesting material.

Visit our website at:  
[www.cheswildlife.org](http://www.cheswildlife.org)

# If you Build It, They Will Come

*A story based on actual events conveyed to us by a CWH member and bluebird box landlord*

Susanna Engvall

Spring is upon us and nesting season will begin soon. Eastern Bluebirds, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens and Tree Swallows among many others are scouting out the perfect site to rear their young.

A pair of bluebirds begins their quest for a suitable nesting site. The beautiful bright blue male spots a nice looking site in your backyard. It has a roof, it is sturdy and it even comes with a cone-shaped predator guard to keep out the unsavory (snakes and raccoons in this case). A perfect site. The female begins the tedious task of building a nest from the fine grass and weed stalks found nearby. Five days later, the nest is soft enough, big enough and just right. It is time to lay the eggs. A long fourteen days is to follow while the mother and father eagerly await the arrival of their young.

Flitting around outside the box are two other birds. One has a striking black "bib" on his throat and chest and the other, a nondescript female with brown to light brown coloring. They too have begun their quest for a suitable nesting site. Down below the male sees a perfect site. It has a roof, it is sturdy and it even comes with a cone-shaped predator guard. The couple who live in the lot next to it even look like nice people who may even feed them. And what is even better about this box? Most of the work is already done. It comes WITH a nest.

The new pair of birds (we'll call them House and Sparrow) begin restoration efforts on the existing nest. More cushioning is needed due to the five pale blue, egg-shaped bumps in the hollow of the nest. House and Sparrow collect whatever they can find to place on top of these five annoying bumps. They find hair, plastic bag pieces, twisty ties, string and other miscellaneous trash to fill the box to the brim so they can begin their family. They lay their eggs. Twelve days later, the eggs hatch, leaving five little babies that look much like them and the family lives happily ever after (including having about three to five more broods that same season). By the end of this one nesting season, House and Sparrow have a flock of 15-25 birds... just from that one perfect house!

What happened to the bluebirds that found the perfect nesting site? Nothing. The five annoying bumps just sat and sat, until they turned rotten and began to smell. One of the bumps started to hatch with a beautiful baby bluebird, but never did because the bluebird mother didn't have a chance to properly attend to the eggs because House and Sparrow's nest was on top of them.

Sad isn't it? Hopefully the nice people in the lot next to the perfect box learned something from this tragic story. They learned that peeking in on their neighbors throughout nesting season is not only a nice thing to do, but it can assure them that nothing terrible has happened to their new bright blue neighbors. They also learned that just because they built this perfect house with a roof and a predator guard, and called it a "Bluebird Box" does not mean that bluebirds will be the only birds that think it is perfect. Ignoring the inhabitants who take up residence in the box, may lead to unwanted characters (House Sparrows) using the house instead.

The House Sparrow, unlike our native sparrows, is actually a weaver finch introduced from Europe in the mid-1800s. House Sparrows will work relentlessly to destroy other birds' eggs and young, and sometimes even the adults too, in an effort to compete for both nesting space and food. Frequently, they are successful in out-competing native birds. There are estimates that there are twice as many House sparrows across the country as all native songbirds combined - a sad thought considering they aren't even native to North America.

There are many ways bluebird box landlords can control House Sparrows. The single one that works best? Monitor, monitor, monitor. By making sure House Sparrows do not even begin laying eggs in the box, you can save yourself the trouble of "eradicating" the sparrows later. If you find the beginnings of a House Sparrow nest in your box, get rid of it before any eggs are laid! It is easier to keep the "unwanted characters" out in the first place, rather than having to figure out a way to get rid of them once they have taken over.

To see pictures of wanted and unwanted nests to watch for in your boxes visit the CWH website at <http://www.cheswildlife.org> and click on "Nest Pictures."

For more articles about these pesky birds, visit <http://audubon-omaha.org/bbbo/ban/hsbyse.htm> or <http://members.tripod.com/~herper/nothingbuttrouble.html>

## Thank You For Your Annual Appeal Support!

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage would like to thank our members for their support in the 2001 Annual Appeal! Annual Appeal donations for 2001 totaled \$106,890, up from \$93,823 in the 2000 Annual Appeal. Thank you for your confidence in our ability to do the best we can with your dollars for wildlife habitat.

Donations from our valued members help to support a wide range of projects designed to protect our Bay's natural heritage. The bulk of our revenues, derived from private foundation and government grants and project income fees, are usually restricted to the specific habitat project for which they were requested. Unrestricted contributions from our members from the Annual Appeal and Membership Drives are crucial to CWH so we can continue to pay rent, utilities, and staff salaries.

Our 2002 Membership drive is in the works and should be arriving in your mailbox soon. Your support is critical to helping us continue with our mission to create and restore wildlife habitat. In 2002, invite a friend to join CWH with you!

# Planning to Help Wildlife Survive

A planned gift to CWH can lower estate taxes for your family, support wildlife and the Bay, and, depending on the type of gift, provide some income for a beneficiary. Planned gifts should always be reviewed by your financial advisor or estate planning lawyer, especially in light of recent tax law changes.

It is important to remember that the recent repeal of the estate tax only applies to one year (2010). Over the next decade estate tax exemptions will rise from the current \$1,000,000 exemption to \$3,500,000 in 2009. Unless Congress acts, the estate tax will reappear in 2011 with a \$1,000,000 exemption. In addition, heirs may face increased capital gains taxes on highly appreciated assets they inherit from your estate beginning in 2010.

The most basic type of a planned gift is a bequest. Bequests can lower

estate tax burdens and allow you to determine where your money will go rather than the federal government. Including CWH in your will is as simple as adding a codicil that names "Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, Inc." as a beneficiary.

Additional planned gifts can include life insurance policies and Charitable Remainder Trusts. New life insurance policies can be purchased or old policies transferred to make CWH the recipient of the death benefits. Certain tax deductions are permitted for gifts of life insurance. Charitable Remainder Trusts are a popular device for individuals to give a significant gift to a charity, receive some tax breaks and provide income for a family member but can be very complicated.

Please call our Director of Development, Christopher B. Pupke, if you have any questions or would like to make a planned gift to CWH.

## Toad Homes

*Here is a simple way to make a safe resting spot for toads.*

- Get a medium-size clay pot and saucer from a garden center, or use a broken pot you already have.
- Fill the saucer with water and place it in a shady spot next to your house or in your yard.
- Nearby, place the pot upside-down with one edge resting on a rock, leaving room for a toad to fit through and hide inside. (A broken pot with a chunk missing at the rim gives the toad home an instant doorway - no need to prop it up.)
- Watch for night visitors.

*Yes! I would like to join with Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage to help build and preserve wildlife habitat.*

I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as my tax deductible contribution.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information on the Planned Giving Program.

Please make your check payable to Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, or charge to:

Visa  M/C Account # \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please mail to: Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, P.O. Box 1745, Easton, MD 21601*

*CWH is a private nonprofit organization designated 501(c)(3) by the IRS. A financial statement is available upon request.*

**CORPORATE MATCHING:** Don't forget corporate matching contributions. The company you work for or are retired from may be able to match your donation to CWH. Check with your personnel office to obtain a matching gift form. Mail the form to us along with your tax-deductible donation. We do the rest.