



A Home for Life

Our natural areas (and sometimes your backyard) provide refuge to the millions of animal neighbors we have in Fairfax County. From the dead tree which is now home to an owl to the abandoned woodchuck burrow that a fox has claimed, animals can live in the oddest places. However, just like you, animals need a clean place to

This may look like a dead tree to you, but it's a luxury condominium to hundreds of Fairfax County's wild residents.

sleep at night, plenty of naturally nutritious food to eat and a safe place to raise their young. The next time you walk in a park, look around to see if you can spot evidence of the animals who live there. Maybe a deer track or dropped feather from a cardinal – or if you are very still, a rabbit may show itself.

Great Stewards

Our wildlife neighbors are stewards of Fairfax County too. When we value the things that wildlife do to maintain our natural areas we understand the importance of protecting wildlife for future generations. Here are some examples of how wildlife helps protect our county.

- **Squirrels** plant the nuts from trees, so that future trees will grow.
- **Worms and termites** help decompose logs into soil so that wildflowers can thrive.
- **Moths and butterflies** pollinate our flowers and provide food for birds.
- **Bats and dragonflies** eat the mosquitoes that annoy us with their itchy bites.

"We learned to be patient observers like the owl. We learned cleverness from the crow, and courage from the jay, who will attack an owl ten times its size to drive it off its territory. But above all of them ranked the chickadee because of its indomitable spirit."

Tom Brown, Jr.,
The Tracker

Wildlife are Inspiring

More than 40 percent of Americans report that they feed birds at some point in their lives. Why? Because birds are beautiful! Watching all forms of wildlife, be it birds at a home feeder or a raccoon in a park, inspires curiosity. When we value wildlife we cannot underestimate the pleasure of their beauty and their importance as a source of interest. Experiencing wildlife contributes to the high quality of life that we enjoy.



A female cardinal plucks a morsel from a bird feeder.

If not you, who? Small things.

- ◆ **Remember to clean your birdbaths every week.** Leaving standing water around for more than one week encourages mosquitoes.

- ◆ **Compost yard waste.** The grass and leaves will turn into "black gold" that will help the plants in your yard grow.

- ◆ **Consider planting an extra plant for wildlife.** Instead of fighting the bugs and animals with harsh chemicals, plant species like marigold or dill to attract beneficial insects.

If not you, who? Big things.

- ◆ **Creating a land preservation agreement with a land trust** on your property can help preserve wildlife, water quality and natural areas in general.

For more information on these or other ideas, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/stewardship.

From smallest to largest, each member of the natural world serves a purpose.



Spotlight Species

Bald Eagle

After decades on the endangered list, the bald eagle has made a comeback all over the U.S. This regal national symbol has a place in Fairfax County as well. Today, eagles can be spotted soaring over the fields of Frying Pan

Park's Kidwell Farm, hunting the marshes of Little Hunting Creek or swooping down from the trees at Riverbend Park to explore the shoreline of the Potomac.

Luna Moth

The luna moth is most at home in our cool, humid forests. Measuring six inches from snout to tail, the luna is best known for its iridescent yellow-green color. Even though lunas are common in Fairfax County, they are nocturnal, so you will only see them at night. Each in their own way, Fairfax County's moths, butterflies and other insects have a story to tell.

Care, Educate, Inspire

Stewardship is about working together to care for the environmental and cultural resources of Fairfax County. People become stewards for different reasons. They may want to help ensure clean water and air. They may wish to share something with their children. They may be inspired by spiritual beliefs. Whatever prompts our commitment, it is easy to take an active role in stewardship. It can be a small and simple thing, or it can be much bigger. Either way, it all adds up to a Fairfax County that looks to its past with pride and to its future with confidence.

You can learn more about Fairfax County Stewardship, the Board of Supervisor's 20-year environmental vision and the Fairfax County Park Authority at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/stewardship



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White-tailed Deer



Red-shouldered Hawk



Blue Dasher Dragonfly



Skink

Kevin Munroe and Tony Robison



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Swallowtail Butterfly



Green Heron



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American Toad



River Otter

Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org



Great Egret



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Widow Skimmer



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

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Snapping Turtle



Great Blue Heron



Green Frog



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Pearl Crescent Butterfly



Beaver

John White