

Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists Newsletter

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Our Mission:

The Mission of the Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists is to protect and enhance the natural resources and wildlife habitats of the Greater Lake Norman area for all to enjoy.

Wildlife Spring Fling!

At LangTree Lake Norman

Surely Mother Nature will bless us with a beautiful sunny day, because we are celebrating her! Our family event highlights all things “nature”. From area wildlife and native plants to beautifying your yard to bee-keeping to boating and water sports. Experts will be on hand to speak about native flora – including a demonstration of meat-eating plants, aliens all around us, why snakes get a bad rap, and what strange and wonderful things might be found by donning scuba gear and searching the depths of Lake Norman.

Just for the kids, we have a host of nature-related games and crafts, including a wildlife costume contest (8 and under), a test of local wildlife identification, and for those fifteen years and younger, a **DRAWING FOR A LIFETIME FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSE!** Kids will have the opportunity to interact with live fish, reptiles, bees and horses.

The festive atmosphere will be enhanced by the music of six area bands, scrumptious offerings from multiple food vendors, performances by the amazing Acrofitness team, and the antics of some adorable animals from three of our area animal rescue volunteer agencies.

Mark your calendar and set your sights on a fun day, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 18, at LangTree Lake Norman!

—Don West

Islands of Lake Norman: Jewels of the Catawba

Adopting an Island Helps Our Wildlife!

As development continues, the islands of Lake Norman are becoming more valuable as habitats for wildlife. In fact the island ecosystems, unique to most inland water bodies in North Carolina, are so valuable in a rapidly developing region of the country that LNWC has made them the cornerstone of our local wildlife conservation efforts.

There are almost 90 islands in Lake Norman, most of which are owned by Duke Energy. The Island Habitat Program encourages and allows individuals and groups to ‘adopt an island’ whereby they agree to regularly clean refuse and debris throughout the year. In addition, island adopters have the opportunity to enhance the wildlife habitat of their island by erecting and maintaining nesting boxes, establishing needed plantings to control erosion and provide food sources, and monitoring results.

Due to the increase in lake users, trash in the lake, which washes up on

the shores of the islands, is increasing as well, causing a detriment to turtles, shorebirds and fish. LNWC is doing its job to get the word out about the islands, said LNWC President Billy Wilson.

Fun ways to get involved:

- Become an osprey monitor
- Gather nesting data on wood ducks/warbblers and brown-headed nuthatches (via the established nest box program on the islands)
- Help with build days for nest boxes and platforms
- Adopt an island
- Assist on planting days
- Help with identifying fish reef locations and data collection

“Every acre and every species matters. The Island Habitat Program allows folks to make a positive difference for habitat and wildlife, and furthers appreciation for natural resource conservation,” Billy said. Interested? Contact Billy at 704-675-2011 or Billy.Wilson@LNWC.org

Spotlight on LKN Wildlife: Mammals

It's a Skunk!

Sometime around the end of May 2014, I came across this cute striped baby skunk or "kit" as they are known when they are little. He and his four siblings were found together under a bush, in my neighbor's yard. They were having a good time and didn't seem bothered that I was taking their picture; but be warned, skunks can spray at eight days old!



Skunks are talented diggers and swimmers. Their eyesight is poor, so they depend on their nose and ears to help them better manage their world.

They are omnivores and eat a variety of insects, worms, fruits, eggs, seeds and small rodents.

Lake Norman is home to many beautiful animals and I feel privileged to share a glimpse into their environment.

—**Lisa Squicciarini**, LNWC Volunteer

Information was attained through ncpedia.org which credits NC Wildlife Resources Commission and the Division of Conservation for Education.

Coyotes! Not a Native, But Definitely Here



It always amazes me how close wildlife can come to our doorsteps, without us having the slightest clue. It is even more amazing when you think about the big predators that move in and out of suburbia, roaming across the nicely manicured yards and weaving around the carefully erected home gardens. From leopards in Thailand, to mountain lions in California, to right here in our own red clay lawns. Yes, I'm talking about coyotes in North Carolina.

The coyote, or *Canis latrans*, is a relative of the grey wolf that diverged about one to two million years ago. They are a native species to North America. Coyotes are often classified as carnivores, but perhaps omnivore would be more appropriate. They are opportunistic feeders who will hunt and eat anything ranging from small rodents, fish, frogs, insects, snakes, fruit, and berries. Coyotes will also scavenge on road kill and neighborhood trash cans. Coyotes often live in packs that revolve around a reproductive female. Coyotes are monogamous, live in and around birthing dens for much of the year, and are much less aggressive than its grey wolf relative at defending territories. They are also one of the most vocal of the North American mammals and their

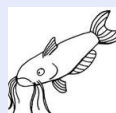
latin name, *Canis latrans*, actually means "barking dog". Coyotes have different vocalizations for alarms, greetings and identifications. These vocalizations include woofs, barks, growls, yips, whines, huffs, and lone howls.

Coyotes by nature tend to avoid humans and all of the commotion we make. In fact, coyotes are most active at night and during the dawn and dusk hours. This may be an adaptation to living alongside neighborhoods and homes. Many readers may remember a speaker who came to one of LNWC's Mooresville Library Programs in March of 2014. The speaker was Naturalist Christopher Matthews of Mecklenburg County. Christopher gave a presentation on Coyotes in Your Neighborhood where he talked about his project of using radio collars to track coyote movements in Mecklenburg County. Unfortunately, the state of North Carolina has yet to fund Mr. Matthews' project, so it is still in the preliminary stages.

Coyotes are in North Carolina, but most of us could go our whole lives without ever seeing one. They are skittish animals that would rather avoid us if they can. That being said, coyotes are wild animals and should be treated with caution and respect. If you do see a coyote call Animal Control to report the sighting.

—**Kayla Chappell**, LNWC Volunteer

*Sources: National Geographic, ncwildlife.org, native-languages.org
Photo: Wikipedia.org*



Conservationist Updates!

Robbins Park

The Town of Cornelius has done a lot of work and the park is looking great! The board walk and fishing pier is in place at the big pond. The fishing pier is floating and ready for final attachment in the small pond. The handicap accessible trails have not been paved yet, but that will happen soon now that the weather has improved. The drawing for the pergola is at the engineer's for approval and then will be sent to the county for permitting. **Steve Turley** made the drawing.

An addition to the Butterfly Garden will be planted in May. We have tree species identification signs ready for installation once the trees have leaved – this will help us identify which signs for which trees. The Town of Cornelius will have a Phase 2 Robbins Park opening event with ribbon cutting on April 25th at their Earth Day celebration. Our support to this event is in discussion.

—Sid Smith



Billy Wilson Elected to State Board

In February, LNWC President **Billy Wilson** joined the North Carolina Wildlife Federation's Board of Directors. NCWF CEO **Tim Gestwicki** said he is pleased that our organization's conservation work attracted the attention and commitment of a person of Billy's caliber. "As an avid angler and sailor, Billy joined the local chapter in an effort to contribute to the protection and enhancement of Lake Norman's wildlife and its habitat," Tim stated, adding, "Billy is a welcomed addition to our fish and wildlife team!"

"I am passionately committed to serving the federation at the state and local levels," Billy said, "and I'm looking forward to spending my time and energy working to protect North Carolina wildlife and habitats"

Help Us By Joining or Renewing!

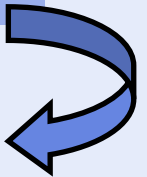
Last year, LNWC supporters stepped up in a BIG way to help us protect wildlife by joining LNWC en masse. This year, \$4,000 is up for grabs. Please visit www.LNWC.org for membership information!

Loon, A Winter Migrant



— Kristen Meng

Thank You to Our Major Sponsors!



Chapter Leaders

Billy Wilson, President
Sid Smith, Vice President
Don West, Treasurer
Julie Higgin, Secretary

Directors at-large:
Eric Peterson
Jim Ray
Kristen Meng
Don Higgin
Ken Teeter

LNWC's Board of Directors meets at 6 p.m. on the first Monday of the month at Keller Williams Realty, 118 Morlake Dr., Mooresville. Join us!

We welcome photos and article ideas for our newsletter. Contact Julie Higgin, editor, at jchiggin@yahoo.com