



## 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.



## Heron Island Tour Provides Exciting Nature Education!

Members and guests of the Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists spent several hours each of the first two Saturdays in May surveying the natural beauty of the colonial water-bird nesting site in Davidson Creek. Heron Island, as it is commonly known, is home to scores of adult great blue herons as they rear their young in the large stick-built nests in the tops of the trees (mostly coniferous) on the island. Most nests had two large chicks which necessitated continual food gathering by both parents. The birds on what is commonly called Heron Island, the largest heronry on the Catawba River, put on dazzling displays of food gathering, feeding of their chicks, preening, and nest repairing. Additional field trips to observe other interesting Lake Norman wildlife throughout the year are being planned and we hope you will join us.



--Lisa Squicciarini



—Gene Vaughn

## Habitat Training This Summer!

Are you a bird watcher? Animal lover? Phobic about snakes? Love plants but have no idea which plants are native and which are invasive? Tree-hugger? Environmentalist or conservationist?

Have we got a class for you!

Join us for a very special Habitat Steward Training on Friday, July 31st, Saturday, Aug. 1st and Sunday, Aug. 2nd at LangTree Clubhouse in Mooresville. This is a National Wildlife Federation program, offered through North Carolina Wildlife Federation to benefit the Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists.

Learn how to create certified wildlife habitats at homes, businesses, places of worship and schools. Find out about threats to our environment in NC. Learn about the value of native plants and the harm done by non-native invasives. Find out what you can do to protect the monarch butterfly and provide it with a habitat in your own backyard. And that's just a small amount of what you'll learn in this training.

Registration is open now and the class size is limited to 30 people. The cost is only \$55. Interested? Contact **Debbie Foster** at [fostdebbie@gmail.com](mailto:fostdebbie@gmail.com) for more information or for an application.

# Spotlight on LKN Wildlife: Reptiles

## Eastern Box Turtle

Spring is transitioning to summer in the Lake Norman area, and with that comes more frequent sightings of our native North Carolina critters. Gray squirrels darting to and fro, honey bees buzzing by and, of course, the steady trot of the Eastern Box Turtle often across our motorways. How many of us have swerved to avoid a collision or even, more likely with our passionate wildlife readers, stopped our car to help the turtles across the road? So let's learn a little more about our state reptile.



The Eastern Box Turtle, or *Terrapene carolina carolina*, became the official state reptile of North Carolina in 1979 and is the only land turtle found in North Carolina. Their range is statewide. The box turtle was given its name because of its ability to completely “box up” when it feels threatened. This means that the upper shell (carapace) and lower shell (plastron) close without leaving a gap, forming a tight “box” to protect the turtle from harm. If injured, the Box Turtle can actually grow back parts of its shell over time. Their coloration is typically brownish or black with yellow or orange radiating patterns of lines of spots.

Eastern Box Turtles have a varied diet consisting of earthworms, snails, slugs, grubs, beetles, caterpillars, fallen fruit, various grasses, berries, mushrooms, flowers, and even animal carrion leftover from predator kills. Adult male Box Turtles are often larger and more brightly colored than the females. The males also have larger hind legs and blockier heads. Typically males will have red or orange eyes, while the females have brown eyes. Males also have a concave indentation on the rear lower shell to help during the mating process.

Box Turtles typically live to be between 25 and 30 years old, but some wild individuals have been found to be between 40 to 50 years old. They do not have many natural predators apart from humans. Raccoons, foxes, skunks, and snakes will eat turtle eggs and young. Turtle nests can also come under attack from red fire ants. Box turtle nests, like most reptiles, are dependent on temperature. Warm nesting temperatures tend to produce female hatchlings, while cooler nest temperatures tend to produce males.

Eastern Box Turtles are slow crawlers, even when compared with other turtle species. This characteristic paired with their slow maturity rate, and few successful offspring each year, make them very susceptible to endangerment from humans. Many Box Turtles fall victim to back county road and highway death. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has placed the Eastern Box Turtle on the Vulnerable Species List because of this and habitat destruction. If you do stop to move an Eastern Box Turtle from the road be sure to place them on the side of the road that they were heading for. Box Turtles have a homing ability that causes them to route back to nesting sites and frequent feeding grounds.

—Kayla Chappell

## President's Report — A CROWning Achievement

This spring, CROWN (Charlotte, Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature), the Charlotte chapter of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF), announced that the City of Charlotte has been certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat. The special designation makes Charlotte the largest city east of the Mississippi to be certified by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and the third largest in the U.S. Community Wildlife Habitat, a national recognition program for neighborhoods, towns, cities, and counties, recognizes and celebrates community wide efforts to green landscapes and buildings, improve air and water quality, restore vital wildlife habitat and improve health and well-being of inhabitants - one property at a time. LNWC congratulates CROWN on this great achievement! In 2011, LNWC's Wild Over LKN! initiative helped Lake Norman acquire the certification, and our area became the largest Community Wildlife Habitat in the nation that surrounds a body of water. It's never too late to certify your property! Please visit [www.LNWC.org](http://www.LNWC.org)

# First Spring Fling Really Rocked!

Mother Nature put on a real show for our Nature Spring Fling – blue skies, fluffy white clouds, a gentle breeze, all wrapped in a perfect mid-70's day. Almost 50 vendors participated, offering a vast array of products and services, ranging from decorative birdhouses, fountains and wildlife basics, native plants and landscaping tips to boating, paddleboarding, outdoor furniture and appliances, camping, and firearms training.

Visitors were treated to a seemingly endless number of choices for food and beverage. LangTree restaurants Baccus, Sunup Café, Oriental Express and Sky Café did a brisk business. Mobile vendors were also present, selling tacos, barbecue, fajitas, wraps, ice cream, pretzels and more. And we offer a special thanks to D9 Brewery, who is fast becoming our “official” beer company.

Kids experienced a special day, playing with live fish, making pine cone feeders, rolling Playdough wildflower seed balls, learning about native wildlife, even seeing the honeybee queen strut her stuff. Pomolas equestrian ranch gave rides to over 100 excited children. One lucky youth won the drawing for a lifetime NC hunting and fishing license! Thank you to Brandon Butler, LangTree Marketing Director, and the rest of the LangTree staff for helping us host this special day for our community!

—Don West

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*The Garden Shed displayed spring beauty.*



*Little ones learned about nature.*



*We spread the word about keeping our lake clean for wildlife and for ourselves.*

# Robbins Park Looking Great!

**R**obbins Park in Cornelius has really been hopping! Butterfly Garden planting has been done, mulch has been delivered, plans for a new Butterfly Garden Pergola are completed, the watering system is in, and tree identification signs are being installed throughout the park, according to Vice President Sid Smith, who's in charge of the project.

On planting day, Sid said, "There were six volunteers plus Carol (Sid's wife), Eric (Peterson), and me. We planted purple and yellow cone flowers, false indigo, and little blue stem prairie grass." Milkweed was planted a couple of weeks later, as it had to get bigger. "We had fun," Sid said.

LNWC's help in planning and implementing this beautiful nature preserve was acknowledged

during the town's Earth Day celebration. At that time, the park's newly refurbished ponds were shown to the public and fish were allowed to re-enter!



Our volunteers continue to clean out non-native invasive plants and to provide wildlife habitat enhancement, as well as educational items such as interpretive signage to the park. This fall, the pergola should be ready for installation. Go have a look at this beautiful community park!

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

LNWC's library programs are on hiatus for the summer, but will return 7 p.m. Sept. 10th at Mooresville Public Library. Have any ideas for speakers? Contact Sid Smith at [grizzer2010@yahoo.com](mailto:grizzer2010@yahoo.com)

**Habitat Steward Training** is July 31, Aug. 1 & 2. (See p1)

Our annual **Wildlife Oyster & Shrimp Fest** is on the platter Sept. 19 at LangTree Lake Norman!



## Thank You to Our Major Sponsors!



## Chapter Leaders

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**Sid Smith**, Vice President  
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LNWC's Board of Directors meets at 6 p.m. on the first Monday of the month (except during the summer) 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](mailto:jchiggin@yahoo.com)