CHESAPEAKE WILDLIFE HERITAGE

Habitat works

The newsletter about restoring and creating habitat for wildlife
Spring 2009

Wood Duck at Canterbury Farm
(Photo by David Judd)

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.

Canterbury Farm Donated to CWH

by Chris Pupke

In December 2008, Canterbury Farm was donated to Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage by Mrs. Martha Ann Healy and her family. This extraordinary gift will benefit wildlife near Easton, Maryland. The 150-acre farm is located on Baileys Neck and contains approximately 100 acres of wetlands, 30 acres of mature woodlands, a 5-acre farm pond, and 15 acres of agricultural land.

CWH worked with Mrs. Healy in 2001 to restore 100 acres of wetlands on the farm. The wetland restoration work included 18 acres of forested wetlands, 45 acres of wet meadows and 38 acres of shallow emergent wetlands. This wetland habitat complimented four acres of wetlands CWH restored on the property in 1990.

The varied wetland habitats provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife including Scarlet Tanagers (forested wetlands), Song Sparrows (wet meadows) and Northern Pintails (shallow emergent wetlands). Indeed, in the short time since restoration, the wetlands at Canterbury Farm have become one of the most important waterfowl sanctuaries in Talbot County.

The wetland restorations also helped improve water quality in the Tred Avon River and the Chesapeake Bay. The property sits in the watersheds of both Peachblossom Creek and Trippe Creek, major tributaries of the Tred Avon River.

CWH Director/Wildlife Habitat Ecologist, Ned Gerber, said, "The wetlands at Canterbury provide critical habitat for wildlife in Talbot County. We are grateful for Mrs. Healy's dedication to wildlife. She has provided landowners throughout the Chesapeake Bay region with an outstanding example of how farms can be managed for the benefit of wildlife."

Mrs. Healy's amazing stewardship of Canterbury Farm did not end with the restoration of the wetlands. In 2004, she donated a conservation easement on the farm to CWH and the Maryland Environmental Trust that ensured the farm would stay wild forever.

CWH President, Ralph Partlow, said, "We are humbled by this exceptional gift. Mrs. Healy has given CWH a wonderful property for wildlife and a high standard to meet when it comes to caring for the wildlife enjoying the farm. We owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude."

Canterbury Farm is the largest remnant of Canterbury Manor. Canterbury was one of the first land grants from Lord Baltimore in Maryland. It was granted to Richard Tilghman in 1659 as 1,000 acres on Baileys Neck. The grant included "all the royaltys and

(continues on page 3)

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Waterfowl Festival and Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage Provide Sanctuaries for Canada Geese

Canada Geese enjoy a restored wetland at Bennett Point Farm near Queenstown, which is co-owned by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. (Photo by David Judd)

The Waterfowl Festival Canada Goose Sanctuary Program provides valuable winter habitat for native migratory Canada Geese. The program is funded by the Waterfowl Festival and administered by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage.

Farmers and landowners are paid to leave standing corn in their fields and/or plant a winter cover crop. These sanctuary sites provide safe resting havens and food for over-wintering, migrating Canada Geese.

Farms throughout the Mid-Shore Region participated in the program during the 2008-09 winter, including properties in Talbot, Queen Anne's and Kent counties. Approximately 4,000 acres of land are managed as sanctuaries under this program.

Canada Geese breed in the Ungava Peninsula in northern Canada. The Chesapeake Bay region, and in particular the Mid-Shore area, provides critical over-wintering habitat for these migratory birds. The familiar sight of the V-shaped flocks harkens the arrival of Fall.

The Waterfowl Festival Canada Goose Sanctuary Program has provided successful winter habitat management for migratory geese for the last 21 years. Long-term sanctuaries are among the best methods for ensuring that migratory geese will continue to winter in the region and return in good condition to their northern breeding grounds.

CWH matched a $10,000 grant from the Waterfowl Festival with funds from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program ($12,700) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Cover Crop Program ($8,275). In addition, Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage contributed more than $9,000 worth of standing corn.

The Waterfowl Festival is dedicated to wildlife conservation, the promotion of wildlife art, and the celebration of life on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Twelve venues throughout the Town of Easton feature world-class wildlife paintings, sculpture, carvings and photos. Over the last 38 years, the Festival has become a leader in the conservation of waterfowl and wildlife habitat. More than $5 million has been raised and donated to projects throughout the Atlantic Flyway, and in particular the Chesapeake Bay. The 2009 Festival is scheduled for November 13, 14 and 15.

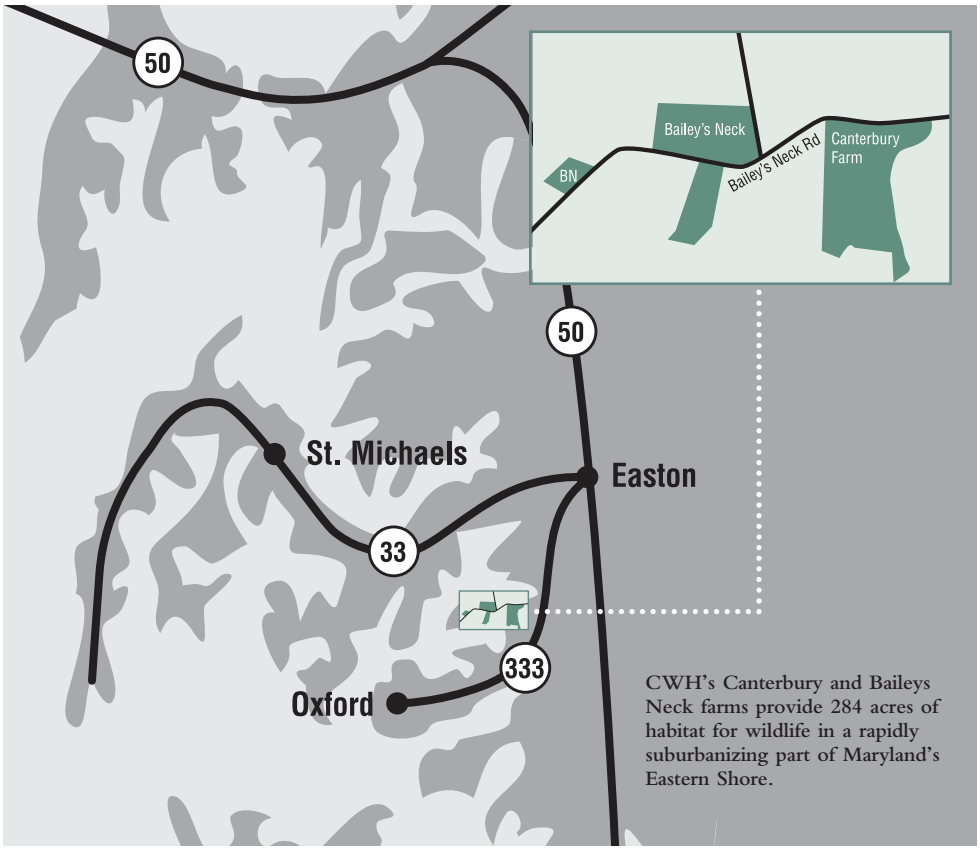
(Canterbury Farm continued from page 1)

privileeges most usually belonging to Mannors in England."

The property was once slated for over 40 homes. It was originally part of the country club development. Mrs. Healy purchased the farm in the 1980's to prevent a housing development from destroying the farm.

CWH will build on the example Mrs. Healy has provided. Our plans for the future will focus on managing the habitat to ensure wildlife continue to call Canterbury home. One particular management challenge will be the ever present non-native pear trees that thrive throughout this part of Talbot County.

Canterbury Farm is located less than one mile from CWH's Baileys Neck Farm, a 135-acre farm which was donated to CWH in 2005 by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. When taken together, the two properties provide 284 acres of habitat for wildlife in a rapidly suburbanizing part of Maryland's Eastern Shore. CWH now owns 1,150 acres of land that are managed to maximize the benefits for wildlife.



CWH's Canterbury and Baileys Neck farms provide 284 acres of habitat for wildlife in a rapidly suburbanizing part of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Wetland restorations at Canterbury Farm provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife as well as help to improve water quality in the Tred Avon River.

CWH Partnership with Landowners and USDA Helps Shenandoah River

By Austin Jamison

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage has been busy planting native, warm-season grasses in Augusta County, Virginia over the past three years. Located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, Augusta County is one of Virginia's largest agricultural counties, and contains some of the most important headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay.

Thanks to the leadership of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Augusta County office, acreages have increased from 29 acres in 2006 to more than 100 acres last year. In 2009, even more acres of these important buffers will be planted.

Many of these warm-season grass plantings are part of the USDA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and take place on marginal pasture land primarily composed of tall fescue. The farm animals utilizing the pastures contribute pollutants that help foul the waters of the Shenandoah River and its tributaries. Furthermore, the fescue makes very poor habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife because of its thick, sod-like growth.

Converting these areas to native, warm-season grasses, including big and little bluestem, and wildflowers such as partridge pea and black-eyed susan, creates the structure and cover that bobwhite quail and other grassland birds need. These meadows also provide habitat for important pollinators.

NRCS District Conservationist, Bobby Whitescarver, says: "Interest has increased because of several factors, first of all because there is an organization that can actually do the work, namely Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage. Second of all, once we educate our participants on the detrimental effects of tall fescue, they understand the need to get rid of it and to put in something native that will help wildlife. And, I think the third reason is that the quail population is so low here in the (Shenandoah)Valley most people consider it an endangered species."

Enrolling these areas in CREP not only allows for the conversion of nonnative fescue to native, warm-season grasses, but also excludes livestock from streams, ponds, wetlands, and other water features. The buffers benefit water quality in the Shenandoah River and eventually the Chesapeake Bay.

For more information on CWH's habitat work in Virginia, contact our Blue Ridge Division Coordinator, Austin Jamison, at 434.825.7587 or ajamison@cheswildlife.org.

CWH's Blue Ridge Division Coordinator, Austin Jamison, loads a specially designed Truax planter with warm-season grass seed for a buffer planting along the Middle River, a major tributary of the Shenandoah River.

Waterfowl Whirl 2008

On Saturday November 15, 2008, supporters of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage gathered at Cottingham Farm, home of CWH Board Vice President Cleo Braver and her husband Allie Tyler, to celebrate another tremendous year for CWH. The event was a success, with food provided by Cleo and Allie and the catering service of Sugar Buns and music by The Sob Sisters and the Brothers Grim.

A few brave souls endured a rare November squall and toured some of the habitat restoration CWH has completed at Cottingham Farm. This restoration work includes 30 acres of warm-season meadows, two acres of forested riparian buffer and an 18-acre wetland restoration.

A live auction capped off the evening, raising more than $6,000 for CWH programs to restore and protect wildlife habitat. We would like to thank the following for their generous donations of auction items: Karen Mathis for her beautiful marsh landscape painting, Biophilia Foundation for a guided waterfowl hunt, Steve Foxwell for his special edition pair of Green-winged Teal decoys, Judge Alfred Burka for a Madison Mitchell Canada Goose decoy, Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr. for a pair of George Bell Blue-winged Teal decoys, Jimmy Scharch and Allie Tyler for a guided fishing trip on the Chesapeake Bay, and Cleo Braver and Allie Tyler for a week-long stay at a beachfront house in the Turks and Caicos.

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage's Board President, Ralph Partlow, said: "It was a terrific evening and a great opportunity to celebrate the outstanding work CWH does for wildlife and the Chesapeake Bay. I am very grateful that Cleo and Allie opened their home and farm to celebrate CWH."

Thanks to Cleo and Allie for hosting a wonderful event and to everyone who attended for making it such a success.

Visit our website
www.cheswildlife.org

Ask Andi

Questions and answers about wildlife by Andi Pupke, Education and Outreach Director

Q: *Do Flying Squirrels really fly?*

A: Flying Squirrels do not actually fly. They glide from tree to tree using their gliding membrane, or patagium, a fold of skin that extends from the wrist of the front leg to the ankle of the hind leg. When the front and hind legs are extended, the membrane forms a wing-like gliding surface. They can travel in the air over 100 feet if they start from a high tree and can steer around branches and other obstacles using their tail.

Flying Squirrels are easily distinguished from other tree squirrels by their smaller size, nine to ten inches long, and their gliding membrane. Their eyes are noticeably large, an adaption for its nocturnal habits. Their fur is soft, silky and moderately long. The upper body is grayish to brownish in color, and the underparts are creamy white.

The Southern Flying Squirrel *(Glaucomys volans)* is found throughout the deciduous forests of eastern North America from southern Ontario to the Gulf Coast, with isolated populations in Mexico and as far south as Honduras. Its distribution in North America is more southerly than that of its close relative, the Northern Flying Squirrel *(Glaucomys sabrinus)*.

In some areas in the U.S. the Southern Flying Squirrel is considered threatened and is fully protected. However, it is quite common in many eastern states. Most people are unaware of how common they are due to their nocturnal behavior. If you are ever in a wooded area just after sunset or just before sunrise you may be able to catch sight of these shy squirrels.

The population density depends on the quality of habitat. In favorable habitat, densities can approach five squirrels per acre. Estimates of home range size, the area used for normal day-to-day activities, range from about one acre to five acres. Females defend their home range, at least during parts of the year, and there is little or no overlap with the home range of other females. Males do not defend territory, and home ranges often overlap with those of other males.

Due to the nocturnal behavior of Flying Squirrels, many people are unaware of how common they are on the Eastern Shore. Flying Squirrels will use manmade nesting structures, such as this bluebird box which contains an abandoned Chickadee nest.

Flying Squirrels are cavity nesters but they do not create cavities themselves. They will move into an existing cavity whether it be an old woodpecker hole, a natural cavity or even a man-made nesting structure. They will sleep, eat, raise their young and over-winter in the cavities. Flying Squirrels do not hibernate, although they may remain in their nests for several days during severe winter weather. In the winter they form groups in a common nest to conserve warmth.

Flying Squirrels produce several vocalizations including a high pitched "tseet" and other chipping sounds. Some vocalizations are above the frequency range of the human ear.

By managing forests to allow trees to mature to a point where they have good cavities (establishing old-growth conditions) for nesting flying squirrels, CWH is helping to protect Flying Squirrel habitat.

Welcome to New Members

CWH would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the 136 new members who joined CWH in 2008:

Cornelius Aben, Jr.
Candice Adams
Chris Artale
The Aspen Institute
Atelier 11, Ltd.
Robert Atlas & Gloria Paul
Aveley Farm Community Assoc.
Bama Works Fund of Dave Matthews Band in CACF
William Banfield
Donald & Mary Jo Barnes
Beck 1989 Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust
Robert & Nancy Bloch
Charles Bohn
Silvia Borges
William & Margie Brown
Norma Calabro
Bruce Carter
Charlottesville Orchid Society
R. J. Christian
Jonathan & Suzanne Clarke
James Cochrane
Kevin Connors
Dandyland Pet Care Center
Peter Danly
George Dappert & Judy Wixted
Anthony Davis
Dominion Resources Services
Craig & Nan Duerling
John & Jennifer Duncan
Easton Management Co.
Caroline Eichler
Mark & Cathleen Ensor
Glenn Everett
Ian & Jill Ferrier
Frederick Fiechter III
Leander & Mary Foley
Steven & Trudy Foxwell
Elizabeth Freedlander
Georgine Garbisch
James & Constance Glover
Marcia Goldberg
GoodSearch
William Gordon
George Grimmell
Alan Hais
George Harwood, Jr.
Dr. Lynne Henderson
Dena Hixon
Andy Ho
Hobbs Contractors
Rich & Suzanne Hood
Greg Heidemann
Dr. Rachel Howland
Larry Hunt & Catherine Beise
Margaret Hutchings
IAAP, Tidewater Chapter
Lehr & Julie Jackson
Robert Jacobs
Elizabeth Jenkins
Charles & Bronwyn Jones
Phillip Juengst
John & Kristen Kelly
Victor Kohn, Jr.
Dara Kraitchman
Elinore Krell

(continues on page 6)

(new members continued from page 5)

Arthur H. Kudner, Jr. Fund
William & Robyn Lake
Sheila Lanahan
Russell & Mary Langfield
James Lighthizer
Ernest & Virginia Litty
Llandaff Family Fdn.
Jerome Lomurno
Cornelius & Vickie Love
Huey Lue
Tom & Sandy Lutterbie
Charles Madary
Daniel & Susan Marder
Maryland Petroleum Council
Timothy & Kellen McCluskey
Douglas McCorkindale
Robert & Laura McGrory
James & Deborah McKee
Jay McLaughlin
James & Valerie McManus
Ed & Holly Mihok
William & Irma Miller
Ted & Dodie Moeller
Michael & Lorrie Moran
Albert & Nancy Morris
Raymond & Margaret Munsch
Patrick & Ruth Murphy
Barbara Noyes
James & Maureen O'Connell
Charles Owen
Richard & Marion Paulson
William Pfordt & Nancy Hubbell
Craig & Vivian Piette for Cory Piette
Janice Pifer
Christopher & Angela Potthast
Phillip Prickett
Margaret Quimby
Robert & Yvonne Rodriguez
James Rytina III
Katherine Salmon
Barry Schneider
Scott & Deborah Schneider
Robert & Pamela Schultz
Richard & Candace Schwadron
Sener/Johnston Family Fund
Charles Smith
David & Carolyn Smith
Virginia Smith
Robert Spiker
Robert Stolz
David & Fran Stout
Sunset Condo Council of Unit Owners
Sycamore Point Farms, LLC
Talbot River Protection Assoc.
Stephen & Lynne Thom
Nina Toups
Benito Troiano
Antoine van Agtmael
Anne van Allen
Sally Vermilye
William Vosburgh
Arthur & Carole Walsh
Clifton Walsh, Jr.
Maria Weber
William & Mary Sue Willis
Frank & Phyllis Wogan
Albert & Michele Woodroof
Sue Wyndham
Peter & Linda Yungbluth
Gunter & Margaret Zierfuss
Karl Zierfuss

Mid-Shore Community Foundation Supports CWH Outreach Efforts

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage received a $5,000 grant from the Mid-Shore Community Foundation to support our wildlife habitat restoration and management program in Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot and Dorchester counties. The funds came from the Sener/Johnston Family Fund and the Arthur H. Kudner, Jr. Fund. CWH is extremely thankful for their support.

The grant will help CWH educate area landowners about their role in restoring our local waterways. CWH's experienced staff will help make landowners active participants in the restoration process. Area landowners will learn about how wetlands and warm-season grass buffers increase habitat for wildlife and decrease pollution entering the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay.

An individual site visit will be conducted to determine the appropriate improvements that can be made on specific properties. Each landowner will receive a management plan designed by our Chesapeake Care Habitat Restoration Program staff. These plans will be specifically designed for each individual property based on location, geology and existing natural areas.

When a successful partnership is developed with a landowner, CWH will work carefully with them to implement the plan. One of the most precarious steps in this process is selecting and enrolling in the proper government program. Our staff will assist the landowner through this process. Finally, we will do the actual work to restore the habitat and provide for the long-term management of the site. In essence, our staff will take the project from concept to completion.

Founded in 1992 and headquartered in Easton, Maryland, the Mid-Shore Community Foundation serves Talbot, Queen Anne's, Kent, Caroline and Dorchester counties. The foundation connects private resources with public needs in order to expand human services and enhance the quality of life for citizens of all ages on the Mid-Shore.

The Mid-Shore Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity that helps individuals, families, businesses, private foundations and others accomplish their charitable giving objectives. It manages donors' financial gifts, according to their wishes, and distributes investment proceeds through grants to enhance quality of life throughout the Mid-Shore area. Grants support the arts, health, environment, civic, education and human service causes. For more information on the Mid-Shore Community Foundation visit their website at www.mscf.org.

If you are interested in a free site visit, please call the CWH office.

IRA Distributions Can Help Restore and Protect Wildlife Habitat

In 2009, you can make a gift to Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage from your traditional IRA. This IRA distribution is tax-free up to $100,000. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, passed last fall, permits these charitable donations from your IRA to count towards your required minimum annual distribution.

Gifts utilizing the IRA Charitable Rollover must be made to a qualified charity, such as CWH, and can be excluded from your gross income. These gifts must be made prior to December 31, 2009 and you must be 70½ years of age or older on the date of the transfer.

In these hard economic times, wildlife continue to need your support. The IRA Charitable Rollover can be an extremely useful philanthropic tool to support your favorite causes. You can benefit by making a required distribution from your IRA without incurring capital gains taxes and the IRA distribution can be excluded from your gross income.

For more information, please call Chris Pupke at the CWH office at 410.822.5100.

CWH Donates Easement Protecting Bozman Field

by Chris Pupke

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage donated a conservation easement to the Maryland Environmental Trust that will protect the wildlife habitat on CWH's Bozman Field property in perpetuity. The 29-acre property is located at the intersection of St. Michaels Road and Bozman-Neavitt Road, just west of St. Michaels in Talbot County, Maryland.

Donated to CWH in 2006, the property consists of 12 acres of mature woodlands and 17 acres of old field. Under CWH's management the old fields are reverting to wooded wetlands. Bozman Field spans the watersheds of Harris Creek and Broad Creek. The woodlands and wetlands are helping to improve water quality down stream.

The easement prohibits the construction of any structures on the property. No subdivision of the property is permitted; indeed the two parcels that comprise the property must be held in common ownership. The most important aspect of the easement is that wildlife habitat on the property is protected from development or conversion to agricultural uses.

MET's Ann Carlson said: "It was a pleasure to work with CWH to protect Bozman Field. The property will forever be wildlife habitat and will forever provide scenic views to the traveling public. Adjacent to and in the vicinity of other MET protected lands, Bozman Field is a wonderful addition to the conservation of the natural and scenic qualities of Talbot County's environment."

CWH appreciates the support of MET for their help in protecting this property. We are most sincerely grateful to the generous benefactors of Bozman Field, without whom wildlife would have less space to roam. If you are interested in protecting the habitat on your property so that wildlife can always call it home, please call CWH's Chris Pupke at 410.822.5100.

CWH protected the mature woodlands and emerging wooded wetlands at our Bozman Field property by donating a conservation easement to the Maryland Environmental Trust.

☐ ***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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☐ $50 Family Habitat Guardian
☐ $100 Habitat Protector
☐ $250 Habitat Sponsor
☐ $500 Habitat Benefactor
☐ $1,000 Habitat Conservator
☐ $2,500 Habitat Steward
☐ Other _____

Signature _____ Amount $ _____ Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____

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.

SP09

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.

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Acorn Shortage Impacts Wildlife

By Andi Pupke

An acorn shortage hit the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeastern states, as well as other parts of the country this winter. Acorn crops have natural cycles of bumper crops and bust years. However, in some areas of the country scientists have found no acorns at all. The shortage has left scientists puzzled and wildlife without a critical food source over the winter.

It is common for oak trees to produce heavy crops of acorns followed by three to four years of lighter crops, but they normally produce some acorns even in poor years. Not all species of oaks would be expected to have a bad year at the same time.

Many things can cause an acorn shortage, including weather, genetics and normal cycles. Weather could have played a part in this extreme acorn shortage. Since oaks are pollinated by the wind rather than by insects, it is possible that heavy spring rains at bloom times could have washed the pollen out of the air before it reached female flowers. A late frost could have killed the oak flowers before they were pollinated. In the fall, high winds may have dislodged loads of acorns from the oaks before wildlife would have found them edible. Another theory is that the oaks were stressed by drought or gypsy moth outbreaks. However, oaks that are stressed normally produce more than normal amounts of acorns to keep the species going.

Regardless of the cause of the acorn shortage, the effects of the shortage are acute and widespread for wildlife. Acorns are a staple food for an array of animals, including deer, raccoons, mice, chipmunks, wild turkey and Blue Jays. Fortunately, other food options such as hickory nuts and black walnuts had a good crop year.

Unfortunately, many animals rely on acorns to get them through the winter. An adult grey squirrel, for example, needs about one pound of food a week. Although they eat a varied diet including insects, mushrooms, fruit and other nuts, most of these other food sources are not available during the winter months. Many professionals watching this shortage predict lower numbers of small mammals in the next few years. A shortage in rodents will also reduce the numbers of owls and hawks who prey on them.

Although this acorn shortage may not have risen to the level of a crisis, scientists suggest it is important to watch closely. If the shortage continues for several years, other forces may be at work and the impact on wildlife that rely on acorns, and the predators that rely on them, will face increased hardship.