

# Wild About Wildlife Month

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At BWA, we're all about the protection and preservation of our water resources. But those rivers, streams, creeks, and bodies of water that comprise our watershed are supported by ecosystems, habitats, and forested landscapes. And an abundance of wildlife - from the largest of predators to the tiniest of insects – ensures the health, balance, and biodiversity of these natural spaces.

If you're WILD ABOUT WILDLIFE, read below for ways that you can help the wildlife of our region - which includes your own backyard! Remember, you don't need a large quantity of acreage to make a difference. Some of these can be carried out anywhere – like the practices and principles of leave no trace - while you're out exploring our parks, refuges, trails, game lands, and public recreation spaces.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- GET OUT THERE - Visit a natural space in your area and learn about the species who live there. Are there any who are threatened or endangered? Learn about the threats they face and why.
- SUPPORT LOCAL EFFORTS - One of the most effective ways to help wildlife is to preserve the environment in which they live. Explore the organizations in your area that help restore, conserve, preserve, and protect the habitats and wildlife of your region. Support their mission by becoming a member, signing up for their newsletters, following them on social media, sharing their stories, and/or attending the local programs, events, and educational opportunities they host.
- RESPECT WILD THINGS – Keep a safe distance and try not to approach. If you find young animals, particularly in the spring or early summer, do not relocate them. Mothers often leave their young for extended periods to forage. Although they appear abandoned, the mother will most likely return. If you encounter an animal that is injured, contact a certified wildlife rescue in your area.
- CONSERVE WATER – It may seem simple enough, but it's so important! Accessible, clean water is an everyday part of our lives, so much so that it's easy to take it for granted. And so, it's easy for our water resources to become extremely susceptible to waste and abuse. Consider the ways you might conserve water in your life.
- LEAVE NO TRACE – we all strive to reduce the damage caused by outdoor activities. Leave No Trace principles and practices are based on respect for the natural world and our wild counterparts. We can act on behalf of the places that inspire us by adopting the skills and ethics that enable us to Leave No Trace. Check out the 7 Principles [here](#).

- DON'T LITTER – even if we already abide by this policy, there are others who don't. If you're out and about in nature, consider carrying a small bag in your backpack to pick up any trash you might come across on your walk, hike, or outdoor adventure, and take it back out with you. Participate in or hold your own local trash clean-up to help protect local areas and clean-up your neighborhood and community.
- REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE: Reduce: the manufacturing of consumer products uses precious natural resources and energy while creating waste and pollution. Reuse: Do not throw it away if it might still have a use. Recycle: Avoid disposable products and those with excessive packaging that cannot easily be recycled. Check out your local recycling center and find out what is recyclable in your area. Dispose of electronics, batteries, and other potentially hazardous materials at municipal collection centers that will handle them properly.

### **MAKE YOUR YOUR YARD WILDLIFE FRIENDLY**

- PLANT NATIVE SPECIES: These flowers, trees, and shrubs provide wild animals with food, shelter, and a place to raise their families. Learn which plant species are native to PA and which might attract beneficial insects like butterflies and moths. Planting native is also a great way to encourage biodiversity and increase habitat.
- REDUCE YOUR LAWN - Lawns offer minimal food and shelter for wildlife. Consider replacing parts of your lawn with garden beds, native plants and flowers arrangements, or even a rain garden. And hey, it's less ground to mow! No yard? No problem! Container gardens are great for patios and balconies.
- SAY NO TO CHEMICALS - Eliminate the use of pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers. These products contribute to wildlife poisonings and are a major source of storm water run-off pollution.
- REDUCE LIGHT POLLUTION: artificial light at night negatively impacts birds and wildlife. To help, only use lighting when and where it is needed, properly shield all outdoor lights, keep your blinds drawn during the evening, and consider installing motion detector lights. Red lights are also an option.
- BUILD OR PLACE NEST BOXES: Artificial nest boxes provide many kinds of birds with places to raise their young.
- RETHINK FALL CLEAN UP: fallen leaves, dead flower heads, and the stalks of plants and grasses provide critical food and shelter for birds, butterflies, bees, and other beneficial insects during the winter months.
- FEED BIRDS IN WINTER: Our feathered friends who overwinter here in PA will thank you! Cardinals, Chickadees, Nuthatches, Dark-eyed Juncos, House Finches, American Goldfinches, Tufted Titmice, and Downy Woodpeckers are just a few species who can brighten up a gloomy winter day by visiting your yard.