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EDITED BY

Lana Artz-McComb

Helping (without Hurting) Monarch Butterflies

By: Lana Artz-McComb, Naturalist

Are you a Monarch lover? This article is for you! Those of us involved in any part of natural resources or conservation are already familiar with the Monarch Butterfly...life cycle, migration, importance as a pollinator. (If you're not, welcome! I encourage you to read all about them starting somewhere like monarchwatch.org.

I'm skipping the basics here to talk about how Monarch lovers can help without inadvertently hurting the populations.

When we see a small striped squishy caterpillar chomping on some milkweed, we might be tempted to bring it inside to care for it and watch it emerge. Recent studies are finding that raising monarchs in captivity, while fascinating, is not in the best interest of monarch conservation.

It is true that predation, parasitism, and human mowing/spraying practices are detrimental to wild populations. However, raising caterpillars inside takes them out of the natural environment and into a climate controlled, pristine setting that reduces their ability to survive those same weather conditions once released. A high density of caterpillars being reared inside can also lead to the spread of parasites.

To learn more about the rearing research start at Xerces.org/blog/keep-monarchs-wild which includes links for further exploration.

Is it ok to bring one or two caterpillars inside to observe for education purposes? Of course! But do you need to collect every single caterpillar you find and bring inside? No, especially if they are in your yard or a conservation area's prairie, safe and sound from mowing. Those caterpillars need to live outside, and maybe even die, to give the population as a whole the best chance for survival.



If you still want an easy way to protect, capture, and tag Monarchs in your garden before migration, you can purchase an outdoor netted enclosure. The one above is specifically marketed for monarch rearing. This allows the caterpillars exposure to the elements (bad and good) while giving a plethora of locations for chrysalis formation and subsequent tagging.

Above all, remember, the best thing you can do for Monarchs (and all pollinators) is to plant habitat! Native milkweed and flowers available the entire growing season are what is needed the most!

LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION

Happy Trails to Sarah and Welcome Amanda!

In July of 2026 we bid adieu to Sarah Martinez, LCC Naturalist, so that she could journey west to attend graduate school in Oregon. We will miss her but we are thrilled for her next adventures in Marine Biology

The next logical step is a welcome to Amanda! Amanda Stallman joined the team at Louisa County Conservation at the end of August.

Amanda Stallman found her love for the outdoors and conservation after growing up on a small farm in Amana, Iowa. She gained her experience in the field of Natural Resources after graduating from Kirkwood Community College with a Parks and Natural Resources Degree in 2022.

Following her education, she utilized these skills by working as a seasonal natural resources' technician for Johnson County and the City of Iowa City. After her service term as an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator in 2024, she joined a conservation non-profit to promote conservation education as the lead Education Coordinator.

Driven by a passion for the outdoors, Amanda loves to create welcoming spaces for people to learn about the natural world to enjoy through recreation! In her free time, you can find her on the water kayaking, camping, working with oil pastels in the prairies or weightlifting!

You'll find Amanda fulfilling the role of Naturalist Technician, splitting her time between environmental education and working in the field managing LCC areas in Louisa County. **Welcome, Amanda!**



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ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

Scott Heater Named 2025 Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame Inductee

Louisa County is proud to recognize Scott Heater as our 2025 Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame inductee! A lifelong advocate for youth, agriculture, and community service, Scott has truly lived out the 4-H pledge to use his “hands to larger service.”

As a youth, Scott was active in 4-H softball and even coached his club team at just 17. His dedication continued for decades, coaching local teams, serving as a longtime Louisa County Fair superintendent, and volunteering across county lines with livestock ID technology. He also contributed his leadership to the ISU Extension Council and the Louisa County Conservation Board.

A devoted cattleman, Scott has supported the Iowa Governor’s Charity Steer Show, Farm Bureau programs, Ag in the Classroom, and more. Congratulations, Scott, and thank you for your many years of service to Louisa County and Iowa 4-H!



Gieselman Family Honored with Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award

Paul and Sara Gieselman and their family of PaSa Farms in Louisa County were honored with the Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award at the 2025 Iowa State Fair by Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig.



The Gieselmans operate a diversified farm with crops, aronia berries, backyard chickens, and a herd of purebred British White cattle. They are recognized for their strong commitment to conservation, animal care, and community involvement.

The family uses conservation practices like no-till, cover crops, buffer strips, and extensive terracing. They follow Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) standards and sell high-quality beef locally.

Paul and Sara are deeply active in the community through Extension, 4-H, youth coaching, and leadership in statewide and international ag organizations. Paul currently serves as Vice Chair of the Iowa Corn Promotion Board.

The Wergin Good Farm Neighbor Award celebrates Iowa farmers who exemplify environmental stewardship, livestock care, and community leadership. Congratulations to the Gieselman family on this well-deserved honor!

4-H: A Place to Grow Leaders

When people think of 4-H, livestock shows often come to mind, but 4-H is so much more! In Louisa County, 4-H and Clover Kids clubs offer hands-on learning in areas like STEM, communication, citizenship, healthy living, and leadership. Youth can explore a wide range of projects from robotics and photography to cooking and woodworking, all while building confidence, responsibility and lifelong skills.

Being part of 4-H or Clover Kids helps young people connect with peers, serve their communities, and discover their interests. Local clubs create a supportive environment where kids grow into strong leaders and engaged citizens, making our entire community stronger.

Whether your child wants to explore new hobbies or you're an adult looking to give back as a club leader, there's a place for you in Louisa County 4-H!

Registration begins September 1st. You can visit our website at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/louisa/join-4-h> or contact Melissa Bell, Louisa County 4-H Program Director for more information at 319-523-2371 or melbell@iastate.edu



Growing Together: Wapello Community Garden Supports Local Families

The first harvest was delivered to the Wapello Food Pantry in early August with fresh produce from the Wapello Community Garden!

This thriving garden is a partnership between ISU Extension and Outreach Louisa County, Wapello Methodist Church, and the Hall Family. Together, they're growing more than just vegetables, they're growing a stronger, healthier community.



The garden provides fresh, local produce to families in need while teaching the value of community involvement, healthy eating and local food systems. By supporting this project, ISU Extension and Outreach helps create opportunities for education, volunteerism and food security right here in Louisa County. We're proud to be part of this effort to give back, one tomato at a time!

Two Louisa County Farms Honored at 2025 Iowa State Fair

At the Iowa State Fair, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig and Iowa Farm Bureau President Brent Johnson recognized 449 Iowa farm families with Century and Heritage Farm awards, celebrating generations of dedication to Iowa agriculture. These awards honor farms that have remained in the same family for 100 years (Century) and 150 years (Heritage).

We're proud to share that Louisa County had two families honored this year:

🌱 Davis Farms of Columbus Junction received the Heritage Farm Award for 160 acres that have been in the family since December 15, 1858—167 years of continuous ownership!

🌱 Padgett Family Farms of Letts received the Century Farm Award for 77 acres that have remained in the family since 1920—105 years of farming legacy! Congratulations to all the families recognized for preserving Iowa's rich agricultural heritage!

PORT LOUISA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2025 Fall Bus Tour Announcement

The food has been grown, and the wetlands on Port Louisa are almost ready to be flooded for waterfowl use. Each year, the Louisa Division of the refuge becomes flooded naturally.

Throughout the summer, refuge staff strategically draw water off to encourage growth of favorable moist soil vegetation. Grasses like wild millet, Walter's millet and rice cutgrass combine with seed-heavy weeds like annual smartweed and beggartick to create a bountiful fall harvest for the ducks.



Having a large food supply within the refuge boundary is important during the fall to ensure waterfowl can reach this resource without having to leave and travel where they are not protected.


At a slightly higher elevation within these same wetland units, you can find bottomland hardwood forests thick with pin oak and pecan trees. The small size of pin oak acorns makes for the perfect duck food and makes it the favorite target of wood ducks and early mallards.

If you were to visit in the middle of the day, you may notice a majority of the birds hanging out in flooded buttonbush or willow thickets between their gluttonous feeding sessions. Birds favor these areas during the day for the safety the overhead cover provides.

Most of the refuge is closed during the fall migration, but staff are sometimes able to give tours. This fall we have a bus tour back in our plans!

The refuge will be hosting a fall migration bus tour on November 8th. Keep an eye on the Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge Facebook page for details as we get closer to this date

PORT LOUISA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



10728 County Rd X61
Wapello, IA 52653
319-523-6982

Office Hours:
M-F, 7:30am-4:00pm
fws.gov/refuge/portlouisa
facebook.com/portlouisaNWR



Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge •
7.1K followers • 12 following

PLNWR Facebook Page

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service.

For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Noah's Nature Nook -

Coyotes

By: Noah Brown, Guest Contributor

Hi, it's Noah again! This time I want to tell you about coyotes. Coyotes are native mammals here in Iowa and their population is growing. You may even hear one (or two or more!) in your backyard if you live near a wooded area. Don't be worried though. Coyotes are generally not aggressive towards humans, but be sure to keep your pets indoors and chickens cooped at night.



Now, time to tell you ten facts about coyotes:

- 1) Coyotes mate for life!
- 2) One coyote in 1937 measured over 4.5 feet from nose to tail.
- 3) An adult coyote can reach speeds of up to 43 mph!
- 4) Coyotes are wild relatives of dogs - but shouldn't be kept as pets.
- 5) Coyotes help control small mammal populations



Noah Brown is in 3rd grade and volunteers his time with LCC doing animal care and writing as a guest contributor for the *Naturally Louisa County Newsletter*. Noah LOVES learning about animals!

6) Full grown coyotes weigh between 15-60 pounds and can stand up to 2-2.5 feet at their shoulders.

7) Coyotes-like animals have been found in the fossil record.

8) Coyotes live up to 10 years in the wild.

9) Coyotes can jump horizontal distances of up to 13 feet.

10) Coyotes are less likely to form packs than wolves, so they usually hunt individually, in pairs, or small family groups.

Bonus fact: Coyotes are known to hunt with badgers as their partner! A strange team, however, they work together. Badgers dig out small prey from underground tunnels and the coyotes chase them down! That's sure something I'd like to see!

So, there you have it. Coyotes are amazing creatures, don't you think?



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LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION EVENTS

Pop Up Monarch Tagging

?? Whenever the Monarchs Decide ??

Usually mid-September

Time and Location to Come

LCC Naturalists will have multiple pop-up monarch tagging programs sometime mid-September.

Peak migration happens when butterflies migrating from northern states join in with the butterflies emerging in Iowa on their journey to Mexico.

Keep your eye on LCC's Facebook page for more info!

Harvest Moon Float

Friday, October 3

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Snively Campground

\$5/LCC Kayak, \$10/LCC Canoe,

BYOBoat free will donation

Join in on a leisurely paddle under the light of the almost full Harvest Moon! LCC has limited numbers of boats available so be sure to reserve your spot soon. LCC will provide life jackets, paddles, and lights for rented boats.

If you are bringing your own boat, please plan to have lights attached for safety.

Auto Tour Loop Open and Milkweed Collection

Saturday, Sept 13

Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge Auto Tour Loop

The refuge tour loop will be opened on the 2nd Saturday of September as has been the routine. Refuge staff are also hosting a milkweed collection day. We are looking for volunteers to lend a hand harvesting common milkweed pods on a neighboring private property.

More information will be posted on the PLNWR Facebook

Trick or Treat in the Campground

Saturday, October 25

6:00 pm-8:00 pm

Virginia Grove Recreation Area

Free!

Dress up and join us for Trick or Treating at Virginia Grove Campground!

This family friendly event will involve trick or treating through decorated campsites, roasting marshmallows on the campfire, hiking the luminary lit trail, and other nocturnal adventures.

No registration needed!

Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Small Business & Organizations

Friday, Sept 26

Noon

ISU Extension, Wapello

Free!

Disasters, whether natural, technological, or human-caused, can hit without warning. Yet the majority of small businesses are not adequately prepared. Focus

will be on Preparedness, Response, Recovery.

Contact camilan@iastate.edu with questions or to register.

2025 Fall Refuge Bus Tour

Saturday, November 8

Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge

The Fall Bus Tour is back! Read more about Fall at the Refuge on [Page 5](#).

Stay tuned to the PLNWR Facebook page for bus tour sign up information.

Unless otherwise stated, all registration and program information can be found at:

[LouisaCountyConservation.org](https://www.louisacountyconservation.org)

Online reservations are available for more programs:

[MyCountyParks.com/County/Louisa.aspx](https://mycountyparks.com/County/Louisa.aspx)

Call our office: 319-523-8381

TRI-RIVERS CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Prairie Outdoor Classroom Shelter at Langwood

Visitors to Langwood Education Center will notice the brand new cedar shelter located at the trailhead of the Wetland Interpretive Trail.

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation funded this project in partnership with generous grants from the Community Foundation for Louisa County and the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust.

Employee volunteers with the MidAmerican Energy CARES program at the Louisa Generating Station were instrumental in the construction of the shelter, bringing the expertise, tools, and strength to get the majority of the shelter completed. Roofing work was finished by Louisa County Conservation staff with tables hopefully arriving in Spring 2026.

This shelter will be utilized by LCC field trips, public programming, and members of the public exploring the Wetland Interpretive Trail.

Thank you to our community partners and granting organizations for YOUR sponsorship of our community!



Community Foundation
of Louisa County
An affiliate of
Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine



Roy J. Carver
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 **TRI-RIVERS
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

The Mission of Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation is to provide funds for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources in the environmentally rich area of the confluences of the Cedar, Iowa and Mississippi Rivers in eastern Iowa. The Foundation will employ enjoyment and use of these resources to educate and instill an appreciation for good land stewardship. It will seek to distribute these funds to carefully chosen public, civic, institutional, and quasi-public programs.

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN LOUISA COUNTY

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☐ Louisa County Trails Council
☐ TRCF Scholarship
☐ Environmental Education
☐ Use my donation where needed most
☐ Other _____

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