



ACCOKEEK
FOUNDATION
at Piscataway Park

An Observation by Wilton Corkern, January 19, 2007:

Newspapers report on unusual events. In the natural world it usually takes a hurricane or an infestation of disease-laden mosquitoes or a sighting of a black bear in a residential neighborhood in order to make the *Washington Post*. Yet here at the farm not a day goes by without some observation of a remarkable or surprising event in the natural world. One day this week I watched a group of Fish Crows diving into the water at Farmington Landing and actually catching fish. I don't know that this is their usual behavior, but I don't think so. On another day a blustery northwest wind kicked up whitecaps on the Potomac.. I watched Turkey Vultures soaring, dipping, tipping, climbing, and gliding along the steep bank outside my office window. Tundra Swans feed on Piscataway Bay and Mallards in the marsh at the mouth of Accokeek Creek. All these I find to be remarkable and newsworthy occurrences, but none makes the papers.

In his 1947 classic, *Spring in Washington*, Louis J. Halle lamented, "I have looked through the Washington newspapers in season without finding any account of the arrival of ducks or the visitations of gulls, although they reported the visit of a French functionary and the return from her wintering grounds in the south of [a local socialite] ... with not a word of events in the outside world." I often think of those sentiments as I read my morning paper, which is filled with what Halle called "news of the hive."