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ALERT

## 'As the Nest Turns:' Viewers riveted by latest Greenway eagle's saga

By KAREN GRAHAM [kgraham@loudountimes.com](mailto:kgraham@loudountimes.com) Feb 28, 2024



A new pair of bald eagles have taken over the nest at the Dulles Greenway Wetlands as of Feb. 26. Courtesy Photo

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When the Dulles Greenway Eaglecam was installed in September 2021, Terry Hoffman, spokesman for the Dulles Greenway, did not expect the storyline to be better than an unscripted reality TV show.

Thousands of viewers are now tuning in daily for what appears to be a revolving door of love triangles and ownership takeovers at the nest.

On the Greenway Wetlands' YouTube channel, viewership has increased by 82% in the past week, Hoffman said, with over 83,000 views in seven days.

Here's a recap: A pair of mated eagles, Rosa and Martin, hatched one eaglet in March 2022. The following spring, in March 2023, they returned to the nest and hatched three eaglets.

The nest was too small to hold the large family and it partially collapsed at the end of May. One of the eaglets, named Pat, fell out of the nest and was quickly rescued. After spending time at a rehabilitation wildlife center, the eaglet returned to its home.

A second eaglet, Pi, also fell out of the nest about a week later and spent time in rehabilitation before being returned to the Dulles Wetlands.

The third eaglet, Flora, was able to fledge from the nest in early June.

From June to December, Rosa and Martin were seen in the Dulles Wetlands area. But Dec. 2 was the last time Martin was seen by observers.

About a week later, two suitors arrived and tried to mate with Rosa. She selected V2, who is named Lewis.

On Valentine's Day, Rosa laid her first egg with her new mate, Lewis. On Feb. 17, a second egg arrived. Rosa continued to incubate the eggs. However, Lewis was not an active participant in the process over the next week. Eventually, on Feb. 23, Rosa left the nest and the eggs were then not viable.

On Feb. 26, two new eagles — so far, they don't have names — arrived in the nest. They have now taken it over, buried the eggs and have begun mating.

"You built such a nice nest for them. It wasn't going to stay on the market for long with inventory so low," one viewer commented.

Hoffman said the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy conducted its annual bird count in December and counted 91 bald eagles in a 15-mile radius of the nest. He says the eagle population in Loudoun is thriving — it was once close to extinction in the area — and established nests will be affected by the population increase.

Loudoun Wildlife said it believes it was Lewis' first experience with an egg and it is not unusual for a new partner to be unsure about what to do.

"While there have been challenges this season, we are always looking forward to educating people about wildlife. Even if we do not have eaglets this season, we are looking forward to what we find on the eagle cam. We are in a wait and see mode. There is always something new," said Michael Myers, executive director of Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy.

"It has been an interesting watch since Rosa laid her egg ... both exciting and stressful, but ultimately educational," another viewer commented.

The eagles can be viewed on the Dulles Greenway livestream eagle cameras at [dullesgreenway.com/eagle-cam](https://dullesgreenway.com/eagle-cam). The website also features a live moderated chat every Monday from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. that allows viewers to comment and ask questions about the bald eagles. Teachers can also request a virtual classroom chat by emailing [eaglecamclasschat@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:eaglecamclasschat@loudounwildlife.org).

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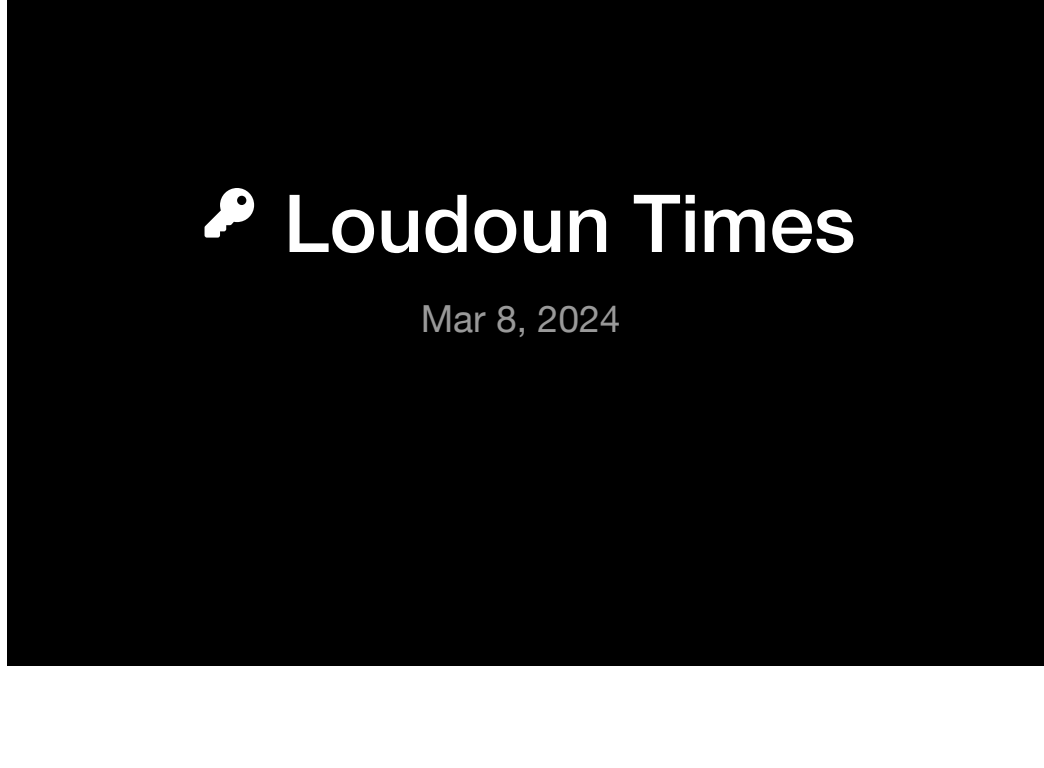
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