

A quarterly newsletter for Volunteers and Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge

FRIENDS OF PATUXENT

Vol. 26 • No. 2

www.friendsopatuxent.org

April-June 2015

Refuges to the Rescue

Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager

The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) continues coming to the rescue of wildlife. That is really no surprise. That is what refuges have done for the past 112 years, since President Theodore Roosevelt had the foresight to establish the first NWR in 1903 - at Pelican Island in Florida to protect large water birds from being slaughtered for women's fashions. We now have over 560 NWRs nationwide, encompassing over 150 million acres. Our mission over the years has always focused on wildlife conservation, clarified and institutionalized in 1997, with the passing of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, which states:

"The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

Current data reveals that the NWRS provides habitat for more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 reptile and amphibian species and more than 1,000 species of fish. The backbone of the NWRS certainly remains conservation of migratory birds - dozens of refuges have a mandated purpose to serve as a sanctuary for migratory birds. North Dakota has more refuges than any other state in the country, with most



Photo by Ross Feldner

being purchased with Duck Stamp funds to protect the important waterfowl breeding grounds of the prairie wetland complexes known as the "Prairie Pothole" region. However, it is interesting to note the variety of purposes for which refuges have been es-

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2014 Patuxent NWR Waterbird Census

Dec. 2013 to Dec. 2014

Surveys of waterbird species use of the Patuxent Research Refuge have been conducted weekly since 1997. Surveys cover about 50 wetland areas encompassing approximately 560 acres, plus approximately 3/4 mile segments each of the Patuxent and Little Patuxent Rivers. Water levels vary considerably from year to year due to drought, modifications from beaver activity and artificial drawdowns.

Weather

The Winter quarter was the eleventh coldest on record, after a very mild 2013. We had 40 inches of snow, versus one inch in 2013. Spring was cold; April was the fourth coldest and third wettest on record. Summer precipitation was

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Refuges to the Rescue

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established, and how many refuges have been established to support the latest species and/or habitat in peril.

The examples are as varied as the NWRS itself. I worked at Great Dismal Swamp NWR in southern Virginia in the early 1990's. It was established in 1980 - thanks in large part to a donation from the Nature Conservancy - "to preserve the unique ecosystem of the Great Dismal Swamp". This is recognized as one of the NWRS' first efforts to preserve a piece of the landscape based on its ecological significance.

A more recent example comes from Alabama, where the Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge was established on the former Fort McClellan military installation in 2003, for the protection and management of remnant old-growth and second-growth longleaf pine forests. This 9,000 acre refuge holds a special place in the landscape, conserving several plant species characteristic of the Southern Appalachian Mountains where they reach the southern limits of their range.

Several recent additions to the NWRS in Alabama were established to support populations of endangered Indiana and


Gray bats, including Sauta Cave and Fern Cave NWRs. As bat populations continue to succumb to diseases such as white-nose syndrome, refuges have been asked to look at protection and restoration of potential hibernacula sites to help these species recover. Patuxent has even been investigating the potential for an old Department of Defense storage bunker on the North Tract to serve as a roosting site.

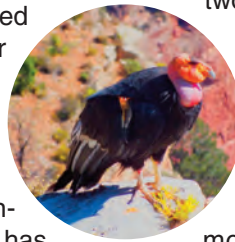
In 2008, Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in eastern Pennsylvania for the conservation of migratory birds and other federal trust species, but is of particular importance for the preservation of habitat for the endangered bog turtle. The refuge has some of the densest populations of this endangered species in the mid-Atlantic.

In 1982, the Service acquired 897 acres in southern California, securing most of the core roosting area for the endangered California condor. This is a key part of the Hopper Mountain NWR complex, which protects habitat not just for the condor, but for other endangered species as well, such as the Western snowy plover and at least nine species of endangered plants.

Within the last twenty years, the NWRS has acquired lands to protect

endangered prehistoric snail species in Iowa (Driftless Area NWR) and to conserve the only known population of Mortensen's Toad in Wyoming (Mortensen Lake NWR). The monarch butterfly, another species recently becoming imperiled, and perhaps soon to be listed as an endangered species, is now receiving urgent attention from refuges throughout its range. Region 5 has plans to preserve/restore 10,000 acres of monarch habitat over the next two years, with much of this acreage occurring on - what else - national wildlife refuges.

The list of species and habitats being protected on refuge lands goes on and on. From majestic condors to slow-moving bog turtles to tiny snail species that have survived for 400,000 years, the NWRS beckons to them all. It serves as their home - their permanently protected home!! It has been at the forefront of such conservation efforts for 112 years, since that long ago birth of Pelican Island NWR. With dedicated staff and continual gains in scientific information, it is well poised to remain at the forefront for that next species, or group of species, or that rare and unique habitat that may become imperiled. It is what the NWRS does - it always has and it always will! 



Friends of Patuxent is published quarterly and can be read online or mailed to our Friends upon request.

Many of the newsletter contributors and other assistants are volunteers. There are regular contributors, however, we welcome and encourage all volunteers and Friends to submit items for the newsletter by sending or bringing them to:

Editor, Friends of Patuxent Newsletter
ATTN: Ross Feldner
 11811 Ivanhoe Street
 Wheaton, MD 20902

Or email to ross.feldner@verizon.net

All articles submitted to the Friends of Patuxent Newsletter will be reviewed by newsletter staff prior to their publication. We reserve the right to not publish submissions based on length, content or suitability.

To become a member of the Friends of Patuxent or send a donation, please see "Membership Application" on page 15.

We invite you to join!

**Your membership/
 contribution helps
 support the mission and
 programs at Patuxent**



Congratulations - Frank McGilvrey

2014 Patuxent Research Refuge

Volunteer of the Year

By Diana Ogilvie, Volunteer Coordinator

Frank McGilvrey has been selected as Patuxent Research Refuge's 2014 Volunteer of the Year. Frank started volunteering at Patuxent in 1996, has volunteered more than 21,000 hours since that date, and is still going strong.

A former Fish and Wildlife Service research biologist, one of Frank's more time-consuming activities is collecting data that is helpful in determining wetland wildlife populations. He spends many hours a week monitoring waterbirds on all impoundments and parts of the rivers flowing through the refuge. Every week from early March to mid-June, he checks approximately 140 wood duck nest boxes and 65 islands for nesting wood ducks, hooded mergansers, Canada geese, mallards and black ducks. He also monitors the breeding success of cavity-nesting songbirds by assisting with the songbird nest box surveys throughout the spring and summer. He prepares reports and articles on many of his survey activities for the Friends/Volunteer newsletter. Data collected are taken into consideration when developing sound wildlife management practices on the refuge.

Frank assists with summer drawdowns of impoundments to encourage growth of annual wetland plants attractive to waterfowl, and monitors waterfowl harvested on the Refuge at the Hunting Control Station during hunting season. He has also helped with the Division of Migratory Bird Management Waterfowl Harvest Survey Wing Bee in past years. This year, he expects to "speciate" 8,000 wings to help determine the statistics on the composition of harvested migratory waterfowl.


Frank has recently become active in the war against invasive plants. In

2014, he single-handedly removed more than 10,000 Bradford pear and 8,000 autumn olive trees growing on the Refuge. Frank also sprayed the cut-stump surface with approved herbicide so that the cut trees would not re-sprout later from the stump.

One of Frank's greatest pleasures as a volunteer has been working with and mentoring young people, including staff, interns and volunteers, who accompany him on biological surveys and invasive plant patrols at Patuxent. Over the years, nearly 100 interns have benefited from his vast experience as a wildlife biologist. In his words, "Their enthusiasm and hard work have kept me going!"

Frank's contributions don't end there. He promotes the refuge and its mission during refuge special events. He staffs the popular display of live wood ducks, interacting with the hundreds of visitors who come to the refuge seeking knowledge about the plants and animals native to our area.

This human dynamo has removed beaver debris from water control structures. He has helped clear and maintain trails by removing trash in order to provide a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience for visitors and wildlife.


In summary, Frank McGilvrey has shown true dedication and commitment as a volunteer throughout the years. He has been actively involved with refuge surveys, outdoor maintenance, special events, and public outreach. He has provided valuable mentoring to staff, interns and volunteers while helping the refuge staff in countless ways. His service is longstanding and far-reaching. Patuxent Research Refuge is fortunate to count Frank McGilvrey among its dedicated volunteers. 

2014 Patuxent NWR Waterbird Census

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near normal. Fall started out dry in September, and was normal the rest of the quarter. The Fall Quarter had normal precipitation with widely fluctuating temperatures.

2014 Highlights

Canada goose numbers increased substantially over the last two years and were above the 15 year average (1997-2011). The 15 year average is 1997-2011. Wood ducks were well below the 15 year average, and only slightly above the record low in 1999. Mallards were at a record low and one-half of the 15 year average. Black ducks also reached a record low. Hooded mergansers were well above the last two years, but still well below the 15 year average. Ring-neck ducks had a very high spring count but a low fall count. They were still well above the 15 year average. Pied-bill grebes and belted kingfishers showed substantial declines. Killdeer were right at the 15 year average. The summer drawdowns on Central Tract attracted an unusual variety of shorebirds in late summer and early fall including pectoral sandpiper and semi-palmated sandpiper. Among the wading birds, great blue herons were well below average, green herons above average, great egrets were twice the average and little blue herons approached the 1998 record, after many years of very few records. Egrets and little blue herons were attracted by the Central Tract drawdowns. Bald eagle numbers were almost three times the long term average, primarily due to the nesting pair. Some unusual species included sandhill crane, red-headed grebe, common merganser, Virginia rail, and black-crowned night heron. 

Duvall Bridge Restoration Re-opens Link Between North and Central Tract

Time to haul equipment reduced by 30 minutes

Teresa Walter, Photos by Oscar Gregory

Patuxent Research Refuge has many historic landmarks, with Duvall Bridge being one of the more endearing. The structure is an 87' single span, steel, Pratt truss bridge with a timber deck, supported by steel floor beams and stringer framing. It's one of three surviving steel truss bridges in the County.

Originally constructed c. 1907 by Anne Arundel County to replace an existing wooden bridge, the Duvall Bridge provides passage over the Patuxent River for, what was then, Telegraph Road. At one time, it is reported that this road was the main thoroughfare between Washington D.C. and Baltimore, with the first long-distance telegraph system, constructed in 1844 by Samuel Morse, running along its route.

The namesake of the bridge was taken from the original wooden bridge, which connected the 450 acre plantation of Dr. Charles Duvall on the south side of the river (Prince George's County), to his saw and grist mill on the north side (Anne Arundel County). The Duvall's farm was sold out of the family in 1906, and in the next year, Anne Arundel County replaced the wooden bridge with the existing structure. The Duvall plantation passed on to different plantation owners until 1936, when the tract was sold to the U.S. Department of the Interior for the creation of The Patuxent Research Refuge. In 1941, the title to Duvall Bridge was officially given to the U.S. Government.

The importance of the bridge to the general operations of Patuxent Research Refuge cannot be overstated. Although this road is not open to the public, it provides the only access



Duvall Bridge before restoration

within the refuge boundary between the north tract and the rest of the refuge. Without the bridge, Patuxent's response time to the north tract for law enforcement officers increases from 15 minutes to 45 minutes. Also, all maintenance equipment had to be trailered to the north tract over the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, which required a contracted hauler. However, even with this level of importance, funding maintenance for the structure proved difficult at best, and the condition of the bridge was allowed to deteriorate almost unchecked. It was condemned and closed to all access as a result of a structural inspection in 2009 which reduced the load rating to 3 tons. Full restoration of the bridge was proposed and submitted as a deferred maintenance project. The project was funded



for design in 2011, and the work was completed in 2013. Due to the severe corrosion and section loss of the truss bottom chords, the five original stringers and the steel floor beams, all these members were replaced, which amounted to a full replacement of the entire bridge superstructure.

The restoration design (Burgess and Niple, Inc.) was sensitive to the need to maintain the historic appearance of the bridge and included elements such as using bolted connections designed to look like the original riveted connections as well as the use of carriage bolts to tie down the wooden deck, similar to the original construction. Also, with the realization of the difficulty to obtain funding for ongoing maintenance of government facilities, one in-

tent of the design was to seek the best protective coating or paint for the new and existing members of the bridge to inhibit corrosion as much as possible. The refuge decided to use a coating frequently used by the National Park Service on historic bridges, Termarust 2200, a high ratio co-polymerized calcium sulfonate penetrant/sealer (which is just a fancy way of saying that it bonds to steel at the molecular level...just don't try to say it 5 times fast or you might hurt yourself!).

The Contractor awarded the project was Kovilic Construction Company, Inc., out of Franklin Park, Illinois. This company is very experienced in bridge work, even major interstate bridges, and did an excellent job restoring the little 87 foot, two-track bridge in the middle of the forest.

With the completion and opening of Duvall Bridge, operations have now become a little more manageable here at Patuxent Research Refuge. The government staff here at Patuxent also enjoys the bridge for its aesthetic qualities. It is even rumored that the bridge has become a popular lunch spot for groups of researchers from USGS, which are co-located here. So, whether it's for hauling the backhoe to the north tract or it's for someone to find a quiet spot to enjoy their roast beef sandwich, here's to what we hope will be another 100 years of service for Patuxent's historic Duvall Bridge. 🦋



Duvall Bridge during restoration



Duvall Bridge after restoration



Duvall Bridge after restoration

Calling for Your Articles and Photos Please

We're looking for articles—your articles—and cool photos for future Friends newsletters. You don't have to be a professional writer. Just jot down a paragraph or two about a nature topic dear to your heart. Or send us a photo or two of a beautiful plant, cute wild critter, or people at a Refuge or Friends event. And if you will, please include a caption for your photos.

Please consider sending us your article and/or your photos for your next newsletter. Make sure to title your article and include your name and volunteer position. When you send it, put Newsletter Article in the Subject Line of your email. We'd like to hear from YOU. Here's where to send them: ross.feldner@verizon.net or jelatham@verizon.net **Thank you so much!**

Spring Artists for 2015 in the Hollingsworth Gallery

Faith Leahy-Thielke, Patuxent Research Refuge Volunteer

Come on Spring! It's a season in which we not only look forward to milder weather, but also to three prior exhibitors. April marks the return of watercolorist, Becky Bogdan, whose work graced the gallery in December of 2011. May offers a double delight: another "returnee", Sol Levine, and local sculptor Charles Bergen (the only "firstie" this month). June climaxes with Jean Phillips whose multi-career story amazes and delights.

Becky Bogdan grew up in rural New York State just south of the Finger Lakes among the fields and woods at the headwaters of the Susquehanna River. In this lovely setting, she experimented with photography in middle and high school. Bogdan says that she has always been attracted to vivid visual images - in the outdoors and from illustrators like Maurice Sendak. Her college degree from Rochester Institute of Technology is in imaging science, and she has worked as a systems engineer for Northrop Grumman. When she first moved to Maryland in 1997, Bogdan's first address was a post office box in Columbia - serendipitously next door to the Artists' Gallery, a small glass-walled building converted to an artists' cooperative. When Bogdan visited and admired the hanging artwork, the woman on duty was their painter who referred her to local art classes. Since then she has taken many classes and studied with Howard County artist, Alice Webb. Bogdan has shown her work in numerous exhibits. She works primarily in watercolor and occasionally acrylics. Her favorite subject matter is floral, and she is planning a series on native plants.

Sol Levine is an award-winning photographer based in Wake Forest, North Carolina, who has expanded an avo-

cation into a business as well as a source of personal enjoyment. In "prior lives" he writes, a PhD in chemistry led to a position as a chemist at IBM. That job was a segue into college teaching from which he has only recently retired after several years on the faculty at NC State. Sol is primarily self-taught although he received some training through the NY Institute of Photography and participated in some workshops and seminars. These days, he himself is the presenter of classes and workshops in many North Carolina locations - and at our Visitors' Center this coming May 2nd. Sol writes that these classes have "developed some friendly competition" with former students who now display their own work at wildlife shows. His own work has been presented at "various venues in several states", and hang in collections in Korea, Japan, Israel and England as well as North America. They also appear in books, calendars, magazines, tourism guides and telephone directories! His note cards and photographs are sold in many locations - bookstores, gift shops and galleries.

Local sculptor, **Charles Bergen**, a D.C. native, is also featured in May. Bergen attended Yale where he studied architecture, a career which allowed him "to exercise a degree of artistry" - within his daily work. Part-time study at the Corcoran and Rockport Maine's Center for Furniture Craftsmanship fed his "percolating" interest in fine art. Today Bergen is two years into his "new" career. His studio at Monroe Street Market's Artwalk in Brookland holds a variety of building materials and "found objects" as well as finished pieces - mostly animal sculptures - often "whimsical". Bergen feels no need to be "literal" about form,

but "reveals a reverence for ecology and a call to rebalance our relationship with nature". Twelve sculptures representing endangered or at-risk species will be displayed here in May.

Jean Phillips has recently traded 575 acres in Germantown for 225 near Frederick. The family dairy farm where she grew up was part of the Montgomery County "master plan". Jean had run it for years - adapting the land from dairy to grain to hay and straw and vegetables then to "entertainment farming", but finally succumbed to "progress". With a science degree from the University of Maryland, Jean taught school for a year, and then worked as an immunologist at NIH before farming became her third professional career. Here she raised her children. One Christmas, her sons gave her a camera. She recognized immediately that she needed a more sophisticated lens. Phillips' fourth career has all but written itself. She has captured images of wild animals on the farm, grizzlies in Yellowstone and the Tetons and polar bears in Alaska. (She reports that she was in a cage waiting for them because polar bears just don't distinguish between baby seals and human grannies when seeking lunch.) Her photos include a few historic sites, as well as bears, owls, and roosters, but mothers and baby pairs are her favorites. Her images have received numerous awards in competitive exhibits, and are reproduced in cards and notes available for sale in many outlets. Picasso software and a Canon 5D Mark 2 are her professional tools. 🐦



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We're all ready for Spring.

Wildlife Images Can Help You Get Ready For Spring Birdwatching

By Pat Simons

With spring approaching, we can start to think about spending more time outside watching nature begin its annual renewal. And what a wonderful time for birdwatchers-novices, children, and the more experienced to appreciate the abundance and diversity of birds here in the mid-Atlantic region. The Friends bookstore, **Wildlife Images**, stocks a wide variety of books and more to help you recognize and learn about the many birds that you can see on the refuge and in the surrounding region—from the city, to the shores of the Chesapeake, to the Atlantic coast.



For the Budding, Junior Naturalist

Just arrived in the store are plastic binoculars perfect as starter binoculars to use on the trails here at the refuge. One pair includes a plastic case and neck strap (\$15.95); while the other is a smaller pair of collapsible binoculars perfect for tucking into a young person's pocket (\$10.95). And to help your young birdwatcher identify what they are seeing, we've just received *Spot the Bird*, by Joseph DiConstanzo. This guide, written especially for children 7-12 years of age, covers more than one hundred common North American

birds. Each page features one bird, along with a full-color photograph and simple to read text about where the bird lives, what it eats, and more. The book also includes stickers so children can track birds they have seen. It is the perfect starter book for young birdwatchers.

More Children's Book About Birds

Footprints of Birds (\$1.50) is a small, fun coloring book with facts about a dozen different birds. Also, on our shelves, the "Read and Color" series of coloring books includes title such as *Birds, Endangered Birds, State Birds, and Eagles* (each \$2.95). Both are great, inexpensive ways to get children thinking about how to identify birds.

Good Luck Baby Owls, by Giles and Alexandra Milton (\$16.95) is a lovely story about two owls eager to grow up, illustrated with collage paintings.

Thunderbirds, Nature's Flying Predators by Jim Arnosky (\$14.95) is a lavishly illustrated book with fold out pages of life-size birds, including owls, vultures, eagles, pelicans, and more.

Olivia Owl Finds a Friend by Maurice Pledger (\$10.95) is a lift-the-flap sturdy book for younger children.

Little Red Bat by Carole Gerber (\$9.95). A story book with four pages of learning activities and fun facts.

On the Trail Guides

The store stocks a variety of convenient, easy to carry, laminated, water-proof folding guides. The following are especially for bird watching in our mid-Atlantic region.



- Birds of the Mid-Atlantic Coast (\$9.95)
- Birds of the Eastern Chesapeake, Maryland & Delaware (\$7.95)
- Birds of the Western Chesapeake, Washington DC & Maryland (\$7.95)
- Raptors of Eastern North America (\$7.95)
- Sibley's Backyard Birds of the Mid-Atlantic (\$9.95)
- Sibley's Raptors of Eastern North America (\$9.95)
- Sibley's Ducks, Geese & Swans of Eastern North America (\$9.95)
- Sibley's Warblers of Eastern North America (\$9.95)
- Sibley's Owls of North America (\$9.95)

Books & Field Guides

The following are just a sampling of the many other books & field guides on our shelves perfect for both beginning and more experienced birdwatchers.

What's that Bird? A Beginner's Guide (\$9.95)

Birding for Beginners, A Comprehensive Introduction to the Art of Birdwatching, Sheila Buff (\$19.95)

The Birder's Companion, Stephen Moss (\$16.95)

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Volunteers Honored at the 2014 Appreciation/Awards Dinner

Diana Ogilvie, Visitor Services Staff

The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held at the Visitor Center on Sunday, December 7, 2014. Nancy Newman Pape graciously entertained dinner attendees by singing holiday favorites as we arrived. Afterward, we enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner and fellowship with more than one hundred of our closest friends.

Below are some highlights from the dinner.

- To start things off, USGS researcher Jim Nichols gave a fascinating presentation about his tiger research and conservation efforts.
- Refuge Manager Brad Knudsen gave an “awe-inspiring?” speech about the new volunteer policy.
- Frank McGilvrey received special recognition from the Bio team and North tract team for his work battling invasives at North tract.
- Frank McGilvrey was honored again as the volunteer who had contributed the highest number of hours in the current year. For this achievement, he was presented with an exceedingly appropriate mallard duck bobble-head award.
- Ann Coren thanked all the Schoolyard Habitat Volunteers who have helped restore the pollinator garden and announced team member Fran Knoll as the winner of the “clean plot” award.
- Rod Burley and Jay Pape received special recognition for their contributions to interpretive programs.
- Ken Lavish, Anne Vore and Mike Goldberg were recognized for their contributions to the Environmental Education program.



Premiere Performance of Patuxent Research Refuge Staffettes



Over 20,000 hours: Frank McGilvrey



7,000 hours: Claudia Papillo, Sparky Sparks



6,000 hours: Brenda Stone



5,000 hours: Joe DiGiovanni, Bob Bailey



4,500 hours: Dennis Green, Bob Hardy



4,000 hours: Lewis Jiles, Jean Sparks, Jeanne Latham



3,000 hours: Barbara Buck, Anne Vore



1,000 hours: Nell Baldacchino



750 hours: Tom Kirby, Evelyn Kirby, Gary Gebauer



500 hours: Debbie Phillips, Diane Buckley-Maidt, Ellen Bretz, Braeden Harpool



300 hours: John McCarthy, Natasha Shangold, Ann Coren, Bob Coren



250 hours: Stephanie Everett



100 hours: Chang-Tzu Lew, Brian Noratel, James Kent, Bob Privette, Devina Escamilla, Janice Devine, Ross Feldner

- Steve Noyes received an appreciation plaque for his dedication to the Songbird Nestbox survey as he turned the reins over to new coordinator, Eric Grosse.
- Joe DiGiovanni received his 5000 hour "Ron Clements Special" walking stick award.

- Twenty-year service pins were awarded to Bob Dennett, Brenda Stone, and Ted Weidenhoft.

The 2014 Volunteer of the Year was also announced. There were eleven nominations for eight different volunteers. The selection committee, made up of volunteers who had not been

nominated, selected Frank McGilvrey as the 2014 Volunteer of the Year. More information about Frank's contributions can be found on page 3.

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Volunteers Honored at the 2014 Appreciation/Awards Dinner

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The following volunteers attending the dinner received milestone awards:

- Over 20,000 hours - Frank McGilvrey
- 7,000 hours - Claudia Papillo, Sparky Sparks
- 6,000 hours - Brenda Stone
- 5,000 hours - Joe DiGiovanni
- 4500 hours - Bob Hardy, Dennis Green
- 4,000 hours - Lewis Jiles, Jean Sparks, Jeanne Latham
- 3,000 hours - Barbara Buck
- 2,080 hours - Jan Hardy, Charlotte Melichar
- 2,000 hours - Jan Hardy
- 1,500 hours - Penny Wolkow, Mike Goldberg
- 1,000 hours - Nell Baldacchino
- 750 hours - Gary Gebauer, Evelyn Kirby, Tom Kirby



50 hours: Ted Pennington, Levi Lundell's dad



25 hours: Nadja George, Dennis George (not shown), Nancy Newman Pape, Wally Stone

500 hours - Ellen Bretz, Debbie Phillips, Diane Buckley-Maidt, Braeden Harpool

400 hours - Jeannette, Grotke

300 hours - Ann Coren, John McCarthy, Bob Coren, Natasha Shangold

250 hours - Stephanie Everett

100 hours - Bob Privette, Devina, Escamilla, Janice Devine, James Kent, Chank-Tzu Lew, Brian Noratel, Ross Feldner

50 hours - Mary Rosa, Levi Lundell, Ted Pennington

25 hours - Nadja George, Nancy Newman Pape, Wally Stone, Dennis George

After the awards presentations, the amazing Nancy Newman Pape entertained us with a song she wrote about the special people who volunteer at Patuxent. The evening ended with the premiere performance of the Patuxent Research Refuge Staffettes, a singing and dancing troupe that performed a selection from the musical Scrooge! 🐦

Congratulations to all the volunteers who reached their latest milestones and thanks to everyone who helped make the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner so enjoyable. It was truly a special evening.

Wildlife Images Can Help You Get Ready for Spring Birdwatching

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Birds of North American, Tom Wood, Sheri Williamson, Jeffrey Glassberg (\$12.95)

Smithsonian Nature Guide: Birds (\$14.95)

Audubon Pocket Backyard Birdwatch (\$9.95)

The Birder's Handbook, A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds (\$22.99)

Birds & Marshes of the Chesapeake Bay Country, Brooke Meanley (\$12.99)

Birds of Lake, Pond and March, Water and Wetland Birds of Eastern North American, John Eastman (\$18.95)

National Wildlife Federation, Field Guide to Birds of North America (\$19.95)

And more...

Two other popular titles starring birds (and birdwatchers) are *Wesley the Owl, The Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and His Girl* by Stacey O'Brien (\$15.00) and *The Big Year*, by Mark Obmascik (\$15.00).

For bird enthusiasts of all ages, we also have a great selection of finger puppets, hand puppets, and Audubon plush birds with real bird calls. Plus beautiful canvas tote bags, yard signs, and more. So pay a visit to the Friends bookstore, and remember that all proceeds from the store go directly to support the refuge. 🐦

Meet New Intern Rebecca Schulze

Hi, I am Rebecca Schulze. I am a college graduate from Keystone College, located in La Plume, PA, with a Bachelors' degree in Wildlife Biology. I am currently doing an internship through Student Conservation Associate (SCA) AmeriCorp here at Patuxent Research Refuge. My position here is a Visitors Service intern, which includes duties like conducting education programs, working at the visitor center desk, and other activities around the visitor center. I have a strong interest in bird watching and being outdoors. I am hoping to gain many new skills, interests, and friends from this experience. After I complete my internship, I hope to find a full time job in this field of work.

Monarch Conservation

Update by Rich Dolesh

The status of the monarch butterfly has been much in the minds of Americans in recent months. While there was a bit of good news regarding a very slight increase in the number of monarchs counted at wintering roosts in Mexico, this was tempered by knowledge that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed there is evidence to review a petition to consider listing the monarch under the Endangered Species Act.

Photo by Ross Feldner



On the conservation front, a new partnership on monarchs was launched between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Noteworthy is that FWS and NFWF will target approximately \$3 million to fund new conservation, education, and research on restoring the monarch. An announcement on the grant program is expected within a month from NFWF. Look for the announcement at: <http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/Pages/home.aspx#.VPSErE10ypo>.

A new resources guide on Monarch Conservation for Parks, Refuges, and Nature Preserves has been developed cooperatively by NRPA in collaboration with Monarch Joint Venture and Monarch Watch. Special thanks to Denise Gibbs of Monarch Watch and Wendy Caldwell of Monarch Joint Venture for these links to resources and information about monarch conservation <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Conservation/>.

If you are thinking of planting milkweed plants or seeds this spring, now is the time to order seeds and plant plugs which will be shipped in April or early May. Visit Milkweed Market for information on locally collected seeds and plants suitable for your geographic location, as well as much other good information on how to implement best practices for improving monarch habitat: <http://monarchwatch.org/milkweed/market/>. 🐦

In Memorium

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Emy Holdridge, Chair of the Friends of Patuxent, passed away on Monday, January 5.

Emy had been a dedicated volunteer at Patuxent since 1999. She was involved in many programs and activities at the refuge over the years, including Friends Board member and Chairperson, special events, birding events, waterfowl surveys, volunteer management and mentoring, staffing the front desk, office/clerical support, outreach, and much more. She will be greatly missed.

USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Jennifer Chin

Many of you conservationists may be aware that the Farm Bill is legislation that supports agriculture, but also has incentive programs to provide wildlife habitat. The “Conservation Reserve Program,” for example, encourages farmers to set aside a small portion of their land for wildlife use.

In recent work by Patuxent Scientist Dan Twedt & his colleagues, Dan studied whether the clusters of trees and shrubs that get set aside (for example) in agricultural fields make a difference to birds.



Their results suggest a small change in primary land use (less than 7%) produced a disproportionate population response by some grassland-dependent and woodland birds during winter. Field buffers provide a direct source of winter food, and cover and may be a pragmatic means to provide critical non-breeding habitat with little alteration of existing agricultural systems.

Dan and his co-authors were recognized by the Mississippi Chapter of the Wildlife Society with the “2014 Outstanding Peer-Reviewed Journal Article” award for their paper, titled: “Avian response to conservation buffers in agricultural landscapes during winter”. 🐦

Say Hello to New Members of the Friends Board of Directors

The Friends of Patuxent is glad to announce that we have two new Board Members. Below is a brief write-up of each, so you can begin to get to know them. When you see them in person, feel free to ask questions and talk with them. Please join us in welcoming these outstanding folks.

Meet Michael Lee



Mike is a native Marylander, having been born in Arbutus, Maryland. He is married to Sharon, who has worked with wildlife rehabilitators, and was a volunteer at the National Zoo.

Mike is an avid outdoors person and conservationist at heart. He is aware of, and interested in the work done by Patuxent, e.g., with bald eagles and Whooping Cranes.

Mike's background includes an education in computer sciences, for which he earned an Associates Degree. He worked in the computer science field for over 40 years.

Mike served on the Board of Directors of the Maryland Fly Anglers for 10 years. He also served as their Membership Chair. He was instrumental in securing the club's non-profit status and Federal 501 C status.

Mike is looking forward to working on the Friends Board of Directors and furthering the work of Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

Meet Charlie Deegan



Charlie has lived in Prince George's County most of his life, and as a result, has close personal, professional and civic ties to the county. He served for a number of years as a county zoning inspector, which gave him a thorough knowledge of the county's communities and physical resources. He has a thorough knowledge of how our state and local government works, and is friendly with many state and county elected officials.

Charlie is currently a member of the State Roads Commission and the State Transportation Commission. He serves on the Board of Directors for Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union. During his 18 years on that Board, he served as both Vice Chairman and Chairman. He also serves on the Board of Directors for Marlin Cove Condominium in Ocean City, Maryland. 🐦

His professional experience includes working for Prince George's County Government for more than 33 years. He has served as: Chief of the Equipment Maintenance Division (i.e., heavy equipment) in the Department of Public Works and Transportation; administrative director of the Fleet Management Division (i.e., motor vehicle fleet) in the Office of Central Services; Director of the Department of Licenses and Permits (zoning, housing and building inspections; building and housing permits; animal control, etc.); Deputy Director of the Landlord - Tenant Office; and Zoning Inspector in the Department of Licenses and Permits. In these positions, he had extensive contact with citizens, community and business leaders, elected officials, and the press.

Charlie is an active member of the Beltsville Lions Club, the Greater Beltsville Business Association, and Emmanuel United Methodist Church. All of these organizations provide opportunities for him to promote Friends of Patuxent, Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

You may be interested to know that Governor Hogan has recently nominated Charlie to chair the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coastal Waterways Critical Areas Commission. He is awaiting confirmation by the Maryland Senate before assuming his duties. 🐦

**WE SALUTE AND
APPLAUD OUR
VOLUNTEERS**

Blast from the Past

Reprinted from the May/June 1995
Volunteers and Friends Newsletter

Patuxent's Flora and Fauna

By Becky Kasten

As spring and summer invite more and more people to the Visitor Center, it seemed like a good time to start including a regular article on the plants and animals you are likely to see at Patuxent. Feel free to share what you know with visitors and to study more on your own.

We'll start by looking at a wildflower that may be familiar - the May apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*).

The May apple is in the Barberry family (*Berberidaceae*) and its scientific name aptly means "foot leaf," "shield-shaped".

It is one of the first plants to leaf out in Eastern forests in the spring. As you stroll through wet meadows or damp, open woodlands such as those at Patuxent, you are likely to see large colonies of these 12" - 18" umbrella-like plants. Each plant is actually connected to many others by underground horizontal stems called rhizomes. For this reason, all of the connected plants are genetically identical.

On non-flowering May apples, you will find a single shield- or umbrella-shaped leaf attached to the vertical stem. The leaves are rounded at the

ends and deeply cut, forming 5-9 lobes. Each of the lobes is serrated and has many veins.

A flowering May apple has two leaves and a single blossom which grows from the "y" where the two leaves join the stem. The nodding white flower is composed of six petals and from the flower's center grows the plant's single fruit.

The rest of the plant is poisonous to eat, however Native Americans and early settlers used medicines made from the root. Today, two pharmaceutical products made from this plant are still in use.

Range: New England and southern Canada to Minnesota, south to Florida through Texas.

Other names: Mandrake, Indian apple, Umbrella-leaf, Wild lemon, Raccoon berry, Hog apple, Devil's apple, Duck's foot, and others.

Sources: *Peterson Field Guides Wildflowers: Northeastern/Northcentral North America*

Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants

The History and Folklore of North American Wildflowers

Peterson Field Guides Ecology of Eastern Forests 



Advance Notice!

Nature's Images Photography Workshop

Presented by the award-winning artist Sol Levine


National Wildlife Visitor Center

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Saturday, May 2nd, Ages 13 +

Do you want to expand your capabilities with your digital or film camera? Learn about equipment, f-stop, shutter speed, metering, composition, and more. Workshop concludes with a short practice session using your camera outdoors on refuge grounds. Participants must bring a bag lunch. For more details on workshop content visit www.naturesimagesbysol.com.

Advanced Registration & Payment required by April 24th, 2015. Workshop Fee is \$60 (\$50 for Members, Friends of Patuxent.) For more information & to register call 301.497.5887. After registering, send checks payable to Friends of Patuxent, National Wildlife Visitor Center, 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop Laurel, MD 20708 – 4027 Attn: Photo Class. Include Name, Address, e-mail.

Workshop will be limited to 20 participants. If workshop minimum of 6 participants is not met the workshop will be canceled/rescheduled. 

Do you like to run? Have you participated in 5K runs before? Would you like to help support the refuge?

The Friends of Patuxent are planning to reinstate the Run for the Refuge, a 5K run and 2K walk fundraiser event on the North Tract on Sunday, September 27, 2015. We are looking for former or current runners or run enthusiasts to help plan and stage the event. Please contact Friends of Patuxent Chair Harlan Tucker at 301-262-1010 or hwtucker@verizon.net for information or to volunteer to serve on the Run for the Refuge committee.

Patronize your Wildlife Images Bookstore. Support the Refuge.

100% of net proceeds help fund Refuge Projects.



Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Holiday Bazaar

Thank you so much to everyone that supported the 2014 Wildlife Holiday Bazaar by donating items and baked goods, and helping with set up on Friday. Special thanks go to the volunteers and staff who helped on the Saturday of the event. You were wonderful, as usual. The Bazaar Committee appreciated your efforts, and the vendors loved you. We raised more than \$2,500 for Friends of Patuxent to be used in support of the Refuge and Research Center. Let's do it again in 2015!



The 2015 Holiday Bazaar will be held **November 14**. The deadline for donations is **November 6**. It's not too early to start looking for those forgotten treasures. When you drop them at the Visitor Center, *PLEASE* remember to fill out a donation form and make a copy for yourself. We will **NOT** be accepting bed linens, posters, flat art or large frames.

The Holiday Bazaar Committee is always looking for new members.
If you are interested, contact Brenda Stone or Jeanne Latham.

For more information contact
Brenda Stone at stonesoop@comcast.net or 301-490-0384.

We're always looking for new and different vendors, preferably folks who have
nature or wildlife related merchandise.

Contact Jeanne Latham at jelatham@verizon.net or 410-212-2280 regarding vendors.

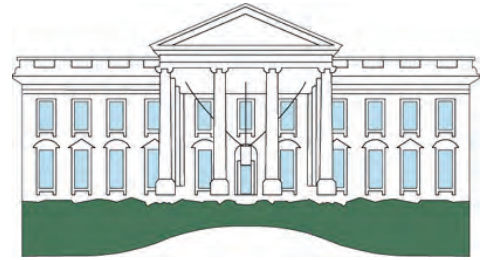
May-Magnificent Whooping Crane Month


Join us for a very special celebratory month! Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center have been deeply involved in saving this majestic bird from extinction since the mid-1960s. Throughout the month of May there will be educational displays, whooping crane observatory tours, and informational talks on Whooping Crane restoration efforts by Dr. John French, Research Manager at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center; Dr. Glenn Olsen, Veterinarian of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center; Brooke Pennypacker of Operation Migration and Ken Lavish, Volunteer, Crane Technician. *Stay tuned for more details!*

President Announces “Every Kid to a Park” Encourages All Fourth-Graders and Their Families to Visit a National Park, Refuge, or Forest in 2016

By Rich Dolesh

President Obama unveiled an ambitious plan on February 19, 2015 to encourage every fourth-grader in the U.S. to visit a park during the 2016 school year. He said that the National Park Service(NPS) and other federal public lands would waive entrance fees for all fourth-



grade students and their families. The President said, “We want every fourth-grader to have the experience of getting out and discovering America. We want them to see the outside of a classroom too; see all the places that make America great.” As part of his budget proposal, he intends to provide \$45 million for youth engagement programs, \$20 million of which would go to the National Park Foundation to provide funds for transportation to national parks for up to 1 million kids. NPS and other federal land-managing agencies will provide more than 1000 activities and resources to enhance youth and family visits. You can find out more about the initiative and the National Park Foundation’s campaign at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/02/19/let-s-get-every-kid-park>. 

JOIN TODAY!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

(E-mail address will not be sold or shared. It will be used for Friends and Refuge announcements only.)

Phone: (opt.) _____

- New
 Renewal
 Individual (\$15/yr)
 Family (\$20/yr)
 Contributor (\$50/yr)
 Sponsor (\$100/yr)
 Life (\$500)
 Donation _____

Make check to “Friends of Patuxent” and mail to address on reverse side of this page.

Check here if you would like save a tree by reading our quarterly newsletter online.



FRIENDS OF PATUXENT



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www.friendsofpatuxent.org

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN!

Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge, Inc is a designated Section 501(c)(3) public charity. It is a membership organization whose mission is to financially support the research of the PWRC and the environmental education, outreach and recreational missions at the PRR. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our Maryland Charitable Organization Registration-2348.

Your membership/contribution helps support the mission and programs at Patuxent. You also receive the following benefits:

- Quarterly newsletter (mailed on request or go to www.friendsofpatuxent.org)
- 10% discount in our Wildlife Images bookstore and other area refuge bookstores
- Attendance at member functions
- Participation in on-site educational programs
- Sense of accomplishment in providing many opportunities for wildlife-related recreation, education and research

(Application on reverse side)