

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

FRIENDS OF PATUXENT

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Spring: A Season for Refuges

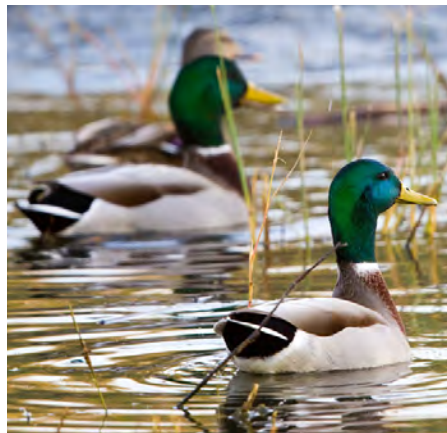
Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager

There is something about spring that always makes me feel like it was made for national wildlife refuges—or maybe it's the other way around.

Maybe it is because the very first refuge ever, Pelican Island NWR in Florida, was established in March 1903—actually a week BEFORE the official start of spring, but hey, close enough! Set aside by President Theodore Roosevelt to protect a variety of wading birds being slaughtered for their plumage, Pelican Island has been conserving birds and providing habitat for several endangered species for over 110 years!

Maybe it is because I have lived most of my life in northern climates, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, Montana, where you see the land and water come back to life after a long winter of snowstorms, cold temperatures, and wind chills. Spring is that time of year for renewal, and refuges certainly are renewed in the spring! Waterfowl return by the thousands as small wetlands and large marshes thaw and provide resting and refueling sites for migrating ducks, geese, and swans, as well as a myriad of shorebirds and passerines. Spring also welcomes the dancing rituals of male sage and sharp-tailed grouse, as they strut their stuff to attract mates on their prairie/sagebrush/pine savannah breeding grounds.

Closer to home, here at Patuxent, vernal pools will soon become overrun



with amphibians, with the first rush to lay their egg masses coming from wood frogs and spotted salamanders. Spring peepers and trilling toads can be deafening the first few warm days/evenings of spring. The migration of warblers and other passerines,

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Chair's Comments

By Jeanne Latham,
Chair of Friends of Patuxent

Thank You!

First of all, I'd like to thank all of you for your support in the form of time, work, membership, or donation. What continues to amaze me is that all of the volunteers, Friends and staff are so willing to go the extra mile, are immensely enthusiastic, and are so loyal to the Refuge and Research Center. Thank you for being you!

New Folks

On behalf of the Friends, I would like to welcome Jennie McNicoll, the new Visitor Services Chief. Jennie will be writing an article for the next issue of the newsletter to tell us about her background. We

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Spring: A Season for Refuges

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shorebirds, and waterfowl all start soon, or may be in full swing as you read these words! You can see wood ducks checking out nesting cavities or one of our artificial nesting structures. And of course, evenings in March and April, you can observe—if you know where to look—the “sky dance” of the woodcock, so famously documented in Aldo Leopold’s “Sand County Almanac.”

Thanks to the efforts of our Visitor Services team, administrators and teachers

“Any day you can spend time on a national wildlife refuge is a good day.”

from local schools also know that spring is a season for national wildlife refuges. Dennis Hartnett, our Environmental Education leader recently informed me there are virtually NO open dates left for school groups to visit Patuxent this April and May. This includes six days set

aside for schools that responded to our offers of free transportation to Patuxent, thanks to the “Every Kid in a Park” grant our Friends received from the National Park Foundation.

Our visitation usually peaks in the spring, so I guess the general public realizes spring is a great time to visit a national wildlife refuge as well. Hikers, birders, people fishing—all stretching their legs after a winter of lesser activity. Even our horseback riders come out a bit more during the spring for a nice trail ride before temperatures and bugs get too oppressive.

So come on out and experience spring on Patuxent or one of our other 561 refuges in the nation. If you can’t make it this spring, there is still summer, fall, and winter! Mollie Beattie, former Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service who passed away in 1996, was known to have said while attending a gray wolf reintroduction event near Yellowstone National Park, “Any day you can hold a live wolf is a good day.” That is a beautiful thought. I can easily repurpose that sentiment, and say, “Any day you can spend time on a national wildlife refuge is a good day.” Give it a try—I hope to see you out there! 🐦



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.

Article submission deadlines:

Issue			Issue		
No.	Months	Deadline	No.	Months	Deadline
1	Jan-Mar	December 1	2	Apr-Jun	March 1
3	Jul-Sept	June 1	4	Oct-Dec	September 1

To become a member of the Friends of Patuxent or send a donation, please see “Membership Application” on page 19.

We invite you to join!
Your membership/ contribution helps support the mission and programs at Patuxent



Spring 2016 in the Hollingsworth Gallery

By Faith Leahy-Thielke, Patuxent Volunteer, Photos by Jennie McNicoll

We all thought “spring wuz sprung” right before Maryland’s own special blizzard week, but March the twentieth is still (at this writing) yet to be—but, spring will be in full flower when the work of Russell Lehman in April, Jon Boone in May and Cecelia Wright in June grace the Refuge’s gallery.

Beltville resident, Russell Lehman is bringing his second April exhibit to Patuxent. Two years ago, we were first introduced to this local master of woodart’s specialty—intarsia-like pieces—that are crafted from a single rather than multiple strips of wood. Lehman’s elegant work is cut and shaped with a scroll saw, inked or stained individually, and then assembled and glued onto a “host” piece and coated with a finish. The images include wonderful birds, fish and other wildlife, and range in size from 4” by 6” to 12” by 16.” Lehman spent many childhood summers on his grandparents’ farm near Annapolis where he acquired his love of nature. Tongue in cheek, he describes his art “education” as elementary school art classes and a junior high woodworking class! But after retiring in 2011, he picked up his scroll saw and never looked back!

May’s exhibitor, a life-long resident of Maryland, is a 21st century Renaissance man. Jon Boone is a learned and



Front showcase art provided by Giancarlo

passionate environmental scientist as well as a writer and watercolorist whose “day job” at the University of Maryland was historian—both as faculty member and academic administrator. A native of Hagerstown, Boone recalls that he first became enthralled by the natural world, especially birds, at age 5 or 6. Books at his local library opened a world of possibilities for him; and in retirement, he’s still exploring them all. He helped found the North American Bluebird Society, became an associate editor of “North American Birdlife”, and serves as a con-



Hummingbirds in flight



Semi-precious stone bird sculptures

sultant with the Roger Tory Peterson (a renowned ornithologist who died in 1996) Institute in Jamestown, N.Y. Boone is working on a book about the Dutch master, Vermeer, an artist who incorporated 17th century science into the creation of his masterpieces. Not in oil, but like Vermeer, Boone makes his transparent watercolor “portraits”—careful and accurate representations of birds, plants, buildings, people and abstracts—celebrating them through his work. Those I saw on line rival Audubon’s and Peterson’s. Boone has a book published entitled “Remi’s, Book of Birds”—dedicated to his 4 year old granddaughter—whom he hopes (along with many children) to enthuse with the same love that captured him in his childhood library.

For the last 12 years, Cecelia Wright, has been a preschool teacher in a parochial school in her native city, Baltimore. A self-taught photographer, she’ll hang her second formal exhibit at Patuxent in June. The first was a recent one at the Irvine Nature Center in Owings Mills. She writes that, like many of us, she’s always enjoyed being outside, and learning about nature through reading, TV, and local nature centers’ programs and clubs. She volunteers with the Natural History Society of Maryland and other environmental groups. Wright’s current camera—though she’s used all kinds—is a digital SLR (single lens reflex) which refers to the action of the mirror—flipping out to reveal the sensor when the shutter button is pressed. Wright’s trips have taken her west to Yellowstone and south to Florida, but one of her favorite places is Cromwell Valley Park—400 acres of stream valleys and upland habitat in Baltimore County. She plans to exhibit a variety of natural scenes and subjects; including insects, plants and her favorite, birds.

Hollingsworth’s exhibitors this spring will make visiting the Refuge an even greater pleasure. 🐦

The Inner Core - Mostly Untouched by Human Hands

Part 2

Bill Harms - <http://blog.botanybill.info/>

Historical Background

Let's look at the history of this area to see why it is so pristine.

There is clear evidence of human settlement activity in the area surrounding the Inner Core. Maps from 1860 and the later 1800's show that at least three homesteads existed in the western part of the Inner Core. There may have been abortive attempts at farming, but the swampy nature and inaccessibility may have made farming difficult. However, initial observations show that the trees in the Inner Core are mostly second growth, clearly indicating a history of logging. More study of the area is needed to understand the extent and impact of historic settlement and logging.

Historical maps show some primitive roads in the area, including one that runs just south of Beaver Valley and another one that transverses the Inner Core from northwest to southeast. However, it may be impossible to determine the exact alignment of these two roads by ground truthing because of their original primitive condition and because vegetation has overgrown the roadbeds.

If there was ever any settlement activity in the Inner Core, it would have come to an end in 1917 when the Army acquired the land for a military installation. Most of the land acquired by the Army at the time was north of the Little Patuxent River, with a small parcel of land south of the Little Patuxent River. The Inner Core is part of this small "south of the river" parcel. According to a US Geological Survey map from 1918, the "south of the-river" parcel is roughly bounded by the Little Patuxent River on the north and east, Telegraph



Map of Inner Core

Area outlined in blue = 1917 Army acquisition south of Little Patuxent River

Area outlined in red = Inner Core

NOTE: the alignments are approximate.

Road to just north of Wood Duck Pond on the west, then by a line that runs roughly southeast from a point just north of Wood Duck Pond to a point near Salamander Pond, and finally by a line which runs northeast from that point towards the Little Patuxent River. Because of map resolution issues, the border of the "south of the river" parcel is not precisely determined.

Between 1917 and the late 1930's, the Army probably did not conduct large scale exercises in the "south of the river" parcel because there was enough land available north of the river to conduct exercises, and the area was remote being on the "other side of the river." For a short time in the mid-1920's, the Inner Core was part of the "Meade National Forest" when the

Army temporarily gave up control of a major part of the military installation. In the late 1930's, the winds of war brought a great change, when the army re-acquired the "Meade National Forest" and annexed a large portion of land south of the Little Patuxent and north of the Patuxent River.

Since the late 1930's, the Inner Core was probably largely ignored because military exercises could now be conducted in the large parcel of newly acquired land which was more accessible. The Inner Core was also part of an area on Fort Meade which was used as an artillery shell impact zone. As a result, unexploded ordnance in the Inner Core and other areas probably became a concern for the area's use for exercises.

Sometime before 1990, the Army stopped using the area as an impact zone, but the danger of unexploded ordnance lingered. After the early 1990's when control of a large portion of Fort Meade was transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the only significant human activity in the Inner Core has been hunting and biological surveying.

Comments About Invasive Species

When one visits the Inner Core, you are struck by the absence of invasive plants when compared to the rest of the North Tract. That said, initial observations of the area indicate that there are some invasive species in the area, such as Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), and common reedgrass (*Phragmites australis*). A small number of populations of the first two species with few individual plants are found in the mesic woods which surround the palustrine wetlands. The common reedgrass (*Phragmites australis*) has been found in a couple of small isolated populations. Further study will probably show isolated pockets of other invasive species, but if they exist, they are probably not as pervasive as elsewhere on the North Tract

Bottomland Floodplain Excluded

Although the bottomland floodplain along the Little Patuxent River also has had minimal human influence over the years, it is excluded from the Inner Core. This is because invasive plants have negatively altered the original pristine condition of the bottomlands. Various invasive species, such as lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), ivy-leaved speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*), and creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*), have been introduced into the bottomlands from outside of the refuge by periodic

Annex

NVC Vegetation Associations Identified in the Inner Core and Adjacent Areas

- Central Appalachian Cutgrass March (Globally not rated)
- Coastal Plain Oak Floodplain Swamp (G4)
- Coastal Plain/Piedmont Floodplain Forest (G4)
- Eastern North American Ruderal Wet Meadow and Marsh (Globally not rated - Ruderal)
- Mid-Atlantic Mesic Hardwood Forest (GS)
- Northeastern Coastal Plain Mixed/Oak Heath Forest (G4G5)
- Pine Barrens Lowland Forest (possible) (G2G3) (NOTE: This plant community may exist within the Inner Core; further field observations are needed to verify or refute.)
- Red Maple/Upright Sedge Wooded Marsh (G3GS)
- Southern New England/Northern Piedmont Red Maple Seepage Swamps (G4GS)
- Southern Red Maple - Black Gum Swamp Forest (G3)
- Successional Sweetgum Forest (Globally not rated - Modified/managed)
- Successional Tuliptree Forest (Globally not rated - Ruderal)
- Successional Virginia Pine Forest (Globally not rated - Ruderal)

flooding and have taken a strong foothold. The Inner Core wetlands are subject to occasional flooding, but their relative higher elevation means that they are out of the Little Patuxent River floodplain which would slow the spread of these invasive species.

Conclusion

The Inner Core can provide a rich area for future biological research. Perhaps elevated protection of some kind may

be warranted to minimize future human impact on this area. The comparative lack of human activity and the relative pristine condition of the Inner Core make it a special place on the North Tract, indeed a biological time capsule. I hope this article has sparked some interest.

Finally, this area is not accessible to the general public, and a hunting permit or a special research permit is required to enter the area. 🦅



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<https://twitter.com/USFWSNortheast/status/78546358377783296>

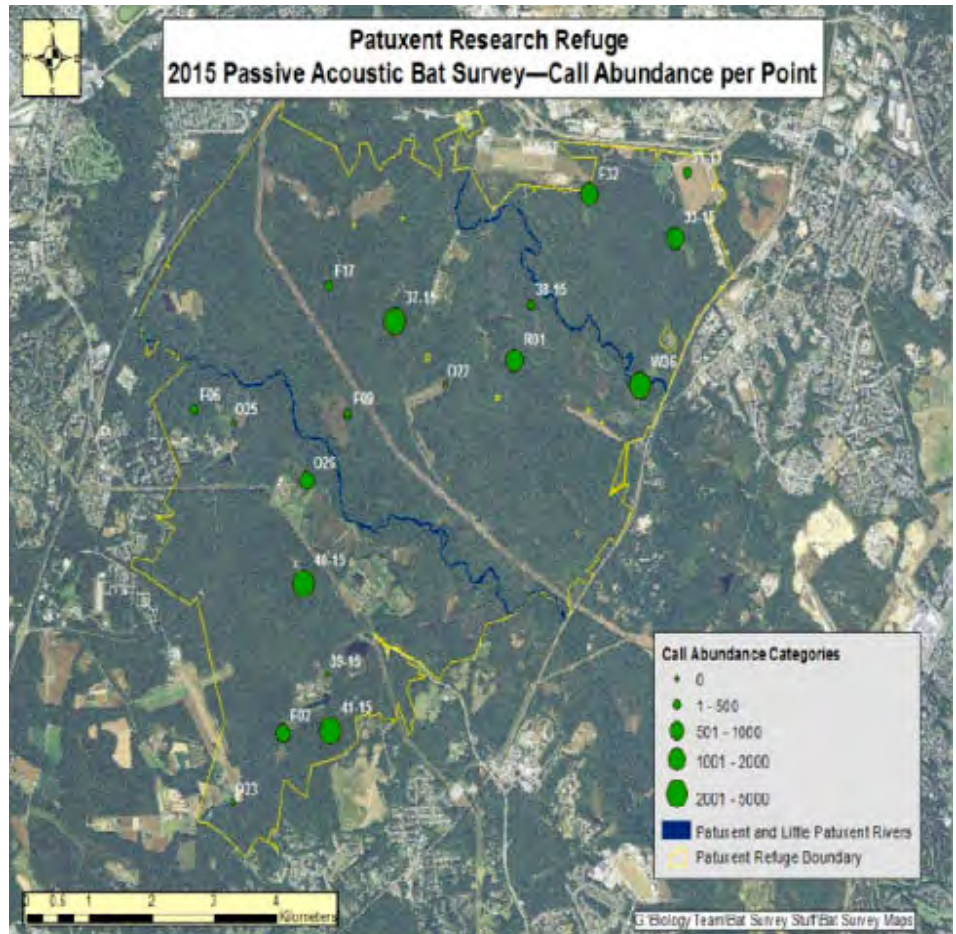
Acoustic Bat Surveys at Patuxent Refuge 2012 - 2015

By Sandy Spencer, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist

Too bad we can't just go on "bat walks" like we do for bird walks. But with today's new technologies we can let specialized recording devices do the "walking" for us. Patuxent is participating, with over a dozen other national wildlife refuges in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region, in a large effort to inventory and monitor bat species using acoustic detectors. With so much forest habitat networked with rivers, streams and ponds in and around Patuxent, this is prime country for forest bats in the Balto-Washington corridor. But bats are experiencing declines and facing threats from loss of or changes to habitat, diseases such as White-nose syndrome, or obstructions in their migration routes such as wind turbines. It's important that we know what species we have, if we have any listed as endangered or threatened (such as Northern long-eared bat), and where they are feeding or roosting, so



Northern long-eared bat. Photo: USFWS



Locations of detectors in 2015

we can plan for their conservation and protection.

Here's how we conduct the survey: Patuxent has three Wildlife Acoustics SM2Bat+ stationary detectors, provided by the USFWS regional office (at about \$900 each), plus some very sensitive and expensive microphones. We set them out in forest openings of many types—streams, glades, river or impoundment edges, narrow roads—and record bat calls for three nights in a row (called a "run"), then move the detectors to three new locations for the next run. We do three runs during the maternity period (late May to July 15) and three runs during the volant period

(July 15 - August 15, when young are flying with adults), amounting to six runs at 18 locations.

When we are done moving detectors around for the season, we process the downloaded data through specialized software (also expensive). Each call file (and there are thousands) needs to be attributed with background information about location, setting, weather conditions, etc.); non-bat calls need to be scrubbed out, low quality calls sorted out, and remaining high quality calls classified to species. We have 3 different classification software programs so we can compare and get corroboration.

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January 2016 Blizzard at Patuxent

By Rachel Roberts, Photos by Rachel Roberts

On Friday January 22nd, my coworkers and I prepared for a historic blizzard to hit Patuxent. We remained at the Refuge through the weekend to care for our animal research colonies which included quail, owls, kestrels, ducks, and cranes. In previous storms, the weight of heavy snowfall tore overhead nets and caused occupied pens to collapse. It was our job to monitor the pens throughout the night and knock any thick snow accumulation from the gentle latticework suspended above our endangered birds.

Starting at midnight, we checked the birds every hour and by Saturday morning nearly 2 feet had fallen without issue. The birds were calm and still as the inches built up around their legs and looked beautiful against the sparkling white snow. When the sun was up, we grabbed shovels and dug out gates, pens, and vehicles. Then began the slow and deliberate task of trudging through each colony, checking all 159 cranes.



By Sunday morning, the snow had stopped and we redoubled our digging efforts. Most of the cranes had enough food to last a few more days but the ducks needed to be fed daily and the quail, owls, and kestrels needed to eat. Working together, we slogged through each research colony carrying buckets of food and shovels. Gratefully, at the



end of our long weekend all the animals (and technicians) survived.

Looking back on the event, I learned a lot during my first snowstorm at Patuxent, and I wanted to share the 7 most important lessons;

1. If you make fun of a coworker for getting a truck stuck, you will get a truck stuck as well.
2. You can never have enough instant mashed potatoes.
3. Walking quickly in snow is impossible.
4. Not throwing shovel-fulls of snow at your coworkers is also impossible

(especially after they made fun of you for getting a truck stuck).

5. A broken snow blower can't hear you yell at it.
6. The scoring system in Cribbage is overly complicated.
7. And finally, if you ever need to accomplish a seemingly overwhelming task, all you have to do is look up from your shovel and become inspired by all your coworkers working toward the same goal; anticipating your needs and caring earnestly for the safety and well-being of the animals. 🦩

Thank You!

“I wish to acknowledge the generosity of Linda Shive and the Patuxent Friends for the donation of about \$45-worth of door prize items for the upcoming US Fish and Wildlife Service Region 5 Biology Workshop. Each participating refuge has been asked to bring memorabilia from their refuge to give out as prizes. Linda picked out a few choice items that I think anybody would be delighted to get, such as hat, mug, water bottle, even a Wild and Not So Wild cookbook, which I didn't know existed! So thank you very much Linda and Friends!”

Sandy Spencer, Refuge Biologist, Patuxent Research Refuge

Volunteers Honored at the 2015 Appreciation/Awards Dinner

Diana Ogilvie, Volunteer Coordinator, Photos by Ed Grimes

On a wintry Sunday afternoon, volunteers made their way to the Visitor Center to help staff decorate and set up for the Volunteer Appreciation potluck scheduled for that evening. By 6:00 pm more than 100 volunteers, Friends and family had gathered to visit, eat delicious food and celebrate the volunteer spirit in the Rachel Carson multipurpose rooms.

Some highlights from the evening included:

- Volunteer Nancy Newman Pape provided incidental music before dinner to set the mood
- Volunteers efficiently filed along the food tables laden with signature dishes, filled their plates and ate heartily
- Facilities Manager Martin Brockman gave a very interesting and informative presentation about the ongoing solar roof project and projected energy savings
- Friends of Patuxent Chair Jeanne Latham introduced Friends Board members and said a few words about the ways the Friends of Patuxent support the refuge
- Staff members shared a tongue-in-cheek instructive training video on the merits of different techniques of pointing during interpretation
- Brad reported on the results of his informal volunteer survey, the most important finding being that over 80% of Patuxent Volunteers are Green Bay Packers fans

After dinner and presentations were complete, it was time for awards. Several volunteers reached new milestones this year.



2015 Volunteer of the Year - Sparky Sparks

25 hours - Phyllis Yigdall, Heidi Primo

50 hours - Frances Kent

100 hours - Dave Burgevin, Joe Gentile, Sam Knights, Sam Johnson, Ross Feldner

500 hours - Jeannette Grotke, Ann Coren, Bob Coren, Stephanie Everett, Pat Simons, Kaitlyn Baligush

1,000 hours - Evelyn Kirby, Tom Kirby, Cheryl Sedlak-Seaver

1,500 hours - Lillian Fazio

2,500 hours - Mike Goldberg, Jan Hardy

3,000 hours - Bill Gill

4,500 hours - Jay Pape

5,000 hours - Bob Hardy, Dennis Green

6,000 hours - Jerry Feldman, Joe DiGiovanni

7,000 hours - Brenda Stone

8,000 hours - Claudia Papillo
no picture

10,000 hours - Ted Weidenhoft

20 year volunteers - Rudy Benavides, Jean Sparks, Sparky Sparks, Gary Hornbaker

A few new award categories were presented.

Innovation Award - Mike Goldberg

Unsung Heroes Award - Claudia Papillo, Dennis Green

Over 1,000 hours Joe DiGiovanni, 1197 hours

Most Volunteer Hours in a Year - Frank McGilvrey, 1669 hours
no picture



25 hours - Phyllis Yigdall, Heidi Primo



50 hours - Frances Kent



100 hours - Dave Burgevin, Joe Gentile, Sam Knights, Sam Johnson, Ross Feldner



500 hours - Jeannette Grotke, Ann Coren, Bob Coren, Stephanie Everett, Pat Simons, Kaitlyn Baligush



1,000 hours - Evelyn Kirby, Tom Kirby, Cheryl Sedlak-Seaver



1,500 hours - Lillian Fazio



2,500 hours - Mike Goldberg, Jan Hardy



3,000 hours - Bill Gill



4,500 hours - Jay Pape



5,000 hours - Bob Hardy, Dennis Green, Ron Clements (artist/carver)



6,000 hours - Jerry Feldman, Joe DiGiovanni



7,000 hours - Brenda Stone

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Volunteers Honored at the 2015 Appreciation/Awards Dinner

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20 year volunteers - Rudy Benavides (not shown), Jean Sparks, Gary Hornbaker (Ted Weidenhoft accepting), Sparky Sparks



10,000 hours - Ted Weidenhoft

Last but not least, Sparky Sparks was selected as the **2015 Volunteer of the Year** by a panel of volunteers. Sparky has been a dedicated Patuxent Research Refuge volunteer for more than 20 years. Throughout the years, he helped establish the North Tract trail system, built gates, participated in biological surveys, helped with native plant landscaping/gardening, staffed the front desk, supported special events and more. He was instrumental in the success of the renowned Patuxent Wildlife Art Show and Sale, a major fundraiser for the Refuge sponsored by the Friends of Patuxent. He has organized, led and coordinated the NABA butterfly count each summer as well as conducted butterfly programs. Last year he chaired the Friends committee that organized Patuxent's first Monarch Butterfly Festival. He currently serves as secretary on the Friends of Patuxent Board of Directors.

As a wrap up to the evening, Nancy Newman Pape, in collaboration with Lennon and McCartney, performed *The Long and Wildlife Road* in honor of the selflessness and dedication of our amazing volunteers.

The long and wildlife road that leads to this door,



Unsung Heroes Award - Claudia Papillo (not shown), Dennis Green



Innovation Award - Mike Goldberg



Over 1,000 hours Joe DiGiovanni, 1197 hours

Traveled by volunteers, who with less have done more.

You're always giving back to those the refuge is for...

The wild and varied life that has been helped and saved

By Friends and volunteers thrives here, night and day.

You lend your helping hands as you show the way...

Many times you've worked alone and many times been tired

Although you may never know the many you've inspired...

And you will lead us back to the long wildlife road

You guide the visitors by sharing the truth you know

Great Friends and Volunteers help wildlife endure....

We Appreciate and Applaud our Volunteers!

Thank you for your incredible support!

Bird Books & More at Wildlife Images

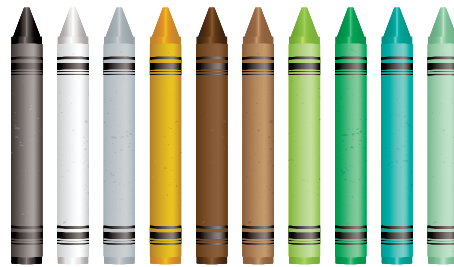
There is always something new on the shelves at Wildlife Images. Whether it is field guides, bird videos, children's books, nature-themed jewelry, or craft items, the store's wide collection of nature-related products reflects and supports the educational and interpretive mission of the refuge. With spring approaching and May bringing both International Migratory Bird Day and the Refuge's Magnificent Whooping Crane Month, let's look at a few new bird-themed books and craft items in the store.

Facts and Figures about Birds: Beyond the Field Guide

How much do birds eat? Do any birds fly backwards? What proportion of the world's birds is migratory? What is abmigration? How accurate are our estimates of bird populations? Do all birds from one species migrate? *The Birders Companion* by Stephen Moss answers these and many more questions. In this fact-filled book, the author has collected 500 questions about birds and arranged them into ten categories such as, What do birds eat? Why do birds sing? How many birds are there? And even, What is a bird? Test your knowledge, learn something new, or make a game of it. Reading this book is sure to pique your interest and answer questions you hadn't even considered.

Eagles & Birds of Prey by Jemima Parry-Jones, from the renowned Eye-witness Books series has great color photographs interspersed with facts ranging from describing head shapes to explaining how birds of prey hunt, eat, and digest their food. What is the largest bird of prey? The smallest? The fastest? Why did Benjamin Franklin think the eagle should not be the national emblem of the United States and what was his choice?

The Birders Handbook. A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds. The Essential Companion to Your Identification Guide by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye is a hefty reference book filled with information not included in most field guides. In addition to bird profiles that include facts about breeding, nesting, diet, and conservation, the authors provide short essays on a wide range of topics such as parental care, diet, feathers, evolution, and bird names. This weighty volume of over 700 pages is not a field guide to take on the trail, but a compendium of information to browse through at leisure.



Crafts and Coloring

The *Ruth Heller Coloring Book* is a stimulating collection of birds for coloring. Some birds are drawn in the water, others are on tree branches or flying. Some pages highlight a single bird, others repeat the same bird multiple times. Exercise your creativity—color the drawings realistically or go crazy with colors and patterns of your own design. The high quality paper is suitable for use with crayons, felt-tipped pens, water paints, pencils, or pastels.

The store has a variety of other avian-centric coloring books for children and adults, including *State Birds*, *Audubon's Birds of America*, *Endangered Birds*, *North American Ducks, Geese, & Swans*, *Birds of Prey*, and the whimsical *Owls Coloring Book* by Creative Haven that poses owls covered with flowers, paisley, and other patterns against vivid backgrounds and intricate designs.

Geese, cranes, hummingbirds, eagles, pelicans, and roadrunners are among the thirty-four birds included in *Origami Birds* by John Montroll. This book starts by illustrating the basic origami folds and then presents detailed instructions on how to create a variety of birds. The folds range in difficulty from intermediate to complex so this book is probably best for those with some origami experience.

The Beautiful Paper Birds kit includes an illustrated instruction book that guides you step-by-step through cutting, gluing, and folding paper to create realistic models of a bluebird, cardinal, goldfinch, and nuthatch. The kit includes 36 sheets of colored paper (enough to make 16 birds), glue, and the detailed instruction book.

Books for IMBD

The second Saturday in May is IMBD, and in 2016, International Migratory Bird Day will focus on how birds have inspired many of the most significant environmental conservation actions in the Americas.

One of the store's perennial bestselling books is *Chasing the Ghost Birds, Saving Swans and Cranes from Extinction* by David Sakrison. The book is a detailed and enthralling story about three major conservation projects to save from extinction trumpeter swans, Siberian cranes, and whooping cranes. This author tells the story of the peo-

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Looking forward to Spring in the Schoolyard Habitat

Ann Coren, Photos by Ann Coren

We're looking forward to spring in the Schoolyard Habitat, located outside the National Wildlife Visitor Center, and welcome you to join us in this restoration project. Its goal is to educate the public about Conservation Landscaping, encouraging people to transition lawns to sustainable wildlife habitat. The garden is free and open to the public. It attracts families out for nature walks, and photographers. School groups use it for environmental education, and church groups and scout troops for their volunteer service hours. As part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, we are very selective in assuring that all new plants are as close to the native ecotype for the site as possible. Gardener volunteers are a welcome part of the design phase. We share our passion for native plants and teach the public about the benefits of gardening for biodiversity.

Regular meeting times for 2016 are currently being scheduled.

Volunteer Opportunities in the School Yard Habitat include:

- Garden maintenance
- Garden planning
- Public educational activities
- Raising funds or write and manage grants.
- Creating educational literature
- Supervising non-gardener volunteers
- Photographing the changes in the garden
- Collecting data on plant survival, plant/pollinator interactions
- Creating a composting area

If you'd like to volunteer for this rewarding opportunity contact:

Ann Coren, the Master Gardener coordinating the project, anncoren@hotmail.com or

Diana Ogilvie, Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator at the Patuxent Research Refuge, Diana_Ogilvie@fws.gov, 301-497-5565.

All new long-term volunteers will need to complete the one-day refuge volunteer orientation which is offered 2-3 times each year, the next one will be in April 2016.

Single day volunteer opportunities will be listed in the Friends Newsletter. 🐦



Volunteers plant a new section of the Pollinator Meadow at the Patuxent Research Refuge Schoolyard Habitat 2015.

Reducing the Carbon Footprint at Patuxent

During the past year, Martin Brockman has managed a utility Energy Service Contract that was awarded to Potomac Electric Power Company to replace the NWVC roof with a white-cool roof, and install the maximum number of solar PV panels possible to meet a large percentage of our electricity needs. The new ENERGY STAR roof- a 179.3 kW (DC) photovoltaic system is mounted on the roof, and a 71.3 kW (DC) photovoltaic system is mounted on a parking lot canopy along with an electric car charging station. The system will include almost 700 Suniva 330 watt modules. When completed, it will be one of the biggest solar projects in the USFWS providing:

- Over \$30,000 in annual electricity savings,**
- Up to 272,671 kWh overall electricity savings annually and**
- Reduction of carbon footprint by over 369 tons annually.**



From Patuxent's Past

Below: Left—Raccoon climbing metal post to wood-duck nest box in search of eggs. Right—Bracket-type mounting for wood-duck nest box developed at Center to prevent raccoons from entering boxes.



Predator proofing of artificial nesting structures was a large part of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's history. These photos by Chuck Webster (year unknown) show both the problem and the solution.

Fran Uhler is pictured in photo to the right.

New South Tract Songbird Nestbox Coordinator

By Tom Kirby

I'm the new volunteer coordinator for cavity nesting songbirds at the Refuge's South Tract. I've been monitoring nestboxes at North Tract for about 3 or 4 years and have learned a lot starting from zero. I'm no expert, but I love the opportunity to watch the different songbirds' peculiarities and watch their chicks grow and fledge, and then start anew. As of this writing, I've scheduled, and invited, current and potential new nestbox monitors to a training seminar in March at the National Wildlife Visitor Center. I've also embarked on cleaning, repairing and replacing existing nestboxes at South Tract as rapidly as possible.

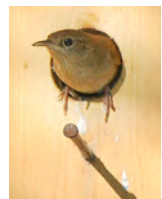


Photo by Ross Feldner

Please contact Diana Ogilvie, Volunteer Coordinator, if you would like to help me and others gather and record data on songbirds during the nesting season from April through mid-August.

Meet the Newest Member of the Friends of Patuxent Board of Directors

Ken Lavish was recently voted onto the Friends of Patuxent Board.

Ken has been a volunteer at Patuxent for 11 years. One of the areas he has found most rewarding is volunteering with the US Geological Survey side of Patuxent by working to save endangered Whooping Cranes. He works as a surrogate crane dad for the young birds and educates the public on their plight. He also serves as an Environ-



mental Education (EE) Specialist at the Refuge. As an EE Specialist he develops and conducts environmental education programs, assists in teacher workshops, works with visiting schools, and gives tours. In addition, Ken also participates in community outreach, scout workshops, performs general maintenance at the refuge, and is the

refuge coordinator for Project Bud-Burst. He also serves as the chair of the Adopt A Whooper Committee (a fund raising program sponsored by the Friends of Patuxent).

He retired as an economist with the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2004 after 32 years. 🦩

May Sneak Peek! May is Magnificent Whooping Crane Month!

Join us for a very special celebratory month! Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center has 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, fascinating Whooping Crane videos, and Family Fun Day on May 21. Stay tuned for more details!



Photo by Ross Feldner

Patuxent Raised Whooping Cranes Released in Louisiana

By Jonathan Male



On December 3, 2015, Up-Up and Away, was the song sung by the Patuxent Crane staff as they said good-bye to 11 costume-reared young-of-the-year whooping crane chicks that were taken by Windway Capital Corporation's private

jet from BWI to Jennings, Louisiana. From the first captive-reared release in 2010, Patuxent has been sending whooping crane chicks to Louisiana in hopes of establishing a self-sustaining non-migratory wild population. From

2010-2014, 64 whooping crane chicks have been released with 35 alive today; with the addition of the recently sent 11 chicks this makes a total of 46 whooping cranes in the wild. Good job Crane staff, good job USGS-Patuxent Staff. 🦩

Upcoming Special Events

Kids' Fishing Day

Saturday, June 11th, 2016

8:30 am – 12:00 pm

National Wildlife Visitor Center

Fishing demonstrations and instructions for ages 15 and under.

Catch and release fishing only.

Pre-registration required. Check website for details.

FREE; Call 301-497-5887 to register starting May 18, 2016 at 9:15 am. Space is limited.

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent/>

Wildlife Conservation and Recreation Day

Saturday, August 13th, 2016

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Patuxent North Tract Entrance

Learn about wildlife conservation and recreational opportunities through habitat exploration, children's crafts, fishing, archery and firearm demonstrations.

Check website for details closer to the event.

FREE; 301-497- 5770; <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent/>

If you would like to volunteer to help with any of these special events please contact Volunteer Coordinator, Diana Ogilvie at Diana_Ogilvie@fws.gov or 301-497-5565.

Pruning - How, When, Where and Why

By Mary Ann Hartnett, Volunteer


In less than two hours, on Saturday, February 27, 2016, Joe DiGiovanni, Volunteer of the year 2012 and Master Gardener in Howard County, explained it all. After listening to Joe's presentation at the Visitor Center, even a novice gardener such as myself, felt empowered to tackle the unruly trees and shrubs in my yard.



Why prune? Safety first. Damaged or dead limbs can fall and cause injuries or destruction to property, electrical wires or other plants.

Proper pruning also enhances the health and aesthetics of a plant.

Joe explained how to select which branches should be removed, what tools should be used for a particular job, and depending on the plant, when you should prune it. He also offered tips on cleaning up tools to prevent the spread of diseases, and provided useful handouts and a list of references for locating additional information.

This was not Joe's first presentation as a Master Gardener, and hopefully not his last. Watch the schedule of events for the Visitor Center for future opportunities to learn from a master. 

Maryland Hunter Education Program at Patuxent

2016 Class Dates

All classes to be held at the Wildlife Visitor Center. The dates and times are as follows:

June 2016

Tuesday June 7th
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Thursday June 9th
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Saturday June 11th
7:30 am - 3:00 pm

July 2016

Tuesday July 12th
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Thursday July 14th
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Saturday July 16th
7:30 am - 3:00 pm

August 2016

Tuesday August 16th
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Thursday August 18th
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Saturday August 20th
7:30 am - 3:00 pm




You Are Invited to a
Night on the Wild Side
A GATHERING OF FRIENDS
Thursday, March 31, 2016
6 to 8 PM

Patuxent Research Refuge
 National Wildlife Visitor Center
 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
 Laurel, MD 20708

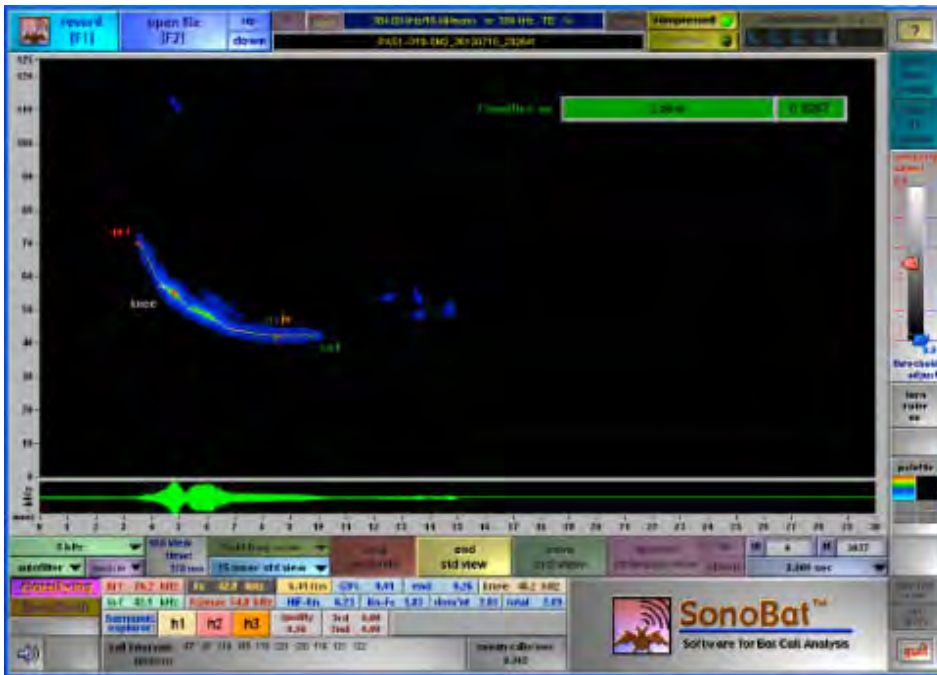
- Enjoy great food, beer and wine
- Find out about vital research to help endangered species
- Discover fun opportunities right in your own backyard
- Meet live animals

Come early at 5 pm for behind the scenes wildlife conservation tram tour
 Attire: Business casual
 RSVP requested by March 18, 2016
 Email: friends@friendsofpatuxent.org
 or call 301-497-5789


Hosted by
Friends of Patuxent

Acoustic Bat Surveys at Patuxent Refuge 2012-2015

Continued from page 6



Sonobat® sonogram image of Eastern red bat

Some bats in the Myotis family are difficult, almost impossible, for the software to tell apart, so these call files will require manual vetting by qualified experts (again, expensive). And of course wouldn't you know this is especially true for the species we are most interested in, the threatened Northern long-

eared bat. One program, Sonobat, produces sonograms of the calls, which is essential to be able to manually vet the call. Bat species identified collectively by all three software programs were eastern red bat, silver-haired bat, big brown bat, hoary bat, evening bat, tricolored bat, eastern small-footed bat,



Detector microphone deployed.

little brown bat. Northern long-eared (threatened) and Indiana (endangered) bats were also identified in these preliminary results, but those call files will require manual vetting by an expert before acceptance. 🐦

Help Wanted! Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Holiday Bazaar

The Holiday Bazaar Committee is looking for a few new members. If you are willing to attend a few planning meetings and provide some new ideas for the 2016 Bazaar, contact Brenda Stone. The 2016 Holiday Bazaar will be held **November 5**.

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 Mary Ann Hartnett regarding vendors at maryannhartnett@netscape.net or 301-474-5572.



Bird Books & More at Wildlife Images

Continued from page 11

ple and organizations working over the last sixty years to protect these magnificent birds, chronicling the field days of projects reintroducing trumpeter swans to the Midwest and whooping cranes to the Eastern United States, and efforts underway to protect the critically threatened Siberian crane in Russia. With photos, illustrations, forays into conservation history, interviews, and first-person accounts, this is an engrossing adventure story for anyone interested in bird conservation.

How Birds Migrate by Paul Kerlinger includes articles on migratory patterns, migration types, the basics of bird flight, weather and atmospheric structure as it affects birds, bird navigation and orientation, migration seasons, and much more. Each chapter includes a number of case studies that examine an individual species or research project. The author served as the director of the New Jersey Audubon Society's Cape May Bird Observatory and uses Cape May as an example to illustrate differences in the seasonal timing of migration among different birds.

And for fun, don't forget about our stuffed toy cranes—Willy the whooping crane, Willy Jr., the whooping crane chick, and Sandy, the Sandhill crane. 🦩

Chair's Comments

Continued from page 1

look forward to working with Jennie and getting to know her.

And I'd like to share that Ken Lavish, whom many of you know, has joined the Friends Board as one of the Directors. Ken's leadership skills, hard work and dedication, as well as his sense of humor, will be great assets to our organization. (Check out his article in this newsletter.)

Gentle Challenge

I continue to hear volunteers and Friends say that they want to know more about the Refuge—there is so much here to discover! And we **should** know all about this place we



love, so we can be the best ambassadors we can be—don't you agree? Would you like to experience an area with which you're not familiar?

Here's the challenge—stretch outside your comfort zone and travel to the north side or the south, where you don't usually go. You could take a friend or family member along. Check out what's happening there—it may surprise you. What about Central Tract? Usually this area is closed to the public for good reason—because it is a sensitive research area. However, during the October Wildlife Festival, there are behind the scenes tours on a limited basis. There are Whooping Crane tours to the Whooping Crane observatory during the year.

Words of Inspiration

Lastly, I'd like to share some words that have inspired me during this past year, and I've tried to put into practice. Hope they inspire you. "Make it happen." "Offer suggestions or solutions—not complaints." "Think and act positively."

...

Please know that the Friends organization welcomes your ideas for programs, tours, suggestions for improvement, etc.. Please let us know what's on your mind. You can email me at jelatham@verizon.net; or Friends at friends@friendsofpatuxent.org. Thank you! 🦩



Looking for A Gift Idea?

Need a gift idea for a family member, a work associate, a friend? Consider getting them a membership to the Friends

(http://www.friendsofpatuxent.org/images/2016_Friends_of_Patuxent_application_form.pdf)

They'll get a very nice gift with their membership along with the newsletter and discount at *Wildlife Images*, the Friends bookstore. Another terrific idea is to make a donation in that person's name to the Adopt A Whooper program, a symbolic adoption of a Whooping Crane (http://www.friendsofpatuxent.org/images/Website_Donation_Form_05-06-13.pdf). With the donation, the gift recipient will receive a memorable Whooping Crane gift.

You'll not only be giving a gift, but you will be showing support for your Refuge, Research Center and Friends!

We invite you to join!

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



FRIENDS OF PATUXENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-2015

- Jeanne Latham, Chair
- Richard Dolesh, Vice-Chair
- Clarence "Sparky" Sparks, Secretary
- Brenda Stone, Assistant Treasurer
- Ed Grimes, Director
- Charles Deegan, Director
- Harlan Tucker, Director
- Ken Lavish, Director

LIAISONS

- Diana Ogilvie, Patuxent Research Refuge Liaison
- Shannon Beliew, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, USGS Liaison
- Douglas Meister, Esq., General Counsel

FRIEND OF PATUXENT BOARD MEETINGS

Friends Board Meetings are usually held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7 PM at the Visitor Center. No Board meetings are held in August and December. The scheduled meetings remaining for this fiscal year are: June 23, July 28, September 22, October 27, November 24.

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 (\$25/yr), gift: FOP bookmark (or other) Family (\$35/yr), gift: FOP decal (or other)

Contributor (\$75/yr), gift: History of Patuxent DVD (or other) Sponsor (\$250/yr), gift: FOP hat (or other)

Life (\$500), gift: FOP shirt (or other) Please size: S M L XL XXL XXXL

Life-65+ (\$300), gift: FOP shirt (or other) Please size: S M L XL XXL XXXL

Donation \$ _____ *Make check to "Friends of Patuxent" and mail to address on reverse side of this page.*

Check here if you prefer not to have a gift, and instead have your entire dues support Friends of Patuxent.

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



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Phone: 301-497-5789
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)