

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

FRIENDS OF PATUXENT

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Jan-Mar 2014



Coming Soon to Patuxent- Personal Sunsets!!

Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager



September 30, 2013 is a day that will be remembered as the day that Patuxent Research Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) was finalized and approved. After four years of pre-planning, public meetings, writing drafts, revising drafts, and debating a multitude of choices for Patuxent's future direction, the CCP was finally blessed and awaits implementation.

This document, you may recall, is to be the guiding light for all Patuxent does over the next fifteen years - from wildlife and habitat management to visitor services to research to hunting/fishing and how we engage with our local communities. "If it is not in the CCP, you do not do it," is the informal mantra we heard throughout the process. It is not QUITE that cut and dried - we do not want to scorn opportunities that come along that we can take advantage of for the good of wildlife and/or the public we serve. But it does set a pretty strong course for where we are headed.

So where ARE we headed? What ARE some of the major changes? There are many, but some of the most prominent include:

- 1) We will be managing for more forested habitat in the future. This means letting some field/meadow areas go through a natural succession from grasses and forbs to shrubs/young trees, and, ultimately to mature stands

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Volunteers Honored at the 2013 Appreciation/ Awards Dinner

Diana Ogilvie,
Visitor Services Staff

The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held at the Visitor Center on Sunday, December 15 this year. As volunteers and staff (with bells in hand) arrived, we were serenaded by the dulcet tones of Nancy Newman Pape singing holiday favorites. Afterward, we enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner and fellowship with more than ninety of our closest friends. We're sorry that not everyone could make the volunteer appreciation/holiday dinner, but wanted to share some highlights with you.

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Coming Soon to Patuxent- Personal Sunsets!!

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of mixed deciduous/pine forests. We will be encouraging the establishment of favorable vegetation over non-desirable and/or invasive plant species through mowing, prescribed burns, and pesticide use.

- 2) Some impoundments will be converted back to floodplain bottomland hardwood habitat rather than the open marshes they are today. This is an effort to at least partially restore the natural hydrology along the Patuxent River. In time, this will result in more forest and less open water on the refuge, favoring the forest birds we have identified as the primary species for which the refuge can benefit the most.
- 3) While we will continue to offer a robust variety of environmental education and interpretation programs at the refuge, we will be increasing our efforts to connect with under-served and diverse populations off-site. This is in keeping with the National Wildlife Refuge System's new Urban Refuge Initiative (URI). Recognizing that fewer and fewer people have opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, the URI strives to bring those experiences closer to home, within their



Photo by Ross Feldner

local communities. There will be a special emphasis on reaching the rapidly growing Latino community in the Washington DC - Baltimore urban area. Other diverse groups will be targeted as well.

- 4) The National Wildlife Visitor Center trails and grounds will be staying open until sunset beginning March 16, 2014. By far, the most common public comment received during the CCP process was to increase our daily hours of operations. We had long understood the disappointment of the public having to leave the NWVC grounds at 4:30PM, missing some of the best hours to observe wildlife as evening approaches. While we cannot offer the same sunrise to sunset hours at the North Tract due to the sign-in, sign-out protocols because of unexploded ordnance, these expanded hours on the South Tract will be more

in line with the majority of national wildlife refuges in the country.

This is the change I am probably most excited about. It gives Patuxent the opportunity to allow you to experience your very own personal sunsets! Sunsets are a powerful rhythm in Nature. The daytime creatures go into hiding, while the night-time creatures begin to stir and emerge from their sanctuary from the daylight.

No two sunsets are alike, and no two observation points are identical. You might view a sunset through the crowns of a stand of pitch pines; you might view it across open water, as a beaver silently glides along, rippling the sun's reflection on the water's surface. From one vantage point, you might hear a barred owl warming up its vocal chords as sunset approaches. From another, maybe you smell the scent of Virginia pines as you watch the sky turn to pink, red, and crimson. One sunset might evoke memories of a sunset shared long ago with family or friends; another might recall a solitary experience you had halfway across the country. In my case, seeing a horizon-filling sunset and watching sandhill cranes return to an alkali wetland roost in North Dakota; or hearing a bull elk bugle during archery season in Montana, wondering where he was taking his harem of cows for the evening.

Every sunset has the potential to be a highly personal experience. Now, courtesy of our completed CCP, such personal sunsets will be available at Patuxent. Watching sunsets can be habit forming. Come out and experience one - then come out again, and experience another. It may be similar - but it will not be the same! ■

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
National Wildlife Visitor Center
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708-4011

Or email to Diana_Ogilvie@fws.gov

To become a member of the Friends of Patuxent or send a donation, please see "Membership Application" in the reverse side of the address page of the newsletter.

The 2013 Patuxent Waterbird Nesting Season

By Frank McGilvrey - Volunteer/biologist

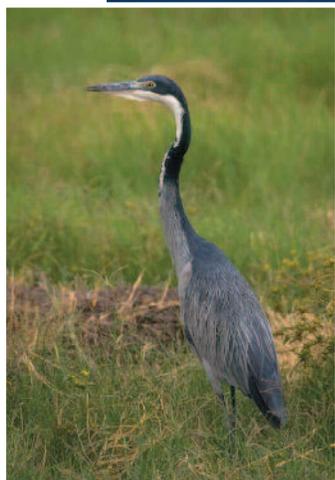
This was the 17th year of intensive monitoring of nesting water birds on the Patuxent Research refuge. Methods included spring pair counts of resident waterfowl species, weekly inspections of nest boxes and brood counts. Resident waterfowl species include Canada goose, wood duck, mallard, hooded merganser, and black duck.

Weather during nesting season - We had a mild winter with near normal precipitation. June was very wet, providing excellent brood rearing conditions.

Pair counts - Pair counts of resident waterfowl are conducted as part of the weekly waterbird census, from mid-March to mid-June. The peak is in mid-April. After that date, early nesters have begun incubation. Goose ganders stay close to incubating hens, and help rear the young. Duck drakes abandon the hens when they are part way through incubation. Late pair counts provide information on re-nesting efforts. Pair counts provide the most reliable information on nesting populations of resident waterfowl. This has become more important since we have stopped searching islands for nesting geese, mallards and black ducks. It also provides data on the nesting population of wood ducks and hooded mergansers; box as well as cavity nesters.

Canada geese peaked at 120 pairs, the lowest since 2008. Only eleven pairs were recorded on South Tract. There were 270 pairs in the late 1990s. There were 66 pairs of wood ducks, the same

as in 2012. The peak was 82 pairs in 2005, the low was 55 in 2000. Mallards totaled 16 pairs, a record low. The peak was 63 pairs in 1999. There were five pairs of hooded mergansers. Two pairs of black ducks were recorded, the same number recorded in each of the last five years.



Nesting - Nest searches were restricted to wood duck boxes. Thirty-six of 42 clutches of wood ducks hatched. This was the same as 2012 and continues well below the peak years of 2003 to 2006 when starts averaged 61. For the first time, we caught every successful hen. There were only 14 yearlings compared to 28 in 2003. Low recruitment

may be a reason for continued lower nesting. There were two hooded merganser clutches. Both hatched all their eggs. One mallard nested in a horizontal box on Lake Allen, and hatched all her eggs. Must have been a tight fit getting into the box, but she was out of reach of marauding raccoons.

Broods - Broods are counted during the weekly waterbird counts. This gives us information on rearing success of

waterfowl. The first week to 10 days are critical for survival. Mature wood duck hens (two years or older), will hatch 13 to 15 eggs, and on average rear four to flight. Yearlings hatch 10 to 12 eggs and are lucky if they rear any young. Goose production crashed in 2013. There were only 16 broods and 50 goslings reared. Only one brood was seen on South Tract. The peak was 2004 when 275 goslings were reared. The effort to reduce the resident goose population is succeeding! Excellent rearing conditions resulted in 40 wood duck broods with 150 ducklings fledged. This included ten cavity hatched broods. No mallard or black duck broods were recorded. Similarly, no hooded merganser broods from boxes were seen. One cavity-hatched brood was recorded.

Other waterbird nesting - We continued to have only one osprey nest. The platform used last year on Cash Lake was usurped by a pair of Canada geese. The gander made it clear that the ospreys would have to go elsewhere. They moved to another platform on the lake, where they were successful. The great blue heron colony on Emy's Pond was abandoned. They will not nest unless there is water beneath the colony. There were no pied-billed grebe broods this year.

Other species using wood duck nest boxes included: three grey squirrels, seven tree swallows, ten Carolina wrens, one crested flycatcher, and one chickadee. Again, no starling nests. Back in the 1960s and 70s they would occupy almost every vertical wood duck box. Hence, the development of the horizontal box. There appears to be a decline in the population, but it is still surprising that we are not getting any nesting attempts. ■

2013 Friends of Patuxent Run for the Refuge 5K

by Pauline Chvilicek, Race Director

The fourth *Friends of Patuxent Run for the Refuge 5K* was held on Sunday, September 29th on the North Tract of the Patuxent Research Refuge. With almost 200 people registered, the race was a success for the fourth year in a row.

This year's overall winners were Luis Navarro (for the second year in a row) and Sherry Stick. Emy Holdridge, Chair of the Friends of Patuxent, presented each winner with a unique Whooping Crane medal. For a complete list of winners, please go to <http://runfortherefuge.com>.

The race has been an excellent way to reach out to a new audience. Again this year there was a lot of positive feedback from the runners. They commented on how well the race was organized and that the Refuge was a great location for a 5K. Many of them said they would like to come back and bring their families.

Looking back over the past four years, it's amazing to see how this event has grown in popularity and has become the



Contestants take their place for the start of the race.



The two overall winners approaching the finish line.



Deputy Refuge Manager Nancy Morrissey and her square dancin' friends support the race.

Photo by Susan Minter

Photo by Pauline Chvilicek

Photo by Susan Minter

Friends' biggest fundraiser. Because of the positive impact and the financial benefits this race has brought to the Refuge and the Research Center, it was very difficult for me to announce that I will be stepping down as Race Director.

Organizing an event of this type cannot be done alone. I would like to thank this year's planning committee for all their hard work. Several of these folks were part of the original planning committee and have served all four years. Thank you to volunteers Rod Burley, Susan Minter, Jeanne Latham, Joan Nolan, Tom Mikell and Harlan Tucker. Thank you to volunteer Barbara Buck for creating the unique designs for the race t-shirts. Thank you also to staff members Amy Shoop and Dionne Briggs. I would also like to thank all the volunteers who came out bright and early on race day to help with this fun event.

This race would not have been possible without the help of our sponsors. This year's sponsors were: Barrett's Grill, BooksAMillion, Giant, New Balance Annapolis, REI and RoadID. Special thanks go to the Laurel Amateur Radio Club and the Maryland City Volunteer Fire Company. ■

Bald Eagles Over Patuxent

Submitted by Jenn Hill



Recently, a pair of bald eagles have been frequenting Lake Redington and Cash Lake. You may have noticed them from the viewing pod of the Visitor Center, or while you've been out hiking on the trails. So we thought we would share a little more information about bald eagles for your reading pleasure!

The following information has been pared down (for the purposes of this newsletter) from the USGS Biological Resource's information sheet titled Patuxent Research Notes.

If you would like to read the information sheet in its entirety, you may find it at:

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/educatnl/beyer/eagle1.pdf>

Patuxent Research Notes

By Nelson Beyer, Sabra Niebur, and Anna Morton of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and by Albin Beyer of the University of South Carolina

Ecologists frequently use three terms in describing wildlife - the region where

an animal lives as its **range**, the kind of place where it lives as its **habitat**, and the way in which it fits into its community as its **niche**. These concepts help us to understand and manage wildlife. We will use the bald eagle to provide examples.

The **range** is the geographic area where a species lives.

Since birds may migrate between distinct areas, we often describe both a breeding range (summer) and a winter range.

The **habitat** of an animal is the kind of environment where an animal lives. Eagles are superb flyers that require open areas. They avoid dense forests where they cannot maneuver. The nesting habitat of a bald eagle is almost always on a coast or lake. In dry habitats of the Southwest bald eagles may nest along rivers. All good eagle habitat has a least one tall tree. Different kinds of trees are selected for nests, but the tree selected is almost always taller than the surrounding trees, giving the eagle a good

lookout and chance to fly over the trees. Eagles also need trees for perching, where they may rest, look for prey, or guard their territory. They generally avoid habitats where they are disturbed by humans.

The **niche** is defined as the role of a species in its community. A niche is often compared to the occupation of a person, whether he or she is a farmer, carpenter, or teacher. If animals of two species in an area have the same or similar niches they will compete with each other. Eventually one species will eliminate the other. If they use different resources and have different niches they can live side by side.

Bald eagles eat primarily fish. Eagles grab fish with their talons (claws) as they skim across a lake. If the fish is large the eagle may not be able to fly off with it, but may tow it to shore before it is eaten. However, eagles steal fish from other birds when they can. In particular, they steal from ospreys, which are related to eagles, but smaller. But bald eagles are open-minded when it comes to theft, and will steal from various kinds of animals, including other bald eagles. They have even been known to snatch food from the bellies of unsuspecting otters, which float on their backs while eating.

We would describe a bald eagle's niche by saying they feed on medium-sized fish that can be seen from the air. Fish that are deep in the water are safe from eagles. The eagle's niche can be expanded, though, to include dead animals. Eagles are famous for eating salmon that die in large numbers in the Pacific northwest. In winter, when ice prevents eagles from fishing, bald eagles may turn to carcasses of deer or elk. They may also prey on ducks and geese. ■

Visit us on Facebook and Twitter

<https://www.facebook.com/PatuxentResearchRefuge>

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

Patuxent's Louisiana Whooping Cranes

Q and A

By Ken Lavish, Volunteer

The Patuxent Wildlife Research Center raises Whooping Cranes for release as non-migratory birds in Louisiana and as Wisconsin to Florida migratory birds. This article deals primarily with the Louisiana birds. In 2011, after an absence of over 60 years, Whooping Cranes were once again flying in the skies over Louisiana.

Why do we send Whooping Cranes to Louisiana, and when did we start putting birds there?

In 2010, we started raising chicks to be released in Louisiana. The 2010 chicks were held at Patuxent until early February 2011, when they were shipped to White Lake, LA. This area was chosen because it is an area where non-migratory Whooping Cranes were historically found, and the state of Louisiana is very eager to re-establish their population of Whooping Cranes.

Why do we wait until so late in the year to send the whoopers to Louisiana?

We wait until late November or early December because of water levels and hunting in the area of release.

Are there differences in rearing the Louisiana birds compared to the Wisconsin ultralight birds?

The Louisiana chicks must learn to eat okra, just a joke!

The Louisiana chicks are normally hatched from eggs laid later in the season, and therefore are younger. Ultralight chicks are shipped prior to fledging, and the Louisiana chicks will reach fledging age at Patuxent. Ideally, the ultralight chick cohorts are of similar age chicks, and most likely to have the same physical endurance.



The ultralight chicks will hear the tape recording of the ultralight engine. The tape is played 3 days prior to the expected hatch date so that chicks in the air cell can start hearing the noise of the engine, and become familiar with it. The engine sound is also played in the aviary a few times during the day so that chicks can hear it. The Louisiana chicks do not need to get used to the sound. However, some do hear it if, as eggs, they are in the incubator when the last of the ultralight chicks are still due to hatch, or if as chicks they may live in the same building as the ultralight chicks. Because ultralight and Louisiana chick hatchings overlap, sometimes they do hear the engine sound.

The Wisconsin/ultralight project is a migratory flock. Louisiana is a non-migratory flock.

The idea behind the ultralight project is for chicks to follow the ultralight from Wisconsin to Florida. Starting at a very young age, it is necessary for those chicks to learn to follow the ultralight. Louisiana chicks will be released in Louisiana as a non-migratory flock.

So, there is no need to learn to follow the ultralight.

All chicks are walked for exercise. Sometimes treats are given as encouragement to follow the costume, because of the need for exercise and to get the chicks to move along. With the ultralight chicks, rewards are given to keep them following the ultralight, and they are rewarded for doing so from the time they learn to follow the trike until they reach Florida.

Why do we socialize the chicks?

Grouping by young Whooping Crane chicks is not a natural behavioral occurrence in the wild. However, the need for chicks to be living in groups for the release projects is a priority to facilitate their release into the wild.

Once the Louisiana chicks are older, and living in the white pen series and no longer being walked for exercise, the time spent with the costume is less.

The focus is to get the chicks socialized, and form one group so that they will be living as a group prior to their

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A Dozen Birds

A Beginner's Guide to Birding By Ear

By Helen Alexander,
Patuxent Volunteer

Patuxent Research Refuge provides a haven for many birds in all seasons. At any season of the year, a birder can come to the refuge and hear many birds. With a little practice one can learn to recognize most of the more common birds that are found here. This guide is organized by season, listing a dozen of the most common birds heard in any given season. There is some overlap in seasons, and some birds can be heard here year round. Several of the more notable examples are the Northern Mockingbird, Blue Jay, Carolina Wren, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Song Sparrow, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Cardinals, Crows and Canada Geese. If you are just beginning to learn to bird by ear, these species would be good ones to begin learning first since they are pretty vocal all year, and are also fairly easy to see. The second thing to keep in mind when you are learning to bird by ear is that birds are more vocal in any season early in the morning and in the evening, so try to time your listening practice for those times as much as possible.

Since there is wide availability of good bird song recordings, this guide is best used as a supplement when you are in the field watching and listening for birds. We urge you not to play recordings in order to lure birds to you. This disrupts their foraging and breeding activities, and puts unnecessary stress on the bird who frantically tries to locate the intruder into its territory. Also, remember that when you are birding by ear, the less noise you make, the more you will hear.

Most of the English language renderings of the calls of the birds are mnemonic devices since it is really not

possible to render the sounds birds make with human language. Over the years, birders have found that rendering bird sounds into approximate equivalents in English helps to remember the song and associate it with the bird.

A Dozen Birds for Winter-Despite the cold weather, one can still hear many birds on the refuge in winter.

1. Canada Goose



One of the most familiar bird sounds at Patuxent, the loud, nasal, honk, honk, honk of the geese as they fly overhead and as they swim on the lakes and ponds, is a trademark sound of the refuge.

2. Blue Jay



Another very familiar sound at the refuge is the loud, raucous calls, "jay, jay, jay," of the Blue Jays as they keep in touch with each other, and harass hawks, crows and other birds they do not want in their territory.

3. Red-bellied Woodpecker



The low-pitched, "chir-r, chir-r, chir-r" of the Red-bellied Woodpecker is heard every day on the refuge. Look for this common woodpecker hitching his way up the main trunks of the trees here.

4. Downy Woodpecker



The Downy Woodpecker makes a characteristic, harsh, but very loud "shrik, shrik, shrik" sound as it forages on the limbs of trees.

5. Northern Flicker



The Northern Flicker's loud, resounding, "wick-a, wick-a, wick-a, wick-a" is one of the sounds of winter on the refuge.

6. Pileated Woodpecker



Distinguish the Pileated Woodpecker's call from the Northern Flicker's call by a slight unevenness in the "wick-a, ... wick-a, wick-a ...wick-a". These two calls are tricky to learn but with practice, you will soon learn to hear the difference.

7. Tufted Titmouse



The Tufted Titmouse's call is often rendered "peter, peter, peter" in English. Another way of thinking of it is that sometimes it sounds like one syllable instead of two, "wheep, wheep, wheep, wheep" which it sings out loudly and clearly throughout the year.

8. Carolina Chickadee



Many people know that the Carolina Chickadee says its name, "chick-a-dee-dee-dee-dee". It also has several other vocalizations, one of which is a single loud, whistle, which has a higher more whistled quality than the Titmouse's call.

9. Carolina Wren



A common rendering of the Carolina Wren's song is 'teakettle, teakettle, teakettle.'

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Volunteers Honored at the 2013 Appreciation/Awards Dinner

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- Refuge Manager Brad Knudsen listed the top ten suggestions that had been “submitted” to him for improving the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinners
- Many volunteers were “goosed” as they reached a new thousand-hour milestone and their names and a new goose will be engraved on the Refuge Guardian plaque.
- This year, four volunteers (Bob Bailey, Ken Lavish, Jerry Feldman, Susan Minter) passed the 5,000 hour milestone and were presented with a “Ron Clements Special” walking stick capped with a blue goose.
- Frank McGilvrey was honored as the volunteer who had contributed the highest number of hours in the current year. For this achievement, he was presented with a highly-coveted Brad Knudsen bobblehead award - the start of a new tradition?
- Twenty-year service pins were awarded to Bob Bailey, Rod Burley, Lucy and Ed Grimes.



Santa Baldy and his elves

strated once again they were smarter than the average volunteer by guessing the song we were about to sing after hearing only one note! As the last strains of *Jingle Bells* faded, Santa Baldy and his elves made a surprise guest appearance.

Congratulations to 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. ■

The following volunteers attending the dinner received milestone awards:

*Please note: Patuxent volunteers **Jessica Helmbold, Dan Messier and Chang-Tzu Lew** attended the dinner but were not recognized for their contributions due to the volunteer coordinator's oversight. (Mea culpa-Diana O.) They are listed in their proper categories.*



Over 17,500 hours
Frank McGilvrey

The 2013 Volunteer of the Year was also announced. Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations for the person they felt deserved to be recognized this year. We received thirteen nominations for eight different volunteers. The selection committee, made up of volunteers who had not been nominated, selected Evelyn Adkins, the Friends of Patuxent treasurer, as the 2013 Volunteer of the Year.

After the awards presentations, the amazing Nancy Newman Pape entertained us with music written specifically for the occasion heralding Patuxent and its volunteers. We ended the evening with a group sing and ring in which Patuxent's volunteers demon-



12,500 hours
Ed Grimes



10,000 hours
Rod Burley



9,000 hours
Emily Holdridge and Lucy Grimes



6,000 hours
Claudia Papillo and Susan Minter



5,000 hours
Woodcarver Ron Clements presents awards to Jerry Feldman, Ken Lavish and Bob Bailey



4,000 hours

Jay Pape, Bob Hardy, Dennis Green, Pauline Chvilicek and Joe DiGiovanni



3,500 hours

Lewis Jiles



3,000 hours

Jeanne Latham



2,500 hours

Anne Vore and Renate Adolph



2,080 hours

Mary Ann Hartnett



2,000 hours

Jan Hardy



1,500 hours

Jon Minter and Frank Cockrell



1,000 hours

Mike Goldberg, Lisa Garrett, Ron Clements and **Jessica Helmbold**



500 hours

Nell Baldacchino, Evelyn Kirby, Tom Kirby and JoAnn Alexander



400 Hours

Debbie Phillips and Jeannine Dorothy



300 hours

Lelan Conti, Ellen Bretz, Jeannette Grotke and **Dan Messier**

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Evelyn Adkins is Voted 2013 Volunteer of the Year

Evelyn Adkins epitomizes the concept of volunteer service and community involvement. Many, however, hardly know she is here, for her job consists of mostly “behind the scenes” support.

Evelyn has served as Treasurer of Friends of Patuxent for many years. She comes in at least once a week, but often several days a week to tackle the many aspects of this position, and frequently works from home as well.

In her capacity as Friends Treasurer:

- She tracks payment for reserved tram tours;
- She tracks payment from conference users who use conference space;
- She tracks donations to both the North Tract and Visitor Center donation boxes, and other donations;
- She supports the Environmental Education program by controlling funds collected through workshops and donations;
- She makes sure all employees (bookstore staff and tram drivers) have the proper paperwork and receive payment;
- She helps oversee bookstore operations and inventory;
- She tracks allocations and expenses for a variety of specific “earmarked” funds for both the Refuge and the Research Center;
- She works with an outside auditor to ensure that all financial records are maintained correctly;
- She reimburses staff and volunteers for legitimate approved expenses against the various accounts;



Evelyn Adkins receives the 2013 Volunteer of the Year Award

- She presents budget reports to the Board on a regular basis;
- She is a fierce “watchdog” against inappropriate or excessive expenses.

Besides bookkeeping:

- Evelyn oversees the submission of entries for the Maryland Waterbird Stamp Design Competition (held annually at the Visitor Center); and
- She historically had a major role in managing the Friends of Patuxent Art Show — notifying artists and tracking their applications for booth space.

Evelyn also attended and contributed to meetings of committees planning

the Art Show, the Adopt A Whooper Program and the Holiday Bazaar.

IN ADDITION, Evelyn has been involved as a volunteer with other charitable and community organizations, keeping their books as well as those of the Friends. She is very involved with her church and its activities; and she sings for at least one choral group. Until recently, Evelyn volunteered as a federal election judge at times when the polls were open for voting. Evelyn is a strong member of her community and is always donating her time and services for many worthy causes. Evelyn is amazingly active and involved. Patuxent is fortunate to have her as one of our dedicated volunteers. ■

Blast from the Past

Submitted by Jenn Hill

Patuxent's Call of the Wild

Article written by Gary D. Ford for *Southern Living Magazine*, January 1996 Issue

Inside, wolves howl. As the howls reverberate, whooping cranes lift their beaks to the sky and cry out their tenuous, but tenacious, hold on earth. Canvasback ducks splash down on the Chesapeake Bay, and California sea otters dive for food.

Inside the National Wildlife Visitor Center south of Laurel, Maryland, life of nearly extinct species - although it's still life - goes on. The wolves, whoopers, ducks, and otters "roam" wondrous exhibits in the new \$18 million showpiece of the Patuxent Research Refuge. Located approximately halfway between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, the Patuxent facility rambles over 12,750 acres and is the country's oldest and largest wildlife research station.

Even the names of nearby towns, Laurel and Greenbelt, indicate the nature of the center's area. You turn off the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and drive 2 miles through a low, soggy forest where deer roam. The center spreads along the banks of Lake Redington, a sweet haven of solitude.



Although nature calls you outdoors, look inside first at the exhibits.

"Wildlife Tell-tales" explores the migratory habits of four species of birds, with a lighted map tracking their flights through the seasons. Did you know lighthouse keepers were the nation's first official birdwatchers?

"Global Concerns" defines seven major problem areas worldwide, including pollution, loss of habitat, and deforestation.

"Habitats" highlights wildlife areas such as the Lower Mississippi Valley, as well as human problems and solutions.

"Lifecycles" points out the life histories of featured species and the work of scientists who are trying to preserve them. Frosted glass, symbolic of the hazy future of some animals, covers semicircular exhibits of species on the edge of extinction. Such species include gray wolves and whooping cranes. The

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For Wildlife

*Lyrics composed by
Nancy Newman Pape*

for the 2013 Volunteer
Appreciation Dinner,

to be sung to The Beatles'
In My Life

There are places I'll remember
All my life, though some have
changed.

But the refuge is much better
And the heart, spirit, mind and
soul sustains.

And this place has
had such moments -

Volunteers and Friends
I thrill to recall,

Who protect and serve the living

•••

For Wildlife,
Refuge means more.

Natural resource defenders
There are none who compare
with you.

And these memories gain
more meaning

Every spring as we see this
world renewed.

Though I know I'll always
have affection

For Volunteers and Friends who
with less do more.

I know I'll always be inspired
by them,

But for Wildlife,
Refuge means more.

***For Wildlife,
Refuge means more.***

Volunteers Honored at the 2013 Appreciation/Awards Dinner

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100 hours

John McCarthy, Bob Coren and Marge O'Connell



50 hours

Ross Feldner, Craig Fisher, Dave Burgevin, Janice Devine and Ann Coren



25 hours

Bob Privette and Chang-Tzu Lew

2014 Hunter Education Class Schedule

Classes start in April 2014, and will be conducted at the Patuxent Research Refuge Range Control Classroom, which is located at 2030 Bald Eagle Drive Laurel, MD. 20724, (near Fort Meade MD. in Anne Arundel County off Route 198). Class dates are listed below. Cost of a class is \$10.00 per person.

ON LINE FIELD DAY WORKSHOPS:

Month	Day	Time
April	5th	7 am-2 pm
May	10th	7 am-2 pm
September	7th	7 am -2 pm

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS:

Month	Day	Time
June	10th	6 pm-10 pm
	12th	6 pm-10 pm
	14th	7 am-2 pm
July	8th	6 pm-10 pm
	10th	6 pm-10 pm
	12th	7 am-2 pm
August	12th	6 pm-10 pm
	14th	6 pm-10 pm
	16th	7 am-2 pm

These classes are limited to 32 students per class, and registration is on a first come, first served basis.

To register for any of these classes, contact Lewis Jiles by email at Ljiles1@yahoo.com or by phone at (301) 233-8818.

Blast from the Past Patuxents' Call of the Wild

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whoopers migrate 2,500 miles each way between their nesting grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada and their winter home at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. Patuxent biologists have nursed the whoopers from a population low of 16 in 1942. Today, wild cranes number about 150, and captive cranes more than 100. "By 2010, we hope to say that whooping cranes are no longer endangered," says Patuxent biologist George F. Gee in a video display. "Our goal is to put ourselves out of business."

On rainy days, you can watch wildlife on Lake Redington from inside the center at a viewing pod equipped with binoculars and telescopes. On sunny days, take your binoculars outside to watch Canada geese and ducks, and bald eagles perched above the lake. Then board an electric tram for a guided tour about the center's three lakes.

Ed Grimes, one of the 150 volunteers at the center, might be your driver/guide. Depending on the season, his informative presentation may be accompanied by a chorus of peeper frogs. Nearby, the serious work of the center goes on to keep the gray wolves howling and the whoopers in the air on their long flights to Texas. ■

Hollingsworth Gallery Art for Winter 2014

Faith Leahy-Thielke, Patuxent Research Refuge Volunteer

At the gallery, 2014 ushers in the familiar as well as the new. Gabriella Rojas' environmentally-themed art graces Hollingsworth in January and the Central Maryland Photographers' Guild's spectacular images will "deck" the hall from February first until March fifteenth. Junior Duck Stamp entries will be on display during the last two weeks of March. These winter shows are all winners.

January

"Gabby" Rojas' interest in art developed early - as a child she watched, fascinated, as her artist father painted, and she remembers that they often drew and painted together. Rojas graduated in May of this year from Washington College where she majored in Studio Art and minored in Anthropology. She found a class in her senior year, "Environmental Art" to be especially exciting. The class was conducted at a 70-acre farm, and it helped shape her artistic direction as she broke away from the "limitations of canvas." A work completed during that course, "Untitled Peace," was featured on the cover of her college magazine. Her thesis, entitled "Now," is an environmentally-themed work. She'll be recreating it in the gallery space and hoping its three-dimensionality will be not only an aesthetic experience for the viewer, but also an interactive one.

February to March 15

CMPG is not an abbreviation for "camping"; it is the acronym for the Central Maryland Photographers' Guild. The organization was formed in 2003 by founders who felt the need themselves, and perceived it in others, for a group "that served the central Maryland area" and was dedicated to education and skills' development. Rather than "judgings, prizes and awards," they opted for a group de-

signed to encourage "the sharing of ideas and techniques, the building of technical and artistic skill and honest critique..." The guild invites anyone with an interest in improving his photography skills. Its membership includes people at all skill levels - using equipment from the simplest to the most sophisticated. They meet monthly for business discussion and workshops; they schedule frequent group photo-shoots, and bimonthly assign themselves a new exercise to develop and strengthen skills. Education listings on their website (www.cmph.smugmug.com) include tips for beginners and experienced pros, various tutorials and even blogs by a number of photographers. "Galleries," another section of their site, includes members' portraits and names. Clicking on one brings up a number of that person's images - many, simply wonderful. How will they ever choose from so many lovely images, the ones we'll get to enjoy at Hollingsworth?

March 16

Each year, students in four categories (K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12) participate in the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program. Its curriculum teaches young people about waterfowl, wetland ecology and wildlife conservation while meeting national "outcomes" for English, science and art. Entries from Maryland students are submitted to the Patuxent Research Refuge. Entrants all receive certificates of participation and three firsts, three seconds and 16 honorable mentions are awarded in each category. An awards ceremony is held at Patuxent's National Wildlife Visitor Center and the award-winning entries go on tour throughout the state. Hollingsworth will showcase the entries during the last two weeks in March. In the past students' entries have been amazingly beautiful and sophisticated. These latest ones will be a fine cap to the refuge's winter exhibits. ■

Future Friends Members Programs



February 22, 2014 - "Owls are a Hoot" by Rod Burley

Join Rod Burley, volunteer, Friends member, and resident bird expert to hunt by ear for our local owls.

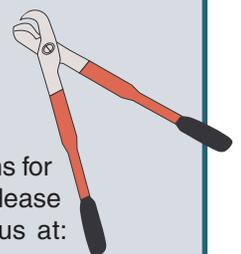
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 6:00 - 8:00 pm.

March 1, 2014 - "Pruning for the Health of It" by Joe DiGiovanni

Back by popular demand is Master Gardener, volunteer and Friends member, Joe DiGiovanni, who will share professional tips about how to prune your plants and trees.

National Wildlife Visitor Center, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm.

The Membership Committee welcomes members' suggestions for topics you'd like to hear about or activities you'd like to do. Please let us know your interests - call 301-497-5789 or e-mail us at: sparky@friendsofpatuxent.org.



Patuxent's Louisiana Whooping Cranes Q and A

Continued from page 6

shipment to Louisiana. This same sort of socialization happens with the ultralight chicks, as they too need to be living together as a group prior to being shipped to Wisconsin.

Socialization can happen when chicks are small, around 10 days of age. We try to start by socializing similar sized chicks together. We start with having two costumed technicians, each walking a single chick out to a neutral place, so that no chick has a "home field" advantage. One chick is normally taken out first and the second one meets up out in the field. The first technician and chick begin to walk slowly as the other technician and chick arrive so that chicks are moving/walking as they meet up with each other. This acts as a bit of a distraction so that if there is any nervousness or aggressiveness with either chick, they may be distracted by their need to follow the costume.

It is with these initial encounters that we learn the personality of the chick with respect to its ability to be with other chicks. Some are nervous, some are submissive, some are aggressive, or just dominant, or some don't seem to care about the other chicks. Some even seem to enjoy the company of others and are playful. When we walk chicks together, we learn the behaviors of chicks with other chicks. We form small groups of walking buddies, until we can add more chicks together and, in time, have a group that will eventually live together. This process can take weeks to months, depending on the personalities of the chicks. If chicks are aggressive in nature, this behavior may subside as the chick gets older. Since Louisiana chicks are held at Patuxent until late November or December, there is **normally** ample time to get the chicks integrated into the group.

Although we initially try socializing similar size chicks together, this is not al-

ways the case. We will walk different size chicks together in the hopes that their size difference won't matter, and they can still be buddies. We have found that it is not so much the size of the chick that matters, but the size of the chick's personality. An aggressive chick, even if much smaller than another chick, can still be mean to other, bigger chicks; even if the smaller one has to jump up to get to the bigger one.

Socializing chicks is very important. There is going to be a dominant bird as well as a hierarchical ladder or "**pecking order**" within the group. The chicks need to be given the chance to work this out among themselves. A little fighting between dominant personalities may have to happen, but we need to be able to walk the fine line of letting them work things out on their own, and know when to step in before things get out of hand. There is a difference in dominant behavior and aggressive behavior of a chick. We don't want chicks to have the chance to be too aggressive to other chicks, because if a chick becomes afraid because of an aggressive chick, they may become submissive. We do not want chicks to get a submissive personality because of a bad experience.

The Whooping Cranes need your help. Donate now and give your support to the recovery of one of America's most endangered birds. Please consider the Friends of Patuxent's Adopt A Whooper program. It supports research, education, and interpretive programs of the US Geological Survey Whooping Crane Project at Patuxent. Pick up a brochure at the National Wildlife Visitor Center or the Visitor Contact Station at the North Tract. You can also download a donation form from our webpage at <http://www.friendsofpatuxent.org/adoptawhooper.html>.

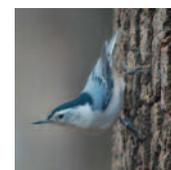
For more information on the Louisiana Whooping Crane restoration effort, visit the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Whooping Crane web site at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes>. ■

A Dozen Birds A Beginner's Guide to Birding By Ear

Continued from page 7

As with many wrens, the Carolina Wren is capable of variation on his song, but once you have established the tonality of the song in your mind you will readily recognize the local accents of this versatile bird's song.

10. White-breasted Nuthatch



If you hear a nasal, not very loud "whonk, whonk, whonk," look around on the tree trunks and look for a dapper little blue-gray

bird bobbing rhythmically up and down looking for insects that are over-wintering in the rough grooves of tree bark.

11. Northern Mockingbird



This bird likes to fool you into thinking there are other birds around. If you hear a slightly off version of any familiar versions of the

bird songs you know, look for the Northern Mockingbird sitting high up in a bush or small tree, singing as many different songs as he can over and over.

12. Northern Cardinal



The Northern Cardinal can almost always be heard, and despite his bright red color, not always seen. His song is often rendered "spit-

cheer, spit-cheer, spit-cheer" given loudly and repeatedly often from a high perch. They can most frequently be heard in all seasons, however, giving their loud, "chip, chip, chip" calls as they forage in the bushes, always keeping in touch with their mates. ■

Let's Increase Our Membership Contest

Hello Friends Members,

Want to do something fun, help the Refuge and Friends, and possibly earn a reward?

Here's what you can do. Talk to a friend, neighbor or relative who is interested in nature and wildlife conservation just like you are. Invite them to join Friends of Patuxent - you could even take them to the Refuge and show them around. Mention the benefits of being a member that you enjoy, like attending the excellent "From Plantation to Patuxent" Friends members program. Ask them to complete the application form and indicate you as the person who got them to join as a member - that way you get credit. The application is available at http://friendsofpatuxent.org/images/Friends_Members_Contest_more_memberships.pdf

What's in it for you?

For the member who brings in the most new members in the next few months, he/she would get their choice of a great gift card of \$25.00 or more.

These gift cards are donated from local restaurants or businesses, for example Old Bowie Town Grille (<http://www.old-bowietowngrille.com/>), Homestead Gardens (<http://www.homesteadgardens.com/>) and Old Bowie Wild Bird and Nature Store (<http://www.polyxenes.com/>). We expect to receive more gift cards and the number of members who win a reward will depend on the number of gift cards donated. The member who recruits the highest number of new members gets the first choice and so on. You can be one of the winners!

We will notify and announce the winners in March, 2014, and you can claim your reward. We'll even put your name in print in the next Friends newsletter, with your permission of course.

The contest will run from November 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014. Thank you for your continued support of Friends of Patuxent, Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

If you have any questions contact Jeanne Latham at jelatham@verizon.net or 410-798-1601.

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.



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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)