Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Awards Ceremony and Christmas Party had the largest turnout to date. Fifty individuals attended and we had a wonderful time. Five individuals were chosen for the Jefferson Award for Volunteers (a national program, starting at the grassroots level). They were Frank Loftus, Bob Mayer, Leon Prescott, Ulla Moore, and Paul Schuler. Bob and Leon also received their 1000 hour service pin. Tom Poling received his 500 hour pin. Five volunteers received their 250 hour pin: Alan Janko, Frank Rawling, Teresa Whitaker, Patty Pierson, and Chris Smith. All volunteers were recognized for their contributions. I accidently missed having the Friends Board Members and officers stand for recognition, so my apologies to Brad Carter, our new president and the other officers. A thank you to all our volunteers. You are dearly cherished!

Next season, starting early March, we will be responsible for staffing of the Allee House with volunteers on weekends from 1-4 pm. (NOTE: new time, not 2-5 pm as in the past). Currently 7 volunteers have signed up to give tours; 2 or 3 more would be helpful. We have 6 females and 1 male. More males would be good, too. We have both male and female costumes. The training for all Allee House volunteers will be Saturday, March 3 from 1-2 pm.

The spring volunteer training which covers staffing the Visitor Center, giving tours, helping at festivals, etc. will be Saturday, March 3 from 9am to 12 noon. All volunteers should attend. It is at this workshop that we plan spring events.

We should also increase the number of volunteers who staff the Visitor Center on weekends so that we have 2 volunteers per shift. Currently there are 6 shifts that are covered by a single volunteer, so please call if you are interested.

A few more volunteers would be helpful in carrying out our environmental education program. The training starts in early April.

"Friends Corner" is open to any of the Friends who would like to submit an article.

I enjoyed visiting with all of you at the Christmas party. You're such a wonderful family to me. Enjoy your winter break and I'll see you in the spring.

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Many thanks to all the Friends, volunteers and special speakers that made the Fall Waterfowl Festival a success!
**The Refuge Store**  
*by: Verna Price*

We have had an increase in sales this year, and this was due in part to our acceptance of credit cards. This began in March, 2000, and the following shows our monthly sales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Charge Sales</th>
<th>Cash Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>$ 859.70</td>
<td>$ 578.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$ 496.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>$ 1,203.55</td>
<td>$ 1,360.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>$ 2,736.75</td>
<td>$ 2,252.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>$ 402.70</td>
<td>$ 943.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>$ 632.80</td>
<td>$ 487.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>$ 372.20</td>
<td>$ 786.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>$ 704.80</td>
<td>$ 993.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>$ 1,539.10</td>
<td>$ 3,203.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>$ 1,269.45</td>
<td>$ 1,811.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>$ 379.00</td>
<td>$ 992.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>$10,100.05</td>
<td>$17,088.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will be re-stocking the store for spring and adding some new inventory. Plan to come and visit us. Thanks to all of you for your continued support.

****

**Wildlife Notes**  
*by: Marian Johnson-Pohlman*

**A Walk in the Woods**

For me, nothing can compare to the joy and peace of a walk in the woods, alone with God. With this first snow fall at Bombay Hook, I got the chance during the Christmas bird count and again the first day back after New Years day, walking the Boardwalk trail.

It was freezing on the Christmas bird count, yet I was in awe of the wonders of the natural world. Watching the lavender sky against the snow backdrop and then the sunrise through the trees and the snow at Finis woods and glowing across Finis pond brought the kind of peace and joy one can’t help but find in the world of nature.

Even though I was ***sooo cold*** with the wind chill, just the feeling of being at peace and knowing I was going to make it through any possible life crisis as long as I had God and nature was exhilarating and fun. The light laughter and chatter of our birding team as we watched the snow geese against a beautiful blue sky and the honk of the Canada geese above the trees at Finis Woods ... Having my binoculars fall on a deer lying down in the woods while I was trying to identify sparrows flitting around on the ground. And as I exclaimed “A deer!” Joel quietly asked, “And how would you like me to record that?!”

I had forgotten how beautiful Holly trees with berries could be against the snow, cardinals and blue jays, and red bellied woodpeckers, and red cedars and a bald eagle! The beauty of nature is endless and I find myself saying thank you God, thank you thank you thank you.

****

**Calendar of Events**  
*by: Marian Johnson-Pohlman*

The Visitor Center will **re-open** on weekends starting **March 3, 2001 from 9 am - 5 pm**.

**February 3, 2001 - 11 am - 2 pm.** Prime Hook Wild Game cooking course. Call Dawn Failing for information on 302-323-5336.

**February 15, 2001 - 1 pm.** John Dickinson Plantation Tour. Allee House tour guides should attend and other interested volunteers are welcome to attend. Meet at the Refuge if you wish to car pool.
Calendar of Events - continued

1 pm - Allee House training. All volunteers interested in being a tour guide should attend.
2 pm - Friends Cooperative Meeting. All Board members should attend.

March 10, 2001 - National Wildlife Refuge System Birthday. 7 am - 9 am - Bird walk.
10 am, 1 pm, 2 pm and 3 pm - Movies on the National Wildlife Refuge System

March 17 & 18, 2001 - 7 am - 9 pm. Hunter Education Training. Anyone interested in teaching others hunter safety, ethics, and regulations should contact Dawn Failing on 302-323-5336.

April 7, 2001 - 9:30 am - 4 pm. Prime Hook Environmental Education workshop. Call Bill Jones to register on 302-684-8419.

April 21, 2001 - 9 am - 4:30 pm. Bombay Hook Environmental Education Workshop for volunteers, teachers, scout leaders and interested refuge visitors. Includes wildlife management tour, trail walk and fresh, brackish, salt and bay wetland studies and forest study. Part II will be attending the Wildlife Festival on May 19, 2001.

April 28, 2001 - 1 pm - 4 pm. Highway clean up! Meet at the Visitor Center.


May 12, 2001 - 7 am - 1 pm. Spring Bird Count. The count will begin at the Visitor Center at Bombay Hook. Call the Refuge to register 302-653-6872.

May 19, 2001 - 8 am - 5 pm. Wildlife Festival. Activities will include bird walk, wildflower walk, boat tour, presentations on biodiversity to include all classes of animals, and crafts and games for children.

Tentative dates for Horseshoe crab surveys - May 5, 7, 9, 21, 23 and 25, 2001 and June 4, 6, 8, 19, 21 and 23, 2001. More information will be available in the Spring Newsletter.

Bird Notes
by: Faith King

Mid September to October

Just as I was steeling myself to do a little Christmas baking the "Observation Lists" arrived. First things first really applies and is preferable when one loves to bird and hates to bake."

As many as 30 Cattle Egrets were seen for a time in Shearness, a bit unusual, but a delightful sight. Parula, Black-throated Blue, Redstarts and Palm Warblers were also observed as were Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

A Peregrine Falcon hunted at Bear Swamp and 200+ Avocets, Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits and a few Golden Plovers were noted. There was one report of a Painted Bunting, but Ken Liehr has all the luck.

Both Great White-fronted and Ross’ Geese were found among the increasing flocks of Snows. Early in October Black Necked Stilts, Glossy Ibis, Long and Short-billed Dowitchers and Lincoln’s and White-crowned Sparrows were noted.

The end of October a Brown Creeper, a Prairie Warbler, a Cooper’s Hawk and a solitary Snow Bunting were seen.

November

A few warblers (Magnolia, Black and White, and Nashville), and a Solitary Vireo were found with both types of kinglets.

An American Bittern, 75 American Pipits, a Woodcock and 3 Common Snipe were listed. Dunlin moved in in good numbers and of course the usual complements of ducks. (Wood, Ring-necked, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal) an American Coot and a Pied-billed Grebe were observed.
Tundra Swan moved in the middle of the month and on the 23rd this birder and spouse had wonderful looks at an almost (plumage wise) adult Goshawk. That same day we had American Wigeon, 6 White-crowned Sparrows, a Red Shouldered Hawk and uncountable numbers of Snow Geese.

The Bald Eagles, mature and immature were sighted several times as was a single Screech Owl and the two Great Horned Owls. At least 7 Harriers hunted the marshes, a Peregrine Falcon was seen and there were unconfirmed reports of an immature Golden Eagle and a Yellow-headed Blackbird just off the Refuge.

December

Hooded Merganser, a Merlin, a Rough Legged Hawk and 20 Bobwhites were seen. Fifty American Pipits and a few Meadowlarks were present in the fields.

Early reports from the “flyovers” indicate 90,000 + Snow Geese and well over 5,000 Canada Geese whose number seems to be increasing. 40,000 ducks of various species were also seen.

The Christmas Bird Count was on icy cold, snow covered December 31st. Marian and 12 birding volunteers braved the elements and the near zero wind chill factor to count the birds at Bombay Hook. The early morning spotters (4:30am) saw (or heard) 6 Screech Owls and dueting Great Horned Owls, and one Barn Owl. Highlights included the 2 Ross’ Geese and 1 Brant with all the Snow Geese, 10 Hooded Mergansers, 3 Rough-legged Hawks, Peregrine, Merlin, Ringed-neck Pheasant, 4 Killdeer, Common Snipe, 165 American Pipits, 164 Horned Larks, and 6 Snow Buntings.

The fields behind the headquarters produced an incredible number of sparrows: 27 Tree Sparrows, 391 Song Sparrows, 364 Swamp Sparrows, 219 White-throated Sparrows, 60 Savannah Sparrows, 4 Field Sparrows, 10 White-crowned Sparrows and 1 Vesper Sparrow. A total of 81 species were identified.

This writing will by my “Swan Song” (no pun intended), but the good work of keeping you abreast of our feathered friends and their comings, goings and nestings will continue. Frank Rawling has volunteered to write “Bird Notes” for the newsletter.

It’s been a pleasure and a privilege to have had the honor of doing this the last several years. Blessings to one and all.

****

Thank you

Faith King

The staff of Bombay Hook, Friends of Bombay Hook, and all the volunteers that have enjoyed your “Bird Notes” column wish to thank you for your dedication to our “Feathered Friends” and for reporting on their whereabouts and patterns.

Refuge Manager’s Corner
by: Terry Villanueva

I was asked to introduce myself to you in my first column in the newsletter.

I grew up in the northwest corner of New Jersey where the Appalachian Trail comes through near the Delaware Water Gap. When I grew up in the area there were more cows than people. I spent a lot of time enjoying the outdoors with my father and experienced the first Earth Day. That was when I realized that I wanted to work in natural resource management.

I went to the University of New Hampshire where I earned a degree in wildlife management. I was fortunate to get a job as a wildlife biologist on the Green Mountain National Forest with the US Forest Service in Vermont. My work there involved mostly wildlife habitat management.
My switch to the US Fish and Wildlife Service was to make the transition to a management position where I could help make the resource management decisions. I got a job at Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Suffolk, Virginia as a manager trainee. This provided an opportunity to work in all aspects of refuge management from biology, to heavy equipment operation, law enforcement, public use, fire fighting, prescribed fire, managing YCC, and budget and administration.

Then I moved to Blackwater NWR in Cambridge, Maryland as an assistant manager. I supervised the public use staff, worked closely with the volunteers and Friends of Blackwater and also stayed involved in the biological programs, law enforcement and many aspects of refuge management. I gained an appreciation of the important contributions of volunteers, sharing their time and talent, and the valuable support provided by the Friends groups. You are an important part of the refuge family.

My father’s declining health pulled me back toward New Jersey and a job as deputy refuge manager at Great Swamp NWR in Basking Ridge, NJ. My broad on-the-ground experience assisted me in the role of overseeing refuge operations. During that time I also spent a few months as acting refuge manager at Wallkill River NWR.

Then I felt a calling to serve the Refuge System. I felt that it was important for refuge people to make the sacrifice of leaving the field to serve refuges at a national level. It was a difficult decision. Leaving through the entrance gate of Great Swamp for the last time was tough. I could see out the corner of my eyes all those places that had special memories that developed after working and living at a refuge over several years.

I posted a sign over my desk in Washington, DC that said “What have we done for the Refuge System this week?” to remind me of why I was there. The refuge recreation fee demonstration program and refuge use policy were my main focus. Then Rick Coleman, the division chief of refuges, asked me to work on the first ever National Wildlife Refuge System conference in the 95 year history of the Refuge System. Coordinating the conference and serving on the leadership workgroup for *Fulfilling the Promise*, a vision document, setting a course for the Refuge System as we reach our Centennial in 2003 gave me a national perspective on emerging refuge issues. It was a great opportunity to serve the Refuge System and be a part of this historic event. Afterwards, I served on the national promises implementation team, tasked to implement the recommendations of *Fulfilling the Promise*. During my time in DC, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act was passed in 1997 that provided a clear mission of wildlife first for the National Wildlife Refuge System. All of these experiences helped me gain an appreciation that the National Wildlife Refuge System is an exceptional system of lands dedicated to wildlife conservation.

Later, a job as division chief for refuges in Albuquerque, New Mexico in our Southwestern Regional Office provided an opportunity to work closer to the field. The division provided program support to refuges in Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Mexico in the areas of wildlife resources, public use, law enforcement, policy, planning, fire, aviation, and operations. Going to a refuge on a site visit felt like going home. But, when I returned to the Regional Office I felt homesick.

So I made the decision to return to the field. Refuge managers get opportunities to work on a limited num-
ber of refuges in their career. It is advisable then to pick field stations that are a good fit for the individual and that a person will really enjoy. When looking around the Refuge System at the opportunities available, Bombay Hook rose to the top. It is a premier refuge in that it is an important link in the chain of coastal refuges that serve as breeding, resting and feeding areas for resident and migratory birds. It is also a place where the public can experience the showcase of wildlife that occurs here and to renew the spirit and reconnect with the land and the wildlife. I also knew many of the dedicated and talented staff that have helped make the refuge what it is today. This move also brings my husband, Gid, and me closer to family on the east coast. He has moved all around the country with me and volunteered at many refuges. Coming to Bombay Hook NWR is like coming home, back to a refuge, with the staff and volunteers that are the refuge family. Back to a job where business attire is boots and binoculars!

I look forward to working here at Bombay Hook NWR, getting to develop the connectedness to this land and wildlife that comes with working on a location and getting to know a place by experiencing the ebb and flow of the seasons. I'm excited about getting to know the refuge family, staff, volunteers and the Friends of Bombay Hook.

We will set a course for the future of Bombay Hook, focusing on how we can continue to meet our migratory bird purpose, supporting the Refuge System mission, continuing the legacy of adapting refuge management activities to emerging science and national policies, while addressing the pressures and needs of others. We will be strengthening existing partnerships and forming new ones because of the synergy that comes from the combined efforts of many working for the same cause. We will continue to spread the word about this special place that is Bombay Hook with this vast area of nearly unaltered marsh and the freshwater impoundments where people can come and enjoy seeing and learning about wildlife in a natural setting.

Lynn Greenwalt, former Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, a former refuge manager, and the son of a refuge manager, said the following at the National Wildlife Refuge System Conference. His words sustain me and guide me through my daily work:

"And it is your obligation to...move forward....in a way that does not denigrate, dilute, or diminish in the slightest degree that which came before you, because many thousands of men and women gave their careers, and some even gave their lives, for what you are working toward - saving the dirt."

I look forward to facing the challenges ahead and continuing the legacy that makes Bombay Hook a premier refuge in this exceptional system of lands we call the National Wildlife Refuge System.

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Congratulations to the Volunteer Award Recipients for the year 2000

I. Jefferson Award: Frank Loftus, Bob Mayer, Ulla Moore, Leon Prescott, and Paul Schuler

II. 1000 Hour Fish and Wildlife Service Pin: Bob Mayer and Leon Prescott

III. 500 Hour Fish and Wildlife Service Pin: Tom Poling


V. Volunteer Recognitions:

Weekday Staffing of Visitor Center: Paul Schuler, Leon Prescott, Nancy Liehr, Frank Rawling, Frances Remley, Patty Pierson, Kathy Jackson, Amelia Muelenaer, Morgan Kowalski, and Earl Potrafke.


Native Plant Garden: Jim Webb & Jessica Armstrong.


Trail Maintenance & Other Construction Maintenance: Frank Loftus, Jim Webb, Leon Prescott, Charlie Moore, Ulla Moore, Daniel Washburn, and various scout groups.


Birding Festivals: Al Dager, Earl West, Cathy Martin, Craig Pugh, Joel Citron, Frank Moffitt, Bob Mayer, Gene Hess, Ken & Nancy Liehr, Mick McLaughlin, Jim White, Susan Yost, Mike Maciarello, Jamie Richie, Bryan Feyock, Teresa Whitaker, Herb & Rick Cutler, Bob Mumford, Peter DePrato, Jay Messenger, Tom & Marcia Poling, Chris Smith, Tammy Lewis, Frank & Phyllis Rawling, Alan Janko, Patty Pierson, Frances Remley, John Hargrove, Anna Hargrove, Shireen Gonzaga, Mary Mayer, Leon Prescott, Dawn Failing, Kathy Jackson, Chris Lesser, Janet Manchester, and so many that I fear I may have missed somebody!

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