

http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org

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The President's Corner by Janet Manchester

If you are a history buff, you will be interested to know that an assessment has been performed on the Allee House and its three outbuildings to determine the condition of each building and the estimated costs of remediation or restoration.

The assessment was commissioned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was performed by John Milner Associates, Inc. It addresses both the architectural and structural conditions of the buildings and provides cost estimates for four levels of remediation: tasks required immediately to protect the buildings; conditions needing to be addressed but not posing an immediate threat to the buildings; work that would constitute ongoing maintenance; and new work in keeping with the historic nature of the buildings and conditional on their eventual use (e.g., as a museum or a residence).

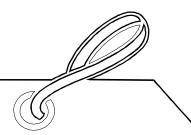
According to the assessment, both the house itself and the icehouse are in good condition. This doesn't mean that they don't need immediate attention. The house, for example, has suffered significant water damage, and as a result, there is the potential for a collapse of the building's foundation.

The two other buildings (a barn and a building whose original function is unknown) are in poor condition.

The estimated costs for remediation of the Allee House itself range from \$312,694 (for work needed immediately) to \$1,138,662 (for restoration to its historic state).

A committee consisting of refuge staff and interested members of the Friends has been formed to conduct a fundraising effort to obtain the money needed for the restoration. The immediate goal will be to raise enough money to stabilize the Allee House and the icehouse. Ideally, the house can ultimately be restored to a condition in which public tours can again be offered.

Updates on the fundraising effort will be provided on the Friends website and in future newsletters.



The Refuge Store By Verna Price

Spring is coming, and we are getting ready!!!

New shirts and new hats have been ordered. Books, jewelry and other items will be re-stocked, and you will be able to find what you want and/or need.

Come visit us and help support the refuge!!!



is published quarterly by "Friends of Bombay Hook, Inc. (FOBH)", a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization working in conjunction with Bombay Hook NWR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. FOBH provides financial and developmental support for environmental education programs at the refuge and in communities throughout the region.

Our readers are encouraged to share comments, provide articles for publication and/or suggestions regarding the refuge as well as notifying us of address changes .

Please direct communications to:

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http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org

Bird Notes By Frank Rawling

The Nesting Season

We are having a late January thaw as I write these notes. So, writing about the nesting season gives us something to look forward to in the middle of winter.

June

The month began with the sighting of 3 Seaside Sparrows along the Boardwalk Trail, a location where they usually can be heard and sometimes seen. This was followed by Glossy Ibis and Marsh Wrens on the 3rd as well as a **Black-crowned Night Heron** seen at Bear Swamp. A *Blue Grosbeak* was seen in the Finis Pool area on the 4th. A Summer Tanager was seen near the Allee House on the 6th. And a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seen near the Visitor Center. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron was a nice sighting on the 7th. There was an unconfirmed report of a *Little Egret* at the north end of Shearness on the 13th. The next day 5 Black **Skimmers** were on the mud flats opposite Shearness. One lucky birder saw a female *Hooded Merganser* with 6 young at Bear Swamp on the 14th. On the 20th a couple of birders heard a **Prothonotary Warbler** in the usual place at Finis Pool. On the 24th both male and female **Bobwhite** were seen just beyond the bend at the north end of Shearness Dike. The same birders saw a female Wild Turkey in a field at the intersection of Bear Swamp and Finis Pool Roads.

July

A sighting of the **Prothonotary Warbler** at Finis Pool kicked off July. The same observer also saw a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Finis and a couple of **Black-necked Stilts** at Shearness. A pair of **Cedar Waxwings** were seen at the north end of Shearness on the 4th. Both

male and female *Orchard Orioles* were also seen on Independence Day. Also on Independence Day a *Black Duck* with 10 young was noticed at Raymond Pool. A nice observation on the 9th was a *Yellow-breasted Chat* along the Bear Swamp exit road. A couple of days later 2 *Caspian Terns* were in residence at Bear Swamp as well as a *Horned Owl*. Both a



Cedar Waxwing

Tom and hen *Wild Turkey* were seen along Finis Road on the 12th as well as a female *Scarlet Tanager* at the

Parson Point trailhead. Raymond Pool that day held about 150 *Short-billed Dowitchers* along with 30 *Lesser Yellowlegs*. A *Least Bittern* was found at Bear Swamp on the 17th. That day Raymond Pool also contained about 50 *American Avocets* and 30 *Black-necked Stilts*. A pair of *Bobwhite* were at the Allee House on the 19th and an *American Bittern* was sighted flying over the salt marsh. An unusual find at Shearness was a *Roseate Spoonbill* on the 20th. Raymond Pool on the 22nd had about 15 *Stilt Sandpipers* and a *Gull-billed Tern* was seen at Bear Swamp. The *Roseate Spoonbill* had moved to Raymond on the 26th. A *Virginia Rail* was sighted at Bear Swamp on the 29th. The month ended with sightings of both *Pectoral* and *Stilt Sandpipers* at Bear Swamp.

August

A nice way to begin the month of August is hearing the song of a Grasshopper Sparrow and one was heard at the beginning of Whitehall Neck Road on the 1st. On the 4th there were 2 **Gull-billed Terns** at Bear Swamp as well as **Blue-winged Teal** and at Shearness there was an American Wigeon. Two White Pelicans were seen flying over the bay side of Shearness on the 5th. Two Cattle Egrets were seen between Raymond and Shearness on the 7th. On the 8th there were at least 5 Black-bellied **Plovers** at Raymond Pool. On the 9th there was a **Tri**colored Heron at Raymond and 2 Hudsonian Godwits at Shearness. Not to be outdone, there was an immature Little Blue Heron at Bear Swamp as well as an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron. The Little Blue Heron was still at Bear Swamp on the 13th. On the 15th Bear Swamp held a *Horned Grebe* and there was a *Lesser* Black-backed Gull at Shearness. Shearness was quite popular on the 17th with sightings of Hudsonian Godwits, Black-necked Stilts, Caspian Terns and Longbilled Dowitchers recorded. However, on the 22nd 6 Marbled Godwits were seen on the bayside of Shearness. A *Peregrine Falcon* flew past Raymond on the 25th. The month closed out with sightings of **Bobolinks** at Bear Swamp and **Clapper Rails** at both Bear Swamp and Shearness.

Next time it is the Fall Migration Season. Let's go birding!

Cheers and Good Birding!

Reprinted news release: NEWS FROM THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVI-RONMENTAL CONTROL (DNREC)

Jan. 22, 2010 Vol. 40, No. 15

For more information, contact Anthony Gonzon, Wildlife Biologist, 302-653-2880, or Joanna Wilson, Public Affairs, 302-739-9902.



DNREC's annual mid-winter survey finds record number of bald eagles

DOVER - In past years, the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife's annual Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey – conducted as part of a nationwide survey – has found fewer than 40 birds in the state. However, in the just-completed 2010 survey, DNREC Wildlife Biologist Anthony Gonzon tallied a record 120 bald eagles – 77 adults and 43 immature birds, including resident nesting birds as well as winter visitors. The survey also located two new eagle nests, increasing the number of eagle territories in Delaware to 60.

"The Division had been receiving recent reports from the public of up to 40 eagles in one place at one time, and the numbers we observed during the mid-winter flight further support that Delaware can be a great place for bald eagles during the winter," said Gonzon. He also noted that the actual number of bald eagles currently in Delaware could be higher, as more eagles are likely overwintering in parts of western Sussex County and north of the C&D Canal in New Castle County, both areas not covered by the survey.

Federally de-listed as an endangered species by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in 2007, bald eagles remain listed as endangered in Delaware. Although they are not as rare as in the last century, bald eagles

continue to face many threats such as disturbance, pollutants and habitat loss. Coordinated through the United States Geological Survey and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the mid-winter survey produces data that allows state and federal agencies to examine population trends in our national bird.

During the winter, Delaware is second home for some bald eagles whose breeding grounds are farther north. These visitors come south to take advantage of food resources ranging from fish to carrion that may not be as plentiful in their northern territories in the winter. Because many birds will feed on road-killed animals and may not perceive the threat of an oncoming vehicle, winter can be a dangerous time.

"In October 2009, a bald eagle was struck and killed by car while feeding along a roadside near Seaford, so motorists need to be especially aware of their possible presence on the roadways," Gonzon said.

In January, Delaware's resident bald eagles are conducting nest maintenance, preparing to nest and defending their nesting territories from the northern invaders and each other. Once numbering as few as two to four nesting pairs during the 1980s, bald eagles continue to rebound in Delaware, largely due to federal protections.

Delaware's mid-winter survey also marks the beginning of the Division's annual nest monitoring program. From January through May, the Division conducts monthly aerial surveys of all known bald eagle nest sites. In 2009, the Division monitored 56 active bald eagle nesting territories in Delaware.

"In these territories, 48 eagle pairs attempted nesting and successfully raised 60 young. That was nine fewer than 2008 when Delaware's eagles produced an astounding 69 young," Gonzon noted. "During the midwinter survey, we observed a number of our birds that are already close to laying the first eggs of 2010," he added.

With the high number of wintering and resident bald eagles, Delawareans could potentially see a bald eagle perched in a tree or soaring high overhead in many locations throughout the state. As part of the annual monitoring program, the Division encourages citizens to report such sightings to help track our resident bald eagles and locate possible new nest sites.

Here are some tips for reporting bald eagle sightings:

- ① Note the number of eagles observed and whether each eagle is an adult or immature. Adults display the distinctive completely white heads and tails. Immature bald eagles have mostly brown heads and tails, often with some white on their breasts and bellies, as well as under the wings.
- ① Note what the eagle is doing. Is it flying or sitting? Is it carrying something or eating on the ground?
- If the bald eagle is flying, please note the direction that it flew from and the direction in which it was headed.
- ① Note the time, date and location of the observation. Use nearest towns and intersections or prominent landmarks as reference points (for example, on Route 6, a half mile west of the intersection with Route 9).
- ① If you believe you have located a bald eagle nest, please contact the Division as soon as possible. Please do not approach nesting eagles, as some pairs may be highly disturbed by innocent spectators.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife also receives many calls about possibly injured eagles, often sitting in fields or yards for long periods of time. In most cases, the eagles are perfectly healthy. Bald eagles may remain in a single location for hours as they recover from a territorial battle with other adult eagles or as they feed, rest and conserve energy.

"These are large, strong birds that are capable of injuring a would-be rescuer, so we encourage the public not to approach or attempt to capture any potentially injured eagle. Instead, observe the bird from a distance and note whether it appears to be in distress or having difficulty flying, before contacting someone with the proper training to help," Gonzon said.

To report observations, potential nests or possible injuries, or to ask other questions, please contact Wildlife Biologist Anthony Gonzon, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, at 302-653-2880, or by email at anthony.gonzon@state.de.us.

Bombay Hook NWR Calendar of Events

Check website for changes and additions: bombayhook.fws.gov
Bombay Hook Visitor Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. year round.
The Visitor Center is open on weekends starting March 6, 2010.
The Allee House is closed for repairs until further notice.

Family Explorer Kit Available amphibian and reptile, insect, and mammal guides to help you identify what you see on the 12-mile wildlife drive and 5 walking trails. Binoculars will help you get a close-up view of birds and magnification lenses will help view smaller specimens. A dip net is provided to explore the brackish pond on Boardwalk trail and the freshwater pond at Finis. Instructions are included on ethical exploration methods and where and how to use the equipment. The next time you visit the refuge ask if the kit is available.

Wednesday February 17, 2010 9:30 am - 11:30 am Garden Keepers The Garden Keepers is a group of garden enthusiasts which meet monthly to learn about gardening with native plants in the mid-Atlantic region and to maintain a native landscape near the Visitor Center at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. The sessions are free and open to everyone but reservations are suggested since many activities are limited. Meet in the Visitor Center Auditorium. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449 or qcsjr@comcast.net. February's program is 'Growing Native Plants from Seed.' Gardeners will learn the varied techniques to grow native plants from seed and will plant seed from choice native plants to take home. Following the workshop, the group will discuss improvements to the landscape planting around the Visitor Center. Light refreshments will be served.

<u>Saturday, March 6, 2010</u> 10:00 am - 12:30 pm *Volunteer Orientation* Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge is seeking responsible individuals who have an interest in wildlife conservation, public relations, maintenance work, and environmental education. The meeting for new volunteers will be at the Refuge Visitor Center. The meeting will cover volunteer opportunities and upcoming activities, with the latter part of the session being a tour of the Refuge.

Volunteers work within a flexible time schedule to accommodate weekday or weekend work. Individuals are needed to staff the Visitor Center and operate The Refuge Store on weekends and weekdays starting in March. Volunteers are also needed to provide environmental education programs for school groups, conducting Refuge tours, providing trail and native plant garden maintenance, and participating in the highway cleanup. Volunteers may be called upon for special wildlife projects throughout the year such as spring and winter bird surveys and horseshoe crab surveys. Come find out how you can make a difference.

<u>Wednesday, March 17, 2010</u> 9:30 am - 11:30 am *Garden Keepers* Meet in the Visitor Center Auditorium. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449 or <u>qcsjr@comcast.net</u>. March's program is '*Pruning*.' Gardeners will learn proper pruning techniques and will participate in applying what they've learned on trees and shrubs in the demonstration landscape at the Visitor Center. Light refreshments will be served.

<u>Saturday, March 27, 2010</u> 9:00 am - 2:00 pm *Exploring the Refuge: Environmental Education Workshop* This workshop will introduce teachers and volunteers to the National Wildlife Refuge System and the natural resources at Bombay Hook. Participants will learn how to use the Refuge as a hands-on outdoor classroom and how the Refuge manages habitats for wildlife. Included are trail walks, fresh, brackish and bay wetland studies, and wildlife identification. Bring a bag lunch and dress for outside activities. Meet at the Visitor Center Auditorium. Call to register.

Sunday, March 28, 2010 10:00 am - 12:00 noon & 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm Tour of the Refuge Join volunteer Ray Cullom for a tour of the Refuge. Find out how the Refuge is managed for wildlife, visit different habitats, and walk a trail. Meet at the Visitor Center.

<u>Saturday, April 10, 2010</u> 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Highway Clean Up Help celebrate 'Earth Day' by participating in the highway clean up on the roads that lead to the Refuge. Wear shoes that can get wet and work gloves. Meet at Bombay Hook's Visitor Center. Refreshments will be served after the clean up.

Wednesday, April 21, 2010 9:30 am - 11:30 am Garden Keepers Meet in the Visitor Center Auditorium. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449 or qcsjr@comcast.net. April's program is 'Dividing and Planting Perennials.' Gardeners will learn how to properly divide and replant native perennials and will have the opportunity to take home a native perennial for their garden. Following the workshop, participants will perform seasonal maintenance on the landscape around the Visitor Center. This is a great opportunity to learn about fertilizers, mulches and other basic garden practices. Light refreshments will be served.

Sunday, April 25, 2010

- 10:00 am 6:00 pm *Bird Identification Station* Randy Murphy will have spotting scopes set up on the auto tour route. Stop and get a close up look at waterfowl, raptors and other wildlife. There will also be binoculars and field guides for you to use.
- 2:00 pm 4:00 pm Bicycle Tour on the Refuge Meet at the Visitor Center. Join Tina Watson for a guided bicycle tour. We will stop to discuss habitats, wildlife management techniques, and to identify birds. The guided trip will be approximately 6 miles. Riders may continue their bicycle tour on their own through the 8 miles of Refuge roads. Roads are packed dirt and a bicycle with hybrid tires is suggested. Bring your helmet and check the air in your tires!

Saturday, May 8, 2010

• 7:00 am - 11:30 am *Spring Bird Count* Celebrate the Migratory Bird Day by participating in Bombay Hook's annual bird count. Meet at the Visitor Center.

(Continued on page 6)

Bombay Hook NWR Calendar of Events (Continued from page 5)

• 10:00 am - 12 noon Personal Nature Journaling Join local artist Ramona Maziarz, pen and ink artist, for a fun discussion on the many ways and reasons to keep a personal journal of your experiences and connections with the natural world. We will take a walk along a trail in Bombay Hook and discover it is possible to collect nature's treasures while honoring the rule of "taking only pictures and leaving only footprints." Journaling helps develop better observation skills and trains the brain to look again and again for more detail. Not suitable for children under twelve. Sketch book will be provided.

Wednesday, May 12, 2010 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Garden Keepers Meet in the Visitor Center Auditorium. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449 or qcsjr@comcast.net. May's program is a field trip to Tyler Arboretum and Red Bud Native Plant Nursery. Depart Bombay Hook at 8:30 am. Gardeners will enjoy an "insider's" visit to the historic Tyler Arboretum near Lima Pennsylvania and have the opportunity to meet with the staff of this 650 acre public garden. Following a tour of the Arboretum participant will enjoy lunch at the nearby Country Deli followed by a visit to Red Bud Native Plant Nursery which offers excellent quality container grown native plants including trees, shrubs, grasses, vines, ferns, wildflowers and aquatic plants for the mid-Atlantic region. Space is limited.

<u>Thursday, May 13, 2010</u> **8:00** am - **10:30** am *Salt Marsh Boat Ride* Meet at the Visitor Center. The salt marsh grasses will be 'greening up' for summer. Shorebirds will be looking for mudflats to probe for aquatic insects, and you may see or hear a rail or two. Dress for the weather and possibly a wet spray from the water. Limit 8. **Call to register at 302-653-6872**.

<u>Saturday, May 15, 2010</u> 12:00 noon - Sunset *Bird Identification Station* Randy Murphy will have spotting scopes set up on the wildlife drive. Stop and get a close up look at shorebirds, song birds and other wildlife. There will also be binoculars and field guides for you to use.

Sunday, May 23, 2010 10:00 am - 12:00 noon & 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm Tour of the Refuge Join volunteer Ray Cullom for a tour of the Refuge. Find out how the Refuge is managed for wildlife, visit different habitats, and walk a trail. Meet at the Visitor Center.

<u>Wednesday, June 9, 2010</u> 7 p.m. *National Garden Week Celebration* The Garden Keepers will be celebrating National Garden week with the unveiling of a new educational program about '*Using native plants in the garden*!' The program will be in the Visitors Center. Light refreshments will be served.

<u>Saturday, June 12, 2010</u> 9:00 am - 10:00 am 'Bob WHITE....... Bob WHITE' Quail Program Chris Williams, Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware will give a presentation on the status of quail habitat in the region and highlight research that has been conducted in the area. Dr. Williams is a leading expert on the subject of quail habitat, population and restoration. He conducts classes in Wildlife Population Ecology, Introduction to Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, and Wildlife Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware.

Wednesday, June 16, 2010 9:30 am - 11:30 am Garden Keepers Meet in the Visitor Center Auditorium. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449 or qcsjr@comcast.net. June's program is 'Softwood Cutting Techniques and a Picnic Lunch and Tour of a Private Garden.' Softwood cuttings are an easy way to raise choice native shrubs for the home garden. Gardeners will learn how to make and root cuttings for their own homes. Following the workshop, participants will perform seasonal maintenance on the landscape around the Visitor Center and then visit a nearby private garden in Smyrna for a picnic luncheon.

July and August Garden Keepers Summer break - no sessions are scheduled

Saturday, August 7, 2010 Shorebird Identification with Kevin Karlson Check back for details.

<u>Saturday, August 21, 2010</u> Shorebird ID Workshop at Bombay Hook Learn a system to ID shorebirds based on size, structure, habits, and plumage. Half day trip includes both classroom and field work. Andy Urquhart & Eric Braun. Reservations required. Call Andy at 302-239-2471 before August 19, 2010.

Wednesday, September 21, 2010
9:30 am - 11:30 am Garden Keepers
Meet in the Visitor Center Auditorium. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder at (302) 653-6449 or qcsjr@comcast.net. September's program is 'Garden Planning and Wildflower Program.' Gardeners will learn how to perform a site analysis and prepare a scaled plan for a garden. Afterwards, there will be a presentation on native plants which can provide year round interest and thrive in almost any growing conditions. Following the workshop, participants will perform seasonal maintenance on the landscape around the Visitor Center. Light refreshments will be served.

Important Reminder to Refuge Visitors....

To protect wildlife and their habitat and to provide the best opportunities in wildlife observation and photography, it is important not to disturb, injure, or damage plants and animals of the refuge. In fact, it is a prohibited act as stated in 50 CFR27.51. This disturbance includes flushing birds and other wildlife or using electronic calls (taping) to lure birds closer for observation or photography. Please remember to take only memories and photographs and leave only footprints.

Can you locate the following birds found at Bombay Hook?

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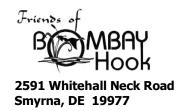
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PELICAN
PEREGRINE FALCON
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SANDPIPER

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Bombay Hook NWR *America's Gem on the Delaware*

There is a new 11 minute DVD on Bombay Hook! The next time you visit the refuge take a few minutes to relax and watch the video.

The video describes how the refuge is managed for wildlife and gives the visitor a view of the refuge in different seasons.