

# FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK

Newsletter



Belted Kingfisher  
Photo by Julie Memmolo



Vol. 29, No. 3  
June 1, 2019

### Our Mission Statement:

The Friends of Bombay Hook is a not-for-profit corporation working in conjunction with Bombay Hook NWR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It supports and enhances educational and recreational programs at Bombay Hook, provides volunteer services and financial assistance and serves as a link between the Refuge and the public.

Spring is in full bloom!!! The Blue Heron Gift Shoppe has new items (see Page 3). However.....

**WE ARE IN NEED FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS AT THE BLUE HERON GIFT SHOPPE!!!** Proceeds from the Blue Heron Gift Shoppe help Friends finance projects and programs for the Refuge. Our current volunteers have kept the store running when hours are available, but we need more people in order to open the store more days. If you are interested, please contact Karen Dever at [fobh@comcast.net](mailto:fobh@comcast.net). Training will be provided.

### 2019 Newsletter Schedule

<u>Newsletter Release</u>	<u>Articles Due</u>
September 1	August 7
November 1	October 7

The next newsletter will be issued on September 1, 2019

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER!!!

Published Quarterly by  
Friends of Bombay Hook, Inc.  
2591 Whitehall Neck Road  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
(302) 653-8322

<http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org>



### **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

*Julie Memmolo*

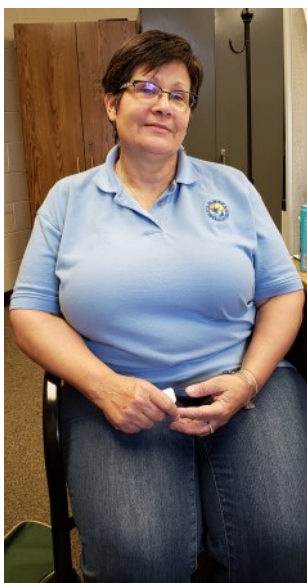


Photo by Karen Dever

This month we are highlighting volunteer Julie Memmolo! Julie works at the Visitor Center and the Blue Heron Gift Shoppe.

Here's what she had to say...

*I have been a volunteer for a little over two years. I volunteer to give back to a place that is very special to me. Everything about Bombay Hook is perfect! Except maybe not the ticks, green flies and mosquitoes! I have been happily married to my husband Louis for 30 years*

*and we have two adult children, Chelsea & Nick. I also have three dogs, Maggie, Lucy and Riley. I enjoy photography and exploring the outdoors, traveling and being involved with my Deep Water Church family.*



Magnolia Warbler  
Photo by Julie Memmolo

\*\*\*\*

The Friends of Bombay Hook would like to thank everyone for attending our 2nd Annual Photo Contest on May 19. The turnout was excellent and everyone had a great time. Thanks are in order to Painted Stave Distilling for hosting the event and Main Street Market for catering the event. More information (and photos) on the event can be found on Page 7 in our newsletter.

# BIRD NOTES

By Franklin Smith

February 1 thru March 31, 2019

## HIGHLIGHTS

The reporting period began with very cold temperatures (single digits on Groundhog Day), a light snowfall accumulation and virtually all of the impoundment systems ice-covered. Flooding of wooded areas was very noticeable with water tables at very high levels and precipitation near normal during February and March. Portions of upland grasslands and shrubs were also inundated to a greater extent than normal. Ducks took full advantage of the excellent feeding and resting areas created by the wet conditions when the wetlands were not ice-covered. Strong winter winds pushed through and blew the Eagle nest out of the tree on the north end of George's Island during early March for the second consecutive year. **Snow Geese** populations peaked at approximately 10,000 during early February but dropped to less than a hundred by the end of March. **Tundra Swans** remained on the Refuge throughout the reporting period and ranged between 30 and 400 birds. Virtually all of the **Tundra Swans** and most of the migratory **Canada Geese** had departed for northern climes by mid-March, while resident geese were nesting in the impoundments. **Ospreys** were welcomed back to the area by the second week of March. **Avocets** were reported by early March and **Stilts** were seen during the last week of March.

## WATERFOWL

Despite several periods when impoundment waters were mostly ice-covered, duck use along the Auto Tour route remained at a high level. Movement into the tidal areas offered plenty of adequate feeding and resting habitat. **Pintail** and **Green-winged Teal** populations increased during mid- to late February. Pintail numbers declined after that time, but high Green-winged numbers remained through March as did **Shovelers**. **Wood Duck** numbers increased throughout the reporting period and made good use of the flooded timber areas for feeding and nesting. **Hooded Mergansers** were seen often and hopefully are taking advantage of the nesting boxes in the flooded timber as well. **Mallards** and **Black Ducks** remained plentiful with a smattering of **Gadwall**, **Wigeon**, **Buffleheads**, **Ruddy Ducks**, **Ring-necked Ducks**, both **Common** and occasional **Red-breasted Mergansers**. A few **Blue-winged Teals** were reported in March. An occasional **Scaup** and a common **Goldeneye** were reported as well. A pair of **Mute Swans** appear to have set up a nesting territory in Shearneck Pool.

## SHOREBIRDS

The many areas of early successional trees and brush in and around some of the old Refuge farm fields have become a favorite haunt for **Woodcock** conducting their evening courtship flights in late winter and early spring. The birds could be seen and heard during the half-hour after sunset most evenings other than during severe cold and wind. Particularly good areas to catch the show are the Visitor Center, the parking lot at Shearneck Pool, and many of the areas around Bear Swamp. By the first week of February, reports of **Avocets**, **Snipe**, **Dunlin**, and **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** were received. **Avocet** numbers topped 50 birds with the addition of **Black-bellied Plovers** and **Killdeer** by the end of March

## MARSH AND WATERBIRDS

Besides plenty of hardy **Great Blue Herons**, sightings of **Black-crowned Night Herons**, **Great Egret**, and several **American Bittern** and **Pied-billed Grebes** were reported. **Glossy Ibis** and **Snowy Egret** were reported during the last week of March.



### Friends of BOMBAY Hook

#### Newsletter

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:

Friends of Bombay Hook, Inc.

2591 Whitehall Neck Road

Smyrna, DE 19977

Phone: (302) 653-8322

Fax: (302) 653-0684

email: [fobh@comcast.net](mailto:fobh@comcast.net)

<http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org>

## GULLS AND TERNS

Lesser Black-backed and Bonaparte Gulls were reported during both months, while Forster's Terns were noted during the last week of March.

## RAILS AND COOTS

Both Coot and Clapper Rails were reported during March.

## PASSERINES AND WOODPECKERS

Woodpecker activity was especially noticeable this period with Northern Flickers as well as Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers in the dead trees around Bear Swamp. A few Pileated sightings were also noted. Phoebes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Meadowlarks, and American Tree Sparrows were all reported during early February. Horned Larks were reported during both months along Whitehall Neck Road. White-crowned Sparrows were mixed in with White Throats at the Visitor Center feeder. Chipping Sparrows were reported during early March and Tree Swallows by the middle of the month. An early sighting of a Purple Martin was noted in late March.



Chipping Sparrow  
Photo by USFWS

## UPLAND GAME BIRDS

A couple of reports were noted of Bobwhite sightings. I'm sure these will pick up significantly as they approach their breeding season. Turkey sightings were noted as well.

## RAPTORS

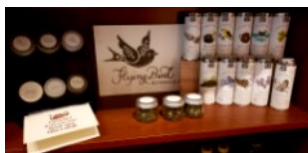
As mentioned above, Osprey returned to the area in March. Barred Owls were frequently reported from the Finis area, Kestrel from the Whitehall Neck area, and Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks from several areas. Peregrine Falcons, Kestrels, Barn Owls, and Horned Owls were reported on multiple occasions. Northern Harriers were seen regularly over the marsh, impoundments and upland fields, and of course, Bald Eagles were hard to miss.

\*\*\*\*



Hello Friends!

Cooler temps and rain seem to be hurting store sales this season. Please come out and support us!!! Purchases go back into the Refuge and what a great way to support Friends of Bombay Hook!

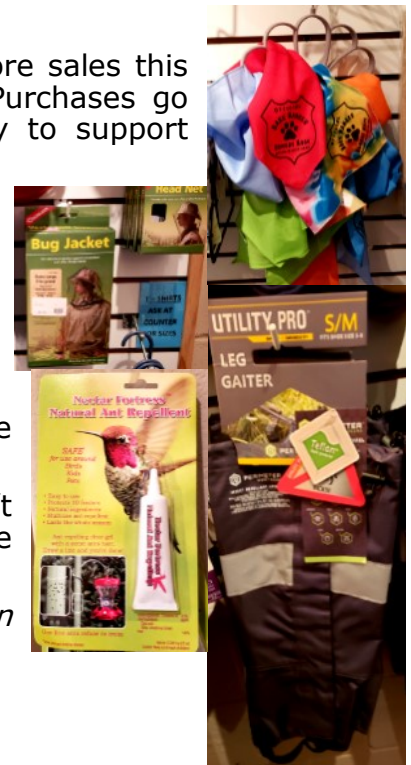


We have several new items in the store from Bee Natural honey products and Flying Bird Botanicals tea to our sweet "Bark Ranger" doggie bandanas! We are introducing a new color to add to your collection of coffee mugs and are carrying bug jackets and tick gators!! Check out our Hummer Ant Repellent and the new Plant Native sticker! And this is just to name a few...



Come out and see us folks! And don't forget...WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! Please contact us at [fobh@comcast.net](mailto:fobh@comcast.net)

Happy Shopping! (Photos by Karen Dever)



Karen Dever,  
Store Manager

\*\*\*\*



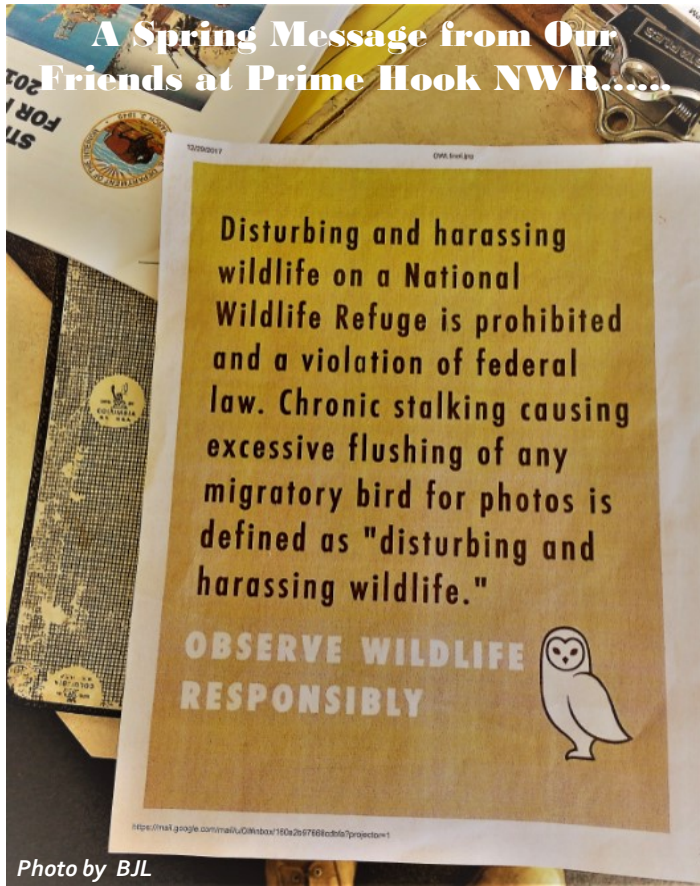


Photo by BJL



### ***Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge By Joanne and Bruce Lantz***



Along the Georgia coast from Savannah down to Jekyll Island is a string of island national wildlife refuges. Nearly all are isolated by salt-marsh, offshore or just difficult to access without a boat. However, located about 35 miles south of Savannah just off south I-95 or Route 17, you'll find Harris Neck NWR. Located just 8 miles east of the interstate in the coastal marsh, this refuge is a haven for migratory birds, a wading bird rookery and home to a diverse population of reptiles, amphibians and coastal mammals. As coastal Georgia development continues to limit access to tidal marshland habitats, Harris Neck NWR offers opportunities to explore the diverse coastal saltmarsh habitats.

The 2800 acre refuge is comprised of 6 freshwater ponds, tidal saltmarshes, maritime scrub, upland pine forests, mixed pine/oak forest, and successional meadows.

This former Army airfield was once a training facility with P-39 and P-40 aircraft. In 1962 the property was designated as a wildlife refuge. If you take the wildlife drive through the refuge, you can still see parts of the old airfield.

One of the premier attractions at Harris Neck is the Wood Stork nesting colony at Woody Pond. The stork's nests are on both nest platforms and in the surrounding trees. Woody Pond also attracts herons, egrets, ibis, spoonbills, waterfowl, turtles, and alligators. At last count, a total of 342 species of birds have been seen in the refuge, with 83 species classified as breeders. Every time I visit this great refuge in spring or fall I see American Alligators and at least one armadillo.

So, next time you drive to Florida or are just exploring coastal Georgia, check out Harris Neck NWR. (Photos by BJL)



## Purple Martins at Bombay Hook NWR

Purple Martin nest boxes have long been a part of Bombay Hook NWR. Franklin Smith, former Refuge Biologist and currently editor of Bird Notes in our Newsletter, recalls a Purple Martin house in the old maintenance/headquarters area in 1977. In 1986, with Arthur Straughn's arrival, locally-grown gourds were erected in the maintenance area and at the newly constructed Visitor Center and offices. Refuge volunteer Janet Manchester recalls Purple Martin Houses and gourds at both the new Visitor Center and the maintenance area, with a friendly competition between the two locations over which could attract the most pairs each season. Eventually, all the Purple Martin nest structures were moved over to the current Visitor Center. Refuge employee Arthur Straughn remembers a Purple Martin house at the Allee House and the battle with Starlings attempting to nest.



Photo by Karen Dever

In 2001 Refuge volunteer Joel Martin started monitoring and managing the Purple Martin colony. Under his guidance, the colony grew and nest structure improvements were made. Joel offered Refuge programs about the Purple Martin colony and insights into starting your own. More recently Ray Gingerich joined Joel in managing and further improving the colony nest boxes and gourds. Currently, Joel and Ray provide weekly nest check programs starting in late spring and running into early summer. These educational programs have become quite popular and afford visitors the opportunity to learn more about the colony.

For this 2019 nesting season, Joel reports there will be 100 nest cavities available using both Martin houses and gourds. The nest structures will be dispersed across 5 poles, each equipped with a rack system. It has started; at the time of this writing (4/13) the Purple Martins have started to arrive at Bombay Hook NWR for the 2019 nesting season.

Joel's Purple Martin records go back over the past 18 years. Some of the important nesting results he tracks over a season include total nesting pairs and total chicks fledged. Other summary data totals include: 1<sup>st</sup> egg laid dates, total eggs laid, total hatchlings, and last fledge dates. High water marks for the Refuge Purple Martin colony include the highest total fledglings at 365 birds in 2017. The largest number of nesting pairs was 105 in 2012. There are no glaring trends over the years on 1<sup>st</sup> egg laid dates or last fledge dates. Across 18 years of data our nesting Purple Martins average 3.56 fledglings per nesting pair. And that's a lot of data collecting volunteer time by Joel and Ray. Wow!! Finally, the occupancy rate at the colony has been trending sharply upward the past 3 years. The gourd remodeling work in 2015 is paying dividends!

Over the years Friends of Bombay Hook (FOBH) has been a supporter of the Purple Martin nest colony. This past winter a FOBH maintenance agreement with Joel Martin was created. This will ensure the colony's nest box needs will be met for years to come.

In summary, the Refuge's Purple Martins have been an important species of interest and fascination for well over 40 years. Our colony birds fly back from Brazil each spring just for a chance to breed and spend spring and summer at Bombay Hook NWR. If you get a chance at the Visitor Center take a moment and listen for that unique Purple Martin chirp. Some say they can't get enough of it.

\*\*\*\*

## WANTED!!!

We have empty ladders



to be filled by Volunteers!!!

### Volunteers Needed In the Maintenance Department at Bombay Hook NWR

If you have no maintenance skills up to those who have worked in the trades, your volunteer help is welcome. Activities include organizing tools and materials, seasonal activities, staging materials for upcoming Refuge projects, painting, and 100 other basic activities. If you're a potential volunteer with more specific maintenance experiences and abilities, Mike Vandevander would like to talk with you.

If you would like to volunteer a couple of hours each month of your time to help keep Bombay Hook NWR on the top 10 list, please join us.

Contact Mike at [michael.vandevander@fws.gov](mailto:michael.vandevander@fws.gov).



### *Hummingbird Clearwing (Hemaris thysbe)*

Interesting facts about the *Hummingbird Clearwing* commonly found around the wildflowers that grow in Bombay Hook NWR:



Photo by BJJ

- The body color can range from **dark red** to **yellow**, olive or a mix of these shades.
- The Clearwings have mostly clear wings with dark veins.
- The Clearwing will hover over a flower as it sips nectar.
- They visit many different flowers like honeysuckle, blueberry, red clover and thistles.
- A Clearwing is a moth that is most active in the hottest part of the day.
- Cocoons are spun on the ground soil.
- A Clearwing's hovering movement mimics that of a hummingbird.
- This moth's rapid wing beats can reach 70 beats per second,
- As a Caterpillar, they feed on cherry and honeysuckle foliage.
- As a moth, they prefer pink and purple flowers for nectar.

### *House Wren Workshop*



Photo by Lois Wilkinson

On March 30, 2019, the Friends of Bombay Hook (FOBH) working with Bombay Hook NWR (BHNWR) held a House Wren Workshop for the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition ladies. The DE Breast Cancer Coalition has a Survivor Program called Nurture With Nature. Partnering with their Kent County office, we worked with their Education and Survivorship Program Manager, Lois Wilkinson, to offer a House Wren program at the Refuge. The day of the workshop speaker Irene Govers presented a short program about the House Wren. Then with modified nest box kits provided by Lois Wilkinson, our FOBH volunteers assisted the ladies in constructing House Wren boxes.

Gift bags provided by FOBH and a donated door prize were presented to the ladies. Then with great weather outside volunteer Janet Manchester lead a bus tour of the Refuge that included a hike on the Boardwalk Trail. In summary, the program was well-received, and at the closing, the ladies thanked us for a great day at the Refuge. Now you're strongly encouraged you to visit our FOBH website at [www.friendsofbombayhook.org/](http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org/) for a more expanded workshop story with a full photo gallery of the workshop.

If you would like to learn more about The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition and their programs and services, contact the Kent County office at (302) 672-6435.

\*\*\*\*

## 2019 FOBH Spring Photo Contest and Reception/Fundraiser

Spring got off to a great start with our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Photo Contest! 110 photos were entered with the judging taking



place on May 11, 2019. I would like to express thanks to our three judges, Marsha Holler, Ken Arni and T.J. Williams for a great job!



Our reception/fundraiser was held this year at Painted Stave Distilling in Smyrna Delaware

on Sunday, May 19. Prizes were awarded to photo winners, a 50/50 raffle was held and also a silent auction. The event was a great success and a good time was had by all! Painted Stave made some wonderful libations and we had great food catered by Main Street Market. The event was organized by Karen Dever, FOBH Coordinator, and Julie Memmolo, FOBH Volunteer.



Our big winner of the day was Heather Rees with her photo of a spider on thorns won Best of Show! Congratulations Heather. And congratulations to all of our winners this year. So many good photos to pick from and what a job it must have been for



the judges!

FOBH will be back next spring for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Contest!

Thank you to all of our friends for the continued support! See you next year!!! (Photos by Karen Dever)



### World Migratory Bird Day!



Phung Luu with one of his birds.  
Photo by Dennis Norwood

Friends of Bombay Hook (FOBH) celebrated World Migratory Bird Day with programs that supported this year's theme **Protect Birds: BE THE SOLUTION TO PLASTIC POLLUTION**. FOBH offered cookies and Birds and Beans bird-friendly coffee to our visitors in the morning to start the day off. Our first program was by Dr. Erica Miller, DVM, who works at Tri-State Bird Rescue. The program focused on how plastics and other toxins affect birds. Next, we had a live bird program by Animal Behavior and Conservation Connections. Phung Luu never fails to amaze us with his beautiful birds! Then to close the day we showed the film, *Albatross* by Chris Jordan and served movie snacks. The film is a moving story about the albatross on Midway Island and how plastics are being transferred from parent birds to their young. Thank you, Phung Luu and Dr. Miller for your great programs!!

\*\*\*\*

# Bombay Hook NWR

2591 Whitehall Neck Road, Smyrna, DE 19977

(302) 653-9345

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bombay\\_Hook/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bombay_Hook/)

The Bombay Hook Visitor Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is open on weekends from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Wildlife Drive is open daily from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

**The Allee House remains closed until further notice.**

Updates will be announced on Facebook (see below) and the Bombay Hook website at [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bombay\\_Hook/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Bombay_Hook/)

## *June 2019 Calendar of Events*

Saturday, June 1, 2019 *Photo Workshop (2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)* - Join wildlife and landscape photographer Terry Willis for a beginning look at how to photograph wildlife. This workshop will focus on learning how to go beyond the "Auto" mode on your camera to enhance your photos of nature. Learn what f-stop, shutter speed and ISO mean, and how to use them. We will also look at the differing techniques used to capture wildlife and landscapes with the camera. Call (302) 653-9345 to register.

Various Days —June 5 through June 28, 2019 *Purple Martin Nest Checks (11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.)* - Joel Martin and Ray Gingerich will perform weekly Purple Martin gourd and house nest checks during June. Individuals can observe and assist with recording data, counting eggs and hatchlings, and after they hatch hold a chick. You will see birds that spent the winter in Brazil and you may see an adult sitting on a nest. The nests need to be checked quickly to make sure the Purple Martins are not disturbed for a long period of time. Meet at the Visitor Center on the following dates: June 5, 10, 14, 19, 24, and 28, 2019.

Sunday, June 23, 2019 *Tour of the Refuge (11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. & 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)* - 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.

Sunday, June 30, 2019 *Tour of the Refuge (11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. & 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)* - 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.



<http://facebook.com/bombayhookwildliferefuge>

### **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.



## HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT FRIENDS???

### Donate or Become a Member!

In 2020, the **FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK (FOBH)** will be celebrating our 30th Anniversary! Without memberships, donations and proceeds from the Blue Heron Gift Shoppe, we surely would not exist today. Throughout the years, we have been able to aid Bombay Hook NWR by supporting environmental education programs, fund transportation for field trips to the Refuge for school children, purchase audio/visual equipment, secure grants, paid for internships, purchased new chairs for the auditorium and for outside programs to name a few. Because of our supporters, we continue with our mission!

#### **TO DONATE OR BECOME A MEMBER:**

Please fill out the form below and mail your check to **FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK, 2591 Whitehall Neck Road, Smyrna, DE 19977.**

Or go to [www.friendsofbombayhook.org](http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org) and follow the prompts to either donate or obtain membership. And you can always stop by the Visitor Center during gift shop hours to do it in person! We would love to see you! The Blue Heron Gift Shoppe is operated by volunteers and is only open when the volunteers are present. If you are uncertain of days and hours, please call ahead.

**MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS** include voting privileges at the FOBH Annual Meeting; 10% discount on merchandise sold at Blue Heron Gift Shoppe; and eligibility to join the Dover Federal Credit Union.

**ALL** donations are tax deductible.

**FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK, INC.** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation founded to promote conservation, environmental education, and a better understanding of and appreciation for Bombay Hook NWR.

### **MEMBERSHIP / DONATION APPLICATION**

Submit completed application at the Visitor Center  
(payment by cash, check or credit card) or Mail (with check) to:

*Friends of Bombay Hook  
2591 Whitehall Neck Road  
Smyrna, DE 19977*

Membership     Donation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

Newsletter Preference:

Print     E-mail (require E-mail address)

#### Method of Payment

- Cash (payment at Visitor Center only)
- Check (payment by mail or at Visitor Center)
- Credit/ Debit Card (payment at Visitor Center only)

<u>Membership Plan (Check One)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (under 18)*	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor***	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate**	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime***	\$200.00

\*Student membership: under age 18.

\*\*Corporate sponsorship includes link to FOBH website; no voting privileges or store discount.

\*\*\*Sponsor and Lifetime memberships include family.

<u>Donation (Check One)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Allee House	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Capital Improvement Campaign	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial for:	\$ _____