

FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK

Newsletter

*Pictured: Rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susan) and Daucus carota (Queen Anne's Lace)
Photo by Karen Dever*



*30 Years of Conservation
1990 - 2020*

Vol. 30, No. 3
September 1, 2020

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 & Wildlife Service. (USFWS) 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.

The Visitor Center will remain CLOSED until further notice but the Wildlife Drive is open daily from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

2020 Newsletter Schedule

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

The next newsletter will be issued on
November 1, 2020

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.

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Hello Friends!

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to affect our daily lives, the Fish & Wildlife Service is still unable to open the Visitor Center to the public so the Blue Heron Gift Shoppe will remain closed. FOBH hopes to be back this fall and we will keep you updated along the way. Please visit friendsofbombayhook.org, [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#) to follow us. You may also correspond by email to fobh@comcast.net.

As many of you know we have cancelled our programs and special events for 2020. The annual FOBH Photo Contest will take place when we are back to normal so remember to focus on getting your "perfect shot".

We are fortunate that the Wildlife Drive has remained open and given comfort to many as a great way to get out of the house and enjoy nature and wildlife, including our friendly insects. During the pandemic we have been excited to notice many first-time visitors as well as our regulars out on the Refuge.

We wish that our friends are well and staying safe. FOBH hopes to see all of you soon!

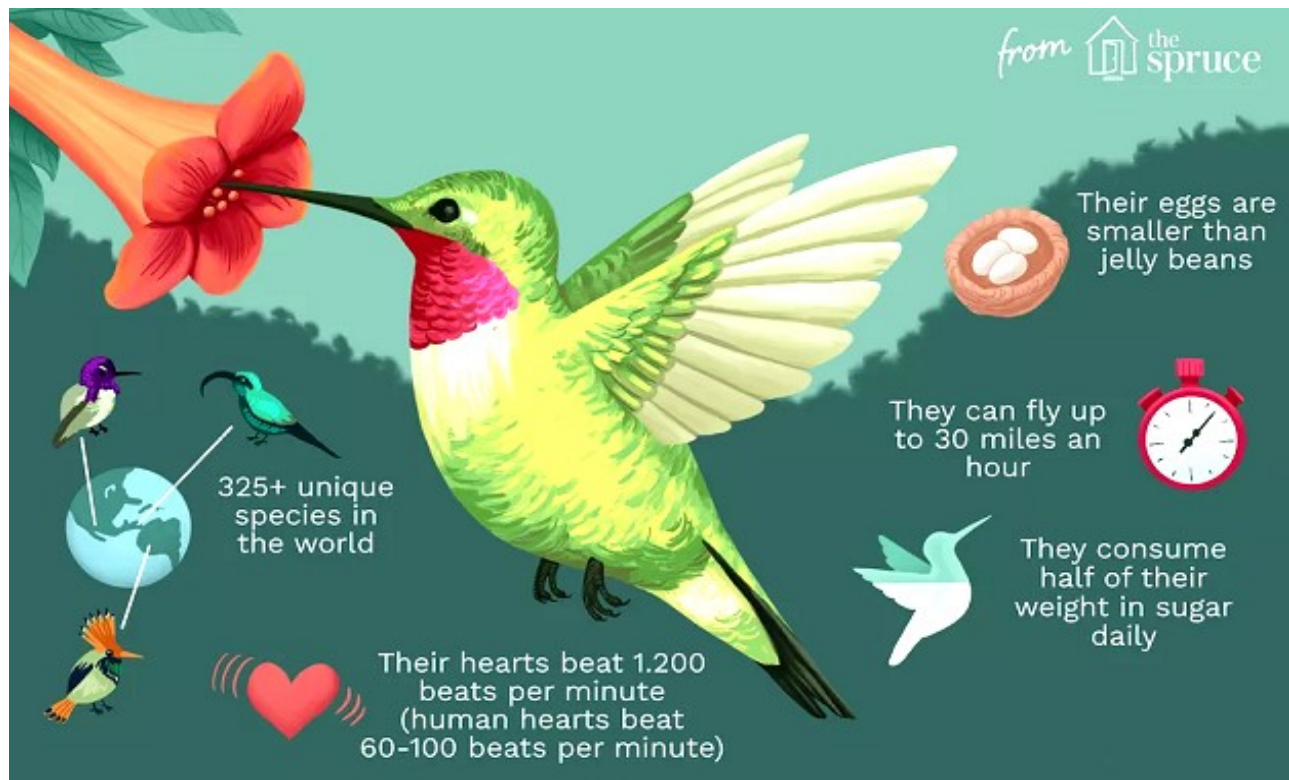
Karen Dever, FOBH Coordinator



Photo by MV

New Refuge Picnic Tables

Two new picnic tables purchased by the Friends of Bombay Hook are now in service around the Pasture Point Pond area at the Refuge. Thank you for supporting the Friends.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird Cool Facts

- The Ruby-throated Hummingbird beats its wings about 53 times a second.
- The extremely short legs of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird prevent it from walking or hopping. The best it can do is shuffle along a perch. Nevertheless, it scratches its head and neck by raising its foot up and over its wing.
- Scientists place hummingbirds and swifts in the same taxonomic order, the Apodiformes. The name means “without feet,” which is certainly how these birds look most of the time.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds prefer to feed on red or orange flowers (though it is not necessary to color the sugar water you put in a hummingbird feeder). Like many birds, hummingbirds have good color vision and can see into the ultraviolet spectrum, which humans cannot see.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds normally place their nest on a branch of a deciduous or coniferous tree; however, these birds are accustomed to human habitation and have been known to nest on loops of chain, wire, and extension cords.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are eastern North America’s only breeding hummingbird. But in terms of area, this species occupies the largest breeding range of any North American hummingbird.
- Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds do not stick around long. Pairs are together long enough for courtship and mating – just a matter of days to weeks. Then he is off on his own and may begin migration by early August.
- The oldest known Ruby-throated Hummingbird was a female, and at least 9 years, 1 month old when she was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in West Virginia.

Taken from *The Spruce*:

Make your own Hummingbird Nectar

¼ cup of sugar to 1 cup of water

*My Introduction to Bombay Hook
By Colin Campbell*

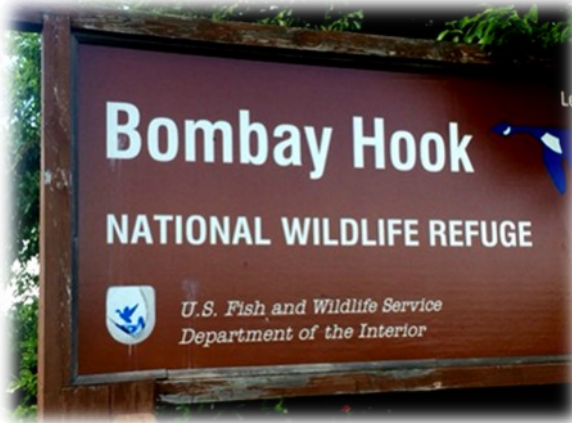


Photo by BJL

In 1987 the Swiss-based chemical company I worked for in Scotland asked if I would be interested in a job opportunity in America, specifically Delaware. With the backing of my family, I said 'you betcha'! Well, that's my best interpretation in US lingo of what I actually said which is redacted. They suggested that my wife and I spend a few days to meet a few people, view the workplace and the surroundings. Having found out where Delaware was on my Times 'Atlas of the World' and having been a birder in the UK for almost twenty years, I also checked out potential bird areas near to where my workplace and potential residence would be (Wilmington area). The name of Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge caught my attention, not just because of its weird name nor its strategic

location but also the limited amount of detail then available suggested that it could be a hotspot for birders. Our introduction to the state was in November that year.

Having completed the more formal aspects of the initial visit, we found ourselves with a day to spend before our overnight flight back home. We had a company car. An hour south was BHNWR. It was irresistible, especially as it was a nice, sunny day. And, I had stashed away a borrowed dog-eared copy of Peterson's bird guide. The migrating winter wildfowl were in profusion and I drooled over the newly-moulted drake Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads and Ring-necked Ducks. But then, on our way out, the west side of Shearness Pool was a blanket of white and I just had to persuade my wife to let me scamper (yes, I used to do these childish things) to the tower and view the immense Snow Goose flock from above. As my jaw dropped, the geese started a chorus of alarm and seconds later, an adult Bald Eagle came from behind, over my head, and the whole goose flock rose as one with a noise I still remember to this day. I picked up my jaw and raced back to the car where my wife was hardly able to work out my blurted outburst – "Where are those HR papers? I need to sign them right now!"

I arrived in the US to start my new job in April 1988; my family wouldn't join me (jobs, schools, selling our house) for sometime so, outside of work, I indulged in birding. My first visitor from the UK was in May and was my mother. Not a birder, I did my filial duty and took her to Longwood Gardens (where I found a singing Dickcissel, much to the skepticism of some very recently-acquired birding friends – until later!) but, needless to say, she had to see BH with me, as she just couldn't get onto those 'wee wobblers' in the canopies (a bit like me, now). But the water birds, eagles and arriving shorebirds did the trick. Not much like it in the Scottish Highlands, for sure! As we were leaving, in the last field before the gate, I noticed a group of binocular-carrying people out of their cars and intently watching a spectacular bird insect catching. We joined them. I had to ask the VA-based group what's up. Another jaw-dropping moment. It was a full spring-plumaged Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. I hadn't done any research on western US species as I was already having plenty of difficulties with many of the eastern variety. Mum was glad to see that I had to ask for the id!

A few years later, the discovery that a Helen's Sausage House (open 4am to noon!) delicious sausage and egg sandwich breakfast lasted me exactly the distance from Rt13 to BH and set me up for an always most enjoyable morning's birding on the Reserve and an afternoon cleaning the car, outside and in only enhanced the experience.

*Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge
By Karen Dever*

During March of 2020, my husband and I visited the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge which is located southeast of Naples, Florida.



Anhinga catching his dinner!

Wow what a place! The refuge is made up of a treasure trove of beautiful mangroves and narrow waterways that are a nursery to many plants, animals, and fish. We saw ground, trees, and waters filled with birds and in the sky each evening were "clouds" of beautiful herons, egrets, pelicans, and ibis flying in to roost



Reddish Egret

for the night. The sight and sound of this was something we had never seen before and will never forget!

The refuge was established in 1996. It can be accessed by boat or by walking the one-mile Marsh Trail. The marsh trail has canoe and kayak access and a large observation tower with views that will stun! Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge is managed as part of the Southwest Florida Gulf Coast Refuge Complex, along with its sister refuge Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

For more information about this exciting refuge visit:

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Ten_Thousand_Islands/about.html

Photos by Karen Dever

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



You can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses with these actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth.
- Practice social distancing by putting space between yourself & others.
- Wash hands often with soap & water for at least 20 seconds.



cdc.gov/coronavirus



Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge By Arno and Mary Loessner

Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge is located just a few miles off exit 67 of I-95 in Townsend, Georgia and is well worth a visit on its own, but especially for anyone driving to Florida and ready for a pleasant break.

Harris Neck is relatively small with 2,752 acres, but it is highly accessible with 15 miles of trails and a paved road with excellent viewing for photography. Nearby Blackbeard and Wolf Island NWRs, on the other hand, are not accessible to visitors. No doubt their presence and the isolation they offer are helpful factors in wildlife preservation, but friends of Bombay Hook will find a familiar environment at Harris Neck, the site of an abandoned military airfield that provides one of the premier nesting locations for Woodstorks, as well as a variety of other bird species, deer, alligators and armadillos, the latter

being the only animals, we later learned, known to carry leprosy. We took some photos and stayed our distance as we always do at any wildlife refuge.



Woodstorks and alligators have a symbiotic relationship - nests are in trees over water to protect from marauders like raccoons, which can swim of course, but if they venture out to the trees, the alligators take care of the problem. Of course, if a fledgling Woodstork happens to fall out of the nest, all bets are off.



The refuge is open 7 days a week, but the visitor center is open only on Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. *Photos and text by Arno & Mary Loessner, February 2020.*



Share Your Refuge Experiences

In our FOBH newsletter from March 2008, Janet Manchester made an insightful request. Today we continue to embrace her call to the Friends of Bombay Hook by reprinting her request below:

WANTED: YOUR TRAVEL STORY

Many people make a point of visiting National Wildlife Refuges when they travel to other parts of the country. In the last newsletter (December 2007), Frank Rawling described a visit that he and his wife and sister made to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in the state of Washington.

In recognition of the uniqueness and great importance of the National Wildlife Refuge System, we would like to print more articles about other refuges.

If you have visited a refuge recently, or if you do so in the future, please consider sharing your experience with other Friends by submitting an article to the newsletter. Just a couple of paragraphs describing what you saw and experienced might inspire someone else to visit a refuge. If space allows, we might be able to print a photo, so if you took a nice digital picture, feel free to send that along with your article.

Submit your articles to this e-mail address: fobh@comcast.net.

Spring Road Work at Bombay Hook NWR 2020



Photo by BJL

This past spring, while the COVID-19 pandemic affected the public's ability to work, Bombay Hook's staff was quietly making progress on Refuge projects. For example, with the Visitor Center closed, Oscar (our Refuge Manager), Bart (Refuge Project Manager), and Mike (Refuge Maintenance) managed the road project that rebuilt the Refuge auto-drive road system.

This road project was a long time coming. When the Refuge roads were re-graveled back in 2010, the materials used resulted in an extremely hard road surface. Because this surface was tough on Refuge equipment and complicated normal maintenance efforts, plans were made recently to rework the auto-drive road surface. Mountain

Consulting was awarded the job of reworking the network of Refuge roads. After reviewing available options, a tar-and-chip road surface was selected. The tar-and-chip surface compares favorably to asphalt and other types of road surfaces. In addition to favorable cost and durability, benefits of this road surface are low maintenance and increased safety due to its rough surface.

The road work began at the height of the statewide pandemic shutdown. Initially, loads of crushed stone were brought in daily, creating mountains of material near the Visitor Center and Allee House. Then the fleet of heavy equipment began showing up each day, growing in numbers, filling the parking lots around the Visitor Center. Once all was staged on-site, the Auto Tour was partially closed, and the Refuge entrance relocated to Dutch Neck Road. The first road work involved breaking up the old hard road surface around the Raymond and Sheariness impoundments. Then the road surface was graded, rolled, and packed. With road prep work completed, two layers of tar-and-chip were applied. Each layer involved applying a tar solution followed by chipped stone that was rolled and allowed to cure. With the southern side of the Refuge completed, the road work moved over to the Bear Swamp side of the Refuge and the remainder of the connecting Auto Tour. These roads were closed to the public, reworked in the same fashion, and the Refuge entrance moved back to Whitehall Neck Road.

The new road surface should provide a good driving surface for vehicles at low speeds. Speed bumps and additional speed signs will be installed along the Refuge Auto Tour. As visitor traffic returns to the Refuge, if any potholes appear on the road surface, they will be filled with tar-and-chip. The short-term plan is to redo the road surface again with tar-and-chip in 5 years. Once the new Visitor Center is completed, the current gravel road from the Whitehall Neck Road entrance to the T intersection within the Auto Tour will also be reworked to a tar-and-chip surface.

Much of the credit for a successful spring road work project goes to the Refuge staff. It was those individuals mentioned above that managed the details by creating the road signage updates, shifting barricades, redirecting visitor traffic, closing, and reopening visitor entrance points throughout the road construction period. These efforts were done daily, often pre-dawn, and after dark to allow the contractor's work to continue unimpeded while providing Refuge visitors access to the experience they have come to enjoy. This was a skeleton crew of only essential staff, and they worked wonders, and still do, as they are following our Governor's pandemic mandates.

Bumble Bees

(Bombus species)

Here are some fun facts about the Bumble Bee, a common resident at Bombay Hook NWR:

- One could see seven common Bumble Bee Species in the Refuge over a season.
- Any one of eight other uncommon eastern Bumble Bee species could also be seen.



- Bumble Bees can be seen at Bombay Hook NWR from April through October.
- It sometimes takes a skilled eye and a good photo to tell one species from another.

- Bumble Bees are extremely important pollinators, visiting many different native plants.

- Bumble Bees gather, feed on and store flower nectar in their nests.

- They feed pollen to their young.



- Long tunnels can often lead to the Bumble Bee's nest underground.

- These are social bees that form colonies, with bees doing different jobs.

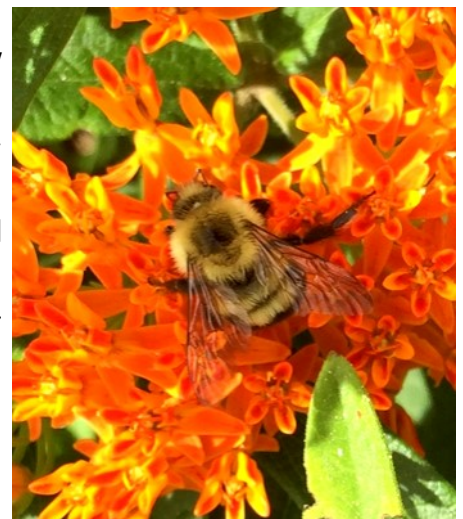
- Bumble Bees typically have round bodies covered with short hair.

- Bumble Bees often are out flying when it's too cold for other bees.

- They will forage in rainy or cloudy conditions when other pollinators don't.

- Female Bumble Bees have stingers, but they normally ignore people and animals.
- They visit flowering plants in a repeated sequence, improving their gathering efficiency.
- Look for Bumble Bees in the Refuge pollinator field and along the Auto Tour.
- The recent declining numbers in some Bumble Bee species is a rising concern.

(Photos by BJL and KD)



***Refuge Maintenance Late Summer 2020 Update
By Michael Vandevander, Maintenance Department***

As many of you have noticed, the Auto Tour route has been tarred and chipped sealed. Mountain Consulting Inc. of Dover DE completed the grading and prep work while American Paving Fabrics Inc. of Hanover MD completed the tar-and-chip seal. You may have noticed that the first part of the roadway from the main gate to the T intersection was not tarred and chipped sealed. This is because it will be completed when the new Visitor Center has been built.

Besides the Visitor Center, I have taken down a bunch of trees. This is in preparation for the new Visitor Center. We are getting closer and closer each day for the groundbreaking of the new center.

Almost all the roadsides have been cut back. This was done because after the recent storm, we had many trees come down and we had to close the entire Refuge, so we could clean up the mess. Since we already had the equipment here from the clearing of the area for the new Visitor Center, we went ahead and cleared beside the roads in hopes that any further storms would not cause us to close because of downed trees. Boardwalk Trail is closed because a tree went through the boardwalk. Repairs will begin in the next few weeks.

Speaking of the roadway, have you noticed the speed bumps? Yes, we installed speed bumps; we still have a few more to install. This is to "hopefully" have everyone maintain a safe speed for your safety as well as everyone else. Also, there is a new stop sign. This new stop sign was installed at the T intersection as you are leaving the Refuge.

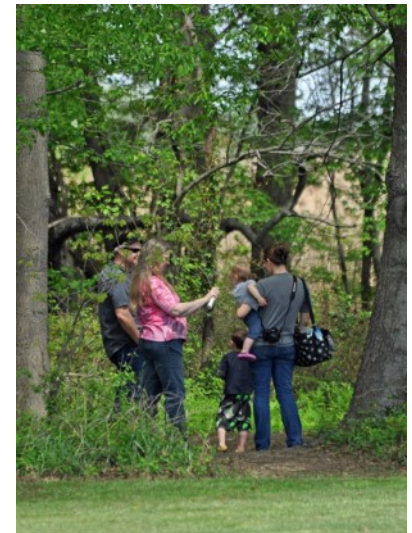
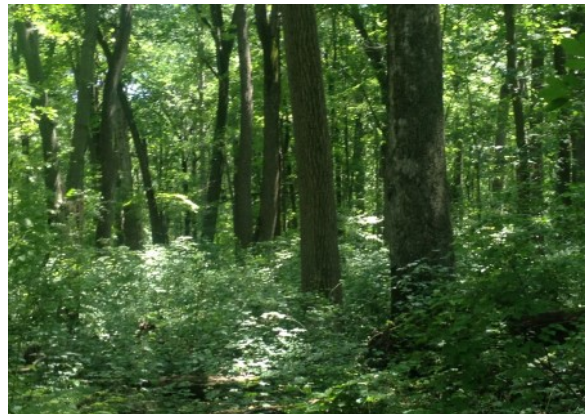
The new pier is open and soon there will be a new restroom there as well as at Bear Swamp.

Please be advised that the Visitor Center is currently closed due to COVID-19. With that being said, the pavilion is open for your enjoyment. Please maintain your distance and wear your mask. There are no trashcans available anywhere on the Refuge at this time. So please take your trash with you.

Everyone please be safe and enjoy Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge.



PSST! Are the kids not back to school, on delay, and taking class lessons over the computer?

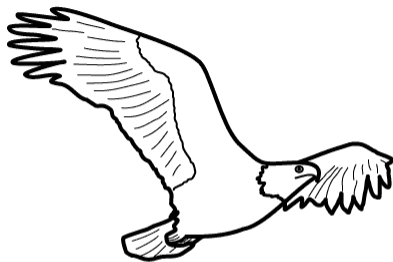
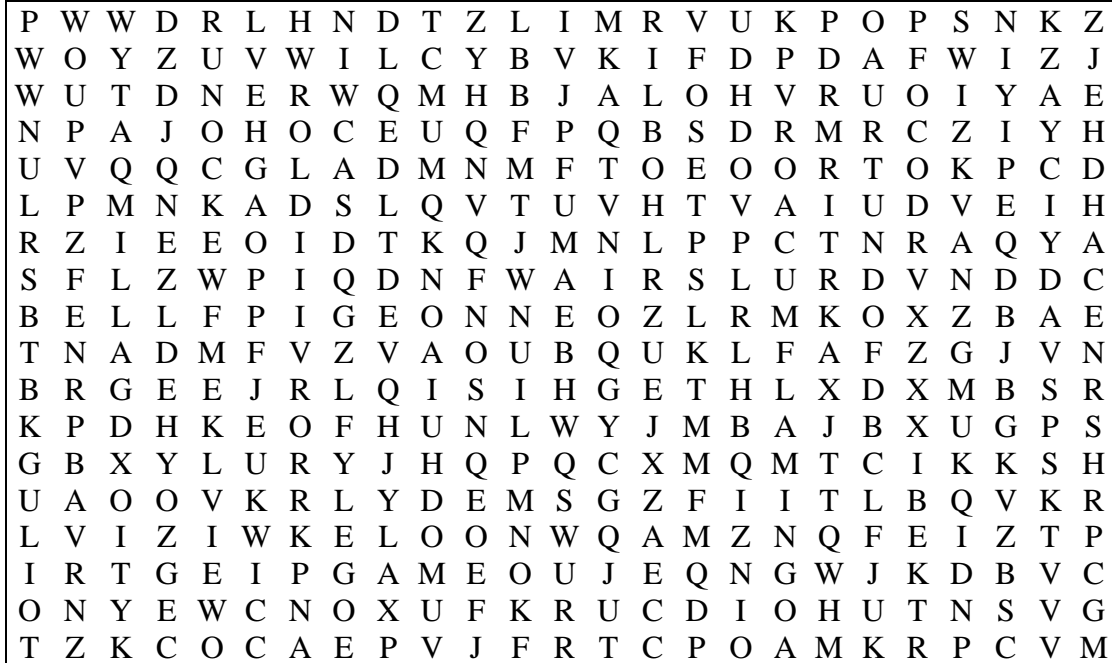


As parents, you try to find creative ways to supplement your children's education at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bombay Hook NWR is a great OUTDOOR CLASSROOM. As their most important teacher, a visit to Bombay Hook gives the family an opportunity to experience the great outdoors and learn a little about the many inhabitants of our Refuge. (Photos by BJJ and KD)



Birds Word Search

Instructions: Try to find all of the hidden Bird words in the word search puzzle below. (Words can be spelled forwards, backwards, diagonally, up, or down.)



© www.BigActivities.com

Word List

DUCK	MAGPIE	PIGEON
FINCH	MEADOWLARK	ROBIN
FLAMINGO	ORIOLE	SPARROW
GULL	PARROT	TURKEY
LOON	PEACOCK	WREN

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT FRIENDS???

Donate or Become a Member!

This year, the **FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK (FOBH)** is celebrating its 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 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:	\$ _____