

FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK

Newsletter



Eight-spotted Forester Moth
Photo by Karen Dever



30 Years of Conservation
1990 - 2020

Vol. 31, No. 1
May 2021

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.

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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Did you know that a National Wildlife Refuge is much different than a National, State or County Park? While most parks are beautiful places filled with nature and recreation for the public, a National Wildlife Refuge is all about conservation and the management of wildlife habitats.

Mission

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Lands and Waters

The Refuge System protects some of the country's most iconic ecosystems and the fish and wildlife that rely on them: prairies of the heartland, teeming with native pollinators and bison; hardwood forests of the Southeast, a source of regional and cultural pride; desert Southwest landscapes, home to vibrant and rare plant communities that draw new life during the summer monsoon season. The Refuge System also conserves waterways that give life to all of them — critical ecosystems along rivers, streams, wetlands, coasts and marine areas.

What Makes the Refuge System Special

The National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters serve a purpose distinct from that of other U.S. public lands. Wildlife conservation drives everything on national wildlife refuges, from the purposes for which each refuge was established, to the recreational activities offered, to the resource management tools used.

Wildlife-Driven Purpose

Each refuge is established to serve a statutory purpose that targets the conservation of native species dependent on its lands and waters. All activities on those acres are reviewed for compatibility with this statutory purpose. For example, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Massachusetts, established to provide habitat for migratory birds, restricts night beach fishing in spring, when tiny Piping Plovers breed and nest. The beach is reopened once Piping Plover breeding season ends.

(Info taken from National Wildlife Refuge: <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/about/>)

Signs of Spring at Bombay Hook NWR

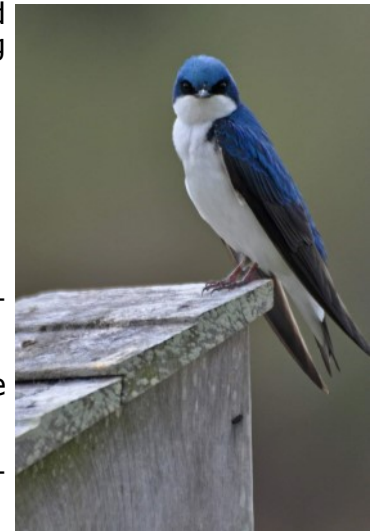
Looking for signs associated with the arrival of spring at the Bombay Hook NWR could produce a long list. We see those signs of spring in our plants, birds, insects, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and weather. Unfortunately there is no one single light switch announcing spring's arrival like the calendar date. Many of us have our own natural sign, either a song or smell or sighting that flips our switch and says "OH WOW! Spring is arriving!" Here are a few signs of spring's arrival that some of you have shared with me this past winter:



- ✓ Feeling that warm spring sun against a steady cold breeze off the tidal waters.
- ✓ Spotting your first insect hatch cloud rising in the morning sun over Finis Pool.
- ✓ Trails full of fresh overnight mammal tracks in the mud.
- ✓ Spring Peepers, Chorus Frogs and Leopard Frogs all heard calling during the day.



- ✓ The first Blue-winged Teals spotted on the Refuge impoundments.
- ✓ The first Osprey heard calling as it soars overhead.
- ✓ Laughing Gulls heard laughing out over the salt marsh.
- ✓ Tree Swallows spotted darting and circling overhead along the Auto Tour.
- ✓ Startled Wood Duck hens heard crying as they fly out through the woods.
- ✓ Titmice calling "peter, peter, peter" or Woodpeckers heard drumming in the distant forest.



- ✓ The first spring Water Turtles lined up along the shoreline, basking in the warm sun.
- ✓ Skunk Cabbage spotted sprouting up through the forest mud.
- ✓ Clumps of Violets or Snow Drops found blooming through the brown forest leaves.
- ✓ The first bumble bees working spring blooms on a cool sunny morning.



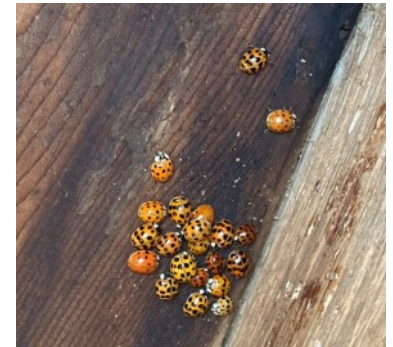
For the long-time visitors, many of these signs bring images of spring's arrival at Bombay Hook NWR and bring back rich memories. If you are new to the Refuge, take a minute; look around; stop and listen or smell the breeze. Create your own personal sign of the changing seasons and spring's arrival at the Refuge. In a couple of weeks summer will be here and all of those signs will be just a memory. *(Photos by BJL)*

Asian-Multicolored Lady Beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*)

Here are some fun facts about the Asian-Multicolored Lady Beetle, a species commonly found at Bombay Hook NWR:



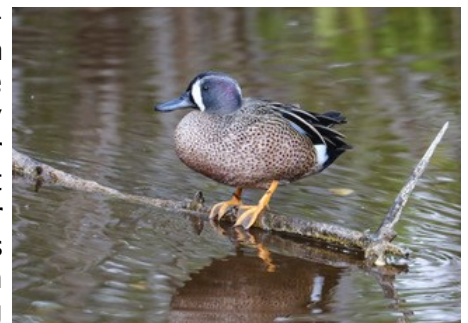
- Native to eastern Asia, it is one of six species found in Delaware.
 - They don't sting Refuge visitors or carry harmful diseases.
 - Since 1916, this beetle has been released as natural pest control by governments.
 - The Asian-Multicolored Lady Beetle was found to be established in the U.S. in 1988.
 - Also, many have entered Delaware through our shipping port over the years.
 - This species has wing colors ranging from yellow to black.
 - Black spots on this lady beetle species can vary in number from 0 to 19.
 - This beetle has four stages of life: egg, larvae, pupa, and adult.
- During winter months, the adults find shelter from freezing temps.
 - Adults like to gather in large numbers and winter over in dead trees or nest boxes.
 - Then these adult females lay eggs in early spring that will hatch into larvae after a week.
 - The larvae will search the Refuge plants for aphids and other soft body insects to eat.
 - They can eat 60 aphids in a day.
 - Larvae molt four times, getting bigger each time.
 - Life stages from eggs to adults can take less than three weeks, depending on the weather.
 - They eat many pest insects and don't chew on plants.
 - If agitated by predators, they release a defensive odor from their legs.
 - The rise of this species in number has been at the detriment of native Lady Bug species.
 - No, they are not a native Lady Bug, but they are here and are having an impact!



(Photos by BJL)

Blue-winged Teal

The Blue-winged Teal is the second-smallest duck in North America; only the Bufflehead is smaller. The Blue-winged Teal has a bright blue wing patch that is easy to spot when flying. These ducks are warm-weather friends that do not like the cold. They are one of the first migrants to head south when cooler weather starts and one of the last ducks to head north in the spring. Most will winter in Mexico or South America and travel as far up as Canada and even Alaska during the breeding season. They use all four flyways to make their journeys.



Although management for these ducks is quite limited on National Wildlife Refuges because of early and late migration, the management of shorebirds is excellent. The Blue-winged Teal is an example of how different species benefit from other

managed habitats mudflats, coastal marshes, and even farm fields with shallow water. (Photos by Julie Memmolo)



Eagles Have Been Soaring

The past 12 months have been a rough patch at Bombay Hook NWR. The Visitor Center has been closed; all Refuge educational programs have been on hold as the Refuge staff has been dealing with the virus. Following USFWS guidelines and Delaware's mandates for safety and essential operations, a skeleton staff has kept the Refuge operating for all of us. They were busy with the Auto Tour road paving, tornado debris, and an avalanche of visitor traffic once everyone discovered the Refuge was the only spot open.

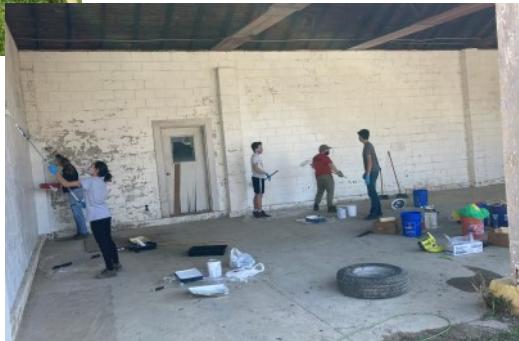


However, over in the maintenance buildings, things were happening. Small groups of youth and adult volunteers were doing some amazing things under the supervision of Mike Vandevander (Refuge Maintenance).

Seven Eagle Scout projects were started this past year at the Refuge. To date, five projects have been completed, while two are still in progress. These were not your typical Eagle projects. During the pandemic, the scouts dealt with limited work dates, limited work party sizes, no work periods, safety protocols, and fund-raising challenges under COVID-19 gathering restrictions. However, they showed excellent leadership, planning work dates, organizing work crews, materials, drawings, tools - all with safety in mind. Below is a shortlist of projects completed or still in progress:

- Two deer stands were built.
- Two picnic tables were built.
- Four flagpole benches were built (for the new Visitor Center).
- One greenhouse was assembled and set on a

(Continued on next page)





Eagles Have Been Soaring

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foundation with a cable tie-down kit.

- One greenhouse planting table was built and installed, along with a solar fan and thermometer.
- Youth waterfowler shed was pressure washed and painted inside and out.
- Seven Refuge information signs were built and installed along Route 9 and at the Refuge.
- Four benches placed and tree markers constructed for the new Tree ID trail.
- With help from a DE Forrester, sixteen specific trail trees were selected for the Tree ID trail.
- The 26' trail bridge components were cut and built, ready for assembly.
- The Tree ID Trailhead Information sign kiosk was built and ready for placement.

None of this work could have been accomplished without Mr. V sharing so much of his time. He made his weekends and weekday hours after work available to the Scouts by text, e-mail, Zoom calls, and in-person instruction. Special thanks to Mr. V for reaching out to these scouts with challenging projects. These projects not only benefited Bombay Hook Refuge visitors, but also provide an opportunity for the scouts to experience volunteering at the Refuge.

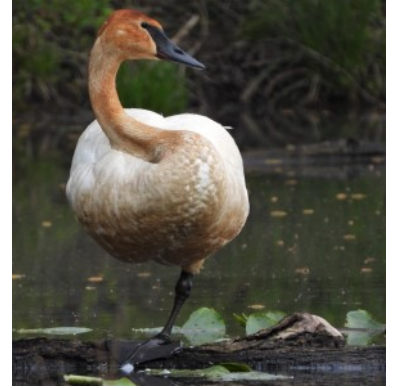


Patuxent Research Refuge
By Karen Dever

Monday fun day! On Monday, April 5th, my friend Julie and I took a little ride to Patuxent Research Refuge in Prince Georges County, Maryland. As much as we both love Refuges, neither of us had been there, so off we went! We have been missing out on such a treasure.

The day started a little "off" with cold weather, and it was extremely damp. Mr. Niceweather never did join us, but we drove around the Wildlife loop and explored a trail. Though the skies and trees were a bit quiet, we did see a nice little sample of Earth's beauty!

We spent some time at a great little bird viewing area near the Visitor Center and enjoyed what birds were hanging out at the feeders inside of it! The remaining areas of the Refuge we visited offered us views of Bluebirds, Robins, Red-winged Blackbirds, Nuthatches, Goldfinches, Chipping, and White-throated Sparrows, Ospreys, and more. Did I mention the Eastern Redbuds scattered about in full bloom were gorgeous?



Trumpeter Swan
Photo by Karen Dever



American Woodcock with chick
Photo by Julie Memmolo

Our highlight of the day was driving the loop! We witnessed an American Woodcock mama and her three chicks crossing the road in front of us. Yes, for those Internet users, we could not get the video of woodcocks "walking their walk" to the song "Billie Jean" out of our heads, and we both started the "doot, doot, doot" ♪. If you have not seen the video, you can check it out here: <https://youtu.be/A2jSXXDGjik>.

But please beware parts of the loop are extremely rough to drive.

We also found a Trumpeter Swan couple tucked away in the waters! A great find for us!

'Nuff said! Please check out this wonderful treasure. Patuxent Research Refuge is easily within two hours driving distance from Bombay Hook.

Patuxent Research Refuge was established in 1936. It is the only Refuge in the country used for wildlife research. The Refuge has grown from 2,670 acres to 12,800 and is divided into three tracts: the North Tract, Central Tract, and South Tract. Each offers something different! Their contact information is listed below:

Patuxent Research Center
National Wildlife Visitor Center
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708-4027
Phone: (301) 497-5770 (Contact Station)
Weather Line: (301) 497-5763
Email: JD_Bolden@fws.gov
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent/>

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.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT FRIENDS???

Donate or Become a Member!

Last year, the **FRIENDS OF BOMBAY HOOK (FOBH)** celebrated 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:	\$ _____