

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Annual Meeting	2
Learning About Swamp Life	4
New Bird Checklist Available	4
Bluebird Homes	5
Photo Contest Winners	6
Calendar of Events	7
Turkey Walk Highlights	9
Membership Report	11

Board of Directors

Kathy Woodward
President

Judy Schmidt
Vice-President

Lisa Molinari
Secretary

Laurel Gould
Treasurer

Marcia Rymer

Sue Reed

Neil Borman

Roger Donat

Juli Kuhl

Tom McFadden
GSNWR Liaison

152 Pleasant Plains Road
Basking Ridge, N.J. 07920
908.797.7200

This newsletter
printed courtesy of PSE&G

About the Friends

PROJECT "ROOKERY INSIGHT" — ONE MORE HERON TO GO

by Peggy Armstrong, Project Coordinator

More than \$3,000 has been raised for the Friends' Project Rookery Insight—the project to purchase two new viewing scopes for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

"The \$3,000 represents three-quarters of the \$4,000 goal we set to buy and install the scopes at the Overlook on Pleasant Plains Road. With such a generous response we're confident that we will be able to meet our desired timetable and have the scopes in place and ready for public use when the Great Blue Herons return to nest this spring," according to Kathy Woodward, Friends president. The plan is to install two new scopes which will be more flexible and allow better focusing capabilities than the present scopes. The new scopes will be set at different heights to accommodate adults and children and will be wheelchair accessible. The older scopes will be moved to another location where the optics are more suitable.

The campaign had its beginnings last fall when the Friends received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation on the condition that the Friends raise a similar amount of the money needed for the scopes. That means that every gift given to the project has been doubled by the grant," says Kathy Woodward. She also noted that many of the gifts have been designated in memory of family or friends who have enjoyed the Great Swamp NWR.

(continued on page 10)

From Headquarters...

HAPPENINGS ON THE REFUGE

by Paul F. Steblein, Deputy Refuge Manager



Pictured L-R: Donald Dinsmore (Mayor, Harding Township), Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, Jane Kenny (EPA), Bill Koch (FWS—Refuge Manager, Great Swamp NWR), Christie Whitman (EPA), Bob Shinn (NJDEP), Suzanne Dapkins (Mayor, Long Hill Township)

Transfer of Property from EPA - after four years and complicated discussions with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), NJDEP (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection), FWS (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Department of Interior, and Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, the EPA property on New Vernon Road will be subdivided and transferred to FWS and NJDEP.

A tract containing a 4-acre remediated landfill unit of the Asbestos Superfund Site (surveys indicate successful cleanup) will go to NJDEP with an access road. NJDEP will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the remediated

(continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From Kathy Woodward

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge has been a place where I like to go to feel better. In addition to serving as a sanctuary for plants and animals, I count on the Swamp to be there and lift my spirits – when I'm tired, when I need to look at things from a different perspective, and where I can really see and listen. I'm sure many of you feel the same way and this fall's events have reinforced the ability of the Swamp to reassure and refresh.

However, the Refuge system is in trouble. Recently, the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a coalition of many national environmental support groups, including National Wildlife Refuge Association, The Wilderness Society, NRA, Defenders of Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, and Audubon produced a report, *Shortchanging America's Wildlife*. The report emphasizes the severe under-funding of Refuges.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's largest network of lands dedicated primarily to wildlife conservation. The more than 93 mil-

lion acres are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a bureau within the Department of the Interior on a current budget of less than \$320 million each year. The per-acre spending is five times smaller than the sister federal land management agency, the National Park Service. As a result, many areas are not cared for adequately.

Within Great Swamp NWR, staff is desperately needed to restore major water impoundments to provide optimum feeding, resting and brood rearing habitat for migratory birds, especially waterfowl and wading birds. Additional staff is also required to manage over 550 acres of native grassland for habitat diversity by mowing it on a rotational basis. Without such management, the grasslands will be lost due to the natural progressive regrowth of woodlands. Invasion of exotic species has already deteriorated habitat in the grasslands, wetlands, forests, and wilderness of the Refuge. Our Refuge headquarters needs added space to provide offices and storage, a larger meeting room and facilities to meet the educational and recreational needs of visitors, which number over

300,000 each year. Similar concerns are present in all of the Refuges.

Through Friends' projects and volunteer help, we can assist with some of these tasks, but it takes staff and funding to plan and implement good volunteer projects. The nature and scope of the effort requires increased funding for staff, maintenance and capital expenditures if the Refuge System is to reach its full potential.

Our Board of Directors will be writing to our federal legislators to advocate increased appropriations for Great Swamp NWR and other Refuges. You can help by sending a message to your congressional representative and our United State Senators to support increased funding for these necessary improvements. We need to keep our Refuge system strong.

For additional information concerning the CARE initiative, please contact Friends of Great Swamp NWR or Refuge headquarters. Information is also available on the Web at www.refugenet.org, www.audubon.org, and www.tws.org.

About the Friends

ANNUAL MEETING

On October 19th 2001, following the Friday evening Sunset Walk, the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Great Swamp was held at the Friends Office, 148 Pleasant Plains Road. The meeting was called to order by President Kathy Woodward. Reports were presented by the Treasurer and the Committee chairs; Deputy Refuge Manager Paul Steblein thanked the Friends for their many contributions and visible support for the Refuge during the year. Elections were held with Kathy Woodward, Judy Schmidt, Lisa Molinari, and Laurel Gould all re-elected to the Board of Directors for two-year terms. Neil Borman presented the proposed revisions to our Bylaws, which were approved by the membership.

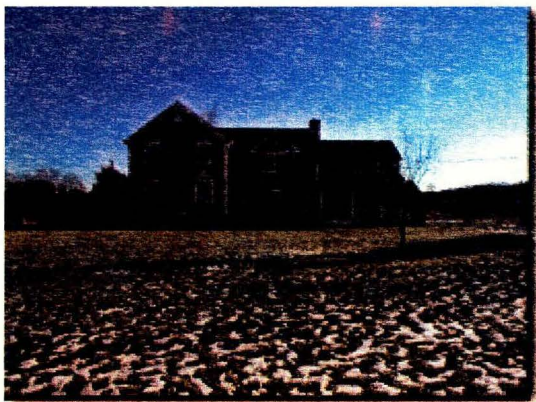
About the Friends

BOARD MEMBER COMINGS AND GOINGS

Nancy Schenck, Board member and Membership Chair, resigned as a member of the Board effective November 13, 2001. President Kathy Woodward accepted her resignation with regret citing Nancy's many contributions to the Board and the Friends and noting with pleasure that Nancy has agreed to continue as Membership Chair.

At the December 11th Board Meeting, the Nominating Committee presented their candidate for the Board. Juli Kuhl was unanimously elected to fill Nancy's unexpired term. Juli brings considerable experience with non-profit groups and corporations and, in her own words, "*a deep love for the outdoors and a firm conviction that children who are taught about nature in an interesting, compelling way become teenagers concerned about the environment, who then in turn become supportive adults of efforts to preserve our natural world.*"

(Happenings — continued from page 1)



*'Today a dream
became reality—
a nightmare
now forgotten.'*

Rodney Frelinghuysen

Pictured above: one of the two houses located on the site. The signing ceremony for the transfer of the property from EPA to FWS and NJDEP was held on January 7, 2002.

landfill. The remaining portions of the property, about 26 acres with wetlands, two houses and a large garage, will go to Great Swamp NWR (FWS). It is expected that one house will meet interim needs for additional staff offices, visitor contact station, space for Friends of Great Swamp NWR, and some dormitory space for interns. The garage could serve as a small auditorium with potential for exhibits and classroom space. Trails and interpretive kiosks may also be developed. An implementation plan will be developed, and funding is required before renovations can be completed. This does not preclude the long-term plan - Great Swamp NWR is scheduled for construction of a visitor center and office complex that will better accommodate the needs of refuge programs and the visiting public.

New Boardwalk Loop at WOC - A 2,000-foot return loop will be added this year to the long boardwalk trail at the Wildlife Observation Center of Great Swamp NWR. The location of the trail has been sited, vegetation cleared away (with help from volunteers), and engineering specifications developed. The construction phase of the project will be con-

tracted, and is just about ready for bids. Funding for the project comes from the OU3 Restoration Program, which has been described in previous newsletters.

Use of Technologies for Natural Resource Management - During the past year, the Refuge has sharply increased the use of GIS (Geographic Information Systems), GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and other technology for planning and management at Great Swamp NWR. GIS are computer-based tools

for mapping and analyzing spatial data. We have set up a new computer system with ArcView, ArcInfo, and presentation graphics software, a large-format printer, and a scanner. A floor-standing exhibit with posters on Refuge programs is one of the first completed projects from the computer system. Basic GIS data that have been assembled includes digital aerial photography, scanned topo maps, refuge boundaries, roads, and land use/cover. GPS receivers are used to develop digital geographic coordinates to record the location of features (such as trails) in a GIS. We have been using GPS to develop data on wildlife survey points and public trails.

GIS and other technology helps us to do our work faster, cheaper, or better than traditional techniques, although this should not be considered a replacement for going out in the field. Development of GIS at Great Swamp has been funded largely through the OU3 Habitat Restoration Program to plan projects and monitor results. It has been used to update the fire management plan, develop base maps of the Refuge, plan restoration projects, and begin mapping the distribution of certain invasive plant species. Two efforts include a big project to map current vegetation and ecological communities of the Great Swamp, and to publish a large aerial photograph base map of the Great Swamp superimposed with trails, parking and other facilities.

Help Wanted

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR REFUGE HQ

Do you enjoy watching the birds and other wildlife? Then this job is for you!

The Refuge is looking for someone to work at the Refuge Headquarters front desk to greet and assist visitors, answer phones, and do some light filing.

If you are available any time from Monday through Friday and would like to spend a few hours each week helping out, please call Tom McFadden at 973-425-1222 ext. 14.

Help Wanted

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Three positions are available for Refuge Assistant Interns — a great way to experience the Refuge first hand while learning from Refuge staff.

Duties may include boundary inspection, Great Blue Heron and waterfowl surveys, duck banding, web page design and other office work. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

Contact Tom McFadden at 973.425.1222 ext. 14 for more information. This program is generously sponsored by AT&T.

Learning about Swamp Life
BALD FACED HORNET
 By Charlie Gould

It's winter and with the dropping of leaves we sometimes look at the bare branches in the trees and see a big, gray paper-like nest hanging there. It's the nest of the bald faced hornet.

The bald faced hornet is located throughout North America. It actually isn't a hornet, rather a member of the yellow jacket wasp family. It lives in wooded regions and constructs its paper-like nest from chewed wood. These aerial nests may exceed a basketball in diameter and are attached to tree branches, and occasionally, buildings. The larger end of the nest is at the top and the single entrance is at the bottom.

Bald faced hornets are actually great neighbors. They are non-aggressive unless threatened. They are voracious eaters of insects and other backyard pests.

In spring a single queen begins to build each nest. She lays eggs and then collects insects for the soon-to-hatch larvae. Upon hatching, the larvae eat the awaiting food and grow



rapidly into workers. The queen from this point becomes an egg laying machine and probably never leaves the nest again. These workers tend to the new larvae, collect food (insects, nectar and pollen), and expand the nest throughout the summer. A mature colony may have several hundred workers by the end of the summer.

In the autumn their incredibly sophisticated social system breaks down when there are no more larvae to attend to. The adults then concentrate on feeding themselves from flower nectar and other sweet liquids. This is when they become a nuisance as they're attracted to the sugar found in our foods and beverages. Around November the colony disperses and the workers eventually die. Next year's queens find over-wintering sites (the queens are the only ones to survive the winter) under bark flaps or a protected dry cavity. The old nest is usually attacked by scavengers looking for food and is never used twice.

Learning about Swamp Life
NEW GREAT SWAMP NWR CHECKLIST
 By Steve Byland

If you're like me, you probably have dozens of checklists that you collected from refuges, parks, and sanctuaries all across the country. Some are fancy, full-colored brochures, while others are single sheet efforts banged out on an old typewriter years ago and photocopied more times than anyone can remember. Either way, they are full of information that tells us what to look for, when to look for it, and even where to find it. We often take these for granted, but have you ever wondered where they come from or what goes into producing a checklist?

Recently, the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge decided to revise its checklist of birds and asked me to help put it together. I got to witness first hand the effort that goes into creating such a checklist. The first thing I did was look at input, provided by a number of local bird experts, on over 240 species of birds. There were numerous differences of opinion for many species caused by a number of factors. Categories utilized to indicate relative abundance are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For instance, a species may be numerous (i.e. "abundant"), but secretive and not likely to be seen (i.e. "uncommon"). Some species are numerous, but in areas of the Refuge that are not easily accessible to the public. A species may be very common one year and completely absent the next.

Many birds received new names since the last checklist was prepared. Several species were discovered utilizing the Refuge and had to be added. Sadly, a few species were determined to no longer use the Refuge, primarily due to overall declines in their populations. Additionally, in the new checklist we wanted to include information on the type of habitat each species is likely to use. There seemed to be an endless amount of information that had to be sorted through and reconciled. My task was to look at all the input and decide what changes to make.

Finally, it all came together last August when the new checklist was finished. You can pick up a copy at Refuge Headquarters or at the Friends of Great Swamp Bookstore & Gift Shop. The next time you look at one of our checklists, please take a moment to consider all the work that goes into making them. A friend of mine said that she wondered if they were made by magic. Well, maybe they are.

*Meet the Refuge Staff***INTERVIEW WITH MARILYN EAMES, SCEP INTERN***By Kathy Woodward*

If you heard singing in the Swamp this past summer, it may have been from a variety of birds or from summer intern, Marilyn Eames. Marilyn will complete her senior year at Virginia Tech in 2002, with a major in Wildlife Science and a minor in Vocal Music!

Marilyn was employed at Great Swamp NWR for three months through the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), a Fish and Wildlife initiative designed to bring talented young people into the Service. Upon completion of 640 hours of seasonal employment and a college degree, Marilyn's position can be converted to a fulltime position within Fish and Wildlife Service.

Marilyn attributes her early interest in the outdoors to extended summer vacations spent with her aunt and uncle, hiking and backpacking through wild areas of the West. Helping her uncle,

who is a wildlife photographer, taught Marilyn about looking at landscapes and learning "the conservation and preservation ethic". Experiences such as these solidified Marilyn's decision of a career path. Marilyn noted, "I never considered myself the kind of person who would take a normal desk job."

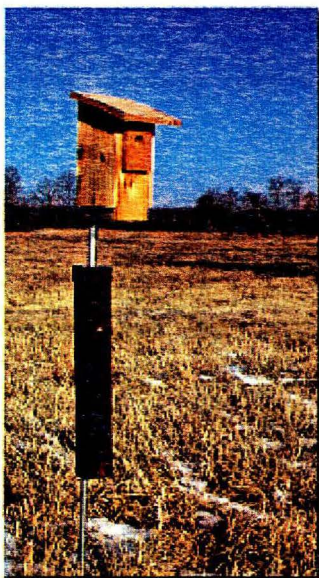
Marilyn's assignments at GSNWR this past summer included fieldwork and research. She helped with the banding and release of ducks raised by Raptor Trust and our own Board member, Judy Schmidt, wildlife rehabilitator. Marilyn spent considerable time in the Integrated Pest Management program, which investigates a combination of methods to reduce or eliminate invasive plant species while diminishing the harmful effects on the larger plant and animal community. In addition to purple loosestrife, the

team also targeted Japanese knotweed and Japanese stilt grass. Marilyn spoke passionately about the degradation caused by "monospecific stands" of the plants. Besides crowding out native species, the density of these plants and the inability of wildlife to use them negatively impacts the breeding of birds and animals in Great Swamp.

Marilyn carries many memories of Great Swamp with her. She enjoyed helping with the early counts of nesting Great Blue Herons and then watching the young mature and fledge. She also was delighted by the variety of frog calls she heard during the summer. Her greatest insight was into the structure and complexity of the NWR system. Marilyn is well on her way to becoming another skilled and dedicated employee of the Refuge system.

*What Friends Do***BLUEBIRD HOMES GETTING A FACE LIFT***By Steve Byland*

The bluebird nest boxes in the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge are getting a facelift. With 162 boxes, there is always a backlog of needed repairs. We started the Bluebird nest box overhaul by designing a new configuration for how the boxes are laid out. Bluebirds will not allow another Bluebird to nest within 100 yards, but will allow Tree Swallows to nest close by. By positioning a pair of boxes 20 feet apart with 100 yards between such pairs, we essentially reserve half of the boxes for Bluebirds and half for Tree Swallows. In the field just north of the parking lot at the Friends of Great Swamp Office & Bookstore, we have already repositioned 10 boxes. This included the construction of new mounting poles with new, more effective predator guards. In other areas, several fallen boxes were remounted while another 8 to 10 will be restored soon.



It takes more than 2 hours and almost \$20 in materials to make each complete mounting unit, including the predator guard. Each old box needs to be taken down, repaired or replaced as necessary, remounted and hauled back into the field, generally one or two at a time.

Generous donations from the Friends of Great Swamp and the ExxonMobil Corporation will provide enough funding to keep us going well into next year. Leo Hollein deserves special thanks as he has helped secure funding and assists with mounting boxes.

During 2001, we had 39 bluebird nests fledging 128 young. Our efforts will allow for these figures to double or even triple over the next few years. While we can't guarantee such increases, we can improve the likelihood of success by making these changes to the trail.

Note: The Friends have authorized a total of \$800 for the Bluebird Trail Project—one example of how your membership dollars and Bookstore purchases benefit the Great Swamp NWR.

*Events***PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

The 2nd annual Friends of Great Swamp Photo Contest was a resounding success. We received many more entries than last year and the quality of the photos made it especially hard to decide the winners.

Winners for Best Landscape and for Best Wildlife photos were chosen by Bill Judge, owner of Colonial Camera, and Blaine Rothauser, professional photographer.



Board members select the winner of the Friends Choice award and first place was given to Anita Beechner of Millington. Her close up photo epitomizes the swamp. Vincent Prapuolenis captured the runner-up spot with his spectacular close-up of a Great Horned Owl.

*"It was a crisp late spring afternoon.
The water was so vibrant and deep blue,
the picture was just waiting to be taken.
When I finally saw the photo,
I knew exactly why we love living here."*

Anita Beechner



In the Best Wildlife category, Jenny Harrington took first place with her shot of a green heron – just swallowing a fresh fish! Runner up was Vincent Prapuolenis with his close-up photo of a male wood duck in full breeding plumage.



In the Best Landscape category, John Gregory of Basking Ridge took first prize. His photograph of two oak trees in full fall colors is breathtaking. Karen Borman of Basking Ridge took second place with her photo of a misty fall morning.

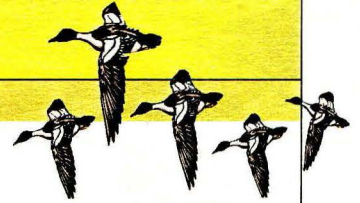
All of the winning photos were enlarged and custom framed by Colonial Camera of New Providence. In every case, the framing enhances the unique qualities of the photograph for absolutely stunning results. The winners each have their framed photo to display and a second set has been given to the Friends for display in the Bookstore & Gift Shop. Runners up received a copy of their actual-size prints – also custom framed.

The Friends Board would like to extend a special thanks to Bill Judge and Stefanie Guidetti of Colonial Camera Shop in New Providence for their generous support of the photo contest again this year.

2002 Contest Underway

Start snapping for the 2002 photo contest. Entry forms are available at Colonial Camera, Village Shopping Center, New Providence, the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop, and on our web site. Amateurs only; photos must be taken in the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge between November 2001 and October 2002; contest deadline is November 1, 2002. The winning photo could be yours!

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE 2002 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



January

January 5

Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop Re-Opens for the season.
Saturdays 11:00 am—5:00 pm; Sundays 1:00 pm—4:00 pm
New books and gift items! Visitor information and free coffee.

April

April 6

Annual Great Swamp NWR clean-up.
8:30 am-12:30 pm; meet at Refuge Headquarters. Bring your friends, family, and co-workers.
This event is coordinated by the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.
For more information call Tom McFadden at 973-425-1222, ext. 14

April 7—May 19

Refuge HQ open on Sundays for Spring migration

April 20

Homestead Cleanup

May

May 3

Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony

May 4

Fishing Derby NJ Fish and Game and GSNWR

May 11

Project Rookery Insight Scope Dedication
International Migratory Bird Day

May 22

Frog Walk — (Tentative.)

June

June 1

Boardwalk Tree and Shrub Trail Guide Debuts — Walks scheduled. National Trails Day.

June 2

Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop closes for the Summer

September

September 7

Third Annual Fall Festival. Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop Reopens for the season.

September 8

Refuge HQ Open on Sundays for Fall Migration

October

October ____

Homestead Cleanup — (Date to be determined.)

October 12-19

National Wildlife Refuge Week, Sunset Walks and Noon Walks

October 18

Annual Meeting, Friends of Great Swamp NWR

November

November 3

Deadline for 2002 Photo Contest.

November 30

Third Annual Turkey Walk

December

December 15

Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop Closes for the holidays.

FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ABOUT FRIENDS GROUP EVENTS
VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.FRIENDSOFGREATSWAMP.ORG

Friends Office and Bookstore located at 148 Pleasant Plains Road, just past Refuge Headquarters.

*Learning about Swamp Life***START LOOKING FOR THE FIRST SIGN OF SPRING***By Laurel Gould*

What do you think of as the first sign of spring? Red-wing blackbirds? Red maple flowers? Kites flying?

Long before these signs appear, when the woods are still brown and ice lingers on the open wetlands, it's time to go searching for one of the very earliest harbingers of spring – the skunk cabbage.

To locate skunk cabbage in bloom, you need to find a wet open area – swamp, marsh, stream borders – and look closely for the small 3 to 5 inch brown and green hood, called a spathe, which protects the real skunk cabbage flowers clustered inside. Frozen ground does not deter this spring flower; the skunk cabbage creates it's own heat – melting the snow cover and ice as it grows.

If you miss finding skunk cabbage in February and March, the large green leaves which appear in late spring are a dead give-away. Look for the clumps of wide dark-green leaves, as much as 2 feet tall (hence the name "cabbage") which can blanket a wet area. (The skunk part comes from the odor the plant emits when any part is crushed.) Now, mark the spot – that's where you will find the flower next February.

The skunk cabbage conceals another surprise. The roots and stems contain needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate that cause severe burning of the mouth, tongue, and throat. Do not taste any parts of the skunk cabbage plant.

So... come Valentine's Day – go for a walk along the Boardwalk trail in the Great Swamp, or scout out wet places on some of the Wilderness Area trails, and look for the brown and green hood of this harbinger of spring called skunk cabbage.

*Bookstore News***PUT YOUR SHOPPING DOLLARS TO WORK FOR THE GREAT SWAMP NWR**

Did you know that all of the proceeds from the Bookstore & Gift Shop go to support Refuge projects—like new Bluebird boxes and predator guards, like a spotting scope for visitor use, like interpretive bird identification aids at the two blinds?

The Bookstore is stocked with a variety of nature-related items, including:

- field guides and nature books for adults and children books, CDs and videos to help improve your identification skills, a swamp-specific birding ID card for beginning birders, and more.
- gift items from local artists—pottery, notecards, gourd birds, and hand-painted pins as well as pins and patches for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.
- T-shirts and sweat-shirts with local artist Ron Orlando's custom design of the hooded mergansers—for adults and children.
- Just arrived — Ron's limited edition prints—"Bluebirds and Creepers", "The Thieves" (Blue Jays) and "A Shift in the Wind" (White Tailed Deer) — these beautiful prints are professionally framed and ready to hang.

Every time you make a purchase, you benefit the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge – and members get a 10% discount as well.

Stop by next time you're in the area – not only does your shopping support the Refuge, but we have visitor information, maps and brochures, and free coffee (cookies too on the right day!)

Winter Hours

Saturdays
11:00 am
to
5:00 pm

Sundays
1:00 pm
to
4:00 pm

*What Friends Do***HOMESTEAD CLEANUP***By Judy Schmidt*

*One sunny Saturday October 13 the friends came 15 strong
 To remove the things that, on a refuge, don't belong.
 It took lots of digging and lugging around,
 So much stuff was buried in the ground.
 We cleared three sites and that's a lot.
 But you should see the things we got!
 Two cars (both Fords), lots of metal stuff and a fence heavy
 and tall.
 A water heater, tires and bottles, and a pocket watch so very
 small.*

*To load the dumpster, it took a whole bunch.
 Then we went back to our office and had some lunch.
 Lots of us got dirty as we carried, pulled, and shoved.
 But Pete got the dirtiest, so he won the golden glove.*



Volunteers L-R: Jack Higgins, Pete Axelrod — Winner of the Golden Glove Award, Carl Woodward, Juli Kuhl, Leo Hollein.

Homestead Cleanup crew

Thank you to Leo Hollein, Chuck Straight, Pete Axelrod, Laurel Gould, Juli Kuhl, Sibelli Bitler, Merris Larkin, Cynthia Kastner, Kathy Woodward, Carl Woodward, Judy Schmidt, Jack Higgins, Tom Mason, Alexandra Mason, Lisa Molinari, GSNWR Staff Craig Bitler.

*Events***WHERE DID ALL THE TURKEYS GO?***By Judy Schmidt*

The wild turkey is a very large long-legged bird with a naked head and neck, iridescent plumage and a long broad tail. The males and some females have a black beard on the breast. The male is considerably larger than the female. They feed on the ground on acorns, nuts, seeds and insects. They can take off quickly to avoid danger and they roost in trees.

So... why didn't we see any turkeys on our annual Turkey Walk held November 24th? Could it be they didn't know that Thanksgiving was over and were still hiding? Or did they eat too many acorns and were napping? Or could it be that 134 walkers made the timid birds run and hide?

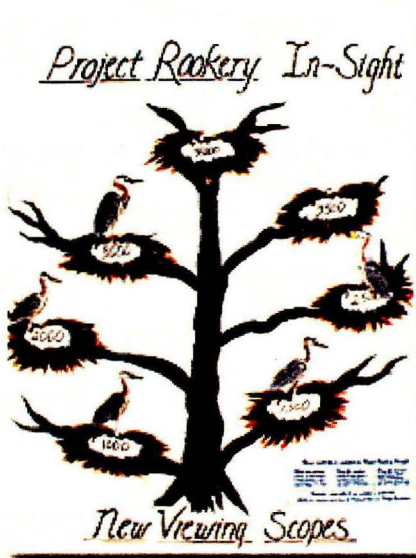
Whatever the reason, we didn't see any of these big birds on our Turkey Walk. But as we walked through the management area, other birds put on a great show! The redheaded woodpeckers hurried back and forth getting their acorns and hiding them. There were mallard, black ducks, wood ducks, and pintails flying into the marsh. Great blue herons, red tailed hawks, fox sparrows and white-throated sparrows, and bluebirds were all spotted by the walkers. The coyotes left lots of proof that they are doing well in the Refuge.

Both adults and children had a wonderful time walking on a perfect day in a special place called the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Join us next year on November 30th for our annual Turkey Walk. *Some say, it's called that because we "walk off all that turkey"!*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Tens of thousands of earthworms live in an acre of soil.
- Butterflies have 4 different life stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult.
- Of the 250 species and subspecies of snakes found in the United States, 36 produce poison which can harm humans.
- Male turtles are generally smaller than females and they often have longer tails.
- Dragonflies and damselflies catch mosquitoes and other insects by making a basket like trap with their legs.
- Woodpeckers use two front toes and a back toe, along with their tail, to perch on tree trunks.

(Project Rookery —continued from page 1)



More than 500 appeals were sent out to Friends members, volunteers, and visitors and the response has been generous. Progress of the fund drive has been tracked on colored posters featuring nesting great blue herons that were created by Judy Schmidt, Friends vice president.

We still need your help! We have not quite reached our goal and any donations above our goal will be used to create interpretive panels to further enhance the visitor experience at the Overlook. Donations can be mailed to Friends of Great Swamp, 152 Pleasant Plains Road, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920 or by visiting the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop on Pleasant Plains Road (open Saturdays from 11-5 and Sundays from 1-4) or at the Great Swamp NWR Headquarters on Pleasant Plains Road (open weekdays from 8-4:30).

All donors will be invited to a special dedication program and planning is now underway for the celebration in May. Several state and area officials are expected to attend. "I'm sure everyone who gave will want to see how their gift enhances the swamp and benefits all visitors," said Kathy Woodward. "The Friends group is delighted to be part of preserving the habitat and encouraging observation of the wildlife area."

About the Friends

PROJECT "ROOKERY INSIGHT" — REMEMBERING DAVID HOLDEN

There wasn't always an overlook for easy viewing of the Heron Rookery – and if you stop there today, you'll find an interpretive kiosk with a plaque which reads "In Memory of David A. Holden — 1959-1994." You may wonder about David Holden, why there is a memorial plaque, and how the Overlook came to be constructed.

David Holden was born and raised in nearby Cranford. He was a published author of short stories and an ardent conservationist. He died at the age of 34 from brain cancer. In the spring of 1994, David's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Holden approached the Great Swamp NWR about making a donation towards a project in memory of their late son. The overlook concept had been approved in the refuge master plan, however, due to a lack of funds it had not yet been constructed. It was a perfect fit. After three years and additional generous donations from other individuals and organizations, over \$14,000 was contributed. The refuge matched this by providing labor, equipment and additional materials.

The overlook was completed and is now one of the most popular visitor sites at the Refuge with an unparalleled view of nesting great blue herons – and more... hawks hunting the marsh, song birds flitting in the shrubs, turtles sunning themselves at the edges of the pond, Woodcock flights over the fields, Red-Headed Woodpeckers in the dead trees, ducks flying overhead. All in all, a very special place.

Not to Be Missed

GREAT SWAMP—IT'S NOT JUST MUD

The current issue of New Jersey Outdoors (Volume 28 (4), Fall 2001), features a fabulous photo-essay called *Great Swamp: It's not just mud*, by Blaine Rothauser. Blaine's article covers the ecology, history, and diversity of wildlife in the Great Swamp, brought to life with 28 of his spectacular photographs.

We are very fortunate to have Blaine as a member of the Friends where he contributes his time and talent. Many of you who attended the Fall Festival participated in one of his photography workshops. Blaine was also a judge for our 2001 photo contest. And if you would like to own some of his photos, Blaine stocks the Bookstore & Gift Shop with his stunning photo note cards—suitable for framing.

Blaine has donated copies of the magazine to the Friends' Library. If you'd like to see his article, stop by the Bookstore & Gift Shop on any weekend.

**WE HAVE
220 MEMBERS —**

YOU COULD BE 221!

NEW MEMBER BENEFITS

Bill Judge owner of Colonial Camera Shop, Village Shopping Center, New Providence is offering discounts to members of the Friends of Great Swamp. Upon presentation of your membership card, you will receive:

- 10% discount on film and film processing
- 15 % discount on custom framing.

And don't forget the long-standing 5% discount offered to members by Friends member Nancy Schenck of Wild Birds Unlimited, 2520 U.S. Hwy 22E, Scotch Plains—"your backyard birdfeeding specialist."

Thank you Colonial Camera and Wild Birds Unlimited.

Also—members receive a 10% discount on all purchases at the Friends of Great Swamp Bookstore and Gift Shop. Discounts also valid at participating refuges. Check our web site for details.

FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership offers ways to get involved at many different levels. Members...

- receive special discounts at our Bookstore and Gift Shop and local merchants
- receive a quarterly newsletter
- have opportunities to participate in special events
- contribute to the improvement of the refuge for all visitors.

If you would like to become a member of the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, please fill out the information on this form, and mail with your check to

Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
152 Pleasant Plains Road, Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920

Yearly Membership

Membership Type ☐ Family - \$25 ☐ Individual—\$15

Renewal? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership is tax deductible!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

Occupation (Optional) _____

I would be interested in volunteering (check one or more)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings & Grounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Education & Outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sales/Bookstore | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs & Events |

The Friends is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation as defined under the laws of the state of New Jersey and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service under section 501-(c)-(3).

Something Really BIG is About to Happen!
In the last issue, we asked "what do the following have in common?"

First Flight at Kitty Hawk
Ford Motor Company
Harley-Davidson
Public Service Electric & Gas Company
National Wildlife Refuge System.



The Answer: They all celebrate their 100th birthday in 2003.
So jump on a plane, get in your Ford, cruise on your Harley and visit a
National Wildlife Refuge!

Friends of **Great Swamp** **National Wildlife Refuge**

JANUARY 2002

