

# FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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This newsletter  
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## About the Friends

### PROJECT "ROOKERY INSIGHT" — WE MADE IT! THANKS TO YOU!

On June 1<sup>st</sup> there will be a dedication ceremony for the two new binocular scopes which are being installed at the Heron Rookery Overlook! Yes – **We Made it!** – thanks to the many members and visitors who gave donations, large and small, for the purchase of the new scopes—and a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The new scopes will provide a much improved view of the great blue herons who are nesting in the decaying trees that you see from the Overlook. Impossible as it seems, these large birds with great long legs, perch in the tops of these trees and raise their young in huge nests of sticks.

Come join us on June 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 am for the dedication ceremony. Or stop by the Overlook next time you're in the swamp. In April and early May, the herons are setting up their nests; during May, the young will be visible eagerly waiting the parental food delivery; in June, the young will be fledging, trying out their own wings as they get ready to leave the nests. This is a unique spot – an unobstructed view of a heron nursery... now, even better than ever, thanks to the new viewing scopes. Come and see for yourself!

## Centennial Countdown

### WOODCOCK WALK — AND 99TH BIRTHDAY PARTY!

by Judy Schmidt

On March 14<sup>th</sup> the Friends celebrated the 99<sup>th</sup> birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System. We had everything you need to make a great party—friends, entertainment, games, presents—and of course a Birthday Cake!

Refuge Manager Bill Koch welcomed the group, presenting each of the 49 attendees with a Centennial pin as a birthday present. Friends volunteers Steve Byland and Pete Axelrod took the group off to find woodcock (which were heard more than seen).

Nevertheless, participants got a running report on all birds that flew overhead or sang in the distance with the calls of spring peepers growing ever louder as night fell.

Did someone say food? Everyone headed back inside the Friends Office for a special 99<sup>th</sup> Birthday Cake baked by member Marcia Rymer with Refuge staff member Tom McFadden blowing out the candles. The evening closed with a drawing for three of the new baby T.R. Bears for those who tested their knowledge of the Refuge system by taking the Centennial Quiz — see insert.





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From Kathy Woodward

In the autobiography I wrote in fourth grade (!), I listed living to 100 years old as one of my goals. Well, so far, so good. But, in the meantime, we have the opportunity to participate in the countdown to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System. On March 14, 1903, President "Teddy" Roosevelt dedicated tiny Pelican Island, off the coast of Florida, to preserve the birds of feather that nested there.

At the turn of the last century, the environment in the United States was struggling. The population of the United States was expanding and moving west. The large expanses of prairie and desert were being opened up, through various land management policies. Irrigation was allowing

sections of the west to become farm area, while improved transportation systems made distribution of the crops economical. The same rail-ways moved coal from the fields in Pennsylvania to major cities, where air pollution became a major problem. And, to top it all off, *literally*, women decided that bird feathers were the fashion chic. As a result, wild birds were killed by the millions to supply plumes for hats and boas.

Fortunately, just as today, people with vision realized that special areas had to be set aside to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat, in its varied forms. Pelican Island was the beginning of the Refuge System, which now includes over 570 refuges.

Over the next two years we will celebrate the Refuge legacy of which Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is a part. On the national level, the Centennial Committee has been appointed and includes such noteworthy folks as Pete Coors and Karl Malone (Utah Jazz)! Anticipated events include a celebration rally at Pelican Island, a Smithsonian Institution Exhibit, a commemorative postage stamp series, and habitat restoration initiatives.

Through our newsletter, we will keep you up to date on the national and regional happenings. At all of our upcoming events, we will focus on our upcoming Centennial.

## About the Friends

### NATIONAL REFUGE FRIENDS CONFERENCE

By Neil Borman

#### How is the best way to spend a Saturday night?

How about with 270 Friends and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (F&WS) staff representing 102 refuges and 43 states from Maine to Midway Atoll!!

These were the participants at the first National Refuge Friends Conference held February 22-25, 2002 in Washington, D.C. Kathy and Carl Woodward and Cathy and Neil Borman represented the Friends of Great Swamp.

The conference focused on the upcoming Centennial of the refuge system, promoting refuges, and visiting our Congressmen or their staff. The convention began with a number of speeches. Lou Hinds, who grew up in the Great Swamp and now supervises the refuges in Florida, pointed out that the issues of wildlife and the refuge system are not in the forefront of Congressional thinking and support is needed for the \$50M increase for F&WS in the 2003 budget. Representative Curt Weldon (R-PA), an avid supporter of the refuge system, gave the following pointers for communicating with our Congressmen: Know the staff members responsible for environmental issues in your Congressmen's office, invite both the Congressman and staff members to your refuge, Congressmen like tributes and publicity.

Outside our meeting room there were displays and free samples of newsletters, brochures, and specialty publications from the many different refuges and Friends groups. Our Friends of Great Swamp newsletter was a big hit.



Pictured above: Friends on Capitol Hill at the National Refuge Friends Conference, February 2002.

Throughout the conference, workshops were held covering key topics including the Centennial plans, fundraising, educational program development, and media relations. A special training session was conducted for those attendees who were planning to take advantage of the opportunity to visit our Congressmen. The training stressed the importance of sending a thank you note to the Congressman or legislative assistant after you visit or write.

On Monday, Cathy and Neil had the opportunity to discuss the need for increased F&WS funding and specific needs of the Great Swamp Refuge with Ms. Carolyn Kappen of Representative Frelinghuysen's staff, Mr. Laurence Epstein of Senator Torricelli's staff, and Ms. Lena McMahon of Senator Corzine's staff.



*Meet the Refuge Staff***INTERVIEW WITH LARRY BALSAMO***By Kathy Woodward*

Larry Balsamo became a full time employee at Great Swamp NWR in 1996 after persisting for 11 years to make his dream come true. In 1986, Larry, a local kid from Berkeley Heights, was part of the summer Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) at Great Swamp. During that year and the next summer, when Larry served as a Youth Leader for the YCC, a crew of 12 young men and women worked together and completed the boardwalk at the Wildlife Observation Center. While living and working in Great Swamp, Larry developed a lasting appreciation for the Refuge and the staff. Following high school, Larry joined the Army reserves, worked in construction and took college courses, studying biology. Whenever possible, Larry came back to the Swamp, as a volunteer, crew leader for YCC (1990) or temporary employee. When a position was available, Larry was ready!

Larry wears several hats, literally and figuratively, at Great Swamp. As a maintenance worker, his day-to-day responsibilities are oriented towards creation and management of habitat. Working with the Refuge manager and staff biologists, he helps regulate the water levels in the impoundments, which are critical for the waterfowl which breed in Great Swamp or stop during migration. Anyone who has been to Great Swamp on an autumn evening can witness the success of this management tool. Operating the hydroaxing machinery, which cuts bushes and small trees, Larry assures that open fields are maintained within Refuge boundaries. Larry frequently sees woodcock flying low into newly created open lands. Larry acknowledges that

while the immediate aftermath of the hydroaxing looks awful, it is an efficient and effective way of cutting young trees and bush. Currently, the machine is used primarily when the ground is frozen. However, on an early trial, the cutting left deep ruts in a work area. Larry was upset until he revisited the site the following day and saw many woodcock busily eating the worms unearthed in process. Larry enjoys operating the aquatic excavator, which Great Swamp shares with Walkill NWR, Ducks Unlimited and other conservancy groups. By periodically creating channels in the management area, water flow is maintained to maximize benefits for flora and fauna.

The other hat Larry wears is as collateral duty enforcement officer. Following training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia, Larry serves as Refuge security as a portion of his weekly assignment. Living on the Refuge, Larry is *on call*, when needed. While the typical offenses on the Refuge are speeding, and trespassing into closed areas, Larry helps with things such as assuring that the annual deer hunt is safe. A recent additional duty is preventing the use of ATVs on Refuge property.

Having served as a volunteer on the Refuge, Larry appreciates the effort of the Friends. He notes there are always more projects the staff would like to complete and volunteers can help in so many ways. Not only can the Friends supply money and talent, Larry says it is more fun when a team of people work together to get things done. It sounds like Larry learned a lot in the Swamp!

*Meet the Refuge Staff***SAYING GOODBYE TO PAUL STEBLEIN**

Energetic, knowledgeable, visionary, friendly, committed, funny, dedicated... all of these characteristics describe Paul Steblein, who is leaving his position as Deputy Refuge Manager at Great Swamp NWR.

Paul has been very involved and extremely supportive of the Friends – and we will definitely miss him as he pursues exciting new opportunities in Washington D.C to coordinate implementation of the strategic plan for the National Wildlife Refuge System, Fulfilling the Promise.

We wish Paul and his family, Tina, Jacob, and Savannah all the best in their new adventure.



Photo: Paul enjoying the Friends 2001 Fall Festival



*What Friends Do***ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2002 — WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR**

True to our mission statement, Friends members and volunteers have been busy during 2002 helping the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. In some cases, the Friends provide money or funding for projects or events – your membership dollars and Bookstore purchases at work! In other cases, the Friends provide much needed volunteer hours to help accomplish a variety of projects that otherwise might not be done due to staff shortages and competing priorities.

**WE'VE HELPED THE REFUGE...**

- ✓ **We Painted!** On January 12, a group of 20 volunteers provided a much needed paint job on the Conference Room at Refuge Headquarters. If you remember the way it was – you should stop by and see it now!
- ✓ **Picked Up Litter!** On a beautiful April 6<sup>th</sup> morning, a record 47 volunteers scoured the Refuge roadsides in the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Great Swamp clean-up. According to Refuge Outdoor Recreation Planner Tom McFadden, some 700 lbs of litter, 200 lbs. of recyclable glass, 50 lbs of recyclable aluminum cans and 15 lbs. of plastic bottles were picked up from nearly 10 miles of refuge and county roads in and around the Great Swamp.
- ✓ **Hauled out debris!** Over the years, the Great Swamp NWR has purchased land to expand the boundaries of the refuge. Often-times these homesteads leave behind their dumps, old cars and trucks, and other man-made debris. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 19 volunteers filled a dumpster with sheet metal, lumber, tires, bottles, barbed wire, and other stuff which was pulled from the swamp – helping return the land to its natural state.
- ✓ **Hosted a Party!** On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the National Wildlife Refuge System was 99 years old and the Friends hosted a Birthday Celebration. Watch for lots more events as we get closer to 2003 – the Centennial year.
- ✓ **Served Up Lunch!** On May 4<sup>th</sup> at the Fishing Derby, the Friends provided food for the kids and their families, as well as other volunteer services, helping make this event a huge success.
- ✓ **Bluebirds** – Volunteer Steve Byland and his team have been working hard replacing bluebird boxes and installing new predator guards. Of the 162 nest boxes on the Refuge, 42 have been overhauled. The Friends are providing ongoing funding for this project.

**WE'VE HELPED REFUGE VISITORS...**

- ✓ **New Scopes** – see story on page 1. We raised money and applied for a matching grant to purchase improved scopes for the heron rookery Overlook.
- ✓ **Coordinated Calendar** – we have compiled a coordinated calendar of week-end events for visitors to the Great Swamp – joined by New Jersey Audubon Society, Somerset County Environmental Education Center and the Morris County Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center.
- ✓ **Spotting Scope at the Bookstore!** There is so much activity in the fields and woods around the Friends Office and Bookstore, that we now have a Nikon spotting scope so visitors (and volunteer staff) can get a close-up look at the birds and wildlife in the area.
- ✓ **WOC and Rookery staffing** – Friends volunteers have been spending Saturday afternoons at the Wildlife Observation Center (WOC) and at the Heron Rookery thus expanding the number of hours that visitor services are available at these popular destinations. Volunteers provide maps, directions, information, and serve as the central clearing-house for interesting sightings reported by visitors.
- ✓ **We're Open Sundays too!** We expanded the hours of the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop to include Sundays as well as Saturdays. We have welcomed nearly 1,000 weekend visitors through April of this year providing maps, directions, checklists, rest rooms... and coffee and cookies too!



## WE'VE HELPED EVERYONE LEARN ABOUT (AND APPRECIATE) THE REFUGE

- ✓ **Group tours!** Judy Schmidt and her volunteer guides have led 9 groups on guided walks of the boardwalk and into the management area – including school groups, scouts, and adults.
- ✓ **Created a Tree & Shrub Guide** – see story on page 8. Our new guide to the trees and shrubs which grow along the Boardwalk Trail will be available for visitor use in June. Printing is being funded by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
- ✓ **Wrote Grant Applications!** We just completed a grant application for an Amphibian Video Program – highlighting the frogs, toads, and salamanders that live in Great Swamp – complete with their calls.

## VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

In a non-profit volunteer organization – like the Friends of Great Swamp – it's all about the members and volunteers. Everyone contributes and every contribution is valued. The Refuge and Friends of Great Swamp will co-host a volunteer recognition ceremony on May 10<sup>th</sup> to say thank you to the many volunteers who have given their time to projects and events this past year.

Here is a listing of the members of the Friends of Great Swamp and their volunteer hours for the fiscal year October 1 2000 through September 30, 2001.

James Ahlstrom (5.5), Peggy Armstrong (4.5), Pete Axelrod (5.5), Bill Ayres (25), Brenda Ayres (22.5), Marge Barrett (4), Donna Besignano (2), Ken Bliss (5), Cathy Borman (21.5), Neil Borman (74.5), Emily Burtnett (3), Linda Byland (11.5), Steve Byland (217), Joseph Castronova (4.5), Tony Cullen (6), David Dietz (3), Jane Kendall Dietz (3), Roger Donat (20), Roger Edwards (24), Frank Elby (2), Stacie Even (4.5), Sheila Frohling (4), Larry Fuhro (3.5), Laura Fuhro (3.5), Bob Furstner (20.5), Jane George (5), Spencer George (5), Charlie Gould (15.5), Laurel Gould (170), Litty Hado (12.5), Shirley Hamilton (3), Lois Harold (5), Jenny Harrington (4), Jack Higgins (86.5), Leo Hollein (67.5), Chris Howie (2), Louise Jensen (12), Bob Kastner (13.5), Susan Katz (9.5), Juli Kuhl (5), Joe Kwiatek (2), Merris Larkin (32.5), Skip Latronica (2), Laura MacAllister (2), George Mironchik (39), Janice Molinari (8), Lisa Molinari (105.5), Alberta Mount (14), Laura Nally (4.5), Mike Newlon (6), Louis Pisane (31.5), Lori Prosser (6.5), Lisa Quartararo (2), Howard Reed (31), Susan Reed (60.5), Dot Reutlinger (3), Greg Ricci (2), Charlie Risberg (32), Edythe Risberg (8), Blaine Rothauser (10.5), Marcia Rymer (48.5), Wayne Rymer (4.5), Nancy Schenck (12), Judy Schmidt (126.5), Jean Sebesta (323), Marvin Sebesta (40), Jen Smith (2), Marguerite Smith (3), Sharon Spurduto (5), Frank Stillinger (5.5), Bob Thompson (28), Martine Vilain (2), Leo Weiss (25.5), Susan Wijdenes (1.5), John Wilmot (10), Carl Woodward (21), Kathy Woodward (20.5), Oliver Young (4.5), George Zielenbach (4).

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAMS AND MATCHING GRANTS - THANK YOU!

Donations from corporations and organizations provide funds for many projects. The following corporations have contributed to the Friends of Great Swamp through their volunteer recognition programs or matching grant programs.

- ✓ **ExxonMobil Foundation** – Volunteer Involvement Program (VIP). Thanks to volunteers Leo Hollein and Jack Higgins for their volunteer hours and the generous donations from ExxonMobil.
- ✓ **PSE&G** – Dollars for Doers – Thanks to volunteers Lisa Molinari and Laurel Gould – these dollars were used to purchase binoculars for loan on group walks.
- ✓ **Illinois Tool Works** – Thanks to member David Beechner.

Check with your employer to see if they will match your donation to the Friends of Great Swamp – we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

We would like to thank the following organizations for their generous donations to the Friends of Great Swamp.

- ✓ **Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township**
- ✓ **Summit Nature Club (2001 and 2002)**
- ✓ **Town & Country Garden Club**



## Learning About Swamp Life

### GREAT SWAMP WARBLERS

By Don Freiday



The first American redstart I ever saw danced and darted in the top of a swamp white oak along the old Meyersville Road one fine May day some 20 years ago. I knew right away what it was, because I had seen it in my Peterson field guide along with several other

warblers of which I thought, *nothing like that could be around here*. How wrong I was!

The redstart was the third warbler species I identified during that spring, preceded the day before by legions of yellow-rumped Warblers and one funny little black-and-white warbler. The black-and-white crept about tree trunks in the bottom of the Millington Gorge, where the Passaic River exits the swamp, and the yellow-rumped flickered in the trees on the shore as I paused from a morning's fishing to watch.

Looking back, I kick myself because I know there must have been a huge flight of warblers that day, given the fact that I was distracted from my fishing to look at the few I noticed. I lacked the bird awareness needed to detect the many other species that must have been present.

Although almost 100 bird species nest at Great Swamp, only ten or so are warblers. The Canadian maritimes, northern Great Lake regions, and Appalachians are the hotbeds of warbler species diversity when it comes to nesting. Most warbler species winter in the West Indies, Mexico, and Central America, and some make it as far south as northern South America. Spring and fall they are in between, with May 5-15 finding most in the mid-Atlantic states.

The Great Swamp and surrounding areas are critical stopover places for these migrants. New Jersey Audubon's research department recently used GIS (Geographic Information System) to place bird radar data (you can see migrating birds with weather radar, believe it or not) over a land cover map, and the result indicated what many birders have known for years: migrating birds use forested wetlands intensively.

Thus, the Great Swamp is wonderful for warblers. A hard-working birder might find over 30 warbler species there during the month of May, sometimes over 20 in a single day.

[Don Freiday is sanctuary director of the New Jersey Audubon Society's Scherman-Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary in Bernardsville. Learn more at <http://www.njaudubon.org/Centers/Scherman/> or phone (908) 766-5787.]

## Learning About Swamp Life

### COMING SOON TO A SWAMP NEAR YOU!

By Steve Byland

Spring is here and the birds are beginning to arrive back at the Great Swamp. The herons are already on their nests and many bluebirds and wood ducks spent the winter. Below is a summary of some of the upcoming arrival times for just some of the species that come to visit this time of year:

- ✓ **Late March**—Tree Swallows, Great Blue Herons, Hooded Mergansers (pond at Pleasant Plains (PP) Road Bridge), Green-winged Teal (Headquarters (HQ) Impoundment), Pintails (HQ Impoundment), Killdeer, Woodcock (display at dusk in any open field), E. Phoebe, Hermit Thrush (boardwalks), Pine Warbler (at the PP Road Bridge), E. Towhee (many spent the winter), Blackbirds.
- ✓ **Early April**—Osprey (watch over the Heron Rookery), American Kestrels, E. Kingbird, Kinglets, Palm Warbler (along PP Road), Chipping Sparrows.
- ✓ **Late April**—Green Heron, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs (HQ Impoundment), Yellow-throated Vireo (trees near HQ),



House Wrens, Gnatcatchers, Wood Thrush, Catbirds, Brown Thrashers (fields north of PP Road Bridge), Warblers (Nashville, Parula, Yellow, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Prairie, Black and White, Redstart, Ovenbird Common Yellowthroat - all along boardwalks), Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles (PP Road Bridge).

✓ **Early May**—Chimney Swifts, Pewees, Wide variety of Shorebirds (HQ Impoundment peaking around May 15), Warbling Vireos (hedgerows).

✓ **Late May**—Willow Flycatcher (brushy fields), Alder Flycatcher (at Rookery and along PP Road north of Bridge) Veerys (boardwalks).

Just a reminder. The bluebirds and tree swallows are already taking a hard look at the nest boxes. Bluebirds start building nests in late April and tree swallows begin in early May. Of the 162 nest boxes in the Refuge, we've overhauled or refitted 42 boxes and will try to squeeze in another dozen or so before the nesting season begins. We will also replace many broken down boxes (there are lots of them) as the season goes along.



# 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 4

Fishing Derby NJ Fish and Game and GSNWR

May 10

Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony

May 11

World Series of Birding —International Migratory Bird Day

May 22

Frog Walk — 6:30 pm — meet at Friends Office & Bookstore

## June

June 1

Project Rookery In-Sight Scope Dedication — 10 am  
Boardwalk Tree and Shrub Trail Guide Debuts — Walk the boardwalk trail with the newly published tree and shrub

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 and Winner Announced for 2002 Photo Contest

## 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](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFGREATSWAMP.ORG)



*What Friends Do***NEW TREE AND SHRUB GUIDE***By Laurel Gould*

Well I don't know what you did this winter, but I spent the season doing a lot of research on trees and shrubs. The 27 plants that we identified on the Boardwalk Trail were split among the six members of the Tree & Shrub Committee. We each took our assigned trees and shrubs and scoured through old books – and new ones – and visited a lot of Internet sites, compiling scads of information: identification characteristics, interesting facts, history, medicinal uses, landscaping value, and value to wildlife for food and shelter. We all learned a lot in the process – a side benefit of volunteering on a project like this one.

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, the Tree & Shrub Guide will be available to visitors at the Wildlife Observation Center. With permission from the Refuge staff, we will be placing a yellow-numbered marker on representative specimens of each of the trees or shrubs identified in the Guide for easy and precise identification. Visitors will be able to use the guide to identify the different varieties of trees and shrubs as they walk the Boardwalk Trail – while learning interesting facts as well. Then comes the test – using the newly-acquired knowledge to locate other similar trees along the trail – or identifying them at home. The Guide will be free for visitors to take home – or they may be recycled for the next visitor to use.

Members of the Tree & Shrub Committee are: David Welch, CTE, Lisa Molinari, Neil Borman, Marcia Rymer, Judy Schmidt, Laurel Gould, Charlie Gould. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provided a Grant for the printing of this new Guide.

The American Beech (right) is a page from the new Guide. The twenty-seven trees and shrubs included are:

red maple	white oak
swamp white oak	red oak
pin oak	black gum
sweetgum	black cherry
black birch	yellow birch
gray birch	eastern redcedar
American holly	American beech
American hornbeam	shagbark hickory
green ash	shadbush
flowering dogwood	sweet pepperbush
highbush blueberry	common witchhazel
sassafras	tuliptree
quaking aspen	arrowwood
swamp azalea	

If you would like a copy of this Guide, let us know and we'd be happy to mail one to you. Give us a call, send us a note, or send an e-mail.

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**American beech***Fagus grandifolia*

*Leaves: Alternate, simple, 2 to 5 inches long, parallel veins extend to evenly-spaced marginal teeth. Fall color is a golden bronze with leaves often persisting on the tree through winter, a key identification feature. Fruit: A prickly bur containing 2 to 3 edible nuts. Bark: Smooth and steel-gray at all ages, a key identification feature.*

**T**he American beech is a magnificent native tree often reaching 70 to 80 feet in height with diameters up to 4 feet. A tree of mature forests, it is long-lived and shade tolerant, often the most massive tree in the forest.

**INTERESTING FACTS**

In the earliest days of written language, the smooth pliable bark was used to carve messages. Our word *book* derives from the Anglo-Saxon *beoce*. Daniel Boone recorded his killing of a bear in 1760 on a beech tree and that tradition continues; carved initials are often visible for years on the smooth bark (not recommended; it's unsightly and can introduce harmful disease and insects). The beech was neglected in early rounds of logging in favor of maple, birch and white pine, thus its present abundance is an artifact of settlement. There was so firm a belief among the Indians that a beech tree was proof against lightning that they took refuge under its branches during thunderstorms, a belief adopted by early farmers.

**VALUE TO MAN — YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

Native Americans used the inner bark to make soup or breads. The sweet nuts were eaten by settlers or boiled into soup or mush. The leaves were chosen over straw to stuff mattresses as they lasted longer without getting musty. Beech wood is very tight grained and is used for furniture, flooring, and veneer. It makes a good container for food and liquids as the wood has no odor or taste. It is an excellent firewood.

**VALUE TO WILDLIFE**

Beechnuts are a vital fall food for chipmunks and red, gray and flying squirrels. Birds feast on the nuts including blue jays, turkey, and wood ducks. Porcupines gnaw on the bark in winter. The tree often becomes hollow through decay, which provides dens for many species of animals.



*Learning About Swamp Life***THE WOOD DUCK BOX — WHO LIVES THERE?***By Judy Schmidt*

When a refuge is created, Congress must pass a law that states its purpose. The purpose of Great Swamp NWR is to provide resting and nesting habitat for migratory waterfowl. That is the main emphasis of Great Swamp, but the refuge is here for all species of wildlife – not just ducks. It often happens that when you try to help one species, you inadvertently end up helping others as well.

The wood duck box is a prime example. There are 299 wood duck boxes on the refuge. These are the larger boxes most often seen in, or near, water or in the woods (the bluebird boxes are smaller and usually in the fields).

In January and February the boxes are cleaned and repaired and new nesting material (wood shavings) is added. This is usually a two-person job with one person carrying the shavings and the other the repair tools. When you get to a box, the team records who used the box, the nest stage, predation, number of eggs, presence of down feathers, and if membranes are present. When wood ducks hatch, they leave a small white embryo sac which looks like a white potato chip; these are the membranes and they are counted so you know how many wood ducks hatched.

Often when you open the door of the box you get a surprise. This year, nine of the boxes were used by squirrels who build a winter home of leaves and jump out as you open the door. Sometimes the box is full of acorns that the squirrels stashed for hard times. Two of the boxes opened this year had mice, one held a bluebird, and three were full of wasps' nests.



By far the best surprise is when you find a screech owl, the only small New Jersey owl with tufts. Screech owls have two distinct color phases, or morphs, gray and red. They nest in cavities of trees – and in wood duck boxes. They are non-migratory and are New Jersey's most abundant owl. The call of this owl is by no means a *screech* but a plaintive, quavering, mellow trill descending in tone at the end, described as sounding like the whinny of a horse. Screech owls eat whatever kind of prey is available including small rodents (a favorite), insects, slugs, snails, and earthworms.

This year, 44 wood duck boxes were used by screech owls, 30 red phase and 14 gray phase. When you are working with an occupied wood duck box, the owl is gently removed along with any of its prey, the house is cleaned, then owl and prey are returned. Most owls are very quiet and often open one eye as if to say *If you please I would like to go back to sleep*. Sometimes you can see these owls during the day sitting in the wood duck box with their faces peering out of the opening – so be sure to check out the boxes when you're on the auto tour route.

When you're working on the wood duck boxes, you never know what you will find, but if you join the house cleaning crew, you are sure to find something interesting. Next winter, give the refuge a call and see if there is an opening.

*Around the Refuge***GREAT SWAMP WATERFOWL COUNTS***By Steve Byland*

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge participated in a study to determine waterfowl usage in refuges across the country.

The count was performed weekly from mid-September 2001 through mid-February 2002. 16,505 waterfowl of 13 species were observed on the Refuge during this period. (Total waterfowl counted 16,505).

Snow goose 220	Canada goose 2,900	Black duck 1,746	Gadwall 1
Mallard 6,751	Pintail 131	Wood duck 4,488	Northern shoveler 3
Green wing teal 255	Ring-necked duck 2	Bufflehead 2	Common merganser 2
			Hooded merganser 5

The peak count occurred on November 21, 2001, when the following numbers were tallied (Total 2,750).

Canada goose 362	Black duck 256	Mallard 976	Pintail 2	Wood duck 1,154
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*From the Bookstore***EXPANDED HOURS ATTRACT MANY MORE VISITORS**

The Bookstore has been a busy place this past winter. We extended our hours and have been open on both Saturday from 11:00 to 5:00 and on Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00. Nearly 1,000 visitors have stopped by for directions and information, to report their sightings, to get warm or dry out, to refuel with coffee and cookies – and of course – to shop!

All proceeds from the Bookstore and Gift Shop go to support projects and events which benefit the Refuge and support our mission. When you buy someone a gift from our bookstore, it's like giving twice!

*So... what's new?*

**Caps for Sale...**We have new hats with a neat pintail duck and the words Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge on the front! And T-shirts in a wider color selection, all sporting the wonderful and exclusive hooded merganser design created for us by Ron Orlando. (Did you know Ron is creating a new design for the 2002 Fall Festival September 7<sup>th</sup>?)

We have just hung Ron's latest limited edition print – titled *Hide and Seek*, it is an eye-catcher. It's available unframed or ready-to-hang, beautifully matted and framed. Judy Schmidt has been busy over the winter and we have lots of new mugs and other pottery pieces all with hand-painted birds, butterflies, frogs, turtles. And check out her latest experiment – bird houses.

Artist Marjorie Impell has branched out – in addition to her painting, she is now creating stunning jewelry. We have the most fabulous necklaces and earrings made with beads of base metal, glass, stone, and shells in all colors and shapes. We continue to expand our stock of books for every level of nature lover – with a wide variety of titles on birds, wildflowers, ferns, butterflies, trees and shrubs. If you haven't stopped by lately – you'll be surprised at what we have to offer.

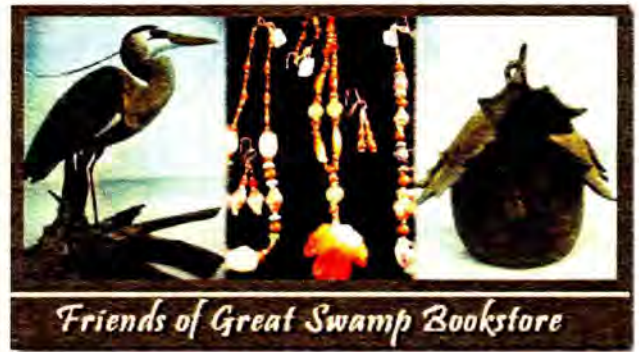
**Just Arrived...**For the upcoming Centennial – We have new baby T.R. Bears – and are they cute! Developed by Chincoteague Natural History Association and New Jersey's own Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, they are a tribute to Teddy Roosevelt who set aside the first national wildlife refuge in 1903. And at \$7.95 they are a bargain.

**HISTORY OF THE "TEDDY BEAR"***By Marcia Rymer*

In 1903, Morris Michtom, cleverly picking up on the cartoon in the Washington Post which sketched Teddy Roosevelt's refusal to shoot a bear cub brought to him in camp after an unsuccessful hunt, placed a handmade "Teddy's bear" in his candy store window. The craze began. Michtom founded The Ideal Toy Company and the Teddy Bear became an American icon.

**FRIENDS OF GREAT SWAMP LIBRARY NEWS**

Our fledgling Library got a terrific boost in March thanks to donations from New Jersey Audubon Society's Scherman-Hoffman Sanctuary. We were invited to come over and browse through the books that were left over after their annual used book sale. Now you might not think that there would be much of interest left – but we found 75 terrific books – which more than doubled the size of our library. We are focusing on natural history books with relevance to the Great Swamp and the Refuge. In the near future, we will be making these books available for loan to Friends members (one of the benefits of your membership) and plan to add circulating videos and CDs to the collection. If you have any natural history books or videos in good condition that you would like to donate, please give us a call, or drop them off at the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop on the weekends (through June 2).

**2002 PHOTO CONTEST**

Well... there weren't many opportunities for winter scenes this year and our spring, all too short, is just about gone by. If you haven't taken your photos yet for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Friends Photo Contest – you still have lots of opportunities – but you'd better start snapping.

Don't forget – the deadline is November 1 – photos must be taken within the Refuge boundaries – and we have a new junior photographer category (age 16 and under)!

Entry forms are available in the Friends Bookstore & Gift Shop, on our web site, at Refuge Headquarters, and at Colonial Camera Shop, Village Shopping Center, Berkeley Heights – our Photo Contest sponsor for the third year in a row.



**WE HAVE  
251 MEMBERS —  
YOU COULD BE 252!**

**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.

Thank you Colonial Camera.

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.

New Format for Mailing Labels — your membership expiration date now appears on your mailing label thanks to membership chair, Nancy Shenck.

## 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).



Friends of Great Swamp  
National Wildlife Refuge

Is an independent, non profit organization  
dedicated to

Promoting the conservation of the natural  
resources of the Refuge

Fostering public understanding and  
appreciation of the Refuge, and

Engaging in activities that will support the mission of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

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

MAY 2002





# Countdown to the Centennial

In 2003, the National Wildlife Refuge System will be 100 years old.  
Get ready for the centennial celebrations by testing your knowledge of national wildlife refuges.

**What government agency manages national wildlife refuges like Great Swamp NWR?**

- ☐ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- ☐ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- ☐ U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
- ☐ New Jersey Department of Forests and Parks
- ☐ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Which President was responsible for setting aside the first national wildlife refuge?**

- ☐ Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- ☐ Theodore Roosevelt
- ☐ Calvin Coolidge
- ☐ Thomas Jefferson
- ☐ Chester A. Arthur

**Where was the first national wildlife refuge established in 1903?**

- ☐ Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Florida
- ☐ Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, New Jersey
- ☐ Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
- ☐ Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia
- ☐ Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin

**How many national wildlife refuges exist today (approximately)?**

- ☐ 38
- ☐ 107
- ☐ 236
- ☐ 535
- ☐ 853

**Which state has the most refuges of any state?**

- ☐ North Dakota
- ☐ California
- ☐ Florida
- ☐ New Jersey
- ☐ Utah

**How many national wildlife refuges are there in New Jersey?**

- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 10
- ☐ 20

**How many volunteers are there supporting the many refuges nationwide?**

- ☐ 2,000
- ☐ 10,000
- ☐ 18,000
- ☐ 25,000
- ☐ 30,000

Check one answer for each question and return the completed quiz to the Friends of Great Swamp.  
If you answer all of the questions correctly, you will receive a National Wildlife Refuge Centennial pin.  
Deadline is June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge  
152 Pleasant Plains Road  
Basking Ridge NJ 07920