

Volunteers ↔ Friends

*A quarterly newsletter for Volunteers and Friends
of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Refuge*
www.friendspwrc.org



**Friends of
Patuxent**

Vol. 21 No. 2

April-June 2010

Congratulations to Refuge Manager Brad Knudsen and Environmental Education Coordinator Dennis Hartnett!

In January, Patuxent Research Refuge Manager Brad Knudsen received an award from the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) for his involvement in the Refuge Academy course. The award was presented to Brad by Matt Poole, Training Specialist at NCTC. Matt says, "Brad Knudsen has been a big supporter of the Refuge Management Academy for the last several years. He and his staff enthusiastically host the Academy field trip twice each year. Brad frequently serves as an instructor and also contributed to the recent effort to revise and update the Academy curriculum. Clearly, he cares deeply about the Academy and the Refuge System employees it serves. In short, he's been a great partner and cheerleader!"

In March, Patuxent's Environmental Education Coordinator Dennis Hartnett was awarded "The 2009 Wonders of Wetland (WOW) Facilitator of the Year." This award was presented to Dennis by Katelin Mielke, Wetland Educator and WOW! Facilitator Program Coordinator. Katelin says, "Dennis has been an active WOW! Facilitator since 2001. We thank him so much for all of his hard work and dedication! We are happy to have him on our team." Dennis presents several Teacher workshops throughout the year including Refuge Orientation, Project Learning Tree, Project Wild and Wonders of Wetlands. ♦

Patuxent Staff Strive to Attract More Visitors

By Nell Baldacchino,

Visitor Services Team Leader

It is difficult for a wildlife refuge to compete with the multitude of attractions and events in the DC/Baltimore metropolitan area. However, Patuxent Research Refuge staff is trying hard to promote the Refuge in a variety of different ways. Refuge staff recently participated in the national ABA (American Bus Association) Marketplace to try to attract more motor coach tours to the Refuge and the National Wildlife Visitor Center. This major annual conference was located this year in the DC metropolitan area. Staff met with or provided information to over 40 motor coach operators and tour planners either via scheduled appointments or informal networking. Many of the motor coach operators specialize in student tours as well as tours for seniors and other groups. Patuxent was fortunate in having two ABA tours come to the Refuge just prior to the conference to familiarize tour operators and planners with the experiences the Refuge has to offer.

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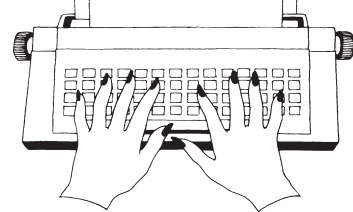
Contributors Needed

We invite articles about wildlife, nature, education programs, research and the various happenings at Patuxent!

Articles should be submitted to
Michelle Donlan
(Michelle_Donlan@fws.gov).

Articles are due by:
Spring (Apr-June)- due March 5th
Summer (Jul-Sept) - due June 5th
Fall (Oct-Dec) due Sep 5th
Winter (Jan-Mar) - due mid - Nov

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS



Contributors are reminded that their input to the newsletter is due no later than the **5th of the month** (i.e. Mar. 5 for Apr.-Jun. edition. The editor(s) and the layout artist need enough time to prepare the newsletter for mailing by the 10th of the month. Special thanks are due to the many contributors who have made this publication what it has become today.

The Patuxent Research Refuge and the National Wildlife Visitor Center are closed on Memorial Day (May 31st)

For more information about Refuge programs, visit <http://patuxent.fws.gov>

For more information about Patuxent Wildlife Research Center activities, visit <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov>

Volunteers ↔ Friends is published quarterly and is mailed to all volunteers and friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

The editor, layout artists, writers, and other helpers are all volunteers. There are some regular contributors, however we welcome and encourage all volunteers and Friends to write for the newsletter.

Send or bring comments or stories to:

Editor, *Volunteers ↔ Friends*
National Wildlife Visitor Center
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708

To become a member of the *Friends* and receive a quarterly subscription to *Volunteers ↔ Friends*, send \$15 (Individual), \$20 (Family), \$50 (Contributor), or \$100 (Sponsor) to the Friends of Patuxent at the address above.

BIRDING FOR THE BLIND

Patuxent Research Refuge's
National Wildlife Visitor Center

Saturday, May 15th 2010
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Join us for this program designed specifically for visually impaired people (VIPs), their families (or friends), **AGES 8 THROUGH ADULT.**

The program will introduce VIPs to nature & birding through hands-on activities and exploration of outdoor habitats. Participants will learn how to identify birds by sound, an activity that can be done in any outdoor setting – like their own backyard!

The program is FREE, but REGISTRATION is REQUIRED!
For more Info or to Register please call:
301-497-5630



Let's Go Outside!



Kids' Fishing Day!

Saturday, June 12th
8:30AM – 11:30AM

Join us for fishing demonstrations,
activities, & fishing for ages 15 and under

Catch & release only!



The refuge provides poles and bait

Public fishing is available daily at the Refuge
North Tract. The Public fishing season at
Cash Lake begins June 13th through October 10th, 2010.
State non-tidal licence and Refuge permit are required.

visit http://www.fws.gov/northeast/patuxent/fishing_refuge.html
for Refuge fishing regulations.

Visit us on our website patuxent.fws.gov
for program listings, upcoming events, photos,
refuge information and more

‘BIG FISH AT PATUXENT’

Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager

No, I'm not talking about the living, breathing creatures that inhabit many of our Refuge waters. I'm talking about major issues staff have been dealing with at the Patuxent Research Refuge for over the last 6-12 months that have kept us hopping from one to the other. I have been here long enough now (10 years this August) to know there is never a slow time at the Refuge, but lately it seems things have become particularly, let's say, interesting. Here is just a sampling of things that have demanded attention in recent months (in no particular order):

- 1) Potential expansion of Tipton Airport – this Anne Arundel County facility is, for the first time, exercising pre-existing easements to control vegetation in and around the airfield, including several acres on Refuge property, to maintain aircraft safety requirements of FAA. Refuge Biologist Holly Obrecht and I have had several meetings with the consultant and airport personnel to ensure there is as little impact to refuge resources – primarily to trees and the Little Patuxent River – as possible.
- 2) The joint Facilities Modernization Program for the Refuge and for the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center – this initiative received a major boost in February 2009, when the Refuge and Research Center received \$14.5 Million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding between them. These funds are being used for a variety of projects including demolition of Stickel Lab, design and engineering work for a new Division of Migratory Bird Management administrative building, construction of three new single-family residences and one duplex, and for documenting/preserving cultural and historic resources on the Refuge. Multiple meetings to discuss design needs, historic resource protection strategies, green building concepts, and stormwater/sediment management issues have been held with multiple partners, contractors, and regulatory agencies.
- 3) Ongoing off-site development projects – including Highway 198 expansion, Highway 197/Powder Mill Road intersection, communication tower requests, and the Arundel Gateways development along our North Tract boundary. Given our location in the Baltimore-Washington Corridor, we know these sorts of issues will never end.
- 4) Establishment of the Fort Meade Federal Facility Agreement – this is essentially the master plan for wrapping up the decades-old Superfund clean-up at Fort Meade and its former holdings, including the 8,100 acres of the North Tract. It requires tightly adhered to clean-up and remediation schedules, interagency coordination and consultation, and rapid review of associated documents and plans. This has accelerated some of the clean-up on the Refuge, including the old trap and skeet range, and resulted in additional monitoring wells being installed to further track contaminants in the groundwater.
- 5) Kicking off the planning phase of our Comprehensive Conservation Plan – Patuxent officially entered the planning phase of its CCP at the start of this fiscal year, after two years of pre-planning. There has been – and will be – plenty going on with “all things CCP.” We recently

Weed Warriors

Do your part to protect Patuxent from alien invaders, and become a Weed Warrior! Non-native invasive plants are threatening our wildlife habitat and we need YOU to help stop them. Come out for one of our “Weed Warriors Days” and help us treat garlic mustard, mile-a-minute, Japanese stiltgrass and other non-native plant infestations on the Refuge. All ages and abilities are welcome. You will receive a short educational briefing explaining the effects of invasive plants on wildlife and wildlife habitats and how to identify and control these plants. Wear long sleeves and pants and bring gloves.

Please register for this event by calling 301-497-5887.

Survey Dates (subject to change or cancellation):

Thursday 04-22-2010, Earth Day event - Weed Warriors kick-off,
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 1:00PM — 3:00PM

Wednesday 05-19-2010,
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 1:00PM — 3:00PM

Wednesday 06-09-2010,
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 9:00AM — 12:00PM

Wednesday 06-16-2010,
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 9:00AM — 12:00PM

Wednesday 07-07-2010,
National Wildlife Visitor Center, 9:00AM — 12:00PM

Wednesday 07-21-2010,
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 9:00AM — 12:00PM

Wednesday 08-04-2010,
North Tract Visitor Contact Station, 9:00AM — 12:00PM



Garlic Mustard

“Big Fish” continued from page 5

held three public scoping meetings to get input on issues and concerns from the public we serve, with a total of 36 people attending. This scoping period will continue through March 31. A draft Habitat Management Plan, a visitor survey, and a Preliminary Project Proposal to address a possible refuge expansion are all currently being worked on, and will be key pieces as the CCP moves forward. I will try to provide a CCP update for future newsletters on a routine basis.

As I said, this is just a sampling of issues that are going on here. Oh, did I mention the closing of Duvall Bridge, two severely deteriorating roadways at key locations on the North Tract, Phase III of the HVAC rehab for the National Wildlife Visitor Center, and 52 inches of snow in February?? Never a dull moment! ♦



Stop by our Wildlife Images bookstore for a wide selection of books, T-shirts, jewelry, educational toys, artwork and much more

New at Patuxent Research Refuge

Hello Everyone! My name is Beth Lenker. I am from Portland, Oregon. In June of 2009, I graduated from Oregon State University with a bachelor's degree in Biology with a focus in Marine Ecology. My interests include outdoor sports, various crafts, and cake baking. I am very excited to be here at the Patuxent Research Refuge and look forward to meeting all of you.

Hi Everyone! My name is Emily Penn, I am so excited to start this new adventure interning

here at Patuxent. I graduated from Towson University May 2008 with a BS in Psychology and a BS in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Animal Behavior. I am currently a student with Johns Hopkins University studying for a Masters in Museum Studies. I love animals and the outdoors. My husband and I currently have an 8 month old yellow lab puppy that we love to take walks and hikes with. I look forward to meeting everyone. See you around! ♦



AMERICA'S NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES...
Where Wildlife Comes Naturally!!



For images of the Patuxent Research Refuge visit our gallery at
http://www.pbase.com/photoops2/patuxent_research_refuge

Woodcock Survey Schedule

The time for woodcock survey has come and the male woodcock is advertising for mates. As in past years, the biological team will be conducting call count surveys to monitor woodcock activity on the Refuge, and we need your help! Surveys are conducted every Monday evening beginning shortly after sunset (time varies by date, Wednesdays reserved as rain dates) and last approximately one-half hour. Volunteers meet at the Visitor Contact Station at North Tract. Participants divide into groups, driving to each of 7 or 8 points along three routes on North Tract to listen for calling activity at each site. Refuge vehicles may be provided for the surveys, but generally personal vehicles are used; no experience necessary (new volunteers will be trained through participation.) All volunteers interested should contact Chris Wicker at Christopher.Wicker@fws.gov prior to survey date. Thanks, and we hope to see you there!

Survey Date (subject to change or cancellation):

- Monday, March 29 7:15PM
- Monday, April 5 7:20PM
- Monday, April 12 7:30PM
- Monday, April 19 7:35PM
- Monday, April 26 7:40PM
- Monday, May 3 7:50PM



Frog Survey Schedule

Spring is coming and the frogs will soon be emerging and calling for mates! As in past years, the biological team will be conducting call count surveys to monitor frog and toad activity on the Refuge, and we need your help to monitor the calls! Surveys are conducted every other Thursday in evening beginning at 1/2 hour after sunset and lasting two hours. Surveys involve driving to various ponds and vernal pools located on the Refuge and listening for calling activity of 12 species at each site. Refuge vehicles are provided for the surveys; interested volunteers need to pass the frog call quiz prior to the first survey (new volunteers will be trained and can obtain a CD of calls) and certification to drive Refuge vehicles is also encouraged. All interested volunteers need to contact Chris Wicker at Christopher.Wicker@fws.gov prior to survey date. Thanks, and I look forward to seeing you there!

Survey Dates (subject to change or cancellation):

- Thursday, March 25 7:24PM 7:10PM
- Thursday, April 8 7:38PM 7:25PM
- Thursday, April 22 7:51PM 7:40PM
- Thursday, May 6 8:05PM 7:55PM
- Thursday, May 20 8:18PM 8:05PM
- Thursday, June 3 8:29PM 8:15PM
- Thursday, June 17 8:36PM 8:20PM



2009 Bird Banding Excursion

by Volunteer, Diane Buckley-Maidt

At the Patuxent Wildlife Art Show and Sale Silent Auction, I bid on and won the bird banding excursion for up to four people.

On October 9th, I, my husband Dave, and our friend Daequan, cashed in on the excursion. When we arrived at the Central Tract a little before 7:00 am, the bird banders were already there gathering their supplies together and getting set up. One volunteer had arrived extra early in order to get the mist nets opened and setup.

They all gathered around a table covered by a little shed. The different sizes of bands all hung neatly sorted on wires from the side of the table. The scale, measuring tools, and pads for recording the data were set out. A little after 7:00am, the group scattered to do the first check of the nets for birds, and then every 40 minutes or so after that for the next 3 hours.

Any birds found in a net are carefully removed and placed in a small cloth bag to carry back to the shed to process them. The staff and volunteer banders were helpful in explaining to us what they were doing. They band the birds in order to compare them from year to year the numbers of different species they're seeing and their migrating patterns. After attaching the band to the bird's leg they give it a health exam. They examine the bird's skullcap to determine whether the

bird is one year old or older. They blow on the bird's chest feathers to fluff them up to see underneath. They're looking for a "U" shaped fat deposit around the base of the neck. The size of the deposit is indicative of the bird's health and therefore the likelihood the bird will survive the winter. They examine the wing tips to see if the feather edges are even or ragged. That's indicative of how well the bird has been eating and of its general health. Then they weigh the bird on a postal scale. One of the volunteers records all the data.

On this day 39 birds were banded. Some of the ones we remember are a Catbird, Cardinal, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Blue Warbler and a Winter Wren. A few other birds that had previously been banded were caught, their band numbers were recorded, and then they were released. The banders always noted whether they had retrieved any Towhees on that round so that they could do them first. The Towhees tended to get excited and thrash around in the bags.

This was a wonderful opportunity to witness first hand how bird banding is done, to feel how light-weight birds are and to see birds we would probably never have gotten to observe otherwise. What a great item to win in the auction! ♦

Attract More Visitors

Continued from page 1

Patuxent staff and volunteers also promote the Refuge through involvement with local and state tourism organizations including the Maryland Tourism Council, local conference and visitors' bureaus, and others. In addition, staff and volunteers frequently provide exhibits or programs at a variety of community events and libraries; and have been doing mailings to attract visits by senior centers and similar facilities in the Washington/Baltimore metropolitan area. Needless to say, notices about Patuxent's monthly public interpretive programs and major events are distributed to the local media and a variety of listserves. Staff hopes to attract more people with continued outreach efforts. ♦



SPRING ARTISTS IN THE HOLLINGSWORTH GALLERY

By Volunteer Faith Leahy - Thielke

After a “New Hampshire” style winter, we’re looking forward to a Maryland spring. The Visitor Center’s Hollingsworth Gallery will feature three notable artists: Mary Konchar in April; Richard Suib in May; and Ramona Maziarz in June.

Mary Konchar, a native of West Virginia, has photographed wildlife in national parks and refuges from New Hampshire to Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and back to Maryland. She attributes her interest in nature photography to a lifelong love of the outdoors. Konchar has exhibited in galleries and shows in several Maryland locations and published images in pamphlets, brochures, calendars, books and magazines. Her image of two bighorn sheep has received several awards including a “Highly Honored” designation in an international contest sponsored by Nature’s Best Magazine and is featured in a show at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and honored as “Best in Show” at an Easton Waterfowl Festival.

Mary presently makes her home in Cambridge, Maryland and volunteers regularly at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. She participates in the entire spectrum of volunteer opportunities. She staffs the

information desk, operates boats and vehicles, counts eagle roosts, plants marsh grass and works to preserve the refuge and the natural world it shelters. She writes, “It is my hope that the paths we take today, the choices we make now, will ensure that many generations to follow will tread upon a robust planet, rich with the diversity of life our generation has been blessed to witness. This hope, for our children and grandchildren, is the inspiration for my photography.”

In May, Hollingsworth displays the work of **Richard Suib**, a longtime resident of Great Falls, Virginia. He and his wife raised their family there in a house Richard designed and had custom built in 1958. Originally from Brooklyn, New York, he graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago with a major in Industrial design — “cause a guy’s got to make a living.” During his career as an exhibition designer and project director for the American Museum of Atomic Energy and the USIA, Richard won a number of awards including the Presidential Design Excellence Award given by the National Endowment for the Arts. Throughout his career, he has always painted and continued to do sculpture, lithography and photography — activities for

which he finally has time since he “hung out his shingle” in 1988 as an independent design consultant.

Richard’s present focus is digital imaging, a medium he considers revolutionary because it gives artists a new way to “realize and conceptualize images” and transform them at will. Photography is the basis of his work, but not an end in itself. His work is exhibited in places as varied as a gallery in Tbilisi, Georgia to the Corcoran in D.C. He is a member of Great Falls Studios, a consortium of artists living or working in Great Falls.

Ramona Maziarz’s exquisite work will grace Hollingsworth in June. She is a self-taught pen and ink artist whose “paintings” draw the viewer into a world of beautifully realized detail. A native of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, she now lives with her family in Middletown, Delaware. WHYY TV filmed a segment (available on line) about Ramona and her artwork for their series, “Experience Delaware”. In the segment she walks the cameraman through the woods and explains what inspires her. She writes that “nature determinedly leaves no place empty or untouched; weeds; flowers, insects and creatures living their lives entwined. It’s the tangle of life I like to ink.” ♦

Patuxent has Bugs!

By Children's Science Writer Amy Hansen

There were bugs at Patuxent's Birthday Bash. Amy S. Hansen made sure of it. She brought pictures, books, and bookmarks, as well as crayons to encourage the kids to draw their own.

Hansen is a local science writer and the author of **BUGS AND BUGSICLES**, a non-fiction picture book about insects in the winter. During the birthday celebration, she read parts of her book, and asked the kids to act out the different kinds of bugs described in the book.

"The mystery really appeals to me," she said explaining why she wrote this particular book. "If I stayed outside in the winter, I would die. But bugs always come back. Some of them migrate, others duck into the frost-free area, and some even freeze solid and then thaw out in the spring."

Some of Hansen's other books include **HOW THINGS WORK**, a book about technology for kids and **TOUCH THE EARTH**, a tactile book about the biomes for middle school students.

Hansen said the National Wildlife Visitor's Center makes a wonderful venue to talk about bugs and their survival techniques, though she hasn't had any problem interesting kids in the book where ever she does her presentations. "Kids are really excited by these mysteries too."

For more information, visit Hansen's website: <http://www.amyshansen.com> ♦





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301-497-5789

We Invite you to join...

Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge, Inc. is designated Section 501(c)(3) public charity. It is a membership organization whose mission is to support the research of the PWRC and the environmental education, outreach and recreational missions at the PRR. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our Maryland Charitable Organization Registration - 2348

Your membership/contribution helps support the mission and programs at Patuxent. You also receive the following benefits:

- > **Newsletter**
- > **10% discount in our Wildlife Images bookstore and other area refuge bookstores**
- > **Attendance at members-only functions**
- > **Participation in on-site educational programs**
- > **Sense of accomplishment in providing many opportunities for wildlife-related recreation, education and research**

Your mailing label denotes your membership expiration date. We appreciate your prompt renewal

Friends of Patuxent

Membership Application

Please mail, along with check, to:

Friends of Patuxent
 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
 Laurel MD 20708-4027

(make check out to "Friends of Patuxent")

Date: _____

New Member Renewal

Annual Membership Rates

Individual (\$15/yr) Family (\$20/yr)
 Contributor (\$50/yr) Sponsor (\$100/yr)

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