

Volunteers ↔ Friends



*A monthly newsletter for Volunteers and Friends
of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Refuge*

July-September 2009

www.friendspwrc.org

Vol. 20 No. 3

Gregory J. Smith Selected as Director of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

We are very pleased to announce that Gregory J. Smith has been selected as the new Director of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Greg has served as Center Director of the U. S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Wetlands Research Center, Lafayette, Louisiana, since November 2004. There, he has led an international research program that develops and disseminates scientific information critical for managing and restoring the Nation's wetlands, coastal habitats, and associated plant and animal communities. In addition to

leading the production of a major USGS publication entitled "Science and the Storms: the USGS Response to the Hurricanes of 2005" following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Greg and his colleagues also received the Service to America Medal for their scientific and humanitarian work after the storms.

Greg has more than 25 years of ecological research and management experience, with a background in population

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Refuge Birthday Bash a Success!

Patuxent Research Refuge staff and volunteers welcomed over 1,000 visitors to the National Wildlife Visitor Center on Saturday, March 14th to celebrate the 106th Anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Special guest, Billy B. -- the Environmental Song and Dance Man - rocked the house with two musical performances. The Friends of Patuxent sponsored the ever popular Crane Café, where visitors could purchase light snacks. Other fun activities included: exploring a wetland inside the Schoolyard Habitat, creating fun critters with children's crafts and taking a conservation tram tour through wildlife habitats. The birthday celebration started early when staff and volunteers were featured during a live FOX5 News broadcast Wednesday, March 11th. Congratulations to Amy Shoop for coordinating a wonderful event! ✨



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Weed Warriors

Non-native invasive plants are threatening our wildlife habitat. We need YOU to help stop them. Do your part to protect Patuxent from these alien invaders and become a Weed Warrior! 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.

For more information, please contact Chris Wicker at Christopher_Wicker@fws.gov.

Dates for 2009 events are as follows
(dates and times subject to change, if necessary):

Wednesday, July 8th
National Wildlife Visitor Center
9:00AM - 12:00PM

Wednesday, July 22nd
North Tract Visitor Contact Station
9:00AM - 12:00PM

Wednesday, August 5th
North Tract Visitor Contact Station
9:00AM - 12:00PM



Contributors are reminded that their input to the newsletter is due no later than the **5th of the month** (i.e. September 5th for Oct-Dec newsletter)! The editor(s) and the layout artist need enough time to prepare the newsletter for mailing by the 15th of the month. Special thanks are due to the many contributors who have made this publication what it has become today.

Volunteers ↔ Friends is published monthly 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 monthly subscription to *Volunteers ↔ Friends*, send \$15 (Individual), \$20 (Family), \$50 (Contributor), or \$100 (Sponsor) to the Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, at the address above.

Upcoming Exhibits at the John Hollingsworth Art Gallery of the National Wildlife Visitor Center

By Nicole Heaton, Volunteer

July Artists

Photographs by James and Pamela Shores will be on display in the John Hollingsworth Art Gallery of the Patuxent National Wildlife Visitor Center throughout the month of July 2009.

James is the main photographer in the family, and with the exception of a course taken at the Nikon School of Photography, he is primarily self-taught. He began taking pictures of wildlife in the mid-1980s, tried wedding photography in the 1990s, then returned to his first love-wildlife photography. When not out taking pictures, James works as an Emergency Medical Technician with the Advance Life Support unit for the Baltimore County Fire Department.

Both James and Pamela take time during their family outings to practice their skills and teach their son about wildlife photography. Their favorite places to visit include National Wildlife Refuges at Blackwater, Prime Hook, Bombay Hook, and Patuxent. One of their most popular prints, a landscape shot of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, was actually taken by Pamela. They believe that wildlife photography is a good way to educate the

public about what is really around them-not just the obvious animals such as sparrows and squirrels, but those that are also more difficult to find, such as Great Blue Herons and Wood Ducks.

August Artists

An assortment of artwork created by Patuxent Research Refuge volunteers will be on display in the John Hollingsworth Art Gallery of the National Wildlife Visitor Center throughout the month of August 2009.

The range of art pieces on display in the gallery will showcase the diverse talents of these volunteers. Themes portrayed in the artwork include wildlife and the natural environment. From painting and photographs, to needlework and carvings, there will be something for everyone to enjoy and appreciate.

All are encouraged to view the capabilities and expertise of these skillful members who generously donate their time each month to help the refuge run smoothly. Every year, more than 300 people contribute over 40,000 hours of their time to help the staff at the Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge manage its activities. The volunteers range in age and

experience, but all share a concern and love for the natural environment.

September Artists

Photographers Joan Anne Dubbs and Donna Neal will display their work in the John Hollingsworth Art Gallery of the Patuxent National Wildlife Visitor Center throughout the month of September 2009.

Joan Anne focuses on nature and wildlife photography. She has studied at such places as the National Association of Photoshop Professionals and Nikon School of Photography for Digital Photography. Her photographs have been published in various media, including the Department of Natural Resources, the Baltimore Sun, and the Bowie Blade. Some of her local exhibits include Brookside Gardens, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Bowie City Hall, and more.

Joan Anne's favorite places for photography include Vermont, Kentucky, and South Dakota, but particularly her local neighborhood in Bowie, Maryland. She has also traveled

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“Gallery”

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to London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Mexico. Joan Anne has now taken her love for photography and turned it into a teaching tool.

Donna Neal has a love for nature and fine art photography. She has always enjoyed photography, and received her first camera, a Brownie, from her parents at the age of ten. For the last 12 years, Donna has been capturing images in Maryland. Currently, she freelances for a New Jersey newspaper.

Donna belongs to two camera clubs and has won numerous awards from these clubs. Birds and Blooms and the Annapolis Home Town Newspaper have published some of her photographs. She has also had photographs placed on the DC Marathon's home page.

Don't miss this opportunity to see the creative artwork of Jim and Pam Shores in July, Patuxent's own volunteers in August, and Joan Anne Dubbs and Donna Neal in September at the John Hollingsworth Art Gallery in the National Wildlife Visitor Center. ✨

Shop Online and Help Support the Refuge!



By Pauline Chvilicek, Volunteer

Did you know that if you made a small change in the way you shop online you could help support the Friends of Patuxent and the Patuxent Research Refuge?

It's easy. Simply go to www.goodshop.com, type Patuxent in the "Who do you Support" field, click on "Verify", then select Friends of Patuxent, Laurel, MD. If you have been using GoodSearch, you will see that this field has been pre-populated.

Many popular companies participate in this program, such as Bass Pro Shop, Dick's, North Face, Target, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and more. Shopping through GoodShop will earn the Refuge up to 30% of each sale.



Money earned through GoodShop helps fund educational programs, exhibits, and outreach opportunities undertaken by the Refuge and for research conducted by the Wildlife Research Center focusing on endangered species, environmental contaminants, loss of habitat, migratory birds, and many other topics vital to the well being of wildlife throughout the country. ✨

WANTED

Wildlife Artwork By Volunteers for the August 2009 Volunteer Art Exhibit
in the Hollingsworth Gallery at Patuxent Research Refuge Visitor Center

Sketches, paintings, photographs, needlework, carvings, castings, pottery, jewelry, etc...of wildlife (native or non-native species) or habitat. Bring to the Refuge after July 15th. For more information, contact Mary Ann Hartnett at (301) 474-5572 or maryannhartnett@netscape.net.

Kids' Fishing Day 2009 a Huge Success!

By Dennis Hartnett, Environmental Education Coordinator

This year's Kid's Fishing Day was a huge success! Approximately 350 kids (ages ranged from three to 16-years-old) with a mixture of scout groups and families attended the event. Upon arrival at the Visitor Center, the participants went through a series of stations including Logistics, Fish ID, and Fish Handling and Ethics led by Brittany West (senior intern). Her team readied the children to start fishing. The

children then proceeded to Lake Reddington or Cash Lake where staffers Phil LePelch and Nell Baldacchino's team of staffers, interns, and volunteers taught the children how to bait their hooks and put their lines into the water. A total of 41 staff, volunteers, and interns worked the event. One young fisherman even caught a five pound bass! All and all it was a very enjoyable day for kids of all ages. ✨



Nature/Outdoor Photography Workshop

By Photographer Sol Levine

Patuxent Research Refuge
National Wildlife Visitor Center

August 8th

9am-4:30pm

Looking to expand your capability with your camera?

-- Confused about the interactions of f-stop, shutter speed, light, and motion conditions when working outdoors?

-- Ever wonder what kind of equipment is needed to achieve all those great nature photos?

-- Uncomfortable with your camera when not using full automatic mode?

This class, appropriate for beginners and intermediate level photographers (and budding photographers from 14 yrs and up) can help you become more comfortable with your camera.

Workshop Fee: \$50

Payable to "Friends of Patuxent"

Payment must be received by July 27th

Friends of Patuxent
National Wildlife Visitor Center
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708
To register, please call: (301) 497-5766

New at Patuxent Research Refuge

I am Jessica Helmbold and I am the newest intern at Patuxent. I came from Indiana where I graduated from Franklin College in 2007. I then worked as the interpretive naturalist at Versailles State Park and interned at Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge. However, I most recently finished my first year of graduate school at Taylor University, where I am working towards a Masters in environmental science. I am interested in environmental education as a career. I am glad to be back in Maryland where I grew up and to be working at Patuxent, gaining valuable experience in the environmental education field and working towards a career in it.

Hello Patuxent! My name is Sara Rothamel and I am the new Invasive Plant Control Intern for the Refuge. I come to you fresh from Sweet Briar College, Virginia but I am originally from southeast Pennsylvania. I graduated in May with a double major in Biology and Environmental Science and have worked with the USFWS and USFS in the past. That is enough about the boring stuff. The fun facts begin with the past four years I spent as an instructor in the Sweet Briar Outdoor Program or SWEBOP for short. After work you'll see me around the refuge hiking, biking, or maybe even playing guitar. I love the

outdoors, nature walks and witty jokes. If you ever need a dancing partner, kayaking buddy, climbing belayer, or just someone to chat with, stop by and introduce yourself. Don't know where to find me? Volunteer for weed warriors or whippoorwill or frog surveys. See you on the trails!



Hi, I'm Jeanna Beard. I am a local resident of Anne Arundel County, and I am one of the new Wildlife Management Interns at the Patuxent Research Refuge. I graduated in December 2008 from Loughborough University in England with a master's degree in Environmental Management. Previously, I have worked with the City of Annapolis' Environmental Department concentrating on urban forestry and public outreach programs. When I'm not out on the refuge counting water birds and wood duck nest boxes, you can find me playing rugby or ultimate frisbee outside or in a gym weight lifting or taking a taekwondo class. I am excited to be a part of the PRR working alongside knowledgeable and enthusiastic people. I hope to

learn more about the Refuge System and native wildlife, and I look forward to speaking with you about your experiences and interests!

My name is Jeremy H. Kennebrew. I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois and currently attend college in Atlanta, Georgia at Morehouse College. My major is Sociology. This summer I was selected to work with the Student Conservation Association as an intern at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland. I was interested in this internship because it provided me with the opportunity to expand my range of knowledge and achieve a more well-rounded educational experience. I also wanted to get the opportunity to experience some of the conservation career paths. I expect to gain many useful organizational and life skills that I can use in other areas of my life and obtain a better understanding of the world in which I live. This experience will require me to step all the way out of my box and comfort zone and I am excited that challenge.

My name is Annie Armstrong. I am currently a student at Tarrant county community in Arlington Texas where I am studying

“New”

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architecture with an interest in conservation. This is my first internship with the Student Conservation Association. The thing that I love the most about this internship is having the opportunity to explore my interest in conservation and being able to take advantage of that opportunity. I feel like this is my chance to see if conservation is something for me. I also feel by taking this internship, I am being an example for my family. This opportunity, for me, lets them know that they can do anything they set out to do -- as far as getting an education and achieving their goals!

My name is Rebecca Hutton and I am a Law Enforcement Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) student. Last summer I worked at the Eastern Massachusetts Complex, and am finishing my SCEP position here at Patuxent Research Refuge. Currently I am a student at Unity College in Maine. In May 2010, I will complete my Bachelors degrees in Conservation Law Enforcement and Parks, Recreation and Ecotourism. I am originally from Pennsylvania but spend most of my time in Maine at school.

While at school, I am actively involved in many outdoor programs, including being the President of Unity's Conservation Law Enforcement Club. Growing up, I always loved the outdoors and anything related to it. Through this interest, I got involved in Venture Crew. While in VC, I had the opportunity to spend most of my weekends out camping and realized that I wanted a career geared towards protecting the environment. I am looking forward to working at Patuxent Research Refuge this summer and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for many years to come.

Hi, my name is Mariah Fortman! I am working with the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) this summer at Patuxent Research Refuge. I will be a senior at Archbishop Spalding in the fall of 2009. I am very excited to be working here this summer, and have a genuine interest in conservation and wildlife. Personally, I am very interested in working and educating students through learning and hands-on activities. In the near future I hope to study conservation and environmental education, and hopefully can get a feel for it during my time here. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work for the Patuxent Research Refuge this summer, and hopefully more to come! ✨



Patuxent Research Refuge, including the National Wildlife Visitor Center, the North Tract Visitor Contact Station, and Refuge grounds will be CLOSED Friday, July 3rd and Saturday, July 4th

Happy Independence Day!

Patuxent Research Refuge Completes Prescribed Burns in Baltimore/Washington Area

By Catherine J. Hibbard

"You hear it all the time - how it can't be done," said Jeff Seabright of the National Park Service, referring to the difficulty of using prescribed fire near metropolitan areas. Seabright was one of several firefighters who converged on Patuxent Research Refuge to conduct two spring burns this year. The Refuge, located in Laurel, Maryland is about 10 miles south of Baltimore and 10 miles north of Washington D.C., a metropolis home to over 8 million people.

According to Refuge Biologist Holliday Obrecht, Patuxent Research Refuge had planned to burn two units for at least four years; a 30-acre field and 15 acres of pine/oak forest. Objectives for the field included maintaining habitat for grassland breeding birds by burning encroaching saplings and studying the effects of fire on controlling Lespedeza, a non-native invasive plant. The latter is especially appropriate for Patuxent Research Refuge, the only Refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System established to support wildlife research. Obrecht thought that fire might stimulate Lespedeza growth making it easier to subsequently

treat with herbicide. Purposes of the forest burn included removing small Virginia pines and clearing the understory to restore open savannah. Obrecht also wanted to determine if fire is an effective tool to maintain the diversity of darkling beetles and rare plants in the area.



Planning for prescribed burning in the northeast is a challenge in itself, let alone planning for a burn in a suburb of the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States. Windows of opportunities are often narrow because conditions must be just right to minimize smoke impacts to people and to achieve resource goals. Even if weather conditions are perfect, personnel and equipment may not be available. Most national wildlife refuges in the northeast, including Patuxent Research Refuge, have only a

few fire-qualified employees and limited firefighting equipment so they rely on partnerships with other refuges or agencies to do burns.

Despite a snowstorm thwarting an attempt to burn in early March, Patuxent Research Refuge successfully completed both burns on separate days in late March and April. Burn Boss Steve Hubner of the Northeast Regional Fire Office coordinated a team of about 20 firefighters, hailing from four National Parks, the State of Maryland, the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, Walkkill River and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuges, and Patuxent Research Refuge. For the field burn,

two Type 6 engines (150-400 gallon capacity) and a Marsh Master were on hand and drafted water from a pond adjacent to the burn. For the forest burn, a bulldozer, three engines, a prototype utility vehicle (Hydra H-1), and a water tender were on site. Firefighters used water from a 1,000-gallon portable tank filled by the water tender. All involved agreed that interagency cooperation was a highlight. "We never would have pulled it off without people coming together to

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“Burning”

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achieve our management goals," said Refuge Manager Brad Knudsen.

The contingent allowed firefighters to both conduct the burn and monitor weather conditions for smoke impacts. For both burns Hubner assigned a smoke monitor to ensure smoke did not blow into local communities or impair visibility on the Baltimore Washington Parkway (Route 295), which was within a quarter-mile of both burns. Firefighters were prepared to extinguish the fire if smoke was an issue, but this was not necessary. Favorable weather conditions dispersed smoke resulting in no loss of visibility on the Parkway or smoke intrusion into neighboring communities. These conditions, along with advance notice to metropolitan media outlets, resulted in no complaints from the public.

As to how well management goals were met, biologist Obrecht said, "We won't know for a while yet, but we will assess it." Preliminary results are favorable. "We were very pleased," he said when he walked through the burned field. "Many of the Bradford pear, sweet gum, and Virginia pine saplings got scorched." Pines targeted for removal in the forest burn also appeared to have been killed. Obrecht will search the site for rare plant germination and show it to beetle expert Warren Steiner of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History to see how the fire affected darkling beetles. ✱



Patuxent Research Refuge Meets Web 2.0

For the past several years there has been a tremendous upsurge in promoting facilities through the social media (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, etc.). However, due to security etc., Department of Interior employees, including Patuxent staff, are blocked from these sites on Agency computers. Staff can get involved from home on their own time, but must never represent themselves in an official capacity.

The area of social marketing is one where Friends and Volunteers could be a terrific asset in getting Patuxent Research Refuge -- both the National Wildlife Visitor Center and North Tract -- better known in the community. For example, you could post a beautiful scenic photo on Flickr and state where it was taken; you could mention upcoming events like Kids' Fishing

Day or a Night Hike you attended at North Tract on your Facebook account.

We would like to ask any of you who are active with the social media to consider gaining volunteer hours by helping us with social marketing activities. Please let Phil or Nell know if you are interested in doing this. We will then contact you with more information. You may also contact Nell, Michelle, or Lisa with questions. Once you become involved, if you get questions about issues about which you are uncertain, please contact Refuge staff for clarification. In particular, it's best to avoid policy issues without checking with staff first.

Again, please let us know if you would like to help Patuxent through social marketing. ✱

News from the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Scientist Interviewed for Scholastic Science World

Dr. Barnett Rattner, Ecotoxicologist at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, was recently interviewed and subsequently cited in an article entitled "Weight & Switch." The article deals with lead poisoning in water birds related to accidental ingestion of lead fishing tackle, and the efforts of Massachusetts Boy Scout Michael Browne to educate anglers about potential hazards. The article was authored by Joe Levit for Scholastic Science World (March 16, 2009, Volume 65, Number 11), a national educational magazine which targets sixth through 10th graders.

USGS Patuxent Scientist Receives Accolades on Coastal Erosion Expertise

The African Partnership Station, via funding provided by the U.S. Office of Naval Research, invited Dr. Cheryl Hapke (Patuxent) to a workshop/field effort on issues of erosion along the coast of Ghana. The researcher met with faculty and graduate students at the University of Ghana and shared their expertise on developing a collaborative science program to understand processes of coastal change, including measuring and monitoring erosion, and establishing historical baseline data sets. The workshop was the focus of an article produced as public relations for the Navy. Additionally, two Ghanaian TV Stations (GTV and TV3) covered the workshop locally.

CNN - Planet In Peril Interviews Jessica Zelt on Bird Watchers Notes

Azadeh Ansani of "CNN on Line" interviewed USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Jessica Zelt (contractor). The interview featured the North American Bird Phenology Program and its 90 years of bird watcher notes going on line. For more information, visit this link: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/science/03/26/pp.bird.usgs/index.html>

USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Dave Ziolkowski Interviewed on National Public Radio

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) biologist, Dave Ziolkowski, provided an interview for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" in which he addressed the Department of Interior's watershed State of the Birds Report. The BBS provided a significant amount of the data behind the conclusions in the report, which include descriptions of troubling declines of bird populations but also depictions of heartening evidence that concerted management actions can reverse bird declines. For more information and to hear the interview please visit: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102119617>

For more Scientist in the News, please visit: http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/SciInNews/index.cfm#Live_Ziolkowski ✨

Patuxent's "Resident" Canada Geese

By Frank McGilvrey, Volunteer
Biologist

There is a general perception that Patuxent's nesting population of Canada geese don't stray far from home. Results from return records of geese banded on Patuxent show that many geese do stray far from home. Between 1963 and 2004, 2080 resident geese were banded on the Refuge. They were rounded up and banded in early July when the adults are moulting and flightless and goslings are not yet on the wing.

Between 1963 and 2008, the Bird Banding Office received reports of the recovery of 616 bands from these birds. As to be expected, most of the recoveries were from Maryland, but 161 bands were recovered from elsewhere; as far south as Georgia and as far north as Quebec and Ontario in Canada. Most were from Virginia (76), but others included 17 from New York, 14 from Delaware, 13 each from North Carolina and Quebec, nine from Pennsylvania, seven from Ontario, three each from New Jersey and Rhode Island, two from D.C., and one each from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Resident geese indeed! ✨

Birding for the Blind

By Michelle Donlan, Patuxent staff
Patuxent Research Refuge staff and volunteers hosted Birding for the Blind on Saturday, May 30, 2009. The program was designed specifically for visually impaired people (VIPs), their families, and friends. Participants were introduced to nature and birding through hands-on activities and exploration of outdoor habitats. Participants learned how to identify birds by sound, an activity that can be done in any outdoor setting - such as a neighborhood park or an individual's backyard!

The program began with introductions of staff and participants. Next, wildlife biologist Barbara Dowell led the group on a conservation tram tour, visiting various habitats on the Refuge. Other staff and volunteers were on hand to expand exploration through descriptions of various habitats and touch items such as animal pelts and mounts. After the tram tour, refuge staff and volunteers lead participants through different education stations highlighting bird species found on the refuge.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Patuxent Research Refuge and U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center staff and volunteers are thrilled to offer these worthwhile programs and look forward to offering more in the future! ✨

Montgomery County Student Wins Maryland Federal Junior Duck Stamp Art Competition

The "Best of Show" winner of the 2009-2010 Maryland Federal Junior Duck Stamp Competition is 14-year-old Yi Patrick An of Germantown. An's splendid acrylic painting of a pair of long-tailed ducks, entitled "Swimming Towards Conservation," was selected from more than 380 entries from this year's statewide contest. An takes lessons at the Washington Luyi Art Center in Germantown.

The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program, sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), is an art and conservation program geared toward teaching children about the importance of wetlands and waterfowl conservation.

The contest is open to students from kindergarten through twelfth grade in all the states and DC. Entries for each jurisdiction are judged separately. The Best of Show winners from each state and the District compete with each other for the Federal Junior Duck Stamp. This national competition was held on April 22, 2009 at 10:30 AM at the National Postal Museum in the District. For more

information on the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program, visit www.fws.gov/juniorduck.

The panel of judges for this year's Maryland contest included: Robert Beall, winner of the 2008 Maryland Migratory Waterfowl Stamp Contest; Jorge Coppen, National Coordinator, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, USFWS; Paul Padding, Atlantic Flyway Representative, Division of Migratory Bird Management, USFWS; Bill Todd, wildlife photographer and volunteer at Patuxent Research Refuge; Valerie Watson, Artist and Visual Arts Specialist, Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The judges selected up to 25 winners in each of four age categories. The winners of both the Maryland and District of Columbia Federal Junior Duck Stamp Competitions will be honored at a joint awards ceremony on May 17 at the National Wildlife Visitor Center, located on the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, MD. All Maryland entries will then go on a statewide tour throughout the year.

Chesapeake Bay Lighthouse & Wildlife ½ Day Tours



Dates: June 28, July 19, August 9 or 16, Sept. 14
Plus Seafood Lunch Cruise July 12 & Poplar I land
Special Tour July 13

Boat Docked at 3866 Harbor Rd., Chesapeake Beach, Maryland

Come aboard the Mary Lou Too out of beautiful Chesapeake Beach, MD for a relaxing ½ day wildlife cruise. We will see lighthouses, osprey, skipjacks, and sailboats on our relaxing trip with Captain Russ and an onboard naturalist.

Cost is only \$42.00 per person. The tax, tip, and fees are included. Your participation benefits the Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge. Minimum of 12 and a maximum of 20 passengers each trip.

We will set sail for the 3 to 3.5 hour tour from Chesapeake Beach, MD at 11:00am, so please arrive no later than 10:30. The Mary Lou Too is docked behind Abner's Crab House. We will give trip details when we receive your registration.

The trip includes views of Sharps I land and Bloody Point lighthouses, as well as the Poplar I land NWR. A wildlife naturalist will be aboard to point out some of the interesting sights and Bay history. Don't forget your binoculars and/or a camera and you can pack a snack too!

If interested please register with Sparky Sparks at sparky@friendspwrc.org, (301) 497-5789 or Lisa Garrett at wildbirdcenter@comcast.net (301) 805-4858 for more information. Driving directions provided if needed.

Payment must be made 5 days prior to the trip. Make checks to "Friends of Patuxent" and mail to:
Friends of Patuxent
National Wildlife Visitor Center
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708-4027

Sponsored by:



Special Trips

Seafood Lunch Buffet @ Harrison's on Tilghman Island
Sunday, July 12

Leave from Chesapeake Beach by boat @ 11 am. Includes boat tour thru the Narrows and a delicious Buffet lunch, w/coffee or tea. Cost: 69.00 pp Book early!

Poplar Island Van Tour
Monday, July 13

Leave from Chesapeake Beach by boat @ 9:45 am for personal tour by van on the 200-acre reclaimed wildlife preserve. Afterwards we will have lunch (on your own) at Harrison's on Tilghman Island before returning home @ 3 pm. Pelicans and eagles might be seen. Lighthouses and history and more on this unique trip. Cost: 49.00 pp (Overflow trip planned for Sept.)

PRR's Songbird Nest Box Program

By Steve Noyes, Volunteer Naturalist

One of the popular activities for volunteers at the Patuxent Research Refuge (PRR) is the monitoring of boxes for cavity nesting songbirds. Originally created to benefit the Eastern Bluebird, nest boxes on the Refuge also attract other cavity nesting birds... Tree Swallows, Carolina Chickadees, House Wrens, and Tufted Titmice.

Over a hundred years ago, the population of the Eastern Bluebird began to decline. Two factors came into play: (1) the introduction of the English Sparrow (aka the House Sparrow) and the European Starling at the end of the 19th century and, (2) changes in habitats. The English Sparrow and the European Starling are both aggressive cavity nesting species and are non-migratory. By the 1930s, following the Depression, some of the larger farms started downsizing; many fields were no longer cultivated and started being taken over by the surrounding forest. The large open tracts, the preferred habitat of the Eastern Bluebird, began disappearing. Concerned citizens in the Mid-West started noticing declines in the Eastern Bluebird population and began putting up nest boxes on



their property. So began the idea of bluebird nest box trails. The original attempt to create protection for the Eastern Bluebird came with the creation of a conservation group to protect Purple Martins and Bluebirds. Eventually, a separate North American Bluebird Society was formed by Dr. Lawrence Zeleny, a researcher at the nearby Beltsville Agriculture Research Center. Today, the Eastern Bluebird population has rebounded to levels of the 1800s, expanding northward as Eastern habitats have changed (more open spaces).

Here at the PRR, our present nest box program began in 1993, soon after the Refuge acquired 8100

acres from Fort Meade, now called North Tract. I had the privilege of being asked to oversee the inaugural program and started training volunteers to keep detailed records on nest box use. Today, there are 69 boxes at North Tract and the grounds of the National Wildlife Visitor Center. Last year, 346 nestlings (200 E. Bluebirds, 107 Tree Swallows, 30 Carolina Chickadees, and nine House Wrens) entered the world from our boxes between early May and mid-August. These figures represent a higher-than-average total, especially for E. Bluebird. Thanks to the dedication of our steadfast volunteers and fellow administrator, volunteer Jay Pape, this is a highly successful program. Most boxes are located in public areas to be enjoyed by our visitors. So, the next time you visit the Refuge, take time to watch nature at work as birds come and go from these boxes.

In addition to the E. Bluebird, there are two more species of bluebirds in the West...the Mountain Bluebird and the Western Bluebird (I've had the pleasure of seeing all three species). They have all benefited from the placement of nest boxes. ✨



“Smith”

Continued from p. 1

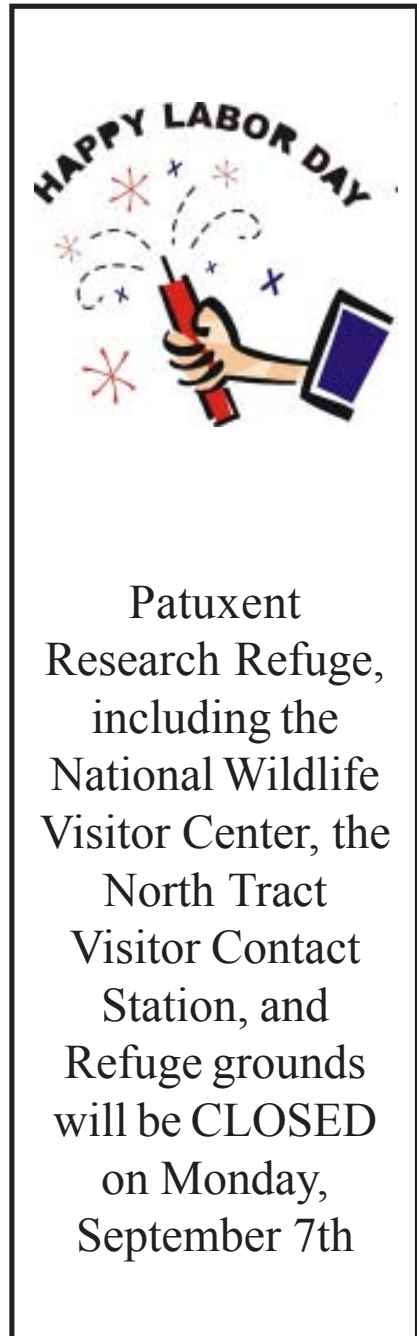
dynamics and environmental toxicology. Prior to joining the USGS Headquarters Office in 1998, he served as the acting Eastern Regional Chief Biologist (1997-1998) and as the Center Director at the USGS Great Lakes Science Center (1996-1997). From 1989 to 1996, he was a Laboratory Manager and later Laboratory Director for a private environmental toxicology corporation in Maryland and from 1988 to 1989, Greg managed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's analytical chemistry program, providing support for research and field investigations involving environmental contaminants. He began his Federal research career at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, following a post-doctoral fellowship with the University of Wisconsin - Madison, also conducted at Patuxent.

Greg currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Wildlife Federation, has led an effort to develop the Delta

Research and Global Observation Network (DRAGON) Partnership, and is the U.S. Co-Chair of the U.S. - Vietnam Bilateral Climate Change Working Group. He is originally from Northern Michigan and he and his wife, Kathy, have two children, Jennifer and Andrew.

Greg expects to begin his new job at Patuxent in late July. Please join the Northeast Area in welcoming him to what we are sure will be a very rewarding and stimulating new challenge.

At this time, we would also like to thank Graham Smith for his dedication and service as Acting Center Director since 2008. He has done an outstanding job of maintaining the scientific excellence of the Center in the interim through his hard work, superior organizational skills, and attention to detail. Because of Graham's in-depth knowledge of the Center's science and scientists as well as his dedication to good management, the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center has continued to thrive during this challenging time of organizational and leadership transition. ✨



Patuxent
Research Refuge,
including the
National Wildlife
Visitor Center, the
North Tract
Visitor Contact
Station, and
Refuge grounds
will be CLOSED
on Monday,
September 7th



Happy Summer!

New Web Photo Galleries

Thanks to Patuxent volunteer webmaster, Dick Kaiser, a "Galleries" section has been added to Patuxent's web site. The intent is to display photographs of the Refuge, wildlife, and events. To see current Galleries, please visit: http://www.fws.gov/northeast/patuxent/gallery_index.html

Information and guidelines for Patuxent web site photo galleries are as follows:

Who contributes photos?

Patuxent staff and volunteers are invited to offer photos for the galleries. Staff and volunteers must understand that they are offering the photo for display on the web site. Patuxent decides whether the photo will actually go on the web or not.

What about copyrights?

All photos offered for the gallery must be in the public domain.

Currently, our arrangements are informal. No written release. Photographers understand that when they give images to the Refuge, unless specified otherwise, the images can be used on the web site or otherwise be used by the Refuge and are considered in the public domain. When images are shared with the media or others, Refuge staff typically request that photo credit be given (if we know who took the photo). There is no guarantee that credit will be provided or that mistakes will not occur.

In case of questioning by Regional or Washington Office staff, we should probably have permission forms from each image contributor. Those donating images should complete an "Agreement for Use" form. There will be a folder and extra blank forms in the



Tech Support Room at the Visitor Center (next to Nell's office), or you can just give to Nell or other staff. Please make the form generic for all of your images if possible.

Who decides what photos will go on the web site?

Each gallery has a "gallery editor." The editor makes the final decision about which photos to display, captions, and text. The gallery editor needn't always be the same person. If a gallery is "special interest" - e.g. birds, frogs - an area expert might be the editor. The editor may decide to update a gallery at any time. Updates include changing which

photographs are displayed and/or changing text and captions.

Will the Gallery Editor make changes to photographs?

Maybe. The gallery editor is permitted to re-size, crop, modify brightness or contrast, etc. The gallery editor is encouraged to make changes only when needed to improve the appearance of the gallery.

Can a gallery include photos from more than one person?

Yes. A gallery might contain photos from one person or from several. The gallery editor makes the decision.

Will photographers receive credit on the web site?

Yes, at the discretion of the editor. The site will include a notice similar to "Photographs courtesy of Sally Snap, FWS Volunteer" as appropriate. If more than one person contributes photos for a gallery, each photographer will receive credit for his/her photos.

How to credit more than one photographer contributing to a photo gallery?

We anticipate that credit text will appear on the text page. The text will be similar to "Photographs courtesy of Sally Snap [SS], FWS Volunteer, and Frank Focus [FF], Patuxent Staff." Identification of the photographer will appear as part of each photograph caption. For example, "Sunrise at Cash Lake [FF]". ✨



Volunteers ↔ Friends
Friends of Patuxent
 National Wildlife Visitor Center
 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
 Laurel, MD 20708-4027

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“Friends” website: www.friendspwrc.org
 ☎ (301) 497-5789

We invite you to join ...

Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge, Inc. is a designated Section 501(c)(3) public charity. It is a membership organization whose mission is to financially support the research of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and the environmental education, outreach, and recreation missions at the Patuxent Research Refuge. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our **2009** Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number for the **Central Maryland** areas is **63960** and Maryland Charitable Organization Registration - **2348**.

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

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

Friends of Patuxent
 Membership Application

Please mail, along with a 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)

Donation only \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ (Zip) _____

Telephone:

Email _____

