

Beaver Tales from Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Spring 2018

Write and boycott Amazon

We were shocked to learn that Amazon is selling live lobsters through the mail as if they were a pair of socks! Despite public protest, they refuse to stop this immoral practice. We have closed our account and will no longer accept items purchased through them. We ask that you speak out against Amazon's cruelty:



- Jeff Bezos, CEO: jeff@amazon.com, or 206.266.1000 or 410 Terry Ave, North Seattle, WA 98109-5210.
- Close any account with Amazon and tell them why.

In the meantime, if you would like to purchase and donate the items we previously listed on Amazon through a different source, call us at 856.697.3541 or visit our Web site.

Bears in New Jersey desperately need your help

Since 2000, the BEAR (Bear Education and Resource) Group has worked with three NJ governors and stopped eight bear hunts. Governor Phil Murphy has promised a moratorium on the hunt. Until then, BEAR needs help with their campaign to erect billboards (see photo) to bring public pressure and



has started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for more billboards. We fully support BEAR's efforts to protect bears and ask that you help by making a tax-deductible contribution here: gofundme.com/billboards4bears.

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A new initiative by Mike Callahan, beaver advocate

Mike Callahan, founder of Beaver Solutions (Southampton, MA), is an expert on non-lethal methods of solving human-beaver conflicts. He has installed more than 900 flood-control devices and his Web site provides information on humane strategies and sources of humane devices for flood control. His new non-profit entity, Beaver Institute™, expands his work in this area. You can read more at the Web site (beaverinstitute.org), including a blog that discusses many beaver issues.



Good news from Wenonah, New Jersey

We reported in spring 2017 about our consultation with Wenonah, New Jersey, Environmental Commission, concerning beavers who had built a dam in wetland area. We were successful in getting the people to install a pond-leveler to prevent flooding of nearby facilities. The Commission wrote to us recently and reported: "The beavers are thriving in our small borough and our message to visitors and residents alike is that with a little tolerance and ingenuity, we can all live with wildlife and be the richer for it. Thank you for your good work." This is a big win for wildlife in general and beavers in particular! We are grateful to Wenonah for acting compassionately on behalf of their wild neighbors and demonstrating that killing wildlife is not necessary for peaceful coexistence.

Bad news for beavers from New Jersey legislators

New Jersey residents: Your legislators are considering the anti-wildlife bill, **A2731**. If passed, this would eliminate the limit of 200 permits and expand the use of body-crushing (Conibear) traps. If A2731 is approved by the full Assembly, it will then go to the Senate, where it must be defeated. Many of the animals caught in these traps die a prolonged, agonizing death. Please call or write each of your legislators (Assemblypersons and Senators) and ask them to **OPPOSE A2731**. Visit njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp for contact information. Otherwise, contact the League of Women Voters of New Jersey: 800.792.8683 or 609.394.3303.



Hooded mergansers

A hooded merganser couple temporarily spent a sunny day on the main pond last November. We are fortunate to have numerous species of water birds, whether residing permanently or just on their way elsewhere.



Rare sighting of ring-necked ducks

Our manager was able to take this photo of ring-necked ducks on the main pond. "I was very excited to see some 'new' ducks on the main pond the other morning. At first I thought they were lesser scaups, but a pair of binoculars showed them to be ring-necked ducks. Although not a rare species, this is only the second time I have spotted them at the Refuge. This couple has been here for about a week. It would be great if they decided to nest here this season."



Frozen main pond allows a unique opportunity

This was the first winter in three years with a sufficient number of below-freezing days to create a thick surface of ice on the main pond. Ever mindful to minimize disturbing the inhabitants, our manager was able to walk across the pond to the beaver lodges on the opposite side. Soon after, we had several days of warmer weather and the ice was gone.

One photo is of the largest (foreground) of the three local lodges, with a second lodge and adjacent food 'raft' (to the left) in the background. The second photo is of the food 'raft' associated with the largest lodge.



Beavers work very hard preparing their lodges for winter, filling small cracks and holes with mud and sticks. They also prepare food stores – the 'rafts' – above and below the waterline so that they can easily and conveniently find food during times when they 'awaken' and are hungry.

Muddy Bog in winter

This lovely area at the Refuge is one of our favorite places to view. Bordered by trees and other wetland, Muddy Bog is an important micro-habitat for many species of animals and plants. You can refer back to our Fall 2017 newsletter to see how it appeared in the fall. Here is what it looked like on a recent winter day when Mike McCormick stopped by for a visit with his camera.



Two more trail camera photos

Since the last newsletter, our trail cameras have yielded several 'clandestine' photos of Refuge inhabitants going about their lives, protected from exploitation (other than harmlessly being photographed, of course). This red fox apparently heard something of interest one evening. These beavers swam up to each other in one of the many waterways on the Refuge.



More activity on frozen main pond

One or more Refuge residents took a long walk across the snow-covered and frozen main pond one evening or early morning in January. The tracks started at a trail head and ended on the opposite end of the pond. Notice the lens flare caused by the bright sunlight.



Another successful volunteer deer patrol season

During our recent annual deer patrol season, we had temperatures as high as 60°F and as low as 10°F. There was at least one 12-inch snowfall.



Dedicated volunteers arrived in T-shirts or parkas, depending on the day! Thank you, as always, to our volunteers (such as Ethan Winter, Brooks Mongiello, Matthew Leister and Randi Fair seen here, left to right). If you were unable to make it this season, we will appreciate your help later this year, when hunters once again take to the woods and

fields. And, we have numerous other volunteer opportunities that go beyond patrolling. Contact us to learn more.

Eastern towhee on a snowy day

Our manager took this photo of an eastern towhee sitting in a snow-covered shrub during a snowfall last December. Although she often hears these birds in the undergrowth, seeing them is a rare treat. They have an unusual two-footed scratching technique when they are searching for food among fallen leaves.



Lichens at the Refuge in winter

We see numerous species of lichens at the Refuge. These composite organisms, often colorful and intricate in appearance, form an important part of the biodiversity that is inherent to this habitat. We thought you might enjoy seeing a couple striking examples. The reindeer lichen (in green) is sometimes misleadingly referred to as reindeer moss. The other lichen pictured here is a bit of a mystery to us. Although we think it is the brown-eyed rim (*Lecanora allophana*), it could be the bumpy rim (*Lecanora hybocarpa*). Given that names are 'artificial' human constructs, the distinction is moot: we appreciate them regardless.



Northern water snake baby prior to hibernation

During one of the last warm days of fall last year, our manager met this tiny northern water snake baby alongside a Refuge trail. The leaf and acorn (right) emphasize the adjective "tiny"! We are looking forward to seeing more reptilian youngsters later this spring.



Raindrop mirror

Being at the right place at the right time and with a camera allowed our manager to get this intriguing photo of a drop of rain on the end of a small branch. If you look carefully, you will see the inverted reflection of the surrounding forest and sky.



Footprints tell the tale

Often, our only awareness of the presence of some Refuge residents is right after a snowfall. Here, a rabbit has made her or his way across the snow.



A creative way to help the Refuge

Eric Baratta, shown here after our annual Earth Day Cleanup last year, is a long-time volunteer and supporter. For his recent birthday celebration, he asked his friends and relatives to donate money to the Refuge in lieu of presents to him. This innovative and generous action on the part of Eric provided much-needed funds for our operations. We hope others will follow in the footsteps of Eric and consider the Refuge as the beneficiary for birthdays and similar events.



Helping wildlife and the Refuge today

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge continues to be an inviolate home and sanctuary for hundreds of animal and plant species. Some of these species are highly endangered and our Refuge ensures them the best chance possible for survival, *with your support and generosity*. We – and the wildlife – could not exist without you. A donation – today – of any amount, will help keep this habitat a home for thousands of animals and plants. *Although we say this in each newsletter, we do desperately need your support right now*. We care for these 767 acres with a very small operating budget, a paid staff of one and a completely voluntary Council of Trustees. Other ways to support us can be found on our **Help Us** page on our Web site.



Helping wildlife and the Refuge in the future

Please remember Unexpected Wildlife Refuge when planning your will and estate. It is an easy, effective and lasting way to help the Refuge... and wildlife. When talking with your estate planner, just provide them with our name, address and tax identification number (**23-7025010**). This is one of the most important gifts the Refuge can receive. If you have already included us in your future plans, thank you!

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge seeking new manager

If you or someone you know is interested in rewarding and challenging service to wildlife, please send the following by E-mail only, to Nedim C. Buyukmihci, president, ned.trustee@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org: 1) letter explaining why you would be the ideal candidate; 2) full curriculum vitae (expanded résumé); and 3) at least three references, one of whom must provide a critical assessment of your abilities. See unexpectedwildliferefuge.org/temp/Unexpected_Wildlife_Refuge_manager_job.pdf for full job description.

Continuing request for your E-mail address

Not only will this reduce costs for the Refuge and the environment, you would receive our bi-monthly newsletters, information that is more timely.

This issue of our newsletter is brought to you by a grant from Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics. It is the result of a team effort involving people dedicated to protecting wildlife in general and furthering the Refuge in particular:

- Veronica Van Hof, story and photo contributor
- Nedim C. Buyukmihci, story contributor and editor
- Linda Buyukmihci-Bey, copy editor

For all wildlife everywhere, we thank you!
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