

BEAVER TALES SUMMER 2022, UNEXPECTED WILDLIFE REFUGE

The last few months have been quite active at Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. Mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, and amphibians are lively as the warmer temperatures of summer arrive. Every day we welcome the sights and sounds of life at the Refuge. Nesting female turtles are seen regularly in areas surrounding the ponds. Choruses of birds, frogs, and toads are heard at different times of day and night. Young toads, having completed metamorphosis, continue to emerge from the water to begin their new life on land.



UWR has continued to provide public education at various local events including: Lines on the Pines, ACUA Earth Day Festival, Folsom Green Day, and NatureFest. You can read more about Lines on the Pines below.

To visit, and enjoy the many sights and sounds of summer on the Refuge, call 856-697-3541 or email manager@unexpectedwildliferetuge.org to schedule.

Running a wildlife refuge is not only physically and emotionally demanding, there are always expenses with which to deal. Although we are frugal in how we spend Refuge funds--having only one employee and an all-volunteer Council of Trustees--we need your help in ensuring the continuation and longevity of the Refuge. We hope you will take the time to make the most generous donation you can...now. And, know that we--and the wildlife--are grateful for your continued support.

UWR at Lines on the Pines, March 13, 2022



One of the most-noted events of the year is Lines on the Pines, a celebration of the arts and culture of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Each year Unexpected Wildlife Refuge provides information about the Refuge as well as children's educational activities. Trustees Janet Romano and David Sauder staffed a table, discussing the beauty and mission of the Refuge with interested visitors. Children could listen to a story about barn owls and make an owl mask. A slideshow presentation of photos

taken at the Refuge played continuously to provide a glimpse of the diversity of animals and plants that make Unexpected Wildlife Refuge their home.

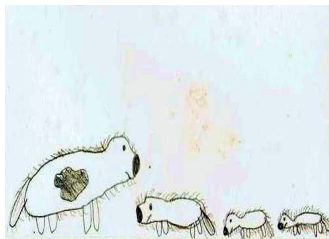
Next year, UWR is slated to present an informational program about the Refuge. We are very excited to have this opportunity to share the Refuge with others.

Kids' corner

When children have opportunities to observe wildlife, a whole new world of wonder can open up. Let's see what it's like to observe the wildlife at UWR from a kid's perspective.

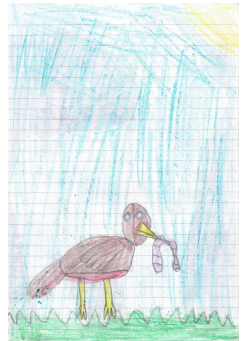
Groundhogs by Sylvia Cudrak, age 8

Groundhogs are omnivores. They eat a lot of different plants, and grubs, insects, and snails. They also eat other small animals, like baby birds! Adults weigh up to 13 pounds. They can be as long as 24 inches. They have sharp claws to dig their burrows and they can stand up on their back feet. Groundhogs are also known as woodchucks. We have a family of groundhogs living next to the house. The mom has a patch of fur missing on her side.



Robins by Sylvia Cudrak, age 8

Robins are gray or brown with a red-orange tummy. They lay four to seven blue-green eggs in a nest. Baby robins are called chicks. Robins eat worms, insects, berries, and other fruits. They hop around on the ground looking for food. Female and male robins look almost exactly the same. Some robins stay around in winter. Robins have about 2,900 feathers.



NJ Plastic Bag and Polystyrene Ban Took Effect May 4, 2022

Starting May 4, 2022, New Jersey retail stores, grocery stores, and food service businesses ceased providing or selling single-use plastic carryout bags and polystyrene foam food service products. Single-use paper carryout bags are allowed to be provided or sold, except by grocery stores equal to or larger than 2,500 square feet, which may only provide or sell reusable carryout bags.

GET PAST PLASTIC



Don't forget to bring your reusable bags when shopping.

Urge Congress to Support the Migratory Bird Protection Act

Earlier this year, a federal rule dramatically weakened the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), our nation's most important bird protection law. The weakened law no longer held companies liable for preventable bird deaths from industrial hazards, giving them a free pass to kill birds. Thankfully, the Interior Department has taken steps to reverse the rollback of the law. Now, Congress should pass the Migratory Bird Protection Act to safeguard the MBTA for the future.



Contact your U.S. Representatives and urge them to strengthen protections for birds by supporting the Migratory Bird Protection Act.

If you have internet access you can sign the petition at: https://act.audubon.org/a/mbpa?ms=policy-adv-web-website-nas-bird-friendly-communities-20210729-mbta-engagement_card.

Young eastern spadefoot toad



Spadefoot toads are found throughout the eastern US. They can be found in almost any habitat, but prefer dry habitats with sandy soils. Spadefoots are extremely fossorial, spending most of their life buried underground, often for weeks at a time. They are explosive breeders, concentrating their reproduction during short time windows. Heavy rains cause them to emerge in large numbers and congregate at ephemeral pools created by the

rain. Males call while floating on the surface of the water. Females can lay up to 2,500 eggs at once. The young hatch from their eggs within two weeks and become terrestrial in two to eight weeks. Adults reach maturity in two to three years. This individual was spotted in the sandy soil beneath the HQ front porch.

Wood ducks at Wild Goose Blind

Wood ducks have been a regular presence on the main pond, which is where the trail camera that documented this pair is located. Male wood ducks are strikingly patterned, with iridescent chestnut-and-green coloring, and ornate patterns on nearly every feather. Females have grayish-brown bodies, and a gray head with a white ring around each eye. Wood ducks are one of only a few ducks who have claws on their feet, allowing them to perch and nest in trees. They are also comfortable flying through woods, as their broad tail and short, broad wings help make them maneuverable. Nesting in tree cavities, often in wooded swamps and woodlands, has earned them the name "wood ducks."



Several species of swallows at Miller Pond

While out on patrol recently, we observed three different species of swallows (rough-winged, tree, and barn) perched together on this beaver lodge in Miller Pond. Swallows are excellent fliers, and they use these skills to feed and to attract mates. They generally forage for prey on the wing, spending a lot of time flying and chasing after insects in acrobatic twists and turns. Swallows always drink on the wing, flying low to sip the water. Can you locate all three species? Rough-winged swallows are brown above with an indistinct brown wash across their throat and breast, and white underparts below their throat. Tree swallows have iridescent blue-green upperparts, black wings and tail, and white underparts. Barn swallows have rufous underparts, with a blue back, wings, and tail.



Eastern towhee displays at Headquarters

This male eastern towhee was spotted around Headquarters among some branches. Similar to the spotted towhee of western North America, the two used to be considered the same species, the rufous-sided towhee. Male eastern towhees have bold black coloring above and on the breast, with warm rufous sides and white on the belly. Females have the same pattern, but are brown instead of black. These birds tend to be rather solitary, and they use a number of threat displays to tell other towhees they're not welcome. Males may lift, spread, or droop one or both wings, fan their tails, or flick their tails to show off the white spots at the corners – as he may be doing in the second photo. Eastern towhees are not listed as threatened or endangered, but their numbers have been declining over the last few decades.



River otter family active day and night

North American river otters are one of the most elusive mammal species in New Jersey, and can be found in fresh, brackish, and saltwater habitats. Members of the mustelid family (Mustelidae), they are known to be highly social animals forming family groups centered around the female. Mainly the female otter cares for the young, with litters consisting of one to three pups. Otters generally live nocturnal lives spring through fall, switching to a diurnal schedule in the colder months while preparing for their breeding season. The photographs here illustrate their broad range of activity across time of day and time of year.



Secretive salamander spotted among debris

This red-backed salamander was spotted among the leaf litter off the boundary trail after we removed a Mylar® balloon to be properly discarded. Members of the family Plethodontidae, they lack lungs, which means they need to live in damp or moist habitats to breathe. They are native to the eastern United States and Canada, and can occur in two color phases, lead-back and red-back. The lead-back phase salamanders are a consistent gray-to-black color while the red-back phase is characterized by an orange-to-red stripe down the length of their body and tail. They are often found in or under logs, leaf litter and burrows of deciduous forests. In colder months, they burrow under the frozen ground surface.



Hooded merganser sounds like pickerel frog

While working at the computer this past February, our manager heard an interesting noise from the main pond. It sounded like a frog, though in the cold of winter, it couldn't be. Instead, a group of hooded mergansers, including the two pictured here, was found swimming through the water. Hooded mergansers are usually silent, but they call during courtship and around nest sites. And it turns out, a courting male makes a deep, rolling sound like the call of a pickerel frog. Since courtship and pair formation usually take place in November, perhaps these mergansers were seeking out a nesting site in our secluded woodland pond--their site of choice, a tree cavity or hole.



Spider crickets are neither spiders nor crickets

This spider cricket (AKA camel cricket) was photographed in the Miller House in late November. Part of the insect order Orthoptera, they are not actually spiders; they're related to grasshoppers, locusts, and other crickets. The "spider" part of their name comes from the way their long legs make them look, but as with all insects, they have six legs, not eight like arachnids. And though they're not spiders, they're not technically crickets, either. They are strong jumpers, but they don't have wings, and most species of spider cricket also lack inner ears, both of which true crickets have. Getting back to those long limbs, spider crickets leap when they are frightened, as a defense mechanism to scare off predators, or to simply jump into darker corners for safety.



UWR on AmazonSmile



Shop on Amazon? You can now support Unexpected Wildlife Refuge through the AmazonSmile program! Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and choose Unexpected Wildlife Refuge as your charity. Every time you shop, be sure to choose the

AmazonSmile page and UWR will receive a donation! Feel great knowing you are helping all wildlife at the Refuge!

Help us and the environment

Please send us your email address so that we can reduce the number of paper newsletters and the waste that entails. Send to info@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org, stating you would like to be placed on the electronic newsletter list.

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