

# BEAVER TALES WINTER 2020, UNEXPECTED WILDLIFE REFUGE

We are very appreciative of everyone who has supported Unexpected Wildlife Refuge during what has been an unusual year. In these challenging times, it should be comforting to know that there are 767 acres of protected habitat and hiking trails where you can easily 'socially distance' and enjoy the wonderful wildlife of the Refuge. We hope you will take advantage of this gem and schedule a visit.



We are amidst 'hunting season' in New Jersey, with bow hunting taking place now through 31 January 2021. Firearm season started 30 November and runs through the end of January. We can use volunteers to help patrol. Let Jen, our manager, know of your willingness to help by calling her at 856.697.3541.

We are deeply indebted to all who supported us in 2020, including the funds you provided for our new Headquarters. If you would like to contribute towards our remaining debt on this – or just to make a helping gift – we would greatly appreciate the most generous donation you can make before the year ends.

We wish you and yours a safe and Happy New Year!

## Refuge co-hosted TnT Cycling fundraising event



In September, Unexpected Wildlife Refuge co-hosted a fundraising event in conjunction with TnT Cycling of Lumberton, NJ. On Sunday, the 27th, 250 riders navigated a variety of cycling routes from White Horse Winery in Hammonton, to Bellview Winery in Landisville, with rest stops at both locations

and a third rest stop at the Franklin Township Community Center. The Refuge hosted the rest stops at Bellview Winery and the Community Center, providing fruit and water refills to the cyclists. Four new volunteers assisted at the rest stops, along with Trustee Dave Sauder and our manager Jen Collins. We are indebted to Jorge Carmona, event organizer, for inviting us to take part and benefit from this event, which raised \$6,500 for the Refuge.

## Former Eagle Scout returns to Refuge

In September, Jared Novak, formerly of Eagle Scout Troop 65, visited the Refuge with his fiancée Brigitte Zschech. They met with our manager Jen, and Jared shared stories of when he volunteered at the Refuge with his troop in the summer of 2011. He and the other troop members installed our beaver viewing platform (lower right of photo), at the main pond near Headquarters, which remains a very popular spot for our visitors. After meeting with Jen, Jared and Brigitte enjoyed the views of the main pond from the platform and hiked the trails.



## Help stop the Saddle River, NJ, deer kill



Despite residents voting for non-lethal alternatives to be used, the Town Council decided to allow the killing of deer (photo APLNJ) in Saddle River. Although this is a major setback for the deer, especially because there are non-lethal ways to 'manage' these animals, the Council should be politely told that they have made a mistake and should reverse their decision and honor the will of the Saddle River residents. Write Mayor Albert J. Kurpis and the Council at Saddle River Borough Hall, 100 E. Allendale Rd, Saddle River, NJ 07458 or call Borough Hall at 201.327.2609. Tell them you want Saddle River to end the deer hunt and to implement safe, effective and humane methods.

## Refuge becomes part of campaign to end wildlife trade



Unexpected Wildlife Refuge has joined a Coalition of non-human animal and environmental organizations calling on The White House to support a permanent ban on wild animal markets that could become sources for future pandemics and to commit to ending

international trade in wild animals and their products. The Coalition, which is led by World Animal Protection and represents more than 10 million supporters across the US, had sent a letter urging the US Government to support this issue at the G20 Leaders' Summit that took place in November 2020.

The US is a leading importer of wildlife, importing more than 224 million live animals and 883 million parts of the bodies of wildlife every year. It has the responsibility to take a leadership role in making sure the G20 acts to protect wildlife and prevent future pandemics, by committing to end the international trade in wild animals and wild animal products.

## Keep saying NO to bear hunting in New Jersey

The cruel hunting of New Jersey's iconic black bears resumed this year, with many hundreds of these wonderful individuals slaughtered by hunters, often using archaic and particularly cruel weapons. We need to keep up the pressure on this issue. Please call Governor Murphy (609.292.6000) and urge him to stop the hunt – permanently – by issuing an executive order.



## Great blue heron views main pond domain

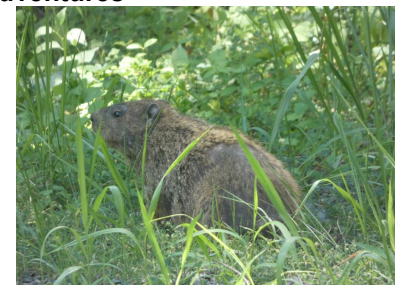


One a sunny day in early summer, this great blue heron seemed to enjoy the vantage point provided by a tree stump in our main pond. At least one mated pair nests nearby. We often see them fishing in the pond or perched in the surrounding trees. We are also regularly alerted to their presence by their distinct call. In this photo, the heron has her beak open allowing us a view of the tongue. Bird tongues have adapted

to be specialized for specific diets. A great blue heron's tongue helps them consume a varied diet of fish, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. The birds are over one meter tall, with males being slightly larger than females. Their wings sometimes span over two meters.

## Aboveground groundhog adventures

We were happy to see our resident groundhog emerge from her burrow behind Headquarters this season as we were unsure if she had chosen a new site in the confusion and activity of the cabin demolition and new building construction. Groundhogs are generally



active until the first major frost, usually in October or November, at which point they begin hibernation in their burrows until the weather warms up – around February or March. On a few occasions over the summer, we were lucky enough to see at least one of this mother's pups exploring and becoming familiar with the surrounding area aboveground in preparation for when he or she would eventually set off on their own. The fur loss (alopecia) in the mother may be from skin parasites, but could be from a variety of other causes; we are reminded that letting 'nature take its course' is ultimately the best thing for wildlife.



Male eastern pondhawk dragonfly rests on lily pad



Over the summer, Miller Pond was abuzz with dragonflies. Patrols to the pond often produced many photographs of dragonflies of a variety of species, the eastern pondhawk being one of them. Here we see a male perched on a lily pad in the open water, perhaps a brief interlude before flying off in search of a female with whom to mate. Eastern pondhawk dragonflies, like many dragonfly species, are dimorphic; males and females can be identified based on color and pattern. Young males are also distinguished from adult males by color and pattern until they reach maturity. Adult males are powder-blue over the entire abdomen and thorax whereas females are bright green with black markings.

Canada geese flock in flight

Canada geese are social birds usually seen in large groups, except when nesting. They are a constant presence on our main pond, and whether a flock is taking off or coming in for a landing, or conversing on the pond, we always know when they are around. Canada geese are often seen in a 'V' formation when flying long distances due to what is know as the drafting effect, which helps them to conserve their energy. The leader in the front splits the air current, thus using the most energy. When they tire, they move to the back and another goose takes over the lead spot. The formation also makes it easier to maintain visual contact and communication.



Eastern tiger swallowtail puddles near Headquarters



This male eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly was seen mud-puddling near Headquarters, using his proboscis (a tube-like feeding structure similar to a tongue) to suck up nutrients from the sand. Males are attracted to sand and other substrates for the salt and amino acids they contain, which can aid in their reproductive success. They have been found to transfer these to females during mating. Eastern tiger swallowtails are a dimorphic species – females can be yellow like the males (differing with a bit of blue and orange on the hind wing) or a dark morph of an almost solid blue-black.

White-footed mouse emerges from tree along the boundary trail

One day while doing trail maintenance along the boundary trail, this white-footed mouse popped out to see what was going on. Our manager quietly watched as the mouse looked around, had a quick grooming session and then scurried out of the hole and down the tree. One of only a few species of mice in NJ, white-footed mice are the most abundant small mammal in mixed forest habitats of the eastern US. They are omnivores, feeding primarily on seeds and insects. Because of their diet, they play the ecological role of seed dispersers, spreading the seeds of trees, shrubs and other plant species across their home range.



American bullfrogs along the main pond dike



American bullfrogs are usually quick to retreat when they perceive a threat – such as our intrusion into their world – so we do not always have the opportunity to see them up close. By the time we are close enough, they have already jumped into the water and out of sight. They can easily jump a

distance of up to two meters, though generally the average is about one meter. Females and males can reach a body length of 15-20 cm, with females typically being larger than males. They have variation in color with light to dark shades of green and brown, and can be solid or spotted. On this day at our main pond, we saw several individuals along the main pond dike, like this one in the photo.

Common garter snake near one of Refuge trails

This common garter snake (the eastern subspecies) was seen near Station 13 along one of the many trails at the Refuge. A casual glance in her direction might not have discerned that she was there, given her blending in with the surround forest substrate. Our manager, however, noticed that there was something 'unusual' there and took a closer look. Garter snakes are commonly seen at the Refuge, but it is always a treat to see one. Although these snakes can grow up to four feet long, the ones we see at the Refuge are usually less than two feet. The saliva of this species is purported to be toxic to the small animals upon whom they prey. People, however, are not at risk whatsoever. We know from experience that this snake's bites are slightly irritating, but of no consequence. The snake's other defense, expelling a foul-smelling liquid from their cloaca, is a far greater deterrent (not that we would ever routinely try to handle them).

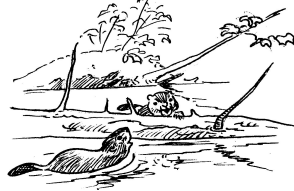


Trustee and 30+ year volunteer shares about Hope



Dave Sauder, Trustee, shared memories of patrolling the Refuge and spending time with co-founder Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci, shown here at her desk in 1994. *“During a six day 'shotgun season' in the early 1980s, I went to the Refuge to help patrol against deer hunters intruding onto the Refuge. Hope had asked that I come to the Refuge before dawn because deer hunters often began their hunts at dawn. I was directed to go to station #20 because she said hunters often led deer drives in this area. I remember there was a driving snow at the time and it was difficult to see almost anything. After staying in this area for a few hours and, thankfully, not observing any hunters, I headed back to the cabin. Hope would often invite volunteers into the cabin where she offered hot tea and vegan soup. If it was the end of the day, we were sometimes invited to sit in front of the wood stove and play a game of Scrabble. She won every time!”*

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. Provide your estate planner with our name, address and tax identification number (**237025010**). This is one of the most important gifts the Refuge can receive!

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](mailto:info@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org), stating you would like to be placed on the electronic newsletter list.

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