

Beaver Tales from Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Fall 2018

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge still seeking new manager

Our recently appointed manager is unfortunately leaving due to unforeseen circumstances. As a result, we are still looking for someone to live onsite and manage the day-to-day operation of the Refuge. If you or someone you know is interested in rewarding and challenging service to wildlife, send the following by E-mail only, to Nedim Buyukmihci, president, ned.trustee@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org: 1) letter explaining why you would be the ideal candidate; 2) résumé; and 3) at least three references, one of whom must provide a critical assessment of your abilities.

Continuing request for your E-mail address

Speaking of E-mail, please help reduce our costs, environmental damage and receive our timely bi-monthly electronic newsletters: send name & E-mail address to info@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org.

Urge NJ Governor Phil Murphy to ban leghold traps

In 1984, the Refuge was part of a coalition that was instrumental in getting leghold traps banned in NJ. The Fish and Game Council recently circumvented this law by allowing 'enclosed foothold traps'. Governor Murphy agreed that leghold traps are "horrible" and can invalidate the Council's regulation with a simple executive order. **Contact Gov Murphy and ask him to do so, now: 609.292.6000; PO Box 001, Trenton, NJ 08625**

More action to help wildlife in NJ

New Jersey residents: Please contact your legislators and ask them to **support S179 and A3110** (prime sponsors Senator Vin Gopal and Assemblyperson Daniel Benson), bills that would prohibit the manufacture, sale, possession or use of body-gripping animal traps. These traps cause horrific suffering in wildlife. 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.

Update on NJ bear hunting – your help still needed

Gov Murphy has *partially* banned bear hunting – but the bad news is that the ban is only on state land and only through 2018. Although encouraging, this is not enough. **Please continue to pressure Gov Murphy and the state legislators to do something permanently to protect this species critical to the ecosystem. See above alerts for contact information.**

Visitor enjoys natural wildness of the Refuge

Candice Burke recently spent some time at the Refuge and experienced the beauty of nature on nature's terms. "I have to say that it was definitely a different type of hiking experience than being in a public park, in a good way. Quiet, less trampled, more natural." Her 'bug hat' helped keep some of the fauna from making a meal of her. She went on to say, "I saw the turtles, a great blue heron, geese, and a few deer including a fawn. My trip through the phragmites netted me many ticks, but felt like an adventure." We encourage others to contact us to explore the Refuge: 856.697.3541 or manager@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org.



Beavers continue making a comeback

Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci, co-founder of the Refuge, was a tireless defender of beavers. She spent decades protecting these much-maligned individuals against those who condemned the species as a 'nuisance'. Due to Hope's and many others' efforts,



the North American beaver is making a strong comeback. The critical role that this persecuted keystone species plays in maintaining the health of our ecosystem is increasingly being recognized. These original 'eco-engineers' dam rivers and

streams, slow water flow, create ponds and help to reduce soil erosion and pollution. The Refuge habitat is ideal for beavers and we are glad to be part of the effort to provide these personable rodents a permanent and protected home. Along with other beaver defenders, we continue to work with the public and local governments to peacefully resolve 'conflicts' throughout New Jersey, helping to ensure that beavers will continue to live and flourish.

Refuge presence at annual Lines on the Pines event

We once again were invited to and attended the annual Lines on the Pines event. Thanks to our Trustees Dave Sauder (pictured here) and Janet Romano, we made more people aware of the Refuge and our mission to protect wildlife from harmful exploitation.



Change means new opportunities

Much of the year, our main pond is relatively open, providing a home for many species of animals and plants. During



summer, lily pads and other plants burgeon, creating a rich, green tableau.

With this come new opportunities for others who depend on the lily pads for food and shelter. Here

you can see just how dense the lily pads

were in June. Contrast this with the situation just a few months before then, when the surface of the pond was frozen and covered with snow. Note the footprints and lens flare similar to those in a photo we shared a while ago.



Hog-nosed snake fools attacker

This juvenile hog-nosed snake was being threatened by a snake of another species. When she could not scare off the other by flattening her head (see photo) and other 'aggressive' behavior, she then did



what hog-nosed snakes do well: rolled over on her back, opened her mouth to allow her tongue to loll out and lay without movement; a convincing portrayal of 'death'. Once the danger had passed, she 'miraculously'



came alive and slithered off into the undergrowth.

Welcome sighting of an eastern box turtle

This species is struggling to exist in a world of narrowing opportunities. Outright loss of habitat as well as fragmentation of existing habitat make survival difficult. The Refuge is fortunate to be able to provide an excellent environment for these wonderful reptiles.



Fungi are wildlife, too

The humid conditions at the Refuge are very conducive to the growth of many species of fungi. We do not claim to be experts on fungi, but always enjoy seeing them, even those that are not 'colorful' like the ones in these photographs. Dave Sauder, one of our Trustees, saw these during a recent visit and shared this photo.



Phellinus fungus on tree

Among the various fungi at the Refuge are numerous species of the genus *Phellinus*. Like many fungi, these grow on trees, as seen here on one of the many pine trees present on Refuge land.



Cottontail rabbit 'visits' our headquarters cabin



This cottontail rabbit was crossing in front of our cabin and stood still long enough for us to get this lovely photo. Although these rabbits thrive at the Refuge, we rarely get to see them -- let alone get nice photos -- due to their understandably furtive behavior. It is a real treat to have one stop long enough to 'study'.

Hummingbirds at the Refuge

The rich flowering plant life at the Refuge attracts many species of animals, including hummingbirds.

This individual was visiting scarlet honeysuckle near the main pond, caught in-flight on approach to a group of flowers.



Insects sharing a buttonbush

When we took this nice photo of a buttonbush with two bumblebees busily collecting nectar, we were not aware of the additional occupant. After we downloaded and were processing the photo, we noticed that there was also a large ant hanging upside down on one of the stems, adding to our – and we hope your – viewing pleasure.



Muskrat lodge in Miller Pond

We would love to share a photo of the muskrats who live at the Refuge. Unfortunately, because these rodents are so elusive, we rarely get to see them. Instead, we can show you one of their homes. Dave Sauder had his camera handy while he was surveying Miller Pond, one of our major and very picturesque wetlands, and shared this image with us.



Dragonflies at the Refuge

The standing ponds and wetlands here are great breeding grounds for many species of dragonflies. Most people never get to see the larvae who spend their lives searching for food under water. We have seen these voracious predators, but getting photographs is not practical. Instead, here are a couple adults who are abundant near and around the bodies of water.



Canada geese in Miller Pond

We never tire of observing Canada geese at the Refuge. Most often, we see them flying onto and swimming in the main pond. The group in the photo, however, were seen paddling through one of the waterways in Miller Pond, which has reverted to largely a marsh since human influence was terminated years ago and nature was allowed to 'do its thing'.



Fowler's toad and an ambitious snake

This Fowler's toad was being attacked by a snake. Of course, we would never interfere with nature, but the situation was almost comical. The snake in question was a small garter snake, surely too small to be a real threat...just overambitious.



White-tailed deer family on island in main pond

The main pond is more than just a source of water for the white-tailed deer living at the Refuge. During the summer months, when there is a burgeoning of lily pads, the deer wade into the pond to browse on these plants. This family of deer ventured out regularly onto one of the small islands some distance from



the shore, where they would spend their afternoons under the trees.

Walking stick and Refuge sign



Walking sticks comprise just a few of the myriad of insects who live at the Refuge. It seems apropos that this individual chose to settle on a sign announcing protection of wildlife. (As an aside, you might notice that this sign was nailed to a tree, something no longer allowed at the Refuge. Our current policy is that all signs must be placed on posts

independent of plant life. One of our long-term projects is to replace all signs attached to trees and we are always in need of volunteers to assist with this task. If you are interested in helping, let us know.)

Belted kingfisher fishing in main pond



This belted kingfisher had just returned to this perch after catching a fish. We, of course, feel sorry for the fish, but we can take comfort in knowing that the animals (and plants) at the Refuge live freely as nature 'intended' and that, unlike us, their dietary choices often of necessity result

in one life ending so that another may continue.

Helping wildlife and the Refuge today



Unexpected Wildlife Refuge is an inviolate sanctuary for hundreds of animal and plant species, some highly endangered, and we ensure them the best chance possible for survival. *We depend on the support of our donors to keep the Refuge safe. We – and the wildlife – could not exist without you. We know that you have limited resources and need to consider which of numerous worthwhile causes to support. We hope, however, that you can find it possible to give us a donation – today – of any amount. 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 and with a paid staff of one and a completely voluntary Council of Trustees. Despite this, even our small operating costs continue to exceed our donations.*

Considering a yard sale?

Why not use the proceeds from that yard sale you have been planning, to help the Refuge? Rid yourself of those items you no longer need and help wildlife at the same 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 (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!

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:

- Nedim C. Buyukmihci, story contributor and editor
- Sarah Kite, copy-editor
- Dave Sauder, photographs

For all wildlife everywhere, we thank you!
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