

New Headquarters finished



The construction of our new Headquarters is now completed. Jen has relocated our office to the new building, which has made a huge difference to the smooth running of the Refuge. In addition to the many functions that the office now performs, we are delighted that it is also attracting other visitors, such as a family of black vultures who raised their young in the attic of the next door cabin barn and used the roof of the Headquarters during the fledging process. We are deeply indebted to all who donated towards the cost of this new building. **If you would like to contribute towards our remaining debt on this, please send a donation in any amount.**



Refuge appoints a new Trustee



We are pleased to announce the appointment of Navin Sasikumar as a Trustee on the Council of Trustees. Navin, a software engineer by trade, is a vegan and an enthusiastic admirer and protector of wildlife. He is particularly interested in birds (photo, foreground) and spends much of his free time observing and photographing them. We look forward to his involvement with the Refuge.

Thanks to Outdoor Club of South Jersey for donation

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge thanks the Outdoor Club of South Jersey (OCSJ) for their generous donation of \$1,000 to help us in our mission to protect wildlife. Representatives Pat Burton, Chris Denneler and Millicent Moore came to the Refuge in June to present us with the check. On hand were Jen Collins, our manager, and Trustee Dave Sauder (see photo, taken by Millicent; from left to right: Pat, Chris, Jen and Dave). We greatly appreciate this 'unexpected' help and hope others will join OCSJ in supporting the Refuge.



Surge in visitors and volunteers

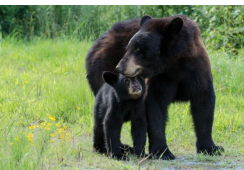


The COVID-19 situation has been tragic in many respects. Locally, however, it seems to have stimulated people to seek time in natural habitats like the Refuge. We have had numerous visitors over the last few months, more than usual for the time of year. People have been able to spend time enjoying the thriving habitat here and getting to see many of the animals and plants in residence.



We have also had people volunteer with some of the ongoing projects at the Refuge. One of the most important is keeping our many trails cleared enough for relatively easy access by visitors. Two of the recent volunteers to help with this included Alyssa Condell and Jacob Safier, pictured here. We are grateful for their generosity in taking the time and effort to work on this never-ending task. If you are interested in helping with this rewarding work or other projects, please contact Jen, our manager, at 856.697.3541 or via E-mail to manager@unexpectedwildliferefuge.org.

Refuge joins coalition set up to stop bear hunt in NJ



Unexpected Wildlife Refuge has joined a coalition that has been established to stop the bear hunt in New Jersey. A petition has been filed with the Department of Environmental Protection to repeal rules permitting bear hunting. The Coalition has also sent a letter to

Governor Murphy urging him to issue an executive order to stop the 2020 bear hunt.

Please take action to end wildlife killing contests in NJ



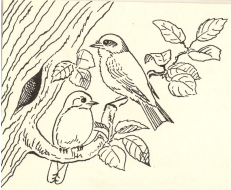
Wildlife killing contests, where people take part in cruel and sickening contests to kill the most and heaviest animals such as coyotes, foxes and squirrels, have already been banned in AZ, CA, MA, NM and VT. Other states, including NJ, NY, CO, MD, NH, OR and WA, are considering bills or proposed regulations to ban them. If you live in NJ, contact your state legislators and urge them to support **S3541** and **A5224**, bills that would end these contests in NJ.

Helping wildlife and Unexpected Wildlife Refuge today

The Refuge is home and sanctuary for hundreds of animal and plant species, some highly endangered, and ensures their best chance for survival. We depend on the support of our donors to keep the Refuge safe. We – and the wildlife – could not exist without you. May we rely on your continued support? A donation today – no matter how small – will help us to continue our important work and secure the future of the Refuge. We care for these 767 acres with a small operating budget, one paid staff and a voluntary Council of Trustees.



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!

Story of the bumblebee and the wild daffodil

In early spring, we are often greeted with the early blooming wild daffodil. Early flowers are beneficial to many insects including hungry bumblebee queens having recently emerged from hibernation. After about six months of hibernating, this bumblebee likely had very little energy until she clung to this wild daffodil taking her first sips of nectar. These early sources of food are crucial so that she may fly off in search of a nest site and start her colony. In return, the daffodil benefits from her 'service' of pollination.



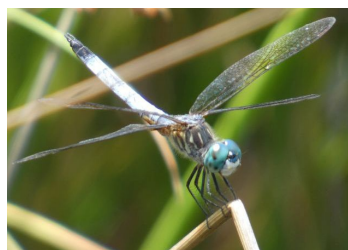
White-tailed deer and wild turkeys via trail camera



The site we recently chose for one of our trail cameras has yielded an abundance of images. Jen, our manager, sorted through several thousand to find the best for us to keep. In addition to the mink and otters we mention later, several white-tailed deer showed up one day, milling around the site, nibbling on moss and drinking from the edge of the swamp. A few days later, a small flock of wild turkeys made an appearance. The birds seemed to become a bit confused before continuing on.



Variety of skimmer dragonflies make the Refuge their home



The vast water habitat at the Refuge is a haven for many species of dragonflies including those referred to as skimmers, like the male blue dasher in the first photo. Dragonflies depend on water for part of their life cycle. Females lay eggs in or near the water. After hatching, the nymphs spend up to several years in the water, eventually climbing out onto vegetation where they

will shed their exoskeleton (exuvia) and emerge as the winged insect with whom most people are familiar. In the second photo, you can see the freshly shed skin behind a newly emerged female yellow-sided skimmer. We spotted her resting near the main pond while her wings dried out before flying off in search of food and a mate. Within about a week, she will have achieved full adult coloration to include yellow and brown markings on her wings. The species here are sexually dimorphic, meaning that females and males appear different once their full adult coloration has been reached, the males being more brightly colored. Male skimmers are known to defend their small territories from other males of the same species. Females choose their mates based on who offers the best area for her to lay her eggs.



Wood frog along Cedar Bridge Trail



This wood frog eyed us nervously as he sat in this little hollow of earth along a swampy area of Cedar Bridge Trail. Wood frogs have a distinct black marking across their eyes, almost appearing as if they are wearing a mask. Adults usually live in woodlands and lay their eggs in vernal pools. During winter, they take shelter in leaf litter and are very tolerant of cold temperatures. During the freezing weather of winter, they stop breathing and their hearts stop beating. Their bodies produce a substance that acts as an antifreeze, preventing ice from forming within their cells.

Cedar waxwing visits Headquarters

On a spring day, Trustee Leor Veleanu visited the Refuge and spotted this cedar waxwing in a tree near our new Headquarters. These birds stand out due to their distinct and unique color patterns and smooth, shiny feathers. Their diet consists primarily of berries. In the winter, they may eat twice their body weight each day, around 800-1,000 berries. They can sometimes appear drunk after feasting on overripe fermented berries. When a male waxwing sets out in search of a mate, he often carries a berry which he then passes to the female in an effort to impress her. The female waxwing then takes the berry and returns it to him, repeating the gifting ritual until eventually, mating takes place.



Fowler's toad at Miller Pond



This Fowler's toad seen hopping around the banks of Miller Pond is one of three species of toads found in New Jersey. Unlike the similar American toad who has one or two bumps per dark spot on their back, Fowler's toads have three or more bumps per spot. Though not unusual

to see toads about during the day, it is also likely that she would be hiding in a burrow or nestled beneath forest debris. When the sun sets, she will then be more active, foraging for insects. Although more highly active after a heavy rainfall, Fowler's toads are often encountered on roads, even on dry nights. It is always a slow and careful drive into the Refuge, especially at or past dusk when toads abound.

Red-bellied woodpecker on pine tree



Trustee Leor Veleanu photographed this male red-bellied woodpecker foraging for insects on a pine tree. The bird was using his bill as a chisel to drill into the bark. Males have more red feathering on their heads, with some around the beak, whereas the red feathers of the female are farther back on the head. One of several woodpecker species here at the Refuge, red-bellied woodpeckers

may be confused with their close relative, the red-headed woodpecker, also seen at the Refuge. Although both have red plumage on their heads, in the red-headed woodpecker it completely covers the head. The holes they create play an important role for other species, such as squirrels and bats who use the cavities as shelter.

American mink and north American river otters



One of our trail cameras recorded this sequence of events when an American mink fled from two north American river otters one morning. In the entire sequence, the mink appears to be walking along, unaware of the coming otters. She suddenly becomes alert and turns to run away as the first otter enters

the area. As the mink escapes into the swamp, a second otter appears and seems to become aware that the mink had been present earlier. The mink was 'right' in running away as otters will prey on mink. You can see the entire sequence and more taken by the trail camera that same day on our Web site.



Northern red-bellied turtles nest at Headquarters



The new headquarters has been a highly trafficked location for female turtles looking to lay their eggs. Northern red-bellied turtles choose to lay their eggs near water, digging a hole about ten cm deep and depositing 10-20 eggs, after which they cover the nest

back up and return to the water. Females are generally larger than males and their plastron (the underside portion of the shell) is a bright red whereas males' tend to be a lighter pink. About 11 weeks after laying her eggs, hatchlings will emerge and make their way to the water. Over the next couple of weeks we anticipate the arrival of an untold number of hatchlings around the Headquarters.

Beavers on the move

Our trail cameras afford us the opportunity to view some of the residents of the Refuge that we might otherwise miss. Because these beavers were not carrying anything back with them as they returned to the water, we suspect this trip had more to do with foraging than building or adding onto existing structures. Beavers can usually relax a bit in the spring as an abundance of vegetation brought by the season pauses their need to stockpile food. Beavers are herbivores, feasting on trees as well as plants that grow in or near the water including water lilies, grasses and clovers. By their size, we can tell that these are adult beavers, although, outside of a nursing mother, it is almost impossible to tell females and males apart without much closer examination.



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