

October 2014
Volume XVII
No. 4



News from the Coastal North Carolina National Wildlife Refuges Complex

Alligator River, Pea Island, Pocosin Lakes,
Roanoke River, Mackay Island, and Currituck

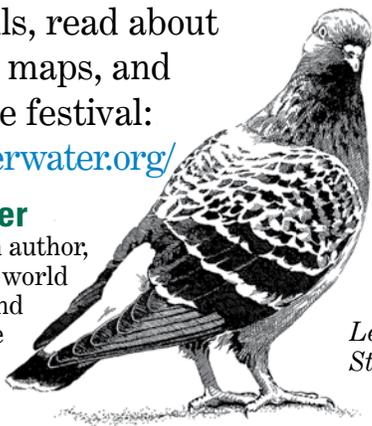
Wings Over Water 2014

Wings Over Water is one of the premier wildlife festivals in the country. With nearly 100 programs involving birding, paddling, plants, photography, history, art and more, there truly is something to interest everyone. Well OK, there's no football! But we do have expert leaders from around the region who gather annually to guide and educate hundreds of participants. *Wings Over Water* has been enjoyed for over 17 years. This year we have participants representing four countries (including Netherlands, Canada and Great Britain) and over 18 states, including as far away as Alaska. Go to our website to get all details, read about programs, see maps, and register for the festival:

<http://wingsoverwater.org/>

Keynote Speaker

Noah Strycker is an author, hiker, tennis player, world traveler, educator and avid birder. He's the keynote speaker on Saturday evening

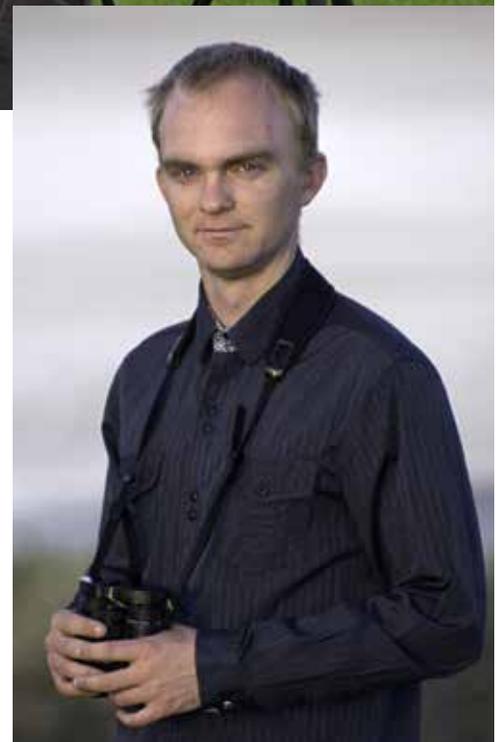


Left: pen and ink drawing by Noah Strycker; right: Noah Strycker



Birding North Pond on Pea Island, credit: USFWS/Hillebrand

October 25th, 6-9 pm. This event is a dinner and lecture held at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island. The dinner will be catered by Kelley's Restaurant. Noah is also presenting a lecture for one of our *Wings Over Water* programs regarding his work with Adélie penguins in Antarctica. This program is scheduled for Wednesday October 22nd from 6:30 - 8:30 pm, also at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center. You may read about Noah's fascinating penguin work and time in Antarctica in his first book, *Among the Penguins*, available in our refuge gift shops. Some of the other programs available are mentioned throughout this issue of the newsletter.



New Artists on Display Fall Wildlife and Wildlands Art Expo Reception October 10th 5-8 pm at National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center

The National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island in partnership with the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society and the Dare County Arts Council, hosts a series of Wildlife and Wildlands of Eastern North Carolina Art Expos each year.

The Reception for the Fall Art Expo will open with an evening reception on **Friday, October 10th from 5 until 8 pm.** The reception, Art Expos, and admission to the Visitor Center are free and open to the public. Artwork will be exhibited in the 100-seat auditorium of the new Visitor Center. The exhibits gallery will also be open.

Artists for this show include:

Ray Lamantia a contemporary artist,

Vic Berg of Outerbanks Waterfowl,

Jeff Lewis renowned wildlife photographer,

Lara Neece of Forest & Fin

Helen Durant, known for her exquisite sketches of Red Wolves

Refuge Manager Mike Bryant says he's proud to see the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service "stepping out of the box." Bryant explained,

"These Art Expos are a great example of partnership between a federal agency and the local community. Everyone benefits. The Refuge's main goal is to attract new people to our facility, so we can show them who we are and what we do. And, we're excited to be able to provide a means to economically benefit some of our local artists."

Artists interested in participating in one of the Art Expos should send five images of their work or a link to their a website that displays examples of their work, along with the artist's biography to Tammy_Batschelet@fws.gov or call Tammy Batschelet at 252/473 1132 x 226 for more information.

Contemporary art of red wolf by Helen Durant



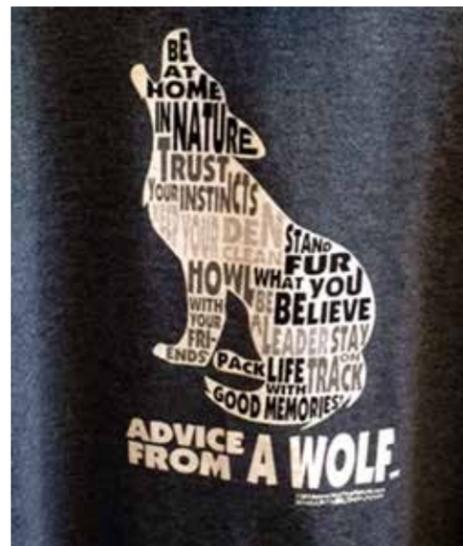
Wild Things Book Store Update

Our store has lots of new products from stocking stuffers to awesome gifts. Start your holiday shopping now for unique gifts that last a lifetime! Of course, you might find something just for you.

We now carry Northwoods pocket card guides, great for children to learn tracks, scats and birds! At only 1"x 4", these laminated cards can easily slip in your pocket or pack.

For those unexpected showers that frequent our area, how about an affordable umbrella that allows you to *Take a Walk on the Wild Side* any time. And of course, we have a new selection of books that are both entertaining and educational.

Come check us out!



New items in the Gift Shop! Come in and check 'em out! Photos by USFWS.

Red Wolf Recovery Program Update

Please help us welcome our most recent addition to the Red Wolf Recovery Program, Ryan! He is the red wolf caretaker intern at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for September through December 2014.

Ryan was born and raised in Alton, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River in the suburbs of Saint Louis, Missouri. He graduated in May 2013 from Southeast Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife/Conservation Biology and a minor in Environmental Science.

After graduation, he worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation as a fisheries field biologist, traveling statewide sampling various fish species and performing water quality surveys in streams and rivers. He also was an intern at The Wilds in Ohio, and participated in their Eastern Hellbender reintroduction program. At The Wilds, he assisted with herpetology and carnivore field and research work.

Most recently, he has been interning at Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge since April before joining us this month. Ryan has always enjoyed being outside and seeing what nature has to offer. In his spare time he likes to hike, fish, camp, travel, attend sporting events (especially St. Louis Cardinals baseball), and spend time with family and friends. His goal is to become a wildlife biologist or zookeeper working with carnivores, fish, or herpetology. Eventually he hopes to attend graduate school to get his MS and further a career in wildlife research and conservation.

He is passionate about working with endangered and threatened species, especially carnivores.

We're lucky to have Ryan as he brings a wonderful skill set of animal handling skills, knowledge of carnivore biology, and passion to protect and conserve imperiled species to this position.



Red Wolf Caretaker Intern Ryan Rose, credit: Ryan Rose

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society Support Your Wildlife Refuges

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is a Friends group that supports your local refuges. Members of the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society donate time and work on the refuges. They are involved in picking up trash, painting signs, leading bird talks and walks, patrolling for sea turtle nests and much more. Alligator River, Pea Island and Pocosin Lake National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Centers are staffed by Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society volunteers. Our refuges would not be as accessible and productive as they currently are without the amazing help and funding provided by Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society members and volunteers.

How do you become a member?

Making a donation is one way. Volunteering to be on a work crew is another. Or, you can become one of the visitor center volunteer staff members. For more details contact volunteer coordinator, Tracey Rock at 252/473 1132 X 227 or tracey_rock@fws.gov

To make a donation mail a check to: CWRS, P.O. Box 1808, Manteo, NC 27954 or use your Visa or MasterCard on line at: <http://coastalwildliferefuge.com/index.html> or, call 252/216 9464 with your credit card information. You will receive a thank you letter/receipt for tax purposes.

Volunteer Spotlight on Linda and LaMont Warren

LaMont and Linda Warren moved to the Outer Banks from Chesapeake VA almost seven years ago. LaMont is a retired accountant, and Linda is a retired English teacher. When LaMont's not patrolling the beach for turtle nests, and he and Linda are not volunteering at the Pea Island Visitor Center, they are turtle nest sitting, delivering for Food for Thought, delivering meals for the Baum Center Senior Nutrition Program, or helping at Ruthie's Kitchen. In their "spare" time they enjoy traveling, being with family, and exploring the beach.

You'll find Linda and LaMont's beautiful and smiling faces (we'll let you decide which belongs to which!) most Wednesdays at the Pea Island Visitor Center. Both friendly and knowledgeable of all things Pea Island, they will gladly meet and greet our refuge visitors, staff, interns, volunteers and friends to answer questions or just shoot the breeze. Stop in and say hello the next Wednesday you are in the vicinity of Pea Island.

As Linda and LaMont expressed, "We feel blessed to be able to volunteer and to help our Outer Banks community."

We are equally blessed to have them as dedicated friends and supporters of our refuges.



WOW: eBird 101

Record the birds you see, keep track of your bird lists, explore dynamic maps and graphs, share your sightings and join the eBird community and contribute to science and conservation.

eBird is a real-time, online checklist program. It's revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution. In this *Wings Over Water* program you will first go out into the field and do some basic birding. When you return to the classroom, your leader, Nate Swick, will guide you through entering the birding data you've collected. You'll learn what other birders are observing and where the birds are located. This is a great tool and resource for all birders. Don't miss out on getting all of the details on how to get started in this global internet birding program. This program is set for Friday October 24, 2014 from 2 - 4 pm at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island.

WOW: Exploring Historic Portsmouth Island Village

National Park Service caretaker David Frum is the authority on all things having to do with the history of Portsmouth village, a forgotten town on Portsmouth Island, located just south of Ocracoke Island. Portsmouth was a shipping and fishing village established in 1753 and abandoned 200 years later. Part of the Cape Lookout National Seashore, over a dozen buildings are currently maintained as the Portsmouth Village Historic District. David will share his extensive knowledge about the wildlife, birds, history and people of the area. It's a fascinating, maybe once-in-a-lifetime trip that you really don't want to miss. This trips leaves from Ocracoke Island on Saturday October 25 at 8 am and returns at 1 pm.



Historic Portsmouth Island Village, credit National Park Service

WOW: Wildlife Sketching with John Sill

John is a wonderful, talented and award-winning wildlife artist. He has worked as a freelance artist and illustrator since 1971. His art has been exhibited in highly-acclaimed shows and appeared in a number of books and magazines. John was the illustrator for the Bird Identification Calendar published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society from its beginning in 1980 until 2007. He has given workshops on field sketching for the American Birding Association and other venues. While the subjects of most of John's work have been birds (both real and imagined), his illustrations for his wife Cathryn's much-awarded *About* series of natural history books for children have expanded his art to include other wildlife. Some of the books in that series are: *About Raptors: a Guide for Children*, *About Birds*, *About Mammals*, *About Reptiles*, *About Fish*, *About Rodents*, *About Amphibians* and many others. For the third year in a row, John returns to teach a basic class in bird and wildlife sketching. This class will focus on waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds. If there is time, raptors and non-birds may be covered. Using an overhead projector, John will demonstrate how to outline and draw what you see. By the end of class, you will have a good idea of how to draw basic birds and maybe more. If you are



Rufous Hummingbird, the American Birding Association's 2014 Bird of the Year, by John Sill. Used by permission. www.aba.org

a more advanced illustrator, John can help you refine and expand your talent. Classes are offered both Friday October 24 and Saturday October 25. Both classes are from 2 - 4 pm at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island.

WOW: Young Birder's Introduction to Birding (Ages 9-14)

Are you interested in watching birds? Would you like to learn the difference between a gull and a tern? Are you overwhelmed by all the pictures in a bird book? Here is your chance to experience birding with two of North Carolina's most enthusiastic, up-and-coming birding fanatics.

You'll begin by learning to use binoculars to identify birds by shape, color and behavior. Discover that you can use your ears to identify birds by song. Spend the morning having a great time observing and studying the fantastic birds along North Pond's famous south dike trail. Parents may either leave their child for the three-hour program or a parent is welcome to join their child for FREE and be a part of the birding experience.



what kind of owl ?/ credit: USFWS/ Orsulak

Scott Winton and Nate Swick are top birders and very excited to share their knowledge of birding with up-and-coming birders. Parents need to plan ahead for this program, because it is held at the Pea Island Visitor Center. If you are not going to participate in the program with your child, you might plan to take a nice beach walk or bring a good book to read during the three hours that your child will be busy. This program runs from 8:30 - 11:30 am on Saturday October 25, 2014.



Bobcat, credit: USFWS/Orsulak

WOW: Alligator River Refuge and Mattamuskeet Refuge Tram Tours (Family Friendly)

On Tuesday October 22, we have an Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge tram tour. On Saturday October 25, you'll be able to tour Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge on the tram. Both trips begin at 9 am and last for a couple of hours. The tram is a great way to see the refuges in a relaxing and yet informative style.

Your trip leader will share information about your national wildlife refuges. Your leader will also talk about the various birds and wildlife you see or might see on your tour. And finally, you'll also learn some interesting local history about the area in which you are traveling. Stops will be made along the way to allow you to use your binoculars, camera or even a scope if you're brought it along. So sign up and then sit back and let us do the driving as you experience one or both refuges from the ease of your tram tour. Both of these trips are 'Family Friendly.' That means a parent can bring up to two children 12 or under with them for free.

WOW: Pea Island Plant Hike

All of our refuges are full of interesting vegetation. But Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge has a uniquely harsh environment that requires an adaptive set of plants that survive the windy, salty and sandy environment growing between sound and sea.

Bob Glennon is one of the top native plant authorities east of the Mississippi. Plants are often the least-recognized element in our refuge environments. Plants provide shelter, safety and food for the creatures who live on the refuge. And plants help stabilize the fragile, moving landscape so evident on Pea Island. Between your two trip leaders, Refuge staffer Cindy Heffley and Bob, you'll learn more in two hours than most people will learn in a lifetime.

Meet at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center on Wednesday October 22 from 9 -11 am.

You'll have a great time, see a lot of wildlife, meet some interesting people and go away refreshed when you become a part of Wings Over Water. Register today!

Nature Through the Eyes of Children

by Bob Glennon,
Refuge Volunteer

As an ‘irregular’ volunteer, I have the opportunity to assist the refuge staff with a variety of programs and chores. Over the past year, I’ve had the privilege to assist and sometimes substitute for Visitor Services Specialist Cindy Heffley with the Friday morning Preschool Program. Cindy always selects great books to read to the children and crafts that engage them. The highlight of the program, though, is the nature walk that usually occupies the last half hour of the program.

The children are ages two through five. Some can barely walk; many cannot speak clearly yet. However, when they get out on the nature trail, they are all truly impressive. ‘Miss Cindy,’ another volunteer or I give each child a magnifying glass, and they follow us out the back door. Then the magic happens. They morph into junior naturalists eager and willing to explore anything and everything along that trail.

Whether the children are ‘regulars’ who have been attending for 18 months or are ‘first-timers,’ Miss Cindy encourages them to observe the world around them. And they do not miss a thing. No flower, no berry, no mushroom, no spider; no spider web is small enough to escape their inquisitive eyes. Many of the regulars bring the walking sticks that they made in one session and help us turn over logs to look for insects and lizards. Everybody enjoys working on the ‘picking logs’ and discovering the termites and millipedes that inhabit the rotting trunks.

We always review certain stops on the trail, especially the pine tree nursery where an opening in the canopy has allowed pine seed to germinate and grow into plants as tall as the children. As plants in the native plant garden flower and make seed and fruit, they enjoy using their magnifying glasses to observe even the smallest detail.

The program is well worth the time for both the children and caregivers, whether they come every week or just pop in for a single visit. It is held from 10 until 11 am on Friday mornings in the classroom at the Refuge Visitor Center in Manteo.

Two Alligator River NWR Biologists Go North

In early August, biologists Dennis Stewart and Brian Van Druten headed to Purvirnituk, Quebec, Canada to assist the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) with banding migratory Canada Geese from the Atlantic Population. This project began in 1997 and uses participants from both the CWS and U.S. wildlife agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or state wildlife agencies.

Each year from late July to mid-August, banding crews capture and band brood flocks of Canada Geese along the northern Hudson Bay. Work was done out of a helicopter and the team stayed in a remote field camp approximately 60 km southwest of Purvirnituk.

The team of five, four biologists and one pilot, flew an area along the coast roughly 185 km long and up to 40 km inland searching for flocks of geese. Once a

sizable group was sighted, the helicopter flew circles around the geese to tighten the flock. Next, the helicopter did a touch down where two biologists got off the helicopter to try to start holding the flock, usually initiated by a sprint in hip boots across the uneven tundra terrain. The helicopter would re-lift and swing around to cut off the flock. Once secured, funnel-shaped traps made of netting were set up and the flightless birds were driven into a holding pen.

During the 10 days in the field, 42 total catches were made with 712 adults and 710 goslings banded. There were also 57 recaptures of previously banded geese, including a goose that was banded as an adult in 1997, making it at least 18 years old!

Unfortunately, productivity was below average for this nesting season. In addition to Canada Geese, Dennis and

Brian saw many other cool things such as Caribou (daily), Snowy Owls, nesting Rough-legged Hawks, a wolf, and many beautiful rivers and waterfalls. They also met some great native people when visiting Purvirnituk. On their final night in camp, they were treated to, as stated by the biologists from the CWS, the best Northern Lights display seen in the camp in 15 years! The sky was illuminated in brilliant green and white hues that were truly spectacular. The only downside of the trip was learning about the tundra’s biting insects, namely mosquitos and lots of black flies!



One of the “picking logs” on the trail is always a hit with the children, credit USFWS.

Environmental Education Update



Kindergarten students enjoy hearing a story about birds before doing a craft during the Kindergarten Young Naturalist Program, credit USFWS.



A student in the sixth grade Young Naturalist Program discusses some of the dangers facing sea turtles, credit USFWS.

2014 Fall/Winter Guided Interpretive Programs

Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges

Preschool Young Naturalist Program

10-11 am Year-round Fridays

National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center
Roanoke Island

Contact Cindy Heffley at 252/475 4180 for information.

Pea Island Bird Walk

8-9:30 am Year-round Fridays (except October 24)

Saturday Tram Tours 9 am-noon

October 11 November 8 December 13

Join us for a trip around the refuge and learn about the wild lands and wildlife. Bring your binoculars and camera! Drinking water and insect repellent are also recommended. Tram seating is limited. To guarantee your tram seats, you may register ahead of time and pay \$10 per person. Children 12 and under may register for free with one or more paying adults. Unreserved seats will be filled at no charge on a first-come/first-served basis on the morning of the tour. The program will occur except with lightning, heavy wind or rain, or impassable road conditions. Dress for the weather! Call 252/216 9464 for reservations. Meet at Creef Cut Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Highway 64 west of Manns Harbor).

Free Saturday Red Wolf Howlings

October 11 6-7:30 pm

November 15 5-6:30 pm

December 6 5-6:30 pm

Meet at Creef Cut Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Highway 64 west of Manns Harbor).

Wings over Water October 21-26

Alligator River/Pea Island
National Wildlife Refuges
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100 Conservation Way (physical)
Manteo, NC 27954

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