



Marsh Musings

Newsletter of the Friends of Heinz Refuge at Tinicum

Summer 2009/Volume 0309

Come One ~ Come All

The Cradle of Birding Wildlife & Conservation Festival Awaits You !!

Come enjoy free food, live music, live animals, special tours, great speakers, and dozens of exciting exhibits at the 6th annual Cradle of Birding Festival. The festival will be held this year on Saturday, September 19th at the John Heinz National Refuge at Tinicum, in collaboration with the Delaware County Riverfest Ramble. Sponsored by the Friends of the Heinz Refuge and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, we are looking forward to another WILD day at the refuge.

The 2009 festival will feature keynote speaker and Philly's hometown birding expert Frank Windfelder, vice-president and long time active field trip leader for the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (DVOC). Frank has been an avid birder for over 30 years and well known local expert. Frank has birded across North America, including Alaska and Churchill, Manitoba, as well as Spain, Hong Kong, Guatemala, Ecuador and Bulgaria. Frank's many published articles appear in "Cassinia", the club's journal and his numerous birding and nature club presentations have helped many local birders develop their avian field skills. In 2005, Frank conducted a year-long Bird Census at Palmyra Cove Nature Park in New Jersey. In 2007, his "Big Year" in Philadelphia, set a new record with 233 bird species recorded within the city limits. Frank's keynote program will feature where, when and how you too can find many bird species right here in Philadelphia.



WOW !!
We Are Glad We Came To The Cradle of Birding



VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED TO MAKE THIS ALL HAPPEN!

Exhibit setup, tour guides, roving naturalists, costume wearers, hosting receptionists, service projects supervision/helpers, promotion, refreshments bookstore and funding are just a few of the areas where you can get involved. You can make a difference by staffing the festival. To do your part and sign up as staff contact Refuge Manager, Gary Stolz at (215) 365-3118, stop by the office or email gary_stolz@fws.gov right away and with your help we will look forward to another fun and exciting festival.

"Friends" memberships and donations are extremely important to the Refuge. Evidence of your support makes it easier for us to obtain grants and other funding for new projects that will enhance the Refuge, and your wildlife experiences here.



Marsh Musings

A quarterly publication of the Friends of the Heinz Refuge at Tincum

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The Friends of the Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tincum is a non-profit cooperating association founded in 1997 to assist the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service in carrying out its educational, interpretive, and public use missions.

Thanks to Our New and Renewing Members In the Last Calendar Quarter

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Patrick Creane |  | George Fieo |
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And to Those Who Made Donations

- | | |
|--|---|
| Southeast Archery,
Folcroft, PA | Fishing Line, Bait,
and Other Tackle |
| Ampro,
Primos, PA | "Take-Me-Fishing"
Tee-Shirt Printing |
| Anonymous Donor | \$2500.00 |



The official registration and financial information of the Friends of the Heinz Refuge at Tincum may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.

Registration does not imply endorsement.

The Fabulous Work of Brookhaven Artist Steve Oliver Returns

By Bill Buchanan, USFWS

One of the most popular exhibits to grace the walls of the Cusano Environmental Education Center at the Heinz Refuge was that of Steve Oliver. The Brookhaven, Delaware County resident's renderings in acrylics, ink, and colored pencils two years ago were met with rave reviews from visitors and staff alike. Well hold on to your hats folks because we are having Steve back from mid-August through mid-November.



Just one
gorgeous
example
of Steve
Oliver's
Work!
A "must-
see"

Steve was born in the Thousand Island region of upstate New York where he first began his close association with the natural world. His love of the wildlife he grew to know so well, and his life-long ambition to be an artist convinced him in 1995 to leave his position as a service manager for a trucking company to pursue a career as a wildlife and nature artist.

Although self taught, Steve's natural ability, along with his continuous pursuit of the study of the lives and habitats of the critters he captures in his art, are evident in the accolades of those who know and love his work. He has spent a great deal of time trekking off into the wilderness throughout the country to photograph, sketch, and take notes on the wildlife that seems to come to life in the artwork he creates.

We invite you to come in and see Steve's work for yourself from August 20 through the second week in November at the refuge visitor center, which is open every day from 8:30AM to 4PM. You can also get a preview of his art as well as all the awards he has won, other venues that will be hosting his work, and much more by visiting his website at: www.steveoliverart.com.

Welcome back, Steve!

What If a Bird Sings And No One Hears It?

By: Sam Hamilton,
Recently Appointed Director of the USFWS

Birds are a national treasure, one shared with neighboring countries well beyond our own continent. Nearly 1,000 different kinds of wild birds call the United States their home at some part of the year. Sadly, 74 of those species are considered endangered or threatened, and nearly 150 have been named "Birds of Conservation Concern" due to their small distribution, declining populations, or the high threats they face.

Now we are dealing with a new, more insidious problem that is threatening public support for successful bird conservation programs. While new generations of birds still sing, younger generations of Americans may not stop to listen or even care.

Our planet is home to the most technologically connected generation in the history of the world, yet they are increasingly disconnected from the rhythms of nature. They are connected to the Internet, text messages, and 300 TV and cable channels, but disengaged from the natural rhythms of the world around them. Growing up not on farms, but coming of age in exurbs, suburbs, and cities, our youngest Americans are attuned to modern distractions unimaginable a generation ago.

Today, (technological) diversions are inescapable, overwhelming, and precluding our gaze out the window, down the stream, or across a meadow to appreciate and better understand the natural world.

But as evidenced by their turnout in the last national election, this highly-connected generation *can* rally together and move in one direction with speed and efficiency. Culturally relevant and economically powerful, this group of 18- to 30-year-olds has a proven ability to influence national movements and affect the direction of our nation in a profound way. *If this generation can become more aware of and concerned with loss of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, perhaps literal mountains may not be moved, but large swaths of critical native landscapes could be saved and properly managed.*

What Better Reason For Us to Establish Programs in Which No Child is Left Inside???

Getting the Picture At the First Refuge Summer Photo Camp

By Bill Buchanan, USFWS

From August 3 – 7 a half dozen youngsters from 12 to 16 years of age participated in the first ever Refuge Summer Photo Camp. Refuge staff member and FOHR Photo Group/USFWS Liaison, Bill Buchanan, served as coordinator and moderator. Mentoring the “campers” for all their field work were Photo Group members, Ron Holmes, Frank Doyle, and Frank Miles. Refuge Visitor Services Supervisor, Suzanne Kelley, served as co-leader of the camp with Buchanan and also arranged for all the lunches, snacks, and beverages throughout the week.

The first day of the camp included a good deal of classroom work, including a PowerPoint presentation developed by Photo Group member, Mark Bohn, on both the technical and creative aspects of photography. This is the same material used in the Photo Group’s “Learning about the Environment Thru the Lens”, or TTL program. Each of the “campers” received a wealth of handout material on photography, Tinicum Marsh, wetlands in general, and the refuge. In addition they each received a CD with all of the lesson plans, photo examples of the technical aspects of photography, such as depth of field, and utilizing different focal lengths, as well as Mark’s PowerPoint presentation.

After the classroom work it was out to the “field” to try to capture images based on the theme “*Connections in Nature*”. The first round of photo field work took campers and mentors out to our new universally accessible trail. Later we went out to the observation platform which overlooks the impoundment. After a quick review of the day’s activities the campers were given CD’s to burn their 10 best images for review on the next day. These activities were repeated daily.

On the final day, Friday, campers were tasked with creating a PowerPoint presentation or similar “slide show” showing what they had learned about both photography and the refuge and its environs. Family and friends were invited and everyone seemed impressed with what their campers had accomplished in the one short week.

The ensuing results showed that overall the campers improved each day both in their technical and creative skills. A few showed real talent from the start. But over and above the increase in photographic skills, it seemed as though everyone had a great time; campers and mentors alike.

The Friends of the Heinz Refuge partnered with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, providing funds for lunches, snacks, and beverages for the campers and mentors.



Campers L to R are: Collin Reilly, Nicole Zuppo, Angelique Zuppo, and Patrick Reilly.

Mentors L to R: Frank Doyle, Ron Holmes, and Frank Miles

Out on the trail the campers focus on a flowery shrub abounding with insect life.

Top two photos by: Bill Buchanan



On the trail again, the campers are checking out the technical aspects of good photography as taught in their orientation classes.

Budding nature photographers, and mentor Ron Holmes set their sights on tree swallows.

Bottom two photos by: Frank Doyle



This Living Thing We Call the Refuge

By Bill Buchanan, USFWS

Sometimes, when we allow ourselves to let our minds wander and begin to ponder the “bigger picture” we come away with a whole new perspective on things we may have taken for granted for so long. Case in point; realizing just how complex and wonderfully intertwined are all the parts that make up the refuge, and nature as a whole.

Take a walk pretty much any place and you will find nature’s connections everywhere. How Darby Creek ebbs and flows to bring nutrients of life we may never see to Tinicum Marsh. How vegetation that grows and dies off in the impoundment sets the stage for an outburst of micro life. This, in turn, feeds larger animals that seem to suddenly appear as if from thin air. We can judge the growth of trees by the way they have shot up, along with the Philadelphia skyline, so that the former is now shielding out the view of the latter. We must now find new vantage points from which to see that wonderful juxtaposition of nature and what man has created upon the landscape.

Swallows feed on the wing. They are literally snatching food from the air; insects that just a few days, or even a few hours, prior may have been in larval form, suspended by the surface tension of the water, or under a curled leaf. The magnificent osprey hovers over the impoundment, pulls its wings back, and dives in for a fish. The fish has grown fat on vegetation and smaller aquatic species. These have fed on minute micro animals which, in turn, have consumed bacteria and other microorganisms in a soup that is the organic foundation of the food chain.

Turtles begin their yearly trek to bury leathery eggs. Their young hatch and will never know the warmth and protection that a newly born fawn enjoys as it suckles its mother’s milk in its first days of life. The milk that was created through the process of digesting grasses and plants, turning cellulose encased chlorophyll into this rich elixir of life.

Surviving winter winds and snows, the chrysalis of the praying mantis bursts open in spring as perfect, nearly opaque, replicas of their fearsome looking parents emerge. Fractions of an inch long, they immediately begin the hunt for aphids and other prey lest they dine on each other.

As the chill of autumn begins to fill the air there is great urgency by some animals to assemble the stores of food that will see them through the short days and long nights of winter. Others begin epic journeys to warmer climates. Those who can not fly or swim to southern latitudes make do, hibernating, growing heavier winter coats, and digging in for winter, or simply dying. But even in death they have passed on their genetic codes to the next generation. Mix together, sun, water and air and the amazing dance of life continues on that most wonderful of worlds that is home to us all, Mother Earth.

So the next time you are walking the trails take a little time to think about all that is going on around you in this living thing we call the refuge. For in all its connections and wonders, it is really just a microcosm of its much larger host, which is refuge for us all.



I was inspired to write this recently as we approached the 40th anniversary of the “Apollo 11” flight to the Moon. But even before that, during the “Apollo 10” flight, those of us who are old enough to remember, could never forget that first image of Earth from a quarter of million miles in space. I guess it was one of those “life changing moments” when I realized just how wonderfully small, fragile, and complex this planet really is and how truly blessed we are to live on such a nurturing and mysterious world. Bill B.



Refuge Hosts Family Fishing Days ~ Lots of Fun For All

By Jean Diehl and Jared Klein

Bright sunny days, chattering children, painting tee shirts, baiting hooks, catching fish, proud smiles, squeals of “Look what I got”, the aroma of roasting hot dogs and the fishing was free—no license required!! What more could anyone ask for?? We had it all – at the Heinz Refuge!!

Every year the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission hosts “Free Fishing” days; times when the public may try their hand at fishing without a license. And every year the refuge hosts this special event. Along with the opportunity to try their hand at fishing, the dads, moms and kids also got a chance to learn about fishing safety, endangered species, and why it is important to “leave no trace” when they visit outdoor environments.

This year there were **two** free fishing days and over 226 people signed up; an increase of 155 people from last year. *We must be doing something right!*

Jared Klein, Refuge Law Enforcement Officer and Family Fishing Days Coordinator explained how/why the dates (May 23rd, and June 7th) and times were selected. He said, “My effort was to make them **Family Days** – so that moms and dads might be able to fish along with their kids. I then looked at when High Tide would be, and then scheduled accordingly (we fish in the tidal section of Darby Creek.)”

Jared continued, “On the second day, we had so many participants, that the formal educational aspect of the day collapsed - just because there were so many kids catching fish. (and to think I always say it’s called “fishing”....not “catching”).”

Jared (and the Friends) thank everyone who helped out with these two days of Family Fishing at the Refuge, saying that, “Without your support, it would not have happened.”

A special thanks goes out to **Southeast Archery** in Folcroft PA for donating fishing line, bait, and other tackle, **Ampro** in Primos, PA, and the **Friends of Heinz Refuge (FOHR)** for donating the “Take Me Fishing” logo T-shirts for the kids to print fish on - (what a great treat that turned out to be)!

Last but not least FOHR made sure that the volunteers didn’t go hungry . . . probably one of the most important things taken care of.



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Manager's Corner

Gary M. Stolz, Refuge Manager

Wow, where did the summer go? It seems like just yesterday we were chasing northbound singing warblers and vireos, adorned with their colorful spring plumage and darting across treetops of the Warbler Woods. Yet now is the time to really hone your birding skills as these neotropical delights return to their winter homes south of the border wearing their much less distinctive fall plumages. Wing bars, tail spots and leg colors become more important field marks to identify those "little green things" bouncing among treetops in pursuit of juicy insects that power them through long migrations. Fall is also the time to watch for southbound shorebirds feasting upon macro invertebrates within the Tinicum Marsh, including the new restoration area (just 1.5 miles down the Dike Road Trail).

This summer John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge launched an exciting new partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to bring summer conservation intern-



ship programs to inner city high school students throughout Philadelphia. Based out of John Heinz NWR, we coordinated five separate camps not only John Heinz NWR, but also programs at Friends of Wissahickon, Cynwyd Trail-Lower Merion Township (2 crews), and Valley Forge NHS. Each crew consisted of 10 youth aged 15-18 from Philadelphia School System (50 total youth) as well 2 adult field leaders per crew (10 total) and one overhead coordinator working directly with me here with office space provided in refuge office. The five crews concentrating on trail work across the city (maintenance/invasive species removal) in each of five sites, working 4 days/week on the job with 5th day used for planned environmental education programs/field trips/career training/etc. This summer program was set up for 7 weeks (June 29th-August 13) with graduation ceremony on the 13th.

Other exciting youth programs this summer included partnerships with the YMCA's fishing camps, Police Athletic

League, Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and our first ever in house refuge summer day camps featuring a nature photography week and a fishing/birding week.

Aggressive control of invasive species control was continued this summer, including helicopter aerial spraying of phragmites and purple loosestrife to help restore wild rice and native emergent vegetation for more productive wildlife wetland habitat, while 1,500 native trees were just planted on the refuge uplands this year. Major trail work was completed along the Darby Creek Trail with the Student Conservation Association as well as with community service workers. Two new bridges were completed in the marsh restoration site and the dike was breached this summer to restore tidal flow to this area. A newly developed / mulched fishing area was added this summer to the banks of Darby Creek opposite the boardwalk on the accessible nature trail.

Our fast approaching biggest event of the year, the 6th annual "Cradle of Birding Wildlife and Conservation Festival," will be held on Saturday, September 19th with early bird tours beginning as early as 7am and many wildlife exhibits running from nine to three. This year's keynote speaker will be Frank Windfelder, Philly's home town birding expert, Vice-President and long time active field trip leader for the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (DVOC). Also this fall Steve Oliver's newest wildlife art exhibit will also be on display in the visitor center auditorium beginning the first of September. Remember to bring your friends and families on out to enjoy the Refuge's many free programs offered every weekend and discover new ways to connect back with nature on your National Wildlife Refuge System.... *where wildlife comes naturally.*



SCA students removing invasive weeds from some of 1500 new native saplings planted in the spring and summer of 2009 along the pipeline trail and in the new marsh restoration area. Note the deer resistant tubes encasing the saplings. Photos by Group Leader, Devon Hyde

2009 Fall Nature Programs at the Refuge

September

5	Tinicum's Birds	Barb Hiebsch	8AM
6	Late Summer Birding	Bob Confer	9AM
7	<i>Buildings closed for the holiday, grounds open sunrise to sunset</i>		
12	What Birds Are Flying?	Lynn Roman	9AM
	Trail Tamers	Hank Hox	9AM
	Fall Flowers*	Dick Cloud	130PM
13	Early Fall Birding	Eddie Parnum	9AM
	Family Nature Program-Trees	Staff	2PM
19	<u>Cradle of Birding Festival</u>		
	See website (www.fws.gov/heinz) for schedule of events/exhibitors!		
20	Beginning Birding	Denis Brennan	9AM
26	Early Fall Migrants	Lynn Roman	9AM
27	Birding at 420	Denis Brennan	9AM **

October

3	Fall Migrants	Mary Ellen Krober	9AM
	Falling Foliage	Dick Cloud	130PM
4	Mid Fall Birding	Eddie Parnum	9AM
10	Tinicum's Fall Birds	Skip Conant	8AM
	Trail Tamers	Hank Hox	9AM
11	Beginning Birding	Denis Brennan	9AM
12	<i>Buildings closed for the holiday, grounds open sunrise to sunset</i>		
17	Fall's Migrating Birds	Doris McGovern	9AM
	Make&Take Storytime-Seasons	Staff	1PM

Oct. 17&18: "Waterfowl Weekend" Carvers/collectors/Jr. Duck Stamp Artists.

See website (www.fws.gov/heinz) for more information!

18	Birding by Ear	Gregg Gorton	9AM
	Family Nature Program-Seasons	Staff	2PM
24	More Fall Birds	Doris McGovern	9AM
25	Tinicum's Birds	Barb Hiebsch	9AM
31	Late Fall Birds	Doris McGovern	9AM
	What is That Plant?	Dick Cloud	130PM

**** Meet at the Rt. 420 side of the refuge.**



For More Information

Call

John Heinz NWR

At Tinicum

215-365-3118

8601 Lindbergh Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19153

or go online at

www.fws.gov/heinz



2009 Fall Nature Programs Continued

November

1	Birding by Ear	Gregg Gorton	9AM
7	Late Migrants	Mary Ellen Krober	9AM
8	Tinicum's Birds	Barb Hiebsch	8AM
11	<i>Buildings closed for the holiday, grounds open sunrise to sunset</i>		
14	Late Fall Birds	Skip Conant	8AM
	Trail Tamers	Hank Hox	9AM
15	Family Nature Program-Migration	Staff	2PM
21	Birds, Trees, and Flowers	Tom Reeves	9AM
	Make &Take Storytime-Migration	Staff	1PM
22	Late Autumn Birding	Debbie Beer	8AM
26	<i>Buildings closed for the holiday, grounds open sunrise to sunset</i>		
28	Late Migrants	Lynn Roman	9AM
29	Really Late Migrants	Debbie Beer	8AM



Special Event ~ National Wildlife Refuge Week

"Waterfowl Weekend" ~ October 17 & 18, 2009

Featuring the Delaware Valley Collectors & Carvers Club and
winning young artists from 2009 Pennsylvania Junior Duck Stamp Competition



Plan to Attend The Friends Annual Dinner Meeting

Sunday, October 25, 2009

Celebrate success—see old "Friends" and make new ones

Buffet dinner—Entertaining Program— Evening Walk

(Members—watch your mail for a special invitation)

FOHR BOARD MEETINGS : The public is always welcome to attend Board Meetings, which are at 6:30 pm at the Cusano Building Visitor's Center the 4th Tuesday of the Month

PLEASE RENEW: If you have not renewed your FOHR membership, please do so using the form on the next to last page.

Birds in Motion

Thoughts from a Bird Walk Leader

By Debbie Beer, volunteer Bird Walk Leader at Tinicum

From sunscreen to mittens, warblers to waterfowl, autumn is a season of change and motion. Birding is my passion year-round, but I especially love the variety of autumn.

In September, the days are long enough that I can visit Tinicum after work, and bask in the glorious sunset that drapes the refuge in brilliant orange and purple hues. Sometimes I bring a book and think that I'll relax on one of the boardwalk benches. But inevitably my attention is drawn to flocks of egrets and **Great Blue Herons** heading to roost, flying majestically low over the impoundment in groups of two, three or even ten. When the waters are drawn down, and the mud exposed liberally, hundreds of shorebirds descend to feed, making the refuge an important stopover during their southbound migration. Yellowlegs, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers will be numerous, along with good numbers of Pectoral, Stilt and maybe even a few White-rumped Sandpipers. Short-billed Dowitchers probe with sewing-machine motion, gobbling tiny invertebrates from the mud. September is a good time to see Common Nighthawks flying over the refuge at dusk, their white wing bars conspicuous on dark, narrow wings.

October brings transition and wonder. One day I wear shorts, and maybe a week later I need gloves to keep my fingers from numbing in the morning! While Hawk Mountain experiences a major migration spectacle not so far away, Tinicum's raptor sightings are no less exciting, as Coopers Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Peregrine, Merlin, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, and Bald Eagle are all seen during the Autumn months. With luck, you might even catch a Broad-winged or Red-shouldered Hawk soaring by.



This Spectacular Great Blue Heron graces the Tinicum Wetlands with its' presence.

Photo by Photo Group Member, Ron Holmes

September and October also brings southbound migrating warblers. Having shed their bright breeding plumage, some species can be difficult to identify, especially as drab juveniles can easily resemble drab females. It's fun to work through the challenges and end up with a pleasing list that includes Northern Parula, Palm, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Yellow-rumped, Blackpoll Warblers and more. Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets are reliably seen. Fox Sparrows, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and Brown Creepers are among Tinicum's treasures in the fall.

The phenomenon of "winter waterfowl" actually begins in November, when the days get cold in earnest. Numbers begin building for Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Ruddy Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Merganser. Look for additional waterfowl species (Scaup, Redhead, Canvasback and more) as the milder days of autumn turn into the cold, short days of winter.

On a warm September evening, crisp October day, or chilly November morning, I invite you to explore Tinicum's treasures for yourself this autumn. You won't be disappointed!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. . . Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

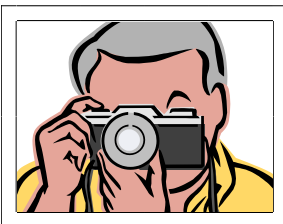
Margaret Mead, a noted anthropologist

Photo Group Report for Fall 2009

By Bill Buchanan, USFWS

The FOHR Photo Group continues to contribute a wealth of images to the refuge photo files documenting everything including special events, environmental education programs, refuge projects, and the wealth of flora and fauna found at the refuge.

The Group has had to push back continued work on an upgrade of its Refuge Traveling Exhibit. This has been due to the fact that we are still seeking specific subject matter and time demands for such an undertaking by members. At the last Group meeting in July it was decided that the October 18 meeting would be dedicated to doing one more review of recently submitted images. All active members in the Photo Group are urged to look through their files and consider getting them to Bill Buchanan by Friday, Oct. 2. All new submissions will be added to the review CD. All members will be notified of particular image needs and guidelines.



Unique Opportunity For Photo Group Members!!

Photo Group Members are invited to participate in the development of the soon to be constructed new website for the Friends of the Heinz Refuge!!

Our webmaster is looking for sharp photos to illustrate what our Refuge and the Friends activities are all about. The project has already begun with subject matter being developed as we speak.

At a minimum we will be looking for public use shots, educational shots, trail tamers shots, birds, mammals, public interest shots (e.g. expressions of children's wonder as they make their connections with nature), Cusano indoor activities, and of course scenics.

If interested in participating, please contact both Jean Diehl—mrstnicum@comcast.net, and Bill Buchanan William.Buchanan@fws.gov for more information.


Several Photo Group members participated in the refuge photo camp that ran from Aug. 3-7. They were Frank Doyle, Ron Holmes, and Frank Miles. Members mentored the young photographers in the field as well as during classroom sessions.

The Photo Group is always looking for new members. To be a member you must maintain membership in FOHR, have basic photographic experience, and be willing to volunteer occasionally documenting events, special projects, assist with the Traveling Exhibit, or our Learning about the Environment Thru the Lens program (Thru the Lens or TTL). We invite interested individuals to attend one of our quarterly meetings which are held on the 3rd Sunday of January, April, July, and October. Meetings start at 10AM and when weather permits, the Group meets at the visitor center at 8AM to go out for 2 hours of field photography.

September Heralds The Friends Annual Membership Drive!

Your Support is the Key to Our Success

Congressional budget constraints have a direct effect on the ability of the Fish and Wildlife Service to properly manage lands for wildlife, perform routine maintenance and still have enough left over to provide the ever changing requirements for quality visitor experiences.

This is the  key reason why the Friends of the Heinz Refuge (FOHR) was established. We pick up the slack when the budgeted funds are just plain NOT ENOUGH!

When the FWS identifies projects for which there is insufficient funding FOHR gets to work. We have obtained thousands of dollars in grants for educational and habitat projects. We provide volunteers when refuge programs need extra hands. Your membership makes a difference. **Together we can make good things happen!**

Micro Adventures Off to Great Start with Interboro Students

By Bill Buchanan, USFWS

This past May and in early November of 2008 a total of approximately 300 fifth grade students from the Interboro School District of Delaware County, PA. participated in our new "Micro Adventures" program. On four different dates 5th grade students, teachers, and assistants from Glenolden, Tinicum, Norwood, and Prospect Park Elementary Schools came out to the refuge to probe the world of the very small.

After a short introduction to the refuge, and what the importance of micro life is, the students were divided into three groups. While one group started the "Micro Adventures" portion of the day's programs, the other two groups alternated between a scavenger hunt within the exhibit area of the Cusano Environmental Education Center, and a nature walk out on the refuge trail system. Then in turn, each group rotated through each of the various parts of the program. Teachers from the Interboro S.D. are quite familiar with these multiple program field visits and in utilizing the refuge as a teaching tool.

Armed with water containers, dip nets, trowels, basters, specimen pans, plastic containers, and note pads the "Micro Adventurers" gathered water, mud, and leaf litter samples from areas along the East Impoundment and Universally Accessible Trails as well as from around the small pond areas nearest to the Cusano Center. Each Group was divided into teams of 5-6 students so they would not crowd any one area during specimen collection or the work area back in the classroom "labs".

Once back in the refuge classrooms they were shown the basics of using the microscopes, slide preparations, and alerted as to what they were to look for. Due to having a relatively short amount of time for the student teams to examine their samples at the refuge, each team was given a set of their specimen collections to investigate at length back at their respective schools and classrooms.

In preparation for their visit to the refuge, students were given the opportunity to view a host of organisms on slide mounts via a fiber optic hook-up between one of our new tri-ocular microscopes and a video monitor. This same viewing unit was later used for some of the students to share their "finds" with their classmates.

All in all, the teachers, assistants, and students were enthusiastic about the "Micro Adventures" program.

One of the Interboro S.D. teachers who has been actively involved with the refuge environmental education programs for several years said she felt that all the 5th grade classes within the district should take part in the program on a regular basis.

Contact Us If Interested

The refuge staff would like to offer the "Micro Adventures Program" to all School Districts throughout the County. Since current staffing levels limit the expansion of this unique program offering, we are thinking of setting up training sessions for teachers and volunteers

The Micro-Adventures program is flexible enough to be utilized by not only 5th grade classes but also by higher grade levels. We also have an abbreviated version of the Program that we offer as part of our weekend family programs.

"Micro Adventures" offers a unique new way of looking at the natural world and is an unusual vehicle for having children, connect with nature. We are looking at how well this program fulfills the state educational standards for area students. Certainly we know it covers a biology standard and it also involves math, when looking at magnification properties and in preparing specimens, and even art, as we ask students to draw what they are seeing when examining their samples.

If you are interested in the "Micro Adventures" program, or know of a teacher, school, or other organization that might be interested please let us know by calling (215) 365-3118 or e-mailing Bill Buchanan at

william_buchanan@fws.gov

Prepare



Gather



EXHIBIT



Students shown at all stages of Micro-Adventures.

All Photos by Photo Group Member, Frank Doyle



Thrills of Backyard Bird Feeding

By Jean Diehl (with excerpts from Jerry Baker's books)



Recently my two great granddaughters – ages 4 and 2, came visiting, and immediately upon entering the house ran to my kitchen window (with a view of several bird feeders). “Look, Grammy, Look – see all the birdies” they chirped. “Look at the pretty red one”! “Why is the yellow one hanging upside down”? Their ooh’s and ahh’s continued for quite a while, intermingled with calls for me to “come see”. Does life get any sweeter?

It is a given that many of our readers are bird lovers from way back, but there undoubtedly are some who have not yet tried out the bird feeding scene. As a relatively recent bird feeder “addict” myself, I would like to share some tips on getting started, and offer some insights about its many side benefits.

Anticipating the arrival of our feathered friends to your new feeder is a big deal! Almost like waiting to open presents at Christmas! It doesn’t take long to find a nice one in a store, (or to build it yourself) set it up, and stock it.

With a little planning you can find the “right” feeder, keep it full, and have great fun at little expense. To get the most “bang for your buck”:

- Find low cost feeders in many stores including Lowes, Home Depot, Kmart and Walmart. Or, if you are handy, you can build one yourself for practically nothing.
- Choose a location near a window for easy viewing.
- If the feeder is not already in or near a tree, make the area look wilder (and more interesting in photographs) by “planting” a large tree branch near the feeder. Find a large broken or pruned tree branch and “plant” it in a hole about 12 inches deep, very close to, and overhanging the feeder, so that birds will be able to use it as a convenient landing or launching pad.
- To save money, ration your banquet. Put out your feed at set times (morning or evening - when birds eat the most), thus eliminating waste (no crumb goes unnoticed) and it won’t take them long to figure out when it is “chow time”! In no time they will be waiting for you.
- Keep the feeders clean. Damp and mold isn’t good for you, and it isn’t good for birds either.

If you live in an area with established trees, you are likely to have visitors within a couple of hours, because birds are already living in the area. If you live in a new development with few trees, or an apartment with a small balcony, it may take a few days for their sharp eyes to take notice of your buffet. Once the birds arrive you will feel as proud as new parents! They’ll become “your” birds. It won’t take long before you can easily recognize the bullies and clowns and laugh at their antics as they joust to get the “best” place on the feeder. Before you know it you will want to add more feeders and will become experts at which birds eat what.

And don’t forget your camera!! Like new parents, you will find yourself sharing little stories and photos with your neighbors. Feeder birds offer lots of color and lots of action right up close.

Many people question whether or not feeding birds at feeders will make them dependent on us for food.

The answer is mixed. Yes, they DO rely on us out of habit. But we are NOT their sole source of food. You can look at your feeders as a “supplement” to their natural food sources. No matter what you provide, it is artificial in nature and does not hold a candle to being able to obtain fresh juicy insects, new weed seeds and wild berries.

Only in hard times are our feeders vital to birds, so make sure yours stays stocked during the winter snows and ice storms. You may be the ONLY source of food at those times.



A Note on Sharing your wealth: Feeders and photography are also treats that can be enjoyed by shut-ins, seniors, and of course those insatiable sponges; kids. Helping an old folks home, hospital, or day care center set up a feeder can provide hours of entertainment. Birds are alive and part of the real world and cannot be compared to some soap opera or computer games.



The public can go to front desk of the Cusano Environmental Education and Visitor Center at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum and borrow rods, reels and a tackle box full of hooks and other terminal tackle. This equipment is borrowed in much the same way books are borrowed from a library. The Visitor Center hours are from 8:30am to 4:00pm. Other tackle loan sites can be found on the PA Fish and Boat Commission's web site at: <http://www.fish.state.pa.us/loaner.htm>

This program is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the American Sportfishing Association, and the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. The program is designed to make it easy for anyone to access fishing tackle. It's hoped that those making the loans will enjoy fishing so much they are hooked for life. This equipment may also be loaned to groups conducting angler education programs in the community.

Report Violations



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

John Heinz N.W.R. at Tinicum
(215) 365-3118

Pennsylvania Game Commission
SE Region Law Enforcement
(610) 926-3136

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
SE Region Law Enforcement
(717) 626-0228

EMERGENCY 911

Join or Renew your Friends of the Heinz Refuge Membership

This is a (please check) new renewal gift membership.

I am joining FOHR Tinicum at the following membership level:

- \$10 Duckling (Student/Senior)
- \$15 Heron (Individual)
- \$25 Heron (Family)
- \$50 Red-bellied Turtle (Group)
- \$100+ Red Fox (Sustaining)
- \$ _____ Donation

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

I want a paper Marsh Musings Mailed

Email _____

Save the paper, send an email saying when the Marsh Musings is on the web

Make checks payable to FOHR Tinicum and mail to FOHR, PO Box 333, Folcroft PA, 19032-0333, or bring to the refuge next time you visit.

Membership supports conservation of the largest fresh water tidal marsh in Pennsylvania and entitles you to attend member only events and a 10% discount at gift shops operated by Friends of National Wildlife Refuges in the Mid Atlantic. If you give us your email address, we will email you (no more than monthly) with reminders of upcoming events and when the newsletter is posted to our website. We do not share your information with any other organizations.



Friends of the Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

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For Information Call:

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website: www.fws.gov/heinz

Co-Sponsored By the US Fish & Wildlife Service & Friends of the Heinz Refuge at Tinicum