



THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

Vol 1. No. 23

EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF NATURE - VOLUNTEER

Spring 2005

DID YOU KNOW ...

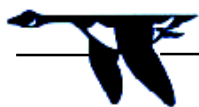
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Wild Things

AMERICA'S NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

where wildlife comes naturally!

Collisions: Clear the Way for Birds

Flight is a magnificent means of transportation, allowing bats, insects, birds, and even humans to travel great distances. For many birds, however, a journey across the skies may be a veritable obstacle course of human-related hazards. In 2005, International Migratory Bird Day examines the obstacles birds may encounter in flight and explores the many ways we may minimize their impacts.



Some of the advances we have made in technology unfortunately contribute to loss of bird life. The towers erected for our cell phones and pagers, the lines that bring us power, our vehicles, the windows on homes and office buildings, and even sources of renewable energy, such as wind turbines, create obstacles for birds in flight. The number of birds killed as a result of aerial collisions each year in the U.S. alone is estimated to be in the billions. The facts about birds and collisions are alarming, but the collaboration of biologists, communities, and corporations to develop innovative solutions is promising.

Tower lighting often confuses birds migrating at night, resulting in collisions with towers or the guy wires that support them. Biologists are working to encourage construction of towers that are under 199 feet tall, avoiding the requirement for safety lighting.

Glass kills more birds than any other human related factor. Architects are working to develop new methods of installing glass windows in homes.

Power cables may not be very visible to birds in flight. Markers, such as metal triangles, help to significantly reduce collisions when placed on the cables.

Raptors often perch on wind turbine towers and blades, which may lead to collisions. Turbine blades that are easily visible and that discourage perching help to reduce bird collisions.

As many as 50 to 100 million birds are killed by cars and trucks on U.S. highways each year.

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CHIEF'S CORNER

Refuge System Chief Bill Hartwig

The Postal Service isn't issuing any commemorative stamps this year for the Refuge System's birthday today, nor is the U.S. Mint manufacturing coins, as they did for our Centennial

celebration. No matter. We have plenty to celebrate on our 102nd anniversary. This has been a remarkable year.

We had a tremendously successful "Conservation in Action Summit" in May, when 250 of our partners, Friends and colleagues came together to identify the shared priorities that will guide us for the next five to 15 years. Those priorities are reflected in the strategic plan now being reviewed, and in the Annual Performance Planning process that makes sure our goals are achievable and measurable - of key importance to those who hold the federal purse strings.

But what's most exhilarating — and what really exemplifies the Refuge System - can be seen on the ground every day in refuges across the country. I've visited national wildlife refuges in every region, and wherever I go, I am bowled over.

Restoration work has revitalized thousands of acres and the wildlife that rely on the land. Work to improve prairie and oak savanna habitat at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, for example, has not only increased the population of the endangered Fender's blue butterfly to its highest level in a decade, but also boosted the population of rare western bluebirds and western meadowlarks. We have brought species back from the brink of extinction. Last year, for example, we tallied 216 whooping cranes that completed their first migration for the winter to Aransas Refuge in Texas - the largest number in 100 years. For that and so many other instances, we can be proud for what we do for wildlife and for people.

We welcome 40 million people onto our refuges each year, teaching them through quality wildlife-dependent recreation what natural resource protection means in their daily lives. We are succeeding. A recent survey gave wildlife refuges top-notch scores for visitor satisfaction, and our employees and volunteers were

among the important elements that people credited. The number of refuge Friends groups grew by 6 percent in the past year, helping to give us the muscle to fight invasives, educate youngsters and families, and maintain our lands for the benefit of wildlife and the American people.

As I celebrate the Refuge System's 102nd anniversary and throughout the year, I am amazed by our people. You are the heart and the backbone of the Refuge System. Your work, your drive for excellence, your professionalism are tremendous. Your dedication to the resource is endless, as is your determination to pass on to a new generation wild and magical places that light hope for the future. I look forward to seeing more national wildlife refuges, both to recharge my professional battery and to acknowledge your work in a personal way.

Congratulations on your accomplishments as we look forward to our 103rd year as the keepers of a truly wild kingdom.

PRESIDENT BUSH DELIVERS 2006 BUDGET PROPOSAL TO CONGRESS

The President's fiscal year 2006 budget of \$2.57 trillion includes \$1.32 billion for the Fish and Wildlife Service, up from \$1.29 billion the previous year, and \$393,894 million to fund National Wildlife Refuge System operations and maintenance. That is a \$2 million increase over the fiscal year 2005 request. The budget includes \$40,992 million for land acquisition as a separate line item. The proposal restructures the budget to include \$393.8 million in the Resource Management Account for the Refuge System in five subactivities:

- Wildlife & Habitat Management \$152.9 million
- Visitor Services: \$ 62 million
- Refuge Law Enforcement: \$ 27.8 million
- Conservation Planning \$ 13.5 million
- Refuge Maintenance \$137.7 million

GREATER SNOW GOOSE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT
Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge
Brigantine Division

By Jorge L. Coppen, Wildlife Biologist

Background

Greater Snow Geese (SNOG) use in the refuge has historically posed a problem at the Brigantine Division. SNOG populations began increasing in the mid 1960's from 3,500 birds documented in 1965 to approximately 60,000 birds in the late 1970's and early 80's. In the 60's and early 70's a majority of the grazing occurred within the impoundments and significant damage to Saltmarsh Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) stands was recorded. With subsequent local population increases, SNOG began utilizing a salt marsh area north of the Northwest Pool where extensive grubbing of *Spartina* rootstalks created extensive mudflat areas.

Research on impacts was conducted by NJ State Biologist Fred Ferrigno in August of 1979. Results of this study stated that "eat out areas display a denuding of the salt marsh grasses, and ribbed mussels (*Modiolus demissus*) and fiddler crabs (*Uca pugnax*)." The report further documented that such losses denied the use of the eat out areas to clapper rails and black ducks for nesting and foraging purposes. Resident Canada Geese foraging on emerging *Spartina* shoots in mudflat areas during spring and summer compounds the impact by retarding recovery. This phenomenon had been observed during peak of the molt period.

By the late-90's, the areas impacted by SNOG had expanded. SNOG had impacted areas to the south and east of the impoundment system denuding 30-50% more salt marsh habitat near the impoundments where many SNOG prefer to roost.

Current Conditions

Affected acreage has remained relatively stable over the past few years. Current minimum damage estimates encompass a total of 675 acres and a breakdown is displayed in Table 1. See attached map for locations.

Table 1. Damage assessment for SNOG eat-out areas at EB Forsythe NWR - Brigantine Division, 2005.

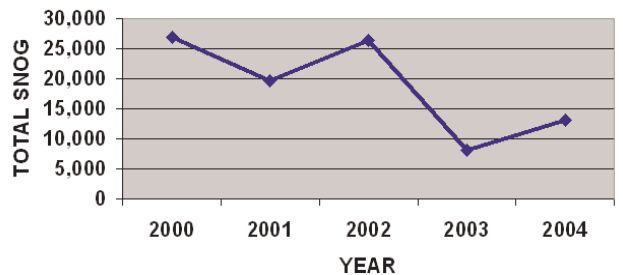
Acres	% denuded
540	30
80	50
5	80
50	95

In addition to this habitat degradation, the eat-outs have an impact on the refuge infrastructure. In 1997, the

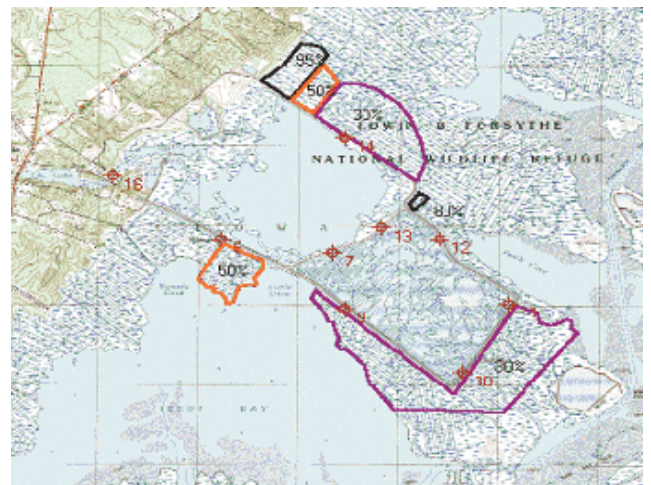
refuge was forced to repair approximately a half-mile of the North dike damaged and eroded due to three strong Noreaster storms. A healthy adjacent salt marsh would have buffered the strong winds and tides thus decreasing effects on the dike. The repairs cost the refuge approximately \$174,000 and required that a portion of the drive be closed for one month during high visitation.

Wintering SNOG numbers at E.B. Forsythe NWR - Brigantine Division have generally declined over the past five years as more birds have been observed by wildlife agencies to be wintering in Salem County, along the Delaware River, and at Bombay Hook NWR in Delaware (Fig. 1). An estimated mean number of 18,853 SNOG (range: 8,087 to 26,940) have been tallied using refuge habitats near the impoundment system over the past 5 years.

Fig. 1. Annual totals of monthly peak SNOG tallies at E.B. Forsythe NWR - Brigantine Division, 2000-04



The recent decline in wintering SNOG numbers has reduced the rate of impact. However, new areas of impact seem to be developing in salt marsh habitat north of Perch Cove and salt marsh habitat east of the east Dike, in the proximity of Black Point where several thousand SNOG were observed as recently as March 14, 2005.



The Friends of Forsythe NWR is a non-profit group established in 1998 to provide support and services to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville, New Jersey. Our goals are:

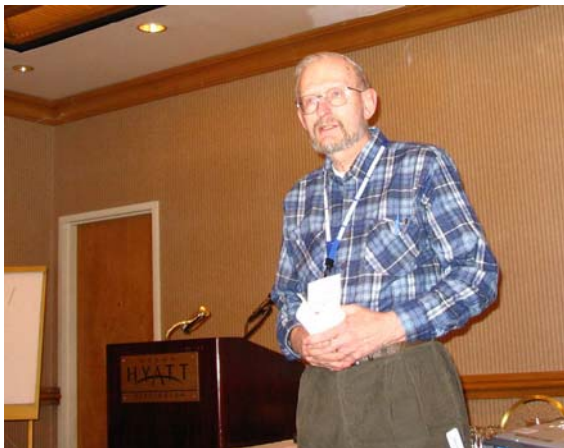


- Promoting a better understanding of the natural history and environment of Southern New Jersey, the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Helping to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat at this Refuge, and to assist the Refuge, the Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of educational and supportive efforts.

Please consider joining the Friends of Forsythe and help us accomplish these goals. Call 609-748-1535 or visit www.friendsofforsythe.org

Forsythe Represented at National Friends Conference

A crowd of more than 250 Friends, partners and Fish and Wildlife Service employees welcomed the Interior Secretary Gale Norton as she keynoted the opening session Feb. 5. The Secretary lauded the achievements of the nation's Friends groups, calling them "essential partners as stewards of the refuges." The conference celebrated the success of the Friends movement and allowed them to learn new skills. Educational breakout sessions taught Friends how to build membership, hold fundraising events, and create community partnerships, among other topics. Ervin Davis, from the National Bison Range, was honored as Volunteer of the Year and Friends of Black Bayou received the Friends Group of the Year award, sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Association and the Fish and Wildlife Service cosponsored the conference which closed on February 7 with friends blanketing Capitol Hill to teach lawmakers how much the Refuge System means to America's wildlife, its communities, and to its people.



(pictured) Dr. Bristow invites Regional Refuges to participate in a photography contest sponsored by our Stay Focused Photo Club

A Dream - Will it Happen?

For many years, I have dreamed of a new Visitor Center for the Forsythe Refuge. Each year, there might be a glimmer of hope, only to become a mirage. Today, the dream has more body thanks to recent events.

Region 5 of the Fish & Wildlife Service came up with projected models of various size centers. Two such centers, for small and medium size refuges, have become real buildings. In late fall, a team from the regional office visited Forsythe to collect information. In February at the annual Friends Conference, I had an opportunity to have some discussion with the Region 5 chief of refuges. Visits to Congressional offices followed, to alert our lawmakers as to the possibility of action and to request their assistance in getting funding into the Federal Budget.

Since then a Forsythe delegation visited Chincoteague N.W.R. to inspect their new facility and ask a lot of questions about the how and how not to reach that elusive goal. Representatives LoBiondo and Saxton have put in the request for funding; our Senators are in support; now it is up to us to gather local support to advance this dream to reality. Just imagine - a building that is not falling apart; exhibits that really teach visitors; a place where school children can do hands-on projects and truly learn instead of just having a day out of school.

Let's make this dream become a reality!

Ed Bristow

President, Friends of Forsythe

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Tuesday, May 31 - 11:30 to 4:30
at Refuge Headquarters.

Be watching for information in your mail



Al and Pat Martens



Pat and Al have made volunteering at Forsythe a family affair. After moving to Smithville in 2002, they began donating their time at the Refuge. Pat helps occasionally in the office greeting visitors and answering phones. Al is involved in the monitoring of the Purple Martins - checking the houses measuring the chicks when they hatch, banding the birds, and talking to the visiting public who come over to the house area when he's doing nest checks or banding. He is also President of the Atlantic Audubon Society. The Martens have one daughter, Melissa, who is the curator of a museum in Baltimore.

The newly renovated Songbird Trail at the Forsythe Refuge opened Saturday, April 9th with a group of Auduboners and Friends of the Refuge exploring it.



The band of hikers led by staffer Art Webster and Al Martens pause near the beginning to checkout a map of the winding wooded trail along the west side of the refuge. A sunny but windy early spring day made it ideal to meander the 4 mile trail in search of the first returning birds of the season. A midway cutoff provided a return shortcut for the few who wished to return early. The trail ended at the sandpit pond on the northwest corner of the auto tour. From there it was an easy parallel pathway along the familiar roadway back to the headquarters compound. The hike of 11 finalists, including Art's two young boys, took 3 hours to return to the starting point of the trail. It was a memorable early spring day in the field, what Forsythe is all about.

John Williamson



YOUR OPINION PLEASE ...

Every year the staff has the pleasure and privilege of celebrating your accomplishments throughout the year at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. We've held it at different times, in different places, and now we'd like to know the type of dinner that most of you would prefer. Please check your preferences below.

- May
- August

- Friday evening
- Saturday afternoon
- Sunday afternoon

- Informal - potluck meal
- More Formal, sit down, served meal

Please send us your responses by May 15 via mail, email or phone to:

Edwin B. Forsythe NWR
 Box 72, Great Creek Road
 Oceanville, NJ 08231
 609-748-1535
 email: sandy_perchetti@fws.gov

Thanks for your response.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 23

Earth Day Celebration - 9:00 to 12 noon. Refuge Clean-Up at Oxycocus Trail (Manahawkin). Call Sandy at 609-748-1535 for more information and to sign up.

Saturday, May 14

International Migratory Bird Day. Bird walks throughout the day. Refuge Series of Birding. For more information call Dr. Bristow at 609-641-4671.

Tuesday, May 31 - 11:30 to 4:30 at Refuge

Headquarters. Training session for all volunteers. * Required for new volunteers.* Meet the staff and learn all about *your Refuge*. Call Sandy at 748-1535 to register.

Saturday, June 11 - 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Kids

Fishing Derby at Patriot Lake (Galloway Township). Call Sandy for more information.

Stay Focused Photo Club meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 am in the Refuge auditorium.

Spring is here! - help with our **wildlife and native plant garden**. Group meets Thursdays at 10 am at Refuge headquarters.

THE STAR THROWER

by Loren Eisley

A young man was picking up objects off the beach and tossing them into the sea. A second man approached him, and saw that the objects were starfish. "Why are you throwing starfish into the water?"

"If the starfish are still on the beach when the tide goes out and the sun rises high in the sky, they will die," replied the young man.



"That's ridiculous. There are thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. You can't really believe that what you're doing could possibly make a difference."

The young man picked up a starfish, paused thoughtfully, and remarked as he tossed it into the waves. "It makes a difference to this one."

WHO'S ON STAFF?

Project Leader
STEVE ATZERT

Deputy Project Leader
DEBORAH LONG

Acting Refuge Manager
Barnegat Division
VINNY TURNER

Chief of Visitor Services
ART WEBSTER

Biologists
JORGE COPPEN, VINNY TURNER

Refuge Law Enforcement Officers
BRIAN WILLARD, CHRIS PANCILA

Administrative
Officer
MARTHA HAND

Visitor Services
Manager
CINDY HEFFLEY

Volunteer Coordinator
SANDY PERCHETTI

Maintenance Professionals
TOM HOLDSWORTH
TERRY MITCHELL