



TAKING ACTION THROUGH EDUCATION

MESSAGE FROM YOUR FRIENDS' BOARD



As you all know, the COVID19 virus threat resulted in Governor Murphy issuing Executive Order 107 on March 21 instructing all residents to stay at home until further notice, and the closure of non-essential retail businesses. The phrase “social distancing” is now part of everyone’s vocabulary. There are certain exceptions to this order, including engaging in outdoor activities. This is where Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge comes in! The refuge is currently open, including Wildlife Drive and the hiking trails, and the entrance fees are waived. So, come on out now and connect with nature again during this time (but please note that the public restrooms and the Visitors Information Center are closed until further notice.) If you like to take photos, you can join our ongoing photo competition, and start taking photos now!



WILDLIFE LIKES US AT

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofForsytheNWR/>

This newsletter is a publication of the FRIENDS OF FORSYTHE, a non-profit, 501(c)3, tax-exempt corporation that works closely with the Refuge. Friends are the bridge between the Refuge and the community, and contribute to its future by helping people understand that their actions today determine the legacy we leave for tomorrow.

Our mission is to support the purposes for which the Refuge was established and includes the following:

- For use as a sanctuary for migratory birds and non-migratory animals
- For protection of natural resources
- For the conservation of non-game, threatened and endangered species
- For promoting environmental education and experiences for children and adults
- For the development of other wildlife-oriented experiences that do not interfere with the primary mission of the Refuge.

We invite you to join. You can serve on the Board of Directors, assist as members of Advisory Committees, work in the Visitor Information Center and Nature Store, or provide your support by being a member. Please share your interest and experience. For more information, please email friendsofforsythe@gmail.com or go to <https://friendsofforsythe.org/>

MESSAGE FROM OUR REFUGE MANAGER Virginia Rettig

Partnership Means Progress!

The Friends of Forsythe, an organization started over 20 years ago, is the only organization committed entirely to the support of Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. The average visitor may not see all of the work that this dedicated group of volunteers does to further refuge goals, but it is impressive. Over the last 4 years I've seen the vigor of the Board of Trustees flourish with new ideas, new projects, and lots of energy.

Because we do not have enough refuge staff, the Friends now deliver all Environmental Education programs on the refuge, and they always need volunteers (hint, hint). We worked closely together to reimagine and reconstruct the entry area and Gift Shop at the Visitor Information Center (VIC) to make it more welcoming. In the last month, we closed off the old "saloon doors" that were on your left when you walk into the VIC so the Friends can use that space for sharing information (it's going to be pretty cool, so stay tuned!).

Last year, the group received a grant from the National Wildlife Refuge Association to improve their ability to track their store's inventory to keep the items they sell updated and interesting. They also used grant funds to buy an interactive tabletop diorama that allows kids to see how water moves through ecosystems. Just this March, they hosted the Gone Missing: 3 Billion Birds event which was attended by over 200 people – that is one of the biggest events ever associated with the refuge, and I am grateful.

I share all of this to shine a light on this wonderful organization. They are a great team, that does a great job working with the refuge team, and, together, we have made progress

towards educating the public. There's always more on the horizon so keep following us and please join in!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Evenings at Forsythe and Other Events

Due to the uncertainty with COVID19 closings, please verify these events are still on before coming out.

Thursday, May 14, 6:30-8 PM Annual Meeting - Friends of Forsythe

Join us for some good food and fellowship as we review our accomplishments over the past year and elect new board members. Followed by the movie "Twelve Tenacious Invasives" and discussion with Steve Fielder. Visitors Information Center Resource Room.

Saturday, May 16 "Terrapin Nesting Project at Leeds Point" (time and location to be announced later).

Thursday May 21, 6:30-8 PM Evenings at Forsythe "All About Eagles" with Clay Sutton. Visitors Information Center Resource Room.

Saturday June 13 Evening Bat Walk with Ethan Gilardi of Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ (time and location to be announced later).

Thursday June 18, 6:30-8 PM Evenings at Forsythe "Birding by Impression" or "How to Bird Like the Experts" with Kevin Karlson and Dale Rosselet. Visitors Information Center Multi-Purpose Room.

Saturday June 27, 1-2 PM, Presentation "African-American History and Culture in Early NJ" with Alexandria Russel, Guy Weston and Kristin O'Bassill-Kulfan. Visitors Information Center Multi-Purpose Room.

SUPPORT FRIENDS WITH THE

World Series of Birding!

In 2019, the Friends of Forsythe (FOF) Ospreys, flew into the World Series of Birding (WSB) for the first time and won the Limited Geographic Area (LGA) category of the Bird Conservation Challenge-Level I. Led by FOF board member Alex Majewski, the other team members were Brian Vernachio and Tim Bardar, as they drove 285 miles and walked 13.5. All in Ocean County, and all in 24 hours. Held on the second Saturday of May since 1984, the WSB brings out the best of the best birders. Well, the FOF Ospreys are not only looking to win again, but they plan on swooping past last year's total of 155 species.



The Osprey's goal is to raise money for FOF while bringing in focus worldwide attention on habitat needs of migrating birds. In preparing for the WSB, the Osprey's spend countless hours of their time scouting, planning, and sharpening their talons. So what fuels this team? Your support. By going on the FOF website (FriendsofForsythe.org) you can donate to support the Ospreys efforts as they fly through this challenge and raise money to continue all the great programs and events offered free of charge by the FOF. If you do pledge, please be sure to add the comment that it is for the FOF Ospreys.

CHILDRENS' ENVIRONMENTAL

Education Events

Friends' Environmental Education program continues to grow each and every year! The word is spreading about our great programs which connect many hundreds of kids a year to the natural world. Board members Les Murray, Mar-Jo Atack and Rae Griffiths, along with other volunteers, conduct these programs at local schools. Here are the upcoming school programs that Les and his team were scheduled to deliver in the coming months (that is, before Covid-19 came along), thanks to the generous support of your Friends Membership.

- March 25 Washington Avenue School, Pleasantville (2nd grade)
- March 25 Absecon School (pre-school 4 year olds)
- March 26 Absecon School (preschool 3 year olds)
- April 14 Washington Avenue School Urban Birding (2nd grade)
- April 22 FAA Science Day
- *April 24 Leeds Avenue School 2nd grade at refuge (2nd grade) at refuge
- May 12 Washington Ave School (2nd grade)
- *May 15th Waymouth Twp School (3rd, 4th and 5th grades) at-refuge
- *May 29 Egg Harbor Township (middle school) at-refuge
- *June 2 Sovereign Ave School, Atlantic City (4th grade) at-refuge
- *June 5 Leeds Ave School, Pleasantville (4th and 5th grades) at refuge

LOVING HOME NEEDED FOR

ElectricTram!

Friends of Forsythe has an all-electric tram available, model “citEcar” enclosed transport buddy, 14p” for sale. We used it for years to give once-weekly free public guided tours of our 8-mile wildlife drive. It was originally bought new, and donated to us by a board member. It has new batteries, has been garage kept, and is in good working condition. Please reply to billharclerode@gmail.com if interested.



INSTAGRAM SPOTLIGHT

By Michael Becktel

The Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is a world-renowned backdrop for wildlife photographers. Each year, thousands of amateur and professional photographers utilize our 47,000+ acres of protected New Jersey coastal habitat to snap millions of bird, landscape, and other wildlife photos. On the Friends of Forsythe Instagram Feed [@friends_of_forsythenwr](#) we feature amazing photography captured by our visitors and followers. In this feature, [Instagram Spotlight](#), the Friends of Forsythe highlights the re-posted image (and photographer) that has received the most “likes” since the previous publication of our newsletter. In this edition we are featuring [@rossacci_photo](#) with a great capture of a Peregrine Falcon at the Refuge!

Featured Photo



Caption: Peregrine Falcon

Profile

Handle:	@rosacco photo
Original image likes:	101
FOF re-post likes:	155
Total posts:	102
Followers:	88

Description: Michael’s feed is a tastefully curated mix of bird portraits, birds in motion, and scenic landscapes. His expertly crafted shots show a careful attention to depth and perspective while also placing an emphasis light and color.

Additional Examples



GONE MISSING – 3 BILLION BIRDS

Panel Discussion

By Susan Puder



Just under the wire, we got the event off on March 7th, which was sponsored by Friends of Forsythe NWR and NJ Audubon. Over 200 people attended the discussion, which was a great success. After my opening remarks, I think everyone was super impressed

with Adriaan Doktor's presentation that began the event. He went into detail about the initial study that led to the report in Science back in October. Then Eric Stiles, President and CEO of New Jersey Audubon, took over as moderator and introduced our six panelists: John Cecil from NJ Audubon, Dr. Emile DeVito from NJ Conservation Foundation, our own Josh Gant from Ocean County Parks and Rec, Virginia Rettig from Forsythe NWR, Adriaan Doktor from Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Linda Widdop from DVOC.



The panel discussion kicked off with questions for each panelist before being open to the audience. Members of the Environmental Club at Stockton University bounded up and down the stairs of the auditorium to hand the mic to questioners. Organizations involved had tables in the lobby with information about their groups available to attendees. We also had printed materials from Cornell Lab of

Ornithology available, which the Friends have for those who couldn't attend.

Forsythe NWR provided packets of native flowers for all as they left the auditorium. The food service at Stockton provided beverages and fresh cookies for those who came early.

The event was videotaped by the University and will provide us with a DVD and link for the video. Now that all colleges and schools are closed, I'm not sure when we will be receiving that. There were a few minutes of a sound glitch, which they strived to correct quickly.



I think we were so lucky to have such esteemed speakers, and to be able to present such an important forum for the public. We hope that people left with a new sense of urgency and with ideas and solutions that they can implement themselves with the 7 Simple Actions to Help Birds. There are also Action Plans for Bird Conservation and for North American Birds. If you are interested in more information, please visit: 3Billionbirds.org

During these trying times here at home and across the globe, we need to take care of our families and friends. But don't forget to help the species that brings many of us together.

2020 Juried Photographic Competition Celebrating E.B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge



Open Submissions: Open to general public
Student Submissions: Open to students age 21 and under

Supporting the mission of the
Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

Cash Awards

Date for entries begins March 14, ends May 9

**Go to <https://friendsofforsythe.org>
for fees, categories, and award information**



**Sponsored by
Friends of Forsythe National
Wildlife Refuge**