

# A Publication of the Friends of Forsythe

Winter 2024



Snow Geese at Sunset, Lynn Padwee

TAKING ACTION THROUGH EDUCATION

## “Name That Newsletter” Contest

The Friends of Forsythe NWR Newsletter has not had a name for several years after the Forsythe Explorer seems to have disappeared over the passage of time, so the Friends are running a contest for our members and supporters to “Name That Newsletter.” Send your entry with your name and email to:

[friendsofforsythe@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofforsythe@gmail.com) with the Subject: Name That Newsletter

Only one entry per person please, submitted by March 15, 2024. The winner will be determined by the Friends of Forsythe Board of Directors and announced in our Spring Newsletter. The winner will receive one of the new Forsythe hats (either gray or blue) of her/his choice AND a refuge annual pass.



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](mailto:friendsofforsythe@gmail.com) or go to <https://friendsofforsythe.org/>

# TRACY'S

CORNER

By Tracy Neal, Visitor Services Manager

## Thank you, Pine Barrens Birding Club of Stockton University!

In celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service, the birding club worked hard to help clear trails and remove trash on the refuge. Thank you for making the refuge safer, cleaner, and more accessible for all who visit!



## Welcome Deputy Refuge Manager Ray Brown!

By Virginia Rettig, Refuge Manager

We are thrilled to welcome Ray Brown to the refuge and South Jersey. Ray received his bachelor's degree in wildlife from the University of Maine (where he hails from) and his master's in science from Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas. Upon graduating, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service and the



USFWS as a wildlife biologist in TX, AR, LA, OK, and MS.

He was a Forest Service district biologist in West Virginia, where he studied birds and endangered species in relation to timber sales, outdoor recreation, oil wells, and other impacts. His dreams were fulfilled when he became the wildlife biologist at Bombay Hook NWR across Delaware Bay in DE and permanently joined the National Wildlife Refuge System. In that position, he managed similar habitats to those at Forsythe (impoundments, fields, brush, saltmarsh). After a few years, he transferred to Moosehorn NWR in Maine, where he was a supervisory wildlife biologist and deputy refuge manager. He helped manage 3 refuges and a waterfowl production area for migratory birds, anadromous fish, and other wildlife. He was there for 16 years before moving to Forsythe.

He is happy to be out of the remote North Maine woods for a while to a place known for managing important habitats for migratory birds and imperiled species, and to be involved in the cutting-edge science we do here, especially for salt marsh birds and habitats. He moved in August with his wife and 3 sons, aged 6th grade to a sophomore in college. *Welcome Ray!*



## Congratulations to Mar-Jo Atack

By Virginia Rettig, Manager

Long-time volunteer Mar-Jo Atack was awarded the 2023 Refuge Volunteer of the Year Award at the fall volunteer appreciation banquet. Mar-Jo, who recently retired from



the board of the Friends of Forsythe, Inc. after 15 years, has been integral to education and outreach at the refuge. She conducted countless environmental education classes with kids, taught groups the Leave No Trace program, worked with long-time friend and volunteer Les Murray on the Audubon Bird program, and did off-site outreach at many events. She tracked volunteers at the VIC, kept the Jitney tours running, and helped count fees. When asked what she was doing with her new-found time now that she's retired, Mar-Jo said she had to run off to line-dancing class, so we can rest assured she is loving life. Thank you, Mar-Jo, for all your years of dedication to the refuge and the public!



*Virginia Rettig, Refuge Manager, awarding Volunteer of the Year to Mar-Jo Attack*



## **Saving Birds One Window at a Time**

By Virginia Rettig, Manager

You may have noticed something different on the refuge's windows. This fall, youth interns installed a variety of applications to help birds avoid colliding with building windows. Most were covered with white dots, and we installed cords, vertical stripes, and external screens on some of them. All these measures will help us avoid adding to the 1 billion birds killed each year by hitting windows. Come by

the Visitor Information Center to see what we've done and learn more about how you can stop bird collisions at your house! About 45% of bird collisions are at homes and you can help make a difference. [Threats to Birds: Collisions-Buildings & Glass | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(fws.gov\).](#)



*YCC Leader Renee Capetola installed the exterior screen and vertical stripes on the VIC.*



## **Welcome New Board Member Mike DiGiore!**

Mike DiGiore was recently voted onto the Friends of Forsythe Board of Directors. He has been volunteering at the Visitor Information Center for 7 years and loves greeting the public, meeting people, and learning about why they visit this special place. He also coordinates VIC volunteers to make sure we have coverage. Mike is retired from the NJDEP where he oversaw hazardous waste compliance. He is looking forward to helping increase the membership of the Friends (and if you would like to join or renew, you can do that here right now! [Become a Friend – Friends of Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge](#)). **Welcome Mike!**





## Friends of Forsythe are Looking for You

By Michele Danley, Member Board of Directors

Friends of Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is looking for your help so that you can put your passion for the refuge to use. Your membership fee will help Forsythe Wildlife Refuge achieve its objectives, and your volunteer work assists with habitat improvement, citizen education, public awareness campaigns, and event attendance. With your help, Friends of Forsythe can provide engaging options like watching ospreys construct their beautiful nests from your computer, walking through the Refuge, and witnessing migrating birds. Kindly think about joining or renewing your tax-deductible membership right now: [Become a Friend – Friends of Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge](#)



## Nature Story Time is Back!

Join us for our next story time at the Refuge.

**Nature Story Time**  
**10:30-11:30 AM**  
**Sat. February 10, 2024**



**Plus an extra surprise book to help celebrate Chinese New Year!**

**Join friends of Forsythe for this FREE program. Open to all ages. Snacks will be served.**

Next month's story time will be from 10:30 to 11:30 am on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Our monthly FRIENDS MEETINGS are the SECOND MONDAY of each month at the EDWIN B. FORSYTHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE Administrative Building 800 Great Creek Road Oceanville, NJ 08231**



**Wildlife Likes us at**

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