

# Views From the Tower

SUMMER 2015 · VOLUME 43 · No. 2

# FROM RUSSIA – WITH CURIOSITY AND COLLABORATION

by Dr. Lenore Tedesco

The Wetlands Institute (TWI), Wetland Link International (based in the UK) and Wetlands International Russia (based in Moscow) teamed up to generate a beneficial international dialogue between wetland centers in the US and Russia. This project, Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands is funded by a grant from the US State Department and will share best practices in environmental education and support the development of effective outreach and education activities among centers in both countries. beautiful lakes and has a visitorship that is heavily seasonal. The park is vast and has a strong focus on interpretive signage and self-guided educational programs. Their mission also includes preservation and education about cultural resources in addition to natural resources. While in Russia, Wetlands Institute staff visited many areas of the park, visited the local middle school, participated in a regional overnight environmental education and service project, and worked with park naturalists, foresters, and research scientists to get a greater understanding of the educational initiatives being

Program need stems from a desire to directly link peers to foster great cultural understanding, while exploring the different historical context and approaches to environmental education utilized in each country. The US has a long history of making natural areas accessible to people and embedding environmental education and outreach in to visitor programs. US wetland education centers are widespread and utilize a variety of innovative approaches to teaching



in and about wetlands. In Russia, for most of their recent history, natural areas have been strictly protected and largely off limits to the public. In recent years, this has changed and new wetland education visitor centers are being opened and new programming is being developed encouraging outdoor and environmental education. The exchange program is designed to have paired centers work together and learn from each other.

The Wetlands Institute is partnering with the Smolensk Lakeland National Park, located in Russia, near the Belarus border about 7



hours west of Moscow. In April, Wetlands Institute Executive Director, Lenore Tedesco, and Director of Education, Brooke Knapick spent 10 days in Russia visiting project partners from Smolensk Lakeland National Park. The park has a newly opened visitor center and shares some interesting similarities with TWI. The park is located in an area with numerous offered by the Park. Full immersion into the Park's programs allowed us to explore commonalities between the two centers and share ideas for new programs and initiatives, exhibits and signage and community involvement. Extending our education programs to an international level such as this is an important next step in the Institute's development.

This exchange visit was the first in a series of wetland center exchange

visits planned for this project. The six wetland centers participating in the program are divided equally between the US and Russia and include a diverse array of centers from different geographic regions and with different areas of expertise and educational focus. Together we are exploring approaches for using social media in environmental education, sharing data and program materials, and will produce a bilingual manual for wetland centers in both countries. The Khakassky State Nature Reserve, located in the Steppe zone of Khakassia, is working with the Driftless Area Wetlands Center in Marguette, Iowa. The Baltic Fund for Nature, located in St. Petersburg is an NGO focused on environmental education in the Baltic Sea basin. The Baltic Fund for Nature is paired with John Bunker Sands Wetland Center located in Seagoville, Texas. The first phase of the exchanges is now complete with each of the US teams visiting Russia. The Russian teams will visit their partners in the US in October. The teams will all come to The Wetlands Institute in mid-October for an international conference on wetland education. The conference will include an evening program that will be open to the public.

To learn more about the program, or follow the travels of the participating wetland centers, please visit our website. You can also find us on Facebook by searching Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program.

Promoting appreciation, understanding and stewardship of wetlands and coastal ecosystems through our programs in research, conservation, and education.

Founded in 1969 by Herbert Mills, Executive Director of the World Wildlife Fund

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# **Hours:**

From May 1 to October 11: Monday through Sunday: 9:30am to 4:30pm

# June 16 to Labor Day

Special Evening Hours until 8pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays

#### **General Admission:**

Members: Free Non-members: \$8 Adults, \$6 Children 3-12

*Views From the Tower* is the quarterly newsletter of The Wetlands Institute and can also be found on our website.

1075 Stone Harbor Blvd Stone Harbor, NJ 08247 609-368-1211

wetlandsinstitute.org



# **MARSH MUSINGS**

#### by Dr. Lenore Tedesco, Executive Director

Summer time has arrived at the shore – and it is a welcome arrival indeed. The Institute has shifted into summer mode and as I write these musings, the marsh and the Institute are a whirlwind of activity. The birds are nesting everywhere – on the grounds, in the surrounding marsh, and at both of the avian restoration projects that we are working on. The horseshoe crabs are actively spawning on Delaware Bay Beaches and the reTurn the Favor program is in full swing with staff and volunteers out rescuing stranded horseshoe crabs. Our goal is to far surpass the 30,000 crabs saved last year. Of course, the warm weather brings diamondback terrapins out of the marsh and up to higher ground to lay eggs keeping our Turtle Patrols very busy.



The summer, with all of its excitement and renewed energy, reminds me how grateful I am for the amazing wetlands and all that live here and visit here. That includes you! We honor your commitment, generosity and your investment in our mission. It is with that spirit that we are honoring our donors in some new ways. The Herbert Mills Legacy Society recognizes those individuals who have notified us of their intentions to name The Institute in their will, trust, or other estate plan. Formerly, simply the Legacy Society, the new Herbert Mills Legacy Society is a tribute to our founder and is open to anyone naming the Institute regardless of bequest amount.

Institute Founder, Herbert Mills

The Institute is pleased to create a new Loyalty Society. The Loyalty Society recognizes those individuals that have made a gift to the Institute, in any amount, for the past 10 consecutive years. We are thrilled to count more than 400 friends in the Loyalty Society. Thanks to all of you for your sustained support.

Finally, we have created a new membership category at the Institute. Lifetime membership is for members that seek to join us at the highest level or for a select group of members whose commitment and belief in the mission and goals of this Institute is apparent in all they do. The Board of Trustees appointed the first class of Lifetime members at their May board meeting.

We hope that these new recognition programs are a fitting way to honor the donors that hold us dear. These donors, along with so many others, were officially recognized at our annual donor recognition event at the end of June. If you have made provisions for the Institute in your estate plan please let us know so we can thank you properly and welcome you into the Herbert Mills Legacy Society. And to everyone that supports what we do – in your own way – we thank you. You are the reason that we *Make No* **Small Plans** and are well on our way to becoming a center of excellence for research, conservation, and education!

# 23,180 Steps for Bird Conservation

Congratulations to everyone that supported the 2015 Marshketeers World Series of Birding team sponsored by Burke Motor Group. The team (Lisa Ferguson, Lenore Tedesco, Allison Anholt, and Tedor Whitman) logged 23,180 steps and covered more than 81/2 miles, mostly through dense fog, in their guest to see and hear as many species as possible to raise money for avian conservation. The team spotted 130 species of birds, including the Ovenbird -



this year's bonus bird. Fueled by junk food and caffeine, the team, with your support raised more than \$4,400. Thank you for your support and look for us again next year!

# **SUMMER HAPPENINGS**

The Wetlands Institute will be open daily from 9:30am-4:30pm with extended evening hours and activities until 8:00pm Tuesday-Thursday from June 16 - September 3, 2015! Unless otherwise stated, all activities occur onsite at The Wetlands Institute. Questions? Please call The Wetlands Institute at 609-368-1211.

### Salt Marsh Safari

Starting in Marsh View Hall, watch our award-winning film, Secrets of the Salt Marsh. Then join us for a guided interpretive walk through the wetlands! Together we will travel along the new elevated walkway, down the salt marsh trail and out onto the dock overlooking Scotch Bonnet creek. To fully experience the marsh, make sure to wear shoes that can get wet and muddy!

Weekdays: 10:00am, 12:00pm, 2:00pm Weekends: 11:00am and 1:00pm Free with admission

### **Creature Feature**

We will highlight a different live animal or group of animals each day! Get up close with turtles, fish, crabs, sea stars and urchins, mollusks, horseshoe crabs and the popular animals of Finding Nemo and Sponge Bob.

Weekdays: 11:15am and 1:15pm Free with admission

### Catch 'o the Day

Get your feet wet (or wear waders!) as you discover what swims in the back bays. Help us drag a seine net through the water to find crabs, shrimp, fish and more. Activity recommended for ages 8 and up. Younger children are welcome to attend and can assist in removing creatures from the net! **This activity is tide dependent and may not occur during low tide**.

Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 3:15pm Free with admission

### **Aquarium Feeding**

Act as an Aquarist for a day and help us feed the local marine life! We will open up feeding three times each week so you can see the turtles chasing minnows and the horseshoe crab gobbling shrimp. **Not all animals are fed every day**. *Tuesday and Thursday: 3:15pm Saturday: 2:15pm* 

Free with admission

# Totally Turtle Tuesday and Horseshoe Crab-mania Thursday

Tuesday and Thursday nights are bursting with fun as we highlight our favorite reptiles and arthropods. Each week we'll bring you live turtles or horseshoe crabs, the latest terrapin research and horseshoe crab conservation, cool crafts and a special terrapin or horseshoe crab hatchling release. *Tuesday and Thursday: 5:00pm Free with admission* 

# **Dune and Beach Walk**

Everyone likes to visit the beach, but what do you know about the plants and animals that actually live there? Meet at 48th Street and Dune Drive in Avalon for an interpretive walk along the maritime forest and dune trails to learn about the flora and fauna that call this area their home. *Wednesday: 9:00am* 

Suggested \$3 donation to The Wetlands Institute

# **Exploration Point**

Bring your beachcombing buckets! Start your week at the beach off right as we explore Stone Harbor Point for awesome seashells, cool birds, fun things that live under the sand, and give a lesson in sand castle building. Meet an educator from The Wetlands Institute at the trailhead at 122nd Street in Stone Harbor. Activity recommended for children age 3-7 accompanied by a parent.

Monday: 9:30am

Suggested \$3 donation to The Wetlands Institute

### **Hooked On Fishing**

Need something to do while you're waiting for check-in time on Saturday? Go fishing! We'll teach you how to bait a hook, cast a line, catch the fish and reel it in. We've even got fishing poles and bait! *Saturday: 9:30am* 

Free with admission

### **Seashell Sundays**

Starting a shell collection? Want to know where shells come from? Can't figure out what you found on the beach? Bring it in and we will tell you all about seashells, how to collect them without harming the environment and feature an assortment of live mollusks and cool artifacts. *Sunday: 10:00am* 

Free with admission

### **Crabbing at the Dock**

Drop a line in the water and see what pinches it! We'll provide the bait and handlines... You reel in the blue crabs! *Sunday: 2:15pm Free with admission* 

Please check our website calendar for schedule updates! wetlandsinstitute.org/events/calendar

# **Stone Harbor Bird Sanctuary Tours**

Join an educator from The Wetlands Institute and take a guided tour of the Stone Harbor Bird Sanctuary. Learn about the history of the sanctuary, the latest restoration efforts and the local flora and fauna – especially birds! Tours depart from Egret Espy trail, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Entrance in Stone Harbor.

Sunday: 10:00am (Memorial Day – Labor Day). Saturday: 10:00am (July - August). Free to attend.

# 40<sup>th</sup> Jersey Cape Shell Club Show

For four decades, the Jersey Cape Shell Club has been taking shell collecting to a new level. See incredible collections of shells from around the world, including shells and shell artwork that will be available for sale. *Friday, August 14 - Sunday, August 16.* 

Shell Show Only Admission: \$3, children under 12 free Shell Show and Institute Admission: adults \$8, children \$6, members free.

Find us on E S O

# **Research and Conservation**

# Home Improvements for Purple Martins and Tree Swallows



Purple martins are a small, beautifullycolored swallow that scoops up airborne insects as they fly about. In spring, martins visit us to nest, travelling from wintering grounds in South America. Once here, they

New gourd-style martin house

prefer close quarters with other martins in nest boxes and other structures stationed in open areas with lots of room for their aerial feats.

We were sure that more martins could take advantage of the phenomenal habitat we have at The Wetlands Institute, so this March we installed a new home for 12 lucky pairs of Purple Martins just outside the Marshview Lecture Hall.

This new gourd-style martin house supplements our 'condo style' martin house for the time being, though we hope to upgrade the condo system for next year's nesting season. The gourds are designed to provide additional protection from predators, and separate compartments for each nesting pair minimize the drawbacks of colonial living, like over-crowding and ectoparasites. The result should be healthier martin parents and chicks.

Another benefit of the new system is that we can raise and lower it each week to check the progress of our new residents. We have no chicks yet as of this writing but we expect them to hatch shortly.



Existing condo-style martin house

With the help of Eagle Scout Nick Zedonek, we were also able to increase the number of nest boxes for tree swallows on our property. Nick led a project to build new and improved nest boxes for Tree Swallows and Bluebirds and installed 6 boxes around our property. Nick's nest boxes have been a hit - the birds started moving in as they were being installed.

# **The Ospreys Return!**



After several years of inactivity, our Osprey Camera finally has an active nest to broadcast. Our nesting pair is patiently incubating three eggs. The eggs were first noticed on May 28, May 31 and June 2. With an incubation period of 35 to 45 days, we are expecting the new additions to hatch around Independence Day.

You can follow their progress by watching the live camera feed on our website. It has night vision so you can watch any time! If you follow us on Facebook or Twitter, you will get regular updates and you can help us name the babies when they arrive!

Visit our website at **wetlandsinstitute.org/** education/osprey-camera to watch the growing family!

# **Welcome Allison Anholt!**

Allison Anholt joined Research and the Conservation Department this spring as a research scientist. Allison has been on the ground rescuing horseshoe crabs with the public through the reTURN the Favor program, is leading avian surveys for us at Ring Island, and is busy with



numerous other projects. Allison brings many years of experience working with avian species in coastal ecosystems throughout the nation, and has spent several of those years here in New Jersey.

1: Email us at staff@wetlandsinstitute.org



or 3: Sign-up at wetlandsinstitute.org/about-us/newsletters



**3** Simple Ways to Go Paperless Paperless newsletters are not only more sustainable but they help reduce our cost so we can allocate more of your gifts to our programs.

# **SUMMER PROJECTS**

# Attention Crabbers: Terrapin BRD's Available!

Diamondback terrapins often become trapped in crab pots, attracted by bait and trapped animals. Because terrapins require access to the surface in order



to breathe, they often drown in crab pots. To prevent the loss of terrapins in traps, New Jersey law requires crabbers use plastic squares called Bycatch Reduction Devices or BRD's in waters of less than 150 feet across at mean low water mark. These BRDs attach to trap openings and prevent terrapins from entering, but leave the hole large enough to catch full size blue crabs. If you, or anyone you know, is a crabber using commercial style pots, please encourage them to use these BRDs. They can be obtained free of charge from The Wetlands Institute or Hand's Bait and Tackle, No Bones Bait Shop, Smuggler's Cove, and Avalon Hodge Podge.

# **Summer Internships**

The return of summer weather to the marsh marks the arrival of our undergraduate interns! Soon enough, this ambitious group will be busy leading public education programs, attending outreach events, conducting research and conservation projects, and enjoying life at The Wetlands Institute.

Please join us in welcoming them to the Coastal Conservation Research Program:

- Lindsay Diehl, Elizabethtown College
- Lauryn Freedman, University of Massachusetts – Amherst
- Shane McFoy, Philadelphia University
- Caitlin O'Neill, St. Mary's College of Maryland
- Matthew Sehrsweeney, University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
- Jennifer Terry, Bucknell University
- And leading the charge this summer is CCRP Program Coordinator Ariele Baker.

And to the Environmental Education Intern Program:

- Mary Birrer, from Rutgers University
- Jacob Lipton, from Stockton University
- Joseph Seebode, from College of the Holy Cross
- Hannah Sinclair, from CUNY Medgar Evers College



- Crab Races and Games
- Crabbing Tips and Tricks
- Crab Teaching Tank
- Crabbing Tournament
- Crabcake Cookoff
- And more Crabulous Fun!

# TIDEPOOL SHOP

The Tidepool Shop is stocked with new and exciting books and inventory just for you! Come by and take a look at some of our featured items:

- 16 oz. Tervis tumblers with our logo boldly displayed in our attractive blue and green colors.
- Bird and Butterfly houses made out of recycled plastic.
- Sea glass framed art and authentic sea glass jewelry. Also, sea glass identification cards and a new book, *The Lure of Sea Glass* by Richard LaMotte.
- Are you a kayaker? We have new kayak T-shirts in adult and youth sizes. Soon you will be seeing the 2015 Summer Nature Program T-shirt with an osprey design everywhere.
- New books on our shelves include *The Call of the Osprey* by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent, *The Narrow Edge-A Tiny Bird, An Ancient Crab and An Epic Journey* by Deborah Cramer, *High Tide for Horseshoe Crabs* by Lisa



Kahn Schnell and *How to Raise a Wild Child* by Scott D. Sampson

Come visit us and see what everyone is talking about!



Find us on

# **A**ROUND THE MARSH

# **2015 Junior Duck Stamp**



Congratulations to Eric Jeon whose art earned him the Best of Show title for the State of New Jersey in the Junior Duck Stamp Competition. His painting, "Resting on a Tranquil Lake" speaks to his Conservation Message: "As humans, we should treat all wildlife with a great amount of respect."

# In Our Donor's Words

We often receive notes from our donors, volunteers and members and we wanted to share some.

"I feel that we have been blessed to be given this perfect natural resource. We need to preserve and protect it. My husband and I are passionate about the environment and protecting this beautiful gift. But as much as I want to help, my expertise is in finance, not in environmental science. I volunteered at The Wetlands Institute because *I knew I could be helpful. I became a member because* I believed in their mission. But after seeina the Institute become an organization on the leading edge of the issues, my husband and I began making additional contributions to the Institute. With the new leadership, they know what they are doing and are taking it in the right direction. They have the experts and the answers. By helping them, I am doing my part for the environment and our beautiful wetlands and I feel really good about that." -- Amy Welsh

Your belief in our mission and the generosity of our donors allows The Wetlands Institute to make a difference every day. As Jane Goodall says, "Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference." Please visit **wetlandsinsitutue.org/donate** and make a difference today!

# Thanks to our 2015 Corporate Sponsors:

- Atlantic City Electric
- Avalon Flooring
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- Sturdy Savings Bank

# **Terrapin Harvest Update**



Most of us don't think of terrapins as food, but in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries they were widely eaten and considered a delicacy in the USA.

Thankfully, eating terrapin is not popular in the American diet today, however harvest for the pet trade and international food markets overseas is a growing concern. Currently it is legal to harvest diamondback terrapins in New Jersey, and the current regulations on terrapin harvest in NJ are not as strong as those of neighboring states. In 2014, 3,500 terrapins were taken and shipped out of state, eventually bound for international markets. In addition, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) Conservation Officers recently caught fishermen who had illegally harvested an additional 800 terrapins in Absecon Bay.

Due to this apparent increase in pressure from harvesting on New Jersey's terrapin population, the terrapin harvest has been closed for one year as of March 2015, to allow the terrapin population status and current harvest regulations to be reviewed. Further conservation action may be considered, and there are bills pending in the state legislature that would make the harvest of wild diamondback terrapins illegal if passed. One bill is pending in the Assembly (Bill A3932) and one in the Senate (Bill S2615). Bill S2615 passed a senate committee vote May 4th; the bill has moved on to be considered by the Senate in a full vote at a currently unannounced date.

The current closure will allow time for NJ DFW to assess the impact of the harvest on terrapins, and the sustainability of any future harvest. The Wetlands Institute has been supportive of the current harvest closure as well as efforts to make the diamondback terrapin a non-game species, including bill S2615 and A3932. For up-to-date information on the harvest closure, as well as what you can do to help terrapins, please visit our website.



**EarthShare New Jersey** is the only environmental federation for workplace giving in the state. For more

information, call Paula Aldarelli at 609-989-1160 or e-mail *paldarelli@earthsharenj.org*.

# **ON THE WATER**

Reservations are required for all activities. Unless otherwise stated, all activities leave from The Wetlands Institute dock.



#### **Back Bay Birding and Wildlife Tours**

Skimmer Tours again offers their highly acclaimed eco-cruises on board *The Skimmer* to view wildlife in the beautiful back bays of Stone Harbor. Highlights include birds and wildlife of the salt marsh and marine life touch tanks. On Tuesday and Wednesday evening sunset cruises, feel free to bring your own wine or brew of choice (no hard liquor) and the crew will serve a tasty assortment of cheese, crackers, and fruit.

Tuesday: 6:00pm (Sunset Cruise)

Wednesday: 10:00am, 1:30pm and 6:00pm (Sunset Cruise) Thursday: 10:00am and 1:30pm

\$28/person (ages 13 and up), \$15/child (ages 3-12), free ages 2 and under

Special Evening Sunset Cruises: \$29/person (ages 13 and up), \$16/child (ages 3-12), free ages 2 and under

#### **Ocean City Back Bay Birding**

Board the *Duke o' Fluke* for a sunset sail on the Ocean City back bays. Cruise past endangered skimmers, dozens of osprey, and the area's largest rookery of herons and egrets. This cruise departs from the Bayside Center, located between 5th and 6th Streets, in Ocean City. Call 609-368-1211 for reservations.

Wednesday: 6:00pm \$25/person (\$15 ages 5-12, free ages 4 and under)

### Sunset Kayaking

Explore the marsh as the sun sets on a guided paddle in a single or tandem kayak. This is your best chance to see wildlife feeding and birds heading to their roosts. Call 609-368-1211 for reservations.

Wednesdays and Thursdays: 6:00pm \$54/person

# Back Bay Kayaking and Paddle Boarding

Kayaking and paddle boarding have become very popular and afford a unique, up-close experience with the natural world. After a short orientation to paddling techniques by a trained instructor, you'll be off for a guided kayak or paddleboard tour of the coastal marsh ecosystem in a single or tandem kayak or atop a paddleboard. Call 609-368-1211 for reservations.

Monday: 9:30am (Paddleboard Only) Tuesday and Thursday: 10:00am (Kayak Only) Friday: 9:30am (Kayak Only) \$44/person for Paddleboard Tour, \$54/person for Kayak Tour

#### **Full Moon Paddling**

For six nights only, hop into a kayak as the sun sets and the full moon rises. During this guided tour, we'll paddle with lights on for safety beneath the moonlight. No participants under 16 please. No kayaking instruction will be provided. Call 609-368-1211 for reservations. June 30, July 1, 29, and 30, August 27 and 28: 7:00pm. \$54/person

# Ocean City Back Bay Kayaking and Full Moon Paddling

Join a naturalist for an interpretive paddle of the Ocean City back bays. Exploring this area via kayak is a truly unique experience. Kayakers will be able to view osprey platforms and, tide permitting, drag a seine net in search of aquatic life! These tours depart from 316 Bay Avenue in Ocean City. Call 609-368-1211 for reservations.

Monday: 6:00pm Wednesday: 10:00am Thursday: 10:00am and 6:00pm Special Full Moon Dates: 7:00pm on June 30, July 1, 29, and 30, August 27 and 28 \$45/person

# **SUMMER NATURE PROGRAM**



#### Explore the Great Outdoors at The Wetlands Institute!

Starting July 1, a day at The Wetlands Institute means a day full of fun science experimentation, games, field trips, beach exploration, arts and crafts, and much more all while enjoying a new theme each week:

Something in the Air, Nature I Spy, Explore the Shore: the Science of Seaside Arts, Walking and Talking Whales, Starry Summer Days and Sunny Nights, Worldwide Watery Ways, Great Growing Ground Stuff.

Summer Nature Programs are filling up fast and you don't want to miss it! For

children ages 5-13, programs are held weekly from July 1 – August 12, 2015 and include field trips and beach days. Children age 4 can enjoy special programs during the weeks of July 13, July 27 and August 10, 2015.

For complete details, including theme descriptions, availability, pricing and registration information, please visit our website at *wetlandsinstitute.org* or call 609-368-1211.



1075 Stone Harbor Blvd. Stone Harbor, NJ 08247-1424

# or Current resident

A non-profit organization studying, preserving and protecting wetlands and coastal ecosystems



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