

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE MEADOWS IN ACTION

by Dr. Lenore Tedesco

A new addition to the research and education programs at the Institute is the installation of live video cameras. Three cameras are mounted on the tower and provide beautiful views of the marsh. They supplement the osprey nest cam and allowed us to observe our fledgling osprey Chance until she ultimately left for warmer climates to the south. One of the cameras looks to the southeast and includes the marsh walkway and another camera provides sweeping views of the marsh to the south of the Institute. The cameras are accessible via the Institute website.

The Jersey Shore and much of the Atlantic Coast from New York to the Carolinas was battered by heavy winds and catastrophic rain for most of the first week of October. Gale force winds blew from the northeast for more than five days and storm tides filled the marshes and back bays. During high tides for several days, the marsh grasses were invisible, and the first time visitor could mistake the marshes for open bays. These storm tides were added onto higher than normal tides that were related to the full moon on September 27th and 28th. The combination of astronomical high tides and storm tides resulted in the marsh being deeply flooded for more than nine days for several hours around each high tide.



An added benefit of the cameras is that they allowed viewers to see how the marshes were doing and track the early October storms from wherever they were. The cameras were extensively used during the storm. In fact, we had more than 9,700 visits to the livecam web page over that four day period. We are pleased to be able to provide this service to our community.

Lots of folks were wondering how the birds fared. Most hunkered down and waited the storm out. We are in the midst

of the great fall migration and for most birds, the migration was interrupted and began again in earnest after the storm passed. The same is true for the monarch butterflies.



As I look over the marshes in the golden fall beauty, I am thankful for the services the marshes provide. Once again, the marshes did their job – and did it well, absorbing billions of gallons of flood waters and dampening waves. As I sat in my office, day after day, listening to the winds buffeting the building and watching the marsh become part of the bay, I gave thanks to Herbert Mills and his visionary leadership, for preserving these marshes for our well-being.

The new cameras allow you to enjoy the majesty of the marshes from wherever you are. Check them out!



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:

September 2 - October 12 - Open daily

9:30 - 4:30 - Monday - Sunday

October 13 - May 1 - Open Friday, Saturday & Sunday 9:30 to 4:30

Closed Monday through Thursday

Check our website for Holiday Hours

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.

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Stone Harbor, NJ 08247
609-368-1211

wetlandsinstitute.org



MARSH MUSINGS

by Dr. Lenore Tedesco, Executive Director

Early October brought historic storms to the Jersey shore and much of the eastern seaboard of the United States. Relentless northeast winds blew for more than five days and storm tides filled the back bays to levels that were reminiscent of Sandy, but thankfully not as high. As with Sandy, our marshes fared very well. In fact, a quick look out over the vast meadows shows them to be in their fall glory with golden hues and the pink and reds of the pickleweed. The marshes did their job – and did it well, absorbing billions of gallons of flood waters and dampening waves.



As I sat in my office, day after day, feeling the fury of the storm and watching the marsh disappear into the bay, I was once again reminded of the importance of the marshes, and thankful for Herbert Mills and his visionary leadership. He recognized the value of these meadows for storm protection and set upon a course to preserve and protect them so that half a century later they are still doing their job and protecting us. He was able to achieve his goals because so many people heard his message, shared his vision and stepped forward with the support he needed to purchase these meadows for the public good. I still meet many of you that contributed to that first fundraising campaign and made that vision a reality.



As the seasons change, we are busy working every day to ensure that these marshes remain healthy. We are actively monitoring them, teaching about them, and sharing our commitment and passion for them and the creatures that rely on them. I hope you will take time to reflect on the many ways that the marshes are valuable to you. How would your life be different if these marshes were not here?

I am so grateful to all of our supporters, past and present for helping ensure that these marshes remain. I hope you will consider the value of the work we do as we enter the season of giving.



Memberships Make Great Gifts!

An annual membership is more than just a simple gift - it's a whole year of great benefits!

Available for purchase and renewal online!



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.

1: Email us at staff@wetlandsinstitute.org

or 2: Text the keyword **PAPERLESS** to 42828

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



WINTER HAPPENINGS

Even though it might be cold outside, it is always warm inside at The Wetlands Institute! Please join us for activities on the marsh every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from now until May 1, 2016. Unless otherwise stated, all activities occur onsite at The Wetlands Institute. Questions? Please call us at 609-368-1211.

Seasonal Science Activities and Crafts

We believe children and adults learn a great deal through moments of self-exploration. Each week we will offer a new self-guided science activity or craft related to seasonal changes in nature. We provide the supplies and you create the learning! Possible activities related to migration, geology, outdoor exploration, nature crafts, simple science experiments and much more!

Free with admission - Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 10:00am – 4:00pm

Creature Feature and Craft

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 animals of Finding Nemo. After the presentation, create a take-home craft related to that day's Creature Feature!

Free with admission - Friday and Saturday: 2:00pm

Aquarium Feeding

Act as an Aquarist for a day and help us feed the local marine life! We will open up feeding each weekend so you can see the turtles chasing minnows and the horseshoe crab eating shrimp. As you watch them gobble down their food, use our animal feeding surveys to record their behavior so we can make sure all our animals are happy and well fed. **Not all animals are fed every day.**

Free with admission - Saturday: 11:00am

Aquarium Teaching and Touch Tank

There is no better way to learn about the local creatures found in the salty waters of the ocean or New Jersey back-bays than to experience them firsthand! Come join a Wetlands Institute educator for a unique, interactive learning experience as they teach about whelk, skates, sea urchins, sea stars, mud snails, and more! **Please come prepared to touch the animals by not having any bug spray, hand sanitizer or lotion on your hands.** If needed, hands can be washed with mild soap and water in The Wetlands Institute restroom before the program.

Free with admission - Sunday: 11:00am

Science Feature and Activity

Each Sunday we will focus on a different conservation issue or science "hot topic"! Some of the topics include Marine Debris, Osprey Conservation, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Seafood, Horseshoe Crab Conservation, Terrapin Conservation and the world of Plankton. After the presentation, participate in a hands-on activity related to that day's Science Feature! Activity recommended for ages 8 and up, but younger children are welcome to attend.

Free with admission - Sunday: 2:00pm



A Year in Review

Friday, December 4 at 6:00pm

With 2016 right around the corner, The Wetlands Institute invites you to take a unique look back over the past few months. Join us for A Year in Review as we celebrate through pictures, stories, videos and discussion all the twists, turns, achievements and efforts we have made over the course of 2015. This is a covered dish dinner, so please bring an appetizer, entrée, salad or dessert to share with at least eight people.

Admission: A covered dish plus \$7 for members and \$12 for non-members. *RSVP requested.*

Winter Lecture Series: Save the Dates!

Lunch and Learn

Join us for a weekly exploration of topics important to our coastal and wetland ecosystems. Bring your lunch and The Wetlands Institute will provide coffee and dessert. Each week we will feature a different speaker and topic of discussion! Please check our website for complete details.

*Admission: \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members
Friday: 11:45am - January 8 through March 18 except on dates of Covered Dish Dinners (January 29 and February 26)*

Covered Dish Dinners

Nothing could be better than an evening filled with meeting new people, eating great food and engaging in scientific discussion! Join us the last Friday of each month, January - March, as we bring in guest speakers from around the region to share their knowledge of important issues in the field of environmental science and biology. In the spirit of covered dish dinners, please bring an appetizer, entrée, salad or dessert to share with at least eight people. Please check our website for complete details.

*Admission: A covered dish plus \$7 for members and \$12 for non-members. *RSVP requested.*
Friday: 6:00pm - January 29, February 26, and March 25*

wetlandsinstitute.org/events/calendar

Find us on



RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

reTURNing the Favor for Horseshoe Crabs

The **reTURN the Favor** program works to make the beaches of New Jersey safer for the thousands of horseshoe crabs that spawn annually between May and July on the Delaware Bayshore. Many of these crabs die by becoming overturned by wave action, or upon being caught in natural or manmade structures such as jetties or old housing structures.

Because many spawning beaches are closed in the spring to protect shorebirds from disturbance, the program has many restrictions for how, where, and when walks can be conducted. Partner organizations sponsor beaches with high spawning numbers and recruit and train volunteers to conduct rescue walks following program protocols. While rescuing crabs, **reTURN the Favor** volunteers identify hazards, known as impingements, and tally overturned and impinged crabs.

In the first three seasons, 101 **reTURN the Favor** volunteer walk leaders have conducted 514 walks and committed 2,061 volunteer hours. This effort has achieved the amazing result of over 70,000 crabs rescued!

The **reTURN the Favor** program has gained momentum since its founding in 2013. The Steering Committee, comprised of members from The Wetlands Institute, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, and Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, collects data, compiles reports, and sets priorities for upcoming projects.

As we have found, this program provides many important benefits beyond the direct rescue of horseshoe crabs. Perhaps the most important result in our three seasons of experience has been the identification and quantification of impingements which trap crabs. Armed with this knowledge, we are now starting to take on fixing these hazards.

Our first pilot project took place this March at East Point Lighthouse. Data collected in 2014 found that hundreds of crabs, representing a majority of crabs at this site, were rescued from manmade impingements. A group of **reTURN the Favor** volunteers, in collaboration with state agencies and Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, hit the ground to remove rubble and fill gaps in between the structures of an out-of-use boat ramp. This small-scale project had big results - only 10 crabs per walk were rescued this year from manmade

impingements, as compared to 77 crabs per walk in 2014. We hope to continue identifying impingement hazards using data collected through the program in order to conduct more on-the-ground restoration projects.



We thank all who have participated in the **reTURN the Favor** program so far. Continued momentum of this program will allow us to identify other ways in which to help spawning horseshoe crabs in New Jersey. If you would like to participate in next year's efforts, please contact us!

5th Disney Conservation Grant Awarded!



The Wetlands Institute is excited to have been awarded a \$24,900 grant from the Disney Conservation Fund (DCF). The conservation grant recognizes The Wetlands Institute's efforts to study and conserve diamondback terrapin populations in southern New Jersey.

The support of the Disney Conservation Fund is invaluable to the Institute's long-term efforts to conserve diamondback terrapins. The funding will allow the Institute to continue and enhance the Institute's terrapin conservation projects, many of which were established over 20 years ago.

Specifically, DCF's support will fund continued efforts to reduce road mortality of nesting female terrapins, incubate eggs harvested from terrapins found killed on roadways and raise the resulting hatchlings. It will also fund the continuation of our mark-recapture project, the training of undergraduate interns, and expanded efforts to remove derelict crab traps that catch and kill many terrapins in the surrounding waterways.

For information on Disney's commitment to conserve nature and a complete list of 2015 grant recipients, visit www.disney.com/conservation.

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

by Allison Anholt



Banding American Oystercatchers

This summer we monitored and banded American Oystercatchers on Stone Harbor Point and in the marshes behind The Wetlands Institute. We banded 11 young oystercatchers to understand the big picture of migration and survival. One of the banded young birds, A22, continues to be seen at Stone Harbor Point. Young birds can be distinguished by the dark brown bill tip as seen in the photo of A22 taken by Lynne Faulterbauer this fall. Right now, A22 is part of a large flock of migratory oystercatchers on Stone Harbor Point. This flock uses Stone Harbor Point annually in order to rest and fuel up for migration.

Bands are readable with binoculars or cameras and are used so that researchers across the bird's range can understand its movements and survival. A22, as a young bird, will likely winter in the southern United States. In fact, another chick we banded at Stone Harbor Point this summer was already spotted in late September in Florida. Hopefully, in a couple years, these birds will return and make Stone Harbor their home for the breeding season.

Increasing the number of banded birds will also help us to solve the confusing puzzle of who is who of our resident nesting birds. Our banding efforts were aided by support from NJ Audubon and Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ. Next time you are on Stone Harbor Point, be sure to look for banded oystercatchers! To learn more about these fascinating creatures, or to report any banded birds you see, please visit the American Oystercatcher Working Group page - www.amoywg.org



TIDEPOOL SHOP

by Joyce Ferguson

Have you seen the authentic Web Art featured in the Tidepool Shop display case?

It has generated a lot of interest! Each spider web was carefully collected by Emil Fiore throughout New Jersey and secured on a signed glass covered disc. This is the unique, nature related gift you have been waiting for.



A new book on our shelves *Birding for the Curious* by Nate Swick provides excellent tips on spotting birds and devotes a chapter to understanding binoculars. For our bird friends we have recycled plastic bird feeders that are Made in America as well as holiday bird seed gift bags.

In keeping with the holiday season think of the Tidepool Shop for books, puppets, plush animals and stocking stuffers for children. Long sleeve T-shirts, hoodie sweatshirts, fleece vests and microfleece jackets make perfect gifts. We have a variety of festive ornaments including a laser cut design with The Wetlands Institute logo (of course, Made in America). The perfect gift for one and all is a Wetlands Institute Gift Card which can be redeemed for General Admission, Summer Nature Programs and Tidepool Shop purchases!

The Tidepool Shop awaits your visit every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM. As always, we are happy to assist you with phone or email orders and keep checking our website for an exciting announcement!



Looking for a meaningful gift?

Give the gift of conservation with one of our adoption programs:

Adopt-A-Terrapin or **Adopt-A-Horseshoe Crab**

Purchase online at wetlandsinstitute.org/conservation
For more information or to purchase by phone, call 609-368-1211



Find us on



AROUND THE MARSH

A Salute to More Than 40 Years of Service – C. Lee Harp



Lee Harp stepped up to serve The Wetlands Institute hours after it was dedicated and has served with passion and dedication ever since. Lee retired from the Board of Trustees in October and he will be sorely missed.

Mr. Harp is an environmental attorney who spent his career with Archer & Greiner. Lee served on numerous Institute committees over the years, but is most well-known for his long tenure chairing the Research and Conservation Committee and being a persistent advocate for the Diamondback Terrapin Conservation Program.

Lee chaired the Golf Committee for 11 years and raised funds for the Research Department with that event. He is most proud of the Institute's intern program and the number of students that have gone on to have successful careers in conservation. He views some of the greatest accomplishments of the Institute to be related to conservation measures for terrapins and the capacity building for other communities to do their own terrapin conservation work.

One of Lee's favorite quotes is "Be part of the solution and not part of the problem." In recognition of Lee's commitment and passion for the Institute, the Board of Trustees conferred upon Lee the honor of inclusion among individuals noted for Exceptional Giving. Lee is only the 4th member so included and is listed alongside the great leaders and contributors to the success of the Institute. They include Herbert Mills, Marion Glaspy, Dr. Albert E. Wood – and now Lee Harp.

To recognize Lee's commitment to research and conservation programs, we have established the Harp Terrapin Conservation Fund and are receiving donations in Lee's honor. You may contribute to the fund online or by mail. Please note your gift is for the Harp Fund. Thank you Lee for all you do! It has been an honor and privilege to work with you.

Dr. Tedesco Named Stone Harbor's Citizen of the Year



From left: Frank Byrne, Incoming SHPOA President; Dr. Tedesco; Jeff Alderton, Immediate Past SHPOA President

Dr. Lenore Tedesco, our Executive Director has been selected as Stone Harbor's Citizen of the Year. At its Fall General Membership meeting on Saturday, September 12, Stone Harbor Property Owners Association President Jeff Alderton provided the following comments:

"Dr Tedesco is an absolutely dedicated professional in the areas of Marine Geology and Geophysics. Her credentials are astounding, both professionally and personally. Her schooling is beyond reproach. She is a researcher, a teacher, an organizer, a leader, and a woman who has made an significant impact on Stone Harbor, our surrounding communities, and quite frankly, the world at large. Her skills and abilities have strengthened one of our true treasures in town - the Bird Sanctuary. She takes enormous pride in preserving, protecting, and restoring natural resources, which is evidenced by all the work she has done on Stone Harbor Point, from 122nd street into the dune section clear to the bridge. She is known for making a difference, she treads lightly to get things accomplished, she imparts wisdom to colleagues and students alike, motivating them to constantly do better, and she makes no small plans."

The Wetlands Institute staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees would like to congratulate Lenore on this well-deserved award!



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.

Our 2015 Corporate Sponsors!

- Atlantic City Electric
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EXCITING EVENTS

Fall Migration Festival

Our 3rd annual Fall Migration Festival was a huge success! It was the perfect weekend and our visitors were treated to some outstanding birding, monarch tagging, native plant garden tours, nature exploration, wildlife interactions, back-bay boat and kayak tours, crafts, and more.



The *Philadelphia Zoo* visited us with a few of their friends. *The Center for Aquatic Sciences* and *Cape May Point State Park* each gave fascinating presentations during which the crowd got up close and personal with some birds, reptiles and other creatures. Kids even got to take part in a special autumn terrapin release!

The 2015 Fall Migration Festival
was sponsored by



Thank You Volunteers!

Our volunteers give of themselves and bring with them their skills, abilities, and compassion and ask for nothing in return. Their commitment to the Institute is an inspiration to all of us. We recently held a celebration to thank these individuals.

Several of our volunteers helped at the front desk or with special events. Others gave their time teaching or assisting in the Aquarium and with Summer Nature Programs. Some also helped with terrapin projects such as spotting nesting females, installing nest enclosures to protect eggs from predation, and monitoring the nests for hatchlings.



This year alone, 71 Junior Volunteers gave a total of 1431 hours; 65 Adult Volunteers providing us with 1328 hours of service; and 112 One Day Volunteers assisted us for 344 hours. Together, these devoted individuals were responsible for an aggregate 3103 donated hours.

Our top junior volunteer for the year was Maria Riley who gave 110 hours of service.

Our top adult volunteer for 2014 was Diana McFadden (pictured above) with 230 hours donated.

Thank you for all that you do!

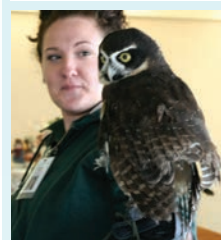
WETLAND WONDERLAND

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28 - 9:30AM TO 3:00PM



Whether through hibernation, dormancy, migration or 'toughing it out,' animals on the marsh have unique strategies for surviving the colder winter temperatures. Join us as we explore these animal adaptations and celebrate the seasonal change!

Throughout the day, we will have family fun activities including a special live animal presentation *Who's Who at the Zoo* by the **Philadelphia Zoo**, an aquarium feeding, extended teaching and touch tank demonstrations, a special appearance by Scute, winter activities, crafts, games and more!



MEMBER: \$8 Adult, \$6 child, \$25 family pack of 4*
NON-MEMBER: \$10 Adult, \$8 child, \$30 family pack of 4*

*Family pack of 4 valid for 2 adults and 2 children or 1 adult and 3 children.

Find us on





1075 Stone Harbor Blvd.
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or Current resident



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

WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

Improvements are on the way! Our quarterly newsletter is getting a makeover and we need your input! Please answer the following questions and mail this form back to us at The Wetlands Institute, c/o: Communications Director, 1075 Stone Harbor Blvd, Stone Harbor, NJ 08247. If you prefer, this form is also available on our website at wetlandsinstitute.org/feedback. Please only complete the survey once, either online or by using this form:

Do you read our newsletter? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

What content interests you the most? (i/e: research and conservation updates, upcoming events, word from our Executive Director, etc.)

What interests you the least? (i/e: research and conservation updates, upcoming events, word from our Executive Director, etc.)

What would you like to know more about?

What other improvements would you like to see in our newsletter?

Would you prefer to receive your newsletter via email? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, please provide email address: _____

Additional comments: _____
