

Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge

Among Friends

Spring 2003

Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the enduring protection, management, and appreciation of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge and its environs.

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The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to preserve a national network of lands and waters for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife and plant resources of the United States for the benefit of present and future generations.

Welcome, Neighbors and Friends!

Wertheim's neighbors from Smith Road and the surrounding area in Shirley will be the guests of honor at Neighborhood Day – a special event to be held at the Wertheim Refuge on Saturday, June 7, from 2 to 4 p.m., rain or shine.

All members of Friends of Wertheim are invited to be part of the welcoming committee and enjoy the fun, which will include:

- Wertheim staff giving a presentation about the Refuge.
- Naturalists from Sweetbriar Nature Center in Smithtown providing nature

education and interactions with live animals typical of those found at Wertheim. Sweetbriar is a private not-for-profit corporation which exists "to provide natural science education services for Long Island residents of all ages and to engage in native wildlife rehabilitation services."

- Nature walks
- Refreshments
- Opportunities to sign up to volunteer for various FOW projects!

So be a good friend and neighbor, and join in on the fun at Wertheim on June 7!

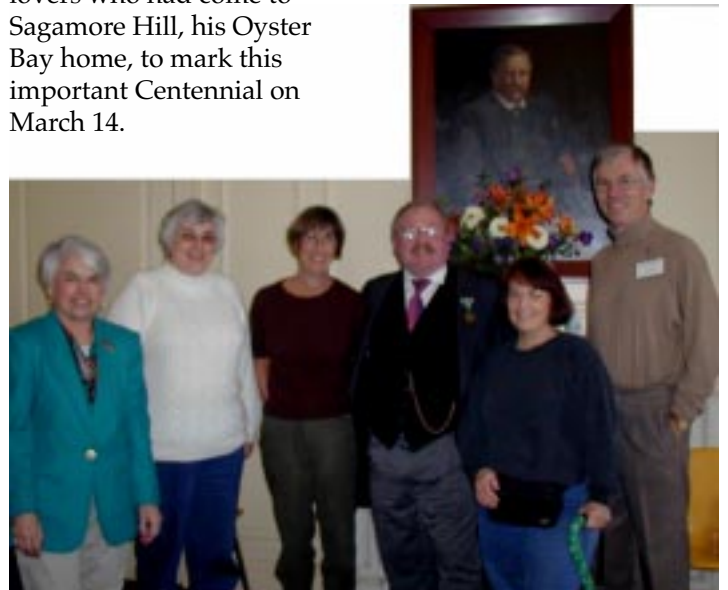
What a Bully Anniversary It Was!



(above) Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic and Deputy Refuge Manager Bill Stewart blow out the candles on the cake marking the National Wildlife Refuge System's first 100 years. (right) Standing beneath his portrait, Theodore Roosevelt (Keith McGough), welcomes FOW members to Sagamore Hill: (L-R) Kathleen O'Connor, Claire Goad, Martha Wolfgang, Anita Cohen, Peter Hutchings.

Looking as young as he did when he first created the National Wildlife Refuge System 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt welcomed a grateful throng of Refuge lovers who had come to Sagamore Hill, his Oyster Bay home, to mark this important Centennial on March 14.

As convincingly portrayed by Teddy Roosevelt look-alike Keith McGough, the 26th U.S. President counts the NWR System among his most significant
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All Ospreys, All the Time

Several osprey nests can be sighted at Wertheim NWR but only one of them can be sighted from almost anywhere – thanks to the amazing Osprey Cam that is trained on the nest and sends out streaming video, 24 hours a day, at www.postmorrow.org/OspreyFund/ospreycam.htm

The Osprey Cam is the main project of the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund, which is administered by the Post-Morrow Foundation. Dennis Puleston, renowned naturalist and honorary FOW Board member, died in 2000. The fund was established as a tribute to this man who had much to do with saving Long Island's ospreys from extinction. Its purpose is "to encourage research about ospreys on Long Island, to improve the nesting opportunities and to educate the public about these magnificent birds." The Osprey Cam addresses much of that mandate.

After much planning, work and excitement the camera, the microphone, the cables, the computers, the Optimum Online Service and the ospreys came together on March 23. From day one, this setup has captured fascinating events in the daily lives of these magnificent birds. We saw the pair of ospreys settle on this nest on March 23, then we observed them as they courted, mated and rearranged the nest. We witnessed the female give birth to four eggs and saw how the male and female took turns incubating them. The first egg hatched on Saturday, May 17, and we saw two chicks in the nest as we went to press.

If you missed all that, log on to the website, where you'll find archival footage

such fascinating events as when each egg first appeared, unusual behavior, the housekeeping done by each bird, and the changing of the guard. Of course, you can also watch live as Mom & Dad feed and raise their young.

While the Osprey Cam is providing magnificent environmental education, Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic says that the research aspect of the project has been amazing too. "We've seen the earliest osprey eggs ever recorded on Long Island, and we're gathering phenomenal technical data about ospreys that we never had before," she said.

Another benefit was unexpected: "Through the websites featuring the Osprey Cam, people who

The Post-Morrow Foundation held a celebration at the Wertheim Refuge on May 10, to thank all those who made the Osprey Cam possible - from those who contributed to the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund to those who worked tirelessly to get the video marvel up and running.

During the festivities, an osprey circled repeatedly over the Carmans River, flowing behind these folks who were key to the Osprey Cam's success: (kneeling, L-R) Karen Rowley, Tom Williams, Patricia Martinkovic; (standing, L-R) Tom Ludlam, Bill Starke, Regina Shea, Tom Shea, Connie Ludlam, Anne Meinhold, Tom Throwe, Rick Mohlmann, Pete Clement and David Shore.



never knew about us are discovering the Wertheim Refuge," said Pat, who is enthusiastic about both the Osprey Cam and the people who made it happen, saying, "It was a huge honor to work with such a talented and dedicated

group of people."

For more background on those people, the fund, Dennis Puleston and the technical aspects of the Osprey Cam, see the Spring 2003 Post Morrow Foundation newsletter, which you can read on line at www.postmorrow.org.

Report From Wertheim's Songbird Sleuth

FOW Board Member and Wertheim Songbird Sleuth Anne Meinhold reports that she finished emptying the 136 songbird boxes at Wertheim in April – just in time for the new tenants to move in. Here's what she found out about last season's occupants:



Tree swallows have taken up residence in songbird house #80, which boasts a scenic location on the banks of the Carmans River.

"We had 10 positive bluebird nestings and about five more that probably were – a little better than last year," Anne said, "I also found three chickadee nests and four titmouse nests, which are very much alike except that the chickadee likes to use mosses and the titmouse likes bits of leaves. Both use animal fur to line the nest."

Anne continued, "House wrens claimed 19 bonafide nests and 23 false nests, which consist of hundreds of small twigs but no soft material in the middle. One of the house wren nests was in an experimental box with an extra large hole – 2.5 inches. This was the first time in 10 years that a songbird nested there rather than a house sparrow. That's very encouraging because I've tried many things to discourage these nonnative birds. Still, house

sparrows made 17 nests, the same as the previous year. Also the same was the amount of tree swallow nests – seven."

Though the birds may have left for warmer winter quarters, the boxes may not be empty when Anne checks them. "I usually tap on the side first," she explained. "The cold keeps the wasps quiet but the mice leap in every direction! The flying squirrels peek out and then go back to sleep."

The evidence she collects from nest boxes is an important verification of who's nesting at Wertheim, but Anne would love to hear about your actual sightings. "If you visit the refuge and see birds using the boxes on the trail or in the field, please go to the FOW website – www.friendsofwertheim.org – and report it."

A Bully Anniversary

achievements.

Hosting the ceremony was Patricia Martinkovic, Refuge Manager for the Long Island NWR Complex. She introduced several speakers, two representatives of the Northeast Regional Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which manages the NWRs – Chief of Refuges Tony Leger and Assistant Regional Director Rick Bennet – and a very special guest, Elizabeth Roosevelt, who represented her distinguished family. A table near the podium held the dozen Refuge-related items that would later be sealed in a time capsule to be opened in 2103.

Following the talks, everyone enjoyed the wonderful reception that included cake and a “champagne” toast, which was hosted by the Oyster Bay group Friends of the Bay. After that, National Park Service staff led three groups on wonderful tours

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through the “Long Island White House,” and, said Patricia Martinkovic, “filled our minds and hearts with the personal stories and every day life of the Roosevelt family.”

The day’s activities had actually begun about six hours earlier at Wertheim NWR, where the Blue Goose Express – a bus that had traveled the Northeast Region making stops at its premiere refuges – arrived carrying the contingent from the regional office.

Patricia Martinkovic kicked off the day’s activities with a patriotic welcome. A short time later, an immature bald eagle thrilled the crowd with a fly-by before they boarded the Blue Goose Express – destination, Sagamore Hill.

On behalf of the LINWR Complex, Patricia also offered “many, many thanks and praises to everyone who made our day a success, including Friends of Wertheim, which

provided folks on the bus with bag lunches, National Park Service staff, Friends of the Bay, Refuge volunteers Liz

Spagnuolo and Edith Mingalone, and all who came to celebrate with us!”

Of course that includes



(above) All aboard the Blue Goose Express!
(left) side of bus

Teddy Roosevelt, who was heard to say, “A fellow couldn’t have a more splendid time!”

friendsofwertheim.org (continued from back page)

scription service to notify you of important activities and events, and calls for volunteers. Just click on the button at the bottom of the FOW home page.

If you sign up now, one alert you will get soon will inform you about the launch of the new website John has created for the Long Island NWR Complex. Under the direction of the Complex’s Andrea

Stewart, John has logged many volunteer hours building a site, said Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic, “that truly showcases each of the nine units that make up the LINWR Complex. John has done such a phenomenal job of accomplishing what we’ve wanted to do for years that thank-you is not a big enough word to convey our gratitude!”

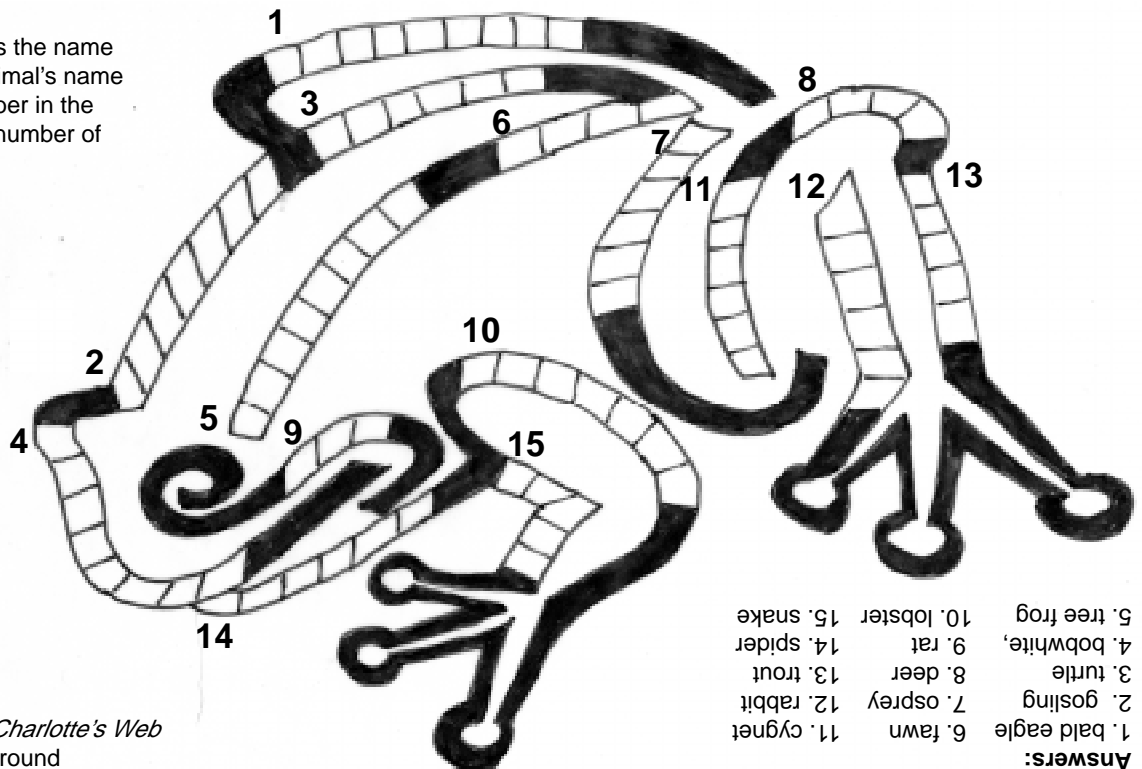
Children’s Corner – The Frog Puzzle

Illustration by Sarah Fuentes

Clues by Connie Ludlam and Faith McCutcheon

From each clue below, guess the name of an animal. Then write the animal’s name on the frog, starting at the number in the frog’s outline that matches the number of the clue.

1. the national bird of the United States (2 words)
2. a Canada goose baby
3. it carries its home with it
4. another name for a quail
5. a small toad with suckers on its toes (2 words)
6. a baby deer
7. another name for a fish hawk
8. it raises its tail when it is startled
9. a long-tailed rodent
10. a crustacean with two large claws
11. the young of a swan
12. it has a cottontail
13. a freshwater fish
14. it has eight legs and is in *Charlotte’s Web*
15. this reptile slithers on the ground



- Answers:**
- 1. bald eagle
 - 2. gosling
 - 3. turtle
 - 4. bobwhite
 - 5. tree frog
 - 6. fawn
 - 7. osprey
 - 8. deer
 - 9. rat
 - 10. lobster
 - 11. cygnet
 - 12. rabbit
 - 13. trout
 - 14. spider
 - 15. snake



Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge
 PO Box 376
 Brookhaven NY 11719

Our Best Friends Are Volunteers

Looking for an outdoor summer project? Consider volunteering for one of these activities for which Refuge staff will provide any necessary training:

• **Count early birds at Wertheim** – From 5 to 10

a.m., accompany experienced birders as they ride in four-wheel drive vehicles on rough Refuge roads to inventory wildlife. Call Refuge Biologist Mark Maghini, 286-0485.

• **Clean**

Up Smith Road – Join the crew at the Wertheim parking lot at 10:00 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month (rain date is Sunday). Bring your own work gloves; bags are provided.

• **Be Clean-Up Coordinator** – Remind the crew about upcoming cleanups; work with Brookhaven Town to get signs, bags and garbage pickup.

• **Become a Refuge Host**

– Spend a few weekend hours welcoming and orienting visitors to Wertheim.

• **Donate talent, time, materials or money** – The Refuge needs your help in:

- obtaining materials for fishing platforms
- obtaining gravel and timber for trail improvement
- hiring a seasonal maintenance worker and a public use specialist to provide information and assistance to

Refuge visitors.

– installing a bubbler near the restrooms.

If you can help in any of the above areas, contact FOW President Claire Goad, 286-0910 or cagoad@optonline.net.

And if you're already volunteering, you're reminded to keep a record of your hours, as this is important for the Refuge and the Regional Office.

Attention: Volunteers
 Save the Date – 10/18

The LINWR is planning a Volunteer Appreciation Day, to be held at the Seatuck Refuge in Islip on Saturday, October 18, 2003. Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic urges all volunteers to "keep the date open and prepared to be intrigued and pampered!" More information will be provided in the next newsletter.

Have you seen these ospreys lately?

If you haven't seen them, then you haven't been watching the Osprey Cam at Wertheim NWR. Read all about it on page 2.



What's New @ friendsofwertheim.org

If you haven't visited FOW's website recently, don't put it off! Webmaster John Petraglia has been busy updating the site at www.friendsofwertheim.org. He's added pictures to the "Sightings" section and new links to the "Links" section, including connec-

tions to the Osprey Cam at Wertheim (see story on page 2) and to nature flash cards that provide photos and information about the animals that populate the Wertheim Refuge.

John has also introduced a free e-mail alerts sub-
 (continued on page 3)

FOW MEMBERSHIP

Please establish a one-year membership for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Individual membership – only \$10

Family membership – an incredible bargain at \$15

If enrolling more than one member, please provide information for each person. Send check, payable to Friends of Wertheim NWR, to: PO Box 376, Brookhaven NY 11719