



# Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge

*Among Friends*

Fall 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.

## Mark Your Calendar for FOW's Annual Meeting! *And Start Saving Stuff Now for Next Fall's Yard Sale!*

*FOW President Claire Goad offers this update and invitation to all Friends of Wertheim:*

Many thanks to FOW members who donated items to our yard sale at the Old South Haven Presbyterian Church in September, as well as to those who donated their garage as the collection place, helped price the items, worked the day of the sale and helped cart away the few things we had left. The yard sale added \$523 to our treasury, and we plan on making this a yearly event. So please remember to put aside any items that you think have good yard sale potential and bring them next September.

Our annual meeting will be held **Thursday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the**



**FOW President Claire Goad and FOW Board member Connie Ludlam assist customers at FOW's yard-sale table.**

### **Post Morrow Foundation Annex, 16 Bay Road, Brookhaven Hamlet.**

Please come to learn more about the ecological treasure we have in our "backyard" – Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. Find out what FOW has been doing and plans to do to continue promoting the protection, management and appreciation of this special place.

The FOW board is always looking for ideas and for volunteers to help us put these ideas

into practice.

At the meeting, we'll also be giving our thanks to two departing Board members – Peter Hutchings, a founding member who served as FOW's second President for two years and who has graciously volunteered to continue to assist the Board with membership, and Annette Perry-Delilhas, who had been on the Board since FOW was founded in 1998. We'll be voting for new Board members to replace them and officially welcoming John Petraglia, who joined the FOW Board of Directors last summer as our 10<sup>th</sup> Board member.

John also does the FOW website, and he is constantly updating it. So, if you haven't been to [www.friendsofwertheim.org](http://www.friendsofwertheim.org) recently, be sure to check it out soon. John also sends out e-mails to members regarding FOW events and programs – but he can only do it if you're a member and we have your e-mail address. So, please, send your address and, if appropriate, your membership dues. Even better, bring them along with you to the annual meeting on November 13, so we can share warm fellowship, exciting ideas and tasty refreshments!



**Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic and FOW Board member Anne Meinhold were among those who helped out at FOW's yard-sale table.**

# Around the Wertheim Refuge

With the LINWR Complex Refuge Manager

**Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic** wants to let FOW members know that the **Comprehensive Conservation Plan** for Wertheim is moving right along. "We have taken all the public input we received," she said, "and, from that, we've developed alternative plans for our future conservation efforts. In November, we'll present the alternatives to our Regional Office supervisors. Then, when we have their input, we'll draw up a draft environmental impact statement for review by the public next spring."

Another significant event for the Refuge is the appointment of a **new Regional Director, Northeast Region of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Marvin Moriarty** – who comes on board on November 30.

Patricia looks forward to briefing Regional Director Moriarty and having the Complex benefit from his expertise. "Mr. Moriarty brings a wealth of experience with him as a result of his work at field stations, Regional Offices, and several top managerial positions in the Washington

## Vote for Preservation on November 4

FOW is one of a host of organizations, concerned citizens and elected officials who have joined together as "Brookhaven Citizens for Community Preservation" to urge that all registered voters go to the polls on Tuesday, November 4, and vote YES for Proposal 3, Brookhaven Town Proposition #1 - The Brookhaven Community Preservation Fund. This is an extraordinary opportunity to save Brookhaven's drinking water, local harbors and bays, open space and farmland for our children and grandchildren before it is lost forever to development – and at no cost to current home and business owners!

For more information, see the FOW website at [www.friendsofwertheim.org](http://www.friendsofwertheim.org).

Office" she said. "We're very fortunate to have one of the Agency's most respected leaders at the helm for Region 5 resources, employees, partners, and the public."

Marvin Moriarty is

originally from Vermont, where he has a farm. He will return to our Region after wrapping up his current duties as deputy regional director for Region 3, which covers eight Midwestern states.

With the Refuge's Wildlife Biologists

**Senior Biologist Mark Maghini** explains how the **management of the Big Fish Creek impoundment** continues to bear fruit. Big Fish Creek is a tributary of the Carmans River.

"Since Refuge staff began manipulating water levels and controlling giant reed [*Phragmites australis*] with herbicide and prescribed fire three years ago, this 35-acre wetland has responded with a flush of native wetland plants that are highly desirable by waterfowl. The impoundment was initially constructed more than 30 years ago to provide enhanced habitat for waterfowl. Unfortunately,



*Sandpiper, in that desolate, abandoned place (Carmans, Phragmites)*

giant reed, a non-native and highly invasive plant, soon colonized the site, rendering its habitat value marginal. Since control efforts began, however, native rushes, sedges, smartweeds, and cattail have begun to reclaim the site. In response to this

newly formed plant community, thousands of green winged teal, gadwall, mallard, and black duck have been using this abundant food resource.

"An additional benefit of impoundment management is the ability to raise and lower water levels, thereby providing up to 10 acres of mud flat or shallowly flooded areas for foraging shorebirds. Again, during spring and fall migration, flocks of least sandpipers numbering in the hundreds, as well as,

lesser numbers of dowitchers, dunlins, and yellow legs have used this foraging habitat."

Mark also tells about a grant that the refuge has received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to **restore upland habitats adjacent to Little Neck Run**, another Carmans tributary, on Wertheim's western boundary.

"The project will remove derelict buildings and treat invasive plants in what was

the former Luskowitz duck farm. This work will likely commence this winter and progress through the spring.

In addition, staff have been working with Ducks Unlimited to also restore the shoreline of Little Neck Run, by controlling giant reed and planting native shrubs and trees that would typically occur in this riverine, aquatic environment.

"This creek is one of the most attractive areas on the Refuge for waterfowl and these projects will only enhance that standing."

**Wildlife Biologist Florence James** describes various surveys conducted at Wertheim:

"For the third year in a row, Wertheim Refuge staff and volunteers have conducted the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 5 breeding bird surveys**. Looking and listening for breeding birds in spring and early summer, these individuals went



through various habitats within the Refuge, including grasslands, oak forest, oak/pine forest, and marshlands.

"Volunteer expert birders, Ernie Lewis and Sally Kiss, surveyed over 120 points on the Refuge this summer. Thanks to their expertise, over 100 species of birds were noted as nesting on the Refuge, including the following species which are rare for Long Island: black-poll warbler, pine warbler, yellow-billed cuckoo, bay-breasted warbler, indigo bunting, and eastern bluebird.

"A special thanks to volunteer and FOW Board member Anne Meinhold, who escorted these birders to their survey points on the Refuge."

Florence next discusses **Wood Duck Box Surveys**

"This winter, Ducks Unlimited and the South Shore Waterfowlers assisted the Refuge in locat-

(continued on page 2)

## Biologists (continued)

ing and cleaning 145 wood duck boxes at Wertheim. The data they collected showed that 253 eggs hatched this year and 123 eggs were un-hatched. Wood ducks used approximately 60 of the 145 wood duck boxes located on the Refuge."

A survey of Vernal Pools is Florence's next topic:

"This year, Linda Caridi, an intern from Southampton College



conducted amphibian egg mass studies to determine amphibian production on the Refuge. Linda surveyed Woods Hole, Pine Pond, Southaven Pond, and Cemetery Pond looking for wood frog egg masses and salamander egg production. Wood frog egg masses were

found in Woods Hole and Pine Pond; however, due to the excessive rain this year, many of the vernal pools were too flooded to conduct proper surveys for

salamander egg production. She also conducted surveys at the ecological preserve that the Long Island NWR Complex oversees at Brookhaven National Laboratory."

Lastly, Florence talks about the success the Long Island NWR Complex staff had with the **Solar Electric Fence** they installed at **Morton NWR in Sag Harbor**.

"To discourage mammalian predators such as foxes, cats, and raccoons from interfering with the nests of two endangered

bird species – the federal-listed piping plover and the state-listed least terns – LINWR Complex personnel erected solar electric fencing at Morton National Wildlife Refuge.

"The fence proved effective as, this year, 7 piping plover chicks and over 40 least tern chicks were fledged at Morton."



## With the Osprey Cam

In the Spring issue of this newsletter, you read about the wonderful start to the first season of the Osprey Cam at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. Through the watchful eye of the video camera installed by the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund, we saw an osprey pair establish a nest and incubate four eggs, of which three hatched and two survived. By late September, the young birds and their parents had left Wertheim to head south to

their winter habitat.

Shortly after that, **Tom Ludlam, an FOW member who is on the Board of the Post-Morrow Foundation**, which administers the DPOF, posted a piece on the PMF website that he called "Wrapping up the season":

"This final commentary is being written as the vanguard of hurricane Isabel whips across our empty nest. I must say, it is impressive that the camera we so arduously mounted above frozen ground many months ago is still faithfully broadcasting, rock-steady in a 30 knot blow. The birds, of course, are elsewhere now. We are left to recall an amazing season of events in which we were afforded unprecedented views of courtship and birth, violent death, a constant struggle for survival, and the final affirmation – as the two chicks departed fully-fledged – that this is part of an annual cycle nature has sustained for millennia. A cycle that we know is nonetheless a fragile thing in the face of present-day human activity. . . .

"For those of us who

have organized the DPOF, this inaugural year has been a great success primarily because of the many hundreds of viewers who have gotten the opportunity to watch the daily activities of an osprey nest. From April through July, the osprey cam site recorded an average of about 2000 'hits' per day. . . .

"We plan to continue the osprey cam next year. Clearly, we've learned a lot in this first year, and will try to take advantage of these lessons next year. Of course, we need the cooperation of the ospreys. They certainly did their part this year! The birds are

expected to appear again on Long Island around mid-March. . . .

"Our effort is financed by contributions, and we will need some additional support to continue next year. Although the major investments in equipment are behind us, continued operation will require continued financial support: we will need money for Internet fees, software maintenance fees, disks for archiving video, repairs, etc. If you can make a [tax-deductible] contribution, we'd appreciate it. See "make a donation" on the web site [at [www.postmorrow.org](http://www.postmorrow.org)]. . . ."

## With the Stork

Ospreys weren't the only pairs nurturing young ones at the Refuge this summer. **Cindy Patterson**, Ducks Unlimited's representative for the partnership on wetlands restoration, and her husband **Bill**, who is with The Nature Conservancy, welcomed their son, Tyler, in June. A short time later, Wertheim's own **Andrea & Bill Stewart** – she's Wertheim's Outdoor Recreation Planner and he's Deputy Refuge Manager – also became the parents of a baby boy – Paul William, born on August 14.

*Congratulations to all!*

## Children's Corner – How much do YOU know about Dennis Puleston?

### True or False Quiz

(Hint: All the answers can be found in this newsletter!)

1. Dennis was a great naturalist.
2. Dennis was not an honorary Board member of FOW.
3. He was 85 years old when he died in 2001.
4. His paintings illustrate his book *A Nature Journal*.
5. The Osprey Cam is not operated by the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund.
- 6 He painted the osprey picture at the top of page 1.

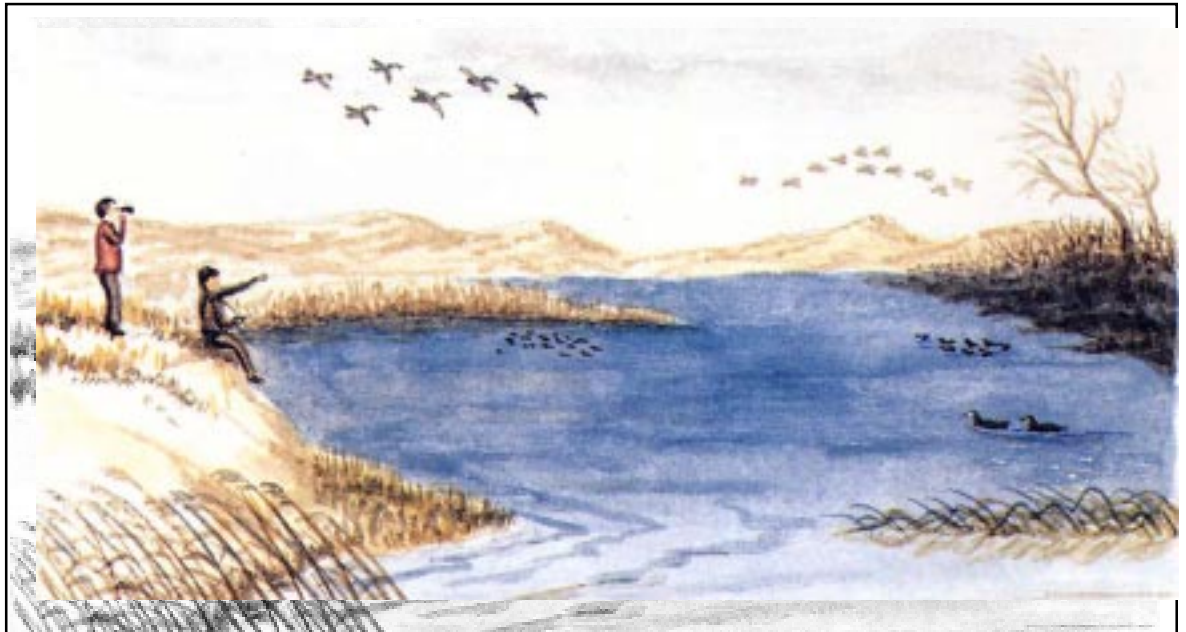
*You can read more about Dennis and see his picture at: [www.postmorrow.org/Spring03Newsletter/spring03a.htm](http://www.postmorrow.org/Spring03Newsletter/spring03a.htm)*

**Answers:** 1-T, 2-F, 3-F, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T



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

Perhaps the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge inspired this painting by the great naturalist and nature artist Dennis Puleston. This and the lovely bird illustrations inside this issue are all from Dennis's book *A Nature Journal*. Though Dennis died in 2000, his commitment to wildlife lives on through the Osprey Cam at the Wertheim Refuge, and his drawings (including the one of the osprey in our flag on page 1) remind us why your vote is so critical on November 4 (see stories inside).



Some of Dennis's wild bird watercolors have been made into prints and are still available for sale, as are copies of *A Nature Journal*. To learn more, call Dennis's daughter, Jennifer Clement, at 286-1674, *after December 6*. These would make great holiday gifts for wildlife lovers!

Fellowship!  
 Exciting Ideas!  
 Refreshments!

You'll enjoy all this and more  
 at **FOW's Annual Meeting**

*(see story on page 1).*

Thursday, November 13, at 7:00 p.m.  
 Post Morrow Foundation Annex,  
 16 Bay Road, Brookhaven Hamlet.  
 We hope to see you there!

**FOW MEMBERSHIP**

Please establish a one-year membership for:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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*Individual membership – only \$10*

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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