



# Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge

Among Friends

Winter 2004

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.

## Thoughts on the Old Year, Wishes for the New

... From FOW President Claire Goad:

The year 2003 was a very good one for Friends of Wertheim NWR.

Early last year, FOW received 501c3 status, becoming a federally recognized tax-exempt organization. Among other things, this status made FOW eligible to receive the exciting grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that you'll read about on page 2.

FOW also benefited in 2003 by generous donations from the Post-Morrow Foundation and the Knapp/Swezey Foundation. Knapp/Swezey agreed to buy us a much-needed printer, and funds from Post-Morrow will

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... From Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic:

Happy New Year! ... and a hearty congratulations to FOW for all your phenomenal achievements in 2003. On behalf of the Refuge Staff and myself, I'd like to convey our sincerest appreciation for everything



Sporting the new FOW pins (see story on page 2), most of the FOW Board (\*) and a few other Friends were on hand for this photo: (seated, L-R: Connie Ludlam\*, Anne Meinhold\*, Faith McCutcheon\*, Anita Cohen (newsletter); standing, L-R: John Petraglia\*, Marvin Loewen\*, Claire Goad\*, Kathleen O'Connor\*, John Pokorny\* and Robbin McGrath (Program Committee). Marty Van Lith was behind the camera for both photos on this page, and Board members Linda Cox, James McGowan and Lee Snead were unavailable. Loewen and McGowan joined the Board following their election at the annual meeting on November 13.

you've done to enhance Wertheim NWR for wildlife resources, visitors, and staff. Each year, we are amazed at what FOW is able to accomplish!

Each of you – annual member, volunteer, commit-

tee member, executive board member, and/or Refuge visitor – has contributed to Wertheim NWR in more ways than you realize.

A very special thank-you is extended to members (continued on page 3)



Everyone was present for 2004's first meeting of Wertheim NWR staff: (seated, L-R): Tom Loring, Wertheim's new Refuge Officer; Mark Maghini, Lead Wildlife Biologist; Deborah Lofredo, Secretary; Jack Martinez, Maintenance Worker; Bill Starke, Maintenance Group Leader; Bob Woerner, Carpenter; Jeremy Feinberg, Wildlife Biologist; Florence James, Wildlife Biologist; Jeannie Callahan, Administrative Assistant; (standing, L-R): Andrea Stewart, Public Use Specialist; Bill Stewart, Deputy Refuge Manager; and Patricia Martinkovic, Refuge Manager.

## From FOW President Claire Goad:

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keep us well-stocked with toner and paper. Thank you so much!

I'd also like to thank some FOW members – Charlie Meinhold, who filed the application for the grant I mentioned above; Board member Kathleen O'Connor, who represented FOW at the National Friends Conference in January; Michael Galante, who, last spring, gave an inspiring organizational workshop for our Board members; past FOW President Peter Hutchings, who became membership chair and whose ideas have met with great success; Board member Linda Cox, whose presentation was critical to persuading Knapp/Swezey of our worthiness; Board member John Petraglia, who did a major redesign of our website, [friendsofwertheim.org](http://friendsofwertheim.org), which he is continually updating; Anita Cohen, who continues to edit this newsletter; and, of course, the rest of the FOW Board, past and

present, whose enthusiasm for and contributions to Wertheim and FOW are boundless!

Always keeping in mind our mission statement (see top of column at left on page 1), FOW continued working to protect Wertheim NWR and its environs as part of a successful effort to prevent development on lands along the headwaters of Yaphank Creek.

Also in tune with our mission, we promoted appreciation of Wertheim through our participation in the NWR Centennial Celebration and in National Wildlife Refuge Week, and by hosting Neighborhood Day at the Refuge.

After all that, what could be left for 2004? Plenty! The roundup below summarizes FOW's current activities, including our new Program Committee, which is planning wonderful experiences for FOW members and the public. You'll also read about a unique opportunity to help us help Wertheim as a Refuge Host. The year 2003 was great, but your participation and involvement will make 2004 extraordinary!

### Generous Grant Granted!

Rain has been an unwelcome guest at several events at Wertheim in the past few years. In the future, however, rain won't dampen our activities thanks to the efforts of FOW member Charlie Meinhold.

Charlie researched, wrote and submitted a grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, requesting \$2,400 in federal funds to support FOW's outreach activities – primarily with the purchase of three tents. His efforts were rewarded in November when the Foundation approved the application in its entirety.

With the grant money, FOW will buy two 10-foot-by-20-foot canopies, and one 10-foot-by-10-foot, all of which are easily set up and taken down, as well as several folding tables and chairs.

Of course rain is not the major reason that FOW wanted tents. As Charlie wrote in the application, “. . . it became clear that facilities for accommodating groups of visitors for presentations of educational, interpretive and recreational programs are essential, particularly for school children. There are no facilities available for either a visitor contact station or a visitor center at the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. While a permanent facility would be the ultimate choice, an interim solution is the most practical at this time.”

Also, said Charlie, “With assistance from our partners – Ducks Unlimited, The Post Morrow Foundation, The Great South Bay Audubon Society, The Brookhaven Village Association, Friends of Fire Island National Seashore, the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, and the Linda Cox Design Group – we expect to obtain tabletop displays and six pairs of binoculars. All these acquisitions will widen the visitor experience both on and off the Wertheim Refuge because the canopies are inherently portable.”

### No More Pining for Pins

While attending National Wildlife Refuge Association Conferences, FOW Board member Kathleen O'Connor has shared ideas with folks from Friends groups at other NWRs, and that's how she learned that many groups had something FOW didn't have – their very own pin!

Now, FOW is proud to announce that we too have a pin, and here it is (shown actual size):

Sporting the FOW logo that features an osprey painted by Dennis Puleston, the colorful enamel pins will soon go on sale for only \$3, wherever FOW paraphernalia is sold!

Right now, that's an infrequent occurrence, but once FOW finishes purchasing three canopies with the newly received grant money (see story at left), things should change. The 10-foot-by-10-foot tent is earmarked as a semipermanent location for the Refuge Host Program – a place for volunteers to sit, rain or shine, to welcome Refuge visitors and sell Refuge and FOW items, such as FOW shirts and hats, Teddy Roosevelt teddy bears, and, of course, pins!



### Become a Refuge Host!

**If you love to meet new people, and if you've got a couple of hours to spare at the Refuge now and then, please consider becoming a Refuge Host. You'll represent FOW in greeting visitors to Wertheim, answering questions or pointing them in the right direction, and selling FOW's wares (see story above). Please call Claire Goad, 286-0910.**

### Program Committee Formed

FOW has formed a Program Committee, dedicated to providing, in association with Refuge personnel, community environmental events at Wertheim.

Co-chaired by Board members John Petraglia and John Pokorny, the committee aims to have a series of programs scheduled by spring. Others on the committee are Anne Meinhold and James McGowan, both Board members, and FOW member Robbin McGrath, who will handle publicity.

So be on the lookout for programs that will cover a wide range of environment-related events for all ages and during all seasons, such as bird watching, environmental walks, photography workshops, and any other programs that would introduce the community to the wonders at Wertheim.

If you'd like to suggest a program or know of someone who could make a suitable presentation, contact either John Petraglia, [johnpetr@optonline.net](mailto:johnpetr@optonline.net), or John Pokorny, [johnpokorny@aol.com](mailto:johnpokorny@aol.com).

### Songbird Summary

Though FOW's songbird sleuth, Board member Anne Meinhold, has finished her annual task of emptying the songbird boxes at Wertheim, not all the songbirds have left the Refuge: “Be sure to watch for bluebirds whenever you visit the blind on the White Oak trail,” Anne advised, (continued on back page)

From Refuge Manager Patricia Martinkovic:  
(continued from page 1)

whom we had the pleasure working side-by-side with this past year. On occasions, it wasn't a pretty picture – horizontal downpour, record numbers of mosquitos and ticks, even a “wee hours of the morning” survey! But, you were always there. With your dynamic ideas, professionalism, tireless efforts and delightful sense of humor, you

Wertheim's Lead Biologist Mark Maghini filled us in on:

• **Geographic Information System (GIS)** – Mark was excited to report that the Refuge will take delivery of a GIS any day. Managing natural resource data through this type of system has become increasingly popular since the early 1990s. “Our GIS,” he said, “will be cutting edge, containing more than 400 layers of digital data, housing everything from digital aerial images to rare species occurrences. The GIS will allow us to identify key areas for habitat management, track the ever-changing conditions on all the refuges in the Long Island

NWR Complex, and provide digital vegetation maps, the foundation for any biological management program, for each of the Refuges.”

• **Phragmites control** – Using a report on the status of phragmites at Wertheim completed this past winter (and available on [www.friendsofwertheim.org](http://www.friendsofwertheim.org)), Refuge Biologist Florence James is applying for permits to control this invasive exotic plant, which has spread significantly upstream in Little Neck Run and Yaphank Creek since 1989. “This is especially critical given the remaining

(continued on back page)

energized us and touched our hearts. I hope that, in 2004, we can laugh and work together with more FOW members.

Next time you visit Wertheim, please stop in the Refuge office. We'd love to meet you, answer your questions, and hear your thoughts.

Thanks to our partnership with FOW, we embark on 2004, and activities like those mentioned in the articles below, with eagerness, confidence, and great pride.

Andrea Stewart, Wertheim's Public Use Specialist, explains what's happening with:

• **White Oak Nature Trail** – “Our newest addition can be found at the end of the section we'd previously resurfaced to be compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act,” Andrea said, “a brand new overlook, complete with a wheelchair accessible ramp and a Soundpost to give you fun facts about migration at the touch of a button!”

• **Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)** – “We are still in the process of developing a CCP and Environmental Impact Statement for the nine units of the Long Island NWR Complex,” Andrea said. The 15-year plan will outline management direction and strategies aimed at preserving wildlife habitat, protecting rare, threatened and endangered species, and providing priority public uses on Refuge lands. After three years of gathering ideas and input, the process now focuses on developing alternatives for management and evaluating their potential consequences, with the goal of completing a draft to be released for public comment. For more information, Stewart said, “Stay tuned to the web site for updated planning newsletters, or go directly to [http://northeast.fws.gov/planning/downloads/LI\\_feb03.pdf](http://northeast.fws.gov/planning/downloads/LI_feb03.pdf).”

• **Junior Duck Stamp Program** – Ducks Unlimited and the LINWR Complex are hosting New York's competition again this year, and said Andrea, “It's only a matter of time before this year's artwork entries come flying in.” (Want to help? See the box at left!)

Make Your Stamp as a Volunteer  
Be one of the first to see NYS Jr. Duck Stamp Competition entries – enter participant information into a pre-formatted computer program. Begin late January/early February and go through mid-March. Organizational skills helpful; basic computer skills a must! Contact Andrea Stewart, 286-0485.

Children's Corner – Sayings With Animals

By Connie Ludlam

The English language is full of sayings referring to animal characteristics. See if you can identify all the animals in this puzzle by completing the phrases below:

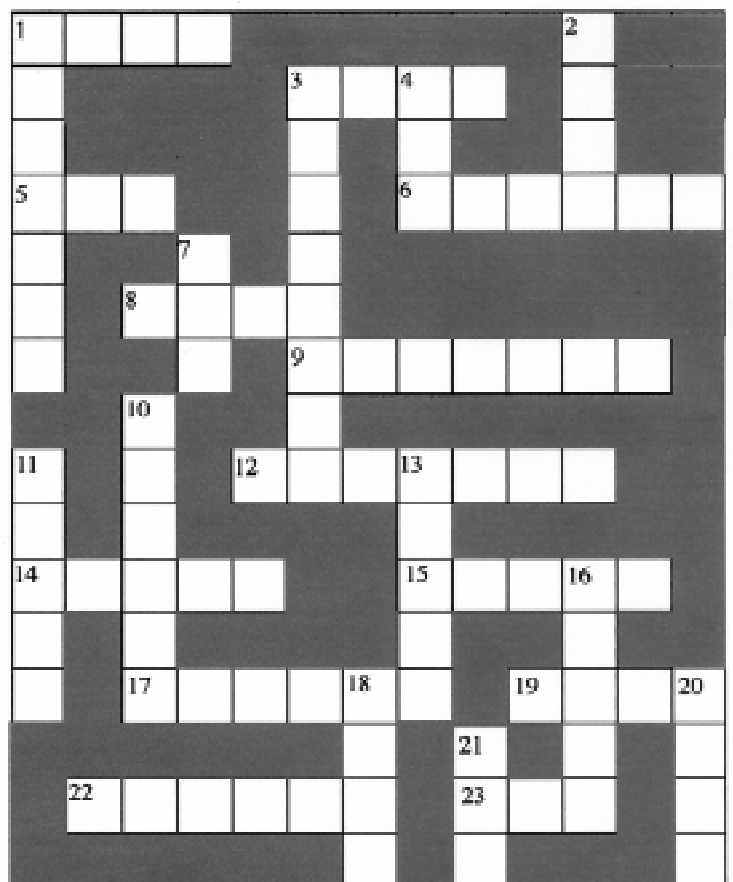
**Across**

1. Noisy as a \_\_\_\_.
3. Mute as a \_\_\_\_.
5. Busy as a \_\_\_\_.
6. Clumsy as a Thanksgiving bird – a \_\_\_\_.
8. Graceful as a \_\_\_\_.
9. A masked bandit: \_\_\_\_.
12. As chattery as this showy bird: \_\_\_\_.
14. A \_\_\_\_ gets the first worm.
15. Silly as a \_\_\_\_.
17. Slow as a \_\_\_\_.
19. Blind as a bunch of \_\_\_\_.
22. Like a certain clock: \_\_\_\_.
23. Wise as an \_\_\_\_.

**Down**

1. Doing great, or sitting in the \_\_\_\_ seat.
2. Like water off a \_\_\_\_'s back.
3. To save money or food: \_\_\_\_ it away.
4. Work as hard as a little \_\_\_\_.
7. Slippery as an \_\_\_\_.
10. Fast as a \_\_\_\_.
11. Steady as a \_\_\_\_ as it fishes for dinner.
13. Majestic as an \_\_\_\_.
16. Slimy as a \_\_\_\_.
18. Crazy as a \_\_\_\_.
20. Sleek as a \_\_\_\_.
21. Sly as a \_\_\_\_.

Answers: **Across:** 1. crow, 3. swan, 5. bee, 6. turkey, 8. deer, 9. fox, 10. rabbit, 11. heron, 13. eagle, 16. snail, 18. lion, 20. seal, 21. fox, cuckoo, 23. owl. **Down:** 1. catbird, 2. duck, 3. squirrel, 4. ant, 7. eel, raccoon, 12. bluejay, 14. robin, 15. goose, 17. turtle, 19. bats, 22. Answers: **Across:** 1. crow, 3. swan, 5. bee, 6. turkey, 8. deer, 9. fox, 10. rabbit, 11. heron, 13. eagle, 16. snail, 18. lion, 20. seal, 21. fox, cuckoo, 23. owl. **Down:** 1. catbird, 2. duck, 3. squirrel, 4. ant, 7. eel, raccoon, 12. bluejay, 14. robin, 15. goose, 17. turtle, 19. bats, 22.





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 PO Box 376  
 Brookhaven NY 11719

### What's Different About Wertheim's Gate?



With newly installed electronics, the Wertheim NWR gate now opens and closes automatically – opening one-half hour before sunrise and closing at 4 p.m. These extended open hours will afford visitors to Wertheim new opportunities to observe wildlife at key moments from dawn to dusk. Enjoy!

#### Mark Maghini (continued)

diversity of freshwater aquatic plant life in these headwaters and their value as resting and foraging areas for wintering waterfowl," Florence said. "Control techniques will mimic successful work we've done in the past elsewhere on the Refuge, using specifically labeled herbicides, prescribed burning, and mowing."

#### • Deer Population

**Estimate** – As in past years, Refuge staff and volunteer Anne Meinhold have been canvassing Wertheim to estimate the white-tailed deer population. Teams drive along both the east and west sides of the Refuge, counting all deer they observe and measuring each deer's distance from the trail with a range finder. Analyz-

### Dues Are Due for 2004

Please sign up now while it's on your mind, and be sure to include your e-mail address so Webmaster John Petraglia can send you reminders about Refuge and/or FOW events.

#### FOW MEMBERSHIP

Please renew / 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

ing these data yields a density estimate for the deer population on the Refuge. In past years, estimates have ranged from 60 to just over 100 deer per square mile, allowing for variables in the survey technique, deer behavior, and over-winter mortality during harsh seasons. Mark Maghini said that such densities are exceedingly high – 20 to 30 deer per square mile is considered optimum. Deer at such high densities have an adverse effect on woodland vegetation and the migratory songbirds that depend on such habitats for nesting.

#### Songbirds (continued)

"as some of our bluebirds don't migrate."

In the boxes she emptied, Anne observed nine definite bluebird nests with another six "possibles."

She also found 10 nests that were either titmouse or chickadee, 14 tree swallow nests, 21 house wren nests, and 15 undesirable house sparrow nests, a decline from last year's 18, but still not low enough, said Anne – not to mention a few mice and flying squirrels that had moved in after the birds went south!

#### Join the Great Backyard Bird Count

The Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology have asked FOW members, both adults and children, to participate in their Great Backyard Bird Count, February 13 to 16 – to help determine the status of bird populations across the continent.

You may do the bird count in your backyard or at the Refuge. To participate at Wertheim, contact an FOW Board member.

You will submit your results on the Bird Source website, [http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/toc\\_page.html](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/toc_page.html). But visit before the count, too, for information and suggestions.