

The Rookery



The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

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Spring 2014

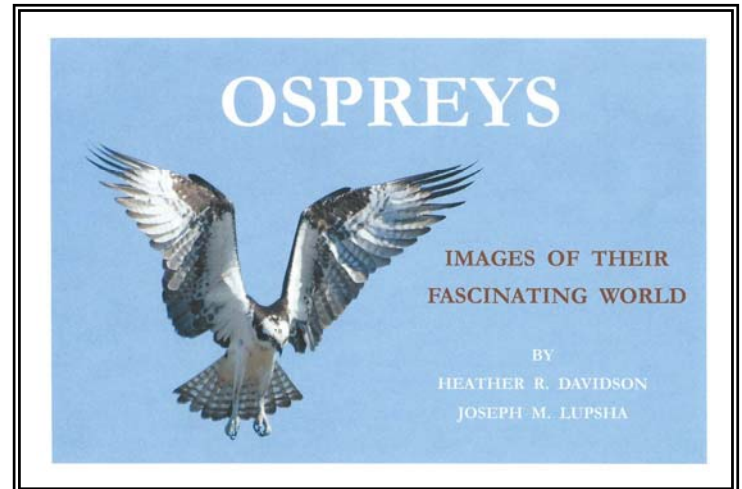
EXCLUSIVE!!

THE REFUGE AND THE FRIENDS WELCOME BACK THE OSPREYS WITH A NEW BOOK FROM HEATHER DAVIDSON

*Heather and collaborator Joe Lupsha will celebrate Eastern Neck's ospreys
with a book signing at the Lodge on March 22*

Many of our members remember Heather Davidson as one of the premier photojournalists in Maryland and, after moving here from the Washington, DC area in 1981, as the unofficial but much revered photo historian of Eastern Neck and, in particular, the Refuge. We have sold her notecards in the bookstore almost ever since it opened. She moved to Maine in 2005 but has spent at least three months each year since then back in her favorite Eastern Shore locales, concentrating on photographing the wildlife at the Refuge, especially the ospreys of which we are so fond.

Heather and her collaborator Joe Lupsha took so many pictures of ospreys here at the Refuge, in fact, that they decided to compile them in a book for everyone to enjoy. The result is *Ospreys: Images of their Fascinating World*, and she has given the Friends the exclusive right to sell the book in Rock Hall and environs for at least the first two weeks after publication. We are excited, to say the least, and we're so grateful to Heather for this opportunity to showcase 'our' ospreys that we've scheduled a book signing for her for **Saturday, March 22 at the Refuge Lodge from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.** While the book will eventually sell for \$16.00, we will be offering it for \$15.00 at this special event. And the timing of this event probably couldn't be much better, since some of the ospreys that frequent the Refuge will most likely have returned, and visitors will no doubt easily spot them as they prepare their nests for the upcoming spring and summer season.



▲
Pictured above is the cover of the new osprey book by Heather Davidson and collaborator Joe Lupsha.

◀
At left is just one of the 160+ photos in the book that catch ospreys in flight and dives and nesting.

Look for short bios of Heather and Joe on page 4, and put this date on your calendar for one of your early spring visits to the Refuge. Bring your friends, too -- what better way to introduce them to the Refuge. We hope to see you here!



President's Message**Spring 2014****Friends:**

I never get tired of driving over the little bridge onto Eastern Neck or "East Neck" as the locals have called it for years. It's a peaceful calm feeling as I look out at the Tundra Swans gently eating and resting. I am reminded how fortunate we are to have this strategic piece of land preserved. I smile as I think of the many people who respect wildlife for their value to the ecosystem and the beauty they provide.

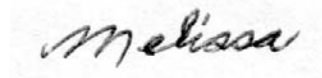
The Friends of Eastern Neck currently has 214 members, 113 of whom are within an hour's drive of the refuge. As I send out the renewal letters each month I am reminded of what a heavy value-laden group of people we have as members. The Friends Board thought it would be enjoyable to invite our members to a social get-together in the Fall. Spending time with people of like interests who value the same things can be comforting and encouraging, as well as just plain fun. Look for the announcement of this event in the months to come.

It is time to watch for the return of the ospreys. As you do, so know that the Board is working on adding an osprey platform on Refuge grounds, Heather Davison has published a new book about ospreys and the Friends will be hosting a book-signing event for that book.

Spring seems far around the corner. We can dream of the return of the butterflies and the beauty of the food source of the Butterfly Garden. Look for a new green bench there in the spring that the Friends has just purchased for your added leisure as you enjoy the garden and watch the butterflies.

This winter has been hard on wildlife. I saw 100 ducks trying to fit into a 6' by 10' opening in the river. Last week there were six eagles sitting next to each other out on the ice trying to fish as the icebergs floated down the small river opening. Little Juncos puff up to stay warm as they hunt for food, and several types of sparrows jump and fly in and out of the tall weeds. I try not to dwell on the fact that I feel sorry for the wildlife during these times. I wonder how many will live through the winter. However, I am gladdened by the fact that they have this refuge to just be.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Friends of Eastern Neck. Your support enables us to assist the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Eastern Neck Island in preserving the wildlife, land and water of the refuge. In my mind that is no small thing. Thanks to all.


OUR MISSION

The mission of the Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc. is to provide support to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge through educational outreach programs and volunteer service on the refuge, including the operation of the refuge bookstore.

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Friends of Eastern Neck
Memberships

Friend: \$25

Patron: \$50

Eagle Society: \$100

Blue Heron: \$250

Tundra Swan: \$500

Board of Directors**Officers:**

Melissa Baile: President
Phil Cicconi: Vice President
Carol DeGennaro: Secretary
Leann Miller: Treasurer

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Jolene L'Tainen
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Meg Parry

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Jackie Cicconi and Kay Snelson:
Bookstore

Melissa Baile:
Membership

REFUGE UPDATE

What's Happening on Your Refuge

With Cindy *extremely* busy with all things administrative, she approved me (your editor) to stand in for her to bring you up to date on what's been happening on the Refuge. Here are some of the activities she and your Board members recently discussed.

- The Board expressed a desire to erect a new osprey platform somewhere on the Refuge, and Cindy agreed that a new one would surely be used. Ospreys have been discussed frequently of late, with the Friends participating in the Osprey Watch project and Heather Davidson releasing a new book featuring our osprey population. Lew Halin will begin work on one platform, which should be completed by the birds' return in mid-March. The Refuge will supply the structure's pole and Cindy will finalize the location choice, likely marshland.
- Friends' president Melissa Baile reported on a meeting with Washington College Center for Environment and Society (CES) representatives Mike Hardesty and Kathy Thornton regarding several cooperative projects. CES has offered to cover the Friends' expenses incurred for the incomplete tenure of last Fall's Visitor Services Intern, and it has initiated a vigorous search to fill the position through advertising and classroom campaigning. It is expected, at this point, that the position will evolve into a full-time summer internship. Cindy, who had met earlier with CES, has prepared an extensive overview of intern duties, subject to Board review. (As of February 24, there were three applicants for the internship.)
- The Friends will be partnering with CES on the Full Moon Kayak event to take place in October.
- Melissa announced that a new *Environmental Sciences and Biology* 'majors' study area has been established at the College. In her opinion, this represents an opportunity for a closer, more interactive relationship with the college and its resources, such as the initiation of specific Senior projects related to Refuge activities. It was suggested we might start with an invitation to involved professors to a luncheon and tour of the island. Board members responded positively and we will explore ideas.
- Also for consideration is the construction of a kayak-launching area on the west side of the island at the Ingleside Recreation Area. Research and consultation, notably with an engineer, will be required and the process will take some time. Board member Meg Parry volunteered to work with Melissa to research the feasibility and costs of the project.
- Duck banding activity is underway with Eastern Neck as the largest banding site in the state. The Blackwater NWR staff is conducting the banding and some delays have occurred due to the weather.
- Cindy voiced concern about the effect of the prolonged unusually cold weather on our island bird populations. In lingering cold weather, species like eagles and owls may postpone nesting. Also of impact are disturbances upsetting to wildlife, such as dogs roaming off-leash. The latter problem initiated a discussion of solutions, such as placing more signs directing visitors to keep dogs leashed.
- The Refuge has purchased a new Xerox copier! Why is this such big news? Because, for the past ten years, the Friends has been paying to lease the office copier due to insufficient federal funds for that purpose. But Cindy managed to put money into her budget to buy a copier when our lease expired, as it did on December 31, 2013. This saves the Friends almost \$200 a month which we can put to good use elsewhere on Refuge projects. ☺



A peaceful winter day on the island.

Photo by Diane McCormick

Bios of our Featured Authors

HEATHER DAVIDSON



Heather Davidson is an experienced photojournalist. Her photographs and articles have appeared in over 50 different magazines and books as well as 16 calendars. Three of her photographs have hung in mural form at Baltimore-Washington International Airport. She has conducted many seminars on wildlife photography and other outdoor subjects, including several for the Smithsonian Institution. Her photographs have also been displayed in the rotunda of the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution. She exhibited her work for many years at photography and wildlife shows throughout the mid-Atlantic area, including for 27 years of the major wildlife show, The Waterfowl Festival in Easton, MD, and in 1994 she was elected to their Hall of Fame. One of her photographs was used on a Maryland State

poster in 1987, and in 1991 she co-produced six popular Mid-Atlantic state lighthouse posters. For four years she wrote and co-hosted a radio program called "Nature in Focus" for WCTR in Chestertown.

In 2009, Heather authored a very successful photographic book about Maryland's commercial fishermen, called *Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Watermen, 1985-2005*.

Heather has always used Nikon equipment and is now most often seen with a 400mm zoom lens on her digital camera.

JOE LUPSHA



Joe Lupsha began his interest in photography with a birthday gift from his father when he was eleven years old, an Argus A3 35mm camera. He has enthusiastically continued his interest over the years and has amassed a large collection of slides, digital images and prints from around the world, taken on many trips abroad that took him to a total of 25 countries.

Joe spent time in the United States Marine Corps and then went on to graduate from the University of Maine with a degree in Forestry. With knowledge of that field, he worked for 27 years in forest management and was, therefore, in close touch with the many wonders of the natural world. His interest in photographing wildlife expanded considerably over those years.

Joe spent some time in the publishing field upon retirement, where he worked as a commercial proofreader and assisted a fledgling rural weekly newspaper by producing for them front page articles with photos, as well as many center-spreads. In the past four years, he has given in to his interest in nature by seriously studying the life of ospreys and recording over a thousand images of their world.

Joe uses Canon equipment and relies mostly on two Canon Rebel cameras, a T1i with an 18-200mm zoom and a T3i with a 400mm Canon zoom lens.



The Waterfowl Count - A Vital Contribution

By Meg Parry

Every Wednesday morning, from November to March - whether it is sunny and warm or cold, snowy and windy - a stalwart group of volunteers arrives at Eastern Neck to conduct the winter waterfowl survey. Once we've gathered up our equipment, we split up into teams, one covering the north end of the island and one the south end. We venture out into both public and restricted areas of the Refuge, making a round of regular, pre-determined stops. Having access to restricted areas as well as public areas gives us maximum coverage of all of the waterfowls' many habitats and wintering grounds. We are also charged with recording Canada goose populations, even designating the specific fields in which they are observed. In addition to identifying and counting the numbers of birds observed, we also record a wide variety of data, including weather conditions, visibility, water conditions and whether or not any distractions are present; we also check water depths in designated areas. The diversity of waterfowl observed is impressive and includes, in addition to Black Ducks and Mallards, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Ducks, Shovelers, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, Ring-necked Ducks, Wigeons, Canvasbacks, Gadwalls, Green-winged Teal, Pintails, Redheads, Pied-billed and Horned Grebes, Common Loons, Wood Ducks, Hooded, Red-breasted and occasionally Common Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, White-winged and Surf Scoters, and a Refuge specialty, Tundra Swans.

Now in my fourth year on the "waterfowl team," I have gradually sharpened my skills at identifying and counting waterfowl at a distance, or when in flight. I also enjoy the opportunity to spend time on some of the "roads less traveled" in the Refuge and observe a wide variety of colorful and dynamic species on their wintering grounds. In addition, I appreciate working with a team of dedicated volunteers who are equally enthusiastic about the work we are doing -- and also have a sense of humor! All in all, it's been and continues to be a very rewarding and enriching experience.

By way of background, the waterfowl survey at Eastern Neck was initiated in 1995 with one volunteer, and from the start has received the whole-hearted support and encouragement of Refuge



The team is all bundled up for a cold day's count. Left to right: Ben Bennington, Meg Parry, Terry Willis and Melissa Baile. Not pictured is Bill Burritt.

staff. In 1996, Rock Hall native Terry Willis joined Howard McIntyre on the survey team, and Terry has been involved ever since. Terry's long-time participation in and commitment to the survey has been invaluable, providing both continuity and consistency to the results. In addition, Terry has trained many new volunteers over the years, as openings became available. In the early years, Howard and Terry covered the entire Refuge on their own - an intensive, all-day job - and with rudimentary equipment. Now, with five volunteers, we are able to complete the survey in three to four hours, and we have the privilege of using state-of-the-art optics and vehicles provided by the Refuge. Survey results are tabulated weekly and forwarded to personnel at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. These results are entered along with waterfowl survey data from other Refuges nationwide. Our results are also available for viewing at the visitor center.

In conclusion, I want to give credit to and thank the many volunteers who have participated in Eastern Neck's waterfowl survey over the years. They are, in addition to Terry Willis and Howard McIntyre, George Bankey, Zieger de Wilde, John Joplin, Gren Whitman and our current team -- Melissa Baile, Bill Burritt, Ben Bennington and Terry. If I have left out any names, please forgive the oversight and know that your contributions are appreciated!

Thanks all around...

This issue, rather than feature new or unusual items in the Refuge bookstore, we are giving a well-deserved "atta boy" shout out to the volunteers who keep that store staffed. This is a particularly important "job," as these dedicated friends are on hand almost every day of the year, not only to represent the Friends and sell the store's merchandise but also to be the face of the Refuge to visitors who find their way to the Lodge. We are *very* grateful to them for giving their time to assist us with our mission. Let's give a big cheer to:

Marie Beasley

Joe Bodell

Anne Bricker

Jeff & Penny Brown

Joanne Coveney

Ted Cumings

Babs Danneberg

Carol DeGennaro

Juli Dulmage

Walter Ellison & Nancy

Martin

Christine & Bob Gibson

Lew Halin

Diane Harris

Ed Hatfield

Judy Kelly

Pat Kobes Gomez

Bob Kramer

Ted Kreamer

Jolene L'Tanien

Judith Miller

Leann Miller

Linda Morgan

Robin & Nick Nicolls

Bill & Barbara Noll

Kathleen O'Connor

Bill Parks

Cathie Reinbold

Stan Rempuszewski

Linda Schwaitzberg

Dave Sorflaten

Pat Weigman

And we can't forget the person who schedules these folks every month, Kay Snelson. I'm constantly amazed at how she manages to do this from her new home in Florida! She's one dedicated lady!

Thank you, thank you, Kay!

Of course, we would be remiss if we didn't also thank our bookstore manager, Jackie Cicconi, who's always on the lookout for new and exciting items for the store.

Next time you come down to the Refuge, be sure to stop in the store and says "Thanks" to the volunteer who greets you.



The Friends of Eastern Neck, Inc.

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