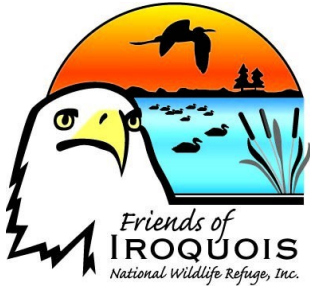


The Overlook

<http://www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org/>

Autumn 2011

ANNUAL MEETING



The Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. will hold its Annual Meeting at 10:00 AM on November 19, 2011, at the INWR headquarters, 1101 Casey Road, Basom, NY 14013. There will be a silent auction, bake sale and special sale of *The Flyway Nature Store* inventory. (**Donations for the Silent Auction can be dropped off** at the refuge headquarters, 1101 Casey Road, Basom NY 14013. Contact person is Rosalind Lind 585-798-9392. Please consider making a purchase and/or a donation.) The meeting will include an update of activities presented by the refuge staff and volunteers. Everyone is welcome!

The **Flyway Nature Store** is offering a sale of 20% off on all inventory except books and nature guides and. If you attend our Annual Meeting at 10:00AM on November 19th, we will be **discounting our nature books by 10%**. Consider early Christmas shopping while helping out the refuge! All profits go to programs at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge with our focus being *Bringing Kids to Nature*.

FINWR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First off, I want to remind everyone that the \$ 1,500.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators who stole the colorful informative signs along Swallow Hallow Trail is still available. The reward offer is still valid.

One scheduled event remaining in this rapidly closing year is the Friends of the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge annual membership meeting - set for **Saturday November 19th, at 10:00 AM in the Refuge HQ**. Please come on out to hear of the plans, and what changes will evolve with the reconstruction of the Refuge HQ building.

We are planning to have vacated the HQ building by March. Yet, we are planning to continue public services and activities. It will be as important this coming year, as it is every year, to support the Refuge as Friends with your membership contributions. Our activities brought more kids and their families out to the Refuge this year than in any past year.

And in this light, we are reducing the price by 20% on everything but books in the inventory of the Flyway store in order to reduce the amount of inventory that will have to be stored. So this will be a great time to come out and do some Christmas gift shopping

Of particular interest, two new and unique photo blinds have been constructed. One is 1.7 miles down the Feeder Road on the end of a long floating dock where you literally sit high & dry, but out in the middle of the water. The other is an Eagle Scout project down a short trail off the southwest corner of the Mallard Overlook down the north portion of Sour Springs Road.

It's high time in the migratory season. Please come on out and enjoy that which we serve to support.

Cordially,
Pete

INSIDE:

Page 2 - Thanks to our Contributors

Page 3 - Take A Kid Along Program

Page 4 - Iroquois Duck Banders Have The Blues

Page 5 - Cavity Nesters At Iroquois In 2011

Page 6 - Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)

Page 7 - Reaching Out

Page 7 - New Hunting/Photo Blinds

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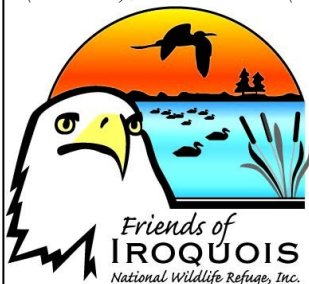
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Overlook Newsletter

is printed seasonally, 4 times per year. Article submissions for each newsletter are due: early January (Winter); late April (Spring); early August (Summer); late October (Fall).



Thank You to our 2011 Contributors !!!

Double Eagle: Mike & Bonnie Woodward, Peter & JoAnne Jackson

Bald Eagle: Peter Gold & Athalie Joy, Tom & Audrey Lunt, Chuck & Ann Fournier, John Walley

Double Heron: Paul & Sheila Hess, Renee Bush & Bruce McCombe

Heron: Bob & Margie Hazen, Paul & Sheila Hess, Sandra & Tom Madejeski, Dorothy Rapp, Peter J. Verroca

Bluebird: Abaya Family, Anne D. Astmann, Nancy & Steve Chenoweth, Amy Choboy, J.Fay & Ruth Cleveland, Mike & Krys Elam, Don & Jean Felton, Ed Fiorino, Tyge & Kristin Fournier, Margaret Hoff, Morgan L. Jones Jr., Kalista Lehrer, Jack & Barb Meeks, Sandra Mendel, Tom & Celeste Morien, Michael Noonon, Betty Smith, Richard Thoma, Wild Birds Unlimited, Pete & Manya Warn, Theodore Weir, Stephen C. Wittkowsky, Alison & Michael Woodward, Leah & Cameron Woodward, Riece & Lakin Woodward, Carl & Phyllis Zenger

Otter: Peter & Therese Finlay, Ellen Gendreau, Marcia Nixon, Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen's Club

Raccoon: Laura Berry, Bill Bixler, Joseph Cassidy, Lawrence & Judith Clare, Marion Dann, Ed & Judy Derry, Ella/Charlie/Rose Fournier, David Grotke, Margaret Hollingsworth, Mary Hughes, Elizabeth Hunt, Ray & Karin Johnson, Charles & Carol Klinger, Allen & Doralee Lackey, Rosaline & Charles Lind, Carol & Richard Manganaro, Judy Murray, Mack & Jackie Schiffler, John & JoAnn Schlegel, Bob & Kay Schmidt, Gail Seamans, Charlie & Sue Slack, Don Swanson, Finger Lakes WNY Waterfowl Assoc., Jeffery & Jocelyn Welton

Family: David & Jennifer Adsit, Sue & Hank Beamer, Doug & Christine Belongia, Charles & Paula Bigalow, Anne Bunch, James & Judith Bunn, Gabrielle Calandra-Baron, Jerry Cataldo, David & Jeanine Chatt, John Cheney, Henry&Kathie Cook, Becky Cummings, Allen Ensminger, Jacqueline Fechner, Keith & Barbara Frederick, Doug & Helen Freitag, Wayne & Susan Gall, Meaghan & Scott Green, Sven Hammer, Don Hawkins, Marvin Jacobs, Tuneesha & Jason Jepsen, Ed & Jan Kramer, Jim & Ellie McConnell, John & Margaret Messer, Suzanne Mullane, Richard Pawlikowski, Anthony & Mary Anne Pietrzykowski, Jim & Pat Sanders, Ruth & Stephen Shewan, David & Grace Strong, Dawn & Shannon Washington, Carol B. Wells, Matt Worth & Family, Susan & Thomas Wren, Henry & Deborah Wright

Individual: Donna Aiken, Maxine Barber, Janet Beglinger, Kathy Bilbrough, Merle Draper, Robert Ensminger, Dorothy Gerhart, Linda Granza, Owen S. Gray, Bonnie Hanssen, John Hoesterman, Judith Hoffman, Marianne Houseknight, Helen Johnson, Lincoln Nutting, Dean Owens, Kathleen Palmer, Gerry Rising, Thomas Roster, Donald Scarlett, Debbie Secrist, Charlie Silvernail, Louise Tomczak, Michelle Tow, Bridgitte Wagner-Ott, Joseph Wolak, Thomas Wright.

A Special Thank You Nancy Chenoweth for securing a grant from State Farm Insurance!

Support the Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. for 2012

Membership Levels:

Individual	\$15
Family	\$25
Raccoon	\$50
Otter/Red Fox	\$75
Bluebird	\$100
Heron	\$200
Bald Eagle	\$500
Double Eagle	\$1000

Please send contribution to:
Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.
1101 Casey Road
Basom, NY 14013

We can use your volunteer time also!!

Contributions are tax deductible

TAKE A KID ALONG PROGRAM 2011



The Refuge, the Friends Group and some volunteers sponsored the second *Take A Kid Along program in 2011*. There were ten kids that participated this year ranging in age from 7 years old to 13 years old and consisting of 6 girls and 4 boys. They were: **Jenna Abaya, Jacob Abaya, Jonathan Abaya, Rose Trometer, Olivia Trometer, James Trometer, Pari Shepard, Sara Stanley, Alysa Urbanczyk and Linda Cox.**

They were broken down into three groups for the program. Each group met once a week for five weeks starting June 25th. The sessions lasted two to three hours each. We started out checking bluebird boxes and banding bluebird and tree swallow chicks. The second session involved lowering purple martin houses and then checking each cavity. Depending on the age and condition of the nest and/or chicks the following acts were performed: Counting eggs and chicks, aging the chicks, changing nest material, banding chicks and returning the nest tray to the cavity. Once all the nests were checked the house was raised back to its upper position.

This year we added some new activities to the program. **Celeste Morien** did a session on bird identification around the Refuge using guide book identification and bird calls. **Chuck Fournier** did a session on pond water study. He also used microscopes to identify and observe small organisms in the ponds.

The final session for all the groups together was lead by Celeste and focused on a study of worms. The anatomy, behavior and life cycle of worms was presented.

At the beginning of the program each kid was given a backpack. The backpack contained:

- Children's Bluebird Activity Book
- Birds of New York Field Guide
- Note book made from elephant dung to keep field notes
- Pen to record notes
- New York State Wildlife: An Introduction to Familiar Species
- Water bottle
- Pair of small binoculars

All of these items were made possible by a grant from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region 5's *Connecting People with Nature Program*. The participants were allowed to keep these after they had attended all five sessions. All the kids attended their sessions and got to keep their backpacks and its contents.

Each participant was asked to keep a journal on all their sessions. After the last session they were asked to submit a story or draw a picture about what they liked best about their experiences. These are displayed in the Auditorium at the Refuge. If you are at the Refuge Headquarters you should take a moment to read some of these. Their stories and pictures make the program really worthwhile.

It is hoped that we will be able to continue this program next year and expose more kids (and their parents) to the Refuge and the wildlife that live here. Thanks to everyone who helped make this years program a success.



IROQUOIS DUCK BANDERS HAVE THE BLUES



Actually, what the title of this article should say is, “Iroquois Duck Banders Have The BlueWINGS.” That’s because the Refuge banded 181 blue-winged teal during the 2011 waterfowl banding season. That’s more bluewings than we’ve ever banded in a season at Iroquois. Interestingly, we didn’t catch a single duck of another species. Even though there were mallards, green-winged teal and wigeon all around the traps, the bluewings were the only ones to go in and get caught, allowing us to band them.

Blue-winged teal are one of the first duck species to migrate through our area, although we do have some bluewings that spend their summer nesting right here at Iroquois. This year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated an amazing 8.9 million blue-winged teal during their summer breeding waterfowl survey, an aerial survey covering much of the northern U.S. and southern Canada. This number was 41% higher than the 2010 estimate and 91% above the long-term average. This large population increase might not be the main reason we banded so many bluewings at Iroquois this year, but it probably helped.

Each year the Refuge conducts waterfowl banding operations between the middle of August and the end of September. The number of ducks that get banded in a season fluctuates between a few dozen to several hundred. Availability of staff time for maintaining traps is generally the main factor in determining how many birds get banded, but waterfowl populations and weather during the trapping season also play a role. Birds are captured in

cages baited with corn and are then fitted with a metal leg band. Each band has a unique number which is recorded in a database maintained at the U.S. Bird Banding Laboratory located in Patuxent, Maryland. When a bird is later “encountered” (most duck band reports come from waterfowl hunters who have shot a banded bird), the location of that encounter is also entered into the database. Much of what we know about bird migration, survival rates, longevity and similar information has been obtained through analysis of banding data.



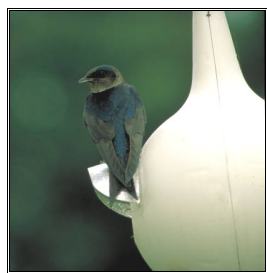
CAVITY NESTERS AT IROQUOIS IN 2011



The cavity nesters at Iroquois NWR were successful in 2011. The eastern bluebird fledged 67 birds this year down only one from last year. This compares to the record high year of 2009 when 80 chicks fledged. The concern is that the attempted nestings was only 23 compared to 36 and 31 in 2009 and 2010. If this trend continues bluebirds could become more difficult to see around the Refuge. The Tree Swallows that share the bluebird boxes continue to be plentiful all around the Refuge area.

Fortunately an American kestrel used the nest box equipped with a camera behind the Headquarters building again this year. This allowed us to watch the undisturbed nesting activity of these birds from Mid-April until the last bird fledged July 11th. They made us very nervous this year as they laid the first egg then waited an unusually long time to lay any more eggs. We surmise that the female was a first year bird and had not read the book yet on how she was supposed to behave. She finally laid 5 eggs and hatched 4 of them. Two of them died in the first few days but the other 2 fledged successfully. We have to relocate this nest box a few yards for next year as it will be too close to the new building construction. It is hoped that it will not deter them from continuing to use it next year.

Kestrels also fledged 4 chicks in the box in the contaminant field off Roberts Road and 5 chicks in the box on Sour Springs Road. This makes a total of 11 known Kestrels fledged on the Refuge. This is a new record, beating last year by one.



The purple martin program continues to grow. The four houses on the Refuge fledged 169 birds this year compared to 102 last year. The only down side was that all of them were at sites at the Job Corps and none at the Refuge Headquarters. There were martins at the house at the Headquarters but they did not lay any eggs. Efforts will continue next year to try to make this successful. We were able to band 110 of these birds with the help of the **Interns, YCC Kids, Bob Schmidt** and others. There were also some new volunteers who helped with monitoring both martin houses and bluebird boxes. **Celeste Morien** and **Sandy Mendel** were especially helpful with the monitoring and record keeping activities.

We also enjoyed some other bird-cams this year. Some bluebird boxes were fitted to accept a camera. We were successful in attracting a tree swallow to a box so we completed the installation of a camera. An additional TV monitor was set up in the lobby and we had 2 species on the screens at once. This nest had 6 chicks which fledged on June 20th. Another box also had a tree swallow with 2 eggs. This was a late nest possibly a re-nesting or a first year females initial attempt. The camera was moved and we were fortunate enough to see another nesting cycle. Only one egg hatched but survived to fledge on July 10th. This however is NOT the end of the story. The box that had the first tree swallow in it now had a house wren nesting in it. So the camera was moved back to it and we continued to watch a third specie go through its nesting cycle. Each specie had different type nests and behavior as it raised its young. Those who got to observe it found it very interesting. It will be hard to top this show next year but we plan to improve the hardware and how we change from box to box .

Thanks to all those involved in the cavity nesting bird activities this year for making it so successful, educational and enjoyable. Our special thanks to **Lee Brun** for his technical assistance and donation of time and equipment.



COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN IS COMPLETED!

In September the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) was signed off on by the Acting Regional Director and is now available for release to the public as well as to start implementing the strategies. The CCP represents our 15-year management plan for the refuge. The plan furthers the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, provides direction to achieve the refuge's purpose, vision and goals, and contributes to State and regional conservation plans.

The planning process started several years ago and has included public scoping meetings, developing a draft CCP and environmental assessment, a public comment period and then the final plan. Hard to believe that it took over 3 years from start to finish! We want to thank all those that have been involved with the process including everyone that provided scoping ideas and comments on the draft plan. Here is a recap of the vision and goals from the plan:

Vision: *"Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, known locally as part of the "Alabama Swamps" will be the ecological "puzzle piece" for western New York by creating and maintaining unsurpassed habitats including wetlands, grasslands, shrublands, and forests for migratory birds and other wildlife. By encouraging compatible wildlife dependent recreation and working with partners, a deep understanding and appreciation for the refuge's ecological integrity will be fostered in its visitors, regardless of generational, economic, or social boundaries. Through these efforts, future generations will cherish Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge's interconnectivity to the much larger National Wildlife Refuge System."*

- Goal 1:** Provide high quality freshwater wetland migration stopover and breeding habitat for waterfowl, marshbirds, shorebirds, and bald eagles in refuge impoundments through water level control.
- Goal 2:** Maintain the environmental health and integrity of Oak Orchard Creek and associated bottomland floodplain forests and wetlands as a natural free-flowing habitat with a diverse assemblage of native plants and animals.
- Goal 3:** Provide a diverse mix of grassland, shrubland, and forested upland habitats arranged to reduce fragmentation and edge effects, and enhance habitat quality for priority species of conservation concern.
- Goal 4:** Refuge visitors will understand and appreciate fish and wildlife conservation through high quality recreation, education, and interpretive programs.
- Goal 5:** Hunters and anglers will enjoy and support programs designed to provide high quality hunting and fishing experiences.
- Goal 6:** Enhance partnerships with local communities and various organizations to garner support and promote refuge programs and resources.

Now the task begins to start implementing the many strategies that are listed in the CCP and keep us busy for the next 15 years! There are a lot of strategies in the plan, too many to be listed here, including new initiatives or modification of existing programs. If you would like an in-depth look at the plan or strategies contact the refuge or go to <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/iroquois/ccphome.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE REFUGE

11/05/11	9:00 am – 1 pm Field Trip to Batavia Sewage Treatment Plant
November 6	Daylight Savings – set clocks back 1 hour.
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday – Refuge Office Closed
November 17	Waterfowl Hunting Ends on the Refuge
November 18	Early Deer Bowhunting Season Ends
November 19	Regular Deer Hunting Season Begins
November 19	Friends Annual Meeting
November 24	Thanksgiving Holiday – Refuge Office Closed
December 11	Regular Deer Hunting Season Ends
December 12	Late Deer Bowhunting and Muzzleloading Seasons Begin
December 26	Christmas Holiday – Refuge Office Closed
01/02/12	New Years Holiday – Refuge Office Closed



The Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge is on Facebook! Come, bookmark us, and be our Friend at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Iroquois-National-Wildlife-Refuge/168915473153818>

REACHING OUT

This year the refuge has increased the number of outreach opportunities over past years. The Refuge staff, Friends and volunteers participated in a number of outreach opportunities in the months of August and September. This is a great way to get out and meet new people and invite them to experience all that the refuge has to offer.

On August 7, **Katie Little** staffed a table at the **Tonawanda Reservation Field Days** where she presented banding demonstrations. The following week she staffed a table at the **Farmer's Market in Medina for Family Day** on August 11. This is the first time the refuge attended either of these venues.

In the month of September alone the refuge was represented at three locations. On September 10, the Refuge had a table at the **Brickhouse Corner Fair in Pembroke**. In addition to refuge information being available, kids could make a rubber stamp picture or a Blue Goose mobile. The following week, on September 17, Friends members and **Katie Little** staffed a table at the **Reinstein Woods Festival in Buffalo**. Lastly, Friends members staffed a table for two days at **National Hunting and Fishing Days (NHFD) at Godfrey's Pond in Batavia**, (Sept. 23-24). At NHFD, kids and adults were invited to play the Migration Challenge game, which **JoAnne Jackson** put together based on the one we borrowed from Erie NWR. Thanks so much JoAnne.

You can see we have gone north, south, east and west to tell people about the refuge. Outreach opportunities such as these are invaluable in getting the word out about the refuge and to garner support and stewardship. Thank you to everyone who helped out.

NEW PHOTOGRAPHY AND HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES CREATED FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Many may remember that the Refuge had two photography blinds for visitors to use in the past. Since these blinds had become very hard to access and were not usable, our YCC group removed the last of these old blinds this summer to make way for new and more accessible ones. **The Refuge decided to develop one that would be a combination hunting and photography blind and would be accessible to visitors with disabilities. The second blind would strictly be for photography.**



Thanks to the Refuge visitor facility enhancement project dollars last year, the Refuge received funding to purchase a floating dock system that would provide access for people with limited mobility. The Refuge chose a style of floating docks that was moveable, environmental friendly, light weight, yet durable enough to remain in the water over the winter. The next step was finding a way to turn this into a photography/hunting blind.

In October of last year, Eagle Scout candidate **Johnathon Hoste** from Troop 40 coordinated volunteers to complete the assembly of the **floating dock in the Mohawk West Pool**. Local waterfowl hunters donated camouflage materials to help conceal the dock so that it could be used by hunters last fall. Currently Eagle Scout candidate **Chris Clarke** from Troop 66 is coordinating volunteers to construct a blind which will be installed on the end of the floating dock. Chris has received donations from a local hunting club and local hardware stores. The Friends of Iroquois also received **donations from Junior Wilson Sportsman's Club in Medina and Pete and JoAnne Jackson** to complete this project. The blind will be installed just in time for this year's waterfowl

hunting season and will be **available by reservation only**. During the waterfowl hunting season, mid-October to mid-November, the blind will only be used by hunters with disabilities. After hunting season comes to an end, any visitor may reserve the blind for photography.

The second photography blind was constructed this year near the **Mallard Overlook on Ringneck Marsh** by Eagle Scout candidate **Jeff Rice** from Troop 164 with a team of volunteers. Jeff received donations from local lumberyards and hardware stores for the project which was started in July and completed by mid-August. The finished blind can be seen only by walking a small pathway down from the parking lot at Mallard Overlook to the edge of Ringneck Marsh. Again, this blind is **available by reservation only**.



THE OVERLOOK NEWSLETTER

**Friends of Iroquois
National Wildlife Refuge
1101 Casey Road
Basom, NY 14013**



FRIEND'S NAME
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CITY, STATE 00000

Visit <http://www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org> for details

2012 amateur PHOTO Contest

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
and the
**Friends of Iroquois
National Wildlife Refuge**
are sponsoring their Second Annual
Amateur Photo Contest

