

**WOODFORD**  
Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge

# NEWS & EVENTS

Office: (856) 983-0326

Rehab: (856) 983-3329

Web Site: [www.cedarrun.org](http://www.cedarrun.org)

## West Nile Virus - How Do We Cope?

*By Ruth Brooks*

A young great horned owl is brought into Cedar Run Refuge, extremely thin, weak, and dehydrated. He struggles to hold his head up, and his temperature is far below normal. Later that day, a red tailed hawk arrives, also weak and dehydrated, with a drooping wing and vacant expression in her eyes. Her temperature is extremely high, and she is infested with an external parasite that lives in the layers of feathers and feasts on her blood. What do both of these beautiful birds have in common? They are probably infected with West Nile virus.

Because this is a virus, there is no magic cure. Viral infections, unlike bacterial infections, do not respond to antibiotics. Supportive care, including fluid and vitamin therapies, anti-inflammatory medicines, and rest and quiet are currently our only means to combat this disease. When someone anxiously asks "Will he make it?" We just don't know.

Crows and blue jays have the lowest survival rate. When these birds are seen sitting on the lawn, unaware of their surroundings, they are usually too sick to intervene with therapy, and euthanasia is the most humane decision. Animals other than birds can also become infected, and many of these are small mammals that are food for these birds of prey. Research has been done that leads many experts to believe that our raptors are becoming infected by eating these prey species.

The effects on wildlife have been devastating nationwide.

Many experts feel that this virus will run its course, as animals are thought to be immune once they have recovered. We still, however, have several more years to deal with these outbreaks before that time comes. Here at the Refuge, we are contributing to this research by documenting each case and what works and what doesn't. Even the most trivial observation may yield answers we can use for the next sick animal we receive. What we do know is that the earlier we see the animal in the course of the virus, the better its chances are for recovery.

Sadly, the red-tailed hawk died the next day. Her symptoms were severe; the virus was just too far advanced for her body to recover. However, the great horned owl was a survivor.

After weeks of supportive care and gradual increases in his food intake and stimulation, he became alert, aggressive and beautiful once again. Conditioning in our flight cage to increase his stamina and observation of his ability to hunt allowed him to be released back to the wild. For this bird, our ultimate goal was achieved, and this is why we do what we do.



*The great horned owl was released near the place it was found in early December.*

## Cendant Funds Education

Cendant Mortgage Company created happiness this fall for more than 1,200 students by funding Refuge on Wheels visits to classrooms in Willingboro and Cooper's Poynt Elementary School in Camden. Our animals were a hit and made learning about wildlife, habitats and conservation an exciting experience.

Cedar Run's teacher/naturalists conducted interactive sessions for every fourth grade in Willingboro, as we have been

doing for the past four years, plus every class from pre-K to sixth grade at Cooper's Poynt. The students learned about adaptations, food chains, habitats and the need for conservation.

"Hunters of the Sky," our bird of prey show, was the centerpiece for most of these lessons. "Owl Stories," a shorter version designed for early childhood students, wowed the youngest pupils at Cooper's Poynt.

Our thanks to Cendant Mortgage.

## Unusual Guests *By Jeanne Woodford*

We are often asked, "What is the most unusual animal that you take in for care?" This year the answer to that question would have to be the three red-necked grebes that were blown off course. Like loons only smaller, grebes cannot become airborne unless they get a running start on the water's surface. So the grebes found in late February and early March during our rather snowy cold winter just past would not have survived had they not been rescued.

As we were to find out, this bird's range in spring and summer is in Northern Canada, Alaska and Minnesota. During the winter they seek open water on the east coast which is when the winter winds blew them to our area some 40 miles inland.

In all three cases care was minimal and consisted of evaluating their condition, warming them up a bit and preparing them for release when the weather broke.

Identification was another matter however, since grebes in winter plumage appear quite different than at other times of the year. It is easy for me to say now that I was leaning toward red-necked grebe, but then we thought it would be a good idea to call in the birding experts. Al Driscoll of Moorestown made the trip to Cedar Run and a positive I.D. of red-necked grebe was made.



*One of the red-necked grebes swims in a tank. Legs set far back on its body are efficient rudders but make walking on land awkward.*

Photo by Toni Moore

As with many of the animals we take in, there always seems to be something new to learn. All grebes actually consume some of their own feathers. Why? These ingested feathers, which form a ball in the stomach, are thought to prevent injury from the bony fish they eat. The protective ball allows the digestive juices more time to dissolve the bones before the material passes into the intestine where further damage could be caused.

When examining the grebes we noticed their unusual feet. Instead of webs between their toes, they have horny flaps or lobes which serve as propellers both in swimming and flying. Grebes also have the ability to press air from between their feathers and out of their air sacs in order to submerge and disappear quickly when danger approaches.

The weather did break at the end of the first week in March and we were quite pleased to be able to release our unusual red-necked grebes in open water where they could rejoin others on the coast.



*The grebe's toes have horny lobes instead of webs. The lobes close as the foot moves forward in the water but fan out on the backstroke.*

Photo by Toni Moore

## Cedar Run Refuge

### Missions

- : To Rehabilitate Native Wildlife
- : To Educate about the Environment
- : To Preserve Pine Barrens Habitats

### Board of Trustees

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## Volunteers Save Nighthawk

Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge depends on volunteers to help care for the more than 3,600 orphaned and injured wild animals we take in each year. Week after week through the warm weather months they come in to clean pens, mix up food and perform the other arduous tasks involved in wildlife rehabilitation.

Some dedicated volunteers also go way beyond the basics.

Take Linda and Dmitri Cherkassy. They cover evening feedings during our "baby season" and a special bird tugged at their heartstrings.

A beautiful nighthawk came to the Refuge in late September 2002, showing symptoms of West Nile virus. This swift species is not a member of the hawk family. It is a nocturnal insect-eater that usually catches flying bugs on the wing. Our bird couldn't even open its mouth to take in nourishment, let alone dart after flying food.

Through the fall our rehab crew pried the nighthawk's beak open five or six times a day and poured protein-rich food down its throat. By Christmas time the bird was still alive. It had gained weight but still didn't open its mouth to eat.

Undiscouraged, Linda took the nighthawk home to feed because of staff vacations.

One red-letter day it opened his

mouth to eat – progress! As the bird gained strength and began lunging towards his food, Linda cleared a space in the living room and encouraged it to take wing. The nighthawk hopped and fluttered and eventually lifted off. Its flights were short, but it wheeled like a wild nighthawk in the sky and the Cherkasskys began to think he might be released one day.

How to accomplish this in winter? Nighthawks are migratory and should be in Florida at that time of year. On the Internet, Linda found Malabar Refuge on the east coast of Florida. They already had an unreleasable nighthawk and were willing to take on Cedar Run's bird.

After several unsuccessful attempts to find private pilots to transport the bird to Malabar, Linda and Dmitri decided a trip to Florida would be just the right way to celebrate their eighth anniversary.



*White wingbars identify nighthawks as they swoop after prey.*

Off they jettied, bird in hand.

The nighthawk is still at Malabar, but doing much better. Next week the Cherkassys are going south for a visit in hopes he can be released into the wild. Since nighthawks are year-round residents of that area, he won't have to migrate and will have plenty of insects to catch.

Even if release doesn't happen, the beautiful bird is safe in a large outdoor enclosure with a companion and plenty of food. Another survivor, thanks to very caring volunteers.

## New Raccoon Run

Several generous donors contributed to our raccoon enclosure fund, enabling the Refuge to erect this much-needed new enclosure.

Our thanks to Michael and Karen Alecxih, Marguerite Cowan, Don Harris and the Stull Family Foundation.



## Special Gift



*Valerie Pelerin, President of the Marlton Women's Club, presents a check to Jeanne Woodford and Squam the barred owl. The Club donated \$2,000 to support Cedar Run's missions.*

## Seeds Are Frequent Travelers

*The flowering plants are gone but there is still much to see on a walk in the woods. The following article was culled from one by Elizabeth Woodford for the December 4, 1989 Medford Central Record. It is amazingly relevant today. By Georgia Wurster*

It is not possible to walk through fields or woods in late autumn and not be aware that seeds are abundant everywhere. The path is littered with a shower of seeds from minute brown specks to assorted shapes and sizes. Some seeds will attach themselves to your clothing, the dog's coat, or almost any object that passes by. You will pick them off far from where they found you. Each hitchhiking seed has the potential of producing thousands of seedlings by this ingenious movement. Some have become world travelers.

The troublesome thistles, beggar ticks, sticktight, etc. are disliked by people but are a good food source for many birds and animals. Most of our goldfinch feed on the hated thistle seeds, and the quail enjoy ragweed. The delicate floating figures of milkweed floss that blow from your hand is the same stuff that is used to strengthen a bird nest.

The strong winds we have had are very helpful to plants with wind-borne seeds. I am always fascinated to see the silken fragments slip from the pod of a milkweed. Every dark brown seed is attached to a separate piece of downy sail and are all pressed tightly within until the dry pod splits open. Each puff acts exactly like a minia-

ture parachute, carrying the mature seed far away from the mother plant.

Some of these seeds will float for a great distance and disappear. Others may lodge against a tree or bush until the wind loses its force, then drop to the ground. How can any make it till spring? Yet, every year orange milkweed seeds do find enough moisture and the right growing conditions along our roadsides and in our fields.

Did you grow up calling these plants "Butterfly Weed" or perhaps "Railroad Annie"? The first name refers to the monarch butterfly larva that feeds by choice on this milkweed. The second name must have come from the fact that railroad embankments, as well as other barren places, are likely spots to find it growing. Possibly the seeds blew from a nearby pasture where it definitely

wasn't wanted.

I think it is a lovely perennial to grace almost any garden, not a nuisance. I certainly enjoy it for its long flowering season and I don't let it spread near the house. I have been rewarded with many butterflies. One year, I was lucky enough to photograph the entire life cycle of a monarch butterfly!

If you would like to attract butterflies by planting milkweed, try one of the many native varieties. The easiest way to start is to collect a few seeds and plant them exactly like any ordinary packet of garden flowers. Plant by early May. Milkweeds are difficult to transplant; some are nearly impossible because their roots are sensitive and go deep into the ground.

As to calling this fascinating plant a weed, just remember that a weed is just a plant that's out of place.



*On October 4th New Jersey Pinelands Commission Chairman James Florio helped Jeanne Woodford release a red-tailed hawk at the 8th Annual Pinelands Month Celebration sponsored by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance.*

# Autumn with the Animals a Smash

By Georgia B. Wurster

This year's annual Autumn with the Animals, held on November 1st, was our most successful yet. Everything dovetailed perfectly: the weather (which seemed like early summer rather than fall), the activities, the entertainment and most of all, the efficient and enthusiastic volunteers.

Over 700 people attended the festival, which combined hands-on activities like games and crafts with spectator activities such as watching the programs about reptiles and raptors presented by Refuge educational staff. The Clydesdale wagon rides were on hand once again as was the inflated caterpillar. The new

addition this year of a colorful trackless train ride was extremely popular.

The food booth was very busy selling drinks, hot dogs, cookies and even peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. All the food was donated, which seemed to make it taste even better.

Our resident Wizard and owl were on hand for pictures, while Smoky the Bear and oversized squirrel and owl wandered through the crowd. Adding to the occasion's atmosphere was the music of the Sugar Sand Ramblers and vocalist Janet Sclaroff.

At five o'clock, the last of the face-painted youngsters and

parents with babies in strollers disappeared. Those who had worked so hard all afternoon picked up the paraphernalia, brought in the tickets and cash and headed home.

Although we had no idea of the bottom line, the consensus was that we had done well. Monday morning we learned that we had cleared \$10,000! After the late summer financial dry spell this was a godsend. Our thanks to everyone who made it happen.



Refuge board member Sonia Sikora has fun at a crafts table during Autumn with the Animals. More than 700 attendees enjoyed the event on November 1st.

Photo by Jeff Barnhurst

## Autumn with the Animals Sponsors

*Event sponsor:*

Bob Meyer Communities

*Entertainment sponsor:*

BBC Worldwide

*Train ride sponsor:*

Mattel Mt. Laurel

*Reptile show sponsor:*

Cornerstone Bank

*Raptor show sponsor:* Comcast

*Food tent sponsor:*

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*Products provided by:* Murphy's Market, Coca-Cola Bottlers of Philadelphia, J & J Snack Foods, Supermarkets of Cherry Hill, Zallie's Shop Rite, Acme Markets

## Seniors Bake for Wildlife

It seemed like an ordinary senior citizen trip. A big, white bus pulled up to the Woodford Education Center and an enthusiastic group of grey-haired people climbed out. Cheerfully they followed naturalist Melanie Reding on a walk around the lake to see our wildlife.

But this group, from Laurel Spring Estates in Voorhees, had a secret agenda. They really wanted

to help the animals.

As they drove back to Laurel Lake, the seniors talked it over and convinced activities coordinator Heather Salimao that they needed to raise money for the Refuge. They settled on a bake sale as the way to do it.

On the first weekend in August the seniors turned out cookies, brownies and other goodies and staged a bake sale at their retire-

ment village. They sold cookies to each other, but also to the families that came to visit parents, aunts and uncles at Laurel Spring Estates.

The result was a contribution of \$67.25 for the animals, one of the sweetest gifts we've ever received. "It came from their hearts," said Ms. Salimao as she dropped off the proceeds.

# Journey to Freedom

A fluffy American kestrel chick squawks as a gloved hand gently lifts it into a carrying case. The young falcon is about to begin another leg of its journey to adulthood.

The kestrel, still covered in its white baby down, was found in a bush in Pemberton on June 24, next to its dead sibling. A curious dog sniffed it out. The dog's owner brought the infant hawk to the Refuge for care and treatment.

Cedar Run's rehab hospital staff immediately sprang into action, weighing the chick and examining it carefully for injuries. It appeared healthy despite its ordeal.

Appetite is a good indicator of wildlife well-being and the kestrel chick was ravenous. It readily gobbled up the bits of mouse offered to it with a long pair of tweezers. After several days of hand feeding, the young falcon began eating well on its own and was moving energetically around its crate.

It was time to put the youngster

outdoors with another kestrel to act as mother. This was an important step in order to keep the chick wild for eventual release. Imprinting – developing a bond with humans – would mean that the little hawk would have to remain in captivity throughout its life.

The chick was placed in a large aviary with Killy, an adult female kestrel who is a permanent resident at Cedar Run.

Killy is a sad example of the imprinting phenomena, a saga that is all too familiar to Refuge staff. Like the little chick, she was found by humans when she was too young to fly. The well-meaning people thought she was adorable and took her in. They held her and fed her lovingly as they would a pet and she soon identified people as the source of food. Of course, once Killy fledged and began to fly it became clear that she was not a good pet. She was brought to the Refuge but it was too late for her to learn to catch food on her own.

Alas for the chick, imprinting

also left Killy unable to be a good kestrel companion. She greatly preferred the company of humans. After several days of hoping the two birds would bond, Refuge caregivers removed the chick and left Killie alone again.

What to do? Tri-state Bird Rescue in Delaware had a captive kestrel that was a good surrogate mother. A phone call quickly established that Tri-state would take the Cedar Run chick and a Refuge volunteer offered to make the hour-long drive.

Thus, the little kestrel found itself in the carrying case on the road to eventual freedom.

The little chick grew rapidly at Tri-state, fledged and learned to fly strongly. She was released in time for fall migration with many good wishes for a long life in the wild. To paraphrase Hilary, it does take a community to raise an orphaned chick, from the caring man with the dog to Cedar Run's staff and the cooperative folks at Tri-state Bird Rescue.

## Girl Scout Day



November 6 may have been a gray and gloomy day but the faces of 50 girl scouts were bright with interest as they experimented with the EnviroScope, created a newspaper watershed, lined up in a wetlands food chain, sopped water from a bucket during a water use game and peered through magnifiers to identify aquatic invertebrates.

The Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts were earning their Water Drop Patch at Cedar Run and having a good time doing it.

The Refuge education team led the girls through activities at five

stations in the education center and along the nature trail. Each troop also visited the animals in our wildlife compound and met Squam, the barred owl, a species that depends on undisturbed wetland habitats.

Naturalist Pat Gurgul, a Cedar Run veteran and long-time Girl Scout leader, planned and organized the water day. Josh Melissari was a new and special member of the team. Josh, an Americorps volunteer assigned to NJDEP, is stationed at the Refuge. He works as the Rancocas Watershed Ambassador and was able to discuss environmental career choices with the girls as well as introduce them to the creepy-crawly critters that live in Cedar Run Lake and other area waterways.

This first Scout Day at the Refuge was a

huge success. Troop leaders begged for more and we are planning another badge workshop for the coming spring.

School, scout or senior adult groups can schedule Refuge Adventures or Refuge on Wheels programs by calling Terri Loy at (856) 993-0326. Check the website at [www.cedarrun.org](http://www.cedarrun.org) and click on the "groups" button for detailed information on titles and costs.



*"Thanks to everyone at Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge for showing our Brownie Troop 3177 of Marlton such a wonderful time," wrote troop leader Denis Bellerini. The girls are wearing shower hats to protect against ticks, a unique and chemical-free approach.*

# Wonderful Wildlife Weekends

Join us each weekend for a WILD time at Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge. Each month will focus on a unique Pine Barrens species and feature hands-on activities. No reservations needed.

December and January are devoted to deer, while February is Foxy. There is no charge for the programs, but admission to the Refuge is \$3 for adults, \$2 for children with two and under free. *Please note the education center will be closed on weekends from December 20 through January 16.*

## New! Discovery Backpacks

Take one of our new Discovery Backpacks out on the trail to explore for signs of wildlife, find special plants and heighten your enjoyment of a walk in the woods. The hands-on activities are designed for families with children who are eager to learn the secrets of nature. You can borrow a free backpack at the education center.

## Winter Bird Watching

Sun., Jan. 25; ongoing from 1-4 pm  
Included in Refuge admission

Bird watching is one of America's fastest growing sports. A great way to start is with winter birds at your feeder. Join us as we discuss and identify our winter guests. Learn what and how to feed your winter visitors and make a special treat for your backyard birds.

## Owls Alive

Sun., Feb. 1; 1:30, 2:15 and 3:00 pm

Included in Refuge admission

The nights are alive with the hoots and hisses of owls since winter is their active time of year. Come learn about New Jersey's nighttime hunters and meet some of our live owls. Bring your camera for up-close shots.

## John Volpa's Explorer Series

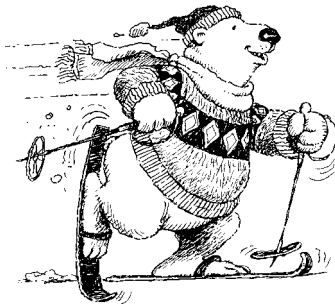
Preregistration is required for all John's outdoor adventures. Call (856) 983-0326 with your credit card number or send a check to the Refuge.

## Mountain Biking the Pines

Sunday, January 25 - 1:00 pm

Cost: \$20; ages 14-up only

Grab your bike and hit the trails with Naturalist John Volpa. Explore the Pine Barrens by way of two wheels as you encounter challenging hills and ridges.



## Full Moon Hike and Campfire

Friday, February 6 - 6:30-8:30 pm

Cost: \$8; family maximum \$30

Bring your hotdogs and join Naturalist John Volpa for a campfire dinner (we'll supply the marshmallows). Once the moon starts to rise we'll head off to explore Cedar Run Refuge and see who's active under the full moon.

## Winter Wonderland Hike

Sat., Feb. 21, 9:00 am

Cost: \$20 adults; \$10 ages 8-16

Discover the wonders of the Batona Trail during the winter. Naturalist John Volpa amazes you with the rich activity to be found in nature even while many animals and plants sleep. After the hike, warm yourselves around the campfire and exchange stories of survival. Bring hotdogs to cook and have dinner at the end of the trail. We'll provide the marshmallows. Campfire begins at 5:00 pm.

## Skiing the Barrens

Whenever it snows

Cost: \$20 adults; ages 14-up only

Winter snow is unpredictable in New Jersey. Be ready when the snow falls to head out for cross country skiing in the Pines. Call us anytime to be put on the ski list (856) 983-0326. If it snows we'll call you to set up a time to put on your skis and join us on the trail.

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## Membership/Adopt/Program Registration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### Adopt-A-Wild-One (please circle your choice)

\$150	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$35	\$25
Bald Eagle	Red-tailed Hawk	Screech Owl	Striped Skunk	Corn Snake	Box Turtle
Snowy Owl	Great Horned Owl	Raccoon	Canada Goose	Flying Squirrel	Cottontail
	White-tailed Deer	Red Fox	Mute Swan	Groundhog	Robin

### Membership (please circle level)

\$1000	\$500	\$250	\$100	\$50	\$30	\$25
Lifetime	Benefactor	Sustaining	Super Family	Family Plus	Family	Individual

Please mail form with check to: **WCRWR, 4 Sawmill Road, Medford, NJ 08055.** Thanks!

# GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON LIVING!

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**Adopt a Wild One for that special person who loves animals.**



You can give a swan a-swimming, a deer a-leaping, a goose a-laying or one of our other appealing animals. We'll feed and care for it while your gift recipient receives a beautiful certificate with the animal's photo and a fact sheet about the species. Adopt "parents" may visit free throughout the year.

**It's easy to Adopt a Wild One – just call (856) 983-0326 with your credit card and we'll send your gift immediately.**

## Holiday Purchases Can Help Refuge

When you buy your holiday gifts on line through the following websites a percentage will benefit Cedar Run.

Each site features familiar companies from Dell Computers to Barnes & Noble and Lands End. Check them out at:

***Buyforcharity.com***  
***lgive.com***

If you're sending flowers, call **Floral Alliance at 1-800-423-5803** and they will send us a donation. Remember to use our **code number: NP-1011.**

Ed Center closed weekends - Dec. 20—Jan. 16  
Lost? Call (856) 983-0326 for directions.

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Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge

**WOODFORD**



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