

Habitat

CHESAPEAKE WILDLIFE HERITAGE

works

The newsletter about restoring, managing and protecting wildlife habitat.
Fall 2016



A regionally rare Wilson's Phalarope was spotted at a wetland CWH restored near Barclay, MD. Photo courtesy of Bill Hubick



Habitat Works is published by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to restoring, managing, and protecting wildlife habitat and establishing a more sustainable agriculture, through direct action, education and research, in partnership with public and private landowners. We welcome your comments and contributions.

CWH Restores Wetland in Chester River Watershed

CWH has recently completed a large wetland restoration at Fleur-de-lis farm near Barclay, Maryland. The project included a 5-acre shallow water emergent wetland and a 14-acre wet meadow. This work is part of CWH's on-going efforts to restore and protect wetlands to provide habitat for wildlife and improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

The wetlands were part of a larger 116-acre wetland restoration that CWH played a critical role in developing. Overall, the full project at Fleur-de-lis resulted in the restoration of 77 acres of wooded wetlands, 25 acres of shallow water emergent wetlands and 14 acres of wet meadow.

CWH staff has worked with the landowner, David Taylor, for more than nine years on this project. Mr. Taylor first contacted CWH during the summer of 2007.

(continued on page 2)



Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage Board of Directors

Ralph Partlow, *President and Treasurer*

Larry Albright, *Chairman*

Cleo Braver, *Vice President*

Laura Hoffman, *Secretary*

Stanley P. Watkins, Jr. M.D.

John Murray, Esq, *Advisor*

Dennis Whigham, PhD, *Advisor*

Staff

Ned Gerber, *Director*

Michael Robin Haggie

Andi Pupke

Chris Pupke

Sandy Parker

Mary Henley

Phil Boyd

Danny Sterling

Paul McMullen

Buck Schuyler

Dean Knowles

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
The Old Railway Station
46 Pennsylvania Avenue
P.O. Box 1745
Easton, Maryland 21601
410.822.5100
410.822.4016 fax
info@cheswildlife.org
cheswildlife.org

Printed on recycled paper.

(continued from page 1)

He wanted to use his farm to help animals. Our staff met with him and showed him some of our wetland restoration projects, including Mudford Farm near Sudlersville and Bailey's Neck Farm near Easton.

Mr. Taylor selected the Wetland Reserve Program from the USDA to use on his farm. WRP covered costs for the restoration and paid the landowner for a conservation easement on the wetland that will permanently protect the habitat. Rich Mason at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided critical support for the project.

Fleur-de-lis Farm contains 153 acres adjacent to the hamlet of Barclay in northern Queen Anne's County. The property is located at the headwaters of Red Lion Branch, a major tributary of the Chester River. The 19 acres of wetlands restored by CWH were in hydric soils, including Hurlock, Othello, Corsica and Carmichael soils. Approximately 20 acres of agricultural run-off will be filtered by these wetlands.

Birds seen at the farm in the first year of the restoration include Tundra Swan, Northern Pintail, Glossy Ibis, Semipalmated Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Orchard Oriole and Grasshopper Sparrow. Perhaps the biggest surprise was a Wilson's Phalarope, which was spotted in April. Overall, seventy-seven different species of birds have been identified on the wetlands.

Many different species will also find critical habitat in the wetlands including frogs, turtles, butterflies, dragonflies and more.

In addition to the wildlife benefits, the wetlands will also help improve water quality in Red Lion Branch a major tributary of the Chester River. The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center has documented that CWH restored wetlands can filter up to 70% of the nutrient pollution that enters the wetlands.

For more information about restoring wetlands on your property, please contact the CWH office at 410-822-5100.



CWH's Phil Boyd (right) discusses the wetland restoration with landowner David Taylor.

Smith Fund Will Help Waterfowl and Other Wildlife

The family and friends of Charlie Smith have established the “Charlie Smith Habitat Fund” at Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage in his memory. The Smith Fund will help CWH restore wetlands for the benefit of wildlife and the Chesapeake Bay. To date, more than \$33,000 has been raised in memory of Charlie.

The first project will be completed at CWH’s Barnstable Hill Farm on Kent Island. The 540-acre farm was donated to CWH in 2000 and is permanently protected from development by a conservation easement. A waterfowl impoundment will be constructed on the north part of the farm. With more than 5.5 miles of waterfrontage on Kirwan Creek and Prospect Bay, Barnstable is one of the most important waterfowl sanctuaries in the Mid-Shore Region.

Charlie was well known among boaters throughout the Chesapeake Bay and East Coast. He was an intrepid sailor and a member of the Annapolis Yacht Club, Tred Avon Yacht Club, Admirals Cove Club, Palm Beach Yacht Club and the Ocean Reef Club. Charlie started Yacht Maintenance Company in 1978. He was also a passionate hunter and fisherman.

Larry Albright, CWH’s Chairman and a great friend of Charlie’s, said, “Charlie loved the work that CWH does, particularly the shallow-water marshes. This will be a great way to honor his memory. Each time the ducks drop into the wetland, I will think about how excited Charlie would get at that sight. I am very grateful to Elizabeth, his widow, and his parents, Anne and Sunny, and family for their support of this project.”

If you want to help support the Smith Fund, please call the office (410-822-5100) and ask to speak with Chris Pupke or stop by Albright’s Gun Shop and talk with Larry.



A pair of American Widgeon found on a wetland restored by CWH at our Canterbury Farm on Bailey’s Neck near Easton, MD. Photo courtesy of David Judd.

Donate Stock and Receive a Charitable Deduction

Tree Swallows using a CWH nesting box



Donating appreciated stock is an excellent way to support CWH, the Bay and our wildlife. This type of donation is very simple and allows you to take advantage of tax laws to maximize your gift to CWH and reduce your taxes.

For example, Mrs. Johnson purchased stock for \$5,000 several years ago. Today, this stock is worth \$20,000. If Mrs. Johnson sells the stock, she would have a \$3,000 capital gains tax (20% of the profit from the sale of the stock). However, if she decides to donate the stock to CWH, Mrs. Johnson would receive a charitable deduction for the full fair-market value of the stock (\$20,000). For someone in the 28% tax bracket, this donation would provide a \$5,600 tax savings. In the end, Mrs. Johnson’s tax bill is \$8,600 less and CWH gets a terrific gift that will benefit wildlife.

Please call 410.822.5100 and talk with Chris Pupke to learn more about this easy method to support CWH!

Thank you Austin

By Ned Gerber

CWH bids a grateful farewell to Austin Jamison for his many years of service to us and the wildlife resource. He first came to work for CWH in the late 1990's as a field tech who worked on CREP buffer plantings of trees and native grasses. After a few years he went to grad school at University of Vermont where he obtained a Master's degree in soil science. Then we opened a CWH outpost near Charlottesville, Virginia where he worked successfully to establish native grass/wildflower/tree buffers along farm streams using that state's CRP/CREP. In Virginia they plant trees on 20-foot centers so that native warm-season grasses and wildflowers can be drilled between the rows which creates a very diverse buffer until the trees close canopy. Austin planted hundreds of acres of native warm-season grasses during his tenure in Virginia and designed some nice wetlands, as well.

The Commonwealth is a large state and at times Austin would camp on farms so that he did not have to commute long distances back and forth to meadow planting projects. I recall receiving some great text photos of his tent set up right next to the tractor and grass drill. The Virginia farming landscape still contains a lot of cows and they also created challenges for Austin at times. Through his efforts, native warm-season grass buffers and meadows became much more appreciated and utilized in a farming area that had only known exotic cool-season grasses before. He pioneered the use of GPS herbicide application for CWH, which has enabled us to reduce the rates we use when establishing meadows.

CWH wishes Austin and his family all the best as he embarks on his new career as a physical therapist.



Austin Jamison loads the warm season grass drill with seed as he prepares to plant one of the more one thousand acres of riparian buffers he planted in Virginia.

Ask Andi:



Large Milkweed Bugs on Butterfly Weed, a type of Milkweed.

Q: What are these orange and black bugs on my milkweed plants? Will they harm Monarch butterflies?

A: These are Large Milkweed Bugs (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*). They spend all the stages of their life in the milkweed patch. It is just one of the many insects that makes its living in the milkweed patch.

The Milkweed Bug is more of a nuisance than a threat to the milkweed plants. They do little damage to the plant and are only present for a short period of time. Adults live about one month in the summer time. They overwinter as adults in the leaf litter.

Large Milkweed Bug adults eat milkweed plant matter, maturing

Questions and answers about
wildlife by Andi Pupke,
Education and Outreach Director



milkweed plant.

milkweed seed and nectar from milkweed flowers. The bodies of the Milkweed Bug contain a toxic compound derived from the sap of the milkweed plant. When milkweed is scarce, the milkweed bug can shift from being an herbivore to a scavenger and predator.

This insect uses the same orange and black warning colors as the Monarch butterfly. Their tendency to congregate probably emphasizes the warning that would be predators. Large Milkweed Bugs should not be a problem for Monarch butterflies.

Milkweed patches are a valuable source of food and cover for a host of insects. They are a micro-environment worth studying all on their own. For information about starting your own Milkweed patch, please call the office and ask for Andi Pupke.

Purple Martin Nesting Box Survey Results *by Andi Pupke*

CWH continued our Purple Martin colony monitoring for some landowners in 2016. Compared to the results for last season, this year's results were disappointing. During the 2015 nesting season, we monitored 13 individual houses on 5 different properties. We had 307 Purple Martin chicks successfully fledge. This gave us an average of 23.6 chicks fledging per house.

During the 2016 nesting season, we monitored 17 houses on 7 different properties and had only 247 chicks fledge successfully. This gave us an average of 16 chicks per house, which represents a 32% decline from 2015 to 2016.

We may never know all of the reasons for the drop in production of Purple Martins this year but we have a few theories ranging from weather to predators to human impact.

This spring was cooler and wetter than normal. Once the Purple Martins arrived in Maryland, we had a great deal of rain and cooler than normal temperatures. This meant there were fewer flying insects to provide food for the Martins to help them survive the cold nights. Purple Martins deplete their fat stores traveling from South America to their breeding grounds and need to consume insects when they return. Indeed, we found more adult Martins huddled together dead in the houses right after their return than ever before. Furthermore, the Martins started nesting about a week later than last year which may have also contributed to lower numbers of offspring.

Predators also made their impact felt. We saw an increase in night-time owl attacks on the Purple Martin colonies. In response, CWH is now encouraging all of our Martin landlords to install owl guards to prevent such attacks from devastating their colonies.

Finally, there may have been an increase in insecticides used in areas surrounding the Purple Martin colonies this year. Purple Martins feed on flying insects and treated insects can move from a treated area to an area that has feeding Martins. The insecticides can travel up the food chain and poison Martins and other insectivores.

CWH will continue to monitor Purple Martin colonies. We hope to have a better season next year. If you have a colony that you would like our trained biologists to monitor for a fee, please call our office.



Newly hatched Purple Martin chicks in a nesting box monitored by CWH staff on Reeds Creek near Centerville, MD.

CWH Receives Grant to Aid Wetland Restoration Project at Canterbury Farm



This pair of Wood Ducks was photographed on one of the restored wetlands at CWH's Canterbury Farm. Wood Ducks are one of a host of birds that will benefit from the wetland restoration project planned at Canterbury Farm for 2017 that was funded by a grant from the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund administered by NFWF.

CWH has received a grant of \$96,000 from the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, a partnership between the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This funding will help CWH restore 15 acres of non-tidal wetlands at our Canterbury Farm.

The restored wetlands will improve water quality in the Choptank River. CWH will also educate 25 landowners in the Mid-Shore region about wetland restoration. We estimate that the restoration of 15 acres of wetlands will annually prevent 3,195 pounds of nitrogen, 150 pounds of phosphorus and 40,000 pounds of sediment from fouling the waters of the Choptank River.

CWH will restore 7 acres of shallow emergent, non-tidal wetlands and 8 acres of forested wetlands on the farm. Both sites are within 1/4 mile of the tidal waters of Trippes Creek, a major tributary of the Choptank River.

Canterbury Farm is a 150-acre property owned by Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage. In 2000-01, CWH developed a terrific partnership with the former landowner Mrs. Martha Ann Healy. This partnership resulted in the restoration of 100 acres of wetlands. In 2008, Mrs. Healy donated the farm to CWH. Subsequently, CWH restored a 6-acre wetland on the farm in 2013. The entirety of Canterbury Farm is in a conservation easement held by Maryland Environmental Trust and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. This easement protects the property from development and more specifically the habitat from conversion to agriculture.

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund is administered by NFWF and financed primarily by the EPA's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program and the Small Watershed Grants Program. Additional public and private funding is provided by NFWF.

Go Green! Receive Newsletters Electronically

Won't you please help CWH save trees and use more of our funds to benefit wildlife and the Chesapeake Bay by having your copy of the CWH newsletter, *Habitat Works*, delivered to you via email. Send an email to info@cheswildlife.org with "Newsletter by email" in the subject line. Please include your name and address in the message (so we are sure we have the correct person in our mailing list). Upon receipt of your email, a reply will be sent to confirm your request for an electronic version of the newsletter.

ABA Honors Ingersoll Family For Wetland Restoration

Congratulations to Hank Ingersoll and the Ingersoll family for their recognition from the American Birding Association. In the Conservation Milestones section of the May 2016 ABA magazine, the Ingersolls were honored for the habitat restoration work on their farm near Chestertown, MD.

CWH worked closely with the family and developed a habitat restoration plan. The plan included a wetland restoration and buffer planting of warm-season grasses. CWH then planted the buffers and designed and restored the wetlands. In addition to avian benefits outlined in the article, the new habitat will benefit a host of wildlife from butterflies to frogs to turtles and help improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

ABA's Conservation Milestones "recognize efforts toward building a better future for birds and birders."

The following article appeared previously in the May 2016 issue of Birder's Guide magazine <bg.aba.org/ii/688884-may-2016/09>, published by the American Birding Association.

Henry Ingersoll: Bring Back the Wetland

In 2007, Henry Ingersoll, a physician living in California, inherited his father's 320-acre farm in Maryland on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay, along with his siblings. Together, they set out to restore wetland habitats on the property.

Many wetlands in this area were drained for farming during the 20th century, and associated bird species have declined. By restoring the habitat, Ingersoll hoped to benefit birds like waterfowl and Field Sparrows, which he remembered seeing on the farm when he was a child.

He got in touch with Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, a local conservation organization that specializes in restoring native habitats. After a few years of planning with the federal Conservation Reserve Program, the heritage built a berm to create a 20-acre seasonal wetland, and planted an additional 30 acres with native grasses to restore meadow habitat.

Then, to document the birds using the property, Ingersoll reached out to Wayne Bell, a senior associate at Washington College's Center for Environment and Society. Bell designed a protocol to survey for birds on the farm. So far, these surveys have produced nearly 400 checklists and have tallied 135 species, including a rare Connecticut Warbler in September 2015.

Two undergraduate students at Washington College analyzed these data as part of their degree requirements. In 2015, they found that avian diversity increased 10% and that avian abundance rose a whopping 46% since the habitats were restored. Surveys found 14 species of waterfowl and shorebirds that were not present before the wetland was brought back, and birds like Field and Swamp sparrows are now using the meadows.

The Conservation Reserve Program, designed for farmers, helps people improve wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion, and improve water quality by planting native vegetation, creating windbreaks and buffer strips, and taking care of riparian zones on croplands. Learn more about the program, and how to enroll, at tinyurl.com/enroll-CRP.



Wetland restored by CWH at Ingersoll farm near Chestertown, Maryland



Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
The Old Railway Station
46 Pennsylvania Avenue
P.O. Box 1745
Easton, MD 21601-8935

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EASTON, MD
PERMIT #62

Return Service Requested

Maintained Nesting Structures Can Yield Surprises



Nesting structures that are well monitored can provide wonderful benefits for wildlife. A bluebird box placed in appropriate habitat might be used by Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Carolina Wrens, Tufted Titmice, and even flying squirrels.

If you are really lucky you might find something completely different. Something like this Grey Treefrog, which was photographed on property near Centerville that has been permanently protected by a conservation easement donated to CWH and the Maryland Environmental Trust.

The easement ensures the property will be forever wild. For more information about nesting structures or permanently protecting the habitat on your property, please call the CWH office.