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# THE KINGFISHER

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
NATURAL RESOURCE EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

*Summer/Fall 2006*

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# Gettin' It Done

The board and the Management Consultants have been workin' hard for you. The standout of late has been Eileen Giffoniello. She has coordinated most of the physical improvements within the last few months to prepare the west dorm wing for this summer's Earthwatch expeditions (read more on Earthwatch on page 2). The following is a short summary of the recent projects she coordinated - in her own words.

**Anthony Iaria Sr. worked four days on Grass Shrimp cabin, putting in the new white door, screening on the porch, and cedar siding around the front. The cabin looks great and is ready for the summer students to use it as a wet lab.**

**Mike Iaria and his crew of Jack Iaria and yours truly, ran underground electric from the old Bathhouse to the small cabins. The entire system of old knob and tube has been removed along with the daisy chain overhead from cabin to cabin. The electric is now 12" underground and encased in gray PVC piping running from corner to corner. The new electric is still being turned around and being fed to the brand new fans, outlets, and double switches. Speaking of fans...Anthony Iaria was called back from retirement to help the "Gimp Crew" install the fans. Since time has passed, Jack had his hip replaced and can't break 90 degrees, Mike has had his rotator cuff surgery and can't turn or lift his right arm, and I can't lift anything over 10 pounds! It took the 3 of us one full day to install one fan! Call SUPER POPS! Anthony Iaria Sr. installed the remaining 3 fans in one afternoon! Once again thanks to my super crew.**

**Rutzler and Sons have installed the HVAC unit in the West Wing. Super cool! West wing plumbing is being done by Ocean Pipeworks LLC. Jim Giffoniello had a double crew on the bathrooms last weekend to try and speed up our opening date of June 3rd. Jared Trabino fixed the many leaks in the kitchen...we now have water in the kitchen and upstairs apartment. We are working on the hot water heaters in the kitchen next. Jared worked for 9 hours under the porch sweating pipes that haven't been used in eons. He even fixed the hose bib outside the kitchen door. Kudos!**

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Wonderful things are going on at our center; Drexel University has partnered with Earth Watch to conduct various Terrapin and Biodiversity studies while living at the Lighthouse Center and Rider University is another one of our leasers. The U.S. Coast Guard rents out building space for their monthly meeting and we have a few other leasers/renters coming on board. While we continue to undertake huge renovations with lots of volunteer labor and materials, the good news is we are producing an income. Now that we are an operating non-profit entity, we could use some fresh ideas. We are currently looking for members interested in serving on the Lighthouse Center Board of Directors. Many of us have been on the board for multiple terms and we need to replace retiring members. Requirements to serve on the board are a passion to keep the center viable, help promote the center, an email address and an educational or business background are helpful. Email me at [nancy.eriksen@exeloncorp.com](mailto:nancy.eriksen@exeloncorp.com) if you are interested.

On September 2, 2006, we plan to hold an open house for our members so mark your calendars. As of the writing of this newsletter, we plan to participate with WOBM for the Day on the Bay. We will hold tours of the center, hayrides and a cookout. Come on out and enjoy the day with us!

*Nancy*

Visit the website for updates - <http://www.experiencebarnegatbay.org>

# Naturalist's Notebook

By Terry O'Leary

## KILLDEER

### Charadrius vociferous

**Physical Description:** This short-billed shorebird is between 9 and 11 inches long, with long, narrow, pointed wings, a grayish-brown back, a rusty rump, a white belly and chest with two black bands around the neck, and a white-tipped tail.



**Habitat:** Although Killdeer feed on mud flats during July and August, they are most conspicuous during the spring in open uplands, darting rapidly and stopping suddenly within their one to two acre territory of cleared, cultivated, or mowed field. This adaptable bird may be observed nesting on beaches, farm fields, gravel roads, lawns, golf courses, and even flat rooftops. The males migrants arrive in early April, making circular flights above their territory, and begin calling "killdee" up to 70 times per minute to the incoming females, and

scraping several shallow depressions called "sham nests". After one is selected by the female, she lays three to five gray-buff, spotted eggs directly on the depression. If any intruder approaches the nest, either of the parents will typically perform a broken wing distraction display, along with piercing cries to lure the intruder away from the nest. After 24-28 days of incubation by both parents (males usually at night), the chicks hatch, and can run about and feed immediately, with the parents leading them to nearby food sources. Killdeer eat beetles, caterpillars, crickets, ants, earthworms, snails, spiders, mosquito larvae, and a few seeds and berries.

**Range:** Migrants may travel from Newfoundland and Alaska to South America, with some populations wintering along the coast as far north as New Jersey.

**Field Notes:** Nest predators include opossums, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and crows. Raptors may capture adult killdeer. Many nests are destroyed inadvertently by humans by stepping on, driving over, or mowing or plowing nest sites. Cattle may also trample nests. Eggs laid on roof tops place hatchlings at risk for starvation or falling off before they can fly. The opportunistic nature of killdeer, as well as their ability to raise a second brood in early summer, have made their numbers steadily increase. They typically live for 4 to 5 years, although some have been observed to survive 10 years or more.

## STAR PARTIES AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

HERE IS A LETTER FROM THE ZUZIC FAMILY AFTER THE LAST STAR PARTY. THANK YOU FOR THE NICE LETTER.

DEAR LIGHTHOUSE CENTER AND ASTRA CLUB MEMBERS;  
THANK YOU ALL FOR SUCH A GREAT FAMILY EVENING OF WATCHING THE STARS ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 4. I, ALONG WITH MY HUSBAND STEVE AND OUR TWO SMALL CHILDREN, KELLY MARIE, AGE 6 AND STEPHEN, AGE 4 CAME TO THE CENTER FOR THE ASTRA STAR PARTY. THE ASTRONOMERS WERE SO GRACIOUS TO SHARE THEIR TELESCOPES AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EILEEN WAS THE PERFECT HOSTESS, MAKING US ALL FEEL WELCOME. WE ARE SO HAPPY TO HAVE A FAMILY MEMBERSHIP AND LOOK FORWARD TO MANY ACTIVITIES THE CENTER HAS TO OFFER. THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR A BEAUTIFUL EVENING, UNDER THE STARS AND IN THE PINES.  
SINCERELY,  
KELLY ZUZIC AND THE ZUZIC FAMILY (STEVE, KELLY MARIE AND STEPHEN)



The Earthwatch institute provided students and teachers a rare opportunity to contribute to environmental sustainability at the Lighthouse Center. Working from a 6-meter motor boat, participants helped John Wnek and his colleagues capture terrapins, tag them with a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag, and track them throughout Barnegat Bay's rich estuary environment. Five summer expeditions monitored turtle nests on tidal creek banks and marsh islands, assessed vegetation types, and collected soil samples and temperature data to determine preferred nesting habitat. Some teams marked and tagged hatchlings at nests and determined hatching success. It was an honor to host this elite group. No doubt we will see them again next year.

**Members Picnic**  
**at Lighthouse Center**

Saturday September 2<sup>nd</sup>

noon- 4 pm

Please, come out see all the improvements we have made and enjoy the “Day on the Bay”. We will have Hay Rides and Tours of the buildings and grounds.

Please contact either Jack Henderson [kb2csi@comcast.net](mailto:kb2csi@comcast.net) or Eileen Giffoniello [emgiffoniello@yahoo.com](mailto:emgiffoniello@yahoo.com) we need to have a count of the number of members who are coming so we can purchase the food. RSVP by August 31st. And as always, we are looking for volunteers to help before, during and after the event.

**ATTENTION**

The Snapple machine is up and running and making us money! Please support the camp by purchasing your water or juice drinks from us.

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