

NJMC NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**New Jersey
Meadowlands
Commission**

New Lunch ‘n’ Learn Series, Animal Visits, Nature Walks Highlight NJMC Winter-Spring 2015 Public Programs

LYNDHURST, N.J. – A new Lunch ‘n’ Learn series, visits from owls and other animals, and a series of nature walks highlight the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission’s (NJMC) Winter-Spring 2015 Schedule of Events. The fun and educational programs offer something for all ages and take place at the Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC) in DeKorte Park, the home of the NJMC.

“The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is pleased to present a variety of informative and engaging workshops and programs for the entire family that bring attention to the importance of environmental stewardship and wildlife conservation,” said Marcia Karrow, Executive Director of the NJMC. “The Commission encourages everyone to take advantage of these great educational opportunities.”

Lunch ‘n’ Learn

The NJMC is proud to introduce its **Lunch ‘n’ Learn** program, in which participants are invited to bring their midday meal to the MEC for nature-themed discussions in an informal setting. The series kicks off on **Wednesday, March 18, at noon**, with “**Passion for Plants.**” NJMC staff will explain how to plant and maintain home gardens for spring, summer and fall. They will review basic plant types, the best light conditions and times of month for planting, and the differences between annuals and perennials. On **Tuesday, April 14, at noon**, Don Torino of the Bergen County Audubon Society tells how you can “**Build a Better Butterfly Garden.**” Don will show attendees how to create a butterfly habitat in their own backyards and talk about how people can help the stunning Monarch butterfly, whose numbers have declined precipitously in recent years. **Lunch ‘n’ Learn** programs are geared toward adults and cost **\$6, MEC members \$5.**

Amazing Animals

On **Sunday, Feb. 22, at 3 p.m.**, visitors of all ages can “**Explore Rainforests**” around the globe and meet some of the critters that inhabit these vital but dwindling natural resources. Joe D’Angeli of the Wildlife and Conservation Center will discuss the importance of rainforests, which provide homes to more than 30 million species of flora and fauna and help regulate our climate. Attendees will have the opportunity to get up-close and personal with various mammals, reptiles and invertebrates. **Cost is \$8, MEC members \$6.**

Owls are mostly nocturnal creatures, but a few of them will be making a special daytime appearance during the “**Owls Alive!**” program at **2 p.m. on Sunday, March 8.** A naturalist from the Flat Rock Brook Nature

Center will explain why the Meadowlands is prime owl territory and discuss these feathered ambassadors' behavior, physiology, adaptations and natural history. **The program cost is \$8, MEC members \$6.**

Find out the **“Buzz About Bees”** on **Saturday, March 14, at 2 p.m.** Beekeeper Erik Swanson will present a family-friendly talk about honeybees, including why they are so important and why they are in trouble. You'll also be able to observe live bees up-close in an observation hive. Erik will have his Meadowlands honey for sale. **Cost is \$6, MEC members \$5.**

In related events, the NJMC is hosting two wildlife slideshow presentations. On **Wednesday, Jan. 14, at 2 p.m.**, local nature photographer Ron Shields hosts **“Birds of the Meadowlands.”** Shields will present his stunning images of a wide array of bird species taken at the Kearny Marsh, Mill Creek Marsh in Secaucus, and DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst during the past four years. Many of Shields' photos were shot from a kayak in remote areas of the region, giving the viewer a unique perspective from which to see our avian friends in a new light. **Cost is \$6, MEC members \$5.**

On **Thursday, May 21, at 7 p.m.**, the Conserve Wildlife Foundation will give an **“Osprey Talk and Slideshow.”** Ospreys – those amazing fish-hunting hawks – have made an amazing comeback in the Meadowlands and all of New Jersey after almost becoming extinct from the misuse of the pesticide DDT. The Conserve Wildlife Foundation has been in the thick of that comeback, building Osprey platforms and monitoring nests statewide. **The program cost is \$6, MEC members \$5.**

Explore Nature's Beauty

Nature and bird-watching enthusiasts of all ages are invited to join the NJMC and the Bergen County Audubon Society (BCAS) on their twice-monthly guided nature walks. **These free, two-hour excursions run from 10 a.m. to noon and are held on the first Sunday and third Tuesday of each month at locations throughout the Meadowlands District.** Visit www.njmeadowlands.gov and click on “Events and Alerts” for locations and additional information.

The Commission and the BCAS are also hosting several free special walks and events. The programs are detailed below:

Before settling in to watch the Super Bowl, nature lovers can join the NJMC and the BCAS for our **Sixth Annual Super Bird Sunday** walk at **10 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 1**, at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst. Prizes will be awarded to the first people to spot a bird that serves as an NFL team name: raven, falcon, eagle, seahawk (osprey), cardinal and wood(packer).

Friday, Feb. 13, is your lucky day: the NJMC and BCAS are hosting a **Lucky Great Backyard Bird Count** at **10 a.m.** at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst. We'll walk along the park's trail system, counting waterfowl, raptors and any other birds we find. A **Woodcock Walk** will be held at **Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus on Monday, March 23, at 6:45 p.m.** The program features a 30-minute walk around the park, followed by a search for American woodcocks. We will also look for ravens, black-crowned night herons and other birds.

Birding for Beginners sessions will take place at **1 p.m. on Sundays April 12 (Bird Identification) and 19 (Optics and Field Guides)** at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst. The two-hour programs begin with sessions in the Meadowlands Environment Center followed by a walk through the park.

Celebrate **Earth Day , Wednesday, April 22, with a 10 a.m. walk** at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst. We'll look for spring arrivals and bald eagles, among other birds. It's all about mom on **Sunday, May 10**, when the NJMC and BCAS host the **Seventh Annual Mother's Day Nature Walk**. The walk starts at **10 a.m.** at the **Ridgefield Nature Center** and includes a visit to the **Skeetkill Creek Marsh in Ridgefield, with a stop to see monk parakeets on the way.**

Nature As a Canvas

The NJMC is offering art workshops for teens and adults, with the environment as your muse. The first program, **“Textural Expression: Letting your Inner Artist Bloom,”** will be held on **Saturday, March 14, from 10 a.m. to noon.** The session focuses on using chalk pastels to explore texture and color. Participants will come away with a finished landscape piece to inspire further artistic exploration. No experience is necessary. **Cost is \$15, MEC members \$12 (includes supplies). Pre-registration is required.**

The three-part series, **The Art Safari: An Interactive Exploration of the World Around Us,** is scheduled for **Saturdays April 18 and 25, and Saturday May 2.** Each session takes place from **2 to 4 p.m.** The courses focus on using the traditional mediums of graphite and charcoal. No experience is necessary. **Cost is \$35, MEC members \$30 (supplies included). Pre-registration is required.**

All Aboard for Boating Safety

Visitors of all ages are invited to **Boating Safety Day** on Saturday, May 9, from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the NJMC’s River Barge Park in Carlstadt.** The New Jersey State Police Marine Division will be on hand to give boater safety demonstrations and hand out informational packets. Visitors can also climb aboard and explore a State Police Patrol Boat. The event is free.

The Meadowlands Rocks!

On **Sunday, Jan. 25 at 2 p.m.,** join NJMC staffer and veteran rock journalist/author Brian Aberback for **Rock ‘n’ Roll in the Meadowlands.** The slideshow presentation will cover Frank Sinatra’s Hoboken roots and the Jersey City doo-wop scene to present-day hard rock guitar virtuoso/Carlstadt native Marc Rizzo and many more. **Cost is \$6/person. \$5 MEC members.**

Pre-registration for all programs is recommended and appreciated; registration is required for art classes. There are three ways to register for programs: Through our online registration system by going to www.njmeadowlands.gov and clicking on “Events,” by bringing a registration form to the Environment Center, or by mailing the form to Meadowlands Environment Center, 2 DeKorte Park Plaza, P.O. Box 640, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071. Make checks payable to “Meadowlands Environment Center.” Program brochures, which include the registration form, are available at the Environment Center or may be requested by email by contacting communications@njmeadowlands.gov. There is no phone registration.

For questions, call 201-777-2431. Those interested in receiving email alerts about NJMC public programs should email communications@njmeadowlands.gov or call 201-460-4619.

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