



## Introduction

### Background: East and West Pond Stewardship Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) is currently working to create a Stewardship Plan that will serve as a detailed roadmap for management of the East and West Pond area of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at Gateway National Recreation Area (GATE). The last formal plan for this area was completed in 1981. Much has changed since then: climate change and sea level rise have begun to threaten the area; partner investment in the Refuge has increased; the composition of flora and fauna has morphed; habitat has been transformed; and NPS management policies have evolved. As urban development continues and natural lands are altered across the metropolitan area, the Refuge has become more important than ever, both to the native plants and animals dependent upon its habitats for their survival, and to the people who find relaxation and enjoyment there.

In that context, the purpose of this plan is to preserve and protect this area by identifying and developing strategies to advance management goals in several areas. The Stewardship Plan will identify management actions related to the protection of resources including freshwater ponds, migratory birds, resident wildlife, aquatic resources, upland habitats, vernal pools, wetlands, and soundscapes. The Stewardship Plan will also outline objectives related to engaging a diverse community of visitors and volunteers, managing a robust volunteer workforce, education and interpretation, and providing opportunities for continued public use and enjoyment of the East and West Pond area.

### Public Scoping Process Summary

In Spring 2022, GATE sought early public engagement on issues to be addressed or evaluated in this plan. From April 26 to June 7, 2022, individuals, government agencies, non-profit and for-profit organizations were invited to provide feedback on the scope of the Stewardship Plan through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website or in writing through letters addressed to Gateway National Recreation Area. Topic questions provided to the public as part of this scoping exercise are included in Appendix A of this report. A total of 116 individuals offered input to NPS through this process. In addition, a virtual open house held on May 17, 2022. During this meeting, NPS staff introduced the Stewardship Plan effort and responded to questions submitted by meeting participants.

After the public comment period closed on June 7, NPS reviewed the input received and began to incorporate comments into the development of the draft Stewardship Plan. The following document provides a summary of the comments received and a description of how NPS will consider, evaluate, and incorporate public feedback into the development of the Stewardship Plan.

### Next Steps

NPS will continue development of the East and West Pond Stewardship Plan. Public feedback received during the Spring 2022 scoping process will be further considered during this process. Additional opportunities for public engagement in the process will be provided, including public and stakeholder review of a Draft East and West Pond Stewardship Plan. Plan development will also include completion of



compliance and consultation as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act and other applicable rules and regulations. During the implementation phase, the Stewardship Plan will support the development of standard operating protocols that will lead to the desired outcomes identified in the Plan for the East and West Ponds. The Stewardship Plan will provide a roadmap for serving visitors and conserving natural resources over the next five-to-ten years.

## Overview of Comments Received

During the scoping period, NPS received unique correspondence from 116 individuals. Approximately 93 percent of this correspondence was submitted by individuals living in New York State. The topics that received the most comments were the installation of bird boxes and similar structures; the management of the park's volunteer program; staffing levels at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; vegetation and viewsheds; water control systems; and the general management of the refuge.

All correspondences were entered into the PEPC system, including 5 correspondences received by email, 30 by U.S. mail, and 81 submitted directly into PEPC. Of the 30 correspondences received by U.S. mail, 10 were identical except for the signature and a further 8 letters were largely identical, but lacked certain detail included in the other 10 letters. Similarly, 15 correspondences received in PEPC were identical to the 10 identical letters, and another 11 correspondences included some, but not all of the word-for-word content submitted in these letters.

All comments were reviewed, coded, and tabulated, even where duplicate wording was submitted by multiple individuals. Summaries of responses to these comments along with representative quotes received from commenters are included in the next section of this report. All comments that pertained to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, regardless of their topic, were carefully read and analyzed and are presented in this report. Commenters will continue to be notified of the project's progress, and are encouraged to visit the NPS PEPC website at [www.parkplanning.nps.gov/StewardsdshipPlan](http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/StewardsdshipPlan) to view information pertaining to this project.

## The Comment Analysis Process

Comment analysis is a process used to compile and combine similar public comments into a format that can be used by decision-makers. Comment analysis assists the team in organizing, clarifying, and addressing technical information, suggestions, opinions, and other input from members of the public. It also aids in identifying the topics and issues to be evaluated and considered throughout the planning process. The process includes five main components: developing a coding structure; employing a comment database for comment management; reading and coding of public comments; interpreting and analyzing the comments to identify issues and themes; and preparing a comment summary.

A coding structure was developed to help sort comments into logical groups by topics and issues. The coding structure was derived from an analysis of the range of topics discussed during internal NPS scoping and the comments themselves. The coding structure was designed to capture all comment content rather than to restrict or exclude any ideas.



The NPS PEPC database was used to manage the comments. The database stores the full text of all correspondence and allows each comment to be coded by topic and issue. Some outputs from the database include tallies of the total number of correspondence and comments received, sorting and reporting of comments by a particular topic or issue, and demographic information regarding the sources of the comments.

Analysis of the public comments involved the assignment of codes to statements made by the public electronically on the PEPC website and in their letters and email messages. Although the analysis process attempts to capture the full range of public concerns, this content analysis report should be used with caution. Comments from people who chose to respond do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the entire public. Furthermore, this was not a vote-counting process, and the emphasis was on content of the comment rather than the number of times a comment was received. This report is intended to provide a summary of the comments received, rather than a statistical analysis of a sample of the public.

## Definition of Terms

Primary terms used in this document are defined below.

- **Correspondence:** A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter. In the context of this scoping process, correspondences took the form of letters, email, and written comments submitted through PEPC. Each piece of correspondence is assigned a unique identification number in the PEPC system. This number can be used to assist the public in identifying the way NPS addressed their comments.
- **Comment:** A comment is a portion of the text within a correspondence that addresses a single subject. It should include information such as an expression of support or opposition to the use of a potential management tool, additional data regarding an existing condition, or an opinion on the management of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.
- **Code:** A grouping centered on a common subject. The codes were developed during the scoping process and are used to track major subjects throughout the Stewardship Planning process.
- **Concern:** A concern is a written summary of all comments received under a particular code. Some codes were further separated into several concern statements to provide a better focus on the content of the comments.
- **Response:** A response is a statement from NPS that corresponds to each concern.

## Guide to this Document

This report is organized as follows:

**Content Analysis Report:** This is the basic report produced from PEPC that provides information on the numbers and types of comments received, organized by code.

**Public Scoping Comment Summary:** This report summarizes the substantive comments received during the scoping process. These comments are organized by codes and further organized into concern statements. Below each concern statement are representative quotes, which have been taken directly from the text of the public's comments and have not been edited; therefore, spelling and grammar errors



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were not corrected. Representative quotes further clarify the concern statements. Duplicate comments from the same individual or comments that pertained to subject matter that was irrelevant to the scoping for the Stewardship Plan have not been included within the analysis of this report but will be documented in the administrative record for this project.

**Correspondence Index of Organizations:** This provides a listing of all groups that submitted comments. In most instances, the organization type was not defined by the commenter; therefore, organizations were listed as “Unaffiliated Individuals”. This list is organized alphabetically and can be found in Appendix B: Correspondence Index of Organizations.

## Content Analysis Report: Comment Distribution by Code

Code	Individuals	Correspondences
DIVERSITY01	Comment addresses strategies for diversifying park visitors and program participants	13
DUPLICATE	Duplicate comment or not pertaining to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	9
EDUCATION01	Comment addresses education and interpretation programming	20
FACILITIES01	Comment addresses West Pond Visitor Center	14
FACILITIES02	Comment addresses trails, boardwalks, or trail maintenance	70
FACILITIES03	Comment addresses the creation of new visitor facilities that do not currently exist	23
GENERAL01	Comment addresses general condition of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.	53
GENERAL02	Comment addresses general management of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	77
GMP01	Comment addresses General Management Plan	3
ISLANDS01	Comment refers to marsh islands or waters of Jamaica Bay	40
NOISE01	Comment addresses noise at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	8
PLAN01	Comment addresses structure or format of Stewardship Plan	36
SAFETY01	Comment addresses visitor safety at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	18
STAFFING01	Comment addresses staffing levels or staffing needs at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	79
STAFFING02	Comment addresses rangers and ranger patrols	72
VEGETATION01	Comment addresses management of viewsheds around East and West Ponds	79
VEGETATION02	Comment addresses mowing techniques or equipment	80
VEGETATION03	Comment addresses non-native or invasive plants and their impacts on native plants or habitat	54



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VEGETATION04	Comment suggests planting of new pollinator-friendly gardens or other landscaping efforts	68
VISITORS01	Comment addresses visitor behavior or adherence to park rules	24
VOLUNTEER01	Have you volunteered at these sites?	8
VOLUNTEER02	Comment addresses strategies for managing volunteer program.	79
WATER01	Comment addresses water control system at East Pond	69
WATER02	Comment addresses construction of additional ponds at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge	42
WATER03	Comment addresses management of water levels at ponds	16
WILDLIFE01	Comment addresses bird feeders, bird baths, bird boxes, or bat boxes	82
WILDLIFE02	Comment addresses osprey cameras, scopes, or other wildlife viewing technology	8
WILDLIFE03	Comment addresses management or culling of raccoons, cats, or other wildlife	59
WILDLIFE04	Comment addresses introduction of fish, amphibians, or reptiles	3

*Note: Each correspondence may have multiple comments, and each comment may have multiple codes. As a result, the total number of comments may be different than the actual comment totals).*



## Public Scoping Comment Summary

### *DIVERSITY01 - Comment addresses strategies for diversifying park visitors and program participants*

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 66957) Commenters suggested strategies for diversifying program participants and/or visitors to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, including using the Every Kid Outdoors pass, partnerships with schools, and social media.

#### ***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 1 Comment ID: 1068024**

**Representative Quote:** Diversifying program participants may also present a challenge. Promotion of the "Every Kid Outdoors" pass is an excellent way to encourage underprivileged children participation! I was happy to see it on the park website. Media for this kind of support system should be publicized in a variety of ways to reach a wider audience. I recommend creating fliers or e-fliers to distribute to schools within the area, especially public schools. Additionally, partnering with the schools to do on-site (at the schools) demonstrations is a great way to grab the attention of some kiddos and get them interested in what goes on at the refuge. This also presents an opportunity to distribute more media/communication materials. Also, with younger generations heavy engagement in digital platforms, perhaps creating a TikTok account for the refuge would be a good way to get them interested! Featuring children in the TikToks (with parental consent) is a great way to incentivize them to go. They'll want to see themselves on the refuge's official TikTok page!

**Response:** Diversifying park visitors and program participants is an important goal of park's and is consistent with the 2014 General Management Plan and a park goal. The Park will consider these specific strategies during the development of Stewardship Plan goals and objectives related to volunteers and visitor use.

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67005) Commenters identified barriers to attracting a diverse set of park visitors, including transportation access, insufficient attractions near the visitor center, and lack of training for volunteers.

#### ***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 28 Comment ID: 1068577**

**Representative Quote:** I have not been to the Ponds for several years. ...  
no easy public transportation is the main reason now.

The Park should have ... regular bus pick up from closest subway stops to make it easier for people to get to the Preserve

**Corr. ID: 32 Comment ID: 1068643**

**Representative Quote:** In order to enhance visitor education and enjoyment, we request that NPS immediately put back the bird feeder and bath stations near the visitor center. They also need to put up the Osprey Nest Cam that has been waiting for installation for three years! The feeders provide recreation and comfort to visitors with disabilities or limited mobility. NPS should strive for an inclusive environment that is a refuge for all.



**Response:** Overcoming barriers to visitor access is a goal for this plan. The Stewardship Plan will consider ways to improve access to the East and West Pond area, including connections to public transit options and visitor attractions that appeal to a diverse set of visitors.

***EDUCATION01 - Comment addresses education and interpretation programming***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67008) Commenters proposed strategies for educational programming, including the use of visual or movement-based learning, nature-focused programming, and additional signage at the East and West Ponds.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 1 Comment ID: 1068025**

**Representative Quote:** When it comes to program curriculum, children are very visual and need outlets to release their youth energy. Luckily, nature and animals seem to be a unanimous topic of interest when it comes to children, so keeping their attention shouldn't be too challenging if done the right way. And currently, it seems that the refuge has a number of youth programs. I recommend LOTS of program activities that involve movement and talking.

**Corr. ID: 42 Comment ID: 1068974**

**Representative Quote:** thoughtful signage, education opportunities, walkways, benches, and viewing areas that are safe, well maintained, and protect the plants and wildlife are important.

**Corr. ID: 49 Comment ID: 1069031**

**Representative Quote:** Create even more signage about JBWR and wildlife along all of the paths. Maybe at every bench on the West Pond, and more on the East Pond.

**Response:** Education and interpretation is a fundamental function of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The Stewardship Plan will consider new strategies for enhancing educational offerings that appeals to multiple types of learners.

***FACILITIES01 - Comment addresses West Pond Visitor Center***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67010) Commenters expressed disappointment that the Visitor Center was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and requested additional programming and activity at the Visitor Center.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 3 Comment ID: 1068043**

**Representative Quote:** I am happy to see that the visitor center is now open and this past weekend when I visited again they were just sitting behind the desk.





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During the pandemic I traveled to other wildlife refuges and they were not closed as was Jamaica bay visitors center and park rangers were walking the trails and available to assist visitors.

**Corr. ID:** 43 **Comment ID:** 1068984

**Representative Quote:** Sometimes the bathrooms are not open which isn't great when it's the only option for someone who doesn't have a car.

**Response:** During the pandemic access to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center was restricted according to NPS policies for visitor and staff protection. During that time, NPS rangers provided many options for outdoor education and interpretation programming. As of this writing, the interior of the Visitor Center is open to the public five days per week.

### ***FACILITIES02 - Comment addresses trails, boardwalks, or trail maintenance***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 66958) Commenters requested that NPS should resurface the West Pond loop trail to address accessibility limitations resulting from the type of gravel used on the trail.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID:** 13 **Comment ID:** 1068160

**Representative Quote:** Resurfacing the West Pond trail to better facilitate visitors. The current West Pond trail was surfaced with gravel stones that are way too big and makes walking quite difficult for seniors and those who are wheelchair bound. The alternative would be to either go with asphalt or pea gravel. The latter would need to be finely crushed and compacted well to work. Engineers would need to look at the pros and cons to any solution.

**Response:** NPS will consider and evaluate trail surface, maintenance and accessibility as part of the planning process for the Stewardship Plan.

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 66959) Commenters expressed concern about the formation of social trails, especially around West Pond. Commenters suggested solutions including signage, enforcement, enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities, and reseeding.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID:** 13 **Comment ID:** 1068159

**Representative Quote:** In a recent Jamaica Bay Task Force meeting, there were comments about the social trails on the West Pond. It could be more efficient if NPS did not block or reseed those trails as suggested. The reasons why those trails should remain are:

No matter if these trails were made inaccessible, more trails will spring up elsewhere. From a habitat management perspective, the current social trails are not damaging any habitat. They lead to the West Pond edge and are used by those who are interested in better close-up views of the pond. The smarter approach would be to leave those social trails but have signs up requiring visitors stay on the said trails. Perhaps a blind or two could be added at the end of a couple of those trails to provide enhanced viewing and opportunities for those looking to photograph the many West Pond visitors.





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**Response:** Social trails have negative impacts on vegetation, habitat, and visitor enjoyment. Management of social trails is a topic that will be evaluated during the planning process. NPS installed new signage communicating refuge rules during the 2021 season.

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 66960) Commenters expressed concern about the condition of boardwalks in the East Pond area.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID:** 13 **Comment ID:** 1068147

**Representative Quote:** NPS maintenance staff needs to fix the boardwalk leading to the East Pond overlook. There are several warped boards. Additionally, there needs to be some sort of non-slip material installed on the boardwalk. It is a disaster waiting to happen after a rainy and a snowy day.

**Response:** Well-functioning boardwalks are important for visitor safety and trail preservation. Working with volunteer groups, NPS replaced the boardwalk leading to the East Pond overlook in August 2022. NPS will continue investigate the condition of the boardwalks in the East Pond area and address safety concerns on an ongoing basis.

**FACILITIES03 - Comment addresses the creation of new visitor facilities that do not currently exist**

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67019) Commenters requested the addition of new viewing structures, parking lots, and nesting floats.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID:** 100 **Comment ID:** 1068121

**Representative Quote:** Create a Parking lot at the end of east 1st road and a trail head at this area that would circumnavigate the pond and include new viewing areas.

**Corr. ID:** 15 **Comment ID:** 1068957

**Representative Quote:** Ideally, at least two viewing structures with blinds (one at ground level and one elevated) would be built at the East Pond. A blind/viewing platform at the West Pond would be an excellent addition, as well.

**Corr. ID:** 24 **Comment ID:** 1068551

**Representative Quote:** The addition of nesting islands and/or nesting floats would make a huge difference to wildlife viewing opportunities. Their absence is a testament to the lack of vision by park service management.

**Response:** NPS will consider and evaluate opportunities for enhancing visitor experiences during the plan development. The 2014 General Management Plan identifies the East and West Ponds in the Natural Zone – areas of the park that will retain natural, wild, and dynamic characteristics and ecological functions and that will be managed to preserve resource integrity while providing low-impact visitor uses. Additionally, the 2015 West Pond Trail Breach Repair Environmental Assessment anticipated future visitor enhancements such as boardwalks, trails, observation blinds, and observation platforms. Evaluation of new visitor amenities like these within the



development of the East and West Stewardship Plan will be consistent with the 2014 GMP as well as NPS rules, regulations, and policies.

***GENERAL01 - Comment addresses general condition of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67020) Commenters expressed disappointment and frustration with a perceived neglect of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, as manifested in invasive plants, ecological succession, visitation levels, water levels, and species diversity.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 39 Comment ID: 1066843**

**Representative Quote:** The water levels have not been managed properly in the past years, the non native plants have been allowed to overgrow, mowing schedules have been derelict or poorly times. The list is long. There doesn't seem to be any conservation-minded oversight or management at all there.

**Corr. ID: 45 Comment ID: 1069001**

**Representative Quote:** As a created habitat, on the other hand, Jamaica Bay does not "take care of itself" if left unattended. At present, its valued open spaces are suffering from severe neglect. Invasive weeds (such as Mugwort) have overgrown natural plants, and open field areas with nectar have been allowed to overgrow into unproductive scrub and successional areas (again mostly inhabited with invasives). The nectar plantings near the Visitors' Center, which in the past attracted many butterflies and delighted countless families and natural history observers, are gone. With few adequate resources left, butterfly numbers and diversity have sharply declined. Today, few visit the refuge as a target site for observing butterflies.

This loss is distressing, but it is also entirely avoidable. With a relatively modest investment of time and planning, Jamaica Bay could be returned to its former prominence.

**Response:** NPS has undertaken this planning process to develop an East and West Pond Stewardship Plan in order to identify achievable and sustainable management goals and objectives that can be implemented by NPS working in cooperation with park partners and volunteers. Leveraging the power of partnerships and volunteers for management of the East and West Ponds is particularly important given the long-term trend of overall reduced budget and staffing capacity within GATE and NPS overall. For example, Gateway worked with partners in 2016 and 2017 to restore 14 acres of native maritime forest in the North and South Garden areas of the Refuge, including invasive plant removal and native habitat restoration.

***GENERAL02 - Comment addresses general management of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67024) Commenters requested the creation of a citizens' resource oversight committee consisting of representatives from specific organizations to assess planning targets, budgets, staffing levels, and other details of refuge management.

***Representative Quote(s):***



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**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068032**

**Representative Quote:** Institute a citizens' resource oversight committee consisting of possible representatives from NYC Audubon, American Littoral Society, Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, South Shore Audubon Society, Brooklyn Bird Club, Queens County Bird Club, NYC Butterfly Club, et. Al. to leverage local expertise and allow for outside input about management actions and timeframes. During these meetings, NPS could provide a list of operational needs, budgets, staffing, and equipment, with an eye toward starting a fund to help pay for some essential projects.

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068120**

**Representative Quote:** Create a Resource Management Oversight Committee: NYCA, ALS, JB Eco Watchers, NYCBC, QCBC, BBC, Linnaean Society, SSA ... to meet two or three times /yearly with NPS to assess plan, budgets, funding, etc.

**Response:** Gateway National Recreation Area enjoys the interest of several partner organizations and many members of the public. NPS cannot relinquish its legal responsibility for the refuge and other areas of the park, and federal law prohibits the NPS from granting privileged access or participation to some groups or individuals over others. However, the NPS recognizes the importance and value of the interest that people have in the East and West Ponds, and is committed to providing meaningful and ongoing opportunities for public engagement in the planning and management of these areas.

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67025) Commenters questioned the management of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge as a natural area and emphasized the man-made origins of the refuge and the need for active management.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 6 Comment ID: 1068068**

**Representative Quote:** As a reminder, the entirety of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is an unnatural, manmade habitat and therefore requires more upkeep than simply allowing nature to take course. Therefore, anything that continues that tradition - planting more native habitat, upgrading pumps to lower water levels, and removing species that cause harm to the residents of this habitat, are great in my book.

**Response:** Although Gateway National Recreation Area is in an urban area and many of the areas of the park were artificially created (including the East and West Ponds) and/or heavily impacted by development and human presence, the park is managed consistent with the same rules, regulations, and policies that are used to manage every other unit of the National Park system. Within this framework, NPS works to manage pond water levels and plant community composition without interfering with other natural processes. In this context, the East and West Pond Stewardship Plan will help to align management practices with the realities of the site, while also conforming to all NPS rules, regulations, and policies, as well as the vision of the 2014 General Management Plan, which identifies the East and West Ponds in the Natural Zone for management purposes.

**GMP01 - Comment addresses General Management Plan**

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67026) Commenters expressed support for goals of the GMP, such as the East and West Pond area serving as a destination for nature study, environmental education, and research.



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*Commenters stressed the importance of further development of planning to take action toward the fulfillment of the GMP vision.*

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 1 Comment ID: 1068021**

**Representative Quote:** The proposed Stewardship Plan would serve as an action-based segment of the General Management Plan, establishing management objectives of the Natural Zone (East and West Pond) within the refuge.

**Corr. ID: 1 Comment ID: 1068022**

**Representative Quote:** I will advocate for a concentrated effort to continue making the East and West Pond area a destination for nature study, environmental education, and research. Further development of program planning and outreach in these areas should (and appears to) be a high priority for the Stewardship Plan.

**Response:** The guiding document for the management of the East and West Pond area is Gateway's 2014 General Management Plan (GMP), which provides a 20-year vision for the entire park. The GMP established park management zones to describe the desired conditions for park resources and visitor experiences in each area of the park. The GMP also lays out specific goals for programming, infrastructure, research, and resource management at the ponds. The Stewardship Plan seeks to advance each of these directives from the GMP by articulating goals, objectives, and associated management strategies.

**ISLANDS01 - Comment refers to marsh islands or waters of Jamaica Bay**

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67027) Commenters made recommendations for the management of marsh islands, especially the trapping or removal of raccoons.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068119**

**Representative Quote:** I would like the following concepts included in the current plan under consideration for the best stewardship ideas for these areas: Start process for trapping and removing raccoons from the heron-nesting islands. The herons have disappeared from Canarsie Pol, Ruffle Bar islands as well due to raccoon invasion. They are destroying the terrapin population and need to be managed.

**Response:** The Stewardship Plan will not address management of the marsh islands or other areas of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge beyond the East and West Pond area. The plan is limited to the East and West ponds. NPS chose this scope specifically in order to expedite the development of a plan for the most visited areas of the refuge. Management of wildlife in the plan area, such as terrapin or racoon, will be evaluated within the plan. Management of the marsh islands is beyond the scope of this plan and would be considered through a distinct planning process.

**NOISE01 - Comment addresses noise at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge**



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**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67028) Commenters requested management actions to reduce noise at the refuge, including changes to trail surfaces and use of machinery.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 10 Comment ID: 1068107**

**Representative Quote:** I have heard large loud pieces of machinery cutting something down in the marsh area (though the trails were not mowed). This is prime nesting season for birds and turtles who can and choose to breed along the marsh. This is not the time to be disturbing fragile shoreline. Why are these employees working after hours on a weekend? That overtime money can be used for many other beneficial causes.

**Corr. ID: 48 Comment ID: 1069020**

**Representative Quote:** The West Pond's construction-size gravel should be replaced with a soft substrate to reduce noise and discomfort.

**Response:** The soundscape is an important aspect of the visitor experience at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Loud noises can impair visitors' ability to hear birdsong or other elements of the natural world while also disrupting wildlife. As such, the Stewardship Plan will consider strategies for managing noise around the ponds.

### **PLAN01 - Comment addresses structure or format of Stewardship Plan**

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67030) Commenters requested that the Stewardship Plan include specific components or features, such as timeframes, budgets, accountability, and productivity goals.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068040**

**Representative Quote:** It is of the utmost importance that we make sure these actions are written into the plan with timeframes, productivity goals, and transparent budgets ...

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068111**

**Representative Quote:** I would like the following concepts included in the current plan under consideration for the best stewardship ideas for these areas: a living action plan with timeframes, transparent budget, and accountability built in. Manage area as a Wildlife Refuge as originally intended.

**Response:** The Stewardship Plan will incorporate goals and strategies that are specific, measurable, action-oriented, and timebound. These features of the plan should address the commenters' request that incorporate timeframes, accountability, and other aspects.

### **SAFETY01 - Comment addresses visitor safety at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge**



**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67031) Commenters reported feeling unsafe on the trails of the East and West Pond area due to the combination of seclusion and a limited presence from rangers.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 3 Comment ID: 1068044**

**Representative Quote:** I feel unsafe walking the trails alone because I do not see Rangers out walking the trails ensuring safety.

**Response:** Visitor safety is the top priority for NPS. It is not feasible for rangers to monitor the trails around the East and West Ponds on a constant basis; however, visitor safety is an important area of evaluation, and the Stewardship Plan will consider additional strategies to enhance physical security at the site. Visitors should report all suspicious or unauthorized activity to the Park Police at 718-354-4700.

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67033) Commenters reported feeling unsafe on the shoreline of East Pond due to the muddy edge of the shore.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 44 Comment ID: 1068999**

**Representative Quote:** Birding the East Pond is a great experience however much of the time when the shorebirds come in the pond is inaccessible... We definitely need a better valve system and a team responsible for the maintenance of the pond especially since it can be very dangerous for bird watchers who may get stuck in the mud.

**Response:** While certain trails east of Crossbay Boulevard provide access directly to the East Pond shoreline, NPS does not encourage visitors to attempt to circumnavigate East Pond or otherwise walk along the pond's muddy shoreline. There are no official trails along the East Pond shoreline and this issue is not related to the East Pond outfall system. The Stewardship Plan will evaluate access and strategies for enhancing visitor safety.

**STAFFING01 - Comment addresses staffing levels or staffing needs at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge**

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67034) Commenters requested that all refuge staff serve as both resource management and interpretation rangers, and encouraged them to work closely with and help train maintenance staff. Commenters also called for the creation of new positions at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, including resource management technicians, landscape specialists, volunteer coordinators, and a refuge manager.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068113**

**Representative Quote:** I would like the following concepts included in the current plan under consideration for the best stewardship ideas for these areas: a Refuge Manager position - a qualified habitat management/resource specialist to be stationed on site and help supervise habitat plan work. All refuge staff should be resource management / interpretation rangers who on managing the trails, gardens, ponds, etc. They need to work closely with and help train maintenance staff. Rangers need to do daily 'working patrols' where they help control invasive species - even if it's 15 minutes/day.



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**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068033**

**Representative Quote:** Initiate changes to refuge staffing to include resource management technicians, a landscape specialist and a volunteer coordinator stationed at the refuge. Resource management / interpretation rangers should work closely with the maintenance staff.

**Response:** Staffing levels and staff composition at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is a complex, multifaceted decision. Regarding resource management and volunteer coordinators specifically, Gateway National Recreation Area currently has a very limited number of these types of staff members to serve park needs across four counties, two states, and dozens of park sites. While the issue of staffing and the type of staffing needed is something that is decided in a larger parkwide context, and NPS cannot comment to any specific management decisions at this time, the issue of staffing and the type of staffing needed is something that will be considered during the planning process for the Stewardship Plan.

### ***STAFFING02 - Comment addresses rangers and ranger patrols***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67037) Commenters requested regular ranger patrols around the ponds, during which rangers would educate the public and cut invasive plants, while also enforcing park regulations.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068037**

**Representative Quote:** Initiate daily and frequent patrols of the ponds, which sorely need ranger presence to educate the public and enforce park regulations. Patrols should be scheduled and documented. Patrol Rangers should help with cutting back invasive species by spending at least 15 minutes each day on a site where bittersweet and other invasives are shading out native vegetation. Having a patrol form to document needs, issues, violations, etc. would be useful.

**Response:** NPS rangers currently offer a variety of education and stewardship programming out of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. Rangers are also present near trails and around the Visitor Center as much as possible given staffing levels and ancillary responsibilities. Other solutions, such as training rangers on the removal of invasive species, are the types of action that will be considered during the planning process for the Stewardship Plan.

### ***VEGETATION01 - Comment addresses management of viewsheds around East and West Ponds***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67038) Commenters requested improved vegetation management around the ponds in order to improve viewsheds and reduce blind spots.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068157**

**Representative Quote:** The vegetation management around the West Pond and Salt Marshes really needs to be improved. There are several blind spots on the pond due to overgrown vegetation that takes away the viewing ability of visitors. This is an easy fix that could and should be addressed. The same applies to views of





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the Salt Marsh. There is almost no ability to view the southwest corner of the Salt Marshes. It is very easy for maintenance to work with individuals familiar with the Refuge and West Pond who could provide valuable input on areas that requires cutback to enhance the views of the pond and marshes.

**Response:** This issue is exactly the type of concern that the Stewardship Plan will consider, so that NPS can identify management strategies for issues including vegetation and the visitor experience. The plan will include planning for viewsheds as well as the management of vegetation.

### ***VEGETATION02 - Comment addresses mowing techniques or equipment***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67039) Commenters suggested a mowing plan with timeframes and goals in order to manage vegetation.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068114**

**Representative Quote:** I would like the following concepts included in the current plan under consideration for the best stewardship ideas for these areas: Establish A mowing plan with timeframes and goals. The west pond viewshed is quickly disappearing as is the view of marshes.

**Response:** Evaluating and identifying vegetation management goals, objectives and strategies, of which mowing is one aspect, is a key aspect of the Stewardship Plan. Mowing will be one of a variety of vegetation management strategies that will be evaluated and considered during the planning process.

### ***VEGETATION03 - Comment addresses non-native or invasive plants and their impacts on native plants or habitat***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67043) Commenters requested that the park implement a plan to control invasive species, including phragmites, mugwort, and bittersweet. Reasons for this action included impacts on avian species and pollinators.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 14 Comment ID: 1068944**

**Representative Quote:** Control invasive species that have gotten completely out of control all over the park. This is detrimental to native species that bird species rely on for breeding and stopover fuel.

**Corr. ID: 24 Comment ID: 1068555**

**Representative Quote:** There is a clear need for control of the secondary growth including the extensive beds of invasive phragmites.

**Corr. ID: 39 Comment ID: 1068689**



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**Representative Quote:** A substantial plan needs to be in place and implemented to manage the refuge as a refuge, To clear non natives so migrating song birds can find the insect food they need.

**Corr. ID:** 45 **Comment ID:** 1069004

**Representative Quote:** Invasive weeds (such as Mugwort) have overgrown natural plants, and open field areas with nectar have been allowed to overgrow into unproductive scrub and successional areas (again mostly inhabited with invasives).

**Response:** Evaluating and identifying vegetation management goals, objectives and strategies, including native and non-native invasive vegetation, is a key aspect of the Stewardship Plan. Even in advance of the Stewardship Plan, Gateway has been pursuing restoration work (such as at the North and South Garden area) to support native vegetation through the creation of native canopies and shade competition for invasives.

### ***VEGETATION04 - Comment suggests planting of new pollinator-friendly gardens or other landscaping efforts***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67044) Commenters requested that open habitats and lawns be transformed into wildflower meadows to provide habitat for pollinators.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID:** 41 **Comment ID:** 1068968

**Representative Quote:** Manage open habitats for pollinators (bees, butterflies, moths, etc.) by allowing sterile lawns to grow into wildflower meadows. This is an essential objective for our environment, and the park should be exemplary. Sterile lawns everywhere should be replaced by native and pollinator-friendly plants.

**Corr. ID:** 100 **Comment ID:** 1068118

**Representative Quote:** I would like the following concepts included in the current plan under consideration for the best stewardship ideas for these areas: Manage open habitats for pollinators ( bees, butterflies, moths, etc.) by allowing sterile lawns to grow into wildflower meadows. Mow once or twice a year.

**Response:** The creation of pollinator gardens or wildflower areas will be considered and evaluated as part of this plan.

### ***VISITORS01 - Comment addresses visitor behavior or adherence to park rules***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67159) Commenters expressed disappointment with visitor behavior and violation of rules, including rules against dog walking, walking off trail, swimming, and poaching. Visitors suggested consequences, patrols, and signage as possible solutions.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID:** 3 **Comment ID:** 1068045



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**Representative Quote:** New trails are being made by folks not following the rules with dog walkers.

**Corr. ID: 5 Comment ID:** 1068061

**Representative Quote:** As a scientist conducting research, i am often out on the WP trail in the summer evenings, and after hours there are dogs and bicycles on the trails, people swim off the beach and wade in the pond. This happens most every weekend night, and often during the week. Calling the park police doesn't help, they are slow to get there if they do at all, they are reluctant to leave their vehicles, they don't know the rules.

**Corr. ID: 7 Comment ID:** 1068082

**Representative Quote:** If budget pressures make it impossible to increase staff visibility and presence where necessary to deter people from letting dogs loose, cutting informal paths, and poaching, then increase consequences (that is, ticketing) when patrolling is possible. My impression of Park Police is that they have not historically seen their role as being primarily conservation officers. They should.

**Response:** Gateway rangers and U.S. Park Police patrol the East and West Pond areas and enforce visitor rules, which are also posted at the entrance to trails. While the majority of visitors obey park rules, there will always be a small number of visitors who violate these rules. The Stewardship Plan will consider alternatives for improved communication and enforcement of Refuge rules, as well as other strategies to enhance physical security at the site. Visitors that witness any activity that violates park rules or impact natural resources are encouraged to call Park Police at 718-354-4700.

***VOLUNTEER01 - Have you volunteered at these sites?***

***VOLUNTEER02 - Comment addresses strategies for managing volunteer program.***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67155) Commenters requested that NPS hire a volunteer coordinator to recruit and manage a volunteer workforce dedicated to habitat management.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 1 Comment ID:** 1068026

**Representative Quote:** As for volunteer management, this gets a little tricky. Volunteers are generally NOT reliable for recurring tasks and responsibilities unless a volunteer hour commitment minimum is enforced. Plus, it's easily possible to spend an unfeasible amount of time training new volunteers every day or week. However, you don't want to discourage good volunteers who can't meet the minimum requirements. I would establish volunteer hour commitment minimums for positions that require a small level of commitment and figure out what positions are more easily rotated out between new and old volunteers. A good way to get volunteers is to reach out and collab with high schools, colleges, or community adult programs.



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**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068034**

**Representative Quote:** A volunteer coordinator could work with the maintenance staff and help guide them on how to shape habitats for people and wildlife. ( I hope to volunteer to help train them in habitat mgmt. practices. Volunteers could do an enormous amount of work if managed and trained properly!

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068151**

**Representative Quote:** Give trusted volunteers more leeway in doing work.  
Avoid micromanaging.

Volunteers should be given an ID badge and uniforms which would go a long way when helping to educate the public in the use of the Park.

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068115**

**Representative Quote:** I would like the following concepts included in the current plan under consideration for the best stewardship ideas for these areas: An on-site volunteer coordinator - A much needed dynamic person to oversee, train, and work with volunteers, rangers, and maintenance staff on various resource projects.

**Response:** Gateway National Recreation Area benefits from the support of "Volunteers-in-Parks" participants and volunteer activities sponsored by partner organizations. Individuals and organizations interested in volunteering to support park management goals, programs, and activities should contact the park. Enhancing volunteer opportunities, programs and management will be considered in the Stewardship Plan.

### ***WATER01 - Comment addresses water control system at East Pond***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67045) Commenters requested that NPS replace the existing outflow valve at East Pond.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068153**

**Representative Quote:** First and foremost is the drainage of the East Pond. The current outflow valve has outlived its usefulness. The East Pond would benefit from the implementation of a new drainage apparatus. Ideally, it would be great to have a design to handle sediment buildup from high tides and storms. However, if a design facilitating that aspect is not feasible at this time, then simply replacing the pipe should be a priority as there is concern that we might have some collapsing that has impeded the water outflow from the pond.

**Response:** Replacement of the East Pond outfall is a funded project that is currently under design.

### ***WATER02 - Comment addresses construction of additional ponds at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge***



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**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67046) Commenters requested that a new freshwater pond be constructed to the west of Cross Bay Boulevard.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068039**

**Representative Quote:** Fresh Water Pond - A study by NY Polytechnical Institute in the 1980's concluded that something similar to Big John's Pond built on the West side of Crossbay would greatly enhance herptile populations, fresh water birds such as coots, gallinules and bitterns while also adding enhanced viewing for visitors.

**Corr. ID: 19 Comment ID: 1068503**

**Representative Quote:** A fresh-water pond similar to Big John's Pond should be built on the west side of Crossbay for birds such as A. Coots, C. Gallinules, bitterns and herptile population.

**Response:** NPS will consider and evaluate opportunities for habitat and wildlife management during development of the East and West Pond Stewardship Plan consistent with the 2014 GMP as well as NPS rules, regulations and policies.

### ***WATER03 - Comment addresses management of water levels at ponds***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67049) Commenters emphasized the importance of water level drawdowns, particularly during the spring migration. Commenters requested a water level drawdown timeline and action plan.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068154**

**Representative Quote:** An updated water level drawdown timeline should also be included in the re-engineering discussion to ensure drainage of the pond is done on time. It should be clear to maintenance staff that this is part of their responsibilities and not just a one-off task. Trails to the East Pond should be well maintained as early as late May into June when the water level allows access and not just on the eve of the Shorebird festival.

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068152**

**Representative Quote:** Please refer to my comments below. I would like to see an active water level drawdown on the West Pond as well, especially during the spring migration.

**Response:** Management of the pond water levels, including standard operating procedures for drawdowns, will be one important aspect of the Stewardship Plan.

### ***WILDLIFE01 - Comment addresses bird feeders, bird baths, bird boxes, or bat boxes***



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**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67051) Commenters requested that NPS maintain, replace, or install bird feeders, bird baths, bird boxes, and bat boxes, for the benefit of species including the tree swallow, house wren, and purple martin, and as an educational tool.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 3 Comment ID: 1068048**

**Representative Quote:** I would like to see the birdfeeders up again and the birdbath filled with water for the birds to drink and cool off in the heat. I have seen Purple Martins flying over the refuge but have no place to nest other wildlife refuges have purple Martin boxes why don't you?

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068156**

**Representative Quote:** In a recent Jamaica Bay Taskforce Meeting, it was discussed that there would be no effort by NPS to maintain or replace damaged Tree Swallow, House Wren, or Bat boxes. The Tree Swallow or Bat boxes on the West Pond trail could be easily maintained. If NPS is stretched for staff, to do this sort of work, then this is one of those items that could be assigned to trusted stewards of the Wildlife Refuge. House Wren and Tree Swallow nest boxes are a neat component of West Pond Loop Trail, and many visitors enjoy relaxing on the benches along the trail to observe the comings and goings of these birds. The same applies to Bat boxes. Bats play an essential role in pest control, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds. School groups are one of the many beneficiaries, learning about the birds and the importance of Bats to the environment. Having these boxes along the trail would provide useful educational prompts. These interactions are the types of experiences that could be the seed planting in the minds of the next generation of naturalists, who will be the ones to inherit and maintain the Jewel of Gateway.

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068162**

**Representative Quote:** During the winter, migrating birds could use some help in obtaining food. It would be nice to have squirrel and racoon proof feeders up along with a solar powered heated bird bath. This is another initiative that could be handed off to trusted stewards of the Refuge if NPS does not have adequate staff to cover these jobs.

**Corr. ID: 100 Comment ID: 1068117**

**Representative Quote:** Immediately Put back the Bird feeder and bird bath; These have been in place for 50 years and suddenly disappeared without informing the public! Repair/replace Tree Swallow and House Wren boxes. The children enjoy the experience these boxes provide.

**Response:** NPS rules, regulations and policies generally do not allow for the feeding of wildlife or provision of structures for habitation or roosting. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2.2 (2) prohibits the feeding of wildlife. NPS does not intervene in natural biological processes unless the conditions of NPS Management Policies 2006 4.1 are 4.4.2 are met. Criteria for intervening by feeding or placing nesting/roosting boxes or bird baths have not been met at the East and West Pond.



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Additionally, while bird feeders and bird baths are effective at attracting birds, they also attract problem species, including domestic cats and raccoons. Instead of installing bird feeders, the park has worked to restore native plant species to increase natural foraging habitat and provide opportunities for visitors to experience wildlife being wild. Furthermore, NPS rangers regularly provide many options for outdoor education and interpretation programming that include the accessible viewing of bird species in natural habitats without the use of bird feeders or bird baths.

### ***WILDLIFE02 - Comment addresses osprey cameras, scopes, or other wildlife viewing technology***

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67052) Commenters requested that NPS install cameras at barn owl boxes and osprey nests.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 2 Comment ID: 1068036**

**Representative Quote:** They also need to put up the Osprey Nest Cam that has been laying around for three years!

**Corr. ID: 13 Comment ID: 1068163**

**Representative Quote:** Nest web cameras at the Barn Owl Box at Big John's Pond and the Osprey near the visitor's center would provide visitors with exciting close looks at these fascinating birds. Imagine the looks of kids seeing Owlets?

**Response:** A camera purchased and intended to be deployed for an osprey live stream has not been deployed. The installation of this equipment was interrupted by staff disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. NPS will consider the installation of this camera or similar equipment.

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67054) Commenters requested that rangers install temporary scopes for visitors to view osprey or other wildlife.

***Representative Quote(s):***

**Corr. ID: 3 Comment ID: 1064518**

**Representative Quote:** I would like to see Rangers walking on the trails setting up spotting scopes for the public to see the osprey nests again and to educate us about all the wonders of this beautiful refuge. I would like to see the birdfeeders up again and the birdbath filled with water for the birds to drink and cool off in the heat. I have seen Purple Martins flying over the refuge but have no place to nest other wildlife refuges have purple Martin boxes why don't you?

**Response:** NPS will consider the installation, purchase, or use of scopes or similar equipment through this planning process..

### ***WILDLIFE03 - Comment addresses management or culling of raccoons, cats, or other wildlife***





**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67055) Commenters requested that NPS trap, sterilize, or cull raccoons throughout Ruler Bar Hassock to support terrapins, ground nesting birds, and other species.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 5 Comment ID: 1068063**

**Representative Quote:** O'Connell (1980) trapped for raccoons on RBH in the early 1980s and found none, indicating they did not then occur on RBH. Raccoons there now are probably the result of deliberate introductions. I think it is a worthy goal to return RBH to that condition. This could be done by trapping raccoons throughout the island and chemically and permanently sterilizing them, which is done at some zoos. Of course, over time, more raccoons would probably be introduced, but then the population could be easily managed to very low numbers in a way acceptable to the public. This would help terrapins and ground nesting birds.

**Response:** Management of wildlife at the East and West Pond, such as terrapin or racoon, will be evaluated within the plan. NPS does not have authority to control animals outside of its jurisdiction, including the Refuge's neighboring communities which includes a large portion of Rulers Bar Hassock.

**WILDLIFE04 - Comment addresses introduction of fish, amphibians, or reptiles**

**CONCERN STATEMENT:** (Concern ID: 67056) Commenters requested that NPS introduce native fish, amphibians, and reptiles to East and West Pond.

**Representative Quote(s):**

**Corr. ID: 5 Comment ID: 1068064**

**Representative Quote:** Now that WP and EP are fresh again, it seems appropriate to introduce native fish, amphibians, and reptiles. This could be managed through cooperation with an advisory group of local biologists. Stock could come from local populations, including local rehabilitated animals.

**Response:** The Stewardship Plan will provide management goals, objectives, and strategies for the East and West Ponds. NPS policies generally allow systems to recover naturally unless manipulation is necessary to protect other park resources, developments, or employee and public safety. The introduction of specific native species to the ponds would require specific analysis of the proposed species and a compelling argument for the introduction of the species.



## Appendix A: Public Scoping Topic Questions

The following Scoping Topic Questions were provided to the public for response and comment during the public scoping period. These topic questions were also identified during the May 17, 2022 public meeting.

*Between April 26 and June 7, 2022, you are invited to participate in this planning process by responding to the following Topic Questions. Your feedback will help the NPS develop the East and West Pond Stewardship Plan.*

- 1. If you currently visit the East or West Ponds, what do you enjoy about the area?*
- 2. If you do not normally visit this area, is there any particular reason why?*
- 3. What is the park doing well at East or West Pond that you would like to see continue?*
- 4. Have you volunteered at these sites in the past? How do you think the park can effectively engage volunteers in the stewardship of these areas?*
- 5. The park's 2014 General Management Plan designated the East and West Ponds as areas for conservation and nature-based recreation (e.g., walking, wildlife viewing). Please refer to additional information included in the attached FAQ document for more information. In this context, how would you like to see the park implement the vision of the General Management Plan?*



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## Appendix B: Correspondence Index of Organizations

Note: In most instances, the organization type was not defined by the commenter; therefore, organizations were listed as “Unaffiliated Individuals.” In some cases, individuals indicated multiple affiliations, which are recorded separately below.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
American Littoral Society	3
Broad Channel Civic Association	1
CityIslandBirds.com	1
Columbia University	1
CUNY	1
Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers	1
Jones Lang LaSalle	1
Linnaean Society of New York	7
National Audubon Society	2
New York City Audubon Society	5
New York City Butterfly Club	1
New York State Ornithological Association	4
Northern Catskills Audubon Society	1
Queens County Bird Club	5
Sebago Canoe Club	1
South Shore Audubon Society	2
University of Denver	1
Unaffiliated Individuals	82