

Migrating shore birds to stop by DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst

BY JIM WRIGHT
NJMC

August is a great month to visit DeKorte Park and look for the migrating shorebirds.

The sprawling waterside park has several large tidal impoundments that provide buffets for all sorts of water birds, from great egrets to least terns.

"DeKorte is probably the best

place in New Jersey north of Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge to see shorebirds," says Michael Newhouse, a naturalist for NJMC. "The Meadowlands contains hundreds of acres of mudflats that entice thousands of shorebirds to forage here on their way south, and some of those mudflats are right here in DeKorte."

According to Newhouse, birds

to keep an eye out for are the numerous sandpipers and yellowlegs. Less common birds include the short-billed dowitcher and semipalmated plover.

"Every year, we get some rarities as well, such as marbled godwit, black-necked stilt, and buff-breasted sandpiper," Newhouse adds.

To help the public appreciate -

and better identify - those shorebirds, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is sponsoring a day of free events presented by Kevin Karlson, a world-renowned photographer and shorebird expert.

The big day is Saturday, Aug. 22, and it kicks off with a bird walk in DeKorte Park, 8:30-10:30 a.m., followed by a 90-minute seminar at 11:15 a.m. on identifying shorebirds with an approach that Karlson calls "Birding by Impression." He highlighted that approach in his best-selling book, "The Shorebird Guide," which will be on sale at the gift shop in the Meadowlands Environment Center, at DeKorte Park. The shop is open every day, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

After a lunch break, Karlson will present a slide show and talk entitled "Birds on the Wind," from 2-3 p.m. The talk focuses on bird migration, including highlights like the unbelievable 7,000-mile non-stop journey of bar-tailed godwits and spectacular raptor movements. Karlson will also be available between events to autograph his book.

For Karlson, a long-time Bergen County resident who now lives



PHOTO COURTESY/JEAN HOOGACKER

Kevin Karlson will present his program "Birding by Impression" on Saturday, Aug. 22.

near Cape May, the day at DeKorte represents a homecoming.

"I started coming to the Meadowlands to look at birds in the early 1980s—from rough-legged hawks in winter to gulls year-round," he recalls. "The mudflats at DeKorte have always had those huge concentrations of shorebirds in late August."

In fact, Karlson used to lead bird walks at DeKorte Park for the Bergen County Audubon Society in the early 1990s. And when he competed in the 24-hour World Series of Birding back then, he always started the day at DeKorte.

"It's just a great place to look at

birds, especially when the tide is right," Karlson says.

You can see for yourself every day, when the tide recedes to expose broad mudflats in the Park. Or visit on Aug. 22 for some expert help from Kevin Karlson himself.

To RSVP for the events, e-mail me at jim.wright@njmeadowlands.gov.

NJMC Communications Officer Jim Wright maintains the Commission's daily nature blog, meadowblog.net - featuring beautiful photography and the latest info on the region's natural wonders.