

Nature Explorers Summer Camp  
*Environmental Examiner*

***Feathered Friends***

This week Nature Explorers learned the basic skills necessary to identify the most common birds of Essex County. Campers entering 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade explored the trails of the Essex County Environmental Center (ECEC) in search of various bird species. With the use of binoculars campers identified birds and observed their behavior.



Campers used binoculars to find birds and nests!

***Birds and Flight***

Nature Explorers started the week by learning the unique components of birds. From hollow bones to air sacs to the function of different feather types, campers learned how birds are anatomically built to fly. Once they understood the basics of flight, campers were asked to build a paper airplane to mimic a bird's flight patterns.



Campers investigating ants on a tree at Great Swamp.

***Field Trip!***

For this week's field trip Nature Explorers visited the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and Raptor Trust, located in Morris County.

**Great Swamp NWR**

The Great Swamp provides an area for migration, nesting, and feeding for migratory birds. Campers walked along the western half of the Refuge and used binoculars in order to practice their bird observation skills.

**The Raptor Trust**

The Raptor Trust is an organization dedicated to providing care for injured and sick birds of prey. The staff at the Trust educates the public about the bird species located on-site.

***Canoeing the Passaic***

After a number of rainy days the water level of the Passaic River increased and flooded the tree line along the edge of the river. Nature Explorers had the unique opportunity to canoe after the rainfall. They observed, first hand, why the Passaic is known for its chronic flooding problems. Campers were able to see how the flooding makes life difficult for families living along the river.



Mr. Joe perfects his paddling!

***Bird Boxes***

The loss of habitat due to both natural and human causes reduced the number of natural nesting sites for a variety of bird species. Mr. Dave worked with campers to build bird boxes that could be used as a bird nesting site. Bird boxes can be very important to the success of breeding species. Thank you, Nature Explorers for your helping building bird boxes!