JAMAICA BAY, GATEWAY NRA: JAMAICA BAY IS FOR THE BIRDS

Anne Yen (drawing birds): Jamaica Bay is an amazing place to draw birds. There's so much variety, there's over 350 species of birds, and it changes throughout the seasons, so it's like you'll never get bored.

Kathy Krause: We see, uh, songbirds, shorebirds, birds of prey, hawks and owls, waterfowl, wading birds, many, many different species. We do have not only the vast expanse of marine habitat here, the open bay, salt marsh and shoreline. We also have the freshwater ponds. We have woodlands and grasslands, so all of these support different types of birds and other wildlife. It's a small pocket of biodiversity right here in New York City.

John Zuzworsky: We have two ponds at the wildlife refuge. We built these ponds back in the fifties and that added a whole other aspect to the wildlife refuge. It enabled us to attract a whole set of wildlife that wasn't here.

We lower each pond once a year, one for the northward migration of shore birds in the spring, and the second one, for the southward migration of shore birds in the fall. And at that time, thousands of shore birds can be seen there at any one day.

These are wading birds that like to feed on insects and other invertebrates. They put their long bills deep into the mud and come up with food.

Kathy Krause: This year, we've had 10 active osprey nests in Jamaica Bay, 19 babies were fledged from these nests. The osprey is a success story. Their populations were nearly decimated due to the pesticide use. Since DDT and other pesticides have been banned, they are making a steady comeback.

Kayleigh Erasmus: Ospreys are well adapted for urban parks like Jamaica Bay. They are able to use a wide variety of items in their nests. They use flip flops, they use plastics, they use netting.

Kathy Krause: We're located right on a major migration route for birds. It's called the Atlantic Flyway, which essentially follows the Eastern seaboard. Many of them are very, very long distance travelers. And because Jamaica Bay is 32 square miles of open space, this is a very attractive place for birds to stop.

Anne Yen: Jamaica Bay is a totally wild part of New York City. You come out, and it's just… beautiful.