

BIOCOMMUNITY

Background

A favorable environment is the primary ingredient necessary for the existence of a diverse wildlife community. Brielle is fortunate in this respect, for there are still several areas which can foster large numbers of plant and animal species, several of which are rare to New Jersey.

Owl Woods and Ellis point

Owl Woods, the area located both on and adjacent to the Manasquan River Golf Course, is the most significant of these regions in Brielle. Shown on the sensitive Areas map, Owl Woods contains a mixed oak forest community and pitch pine lowlands, the last complete ecosystem in the Borough.

In terms of a marine environment, the Ellis Point area is worthy of mention. Ellis Point itself is the land that juts out into the River from the Manasquan River Golf Course. The natural cove formed between Ellis Point and Osborn Island supports much water fowl and marine life activity, and serves as a sanctuary during the harsher winter months.

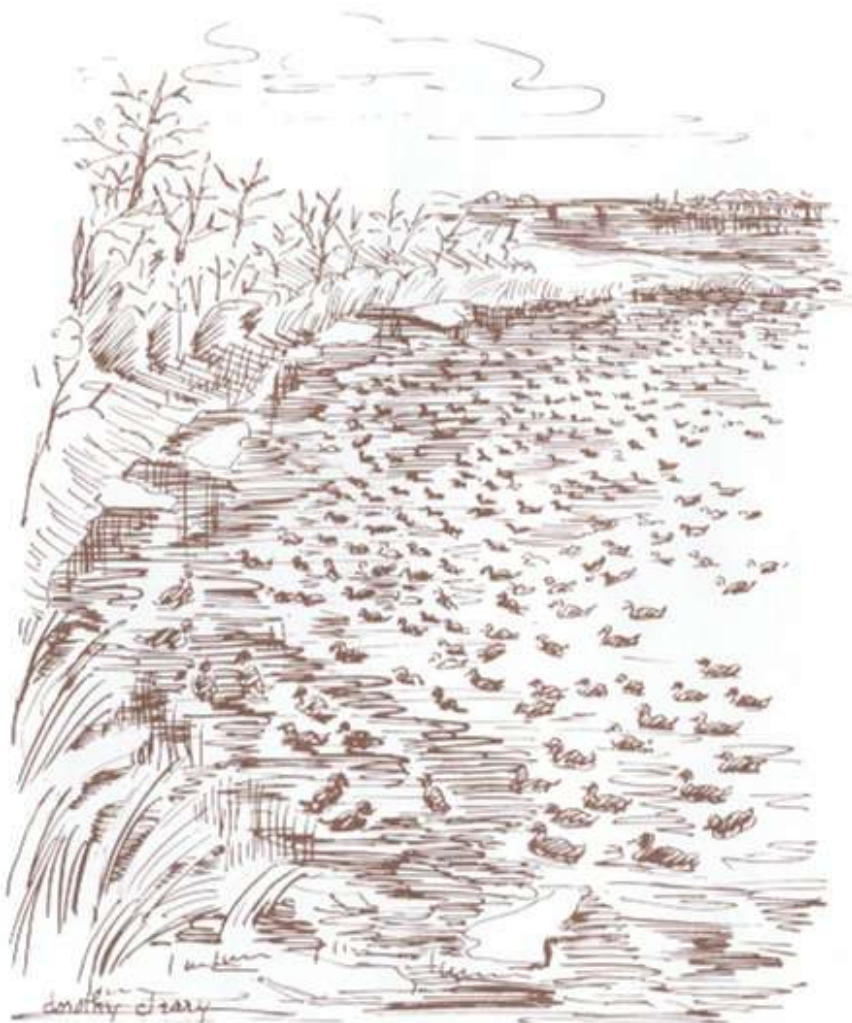
As long as the Manasquan River Golf Course continues to function in its present capacity, both the Owl Woods and Ellis point areas will be preserved from development and encroachment. Thus, the diverse biocommunities contained therein will exist for future

generations to both enjoy and study. The fact that the State of New Jersey, in 1972, declared the Brielle waters of the Manasquan River a waterfowl sanctuary is a big step in the right direction for the preservation of the areas wildlife.

Woods

The three undeveloped wooded areas, situated along the westerly boundary of the Borough, represent typical mixed-oak forest communities. Dominant species found within the respective tree mixes include White Oak, Red Oak, Chestnut Oak, Black Gum, and Pitch Pine. Under these larger trees may be found such others as Flowering Dogwood, and, in certain lower areas, American Holly and Red Maple.

This forest mix supports a variety of mammal life, the most common of which are racoon, squirrel, and opossum. Most of the land mammals listed in the Appendix can be found in one of these three woods, or along the northern boundary of the golf course.



The open water of the Manasquan River provides a haven for wildlife during a harsh winter.

The Manasquan River

During a harsh winter, the only open water available to wildlife in this area is the Manasquan River. This fact underscores the importance of the State's 1972 edict. The winter of 1976-77 provides an insight into the Manasquan's importance. Because it was the only open water in the general area, the River experienced a large influx of ducks and other waterfowl. The resultant population proved to be too great even for the Manasquan River to support, so a group of local citizens stepped in to fill the gap and provide feed.

Normally, the artificial feeding of wildlife is to be discouraged, since said creatures might then become dependent upon man for survival. However, in such extreme conditions, assistance is sometimes necessary to ensure the survival of nature's creatures.

Aquatic and Semi-Aquatic Environments

The pitch pine lowlands of Owl Woods (previously discussed) and the swampy portions of the Indian Settlement conservation easement are the two significant semi-aquatic environments in the Borough. The most significant aquatic environment is that of the ponds along the northern boundary of the golf course, which drain through the Ellis Point area and into the Manasquan River. The Appendix also lists the types of living species that are found in this area.

Although marine life can be found virtually throughout the entire Manasquan River, important concentrations are located in the Ellis Point–Osborn Island cove previously mentioned, as well as the Sedge Island - Debbie's Creek area. The major portions of Brielle wetlands are also situated in these two principle regions. The Appendix lists some of the marine life to be found in or about the Manasquan River.

The Residential Biotic Community

Brielle also possesses a residential biotic community, representing a mix of both natural species and exotic plantings, that serve to make it the envy of neighboring towns. This is especially evident during the Spring months when most of the plantings are in bloom.

Selected species of mammals have adapted well to this urban wildlife habitat. Typical of these are the Eastern cottontail rabbit, the grey squirrel, and the chipmunk.

The plant and animal inventory in the Appendix not only provides various listings of appropriate species, but some also show their general location by a number system that is related to the Sensitive Areas Map.



Top, Baby Great Blue Heron rescued by the Commission and placed on Ellis Point; Bottom, rare swamp Hyacinth found in Owl Woods.