



Shoreline

Volume 1 No 1

Flocking to Refuge

As the days turn cooler and the leaves change color, many Idahoans turn their eyes and ears to the skies.

Thousands of geese—in V-shaped formations and with loud, insistent honking—have begun their annual migrations through Idaho.

Deer Flat NWR, like many refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System, falls along one of the four North American bird flyways. Flyways are like highways in the sky for migrating birds.

National Wildlife Refuges along these “highways” provide crucial stopovers for birds to feed, rest, and recharge as they migrate to and from northern nesting grounds and southern wintering grounds.

Migrating ducks and geese use refuge waters as an evening roost safe from predators. They use refuge uplands and farm fields as a grocery store to fuel winter activities.

Some waterfowl stop at the refuge only temporarily to rest

and eat. Others end their long journeys at Deer Flat.

“Although Deer Flat

provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife throughout the year, the most impressive display of



wildlife occurs in fall and early winter when the geese and ducks arrive,” according to Todd Fenzl, Deputy Refuge Manager.

Next time you’re at the refuge, look—and listen—for some of the waterfowl that make the refuge their winter home. The best time to see the geese and ducks is at dawn or dusk when large flocks travel between the lake and feeding sites. You might watch for flocks from the refuge’s new observation deck! (See next story.)

Canada goose populations peak in mid-November with as many as 15,000 geese. Duck populations don’t peak until mid-December, but then top out at up to 100,000 ducks.

Did you know that flying in a “V” helps geese fly further? The leading goose works hard to break up the air. The other birds use less than half as much energy to fly through the air stirred up by the leader. Watch a “V” of geese to see the lead bird shift. They share the hard work!



Wildlife-watching Platform Installed

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge is proud to support full-time AmeriCorps member Lauren Giebler in the position of Environmental Education Outreach Specialist. She has been serving at the refuge since October 2004 and is a graduate of Boise State University with a degree in history, emphasis secondary education. Lauren will be returning to the refuge for a second year of service and looks forward to another year of rewarding challenges.

Looking for a peaceful, scenic place to watch wildlife? Then you'll want to find your way to the refuge's new wildlife-observation platform

Standing atop the farthest hill west of the Visitor Center, the platform provides the best view of the Lake Lowell sector of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

The idea to install a wildlife-observation platform came from Lauren Giebler, who is serving as a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer at the refuge. "For my AmeriCorps Community Action Project, I wanted to provide a spot for visiting students and families to watch wildlife and also get a sense of the grandeur of the refuge," said Giebler.

Giebler managed all aspects of the project, including budgeting, purchasing, public relations, and recruiting volunteers. She initiated and oversaw a partnership with students from the Boise State University Construction Management Program. Construction Management students Jeremy McMullin and Troy Bingham



oversaw design, construction, and recruiting other BSU students to help with construction.

In May 2005, after almost 4 months of hard labor, creative financial planning, and a constantly evolving design, Giebler finally saw her idea completed. The ten-by-twelve foot platform rises four feet above ground and is disabled-accessible by a fifty-foot ramp.

The project was funded by Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge and a donation from the Southwest Idaho Birder's Association.

According to Elaine Johnson, Refuge Manager, "the observation platform is a tremendous community asset, available to both visiting students and the general public."



Lauren Giebler, Jeremy McMullin & Troy Bingham

Litter's not for Critters!

So please join
Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge
for the First Annual
End-of-Summer Litter Lift!

When: 9 A.M. – Noon, Saturday, October 1st

Where: Meet at 9 A.M. at refuge Visitor Center (west end of Upper Dam at Lake Lowell)

What: Help collect litter at the refuge! Bring gloves and clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Bags & energy breakfast will be provided

Questions? Contact 208.467.9278 or deerflat@fws.gov

Refuge Creates Wetland

In June, refuge staff, volunteers, and partners created a permanent, 4-acre marsh east of Gott's Point. In previous years this area, known as Coyote Cove, has flooded only when the lake was full.

This seasonal wetland did provide habitat for wood ducks, beavers, raccoons, marsh birds, and more. However, fluctuating lake levels meant the wetland remained dry for most of the year, making it hard for

wetlands wildlife to settle in year round.



In order to turn the wetland into a permanent marsh, 1,200 feet of PVC pipe was installed to funnel run-off from an adjacent gravel pit into the wetland. This project was a cooperative effort between Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game.

Did you know that more than three-quarters of Idaho's wildlife species depend on wetlands during some phase of their life cycle?

Beetles on the Move

They started by chewing through the marsh below the Upper Dam. This summer, with the help of refuge volunteers, they've been on the move to other wetlands at the refuge, chewing leaves wherever they go.



Who's doing the chewing? Purple loosestrife, or *Galerucella*, beetles.

Purple loosestrife grows in marshes, wet meadows, rivers, and ditches and has beautiful, purple flowers from July to September. Unfortunately, it is also an Idaho noxious weed. Originally brought to the United States in the 1800's as an ornamental plant, it is now the

bane of farmers and naturalists alike because it clogs channels that carry water to growing crops and crowds out native plants used by wildlife for food and nesting habitat.

Because of its impact on wildlife habitat, and its creeping spread across the refuge, control of purple loosestrife has become a priority for Deer Flat NWR, and that's where those beetles come in.

Galerucella beetles feast on purple loosestrife—and only purple loosestrife—making them a great weapon in the war on this weed. They've been used at the refuge for 5 years, and are taking their toll.

The Upper Dam Marsh is no longer purple in late summer!

Care about wildlife? Concerned about the refuge? Then consider becoming a refuge volunteer!

WE NEED YOU...

your talents, your enthusiasm, and some of your time,
to help fill the following positions:

Visitor Services Assistant
Biological Assistant
Office Assistant
Recreational Survey Assistant

Environmental Education Assistant
Landscaping Assistant
Litter Collector
Refuge Friends Group

To fill out a volunteer application visit the refuge website at
<http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/currvol.htm>

Or stop in at the refuge Visitor Center at the Upper Dam near Lake Lowell.

ACTION SATURDAYS



You and your family are invited to attend Action Saturdays at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge! Learn about local wildlife and ecosystems, manage wildlife habitat, clean up the community and make new friends!

What: Learn about the environment and put knowledge into action through an on-site project

When: The 1st & 3rd Saturday of every month.

Where: Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

Who: Geared towards naturalists ages 8 to 108!



October: The Mysteries of Autumn



Saturday, October 15, 2005
10 AM – 12 PM

Let it Rot

Discover the secrets of Autumn! Why do leaves change color? How do decaying leaves contribute to a healthy ecosystem? Help build an on-site compost pile and learn how to build your own at home.

November: Preparing for Winter



Saturday, November 5, 2005
10 AM- 12 PM

Flying the Coop

Learn about the Pacific Flyway and just how many McDonald's hamburgers a person would have to eat to store up as much fat as a migrating shorebird. Then create window deflectors and bird feeders to help birds on their yearly journey!

Saturday, November 19, 2005
10 AM – 12 PM

Sleeping In

Discover which refuge mammal hibernates from mid-June to mid-February! Construct rock shelters and bat boxes to give wildlife homes in all seasons.



Many thanks to all our refuge volunteers!

Jordan Tollefson

North Dakota native Jordan Tollefson spent nearly 200 hours volunteering this summer. He spent the summer surveying frogs in a contaminants study, monitoring the re-growth of native shrubs replanted after the 2003 fire west of the Visitor Center, chopping noxious weeds, and much more! A junior at the University of North Dakota, Jordan is studying Wildlife and Fisheries Biology and plans to eventually get a Masters in Wildlife

Biology, Ecology, or Environmental Studies. After graduating, he wants to find a job doing field work, research, and, eventually, management.

After spending the summer in Idaho, Jordan says he will most miss the mountains—and the fry sauce!

Thanks Jordan!



Sandra Schachat

World traveler Sandra Schachat also spent the summer at the refuge, volunteering over 500 hours!

Sandra's previous travels (and volunteer positions) have taken her to Agassiz and Tamarack National Wildlife Refuges in Northern Minnesota, the Monteverde Conservation League in Costa Rica, and Florida. After leaving Idaho, Sandra will make a quick stop at her home near Washington, D.C. before heading off to the cloud forests of Ecuador for six months.

At Deer Flat, Sandra surveyed frogs, monitored re-growth of native plants, chopped noxious weeds, translated the refuge brochure, and helped start a new, labor-intensive, visitor-counting technique.

Sandra was also the first to discover that Chinese weatherfish are making Deer Flat NWR home (see next page). **Thanks Sandra!**



CHINESE WEATHERFISH

Chinese weatherfish, also known as Chinese loach, are a popular aquarium fish native to Korea and China. Weatherfish got their name from a tendency to swim in rapid circles in response to changes in barometric pressure that signal changes in the weather.

Unfortunately, irresponsible pet owners have released these non-native fish to various U.S. waters, including the lower Boise and Payette Rivers. This summer, while trapping bullfrog tadpoles for a contaminants survey, volunteer Sandra Schachat found the first weatherfish at the refuge. They probably found their way to the lake through the New York Canal.

Weatherfish are tolerant of polluted waters and low oxygen content. Their effect on other lake wildlife is currently unknown.



PERSONALS

Young Mallard seeks active, vivacious female who enjoys paddling in the smartweed, beautiful autumn sunsets, and long flights south.

SWTS (Single White Tundra Swan) seeks long-term relationship with another SWTS. Seasoned traveler preferred, must winter in Alaska. Sense of humor a plus.

Independent coyote male looking for casual relationship with active, fun-loving female. Must enjoy rabbit chases and shortcuts through the marsh. Ashy blondes preferred.

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge seeks energetic, motivated PFWL (people from all walks of life) who love wildlife and are eager to start a dialogue about forming a Refuge Friends group.

Retired bear female with established south side of

Recently widowed snake looking for a mate. Slim, athletic, likes warm rocks and eating out. Inquire in the grasses along the patrol road.

SFM (Single SMM (Single early morning expeditions close to the

We all need friends!

Interested in supporting refuge programs? Giving back to your community? Helping local wildlife?

Then join with other community members to organize a Refuge Friends group!

- Raise funds for refuge programs.
- Provide a refuge volunteer corps.
- Promote and perpetuate the mission of Deer Flat in the local and national community.
- Receive Refuge newsletters
- Make new friends!

Want to know more? Call 208.467.9278 or e-mail deerflat@fws.gov to request information.

Autumn Activity Schedule

October

Saturday, October 1

End-of-Summer Litter Lift.

Help collect litter at the refuge!
Wear gloves and clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Bags & energy breakfast provided.
Meet 9 A.M., Visitor Center

Tuesday, October 4

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, October 5

Reading at the Refuge
2 P.M., Visitor Center

Saturday, October 15

Action Saturday

Discover the secrets of Autumn! How do decaying leaves contribute to a healthy ecosystem? Help build an on-site compost pile and learn how to build your own at home.
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, October 18

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, October 19

Reading at the Refuge
2 P.M., Visitor Center

Reading at the Refuge

Where the wild things are!
This preschool reading program includes wildlife-related stories, crafts, and a light snack.

November

Tuesday, November 1

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, November 2

Reading at the Refuge
2 P.M., Visitor Center

Saturday, November 5

Action Saturday

Learn about the Pacific Flyway and just how many McDonald's hamburgers a person would have to eat to store up as much fat as a migrating shorebird. Then create window deflectors and bird feeders to help birds on their yearly journey!
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, November 15

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, November 16

Reading at the Refuge
2 P.M., Visitor Center

Saturday, November 19

Action Saturday

Discover which refuge mammal hibernates from mid-June to mid-February! Construct rock shelters and bat boxes to give refuge wildlife homes in all seasons.
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

December

Saturday, December 3

Action Saturday

Get ready for the holidays! Make earth-friendly decorations and learn what to do with your holiday trees when the holidays are over!
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, December 6

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, December 7

Reading at the Refuge
2 P.M., Visitor Center

Saturday, December 17

Action Saturday

Are you prepared to deal with mountains of holiday wrapping paper and decorations? Learn about recycling resources in our area, then design a recycling center for your own home!
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, December 20

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, December 21

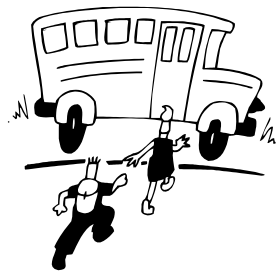
Reading at the Refuge
2 P.M., Visitor Center

Environmental Education

Classroom Programs

Bring the refuge to your classroom! Refuge staff will visit your school to present a standards-based, interactive environmental education program. Choose from the programs listed below or request one tailored to meet your needs!

- Alien Invaders
- Animal Camouflage
- Animal Toolkits
- Bird Beaks
- Ecosystems Alive
- FISH!
- Highways in the Sky
- Touch Trunk
- Wetlands' Wonders
- What Did the Owl Eat?



Field Trips

Visit Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge at Lake Lowell for a standards-based environmental education activity or hands-on exploration of sagebrush upland, riparian, and lake habitats!

One Class?

Schedule a hike on the Nature Trail and/or an environmental education activity. All visits include time in the Visitor Center and a brief orientation to the refuge.

More Than One Class?

Large groups will be split into groups and rotated through 3 or 4 stations. Stations include the visitor center, nature trail, and one or more outdoor environmental education activities. Each station lasts approximately 20-25 minutes. Visitor Center station includes 11-minute refuge orientation video.

All programs and field trips are free of charge

For more information about other Environmental Education opportunities, including Service Learning and Community Programs, please visit our website or pick up a copy of our Environmental Education Guide at the Refuge Visitor Center.

Want to know more?

Visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov.deerflat> for more information, including a calendar of refuge availability, details about classroom programs and field trip FAQ's.

Schedule a classroom program or field trip!

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