



Shoreline

Winter 2005 Volume 1 No 2

Ducks for Lunch?

Although only two pairs of bald eagles have nested at the lake in recent years, the refuge's eagle population balloons to as many as 70 birds during the winter months!

The wintering eagles, as well as a variety of hawks, are attracted to the lake in the

winter because of the tens of thousands of geese and ducks that also winter here.

Why are fish-eating bald eagles attracted by migrating waterfowl? Because ducks and geese make good eating too! Although bald eagles eat mostly fish, they are opportunistic scavengers and will take advantage of other food resources when available.

Some of the geese and ducks that winter at Deer Flat arrive tired or sick after a long migration from their northern breeding grounds. The arrival of these ailing birds means a relatively easy—and tasty—lunch for the wintering eagles and hawks.

One of the best places at the refuge to see these magnificent birds is at the

Visitor Center. Eagles like to perch in the large trees that line the lake, a habit appreciated by refuge visitors and staff alike.

According to Elaine Johnson, Refuge Manager, "they use those perches as

lookout towers from which to hunt for their next meal. Fortunately for us, they particularly like the trees near the Visitor Center!"

Johnson still vividly recalls the day several years ago

when she glanced out her office windows and saw not one, not two, but 26 eagles in the trees along the lakeshore!

Schedule a winter visit to the refuge to see if you can spot an eagle or two!



Refuge eagle-watchers

sometimes spot an eagle-sized bird without the

trademark white head and tail and think it's a golden eagle.

However, golden eagles are rarely seen at the lake.

Immature bald eagles appear almost solid brown, until they

mature at four or five years old.



Jumping Into Action!

Want to help with Action Saturdays? Contact Lauren Giebler at 208.467.9278 or lauren_giebler@fws.gov

From families planting trees to kids learning about hibernation and recycling, Action Saturdays are off to a great start!

Since October 15, naturalists of all ages have gathered twice a month to learn about wildlife and participate in an on-site service project. So far, participants have built a compost pile, learned about migration while practicing their birding skills, created eco-friendly holiday ornaments, and planted over eighty juniper trees to improve wildlife habitat.

Upcoming Action Saturdays will include paper-making, counting birds

for the nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count, and catching and re-locating purple loosestrife beetles!

Action Saturdays are held at the refuge Visitor Center from 10 A.M.-noon on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month. Nature enthusiasts of all ages are invited to attend. For more information, please contact the refuge at 208.467.9278.



Creating a window deflector that helps prevent birds from flying into a glass window.



Making holiday decorations.



Planting juniper trees to create wildlife habitat.



THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT



Grab a buddy, a pair of binoculars
and look to the sky

...because the 9th annual
Great Backyard Bird Count
is coming to a yard near you!



This annual 4-day event generates continent-wide information about bird movements, locations, and numbers. It allows scientists to compare population sizes over a span of years and sparks collaboration between scientists, bird-enthusiasts, and naturalists around the country.

In 2005, participants sent in more than 52,000 checklists, with a record-breaking 613 species and more than 6 million birds counted!

You can view results from past counts and learn how to participate in this free event by visiting www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

When: Saturday, February 18
10 A.M. – Noon

Where: Refuge Visitor Center
(or your own backyard!)

Cost: FREE!!

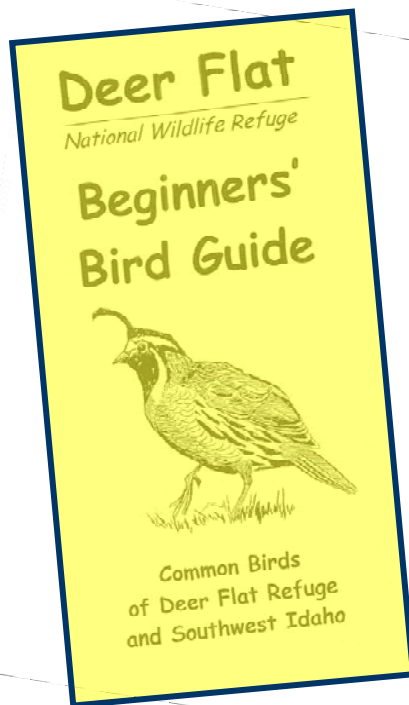
Gear: If you have binoculars or a bird field guide, please bring them! If not, you can share one of the refuge binoculars and bird guides.

For more information, call
208.467.9278 or visit
<http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/>

"This project has become a major source of scientific information about North American bird populations. It is a classic example of the vital role citizens and the Internet now play in understanding our planet".

Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

LOOK WHAT'S NEW AT THE REFUGE!



The Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Beginner's Bird Guide is now available!

Delve into the exciting world of birding! Use the bird guide to identify common birds around the refuge or even in your backyard.

Pick up your copy today!

Stop by the refuge visitor center or visit [http:// www.fws.gov/deerflat/](http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/)

Bird Guide illustrations by volunteer Jerry Wilda.

Use the bird guide to start preparing for The Great Backyard Bird Count!

We All Need Friends!

Eighteen energetic and passionate friends of the refuge gathered in early December to exchange



ideas and begin the process of organizing an official Deer Flat "Friends Group."

Friends Groups are independent organizations established to support a refuge and act as advocates for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Run by local citizens, these groups provide a link between refuges and the community.

They can help educate community members, build participation in refuge programs, and foster long-term support for the refuge.

Participants at December's meeting voiced concerns about current refuge issues, suggested possible avenues of action, and brainstormed ideas for a group name and mission statement. A second organizing meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 3 at 7 P.M. Call 208.467.9278 if you would like more information.

"This is a firecracker group!"
Lee McGlinsky

If you would like to become a member of the friends group, participate in the organizing process, or know more, please contact the refuge at 208.467.9278.

Dam Repair Updates

During a routine dam safety evaluation last spring, weak spots were discovered in the foundation beneath the intake pipe that transfers water into the Caldwell Canal. In May, the Bureau of Reclamation constructed a gravel berm to isolate the intake pipe and temporarily fix the problem.



Recent refuge visitors have probably noticed drilling rigs on the dams. This fall, Bureau staff have

drilled core samples on the Upper and Lower Dams to determine whether other repairs are also needed. To date, the core samples have not revealed any serious concerns.

Permanent repairs to the Caldwell Canal intake pipe are projected to begin in fall 2007. The Upper Dam will be closed during the repairs, so a new access road for the Visitor Center and the west Upper Dam boat ramp will be constructed from the corner of Indiana and Roosevelt Avenues in 2006 or 2007.

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 Member

For a volunteer application, stop by the Visitor Center or
Visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/currvol.htm>

**Volunteer orientation sessions are scheduled for
7:00 on Tuesday, January 10th and 1:00 on Saturday, January 21st.**



Many thanks to all our refuge volunteers!

Refuge Artist Jerry Wilda

Whether it's a coyote, a kingfisher, or a kestrel, refuge volunteer Jerry Wilda brings wildlife to life with his pen.

Jerry has produced wildlife illustrations for refuge publications for nearly two years. Look for the grebe he drew for the Refuge Helpers litter control signs (recently posted at adoptable areas around the lake). Or pick up the new Beginners' Bird Guide (see earlier article), which is built around eighteen of Jerry's illustrations of common refuge birds.

Jerry says he volunteers at Deer Flat because he enjoys illustrating wildlife and wanted to fill a refuge need.

Volunteering allows him to pursue his "tremendous love for waterfowl" and other wildlife, while helping to teach people about wildlife.

Jerry's best memories of the refuge are from "yesteryear" when he spent thousands of hours watching flocks of hundreds of thousands of mallards and other ducks at Lake Lowell.



Wilda's love of waterfowl is reflected in his artwork.

The Landscaping Daycare

"Is *this* a weed?"

"Look how many I've got in *my* bag!"

Such cries were heard often this summer and early fall during Smiley Faces Day Care's regular visits to weed the Visitor Center landscaping.

Kimberly Hoffman called in early summer looking for a place for the children in her day care to volunteer. She hoped that volunteering at the refuge would allow the kids to spend time outside appreciating wildlife and the outdoors, having fun, and learning.

The crew, including Hoffman's own children, put in a total of over 30 hours between June and October. Having worked with kids from a variety of backgrounds, Hoffman saw the need "for kids to be involved and see that they can be helpful."

Volunteer outings included about an hour of weeding, a picnic lunch, and time to watch a wildlife video or do hands-on kids activities. According to Hoffman, combining volunteering with more recreational activities meant that "we got just as much out of it as the refuge did!"



Kira Hoffman, 8, and Julian Hoffman, 5, regularly volunteer at the refuge.



Holiday Wish List



The refuge is in need of the following items to use in an interpretive program. The program "build a beaver" will help students learn about beaver survival adaptations. All donations will be greatly appreciated!

- ✓ 1 wooden canoe paddle
- ✓ 1 pair rubber gloves
- ✓ 1 brown blanket
- ✓ 1 yellow blanket
- ✓ 1 pair swim goggles
- ✓ 1 pair ear muffs
- ✓ 1 clothespin

A Chance to Say Thanks!

Refuge volunteers enjoyed

"dinner and a movie" at the Visitor Center when they gathered with refuge staff in mid-October for the annual volunteer

recognition event. After sharing lively conversations over delicious potluck dishes, volunteers were recognized for their contributions with



certificates of appreciation and special awards for those reaching a "milestone" number of hours.

Afterwards, we popped popcorn and watched several movies borrowed from the

International Wildlife Film Festival, including a montage of wildlife and habitat images and the story of a merganser family.

For those volunteers that couldn't attend, we missed you, and thanks for volunteering!

Winter Activity Schedule

December

Saturday, December 3

Action Saturday
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
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

Action Saturdays

On-site service-learning program for families and naturalists of all ages. Learn about local wildlife and ecosystems, help manage wildlife habitat, clean up the community and make new friends!

January

Tuesday, January 3

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

Friends Group Meeting

7 P.M., Visitor Center
Please RSVP

Wednesday, January 4

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

Saturday, January 7

Action Saturday
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, January 10

Volunteer Orientation
7 P.M., Visitor Center

Tuesday, January 17

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

Wednesday, January 18

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

Saturday, January 21

Action Saturday
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Volunteer Orientation
1 P.M., Visitor Center

Volunteer Orientation

Interested in volunteering at the refuge? Find out about the refuge and what you can do to help out!

February

Wednesday, February 1

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

Saturday, February 4

Action Saturday
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, February 7

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

Friends Group Meeting

7 P.M., Visitor Center
Please RSVP

Wednesday, February 15

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

Saturday, February 18

Action Saturday
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Great Backyard Bird Count
10 A.M.-Noon, Visitor Center

Tuesday, February 21

Reading at the Refuge
10 A.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.

Environmental Education

PASS IT ON!

Do you know someone who might be interested in a FREE, fun environmental education program? Then please pass on a copy of Shoreline or help them contact us at the refuge. Thank you for helping us spread the word about our programs!

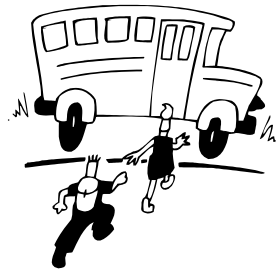
All programs and field trips are free!!

For more information about other Environmental Education opportunities, including Service Learning and Community Programs, please contact the refuge at 208.467.9278 or deerflat@fws.gov.

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 smaller 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. The Visitor Center station includes an 11-minute refuge orientation video.

Want to know more?

Visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/education.htm> 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!

Phone: 208.467.9278 Fax: 208.467.1019

E-mail: deerflat@fws.gov