



Shoreline

Spring 2006 Volume 2 No 1

Dandelions and Tiger Salamanders and Woolly Bears, Oh My!

about some of the many “services” provided by living things. Then you decide!

- *Biodiversity saves lives.* Aspirin, cortisone, digitalis, penicillin, and many other prescription and non-prescription drugs are derived from living things. Could there be other life-saving drugs we haven't yet discovered?
- *Biodiversity produces food.* Many native plants and agricultural crops would not produce fruits without pollinators like bees, butterflies, beetles, bats, and birds. Although honeybees do pollinate some crops, domestic hives are vulnerable to parasites and diseases. Having a variety of natural pollinators makes us less reliant on honeybee populations that might crash.
- *Biodiversity cleans up.* Although we don't often stop to appreciate worms,

Dorothy, the scarecrow, and the tin man watched for “lions and tigers and bears” as they followed the yellow brick road toward Oz. Like Dorothy, many of us think mostly about the large, furry, and feathered when we think about the natural world. However, of the 1.4 million described species, only about 4,000 are mammals and 9,500 are birds. What about the rest of the living things?

The variety of life in all its forms is referred to as biological diversity, or biodiversity. Unfortunately, biodiversity is declining. Just in North America, over 600 species have gone extinct since 1642, from the

Passenger Pigeon and the Las Vegas leopard frog to the Steller's sea lion and the Florida fairy shrimp. The populations of many other species have

declined, making them more vulnerable to extinction.

Should you care about declining biodiversity? Read

Did you know that a new species, the Chinese weatherfish, was discovered last summer at the refuge? Join BioBlitz 2006 to help better document refuge biodiversity. See the ad later in this edition of Shoreline.



Chinese Weatherfish

bacteria, and other decomposers, without them waste products and dead animals and plants would soon be everywhere. Also, wetland plants help clean water by trapping pollutants.

- *Biodiversity provides resilience.* Just as a diverse investment portfolio helps protect a portfolio in the financial markets, biologically diverse systems are better able to react to disturbances ranging from disease to global warming.
- *Biodiversity controls pests.* For example, spiders provide an important service by keeping insect populations in balance. A decline in spider diversity would probably result in many more insect-borne diseases like West Nile virus and malaria.

From the air we breathe to the water we drink to the food we eat, services provided by plants and animals affect our lives every day. Biodiversity also inspires awe and wonder, and the benefit of that is priceless.

As she headed toward Oz, maybe Dorothy should also have been on the lookout for ant lions, tiger lilies, and water bears!

Discover biodiversity at the first Idaho BioBlitz! During this 24-hour rapid inventory of biological diversity, professional and citizen scientists can help survey for plants and animals. Begins 3 PM Friday, June 2 and ends 24 intense hours later at 3 PM Saturday.

Others can celebrate and learn more about biodiversity at the BioBlitz Festival, from 10 AM to 3 PM Saturday. Watch scientists survey plants and animals, participate in crafts and games, watch demonstrations, and browse among booths from a variety of local organizations.

Litter's Not for Critters!

A juvenile fox stumbles about with its head stuck in a canning jar. An osprey chick fails to fledge because its leg is tangled in the baling twine its parents used to build their



Juvenile osprey with a club foot caused by baling twine.

Concerned about litter? Join us for the Annual Earth Day Litter Lift on Saturday April 22, 2006. Or ask about adopting a section of the refuge through the Refuge Helpers programs

nest. A western grebe struggles to escape the fishing line tangled around its legs.

These local incidents serve as sad

and vivid reminders that litter and wildlife don't mix. Although the fox, osprey, and grebe were discovered and helped, that help came too late for the osprey, which died as a result of its injuries. Also, most animals injured or killed by trash go undetected, leaving many people unaware of the scope of the problem.

Litter harms wildlife in a variety of ways. Animals



FWS employee untying a pelican.

sometimes eat discarded litter they mistake for food. Indigestible litter may accumulate in the gut and cause a fatal blockage or reduce hunger signals required for the animal to maintain healthy feeding activity.

Animals may get entangled in litter, like the osprey and the grebe. Or they may get stuck in glass or plastic containers, like the fox. Even if trapped animals manage to escape, resulting injuries or wasted energy increase their risk of death by predation, disease, or starvation. Litter can have a particularly bad impact during already-stressful times like winter, breeding seasons, and times of drought.

Cigarette butts, though small and sometimes overlooked, are the most common litter collected in organized litter clean-ups. Fish and birds sometimes mistake butts for food items and eat them. Cigarette butts can also indirectly harm wildlife if they are washed or blown into lakes or streams. Remaining

tobacco and residual toxins trapped in the filter may leach into the water and cause wildlife health problems at even very low concentrations.

Most conscientious and well-

informed wildlife-watchers don't litter non-biodegradable items. However, well-meaning people may think it's okay to litter biodegradable trash like orange peels or paper, or to "feed the wildlife" by tossing edible leftovers. Even if

something is biodegradable, it may take a long time to disappear.

Orange peels and cotton rope can stick around for months or years under the right



Bird killed by plastic pop-can holder.

What can you do to help? First, don't litter! Also, bring a plastic bag with you when you're recreating outdoors, and try to leave the places you visit cleaner

conditions. Also, litter attracts additional litter, so less conscientious people may be tempted to add their non-biodegradable litter to the pile.

How about "feeding the animals" with our edible leftovers? Even if it's littered with good intentions, "people food" negatively impacts wildlife in several ways. It is not healthy for wild animals, whose bodies are designed to digest *their* natural diets. Deer and ducks will happily eat bread, but it can make them sick and distract them from natural, more nutritious foods. Also, food tossed from cars may attract wildlife to roads, where they are at greater risk of being killed or injured by cars. And, littered food may attract more scavengers, such as crows, raccoons, and skunks. More scavengers may increase predation on other wildlife, particularly young animals.

than they were when you arrived. Get in the habit by picking up at least two pieces of litter each day!

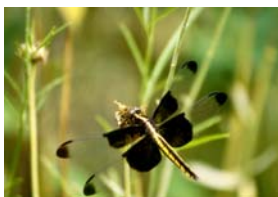
Those who want to get more involved can join the Refuge Helpers Litter Control program.

Refuge Helpers are individuals, families, or groups that adopt a part of the refuge and commit to regularly clearing it of litter. For those more interested in helping once or twice a year, the refuge holds Litter Lifts in April to celebrate Earth Day and in September or October to clean up summer litter.

Remember, litter's not for critters!



Volunteer picking up litter at Deer Flat NWR.



Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

BIOBLITZ 2006

Race against time in this 24-hour rapid inventory of biodiversity!

Discover & celebrate biodiversity at the BioBlitz Festival!

Friday June 2, 3 P.M. to Saturday June 3, 3 P.M.

BioBlitz

Join scientists, naturalists & volunteers as they comb the refuge in search of life!



BioBlitz Festival

**Saturday June 3
10 A.M. – 3 P.M.**

- Displays
- Booths
- Demonstrations
- Crafts
- Lectures
- Nature Walks

Everyone is invited to attend. Scientists with field experience and taxonomic expertise, as well as individuals interested in helping with event logistics, are encouraged to join the BioBlitz team now!

Call Lauren Giebler at **208.467.9278** E-mail lauren_giebler@fws.gov

To learn more about the refuge, visit www.fws.gov/deerflat

Every. Living. Thing.



Spring Litter Lift!

When: 9 A.M. – Noon, Saturday, April 22

Where: Deer Flat National Wildlife
Refuge Visitor Center

What: Help collect litter at the refuge.
Bring gloves
Wear clothes you can get dirty.

Bags & breakfast provided



Remember: Litter's Not for Critters!

We All Need Friends!

“Foster, enhance and preserve the treasure that is Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge” This is the mission statement of the newly formed Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge, a dynamic and diverse group dedicated to preserving and promoting the refuge. They just elected officers and are in the process of adopting bylaws to ensure the future of the group and seeking recognition as a non profit agency. Some exciting projects currently being considered by the group include fish and wildlife habitat enhancements, attending public meetings on the increasing development surrounding the refuge,

staffing the Visitor Center for expanded hours, and encouraging public support for the refuge via newsletters, newspaper articles, brochures, etc. The group meets at the Refuge Visitor Center on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. New friends are always welcome! For more information, please call the McGlinskys at 465-0404.

If you would like to become a member of the friends group, participate in the organizing process, or know more, please contact the McGlinskys at 465.0404.



Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day!



Saturday, May 13, 2 – 5 P.M.

Refuge Visitor Center

International Migratory Bird Day Fair

- *Grand opening of wildlife viewing platform*
- *Booths & Displays*
- *Dessert table*
- *3:00 movie “Winged Migration”*

Marmots are in a state of hibernation for almost 8 months every year! Can you imagine sleeping for two-thirds of your life?

Marmots!

As the orange and pink rays of the sun gently warm the Upper Dam at Lake Lowell, a small brown head pokes out of the rocks and scans the road for signs of danger. Sensing none, the animal emerges and scampers across the road for a morning meal of vegetation.

That brown head belongs to a yellow-bellied marmot, an animal frequently seen on the Upper Dam this time of year.

Sometimes called “whistle pigs” for their high-pitched chirp, these large native rodents make their

homes in rocky hillsides and talus slopes throughout the mountainous West.

Their distinct yellow belly and the patch of white between their eyes make marmots hard to miss. However, you will see them only in late winter and spring. Marmots spend seven to eight months underground! They avoid the hot, dry months by estivating through the summer, and avoid the cold by hibernating through the winter.

Emerging in February, marmots spend their time eating, raising their young and sunning themselves on warm rocks along the dam. By late June, they burrow down into the cool soil, fattened for their long nap.



Yellow-bellied Marmot



Many thanks to all our refuge volunteers!

Saturday Staff

Come to the Visitor Center most Saturdays, and you'll be welcomed by some of the most dedicated refuge volunteers: The visitor center volunteers. work anywhere from four to 12 Saturdays per year, welcoming visitors and sharing their enthusiasm for the refuge and its wildlife.

This program was initiated by the Southwest Idaho Birder's Association (SIBA) in 2003, to keep the Visitor Center open on weekends for families and working people. These volunteers serve for a variety of reasons.

Denise Hughes enjoys talking to the visitors and, during slower times, likes to "wander down the nature trail and see what's out there."

Cathy Eells also likes watching the wildlife while volunteering, and enjoys giving back to the community. Jim Holcomb wants to share his passion for wildlife with others "to make birders out of all the visitors." Lynnette Wilfling wants to allow more people to discover the refuge by keeping the Visitor Center open on weekends.

The Saturday volunteers' efforts are paying off. Last year nearly 1,400 people came to the refuge Visitor Center on Saturdays, up substantially from the year before. Thanks!



Connie with Visitor Center visitors.

Howard's Haven

If you have driven down Lake Shore Drive lately, you may have noticed a family picking up trash in Parking Lot 7. Now affectionately called "Howard's Haven," Parking Lot 7 has been adopted by the Howard family as part of the new Refuge Helpers program. Mark, Kathy, Amber, Ashley, and Caleb have spent several Saturdays picking up litter in the lot.

Kathy says she joined

Refuge Helpers because she was "sick of her kids always thinking of themselves first." She wanted her family to branch out and actively participate in the community. "At first the kids were hesitant to participate but once I picked up trash they all joined in and it became a family effort."



L to R: Kathy, Caleb, Ashley, and Amber Howard
In front: Family Friend Tanner



Register for Summer Day Camps!

Desert Detectives Critter Camp

June 12 - 16

9 A.M. - Noon

All students entering 2nd or 3rd grades



Biodiversity Basics

June 26 - 30

9 A.M. - Noon

All students entering 4th or 5th grades



Cost: FREE!!

Space is limited so please register early to ensure a spot!

For more information, please call Lauren or Susan at 208.467.9278.

Local wildlife needs you. Become a

WEED WARRIOR!



Who: You? Help wildlife and spend time outside.

What: Remove invasive weeds to improve wildlife habitat at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

When: 3rd Saturday of each month, 2 P.M. - 4 P.M.

Where: Meet at the refuge Visitor Center with gloves, water, and a shovel.

Spring Activity Schedule

March

Wednesday, March 1

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

Saturday, March 4

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

Tuesday, March 7

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

Friends Group Meeting
7 P.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, March 15

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

Saturday, March 18

Weed Warriors
2 – 4 P.M. Visitor Center

Tuesday, March 21

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

April

Saturday, April 1

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

Tuesday, April 4

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

Friends Group Meeting
7 P.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, April 5

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

Saturday, April 15

Weed Warriors
2 – 4 P.M. Visitor Center

Tuesday, April 18

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

Wednesday, April 19

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

Saturday, April 22

Litter Lift!
10 A.M., Visitor Center
Bring gloves and water.

May

Tuesday, May 2

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

Friends Group Meeting
7 P.M., Visitor Center

Wednesday, May 3

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

Saturday, May 6

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

Saturday, May 13

International Migratory
Bird Day Celebration
2 P.M. – 5 P.M., Visitor Center

Tuesday, May 16

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

Wednesday, May 17

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

Saturday, May 20

Weed Warriors
2 – 4 P.M. Visitor Center

June

Friday & Sat, June 2 & 3

BioBlitz 2006!
3 P.M. Friday – 3 P.M. Sat.

BioBlitz 2006 Festival!

10 A.M. – 3 P.M. Saturday
Visitor Center

Monday – Friday, June 12-16

Desert Detectives
Critter Camp
M-F 9 A.M. – Noon

Saturday, June 17

Weed Warriors
2 – 4 P.M. Visitor Center

Monday – Friday, June 26-30

Biodiversity Basics Day Camp
M-F 9 A.M. – Noon

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!

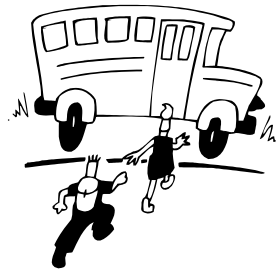
All programs and field trips are free!!

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