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# NEWS RELEASE

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **1<sup>st</sup> Refuge Celebrates National Wildlife Refuge Week**

Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 12-18 at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Plant a tree, go kayaking or do some bird watching from a chair at the nation's first wildlife refuge.

Specific activities taking place on the refuge include:

- **The Big Sit!** Sunday, October 12, 7am–7pm. A non-competitive, one-day bird-a-thon counting bird species from a 17-foot circle. Bring your own chair and binoculars (loaners available), and pack a meal. Free and open to anyone, any age, and beginning and experienced bird watchers. For more information about the Big Sit!, visit <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com>. To sign up for a 4-hour shift with the Pelican Island Audubon Society, call Nancy at (772) 567-8234.
- **Kayak Excursions to Pelican Island**, October 13-17, 9:30–11:30am. A 2-hour mini adventure to the nation's first wildlife refuge and historic bird rookery. Children free with paid adult. Adults \$35. Proceeds benefit Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Call Kayaks, Etc for reservations: (772) 794-9900.
- **Connecting Kids with Nature:** plant a tree and kayak to Pelican Island for free! Friday, October 17 – no school in Indian River County. Kid's free with paid adult. Adults \$35. Proceeds benefit Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Call Kayaks Etc for reservations: (772) 794-9900.
- **Beginning Bird Watching Tour**, Saturday, October 18, 8am-11am. A 3-hour guided tour for anyone, any age, and beginning and experienced bird watchers. Expect to walk up to 1 mile and identify and learn about many of the refuges spectacular birds. Free and no reservations required. Just show up at 8am at the north parking lot, the Pelican Island Welcome and Orientation Area, on north Historic Jungle Trail off Hwy A1A. For more information, call (772) 562-3909 x 258.

Refuge Week is a perfect time to visit Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge to celebrate and reflect on the significance of this refuge in the development of our nation's National Wildlife Refuge System, the largest system of lands for wildlife in the world! The weather in October is perfect, the migratory birds will be arriving and the refuge has over 5 miles of self-guided trails that are open every day of the year, from dawn to dusk.

- The Centennial Trail – ¾ mile round-trip paved trail that culminates to a boardwalk and ADA observation tower to view the historic Pelican Island rookery.
- Pete’s & Bird’s Impoundment Trails – each a 2.5 mile loop offering a deeper wildlife and nature experience through salt marsh habitat.

By mid-October, new migratory birds will be arriving and using the refuge as an important stopover ground, including white pelicans and numerous flocks of wading birds, shorebirds and ducks. Other wildlife abundant on the refuge include bobcats, river otters, raccoons and marsh rabbits. The refuge also hosts habitat for several butterfly species not commonly seen in backyards, including the mangrove buckeye, painted lady, red admiral, and mangrove skipper.

This year, National Wildlife Refuge Week also celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federal Duck Stamp and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Small Wetlands Program. Duck stamps have generated more than \$670 million to help purchase or lease over 5.2 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the United States. “Now more than ever, our nation depends on healthy wetlands and clean water for conserving waterfowl populations and ensuring health and safe communities. Purchasing this little stamp reaps huge dividends for our nation,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale Hall as he purchased the first stamp of 2008. (Learn more at [www.fws.gov/duckstamps](http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps)).

There are 548 national wildlife refuges across the country, offering a variety of outdoor activities, including fishing, hunting, environmental education, wildlife observation and photography. Many wildlife refuges also offer nature hikes, bird watching tours, wildlife drives and trails, and other adventures. Each year, about 40 million Americans discover the wonders of nature by visiting a wildlife refuge.

For more information about National Wildlife Refuge Week events, contact Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge by phone at (772) 562-3909 x258 or by email at [pelicanisland@fws.gov](mailto:pelicanisland@fws.gov).

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