



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Chesapeake Marshlands NWR Complex
BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Blackwater NWR Holds 8th Eagle Festival & Grand Opening of Refuge Library

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge is holding its 8th Annual Eagle Festival to celebrate Blackwater NWR's 75th birthday and the 105th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System on March 15, 2008 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Ceremonies and a ribbon cutting will be held at 10:00 am for the grand opening of the Refuge Library. The public is invited to participate in the many great activities planned for the day. All activities are free and the entrance fee to the Wildlife Drive is also free for the day.

The day will begin with the 2nd annual Wild Birds Unlimited bird walk at 8:00am with our experienced birder Terry Allen. Programs will include: a live peregrine falcon program with falconer Andrew Bullen and his peregrine falcon, a live bald eagle program with Mike Callahan from Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center, "Night and Day Predators" with Naturalist and Raptor Educator Liz Smith and her live birds, "Bald Eagle and Other Maryland Endangered Species" with MD Biologist Glenn Theres, "Global Warming and Sea Level Rise in Your Backyard" with Refuge Supervisory Biologist Dixie Birch, "History of Blackwater" with Refuge Fire Control Officer Bill Giese, "How to Photograph Wildlife" with photographers's John Lore and Dominic Spolitino, and Volunteer Zeeger de Wilde will lead three eagle prowls. The eagle prowls are limited and you need to register in advance by calling 410-228-2677 or at the sign up table in the Visitor Center.

Photos from the Youth Photo Contest held by the Friends of Blackwater to celebrate the Refuge's 75th birthday, will be displayed in the observatory. The award presentations to the winners will be held at 10:00 am in the observatory.

Candy Rabbitt will be providing music from 10:00 am to 12 noon; the George Fox Middle School Ukulele Ensemble will be playing their own written music about the Chesapeake Bay at noon; and Ron Warren will play Native American flute music at 1:00 pm.

A youth blue bird nest box building construction program will provide materials for 50 youths to build their own box to take home. Since materials are limited to 50, youths need to sign up in advance by calling the Refuge at 410-228-2677. Other youth programs will include: a "What in the World is Carbon Sequestration?" activity program, owl pellet activity, endangered species puppet show, puppet construction, and bald eagle migration game. All participants to the puppet show will receive a free Albert the Delmarva Fox Squirrel coloring book. An expert birder will man a spotting scope on the Wildlife Drive to assist viewers in sighting

eagles and other birds. "Tom Eagle" will be greeting all the kids and promoting "Eagle Day."

Live birds of prey will be on exhibit from Carrie Murray Nature Center, Salisbury Zoo, and Raptor's Eye. Other exhibitors include Wild Birds Unlimited Optics, Tri-State Bird Research and Rescue, Marine Mammals Rescue display, John Lore and Dominic Spolitina's photography display, Patrick Lynch's osprey photography display, and Ron Warren's Native American flute music CD display.

The Hurlock Lions Club and the Chicone Ruritans will have food and drinks available throughout the day. Although the Visitor Center and Wild Birds Unlimited Pathways to Nature Observatory is open and some of the activities will occur in the conference room, many of the programs will be in one of two large heated tents outside the Visitor Center. Come out and join the fun and help us celebrate. Enjoy the Wildlife Drive and Visitor Center exhibits, observatory, video cams, and bookstore as well. For more information, please call 410-228-2677.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

The schedule of events is as follows:

8:00am - 2nd Annual Wild Birds Unlimited Bird Walk - meet outside Visitor Center

With leader Terry Allen, observe resident and migratory birds including eagles, Canada geese, ducks, herons, and song birds. Bring binoculars. Approximately 2 hours. Meet at the entrance to the Visitor Center.

9:00am- Youth Blue Bird Nesting Box Construction - in exhibit tent

Construct Blue Bird Box to take home. All materials supplied. Limited to 50 youths, register at 410-228-2677 before event or at registration table at the Eagle Festival.

9:00am - "How to Photograph Wildlife" - in program tent

Learn how to photograph wildlife with photographers John Lore and Dominic Spolitino.

10:00am - "Night and Day Predators"- in program tent

Naturalist Liz Smith will use live birds to show and tell you the differences in night predators and day predators.

10:00am - Library Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Grand Opening of the Refuge Library on the second floor of the Visitor Center.

10:30am - Eagle Prowl - meet outside the Visitor Center

Limited - register at VC desk or call 410-228-2677. Zeeger de Wilde will help you locate eagles here on the refuge.

10:30am - Youth Photo Contest Awards Presentations - in observatory

11:00am - Live Peregrine Falcon Program - in program tent

Falconer Andrew Bullen will have his peregrine falcon to observe while you learn about this magnificent bird and how it is returning from near extinction by adapting to its changing environment.

11:30pm - Kid's "What in the World is Carbon Sequestration?" in exhibit tent

Join Chris Ros in two activities to explain carbon sequestration and its effect on our environment.

- 12:00pm - "Bald Eagles & Other Maryland Endangered Species"** - in conference room
MD DNR Biologist Glenn Theres will give an update on the bald eagle population in Maryland and information on other MD endangered species.
- 12:00pm - George Fox Middle School Ukulele Ensemble** - in program tent
Teacher Ben Thompson will lead ukulele ensemble from George Fox Middle School in Pasadena, MD in music they have created about Blackwater and the Chesapeake Bay.
- 12:30pm - Eagle Prowl** - meet outside the Visitor Center
Limited - register at VC desk or call 410-228-2677. Zeeger de Wilde will help you locate eagles here on the refuge.
- 12:30pm - Owl Pellet Activity** - in exhibit tent
What is an owl pellet? Learn about owls, owl pellets, and what their latest dinner was by examining an owl pellet.
- 1:00pm - "Global Warming and Sea Level Rise in Your Backyard"** - in conference room
Refuge Supervisory Biologist Dixie Birch will show how global warming and sea level rise will affect all of us in Dorchester County and how we might deal with it.
- 1:00pm - Native American Flute Music - in program tent
Native American Ron Warren will demonstrate his music on several flutes.
- 1:30pm - Kid's Eagle Migration Game** - in pop up tent outside VC
Take an eagle's migration route and encounter all the obstacles that an eagle might have to deal with in real life.
- 2:00pm - Live Bald Eagle Program** - in program tent
Observe the magnificent live bald eagle as Mike Callahan from the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Center provides interesting information and facts about our national symbol.
- 2:30pm - Eagle Prowl** - meet outside the Visitor Center
Limited - register at VC desk or call 410-228-2677. Zeeger de Wilde will help you locate eagles here on the refuge.
- 2:30pm - Endangered Species Puppet Show** - in Visitor Center conference room
Join Albert the Delmarva fox squirrel, Hoot the owl, Red the fox, Edith the bald eagle and their friends in discovering life on a Refuge. Free Albert the Squirrel coloring book to participants.
- 3:00pm - "History of Blackwater"** - in conference room
Refuge Fire Control Officer Bill Giese will present a power point program on the history of Blackwater NWR and how we got to where we are today.
- 3:30pm - "How to Photograph Wildlife"** - in program tent
Learn how to photograph wildlife with photographers John Lore and Dominic Spolitino.
- 3:30pm - Kid's Puppet Construction** - in exhibit tent
Construct a finger puppet you can take home.

The End