

MAKING TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE TUALATIN RIVER NWR

JOYFULLY CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY WITH THE WONDER OF THE REFUGE



PRESIDENT'S PERCH

By Mark Newell, President of the Board

It's getting colder and darker. It's Winter, it can't help it. As the northern states and Canada get colder the migrating waterfowl begin their journey south.

Like the last couple of years, waterfowl numbers remain above the long term average. And while this number is down 13% from last year, due mainly to drought conditions in the prairie pothole areas (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa). We are still above our long term average. The prairie pothole areas are the nesting areas of a lot of North American waterfowl and there were fewer birds born this year due to the drier than normal conditions. Our populations are still healthy, and waterfowl have been dealing with these kinds of cycles for as long as they have existed, they're resilient, astounding birds. So the sky isn't falling, but...

While there is little we can do to stop a drought (short of stopping climate change), there is a lot we can do to protect the wetlands that remain. And this is where we have a larger problem; many of the prairie pothole regions have been drained and are farmed, up to 70% in some regions.

Northern pintails were 18% below the 2017 estimate and 40% below the long-term average. Why, because Pintails are particular about nesting areas. The prairie pothole region is their first choice for breeding. If it's been dry, they overfly that area and nest in Northern Canada and Alaska. This decision comes at a cost. Fewer young are produced in years when large numbers of pintails settle in northern breeding areas. As a result, the prairies are where the fate of the pintail population is largely determined each year. As climate change occurs, the remaining wetlands are going to become more important than ever before. By protecting those wetlands that still exist and restoring those that we can, we can play a part in how this story continues.

Why is this important: Wetlands are incredible places, but don't take my word for it, here's what the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has to say (<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/why-are-wetlands-important>): **Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs.** Wetlands can be thought of as "biological super-markets." More than one-third of the United States' threatened and endangered species live only in wetlands, and nearly half use wetlands at some point in their lives. Many other animals and plants depend on wetlands for survival. **Scientists now know that atmospheric maintenance may be an additional wetlands function.** Wetlands store carbon within their plant communities and soil instead of releasing it to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. Thus wetlands help to moderate global climate conditions. **Wetlands provide values that no other ecosystem can.** These include natural water quality improvement, flood protection, and shoreline erosion control.

What can you do? We have a wetland right here, that's pretty remarkable. And check this out, the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex is about to embark upon an amazing endeavor. They're about to restore Chicken Creek so that the area you see behind the Visitor Center and along the trails becomes a more natural ecosystem that will ebb and flow naturally with the Tualatin River.



Hoodoo and her person Mark

JOIN

DONATE

RENEW

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Second Saturday Restoration Work Party \(session 2 of 11\)](#)

February 09, 2019 9:00 AM

[Owl Prowl](#)

February 12, 2019 6:00 PM

[Puddle Stompers-Frogs](#)

February 13, 2019 1:00 PM

[Puddle Stompers-Frogs](#)

February 19, 2019 10:00 AM

[Friends Board Meeting](#)

February 26, 2019 6:30 PM

[Second Saturday Restoration Work Party \(session 3 of 11\)](#)

March 09, 2019 9:00 AM

[Puddle Stompers-Eagles](#)

March 13, 2019 1:00 PM

[Puddle Stompers-Eagles](#)

March 19, 2019 10:00 AM



SOCIAL MEDIA



By becoming involved with the Friends group you help us raise money (with your membership). That money goes right back into the refuge. By lending us a hand in the project your individual efforts help our collective whole, and the Northern Pintail would like to thank you for that. Want to become a member or know somebody who might? The volunteer staff at the Visitors Center would love to answer your questions, or call Bonnie at: 503-625-5944.

Membership Matters

Michelle Scholz, Membership Chair



Hi, my name is Michelle Scholz and I serve on the board of the Friends of the Refuge. We are seeking to increase our membership and I am appealing to you to consider joining the Friends' group if you are not currently a member.

This year will see many changes taking place on the refuge and we aim to support the mission of USFW in this endeavor.

Please visit our website: <http://friendsoftualatinrefuge.org/> and click on GET INVOLVED>JOIN THE FRIENDS.

For \$25 you can make a huge difference!

Thank you for your consideration,

Questions?

M_Scholz@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org Thanks,

Michelle

HELP THE FRIENDS WHILE
YOU SHOP



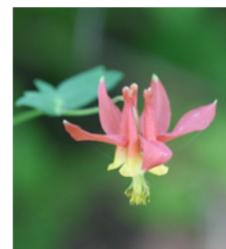
Save the Date for our Annual Native Plant Sale

April 26th—Friends Members Pre Sale—4pm-5:30pm



Open to the Public Sale
April 26th—5:30pm-6:30pm

April 27th—9am-3pm



Drop in Science Exploration Days Back at the Refuge

Back by popular demand our Visitor Center was packed with families ready to learn about animal tracking. The room was filled with kids creating their own animal tracks in sand and in their take home track artwork. Drop in days require no registration and people can stop by for any length of time. Themes are rotating each session between Pelts & Skulls, Birds & Nets, Animal Tracking and a Mystery theme that is new each time.

Check the Friends website or Facebook page for upcoming dates and themes. Interested in helping out with these drop in days, teaching a new theme, or just stopping by?

Contact tiffany_mancillas@fws.gov for more information and to volunteer.



Duck Stamps The 2018-2019 Federal Duck Stamps, featuring a pair of mallards, have arrived and are now available for purchase at Nature's Overlook. Duck Stamps are a great way to help support refuges, because 98% of the purchase price goes directly to help acquire and protect wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System. For every \$25 Stamp purchased, \$24.50 goes directly to that cause! In addition to being a wonderful way to contribute to conservation of wetland habitat, a current Duck Stamp is good for free admission to any refuge that charges an entry fee. To learn more about Duck Stamps, visit fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php. The sale of these stamps has been used to protect over 5.7 million acres of wetlands on national wildlife refuges since 1934.

Nature's Overlook Store Volunteer Buyer Wanted

Nature's Overlook is recruiting for a Volunteer Buyer for general merchandise. George Burnett, who has been the Buyer for several years, is "retiring" from that role, but thankfully not from the other volunteer work she does on the Refuge! She will be happy to provide all the details about the job duties, the "perks" and the time commitment. George will also be available to provide training and support to whoever becomes the new Buyer. To learn more about this great opportunity, please contact her at 503-547-4721.

Restoration on the Refuge

Nathan Kossnar, Habitat Restoration Specialist, Friends of the Refuge

The Biological Team is eagerly awaiting the beginning of Amphibian Egg Mass Survey season. Sarah and Nathan have participated in volunteer training sessions at Metro's Headquarters to represent Tualatin River and our part in the assembly of local organizations collecting amphibian data in the Portland area. This is the second year TRNWR is taking part in Metro's amphibian surveys and we are excited to build upon the current community science opportunities conducted at the Refuge.



Juvenile Bald Eagle seen on the main unit.



Pintail and Mallard in flight.

Photos by Nathan Kossnar

Tualatin River NWR is free year-round

National Wildlife Refuges Announce 2019 Fee-Free Days

Dates apply to 30 refuges that charge for admittance; nearly 500 other refuges are free year-round

Across America, [national wildlife refuges](#) offer unparalleled opportunities to experience the great outdoors amid scenic beauty. And they do it on awe-inducing landscapes that range from Oregon's rocky cliffs to Texas lagoons, from Maine wilderness to woods and fields inside the city of Philadelphia. Thirty refuges that normally charge entrance fees will offer free admission on these days in 2019:

January 21 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 18 – Presidents' Day
September 28 – National Public Lands Day
October 13 – First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week
November 11 – Veterans Day

These refuges charge admission ranging from \$3 to \$8 per vehicle to help fund their recreation-related projects. The 2019 entrance fee waiver does not cover concessionaire or permit fees for some activities such as hunting, fishing or special tours. Every state and U.S. territory has at least one national wildlife refuge, there is and one within an hour's drive of most major metropolitan areas. Use the [online zip code locator](#) to find one close to you.

"National wildlife refuges provide habitat for species as diverse as bison, whooping cranes and monarch butterflies. They also provide unique places to hunt, fish, observe nature and simply enjoy the outdoors," said Refuge System Chief Cynthia Martinez. "Wildlife refuges also provide green space to the millions of Americans who live in urban areas. If you have never visited a national wildlife refuge, these fee-free days offer perfect opportunities to see what you've been missing."

The [National Wildlife Refuge System](#), managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the world's largest network of conservation lands, encompassing 567 refuges and 38 wetland management districts. Nearly 500 national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts are open to the public, hosting some 53 million visits every year – almost all offering free admittance year-round.

Have you tuned in yet? Watch the new Animal Planet show highlighting two of Alaska's premier national wildlife refuges — [Kenai Refuge and Kodiak Refuge](#). The 10-part series, titled "Into Alaska," airs Mondays through December 24, 2018. Watch thrilling up-close encounters with brown bears, moose and salmon. See aerial views of spectacular landscapes reachable only by air, boat or foot. Episodes air at 10 p.m. Eastern Time and Alaska Time, or check local listings.

Refuges also do more than conserve wildlife and provide outdoor recreation: they help protect against erosion and flooding and purify our air and water. Refuges generate \$2.4 billion per year and more than 35,000 jobs to regional economies.

Other federal land management agencies that will offer fee-free days in 2019 include: [National Park Service](#), [Bureau of Land Management](#), [Bureau of Reclamation](#) and [U.S. Forest Service](#). Please contact each for details.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Forest Service also participate in the America the Beautiful National Parks Pass and Federal Recreational Lands Pass programs. These passes grant access to more than 2,000 national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, grasslands and other federal lands that provide a wide variety of nature-based recreational opportunities for the American public.

These passes are available:

Free annual pass to current military members and their dependents.

Free lifetime pass for people with permanent disabilities.

\$80 lifetime senior pass for those aged 62 and over.

\$80 annual pass for the general public.

Free annual pass for volunteers who accrue 250 hours and who do not already have a valid interagency pass.

[Every Kid in a Park](#): Free annual pass valid for the school year, September to August, for duration of the 4th grade year. Covers students and their families.

Learn [how you can buy a pass](#).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).

Wear In The World

Have you taken your Friends gear to exciting destinations? Send us a photo of you wearing your Friends Hat, T-Shirt or outerwear. Let us know where the photo was taken. Send it to Info@FriendsOfTualatinRefuge.org

CONTACT US

Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge
19255 SW Pacific Highway
Sherwood, OR 97140
503-625-5944 x227

info@friendsoftualatinrefuge.org