



The Cackler

Published by The Friends of Humboldt Bay NWR

Issue 1, Summer 2008

Friends of Humboldt Bay NWR Update

www.fws.gov/humboldtбай

Upcoming Events

◆ July 13-

The refuge will have an information and kid's activity booth at Loleta's **Swauger Station Day**.

◆ July 22 –

Monthly Meeting at 5:30 PM at Richard J. Guadagno Visitor Center

◆ August 10 –

The California Waterfowl Association **Youth Outdoor Adventure Day** will be held at the refuge.

◆ August 22 –

“Gardening for Wildlife”, the third talk of Friday Night at the Refuge Series, will be held at the Visitor Center at 7:00 PM.

Our Mission is to support the Refuge and its staff in fulfilling the mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service by promoting community outreach, environmental education, interpretation and other activities related to wildlife and habitat conservation.

Welcome to the first issue of the *Cackler*, a collaborative effort by our Friends group and the Visitor Services office of Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The current and future projects which the very dedicated members are involved in include the following:

- BirdWalks @ 9 am on every 1st and 3rd Wed. of the month
- Creation of a Trail Guide for the Shorebird Loop Trail on the Salmon Creek Unit of HBNWR
- Creation of a special place for children's activities in the Visitor's Center called “The Fledgling Fort” and hope to create a “Wild Wing” outdoor children's exploration area.
- Sponsor the annual “Aleutian Cackling Goose Fly-off and Family Fun Weekend the 1st weekend in March
- Sponsor the annual National Wildlife Refuge Week festivities during the 2nd week of October
- Sponsor the quarterly Friday Night at the Refuge speaker's series which have included presentations on the comeback of the Aleutian Cackling Geese and Amphibians of the Refuge.
- Support the development of the Native Plant Garden in front of the Visitor's Center at Salmon Creek.

We welcome new members, and invite you to join one of the exciting projects described above.



Habitat Management Update



We are often asked why we are removing large eucalyptus (blue gum) trees from the refuge. Blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), a tree native to Tasmania, was introduced in California in the mid to late 1800s. In the 1920s an approximately one mile long strip of blue gum was planted on the Humboldt Bay NWR, north of what is now the Visitor Center, by McBride Family ranch hands probably as a wind break. Blue gum and other non native trees, such as Monterey pine, Bishop pine and Monterey cypress were also planted in this area in the 1900s.

Although some wildlife, such as raptors, European starlings, skunk, and deer use this area in general for resting and in some limited cases foraging and breeding, blue gum is recognized to be largely detrimental to wildlife. All birds that naturally evolved with this tree species have long bills and are typically not diminutive songbirds. The species of songbirds that would typically inhabit California's native trees in winter are

Anna's and Allen's hummingbirds, yellow-rumped warblers, and kinglets. These birds have short bills and small nasal openings relative to the species that have evolved with the blue gum. The gum (thick nectar) and pollen of these winter blooming trees tends to clog the nasal openings of these native birds, which can lead to starvation. In addition, hummingbirds that nest in these trees typically have their nests blow out of the trees five times more often than in native vegetation. These large, heavy trees are also a potential safety hazard because toppling could cause damage to nearby structures.

Selective removal of the non-native trees was recommended in the original 1989 Management Plan for the Humboldt Bay NWR and is currently continuing. The blue gum is to be replaced with native vegetation such as, but not limited to, Sitka spruce, alders, and willows. Downed trees are then donated to programs that distribute the wood to senior citizens.



Site of recent eucalyptus removal.
Photo courtesy USFWS



This prolific invasive has already started to re-sprout from the stumps and will need treatment again.
Photo courtesy USFWS



Summer 2008 Refuge YCC Crew Finalized



The summer 2008 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Crew has been selected. The YCC Crew works from late June through early August, providing local high school students with eight weeks of full-time employment. The crew works on many projects throughout the refuge. Projects for the summer include facilities enhancements such as: building a new interpretive kiosk at Lanphere Dunes Unit; installing a bike rack at the Visitor Center; building a split rail fence around the cattle guard pull-off area and installing safety railing around decks and stairs at the Lanphere Dunes Unit.

The crew maintains all restroom facilities and litter clean up at Hookton Slough and Salmon Creek Units. Crew members are also very active in the refuge's invasive plant management program. The crew plans to work on thistle removal along the Shorebird Loop Trail; iceplant removal at the Table Bluff Unit; *Picarus* removal at all units and English ivy removal along the entrance road; and Bindweed removal, along with many other projects. If you see our hard working crew during your visit let them know what a great job they are doing!



The Summer 2008 YCC Crew: From left to right: Broc Tuel, Michelle Pierce, Keira Carpenter-Brooks, Kyle Cox, Crew Leader Spencer Falor-Ward, Nicholas Hanson.



Staff Corner



I'd like to welcome you to the first issue of "The Cackler"! This newsletter is intended to share what is going on here at the refuge; whether it be special events, management, or wildlife. I consider myself very lucky to work at a place I care deeply for, and am excited to let people know some of the behind the scenes management we do to make the refuge a great

home for the wildlife and a great place to visit for people who love wildlife. If you have any questions for us come in to the Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters and Visitor Center or give us a call at (707) 733-5406. We are open 7 days a week from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Sean Brophy, Visitor Services Assistant, HBNWR
Email: Sean_Brophy@fws.gov



This Issue's "Refuge Tip"



Want to enjoy a pleasant walk on a late summer evening at the refuge? While the Salmon Creek Unit and Shorebird Loop Trail closes at 5:00 PM, the Hookton Slough Trail remains open until dark! That's over 3 bonus hours to enjoy the refuge this time of year.

To get to the Hookton Slough Unit, take the Hookton Road exit (Exit 696) from Highway 101. Turn on to Hookton Slough Road and travel about a mile and a half. A sign for the Hookton Slough Unit is on the right side of the road. The parking lot has two bathrooms and there is also a public boat dock for non-motorized boats.



Recent Refuge Events



On Friday June 20, 2008 we enjoyed a Volunteer Appreciation BBQ at the Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters and Visitor Center. About 30 volunteers of the Salmon Creek Unit and members of the Friends of Humboldt Bay NWR participated. Staff member Steve Lewis fried up some great abalone, 15 pounds of tri-tip were consumed, and root beer floats made by Greg and Sandy Gaser were enjoyed. After dinner, several volunteers joined project leader Eric Nelson on a late evening walk. Everyone had a great time, despite a freak late evening thunderstorm that struck during the hike! In addition to dinner volunteers also received California Poppy seeds and "Chico" eco grocery bags. The bags are made from all recycled material and are designed to attach to your keychain.

We appreciate the hard work and dedication our volunteers put in to making the refuge a better place for all to experience. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at the refuge, contact Visitor Services Assistant Sean Brophy at Sean_Brophy@fws.gov, by coming in to the Visitor Center, or by downloading an application on the refuge website; www.fws.gov/humboldtby.



Items like the ChicoBag are a great way to reduce your consumption level.



Volunteers enjoying the Appreciation BBQ.

Photo credit: Denise Seeger

Highlight Species List

For the Salmon Creek Unit/Shorebird Loop Trail, June 2008

- ◆ **Lazuli Bunting-**
Seen by volunteers and staff near Visitor Center on June 3.

- ◆ **Bald Eagle-**
Sighted by visitors on the Shorebird Loop Trail June 4.

- ◆ **Black Bear-**
Sighted by staff on Entrance Road June 12, and near Salmon Creek June 14.

- ◆ **Black Crowned Night Heron-**
Sighted by visitors near Observation kiosk, Cattail Pond

- ◆ **Long-Tailed Weasel-**
Sighted by staff near Salmon Creek and on mid diversion road June 16.

- ◆ **Osprey-**
Sighted by visitors on the Shorebird Loop Trail June 17.

- ◆ **Black-Tailed Deer Fawns-**
Newborn twin fawns seen with mother behind the Visitor Center. Very cute!! Seen June 20 to present.



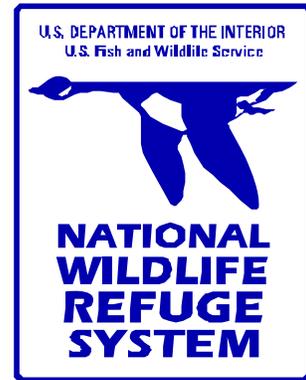
Safety Notice



This is currently tick season. During spring and summer ticks actively search for hosts to provide blood meals for their development. Ticks often wait on stalks on tall grass and vegetation and attach to passing warm blooded animals, including humans. Upon completion of hiking visitors are advised to check their clothes and their children for ticks. Ticks can simply be flicked off. If bitten by a tick, remove by grabbing as close to the mouthparts/skin as possible with a pair of tweezers and firmly but gently pull straight backwards. Other methods may cause tick to inject fluids into the bite wound or dislodge the head under the skin. Save the tick and bring in to a doctors office, where they can easily test tick for Lyme disease.



Life stages of the deer tick (scale is in centimeters).



***FRIENDS OF HUMBOLDT BAY
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE***

A 501(3)(c) Nonprofit Organization

PO Box 576,
1020 Ranch Road
Loleta, CA 95551-9633
(707) 733-5406

frdsofhbnwr@gmail.com

www.fws.gov/humboldtбай

Yes! I'd like to join the **Friends of Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge**

Please return this form with your membership information and annual dues to the address listed above.

Name _____ Address _____ City/State _____

Phone _____ email _____

Check your level of membership:

Student/Senior: \$10; Individual: \$20; Family:\$30; Supporter:\$50

Yes, I am interested in volunteering, please contact me.

*FOHBNWR Artwork by Ana Roberts