



Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge

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Planning your field trip to Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge

How many students can I bring? How many chaperones will I need?

The refuge can accommodate **one class or a maximum of about thirty students** at a time. An adult to student ratio of 1 adult to 5 students is required, and adult supervision is required at all times.

Do I have to make a reservation?

Reservations are required. A minimum of two week's advanced notice is helpful, especially if you are requesting staff or volunteer docent assistance. Please see the Application for Field Trip Reservation form. Our staffing is limited and your patience is appreciated throughout the scheduling process. All efforts will be made to accommodate your requests, however, because of the shortage of staff and volunteer docents, field trips are subject to cancellation in the event of sickness or an emergency.

What can my group do at the Refuge?

Your group can take a self-guided walk on the 1.7 mile Shorebird Loop Trail. This level path leads through diverse wetland and bay habitats where your group could see ducks, geese, shorebirds, songbirds, deer, or otters. You may borrow support materials from the visitor center, such as binoculars and field guides. The visitor center features a fabulous display showing native plants and delicate, carved birds of our local ecosystem. As the exhibit room is small and the displays very fragile, we invite students explore the exhibit room in groups of up to five at a time, under adult supervision. With advanced notice, refuge staff may be able to arrange for your group to view a short video about the National Wildlife Refuge System, have an orientation talk, and/or have a staff member or volunteer naturalist guide your group along the Shorebird Loop Trail.

When is the best time to visit the Refuge?

There is something to see every day of the year. November through April are the best months for bird watching. In the winter, rainfall creates seasonal wetlands which attract ducks, geese, and swans to the refuge. Aleutian cackling geese graze on our meadows. During January, February, and March, flocks of up to 60,000 can often be seen.

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What facilities are available?

Restrooms are located at the visitor center. Bus parking is located on the north side of the flagpole. **Please direct your bus driver to go counter-clockwise around the parking loop to the bus parking area.** Refuge water is not potable; please have your students bring their own drinking water in water bottles. A small outdoor picnicking area is available with two picnic tables. Bring a trash bag and pack your group's lunch garbage home with you.

How should I prepare my group for the field trip?

Make sure that each student is dressed warmly and wearing appropriate footwear! **Be prepared for windy, cold, and rainy weather.** Rubber boots are recommended as the trail can be muddy and wet. Students with allergies or asthma should bring their medication. Before you arrive, talk with your students about how they can show respect for wildlife during their visit, and review the following ecological concepts.

Become familiar with these ecological concepts before your trip!

Everything has a home. During your field trip, you will be walking in, around, and through several animals' living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms. We call these homes habitats, ranges, and ecological niches. Ecology (from the Greek "oikos" which means house) is the study of the common home of all life - the earth.

Everything is becoming something else. All plants and animals undergo evolutionary changes and adaptations. When things die, they are broken down, decomposed, recycled, and used by other living things.

Every living thing eats and is eaten by something else. Three categories of life forms are in the basic food cycle of life: producers, consumers, and decomposers.

Everything depends on something else. Interaction and interdependence occur among living and nonliving things and their environment. A change in one strand of the food cycle of life affects the entire web. Nothing exists in isolation.

There are basic necessities for life. Food, water, shelter, and space are the basic necessities for life. These necessities are found in the atmosphere (air), the hydrosphere (water), and the earth's crust (soil). The biosphere is the thin skin of the planet where these zones collectively support life on earth.

Diversity is essential for life. Many similarities and differences occur among living and nonliving things. This variation is essential for maintaining a healthy community and ensuring that plants and animals survive and reproduce in spite of changing situations.

Humans are capable of changing the balance of nature.