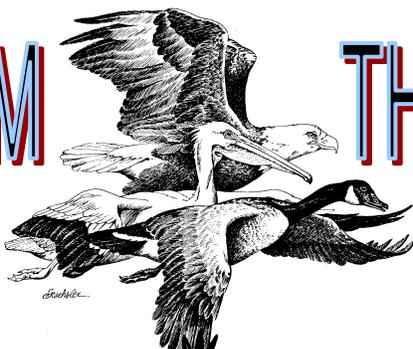


WORDS FROM

THE WETLANDS



SUMMER



2008

NEWS FROM THE KLAMATH BASIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX

Lower Klamath Birthday Celebration August 8th *by Dave Menke* *Outdoor Recreation Planner*

The public is invited to join the Refuge staff and friends to celebrate a century of conservation in the Klamath Basin on Friday August 8, 2008. This date is one hundred year to the day that Theodore Roosevelt established Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge by Executive Order. Everyone is invited to this event but should RSVP by mid July so that organizers can determine requirements for serving lunch after the dedication ceremony.

There will be a short program which will feature a dedication of new exhibits near the refuge entrance and recognition of the significance of 100 years of wildlife conservation in the Klamath Basin. After the ceremony, the Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association will host a complementary lunch. Guests will receive a poster and unique stamped first day of issue envelope commemorating the centennial of Lower Klamath Refuge. Displays featuring Refuge history will be highlighted at the event.

This event will only happen once and promises to be truly unique

The schedule for the day's events is as follows:

8:30 and 9:45 – Starting times for one hour guided bus tours of Lower Klamath Refuge

11:00 to 11:45 – Dedication of the new exhibits, kiosk and viewing platform at the Refuge entrance

11:45 to 1:15 pm – Complementary lunch and social gathering hosted by the Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association

1:15 to 2:00 – Opportunity to obtain unique Centennial memorabilia including a Lower Klamath Refuge Centennial Poster and first day of issue stamped envelopes.



**President Theodore Roosevelt
1901-1909**

JULY FIELD TRIP TO CLEAR LAKE NWR

Saturday, July 19, 2008

by Dave Menke-Outdoor Recreation Planner

July Centennial field trip participants will meet at 9:00 am on Saturday, July 19th at the Tule Lake Refuge Visitor Center. Those interested in the bus tour to Clear Lake Refuge should call (530) 667-2231 for reservations which will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Refuge employees and volunteers will lead the tour to the south end of Clear Lake Refuge. Clear Lake was established in 1911 by Theodore Roosevelt to protect breeding birds and other wildlife as the second of the six National Wildlife Refuges located in the Klamath Basin. Clear Lake is home to nesting American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, Forster's Terns and Sage Grouse, as well as Pronghorn and other sagebrush adapted species. Refuge management programs will be discussed and there will be wildlife viewing opportunities in this extensive juniper sagebrush habitat. After a sack lunch at nearby Boles Creek, there will be a discussion of the connection of this area to the Applegate Trail, the surrender of Captain Jack in 1872 and other history of this area. Participants should bring snacks, plenty of water, mosquito repellent, a sack lunch and a twenty dollar gold piece minted in 1867 in the unlikely event that the bus breaks down.

For a complete list of future events held to highlight the centennial of Lower Klamath Refuge visit the refuge web site at "fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges."



Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuge

HUNT PROGRAM UP-DATE

by Stacy Freitas-Hunt Program Coordinator

I hope everyone is having a great summer. I know the fishing is in full swing, the kids are out of school and most folks are looking forward to vacations. I just wanted to give everyone an update on what has been happening with the refuge hunt program.

We held our annual public hunt meeting in April. There were some good proposals for upgrades and changes; also great communication between hunters and Refuge staff regarding concerns and issues of the past season.

So here is what you can expect for the upcoming season: The hunting page of the Refuge website is being updated with current regulations, maps and other information. We are expecting the majority of the changes to be completed by mid to late July (just in time for opening weekend draw applications). The exceptions of course will be bag limits, season dates (which we receive from state Fish & Game Departments in late August) and the hunt maps. We are updating our brochures this season and they will be available at all the usual spots prior to season. At Lower Klamath Refuge expect to see improvements to a number of parking areas and boat ramps. This will include improvements to the 6B-1 entrance / launching area to allow enough room for hunters to get off the main road. We are scheduled to make improvements to the Orem 3 unit, similar to those improvements made last year to the Orem 1 unit.

At the Tule Lake Refuge you will see changes in habitat, such as the addition of flooded fields similar to last season and a few of the co-op farmed fields have been moved to the League of Nations to provide more feed for waterfowl in the northern area of the Refuge. One of the flooded units will be the "A" blinds area. My hope is that we will have good vegetation growth and be able to open the unit to hunting. We are working on a couple of back up plans "just in case". Remember the idea is to have a quality hunt. The spaced blinds will all be open to drive in and set up equipment this season. There has also been a change in the Sump 1B area. It was scheduled to be drained and water managed to encourage vegetation growth; which in turn brings in the big numbers of ducks the sump is known for. Unfortunately we had such a wet and cold spring that sump 1B was needed to provide water storage. The sump will still be a good mixed bag hunt.

I hope to see you all this fall, remember we will be having our annual informational gathering at the Refuge Visitor Center the evening before opening day. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at the refuge at 530-667-2231 or send an email to stacy_freitas@fws.gov Happy Hunting!

Colorful Wildlife Banners Adorn Main Street in Klamath Falls

by *Dave Menke-Outdoor Recreation Planner*

To recognize the 2008 Centennial of Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, 70 street banners have been hung along Main Street between 3rd Avenue and Pine Street. The banners feature wildlife found on refuges and wildlife areas in the Basin. According to Refuge Project Leader, Ron Cole the 70 wildlife species shown depict just under one-seventh of the 493 birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes known to occur in the Klamath Basin.

As a special challenge to families with school age children, the Refuge is offering prizes to those correctly matching 35 of the wildlife species shown on the banners to the correct habitat used by those wildlife species in the Klamath Basin. Here's how the contest works:

1) Viewing the banners along Main Street, families should write the names of 35 or more of the wildlife species shown on the banners (names are shown along the bottom edge of each banner).

2) Match each wildlife species with a habitat in the Klamath Basin where that animal might be seen. Many species are found in more than one of the following habitats:

W = Wetland habitats (including marshes, lakes and rivers)

CPR = Crop, pasture and residential habitats

S = Sagebrush and juniper upland habitats

R = Riparian habitats (trees, brush and other vegetation at the water's edge)

C = Coniferous upland habitats (ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and high elevation areas)

3) Mail entries to Dave Menke at Klamath Basin Refuges, 4009 Hill Road, Tulelake, CA, 96134 or email entries to dave_menke@fws.gov. The entry must contain the entrant's phone number or email.

4) The first 20 entries with 35 correct answers will receive a CD featuring the Klamath Basin Refuges and wildlife information. All subsequent successful contest entries received before August 8, 2008 will receive a colorful Lower Klamath Refuge Centennial poster. Winning entrants will be notified by telephone or email and may pick up prizes at the Travel Klamath Office at 205 Riverside Drive.

The Klamath Basin Refuges is offering a monthly series of events to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. A current list of Centennial events hosted by the refuge staff and volunteers is available at the Chamber of Commerce Office on Main Street and the Travel Klamath Office near downtown Klamath Falls.

The Centennial Day Celebration for Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge will be held on August 8, 2008 with a ceremony and free picnic near the Refuge entrance. More details about the Lower Klamath Refuge Centennial event will be available in July.



Banners along Main Street in downtown Klamath Falls Feature 70 wildlife species found on the Klamath Basin Refuges

Field Trip to Klamath Marsh Refuge Yields 85 Species

by *Dave Menke-Outdoor Recreation Planner*

On June 14, the Klamath Basin Refuges hosted a field trip to Klamath Marsh as part of a monthly series of events celebrating 100 years of Refuges in the Klamath Basin. The twenty-five participants on the Refuge's monthly field trip saw or heard a total of 85 bird species. The trip which began and ended in Klamath Falls included a brief stop in Hagelstein County Park where interesting observations included Green Herons, Green-tailed Towhees, a Cedar Waxwing and several Bullock's Orioles. Shortly after entering the extensive grassland and marshes at the Refuge, interesting birds including Long-billed Curlews, Savanna Sparrows, Ring-necked Ducks, Cinnamon Teal and many wood Ducks were seen along Silver Lake Road.

In the Wocus Bay area, in addition to some of the most spectacular views in the Klamath Basin, participants were able to find Olive-sided Flycatchers, Mountain Bluebirds and Black Terns in addition to more common species. The highlight of the trip for many birdwatchers was a great look at a Red-naped Sapsucker (a rare species in the Klamath Basin). Towards the late afternoon hours a drive through marshes along Military Crossing Road provided looks at American Bittern, several warbler species and many Black-crowned Night Herons.

Several participants stayed until dark to hear the calls of the rare Yellow Rail. Klamath Marsh is one of the few locations west of the Rockies where this species breeds. At least five yellow rails responded to an imitation of their call which is very similar to the sound of clicking two rocks together.

The tired but satisfied group of hard core birders returned to Klamath Falls after this memorable experience.



Klamath Marsh Refuge Manager, Carol Damberg points out one of several birds seen from the Wocus Bay shoreline.



The secretive Sora is one of several rail species found at Klamath Marsh.



Wood Ducks are more commonly seen at the Klamath Marsh during the summer months than any other Klamath Basin location.

The Klamath Basin Refuges Marsh Master

by Dave Goheen-Fire Management Officer

The Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges Fire Management Program recently purchased a piece of equipment that will increase the ability to perform prescribed fire and fire suppression activities in wetland environments. The Marsh Master is a fully amphibious marsh buggy manufactured by Coast Machinery in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The first Marsh Master was built by John Coast in 1971 as a means to access duck hunting areas located within previously inaccessible marshes.

Marsh Masters are a popular machine for Fish and Wildlife Service fire programs in other regions. Employees from Klamath Basin have been exposed to Marsh Masters while on detail to other regions, particularly Regions 3 and 4. The potential uses of this machine for fire management projects in large wetlands have long been known here, and regional fire funding allowed the purchase of this machine specifically for the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges.

Coast Machinery manufactures three size classes of the Marsh Master. The machine at Klamath Basin is the intermediate model. This size offers the best compromise in weight and function for the fire program. The machine needs to be light enough to float, but fire management needs a machine that is big enough to allow a cutter attachment. Besides the cutter attachment, the machine at Klamath is outfitted with a pump and water tank for firefighting duty.

The Marsh Master will be an effective tool for conducting habitat benefitting prescribed burns in some of the large marsh units within the Refuges. Plans are in place for utilizing this machine to assist with implementation of upcoming prescribed fire projects at the Klamath Marsh Refuge next fall. In addition, the Marsh Master will be available for initial attack in case any wildfires start within marsh units on the Refuges.

While the Marsh Master looks to be a valuable tool for the refuges, the machine does have some limitations. It is not designed to operate in rocky terrain. While it does have the capability of being a fully amphibious vehicle, it is possible to get the vehicle stuck in certain situations. The machine is a specialized piece of equipment requiring trained and certified operators. They will use the Marsh Master to the greatest advantage in the management and preservation of Refuge habitats.



Tule Lake Bird Festival

by David Champine-Park Ranger

The weather had been in question most of that week. Organizers were wondering what might happen and what type of "Plan B" they may have to use. In the end May 17, 2008, turned out to be a beautiful weather day. May 17, 2008, was the day of the Tule Lake Migratory Bird Festival. A day that over two hundred people came to Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge and celebrated the age old mystery of bird migration.

The day was filled with family fun activities of bird mist netting, live demonstration birds, air boat rides, guided refuge tours, food, arts and crafts and music by the Klamath Blues Society Jam Band. It was a day that was not only fun but educational. A day enjoyed by both young and old alike.

The refuge staff would like to thank all of the participants that made that day possible. We would also like to thank all of the people that came and enjoyed what we had to offer. Everyone is of course invited back for next years migratory bird festival. Exact date TBA.

Attention

Volunteers Needed!!!

Volunteers needed to help with Visitor Center operations. Volunteers needed for any time that the visitor center is open. If you like wildlife and helping to inform the public about them, then this is the opportunity to share the wonders of the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges.

For more information contact:

Park Ranger David Champine

at (530) 667-2231

E-mail: david_champine@fws.gov

Hope you will join us!

Attention

Loyal readers of Words from the Wetlands

In an effort to cut cost and become more of a paperless agency, we are offering you the opportunity to have this newsletter E-mailed to you. This means that the newsletter would be sent to your E-mail address in a PDF format. Adobe Acrobat reader is a free on line download. **NO** hard copy would be sent.

If you would like to take part in this opportunity send an E-mail to david_champine@fws.gov. Be sure to include your name and regular mail address so you can be removed from that data base.

Thank You



Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

American Bittern

Botaurus lentiginosus

By Michele Nuss—Park Ranger

A shy, secretive bird that doesn't care much for crowds, the American Bittern is generally heard more often than it is seen. The loud, distinctive "unk-a-chunk" call is unmistakable, as it resonates for long distances through a marsh, most often heard at dawn or dusk. Preferring a solitary life, the bittern spends most of its time quietly searching for fish and other aquatic tidbits as it slowly wades among dense reeds of marshes and wetland areas.

A bittern will stand perfectly still at the water's edge patiently watching and waiting to capture its prey in the water below. Its diet consists of small fish, eels, small snakes, insects and frogs.

Northern populations of American Bittern can be strongly migratory in areas where water freezes. In milder areas where water doesn't freeze, they are more likely to stay in the same area year round. Migrating birds winter along the Pacific coast, the Gulf Coast and the southern Atlantic Coast and as far south as Mexico and the Caribbean.

The American Bittern is a stocky, medium-sized wading bird with mottled, buff-brown streaked plumage, 23-34 inches in height with a wingspan of 3 feet. The long, thick bill is yellow, long legs are yellowish-green, and eyes are yellow. It is easy to confuse a bittern with juvenile black-crowned night herons, as size and coloration are similar. Clues to help distinguish between the two are a richer, more reddish-brown color in the bittern, but a more grayish-brown in young night-herons. Look for a more uniform color in the wings of the night-heron, while the bittern has darker, more contrasting flight

feathers compared to the rest of the wing. Night-herons have shorter, stouter bills than bitterns.

Unlike herons that will fly away when frightened, if a bittern is approached or alarmed, it prefers to remain completely still, and, by extending its neck and head upward, it "freezes", trusting that its concealing coloration will offer more protection than flying off.

While standing with its neck stretched up and bill pointed to the sky, it will sometimes sway slowly from side to side as if to imitate reeds waving in the breeze.



The American Bittern does not breed in colonies nor do they build "rookeries" which is typical nesting behavior of most herons. Instead, bitterns will build platform nests directly on the ground or raised slightly within dense wetland marshes. Usually the female bittern chooses the nesting site and builds a platform nest of reeds, cattails, sedges and lines it with grasses. While the male will defend a nesting territory, it is the female alone who incubates from 2-6 eggs and cares for the young. The eggs hatch in 24-28 days and the chicks leave the

nest when they are a week or two old. They stay close by and are fed by the female until they are about four weeks old. Their first flight may take place at around 7-8 weeks.

With patience, determination and a watchful eye on the edge of the marshes of Lower Klamath, Upper Klamath, Tule Lake or Klamath Marsh Refuges, you might have the fortunate luck of spotting the secretive and well-camouflaged American Bittern. Good luck and good birding!

KLAMATH BASIN WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION
Membership Application / Renewal

Name _____

Single \$15

Address _____

Family \$20

City / State / Zip _____

Sustaining \$35

Telephone _____

Benefactor \$50

E-Mail _____

*Mail to: Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association
4009 Hill Road, Tulelake, California 96134*

**US Fish and Wildlife Service
Klamath Basin NWR Complex
4009 Hill Road
Tulelake, CA 96134-9758
(530) 667-2231**

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Write or call Refuge Headquarters.**