

WILD NEWS

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Nature Program Calendar

January - March 2005

The White-Tails of the Refuge

By Jennifer Keyser

Comprising some 5,000 acres, the Refuge is the largest contiguous open space in the Denver metropolitan area. By preserving and restoring wildlife habitat the Refuge provides a home for one of North America's signature animals, the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*).

The white-tailed deer subspecies can be found from Maine through the Gulf Coast states and even into the Pacific Northwest; they prefer relatively open spaces to browse and thick undergrowth for shelter against both the elements and predators. While the Refuge is known for its population of mule deer ("mulies") the presence of an equal number of white-tails is a prime example of the meeting of plains and mountain zone species.

Both "white-tails" and mulies are 4-6 feet long and three or more feet high at the shoulder, but each has distinctive characteristics. White-tails have a broad brownish tail with a white underside that flashes like a white flag when alarmed. Mulies have thinner black tipped tails. In addition, white-tails have smaller ears than the mulies. When running white-tails move with a graceful lope, whereas mulies bound stiff-legged. Behavior also distinguishes these deer. The white-tails tend to be skittish and stay in the timbered areas along the south side of the Refuge, whereas mulies usually seem unperturbed by visitors and roam in more open areas.

Refuge biologists recently concluded a study examining several possible reasons for a fawn population decline in the last five years. Reasons include the impact of drought and greater predation by coyotes. Details of this on-going study can be found on the following link <http://www.fws.gov/rockymountainarsenal/wildlife/wildlife.htm>.

Sources:

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Website. <http://www.fws.gov/rockymountainarsenal/overview/overview.htm>.

Colorado Division of Wildlife Website. <http://wildlife.state.co.us/Education/mammalsguide/deer.asp>.

National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mammals. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1997.

Nature Programs

JANUARY—MARCH 2006

Reservations are required for these FREE popular programs. Space is limited. **Call 303-289-0930 to register.** Please dress for the weather and all children must be accompanied by an adult. For the protection of wildlife, please leave pets at home. Assistance dogs are welcome.



JANUARY

Frosty Photo Tour

Saturday Jan 7 8:00 - 11:00 am
Jack Frost may be nipping at your nose, but some of the best Refuge photo opportunities are during the winter! A nature photographer will provide photo tips and take you into the field for some shutter bug action.

Winter Raptors

Sunday Jan 15 9:00 - 11:00 am
It's peak season for winter raptors. Become an expert in identifying these birds while they're perched or flying.

Eagles on Holiday

Saturday Jan 21 1:00 - 3:00 pm

The Refuge is a great place to see and learn about eagles. Bring binoculars and discover what makes this majestic creature so mesmerizing.

For The Birds

Saturday Jan 28 12:00 - 3:00 pm
Head out into the field and learn to identify some of the common (and not so common) species by sight and sound during this beginning birding program.

White Flags

Sunday Jan 29 9:00 - 11:00 am
Learn some fascinating facts about the phenomenal white-tailed deer's superb senses and its ability to live near man. During this fun ride search for these skittish, elegant mammals.



FEBRUARY

No Bones About It

Saturday Feb 4 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Eyes on front I hunt; eyes on side I hide....Use your detective skills to examine skulls, teeth and bones to learn about animal behavior and adaptations.

Wildlife, Camera, Action

Saturday Feb 11 8:00 - 11:00 am
Bring a camera, zoom lenses, and

lots of film for a chance to capture some remarkable winter wildlife.

Sky Tigers

Sunday Feb 12 9:00 - 11:00 am
Eyes to the sky! Head out for a hootin' time in search of great horned owls. Be sure to bring your binoculars and camera!

Where Eagles Soar

Sunday Feb 19 9:00 - 11:00 am
During winter, the Refuge is a great place to see the symbol of our country - the magnificent bald eagle. Watch for these awe-inspiring birds and possibly some other wildlife during this special tour.

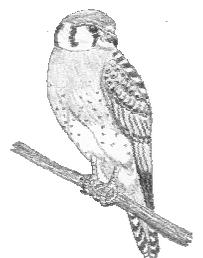
Winter Residents

Sunday Feb 26 9:00 am - 11:00 am
Explore the Refuge's snowy landscape discovering the creatures that stay for winter and the ones who just visit when it's cold.

MARCH

Friends of a Feather

Saturday Mar 4 12:00 - 3:00 pm
Birders unite! Using our Bird Checklist, search for feathered winter dwellers during this guided journey.



Refuge Manager Tour

Saturday Mar 11 10:00 - noon
Learn the inside scoop during this tour guided by the Refuge Manager!

Shutterbug Tour

Sunday Mar 12 8:00 - 11:00 am
Search the Refuge for some spectacular wild shots with your camera. Recommended for adults.

What Is All That Smoke About?

Saturday Mar 18 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Prescribed fire is an important habitat management tool that is used to maintain the health and vigor of plant and animal communities. See a demonstration of equipment used and tour through previously burned sites.

Spring Fling

Sunday Mar 19 9:00 - 11:00 am
It's time for the Refuge to "spring" to life. Discover changes that happen in the plant and animal world

as winter leaves and spring arrives. This program is especially for kids.

Tracks 'n Scat

Saturday Mar 25 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Animals leave behind lots of clues to let you know where they've been. Learn to become a wildlife detective and see if you can discover what animals left their clues behind!

Scouting For Wildlife

Sunday Mar 26 9:00 - 11:00 am
Calling all scouts! A great opportunity to observe the wild side of the Refuge on a guided hike through woodlands, wetlands and grasslands.



► WILD RIDES ◀

Two hour trolley-tram wildlife viewing tour. Reservations required.

Saturdays from 10:00 am - noon
Sundays from 1:00 - 3:00 pm

► WILD TREKS ◀ Drop-In Program

Enjoy the sights and sounds of winter. Reservations not required to hike the trails. Saturdays and Sundays 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

► E NEWS ◀

Help us save paper and mailing costs! If you would prefer to receive an electronic issue of Wild-News instead of one in the mail, please send an email to rockymountainarsenal@fws.gov.

► PUBLIC MEETING ◀

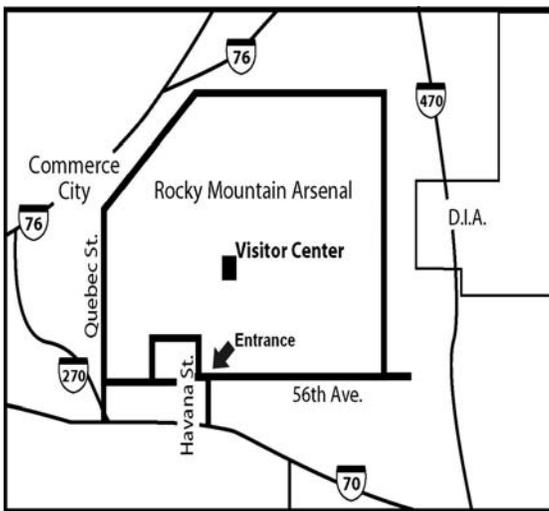
The Service is hosting a special public scoping meeting **February 25 at 4:00 p.m.** in the Visitor Center regarding potential Refuge plans for managing the fisheries and recreation fee fishing program. Also, aquatic survey sampling results will be provided during the presentation. Your attendance to provide input and suggestions is encouraged. For more information call Judson Spicer at 303-289-0572.

► VOLUNTEERS ◀

The Refuge Needs You!

Discover America's best kept secret! Become a volunteer and make a difference at your Refuge. Contact Jeannine Kimble for more information.

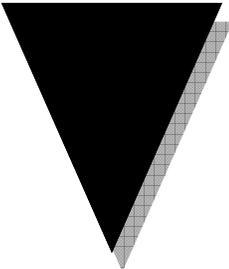
303-289-0471



DIRECTIONS

Enter the Refuge at 56th Avenue and Havana St. Proceed 1.5 miles to check-in at the Visitor Center.

~



The Refuge will be closed on Jan 1, 2006 and also April 1 - May 31, 2006. We apologize for any inconvenience.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Commerce City, CO 80022-1748

PRSRT STD
Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
PERMIT G-77