

WILD NEWS



Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Nature Program Calendar April - June 2005

The Wetlands *JEWEL* of the Refuge

Jennifer Keyser

If you walk the Refuge's trails and see a glimmering, lace-winged insect doing aerial acrobatics, it's probably the common green darner dragonfly (*Anax junius*). The green darner is one of the most familiar dragonflies and also one of the largest, with a body length between 2 ¼ and 3 ½ inches. Both sexes have a bright green thorax; males have a bright blue abdomen while the female's abdomen is pink/brown/green.



The green darner can be admired for more than its beauty. It is a superb flier, with two pairs of wings that can each beat

independently. It can reach a speed up to 35 miles per hour, fly backwards and also pivot in tight circles. These flying skills help it pursue mosquitoes and other insects harmful to the Refuge's birds and mammals. The green darner catches its prey on the wing and can consume nearly two-thirds of its weight daily.

The green darner is a vital part of wetlands ecosystems, both as predator and food for other animals. Its larvae (naiads) feed on aquatic insects, tadpoles, worms, and small fish. The naiads, in turn are prey for larger fish, crayfish and water

birds. It's essential for us to ensure the continued existence of this showy carnivore. Much of the green darner's survival depends on conserving wetlands and ponds and maintaining a healthy aquatic environment, all ongoing concerns of the Refuge.

Sources:

National Wildlife Federation Website.
www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/mosquitoessummer.cfm

Fairfax County Public Schools Website.
http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/StratfordLandingES/Ecology/mpages/green_darner.htm

NATURE PROGRAMS

April-June 2005

Reservations are required for these **FREE** popular programs. Space is limited. Call (303) 289-0930 to register. Please dress according to the weather. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Assistance dogs are welcome.

APRIL

Hippity Hop with Refuge Rabbit

Saturday April 2 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Hop on over for a fun time! Create a craft, play Bunny Bingo, and then help us find Refuge Rabbit's eggs around Lake Mary. Recommended for children ages 4-10. Parent or guardian must be present.

Wildlife Watch

Sunday April 10 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Connect with wildlife! Learn to master the proper techniques and skills to observe wildlife responsibly through this fun activity-filled workshop. Recommended for ages 12 and older.

All American Kids

Fishing Derby

Saturday April 23 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Attention Kids! The Refuge, in partnership with Wal-Mart, is pleased to offer this exciting fishing competition for kids of all ages. Prizes will be awarded in each age group: 5-8, 9-12, and 13-16 years old. Kids age 4 and under are welcome to fish from Small Fry Pond. Refreshments will be provided. Kids 16 years of age must have a State of Colorado Fishing License. Register early!

Fishing Clinic

Sunday April 10 9:00 - 11:00 am

Get prepared for the season and that "big catch"! This clinic will help fine tune your skills to reel in the big ones (and the small fry!) from the Refuge lakes.

Friends of a Feather

Saturday April 16 8:00 - 11:00 am

Don't miss the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the Refuge's winged spring arrivals! Look for northern orioles, goldfinches, warblers, and Colorado's state bird - the lark bunting.

Evening Shades Photo Tour

Sunday April 17 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Shutterbugs rejoice! Catch the shades of evening light and keep your eyes peeled for some dramatic shots of wildlife and Refuge scenes.

Earth Day Planting

Sunday April 24 9:00 - 11:00 am

Bring a pair of gardening gloves and help restore the Refuge! Celebrate Earth Day by participating in this native prairie plant-a-thon.

Bike the Refuge

Saturday April 30 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Enjoy the scenes of the Refuge from the seat of your bicycle on this leisurely guided tour. Fat, puncture-proof tires are strongly recommended. Helmets required.

MAY

Froggy Night Out

Saturday May 7 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Do you know the difference between frogs and toads? Come prepared for an adventure on this hike to observe nature's night shift and listen to an evening frog chorus.

RMA Wildlife Society Birding Tour

Sunday May 8 8:00 am - noon

Start your day out with chirping, trilling, and warbling by joining this special birding tour sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society. An expert birder will guide you through Refuge woodlands, wetlands, and prairie in search of your favorite fine-feathered friends!

Spring Photo Tour

Sunday May 15 8:00 - 10:00 am

Pack your camera and extra film for some shutterbug action. The migrants are here and there's lots of wildlife to be seen, so click away!

Poking Around the Pond

Saturday May 21 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Grab an old pair of sneakers and prepare to get wet! Find out what is hiding under the rocks and in the mud, or swimming around the pond.

The Argentine Connection

Sunday May 22 9:00 - 11:00 am

What does the Refuge have in common with Argentina? Swainson's hawks! Join a Refuge naturalist in search of these local nesters and learn about their long journey.

Burrow Babes

Saturday May 28 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Baby prairie dogs are venturing out of their burrows for the first time! Keep your camera handy for pictures of the pups, and you might even spot a burrowing owl or two.

JUNE

Refuge Night Hike

Saturday June 4 6:00 - 8:00 pm
What critters come out at night? What sounds can be heard after dark? Join us on this special hike and discover the Refuge night life.

RMA Wildlife Society Photo Tour

Saturday June 11 6:00-10:00 am

Owls Underground

Sunday June 12 9:00 - 11:00 am
Join wildlife biologist Noelle Ronan on this exploration and learn more about the small, spindly-legged burrowing owls that visit the Refuge each summer.

Prairie Blooms

Saturday June 18 1:00 - 3:00 pm
The prairie is bursting with color! Take this guided hike to photograph and learn about these spectacular blooms. Take home a package of wildflower seeds to start your own prairie garden.

Evening Under the Stars

Sunday June 19 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Take this slow and easy hayride and watch the setting sun give way to a starlit sky. Look and listen for raccoons, owls, skunks, and other night critters.

Family Fishing Fun

Saturday June 25 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Don't spend the afternoon inside! Bring the family to the Refuge lakes for an unforgettable outdoor fishing adventure. Take home a souvenir photo of your catch. No pole? Don't worry - we have a limited number available to borrow.

Bike the Refuge

Sunday June 26 9:00 - 11:00 am
Join a Refuge naturalist on this tranquil bike ride through woodlands, prairie, and wetlands. Fat, puncture-proof tires are strongly recommended. Helmet required.

Fishing News Go Fish! - The 2005 Refuge public fishing season is here! Beginning April 16 through October 9, catch-and-release fishing will be offered at the Refuge lakes each weekend from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm. A recreation fishing fee of \$3.00 per person is required along with a State of Colorado Fishing License for anglers 16 years and older. Anglers must attend a one-time orientation before fishing. Please check our website for orientation dates, rules, and regulations.

Extended Hours for Fishing

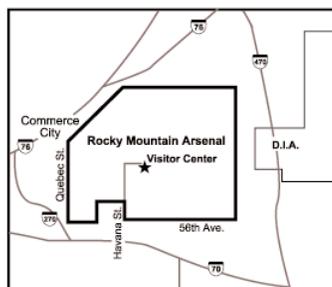
On the following dates, public fishing will be available from 8:00 am - sunset. Please note the sunset times when checking in at the Visitor Center.
Sunday April 17 | Saturday May 7 | Sunday May 15 | Saturday June 4 | Sunday June 19

Special Free Fishing Days

SaturdayMay 14Fishing Fever Special Event
SaturdayJune 4National Trails & Fishing Day

Photo Gallery Showing - Seasons of Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

Coming in May! Don't miss this special showing from Refuge photographer Dave Showalter. His month to month collection of spectacular wildlife and scenic Refuge photos will be on exhibit in the Visitor Center from May - October. A special announcement will be available on our website with more information about the collection including a special date to meet Mr. Showalter.



Directions to the Refuge:

Enter the Refuge at 56th Ave. and Havana St. Proceed 1 1/2 miles to the Visitor Center and check-in.

Reservations are not required for the following:

FISHING FEVER SPECIAL EVENT

Saturday May 14 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Have you caught the fishing fever? We have, and you can too at the premier of this free family special event! Bring your pole and get ready to reel in the big ones! Try your luck at the Refuge Wheel of Fortune, learn how to tie flies, get fishing tips from the experts, and watch a taxidermist prepare a fish for mounting. Very young anglers can fish at Small Fry Pond. Wildlife viewing tours will be offered continuously through the day. A light lunch will be available for purchase from the RMA Wildlife Society. All fishing is catch-and-release, no live bait allowed. Anglers 16 years and older must have a valid State of Colorado Fishing License. Check our website for event updates and information about parking.

Wild Rides

Saturdays 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sundays 1:00 - 3:00 pm
See spring at its best by taking our two-hour trolley-tram wildlife viewing tour.

Wild Treks Drop-In Program

Saturdays and Sundays 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Drop-in and explore the Refuge! See what's springing up along the trails and visit the Wildlife Learning Lab.

Volunteer Open House

Sunday June 5 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Discover how you can make a difference for the community and the Refuge while doing something you enjoy! Stop in and learn all about our Refuge Volunteer Program and the opportunities available.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Building 111
Commerce City, CO 80022-1748

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