

Refuge Ramble

Sunday September 26
9:00 - 11:00 am

Take some time to enjoy the great outdoors on this guided hike through wetlands, prairie, and woodlands.

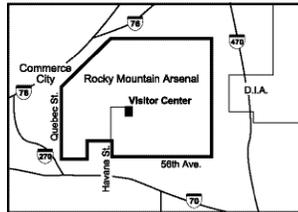
News from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society

Thank you to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for installing the Wildlife Web Cam – a task that required skill and extensive patience during the last few months. The new webcam enables you to view wildlife activity in the Lake Mary and Lake Ladora areas from your computer. Simply click onto <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov> and then onto the webcam button. The project was funded by a Pathways to Nature grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Wild Birds Unlimited, supplemented by the Society and the Service. A computer in the exhibit room of the Visitor Center also enables visitors to look for wildlife in these areas.

PLEASE NOTE:
The Visitor Center facility will be closed for two weekends during the summer for the installation of new carpet, however, the Refuge will continue to be open for fishing, tours, and trail use. Nature programs will be held as scheduled. We ask that drop-in visitors and anglers stop and check-in at a tent that will be set up behind the Visitor Center. Seating and water will be available in the tent. Restroom facilities are located at Lake Mary and Lake Ladora. We apologize for the inconvenience while we make this improvement to the Visitor Center.

Directions to the Refuge:

Enter the Refuge at 56th Avenue and Havana. Parking is available at the Visitor Center.



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Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
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Visit our website at <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov>.

WILD NEWS



Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Nature Program Calendar July - September 2004

Public Input We Want To Hear From You!

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR is your refuge and the public has an important role in refuge planning. On a recurring basis, the Refuge staff prepares plans and other documents to guide our wildlife, habitat and public use programs. This is your Refuge, and your programs, and we want to know what you think about how we're doing. Visit the Refuge web-page at: <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov>, and "click" on Public Input. There you will find any draft documents such as management plans, environmental assessments, and compatibility determinations that are available for public review. At times we won't be seeking comments on any documents and other times, there may be multiple draft documents available for review and comment. Comment periods will vary, depending on the kind of document we are posting, but, always for at least 14 days. You can respond via e-mail directly to the website, or write to us with your comments or questions.

So, let us know what you think. Check the website a couple times a month, ask questions, make comments and get involved in your Refuge.

A Resident Reptile The BULLSNAKE

Illustration by Liz Blesiot

If you are walking the trails at the Refuge and see a large, spotted snake it's probably not a rattlesnake. It's more likely you have seen a bullsnake, a common resident of the Refuge with an appearance similar to a rattler's. The bullsnake is a heavy-bodied snake that varies in length from three to five feet. Its body is beige to light brown with dark brown or black blotches. The belly of the bullsnake is yellowish with black spots.

Bullsnares occupy a large range. They can be found from Canada south to Texas, and from Colorado to Illinois.

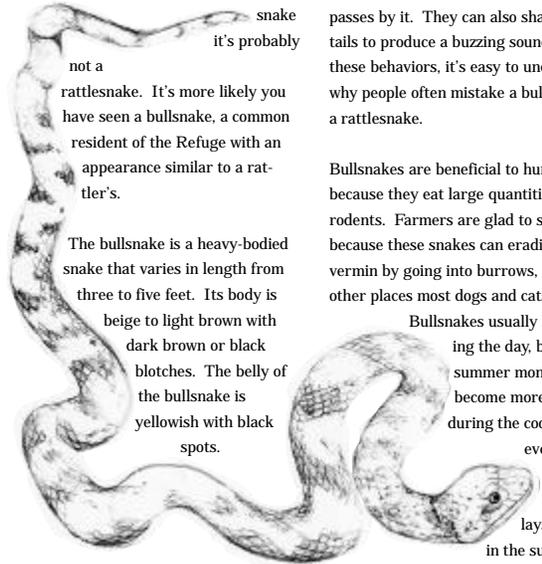
Even though bullsnares are not venomous, it's still best to be cautious if you see one. Some can be docile while others can get quite aggressive, particularly towards someone attempting to handle them. When agitated, bullsnares can make a loud, raspy hiss.

The sound comes from a flap of cartilage in front of the trachea that vibrates as air passes by it. They can also shake their tails to produce a buzzing sound. Given these behaviors, it's easy to understand why people often mistake a bullsnake for a rattlesnake.

Bullsnares are beneficial to humans because they eat large quantities of rodents. Farmers are glad to see them because these snakes can eradicate vermin by going into burrows, holes and other places most dogs and cats can't go.

Bullsnares usually hunt during the day, but in hot summer months they become more active during the cool evenings. The female lays her eggs in the summer, usually 5 to 19 laid in loose soil. Incubation is about 50 to 80 days after which the hatchlings emerge.

Bullsnares are not endangered, however they do face some threats. They move slowly and are often killed while crossing roads or basking on them. Habitat destruction, along with road mortality are two factors that imperil the otherwise hardy bullsnake.



REFUGE VIEWS

Dean Rundle, Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Wow! What a great spring we've had at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR! On April 17, we were honored by the presence of Interior Secretary Norton, Senator Allard, Representative Beauprez, Representative DeGette, Asst. Army Secretary Prosch and many other dignitaries to celebrate the transfer of 5,000 acres from the Army to the Fish and Wildlife Service. It was a fine Colorado morning and those in attendance painted a vivid picture of all the people and groups that made this Refuge possible. We were graced by the presence of the children of pioneers who grew up on this land before WWII, retired Army and Shell employees, volunteers, Wildlife Society members, the entire Commerce City Council, representatives from conservation groups, and a myriad of state and local agencies. The event reminded me that the success the Refuge enjoys results from the work and love of many people and the critical role that partnerships play in wildlife conservation.

Since April, our visitation has grown with 250 - 500 people visiting their Refuge every weekend to fish, walk the trails, enjoy interpretive nature programs and just enjoy wildlife in the shadow of the city. The "critters" are doing well too. Our nesting bald eagles are raising two babies (check the photos on the refuge website at <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov>), and so far, our expanding prairie dog population has not been hit with plague this year.

There's a lot of biological work going on at your Refuge this summer. Refuge biologists have been logging in numerous hours with daily field work putting radio collars on mule deer and white-tailed deer fawns. That study will help us better understand the dynamics of our deer herds and the relationships between deer, predators, climate and habitat. There's also a new study on bats at the Refuge which should be well underway by July.

Lots of good things are happening at your National Wildlife Refuge. I hope a trip or two to the Arsenal are part of your plans for a great summer season!

Dean Rundle, Refuge Manager

Reservations are not required for the following programs.

Wild Treks Drop-in Program

Saturdays and Sundays

8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Don't let the dog days of summer slow you down - come on out to your Refuge to relax and enjoy! Wander through the Wildlife Learning Lab and try out some new activities. See what the bees are up to in the honeybee tree. Browse through the Wildlife Society's bookstore. Go for a hike around the lakes or through the woodlands and look for resident wildlife, migratory birds, and showy blooms. There's something for the entire family!

Go Fish'n

Saturdays and Sundays

8:00 am - sunset

Refuge lakes are a popular attraction for anglers of all

ages. Here's your opportunity to get "hooked." Each weekend until October 10, you can enjoy catch-and-release fishing. A recreation fee of \$3.00 per day for anglers 18 years of age and older is required to fish. Check out our website to learn more about the fishing program.

Scout Packs

Saturdays and Sundays

8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Calling all scouts! Head out to the Refuge trails for some wildlife fun! Check out our backpacks filled with field study guides, binoculars, and activities and get on your way to earning badge merits.

Reservations are required for these popular programs. Space is limited. Call (303) 289-0930 to register.

For all programs please wear sturdy shoes and dress accordingly to the weather. If you have questions about which programs would be appropriate for certain ages, please ask when making your reservation. All children must be accompanied by an adult. All programs and activities are FREE. The driver must show a photo I.D. to enter the Refuge. Please sign-in at the Visitor Center upon arrival. Assistance dogs are welcome.

Wild Rides

Sundays 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Summer evenings offer some spectacular wildlife viewing! Join us for this two-hour guided tour as we search for hawks, deer, coyotes, and other Refuge wildlife. Don't forget your cameras and binoculars - you never know what you might see! Our apologies - the tour will not be available on July 18 & August 29.

JULY

Fishing Clinic

Saturday July 3 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Learn hands-on fishing techniques and get expert advice from the Refuge's Arsenal Anglers.

A "Wild" 4th

Sunday July 8 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Wondering what to do until the fireworks begin? Visit your national wildlife refuge for some daytime fun!

Meet The Natives

Saturday July 10 10:00 am - noon

Learn how to use native plants in your home landscape. Conserve water while maintaining a colorful display.

Birding Basics

Sunday July 11 7:00 - 10:00 am

Are you a beginning birder? This workshop will help you get started with this popular hobby.

Going Batty

Saturday July 17

8:30 - 10:30 pm

Discover the facts about bats and learn why they are so important to us. See a mist net demonstration and look for these wonderful creatures.



Wildlife Watch

Sunday July 18 2:00 - 6:00 pm

Master your outdoor skills through this workshop designed to sharpen your sights and senses. Offered by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Owls Underground

Saturday July 24 10:00 am - noon

Look for these small spindly-legged owls that nest in prairie dog burrows at the Refuge each summer.

Photo Workshop

Friday July 30 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Join photographers Suzanne O'Neill and Dave Showalter on this photo excursion sponsored by the RMA Wildlife Society.

Bike the Refuge

Sunday July 25 9:00 - 11:00 am

Ride your bike past the Refuge lakes, prairie dog towns, and woodlands. Helmets required. Fat, puncture-proof tires recommended.

AUGUST

Photo Workshop

Sunday August 1 7:00 - 10:00 am

Learn some photo tricks of the trade from expert photographer Dave Showalter.

Home Is Habitat

Saturday August 7

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Teachers! Learn how to use the "Home Is Habitat" curriculum to lead your own field trips at the Refuge. Re-certification credits offered. Call (303) 289-0931 to register.

Friends of a Feather

Sunday August 8 7:00 - 10:00 am

Expand your bird checklist and learn more about our fine feathered friends.

Animals of the Marsh

Saturday August 14 10:00 am - noon

Who is hiding in the marsh? Learn about different trapping techniques used to identify reptiles, amphibians, and other marsh animals.

Bike the Refuge

Sunday August 15 9:00 - 11:00 am

Enjoy nature while biking wooded trails full of "wild" surprises. Helmets required.

Summer Raptors

Saturday August 21

10:00 am - noon

Sherry Skipper will lead this interactive tour of the Refuge to look for one of our summer visitors, the Swainson's hawk. Discover the differences between Swainson's and other raptors and how to identify them in flight.



Refuge Ramble

Sunday August 22 9:00 - 11:00 am

Explore the different habitats, plants, and wildlife on this fun guided hike.

Song Dogs

Saturday August 28 7:00 - 9:00 pm

The lonesome howl of a coyote travels far on a summer evening. During the day, these "song dogs" can be seen hunting solo or in groups of three or four. This expedition will lead you on a search for coyotes.

Moonlit Hayride

Sunday August 29 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Join us on this leisurely hayride under a full moon and discover some Refuge nightlife!

SEPTEMBER

I Spy

Saturday September 4 10:00 am - noon

Have fun on this mystery exploration and test your observational skills. See if you can spy the tracks, bones, feathers, and other signs animals leave behind to determine who's been there before.

Photo Tour

Sunday September 5 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Catch the long days of summer winding down on film and get that special evening photo.

Kids Day

Saturday September 11 10:00 am - noon

Kids! This special "wild" program is just for you! Jump aboard the trolley for wildlife bingo, then look for clues on a scavenger hunt at Lake Mary. Have your photo taken with Honker the Blue Goose.

Friends of a Feather

Sunday September 12 7:00 - 10:00 am

Take advantage of this wonderful birding opportunity!

Community Service Day

Saturday September 18 9:00 am - noon

Calling all students, scouts, and anyone else who wants to pitch in on a Refuge project. Come out to help clean-up YOUR Refuge. Bring gardening gloves if possible. Long pants and long sleeve shirts are recommended but not required. Recommend for ages 9 and up.

Bike the Refuge

Sunday September 19 9:00 - 11:00 am

Ride your bike past prairie dog towns, under cottonwoods, and alongside waterfowl-filled wetlands. Helmets are required. Fat, puncture-proof tires recommended.

Refuge Nightlife

Saturday September 25 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Become acquainted with the Refuge's nightlife: chorus frogs, howling coyotes and the rustling of native prairie plants on this evening guided hike.

Register early for these FREE activities by calling (303) 289-0930

Visit our website at <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov>.