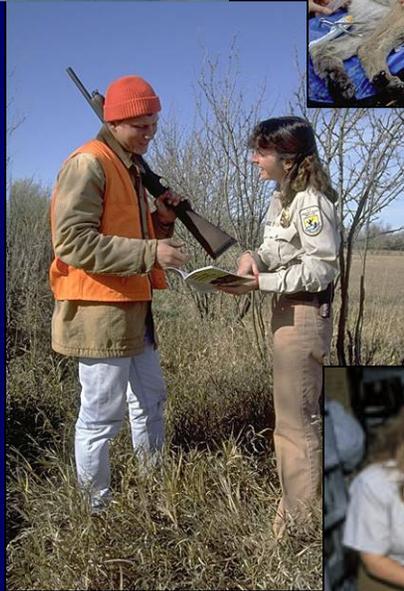
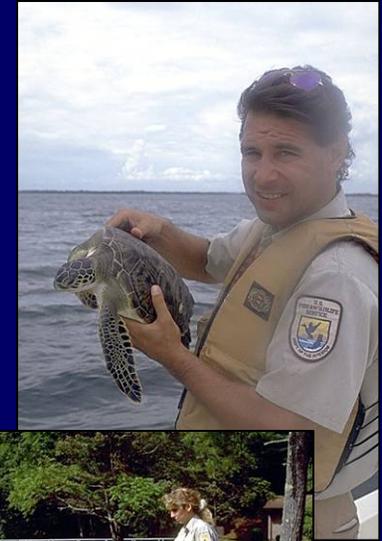


# The NWRS Birding Initiative Connecting Birders to Refuges



*Photo by Jerry Goffe ©*

# The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



# The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

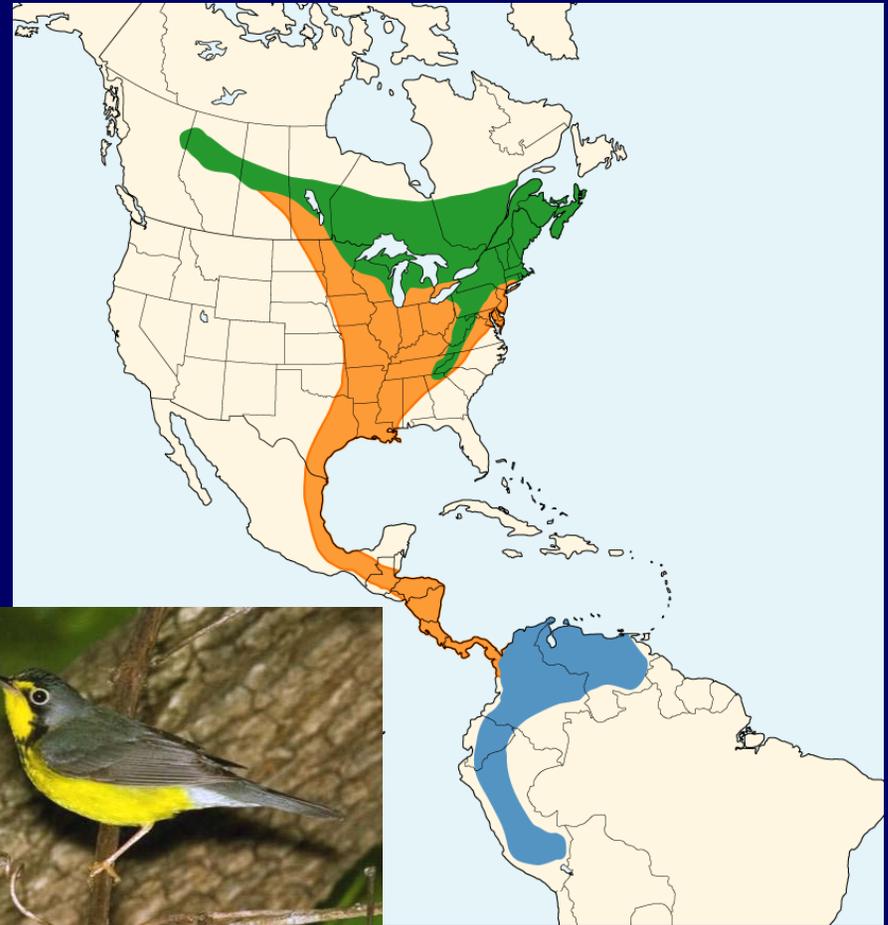
## Division of Migratory Bird Management



*The principal Federal agency charged with protecting and enhancing the populations and habitat of more than 800 species of birds that spend all or part of their lives in the United States.*

# The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Migratory Bird Management

- Supports habitat conservation work under five major bird plans:
  - North American Waterfowl Management Plan
  - U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan
  - North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
  - Partners in Flight
  - North American Bird Conservation Initiative



Canada Warbler migratory route

# The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Migratory Bird Management

- Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp program (Duck Stamp).
- Conducts waterfowl population surveys.
- Works with neotropical migrants, shorebirds, waterbirds, etc.



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System



- Manages nearly **154** million acres for the benefit of wildlife and people.
- The very first refuges were established to protect wading birds and seabirds.



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System



- Many Refuges were established as breeding, migrating or wintering grounds for migratory waterfowl, especially in the 1930's. Most also benefit a diversity of fish and wildlife species.



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System

- Six priority public uses on refuges, defined by law:
  - **Wildlife Observation**
  - Wildlife Photography
  - Hunting
  - Fishing
  - Environmental Education
  - Interpretation



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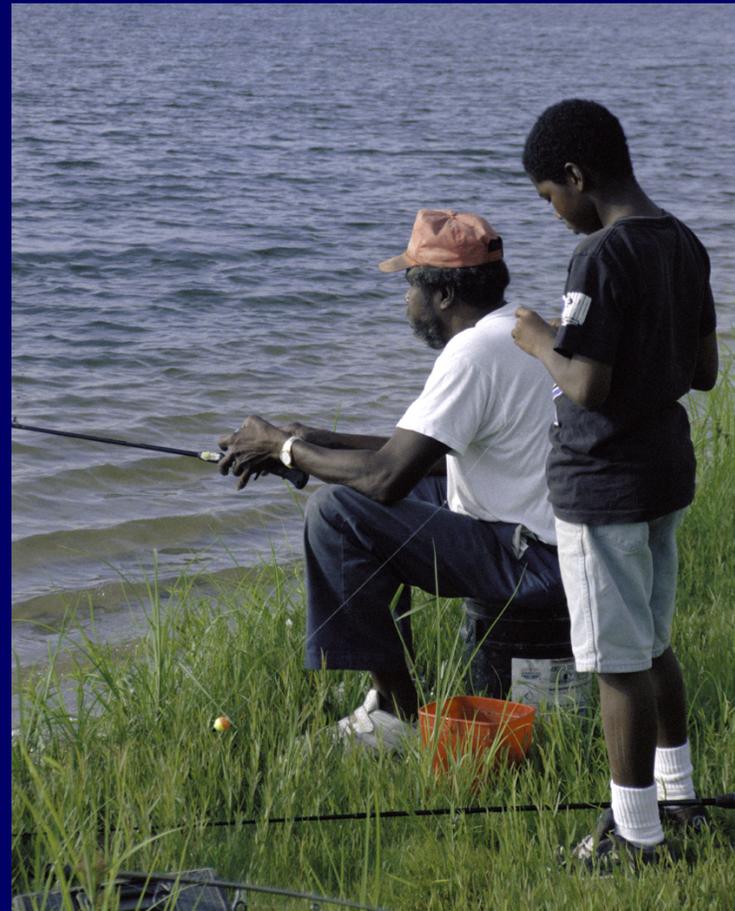
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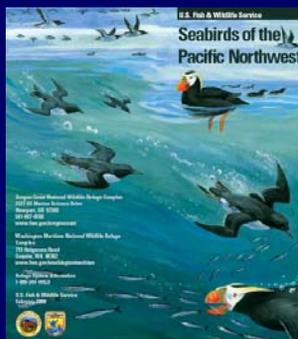
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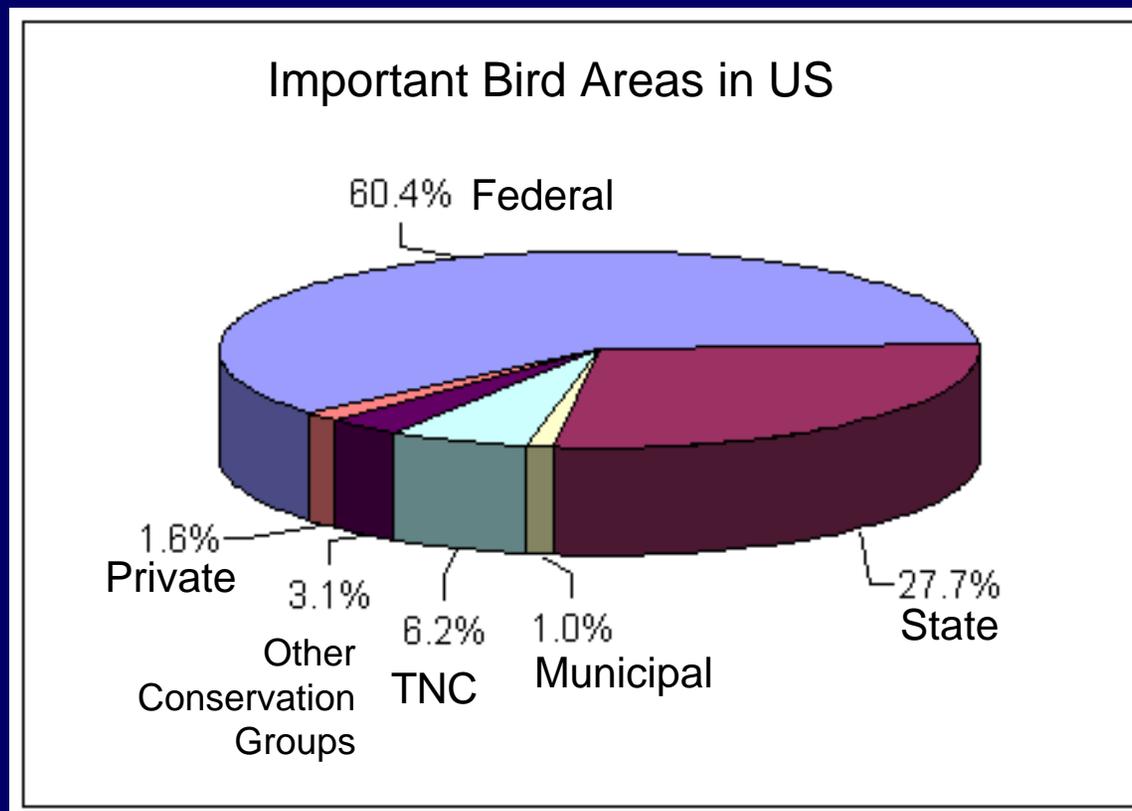
# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System



- More than 40 million visitors
- 75% participate in wildlife observation or photography

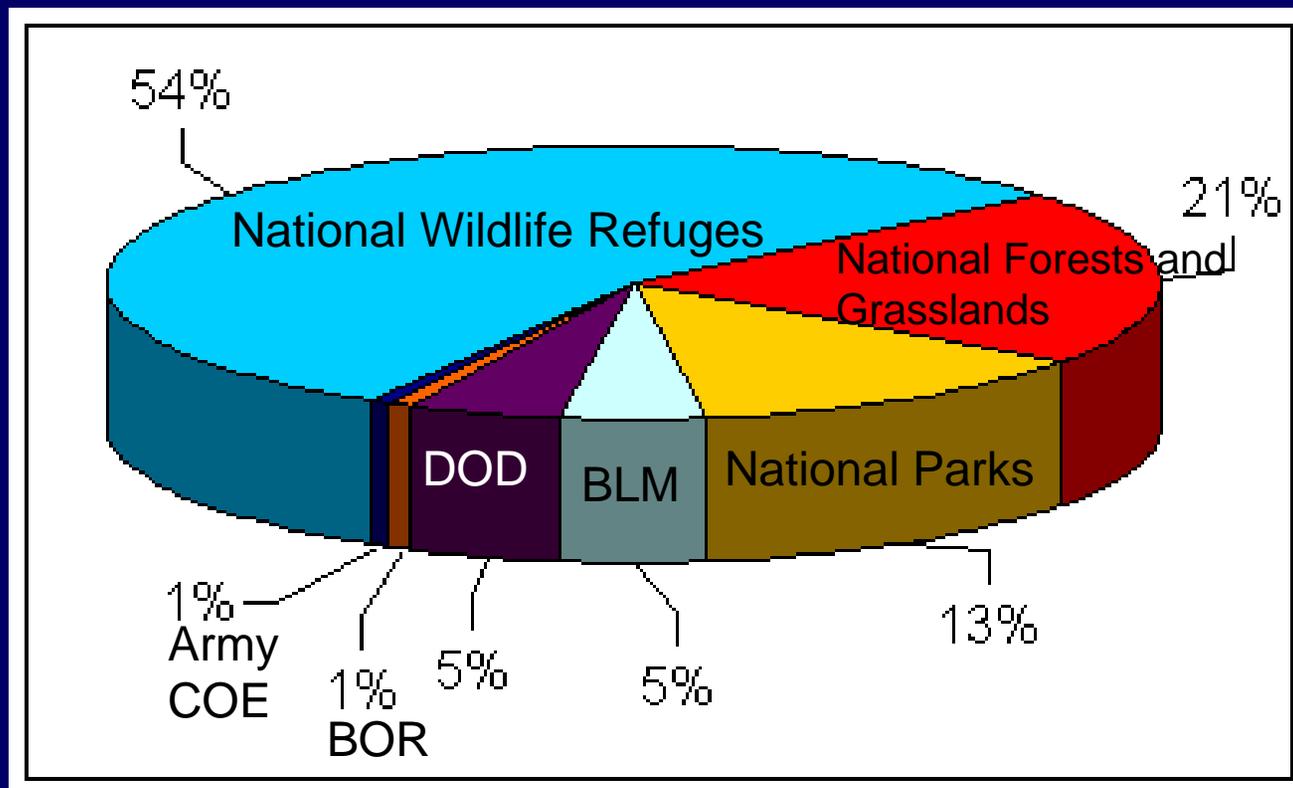
# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System

- IBA (Important Bird Area) is a site providing essential habitat to one or more species of breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds.



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System

One-third of all globally Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the U.S. are on refuges.



# Sweden



# England



# National Wildlife Refuge System



- 35 million visitors spending generated \$1.7 billion in regional economies.
- 82% of expenditures generated by non-consumptive activities.
- Local residents account for 13% of expenditures, outside visitors 87%.

*Banking on Nature, 2006*

# The Birding Community

- Birders are an untapped support base for the FWS and for the National Wildlife Refuge System.





*Photo by Jerry Goffe©*

# National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative

- Birders enjoying a quality experience are likely to become committed to the FWS and the Refuge System.
- Birder Friendly Refuges
- Refuge Friendly Birders



# National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative

- Welcome and Orient Birders
- Sharing Birder Skills
- Interpretation and Education
- Facilities
- Citizen Science
- Visitor Center Bird Feeding Stations
- Nest Boxes and Platforms
- Family Radio Use
- Partnerships
- Community Relations
- Duck Stamp
- The Big Sit!

# The “Birder Friendly” Refuge

- Three main elements:
  - Welcome and Orient Birders
  - On-site Programs and Activities
  - Outreach
- Elements were identified and prioritized by the NWRS Birding Team.
- Supported by the Visitor Services Standards and Handbook







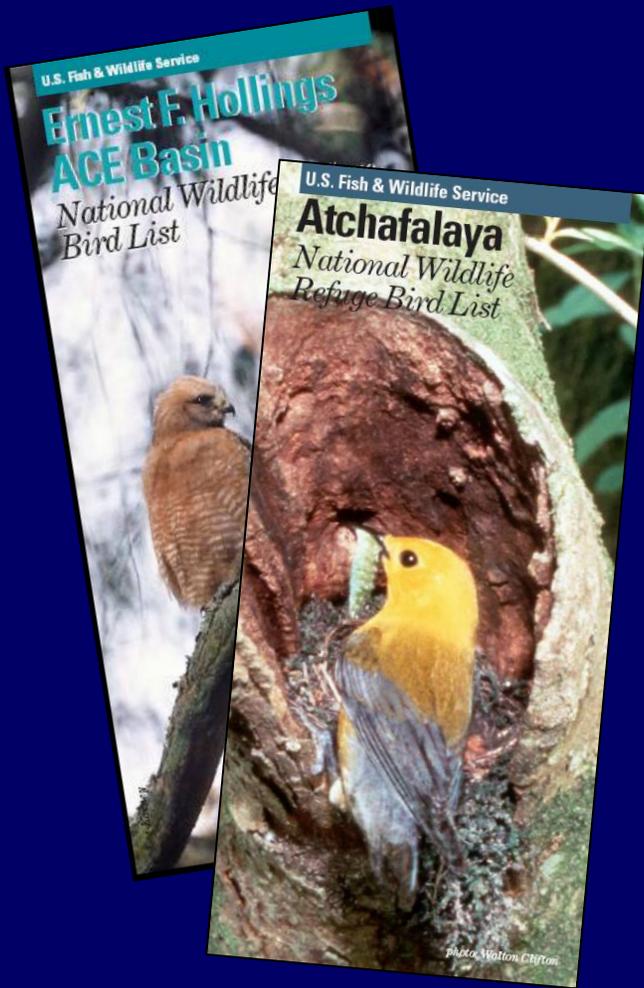






# Welcome and Orient Birders

## Bird Checklists



- Avid birders (bar-graph format)
- Casual birders (specialty and/or common birds with images)
- Available online and on-site after hours



## Seasonal Abundance

- █** ABUNDANT: Present in moderate to large numbers, and easily found in appropriate habitat at the right time of year.
- ▬** COMMON: Present in small to moderate numbers, and usually can be found in appropriate habitat at the right time of year.
- ▬▬** UNCOMMON: Present in small numbers, and sometimes—but not always—found with some effort in appropriate habitat at the right time of year.
- ▬▬▬** OCCASIONAL: Occurs annually in very small numbers. Not to be expected on any given day, but some species might be found with extended effort over the course of the appropriate season(s).
- ▬▬▬▬** RARE: Occurs less than annually, but there tends to be a pattern over time at the right time of year in appropriate habitat; 4 or more records in last 10 years.
- .....** ACCIDENTAL: Represents an exceptional occurrence that might not be repeated again for years; 3 or fewer records in last 10 years.
- IRRUPTIVE: Represents an irruptive species whose numbers are highly variable from year to year. There may be small to even large numbers present in one year, while in another year it may be absent altogether.

## Special Flags (maximum of 8 per refuge)

- |          |             |  |
|----------|-------------|--|
| <b>*</b> | Breeding    | (shown at end of species name); The species is known or suspected to have nested on the refuge, or is known to nest locally. |
| <b>B</b> | BCC Species | Species is on the USFWS list of Birds of Conservation Concern.   |
| <b>E</b> | Endangered  | On the federal ESA endangered list.  |
| <b>X</b> | Exotic      | Introduced or escaped species.   |
| <b>#</b> | Extirpated  | Species occurring formerly that no longer occurs on refuge. Also called Historical.  |

# Welcome and Orient Birders

## Visitor Enhancements

- Safe, well-maintained towers, boardwalks, blinds, etc.
- Sheltered from the elements
- Consider birder input in design stage



# Welcome and Orient Birders After Hours Information



- Near refuge entrance, visitor center, office, or fee booth
- Birder-friendly elements include:
  - Sightings list or board
  - Bird checklists
  - Maps
  - Birdfinding guide

# Welcome and Orient Birders

## Explain Closed Areas

- Identify reasons:
  - Nesting
  - Roosting
  - Sanctuary
- Direct to comparable alternative sites

 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Where to Find the Birds of Yaquina Head

**Legend**

-  Lighthouse
-  Seabirds
-  Shorebirds
-  Bald Eagles
-  Harbor Seals
-  Tidepools



 Photo by Glenn P. Hill

 Photo by Glenn P. Hill

 Photo by Glenn P. Hill

# On-site Programs and Activities

## Bird Walks



- Can be led by staff, volunteers, Friends or local bird clubs.
- Programs for families, children, school, or youth groups

# On-site Programs and Activities

## Bird Feeding Stations

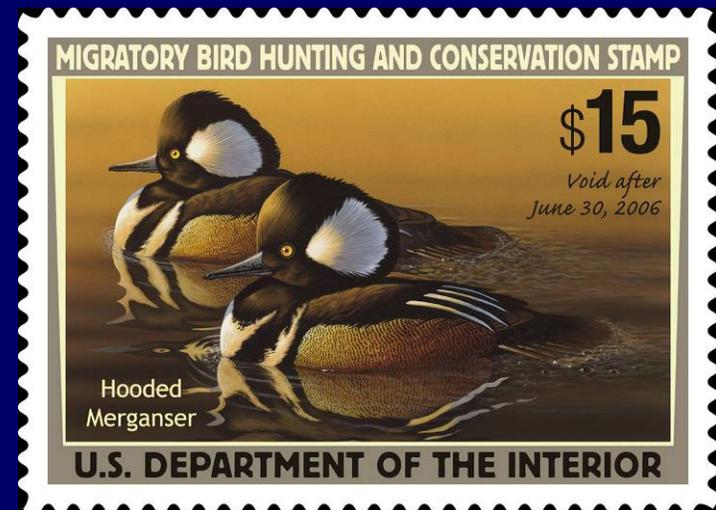
- Opportunity for up-close viewing by avid and casual birders.
- Demonstrate good feeder maintenance.
- Provide take-home information.



# On-site Programs and Activities

## Opportunities to Contribute to Conservation

- Avid birders may assist with surveying or monitoring projects.
- Casual birders can contribute to Citizen Science programs.
- Organize work days for families.
- Promote Duck Stamp sales.



# On-site Programs and Activities

## Optics and Field Guide Loans

*Free for you to borrow*

Ask a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Volunteer  
or staff

Birding &  
National  
Wildlife  
Refuges:  
a perfect  
fit!



Donations  
greatfully  
accepted

- For beginning or casual birders
- Include quality field guide loans
- Package into “Discovery Packs” for families

# On-site Programs and Activities

## Identify local birder resources

- Explore partnership opportunities with local bird clubs.
- Provide birding visitors with resources such as:
  - Rare bird alerts
  - Schedule of local bird club meetings
  - Schedule of local bird club field trips



Fresno Audubon Society  
2007-2008 Field Trips

**Wednesday Walks**

September 19, 2007:	Courtright Lake
October 3, 2007:	Grant Grove.
October 17, 2007:	Lost Lake Park.
October 31, 2007:	Yokohl Valley.
November 6-7, 2007:	Central Coast/Morro Bay.
November 28, 2007:	Oakhurst/Bass Lake.
January 9, 2008:	Madera grasslands.
<b>January 23, 2008:</b>	<b>Merced National Wildlife Refuge.</b>
<b>February 6, 2008:</b>	<b>Kern National Wildlife Refuge.</b>
<b>February 20, 2008:</b>	<b>San Luis National Wildlife Refuge.</b>
March 5, 2008:	Mendota Wildlife Management Area.
March 19, 2008:	Fresno Wastewater Treatment Plant.
April 2, 2008:	Lost Lake Park.
April 16, 2008:	China Creek/Avocado Lake.
April 29-30, 2008:	Kern River Preserve.
May 13, 2008:	Squaw Valley.
May 28, 2008:	Shaver Lake.
June 11, 2008:	Madera County mountains.

# On-site Programs and Activities

## Birding Supplies Available for Sale

- Binoculars
- Field guides
- Binocular straps
- Duck stamp holders



# On-site Programs and Activities

## Nest Box Program with Volunteer Stewards



- Wood ducks, bluebirds, prothonotary warblers, burrowing owls
- Requires long-term commitment
- Conservation and viewing benefits

# On-site Programs and Activities

## Birding Information Podcasts

- Highlight birding opportunities
- Include additional audio or visual elements



## Outreach

# Current, accurate website

- Current, accurate information is integral, including:
  - Downloadable checklist
  - Refuge map
  - Seasonal highlights
  - Welcoming information
  - Migration information
  - Bird counts
  - Birding facilities
  - Links to local bird clubs, rare birds alerts, etc.



# Outreach

## Birdfinding Guide

- A step beyond a bird checklist
- Describes where and when to find birds on the refuge
- Can be a great volunteer project.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### *A Birdfinding Guide to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge*

#### **Background**

Unquestionably Delaware's single best-known birding site, Bombay Hook justifies its fame with exceptional bird and wildlife viewing throughout the year. Centered around an Auto Tour loop road that traverses a cornucopia of habitats, including fresh & salt marshes, ponds, mudflats, woodlands, and fields, Bombay Hook also features 3 observation towers and several short walking trails.

You should plan an absolute minimum of two hours for a visit here; four is much better, and you could easily make multiple trips over several days before really getting a feel for the varying diurnal and tidal rhythms.

Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge was created in 1937 as a refuge and breeding ground for migrating birds and other wildlife. It currently comprises nearly 16,000 acres of land, with about 80% being tidal salt marsh. The Refuge is open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset.

There is an entry fee of \$4.00 per car or motorcycle or \$2.00 per bicycle or hiker. Holders of a valid Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (often called the "Duck Stamp") enter for free. Purchasing these stamps is an easy way for birders and other wildlife watchers to contribute to habitat acquisition. For complete information on user fees, please visit the web site or call the visitor center.

#### **Visitor Center**

Open fields and plantings attractive to native wildlife surround the Visitor Center. Inside, you'll find useful birding information, a nature-oriented book shop, and helpful staff and volunteers. A visitor-maintained bird sighting log, found

# Outreach Refuge Friends Group

Hummingbird Banding  
with Bill Talbot  
Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge



June 7, 2008  
8am-4pm  
575-835-1828

Hear The beat of the tiny and powerful hearts of one of New Mexico's most enchanted creatures! Join Bill at the Bosque del Apache NWR for a unique experience capturing, banding and learning about the hummingbirds who call the refuge home during the spring and summer months.



Friends of the Bosque del Apache  
National Wildlife Refuge  
P.O. Box 340, San Antonio, NM 87832  
[www.FriendsoftheBosque.org](http://www.FriendsoftheBosque.org)

- Engage in bird-related activities, conservation, projects.
- Provide funding, volunteers and partnership support.
- Recruit birders for board positions.

# Outreach

## Birding Trails and Scenic Byways

- Actively participate in site nominations, events, other activities.
- Jointly promote birding area partnerships.
- Be active in byway organizations.
- eBird Trail Tracker may be appropriate.



# Outreach

## Bird-related Celebrations



- Broaden exposure of the refuge during different events.
- Participate in local nature or birding events.
- Participate in The Big Sit! as part of NWR Week Activities.

## Outreach

# Staff Visibility to Birding Groups



- Engage with local birders at meetings or conferences.
- Participate in regional or state listserv.
- Host field trips or other events.

## Outreach

# Promote refuges good for beginners



- Identify opportunities for easy birding
  - Large concentrations
  - Large waterbirds, out in the open
  - Seasonal spectacles
  - Good facilities

# Outreach

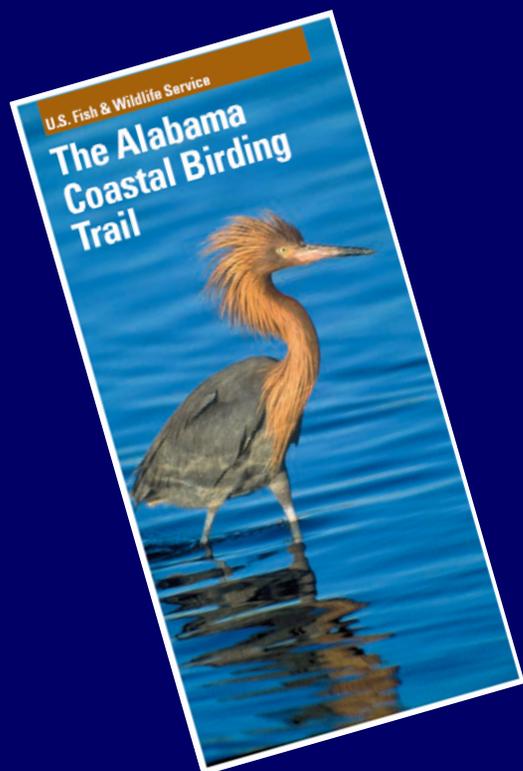
## Publicize special designations

- Important Bird Areas
- Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network
- Ramsar sites
- Other designations



# How birders, as a group, can support refuges

- Partnership opportunities exist between birders, refuges, and local communities



# How birders, as a group, can support refuges



- Experienced local birders can assist in data collection, monitoring, census work, and other projects.

# How birders, as a group, can support refuges

- Leading birders can lend expertise and knowledge to refuge birding opportunities.



# How birders, as a group, can support refuges

- In some cases, expert birders can help train refuge staff or volunteers in field identification of difficult groups, such as sandpipers, gulls, or terns



# How birders, as a group, can support refuges

- Birding builds school science education and strengthens family/community bonds.





[www.fws.gov/refuges/birding](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/birding)