

# **The Economic Contributions of Recreational Visitation at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge**

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This paper establishes the economic contribution baseline for recreational visitation at Basket Slough National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The paper addresses the levels of Refuge recreational activities and the economic effects of Refuge recreational activities. The analysis is followed by a glossary of terms. For more information regarding the methodology, please refer to “Banking on Nature – The Economic Contributions to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation” at <https://www.fws.gov/economics/divisionpublications/divisionpublications.asp>.

From an economic perspective, Basket Slough National Wildlife Refuge provides a variety of environmental and natural resource goods and services used by people either directly or indirectly. The use of these goods and services may result in economic effects to both local and state economies. The various services the Refuge provides can be grouped into five broad categories: (1) maintenance and conservation of environmental resources, services and ecological processes; (2) protection of natural resources such as fish, wildlife, and plants; (3) protection of cultural and historical sites and objects; (4) provision of educational and research opportunities; and (5) outdoor and wildlife-related recreation. A comprehensive economic profile of the Refuge would address all applicable economic effects associated with the use of refuge-produced goods and services. However, some of the major contributions of the Refuge to the natural environment, such as watershed protection, maintenance and stabilization of ecological processes, and the enhancement of biodiversity are beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, this paper focuses on economic effects associated with recreational visitation. As a result, benefits represent conservative estimates and do not represent the Refuge’s total social impacts.

## **Refuge Description**

Established in 1965 as part of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex, the Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge’s primary management goal is to provide wintering habitat for dusky Canada geese. Unlike other Canada goose subspecies, duskies have limited summer and winter ranges. They nest in Alaska’s Copper River Delta and winter almost exclusively in the wetlands of the Willamette Valley.

The largest known population of Fender’s blue butterfly is at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge. Once believed to be extinct, the Fender’s blue butterfly was rediscovered on Baskett Butte in the 1980’s and has since been designated as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The Fender’s blue butterfly is so rare due to its complete dependence on the threatened Kincaid’s lupine (its host plant), which is a part of the disappearing oak savanna habitat which was once prolific in the Willamette Valley.

With the extensive habitat restoration projects at work on all 2,492 acres of the Refuge, it makes exploring the Refuge much like taking a step back into the natural history of the Willamette Valley. Located at the junction of State Highways 99W and 22, the Refuge offers convenient access to miles of dirt trails as well as handicap and stroller accessible viewing platforms for its human visitors. The Refuge kiosk just off Highway 22 provides an interpretive and informative experience for visitors, so make sure to stop at the pull-off to learn more about the refuge habitats and how they are maintained for wildlife.

The HWY 22 kiosk and Rich Guadagno Memorial Trail are open year-round, but all other trails are closed from October 1 through March 31 to provide sanctuary for wintering dusky Canada geese and other waterfowl.

### Activity Levels

Table 1 shows the recreation visits for the Refuge. The Refuge had about 130,000 recreational visits in 2017 which contributed to the economic effect of the Refuge. Non-consumptive recreation accounted for all visits with residents comprising 63 percent of Refuge visitation.

**Table 1. Basket Slough NWR: 2017 Recreation Visits**

Activity	Residents	Non-Residents	Total
<b>Non-Consumptive:</b>			
Pedestrian	17,625	5,875	23,500
Auto Tour	60,600	40,400	101,000
Boat Trail/Launch	-	-	-
Bicycle	-	-	-
Photography	3,380	1,820	5,200
Interpretation	135	45	180
Other Recreation	-	-	-
Visitor Center	360	40	400
<b>Hunting:</b>			
Big Game	-	-	-
Small Game	-	-	-
Migratory Birds	-	-	-
<b>Fishing:</b>	-	-	-
<b>Total Visitation</b>	<b>82,100</b>	<b>48,180</b>	<b>130,280</b>

Source: Refuge Annual Performance Plan 2017 and Refuge Staff

### Regional Economic Analysis

The economic area for the Refuge is Polk County, Oregon. It is assumed that visitor expenditures occur primarily within these counties. Visitor recreation expenditures for 2017 are shown in Table 2. Total expenditures were \$1.6 million with non-residents accounting for \$1.2 million or 77 percent of total expenditures.

Spending in the local area generates and supports economic activity within Polk County (Table 3). The contribution of recreational spending in local communities was associated with about 18 jobs, \$485,000 in employment income, \$98,000 in total tax revenue, and \$1.9 million in economic output.

**Table 2. Basket Slough NWR: Visitor Recreation Expenditures (2017 \$,000)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Non-Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Non-Consumptive	\$368.1	\$1,210.3	\$1,578.4
Hunting	-	-	-
Fishing	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$368.1</b>	<b>\$1,210.3</b>	<b>\$1,578.4</b>

**Table 3. Basket Slough NWR: Local Economic Contributions Associated with Recreation Visits (2017 \$,000)**

	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Non-Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Economic Output	\$434.2	\$1,445.8	\$1,880.0
Jobs	4	14	18
Job Income	\$113.6	\$371.8	\$485.4
State and Local Tax Revenue	\$19.8	\$78.1	\$97.9

## Glossary

**Economic Contribution:** The economic activity generated in a region by residents and non-resident recreation spending.

**Expenditures:** The spending by recreational visitors when visiting refuges. Expenditure categories include food, lodging, transportation, and other. Expenditure information is based on the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation (NSFHWR).

**Economic Output:** The total spending by final consumers on all goods. The amount reported in this study is the change in spending by final consumers in the region attributable to refuge visitation. Economic output includes spending by people who earn income from refuge visitors' activities as well as spending by refuge visitors themselves.

**Impact:** The new economic activity generated in a region as a refuge attracts non-residents to the area. This figure represents economic activity that would be lost if the refuge were not there.

**IMPLAN:** An economic modeling software package that applies input-output analysis techniques to regional economies.

**Jobs:** Full and part time jobs.

**Job Income:** Income to households from labor including wages and salaries.

**Resident/Non-Resident:** People living more than 50 miles from the refuges are considered non-residents for this study.

**Tax Revenue:** Local, county and state taxes: sales tax, property tax, and income tax

**Visitors:** A visitor is someone who comes to the refuge and participates in one or more of the activities available at the refuge.

**Visits (visitation):** A visit is not the same as a visitor. One visitor could be responsible for several visits on a refuge. For example, if a family of four went fishing in the morning and hiked a short nature trail in the afternoon, they would have contributed 8 activity visits to the refuge; yet, they are only four visitors.

## References

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