U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wings

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No. 2

News from the Coastal North Carolina National Wildlife Refuges Complex

Alligator River, Pea Island, Pocosin Lakes, Roanoke River, Mackay Island, and Currituck

Successful Prescribed Burns Conducted

Just like a prescription is sometimes given to help with our health, a prescribed fire is something that helps with the health of habitat.

Recently, the fire crew at Alligator River refuge was presented with just the right combination of conditions to successfully burn thousands of acres on refuges in the complex. The fires are conducted under "prescribed" conditions in which they can be managed safely to achieve management objectives. Each prescribed burn has a prescription that defines all the boundaries under which we would say "GO." We have to have the right weather conditions, especially wind direction and speed. And, if the fuel is too damp, it won't burn.

Public and firefighter safety is always the highest priority during a prescribed burn. Prescribed burning is a valuable wildlife and habitat management tool. The coastal ecosystems of North Carolina include fire-adapted species which need fire in their habitats to reduce competition from invading species and add nutrients back to the soil. By reducing the amount of dry and dead plant materials ("fuels") in an area, prescribed fire is also highly effective at reducing the likelihood of large, damaging wildfire. Some folks are concerned about wildlife during the burns. As one of the fire team members Amy Midgett mentioned when asked about the animals, "They get out of the way. We burn in strips which allows the animals to escape; after all, that is one of the reasons we burn it - for the animals."

credit USFWS

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Wings

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E-mail: alligatorriver@fws.gov
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator_river/

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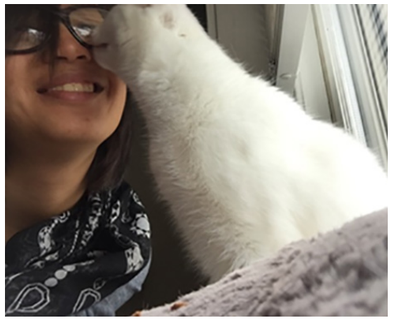
Friends of Alligator River and
Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges

Welcome Our Summer Interns!

Jessica Hien
Red Wolf Caretaker
General Refuge Intern



Jessica is from the greater Boston area and a recent graduate from U Mass with a Wildlife Conservation major. She loves exploring different parts of the world and U.S. and has backpacked across Southeast Asia jungle-trekking in Sumatra, spent a semester in Alaska, and worked in northern Virginia at a wildlife sanctuary for a summer. Currently, Jessica works as a pet sitter/dog walker and loves being and working outside. An avid rock climber, she loves baking and has a terrible sweet tooth.

Amanda Emberson
Pea Island

Originally from Long Beach, California, Amanda grew up in Plano, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Her interest in animals began during a visit to the San Diego Wild Animal Park. While there she had the chance to feed rhinos and fell in love. They have been her favorite animal ever since. She attends Tarleton State University and plans to graduate in August of 2017 with BS degree in Wildlife Sustainability and Ecosystem Science with a minor in Biology.

Samara Travella
Pea Island

Samara grew up an only child with a single mother in the military, so she got accustomed to traveling quite a bit. She has a BS degree in Biology with an emphasis in marine from Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. Samara has spent the last two years traveling the west coast while working as an intern in positions involving a variety of wildlife.

Sydney Tomechko
Pea Island

Sydney Tomechko is from Front Royal, Virginia and attends school at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is majoring in Biology with a concentration in Ecology, Conservation, and Environmental biology. Sydney is also double minoring in Anthropology and Sustainability Studies.

Her ultimate goal is to be a field conservation biologist and specialize in canids and felids; though she would be happy with any job as long as she is working towards protecting the environment and is out in the field.

Zach Dillard
Pocosin Lakes

Zach grew up in the very small town of Craigsville in central West Virginia (near the New River Gorge) and is pursuing an undergraduate education at West Liberty University in West Virginia. He will earn a BS degree in Biology in May 2017. Zach's time as an undergraduate researcher has made him passionate about hands-on conservation approaches. It has also highlighted in clear terms how very important it is to communicate to the general public the reasons that this work must continue.

Karen Gravely
Pocosin Lakes

Karen grew up in Pickens, South Carolina at the Foothills of the Appalachians with nature-loving parents. She attended Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina and pursued a double major in Environmental Studies and Government. She interned in Patagonia, Arizona where she graduated in May 2016. Prior to arriving here, she will be working as an intern on the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Texas.

Andrea Broad
Alligator River

Andrea was born in Massachusetts and raised in Florida before heading to Virginia for college, so she pretty much counts the East Coast her home. In May 2016, she graduated from George Mason University with a BS in Biology and minors in Environmental Policy and Conservation. Her main professional interests are conserving large carnivores, educating the public about the environment, and utilizing science to shape public policy. During college, she had opportunities to study in Kenya and England. Andrea has also had the chance to intern working with captive exotic cats at Big Cat Rescue and Mexican gray wolves at California Wolf Center.

Many college students spent their spring break helping out on the refuges. This group from Auburn University planned their trip through a company called Auburn Outdoors, an adventure based education program. They spent two hours working on the new trail at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center and then went paddle boarding at Alligator River refuge, credit USFWS.

Kat Bell
Alligator River

Kathryn (Kat) graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in December of 2016 with a BS in Biology, specializing in ecology, evolution, and behavior. Beyond growing up on a ranch in Central Texas, she was able to get some hands-on experience with interacting organisms as an intern at the Austin Zoo, a non-profit rescue facility in Austin, Texas. Here she was able to learn the ropes of animal husbandry, focusing specifically on animal enrichment and very basic medical care.

Alex Mense
Mattamuskeet Refuge

Alex Mense graduated from Haywood Community College with a degree in Fish and Wildlife Management Technology and hopes to attend North Carolina State University in the future to earn his Bachelor's Degree. He is from New Bern, North Carolina and enjoys spending time in the woods hunting, fishing, and playing games.

North Carolina Chapter of Alpha Zeta

"Recently Alpha Zeta was privileged enough to travel the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and Farm Fields Management Unit. During our trip, we got to learn about drainage and pump management, waterfowl management, and the Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Farming Program and policies. We had a great time and learned a lot about the role that agriculture plays in wildlife refuges."

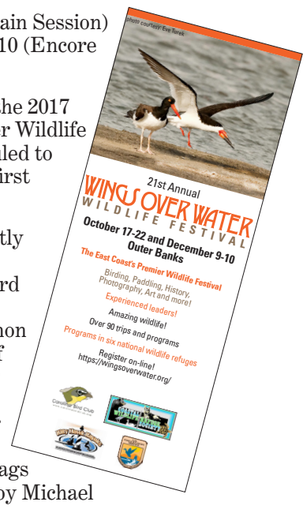
After spending a day learning about the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Alpha Zeta travelled to Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge to participate in a service project picking up trash along the road and on the beach.

Wings Over Water 2017

October 17-22 (Main Session) and December 8-10 (Encore Sessions)

Registration for the 2017 Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival is scheduled to open on-line the first week of May.

New trips currently being finalized include a Shorebird workshop led by birding guide Simon RB Thompson (of Ventures Birding Tours) and a Herpetology tour at The Nature Conservancy's Nags Head Woods led by Michael Gosselin.



Cleaning Up Canals is Vital for Moving Water on Refuges

Submitted by Kelley VanDruten

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Maintenance and Fire Equipment Operators have begun slinging dirt as part of a Deferred Maintenance Project to clean out the farm unit canals. With over 27 miles of canals to clean, the project began with drawing down water levels in the farm units a couple weeks early so equipment could get into the fields in early March. Prep work has included mowing dikes and canal banks as well as using the slashbuster to clear out overhanging trees and tree limbs blocking access to ditches or canals. Actual clean out started by targeting those v-ditches next to woody blocks that the cooperative farmers cannot keep clear with their equipment and other areas where the operators need to get in and out of the fields ahead of planting. Operators will clean out approximately five to eight inches of silty debris from the bottom of the canals to improve water flow, thereby reducing pumping costs and improving efficiency for moving water in and out of our waterfowl impoundments. Where it is not practical to put the silty debris on a dike, road shoulder, or farm field it will be loaded into dump trucks and hauled to an old maintenance area off Milltail Road or near the Pit. The project will last for several months so refuge visitors will likely get a chance to see our equipment operators in action.

Excavator: Fire Equipment Operator Eric Meekins uses a long reach excavator to clean out the canal along Buffalo City Road and North Twiford farm unit. After drying, a bulldozer will smooth out the dirt.

WoodyDitch: Equipment Operator Bobby Govan steps off the excavator after cleaning out part of the v-ditch. After drying, a bulldozer will smooth out the silty debris and then it will be disked.

Slashbuster: Equipment Operator Eric Craddock uses the Slashbuster to trim back trees and tree limbs overhanging the v-ditch in the North Twiford farm unit, improving equipment access to the ditch. The clean, woody debris will be placed into the woods so that it will not get mixed in with the silty debris being removed from the canal. All photo this page credit USFWS.

New Recycled Lumber Deck Furniture – Still time for SPONSORSHIPS!

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society has purchased extraordinarily functional, durable, and attractive furniture for the back deck of the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center. Each piece will have a beautiful aluminum plaque with your personalized message of honor or memorial. The cost of sponsorship covers both the costs of the furniture and the plaque. We have 26 individual pieces. Eleven pieces have already been sponsored, but the following pieces are available for sponsorship: Child's chair-1; Adult chair-11; Small table-1; Trash can-2.

COURTESY OF
Daniels' Homeport

COURTESY OF
LINDA & GERALD MCCLESKY

IN MEMORY OF
CPL. PATRICK GLENNON
MISSING IN ACTION IN NORTH KOREA
NOVEMBER 1,1950

IN MEMORY OF
MARTHA
THE LAST KNOWN PASSENGER PIGEON: 1885–1914

COURTESY OF
A FORMER REFUGE VOLUNTEER

IN MEMORY OF
PAUL W. STURM
REFUGE MANAGER
PEA ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
1947–1949

IN MEMORY OF
DEDICATED REFUGE VOLUNTEER
VICTOR J. 'KRIS' KRISTOFFERSON

IN RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION OF
PROJECT LEADER
MIKE BRYANT
FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE COASTAL NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES COMPLEX
APRIL 15, 1996 – OCTOBER 15, 2016
CONSERVATIONIST, LEADER, MENTOR, FRIEND

IN MEMORY OF
DEDICATED REFUGE VOLUNTEER
HERB LEWIS
'MR. TURTLE'

IN HONOR OF MY GRANDS...
KORY, MYA, LANEY, WAYLON, HEIDI, JOLENE, AND KANAN
WHO LOVE THIS PLACE & ALL THINGS WILD!

Examples of personal messages from currently sponsored pieces.

Please call 252/473 1132 x 224 or email Steven_Brumfield@fws.gov to claim your piece and learn the details of sponsorship.

Sponsorship Fees/ Contributions:

Child Chair..... $325

Adult Chair..... $400

Large Table..... $500

Small Table..... $200

Trash or Recycle Bins..... $600

Biological Program Update

Submitted by Refuge Biologist Becky Harrison

Beginning every fall, refuge biological staff starts to document migration and wintering activities of waterfowl on northeastern national wildlife refuges. Refuge biological staff begins waterfowl surveys at Pea Island and Alligator River NWRs in September and November, respectively, and continue these observations through early March. Ground surveys using the Integrated Waterbird Monitoring and Management (http://iwmmprogram.org/) protocol are conducted three times/month, while aerial surveys typically occur at least monthly during November through February. Refuge biological staff record total numbers and locations for each species seen during a survey.

Alligator River and Pea Island refuge areas are located roughly at the midpoint of the Atlantic Flyway migration corridor and provide significant feeding and resting areas for numerous species of wintering waterfowl as well as important breeding habitat for Wood Ducks and American Black Ducks. Management of the refuge's moist soil units, impoundments, and marshes for waterfowl is important for meeting the refuge's purpose. These habitats help meet the refuge's waterfowl objectives of managing habitat needs and sufficient sanctuary areas that provide undisturbed resting and feeding areas for waterfowl.

Pintail at Pea Island refuge, credit: E. Turek

Alligator River refuge is a great place to see large numbers of dabbling ducks like Northern Pintails, Green-winged Teal, and Gadwall. In addition, the most common diving species observed this year on Alligator NWR was the ring-necked duck. Overall, 17 different species of waterfowl were observed on the refuge with a maximum peak observation of almost 14,000 individuals during one survey.

Tundra Swans can be seen in the colder months on refuges in the area, credit USFWS.

It was also terrific year to see waterfowl on Pea Island refuge. A total of 22 different species of waterfowl, with a peak observation of over 31,000 individuals were recorded during a January survey of the impoundments at North Pond, New Field, and South Pond. The most common species observed was Redhead, with almost 15,000 seen in mid-January. Other species observed in large numbers included Northern Pintails, Gadwall, Bufflehead, and American Wigeon. In addition, we observed a peak number of Tundra Swans (1800+) in mid-December. If you are interested in seeing a diversity of waterfowl up-close, we encourage you to explore the wildlife trails at North Pond or Salt Flats.

With May on the horizon, refuge biological staff and volunteers are beginning to anticipate sea turtle nesting season. In 2016, we observed increased nesting activities on Pea Island record with a record of 41 nests observed. While all of the 2016 nests observed were laid by loggerhead sea turtles, green sea turtles have also used Pea Island refuge in previous years. Warmer temperatures and longer days also mark the start of shorebird nesting season on Pea Island refuge. Refuge biological staff and seasonal interns will be surveying habitats for nesting American Oystercatcher, Piping Plover, Least Tern, and the occasional Wilson's Plover.

Support Your National Wildlife Refuges - Donate to Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society exists to support interpretive, educational and volunteer programs of eastern NC national wildlife refuges with a focus on Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges and the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island. Your contributions to the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society help make it possible to provide this support.

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society supports local K-12 schools by assisting with educational programs and funding transportation grants for students and teachers to visit the refuges and the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center.

Donated funds also help maintain refuge land and water trails, provide refuge visitor services staff, assist with the annual *Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival*, and support dozens of refuge projects and programs.

Please support your national wildlife refuges by donating $10, $25, $50, $100 or more. Send check or money order to: Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, P.O Box 1808, Manteo, NC 27954 Or, use your credit card. Call, 252/216 9464 or visit http://www.coastalwildliferefuge.com/donate.html

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Tax ID #56-1649348. Your contribution may be deductible as a charitable contribution on your federal taxes. We'll send you a receipt for each contribution, as well as an annual Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society membership card to use for savings in local refuge gift shops.

2017 June, July and August Guided Interpretive Programs Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges

Program	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Location
Refuge/Wildlife Movies	9:30 am-3 pm	9:30 am-3 pm	9:30 am-3 pm	9:30 am-3 pm	National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center Roanoke Island
Turtle Talk	2:30-3:30 pm				Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
AR Canoe Tour ($)(R)		9 am-12 noon	9 am-11 am	9 am-12 noon	Alligator River NWR Buffalo City Boat Launch
AR Van Tour ($)(R)	7-9 am	7-9 am	5-7 pm		Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot
PI Bird Walk		8-9:30 am		8-9:30 am	Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
PI Canoe Tour ($)(R)		9-11 am	9-11 am	9-11 am	Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
Bird Adaptations		2:30-3:30 pm			Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
Bear Necessities		5:30-7 pm			Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot
Red Wolf Howling ($)		7:30-9 pm			Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot
Who Lives in that Shell?			2:30-3:30 pm		Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
Open-air Tran Tour ($)(R)			8:30-11 am		Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot

All programs are free unless noted. $-Fee charged. R-Reservation required. Call 252-216-9464.

Other Programs

Free Preschool Young Naturalist Program 10-11 am Year-round Fridays National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center Roanoke Island	Free Saturday Red Wolf Howlings April 8 7-8:30 pm May 13 7:30-9 pm October 14 6-7:30 pm November 18 4:30-6 pm December 19 4:30-6 pm	Saturday Tram Tours ($)(9 am-noon) April 8 May 13 September 9 October 14 November 11 December 16
Free Pea Island Bird Walk 8-9:30 am June-August Wednesdays Year-round Fridays (except October 20-December 9)		

North American River Otters love to eat fish. But they also eat turtles, frogs, crayfish and a variety of amphibians. They can be seen at Alligator River and Pea Island refuges, credit J. Orsulak.

Virtual tour: National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center

Scan to store this schedule on your phone!

Or visit: http://www.fws.gov/ refuge/alligator_river/visit/ guided_programs.html

Or call 252/216 9464

WINGS OVER WATER
WILDLIFE FESTIVAL
October 17-22
The East Coast's Premier Wildlife Festival
www.wingsoverwater.org

2017 Guided Interpretive Program Descriptions

Program	Description
Refuge/Wildlife Movies	Looking for something to do inside? Stop by the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island to watch a wonderful movie in HD-surround sound. Learn about the various refuges in the area. Other topics will be shown throughout the summer.
Turtle Talk	FREE What are the differences between sea turtles and land turtles? Why are sea turtles endangered? What can you do to save these gentle giants? Find out about sea turtle conservation; learn how you can be a part of the solution. Make a take-home craft. Meet at Pea Island Visitor Center.
Alligator River Canoe Tour	2-3 hours $40 per person; $25 for children 12 and under; 1 1/2-2 hours-$30 per person; $20 for children 12 and under. Reservation required. Really get out into the wild! Milltail Creek Paddling Trails take you deep into the heart of Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Paddle the shady blackwater canals; learn about the history of the area. Watch and listen for the Refuge's secretive wildlife. Hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and drinking water are recommended. Co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society. Meet at the end of Buffalo City Road off Hwy 64 west of Manns Harbor.
Alligator River Guided Van Tour	$30 per adult. $20 children 6-12. Limited to 5 participants. Larger group trips can be arranged. Reservation required. Join us for a personal tour through popular areas for viewing and photographing wildlife. Comfortable walking shoes, insect repellant, sunscreen, and drinking water are recommended. Feel free to bring a snack. Co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society. Meet at Creef Cut Wildlife Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Hwy 64 west of Manns Harbor).
Pea Island Bird Walk	FREE Pea Island is for the birds - literally! Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge is home to nearly 400 species of birds. Whether you're a beginner or an expert, you'll enjoy this casual stroll beside North Pond. Field guides, binoculars, sunscreen, and insect repellent are recommended. Some field guides and binoculars will be available for loan. Meet at Pea Island Visitor Center.
Pea Island Canoe Tour	1 1/2-2 hours-$30 per person; $20 for children 12 and under. Reservation required. Visit the quiet side of Pea Island. Explore the marshes, islands, and creeks of Pamlico Sound. Our two- hour tour is designed especially for kids and others who are looking for a hands-on experience. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and drinking water are recommended. Reservations and footwear are required. Co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society. Meet at Pea Island Visitor Center.
Birds and their Adaptations	FREE Do all shorebirds have long legs? How can a duck stay afloat in the water? Why do certain birds open their wet wings to dry? If you have ever wondered about these and other facts about birds, come out and discover the many ways birds adapt to their habitats. You may even create your own bird to take home. Meet at Pea Island Visitor Center.
Bear Necessities	FREE Alligator River is home to the largest population of black bears in eastern North Carolina and one of the largest in the eastern United States! Learn more about what makes the Refuge such a good home for our largest mammal. After the presentation, follow us in your vehicle as we lead you on the Wildlife Drive to look for bears and other wildlife. Participants will return in time for the Red Wolf Howling. Meet at Creef Cut Wildlife Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Hwy 64 west of Manns Harbor).
Red Wolf Howling	$10 per adult. Children 12 and under Free. NO RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. Refuge staff and volunteers offer you the experience of a lifetime! Come and learn about the endangered red wolf during a short presentation and journey to the heart of the refuge for an adventurous attempt to hear our captive red wolves produce their haunting sounds. The program will occur except when there is lightning, heavy wind or rain, or impassable road conditions. Co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society. Meet at Creef Cut Wildlife Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Hwy 64 west of Manns Harbor).
Who Lives in that Shell?	FREE What have you found on the beach today? Have you ever thought about what used to live inside all of those shells? Learn about a variety of critters that call the ocean home. After exploring our touch box, we'll cross the road and explore the beach (Weather permitting). Meet at the Pea Island Visitor Center.
Open-air Tran Tour ($)(R)	$10 per adult. Children 12 and under Free with one or more paying adults. Tram seating is limited. To guarantee your tram seats, you may register ahead of time. Join us for a trip around the refuge and learn about the wild lands and wildlife. Bring your binoculars and camera! Drinking water and insect repellent are also recommended. The program will occur except with lightning, heavy wind or rain, or impassable road conditions. Dress for the weather! Co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society. Meet at Creef Cut Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Hwy 64 west of Manns Harbor).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to programs for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, close captioning, or other accommodation needs by calling 252/216 9464, TTY 800/877 8339, at least two weeks prior to the program.