

Cold Springs NWR • Columbia NWR • Conboy Lake NWR • Hanford Reach National Monument
McKay Creek NWR • McNary NWR • Saddle Mountain NWR • Toppenish NWR • Umatilla NWR



NEWS RELEASE



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2009 INTERNATIONAL BIRD DAY

Columbia, McNary and Toppenish National Wildlife Refuges.

May 9 is International Migratory Bird Day. In commemoration of this year's celebration, the Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuges are hosting three events at three different refuges.

At McNary National Wildlife Refuge in Burbank, the public is invited on a guided float trip down the four miles of the Walla Walla River, on Sanctuary Pond, and across White-tail Bay. Participants need to bring their own kayak or canoe and be prepared to navigate a swift current. Early arrivals are welcome to walk the nature trail at McNary NWR and observe spring migrant birds from the blind overlooking the slough. The new Wildlife Discovery Center will be open, although it is still under construction. Please phone (509) 546-8300 for further information and to register for the float trip. Spaces are limited, so register soon.

At Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge, participants can enjoy a demonstration of live raptors, bird banding, birding walks and tours. Participants should arrive at 9 a.m. for the activities, dressed appropriately for the weather. Bring binoculars. Phone (509) 546-8320 for further information.

At Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, join refuge biologist Randy Hill for a half to full day field trip exploring diverse habitats on and near the refuge. Meet at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office at 7th and Main in Othello in time for a 7 a.m. departure. Participants should see nesting owls and other birds of prey, curlews and other shorebirds, waterfowl, marsh birds, and a variety of songbirds. Bring binoculars, lunch, drinks, sun screen, hat, and comfortable clothing for warm or cool weather. There are several short, easy hikes. Phone (509) 488-2668 for more information and to register. Space is limited.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people observe International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) to learn more about wild birds, take action to conserve birds and their habitats, and simply have fun. Like any day of recognition, IMBD exists to focus attention on something important and marvelous—in this case, the journey birds undertake between their summer and winter homes. IMBD was created specifically to highlight the migration of nearly 350 species of migratory birds between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. However, the day serves as an opportunity to celebrate all the species of birds whose annual movements enliven our lands, waters and skies.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The FWS manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 548 national wildlife refuges—including two national monuments—thousands of wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 66 fishery resources offices, and more than 80 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid Program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.