

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer



Welcome

Located in both Washington and Oregon along the lower Columbia River sits Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer. Established in 1971 the refuge protects over 6,000 acres of grasslands, forested tidal swamps, woodlands, marshes and sloughs along and within the lower Columbia River estuary.

These habitats support the Columbian white-tailed deer and a variety of other wildlife including wintering birds, a small herd of Roosevelt elk, river otter, various reptiles and amphibians including painted turtles and red-legged frogs, and several pairs of nesting bald eagles and ospreys.

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Julia Butler Hansen Refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This network of 568 refuges and growing protects 95 million acres of land across all 50 states and U.S. territories. The Julia Butler Hansen Refuge is one of 60 refuges established specifically to benefit threatened and endangered species.

Wildlife refuges are primarily for the protection of wildlife and their habitat, but they also provide a variety of great outdoor experiences for you. Bird watching, nature photography, hunting, fishing, paddling, hiking, environmental education and more. More than 68 million people visit refuges every year, creating economic booms for local communities.



The "Blue Goose" is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.



A Deer Sanctuary

The Columbian white-tailed deer is one of 30 subspecies of white-tailed deer in North America, and the only one west of the Cascade Mountains. They once ranged throughout the river valleys west of the Cascade Mountains from the Umpqua River in Oregon, northward through the Willamette Valley to Puget Sound, and westward down the lower Columbia River.

1800's

1900 - 1940's

Deer numbers were dangerously low due to unregulated hunting and loss of habitat.

1969

By 1900 they had disappeared from nearly all of their range and, in the 1930s, were thought to be extinct. Remnant populations were discovered in SW Washington and near Roseburg, Oregon and the efforts to save them began.

Today

In 1969, the lower Columbia River population was listed as endangered. Efforts to recover the deer included capturing, collaring and then translocating to create additional subpopulations.

In 2016, as the population increased, they were downlisted to threatened. Now about 400 deer live on the refuge and over 900 on private and public lands.



Left: Staff and partners prepare a deer for translocation
Right: Crates are used to safely transport deer.



Why Do Deer Love It Here?

Optimal deer habitat is a mosaic of forest and grassland that provides an abundance of "edge" habitat. Edge habitat consists of thick younger growth that offers cover from predators, shelter for their fawns, and provides an important food source for deer. Native trees and shrubs are planted on the refuge to provide additional edge habitat to help keep the deer population healthy and growing.

What Are the Deer Eating?

A deer's diet includes: grasses, broadleaf forbs like clover, and the buds, leaves, and stems of trees and shrubs. To provide a variety of these foods, the refuge mows, grazes cattle, controls invasive species, hays, and plants food plots.



Red-tailed hawk

Beyond Deer

Water management is critical for maintaining the diverse habitats deer, fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife need on the refuge. Historically much of the refuge was a mix of tidal forested swamp, emergent salt marsh and tidal sloughs. The construction of dikes around Tenasillahe Island, and much of the mainland, prevent flooding by the Columbia River. This dramatically changed the landscape, and these areas stay drier and support many more deer than lands that flood with the tides.

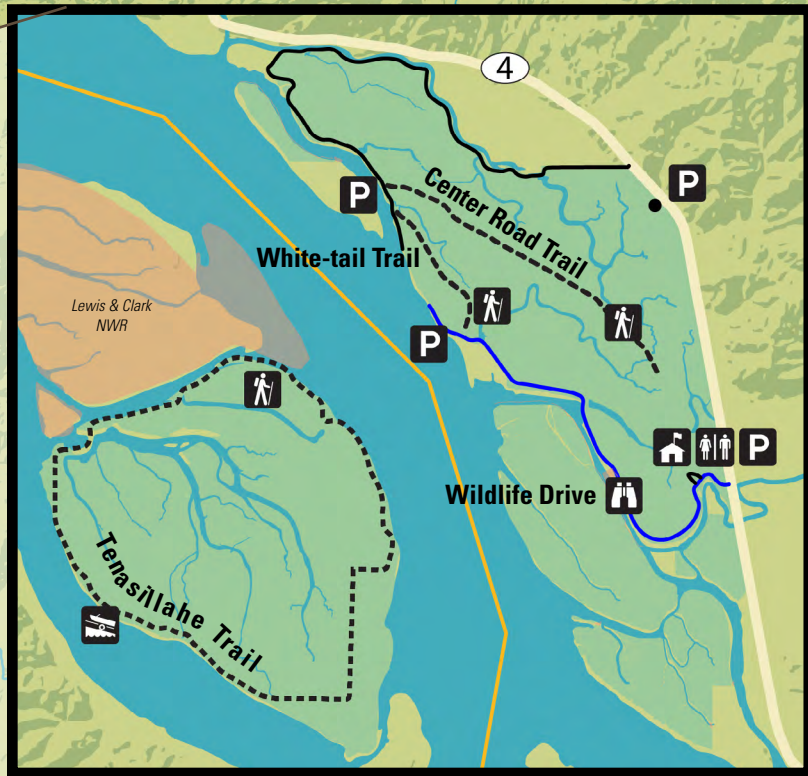
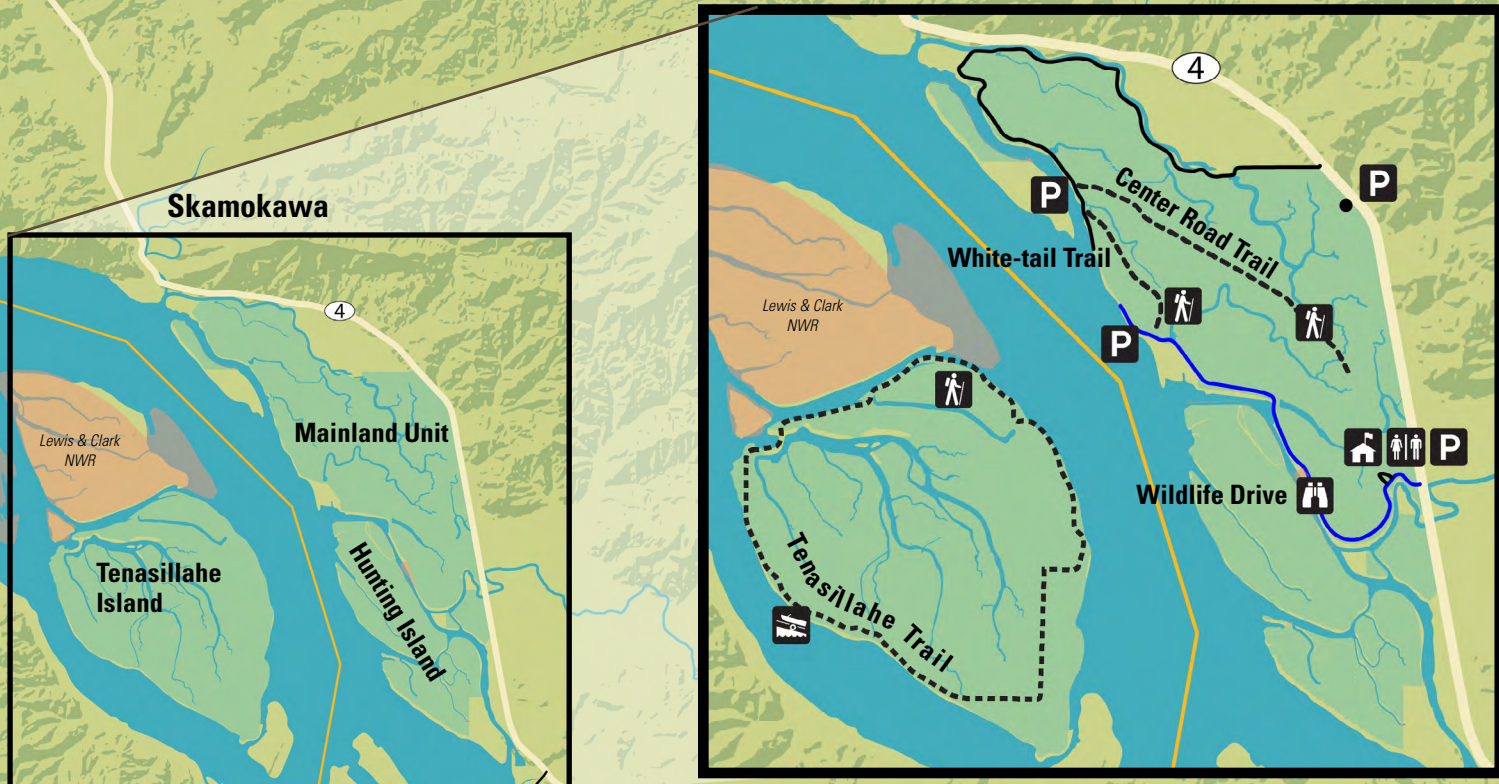


Columbian white-tailed deer



*Cinnamon teal
(Female and Male)*

Refuge Map & Trails



White-tail Trail
Easy - 0.9mi one-way

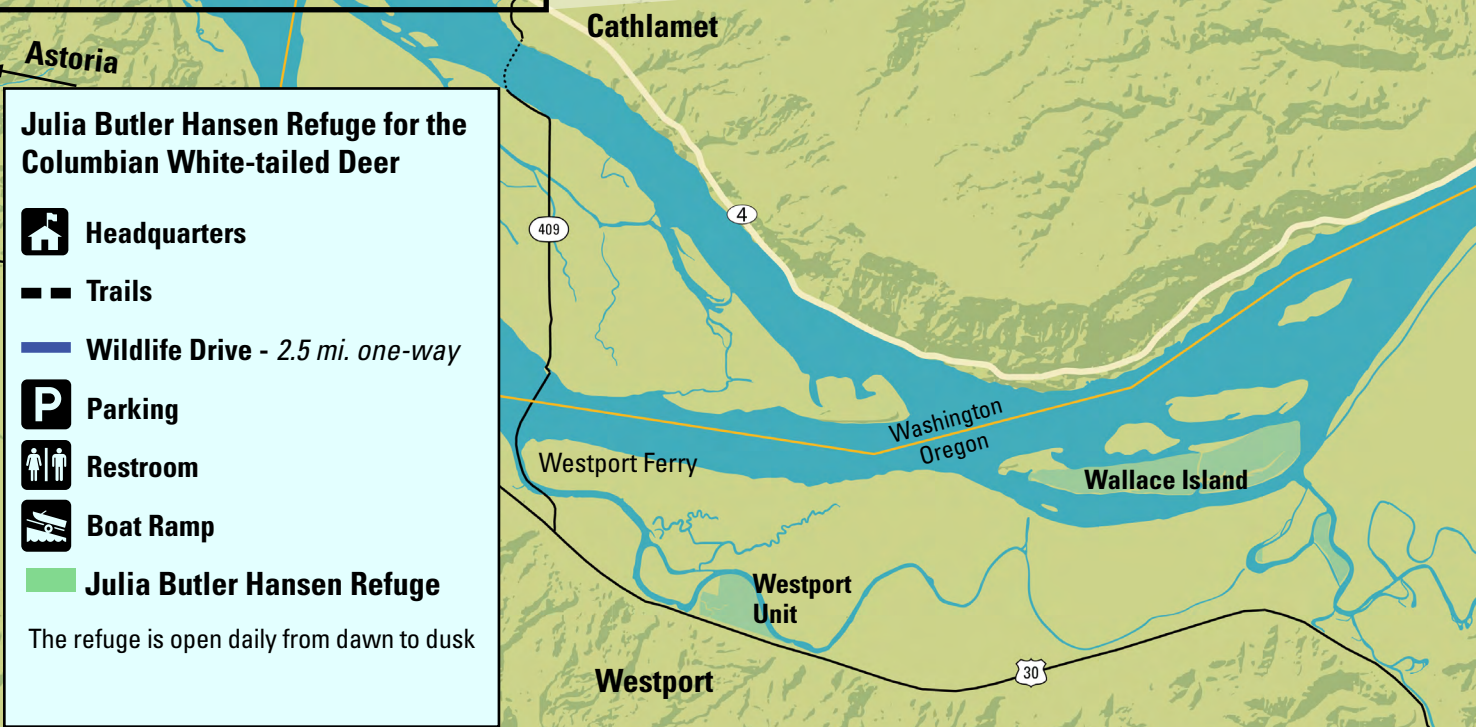
This trail winds through many habitats and offers an opportunity to see a diversity of wildlife. Along the trail, information panels highlight some of the refuge's plants and animals. Spot our namesake deer grazing in the grassland, or waterfowl and songbirds in the marsh. Non-motorized bikes are allowed on this trail.

Center Road Trail (June - Sept)
Easy - 2mi one-way

A great option for those seeking solitude in nature. Please obey closure signs. Only open during summer to provide undisturbed sanctuary for waterfowl from October to May.

Tenasillahe Trail
Easy - 6.5mi loop

Located on Tenasillahe Island (only accessible by boat), this trail offers views of the Columbia River and takes you through grasslands, forests, and swamps. No services on the island. Bring your own water, food, and other necessities.



Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer

- Headquarters
- Trails
- Wildlife Drive - 2.5 mi. one-way
- Parking
- Restroom
- Boat Ramp
- Julia Butler Hansen Refuge

The refuge is open daily from dawn to dusk

Prohibited Activities

- Camping
- Dogs
- Campfires
- Target Shooting
- Drones
- ATVs
- Collecting

Wildlife Drive



Wildlife Drive follows the road into the refuge and is open year-round. Along the drive watch deer, elk, ducks, and other wildlife safely from your vehicle. The drive is 2.5 miles one-way.

Along the drive, look for eight numbered signs. These signs correspond with the Wildlife Drive brochure which offers an interpretive narrative of the refuge and what you might see at each stop. Pick up a copy at the refuge office or download from the website.

Fishing

The navigable waterways around the refuge are accessible by boat and are open to fishing in accordance with state regulations. Some areas are closed to fishing. See website and brochure for more details.

Hunting

Hunting geese, ducks, coot and snipe is permitted along the shoreline on the refuge portion of Hunting, Wallace, Price and Crims Islands in accordance with Federal and State Hunting Regulations. See website and brochure for more details.

Boating

Tenasillahe, Crims, Price, Hunting, and Wallace Islands are accessible only by boat. Non-motorized boats only are allowed in White-tail Slough, located east of White-tail Trail. Tidal flows, strong winds, and large wakes from ships can make boating difficult and sometimes dangerous. Consult navigation charts and tide tables before venturing out.

Get Involved

Whether you want to further conservation through hands-on opportunities, learn more about nature by joining a field-based event, or share your love of nature with our youngest generations, you've come to the right place!

Volunteer

Opportunities are available for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Assist with habitat restoration efforts, lead groups of students on field trips, maintain trail conditions and more!

Email us at willapa@fws.gov to find out more.

Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

The Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting refuge programs and enhancing awareness and appreciation of the refuge.

If you are interested in supporting the refuge through the Friends, visit friendsofwillaparefuge.org

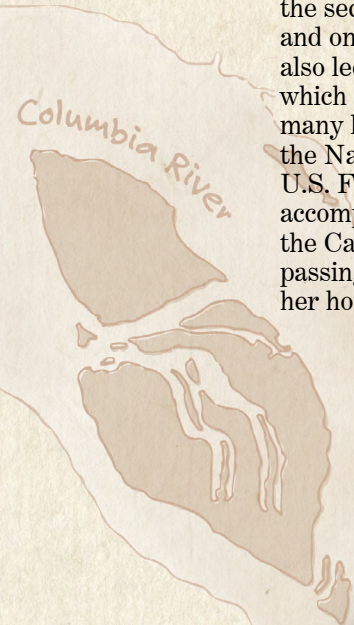


A flock of mallard and northern pintails taking flight.

**Julia Butler
Hansen**

Julia Butler Hansen (1907-1988) grew up and spent most of her life in Cathlamet, WA. In 1937, she began what would be 43 years of public service as the first woman on the Cathlamet City Council. She then spent 22 years in the Washington Legislature and 14 years as a Representative in the U.S. Congress, where she continued to achieve many “first woman to...” accomplishments.

During her time in Congress, Hansen was a champion of public education, transportation and women’s rights. In 1963 she was appointed to the Appropriations Committee, becoming the second woman on the committee and only woman at the time. She also led the Interior Committee which oversaw the budgets for many land-based agencies including the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. For all of her accomplishments and dedication to the Cathlamet community, upon her passing, the refuge was renamed in her honor.



Julia Butler Hansen



Columbian white-tailed deer



Orange-crowned warbler

Spring

As the season of new beginnings and growth, spring brings life to the habitats and wildlife of the refuge. Food is becoming abundant, weather is less challenging, and longer days give more time for foraging. Enjoy the Wildlife Drive to catch a glimpse of juvenile animals and watch for songbirds courting, defining territories, and building nests.



American kestrel

Summer

Center Road Trail offers views of grazing deer and elk in the grasslands, songbirds such as savannah sparrows, and swallows and purple martins in nesting boxes throughout the refuge.

Boat out to Tenasillahe Island and hike the trail. Here you'll experience solitude in the middle of the Columbia River. This is the ideal time to see does grazing in the fields with their spotted fawns.



Greater yellowlegs

Fall

Fall offers another opportunity to see migratory birds at the refuge, some staying through the winter and some just passing through. Tens of thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl are prominent, filling the marshes, rivers, and grasslands. Spot a variety of ducks such as scaup, bufflehead, and pintail.



Northern pintail

Winter

Stroll down White-tail Trail, stopping along the way to enjoy the informational signs and wildlife associated with them! This trail takes you through a variety of habitats, including grasslands and marsh with views of the river and forest. Look up to spot bald eagles flying and preparing their nests for spring. Hear the calls of sea lions echoing across the water. Waterfowl are still abundant, swans have arrived, and elk are likely to be spotted with their antlers on display.

**Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the
Columbian White-tailed Deer**
46 Steamboat Slough Road
Cathlamet, Washington 98612
360/795 3915
www.fws.gov/refuge/julia-butler-hansen-columbian-white-tailed-deer

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

Refuge Information
1 800/344 WILD

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**All photographs courtesy of Jake Bonello/
USFWS**

**This brochure will be made
available in other formats
upon request.**

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