



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fact Sheet

Tualatin River

National Wildlife Refuge

Date Established
1992

Refuge Size
7,370 acres - approved boundary
1,850 acres - acquired as of 2009

Contact
Tualatin River NWR
19255 SW Pacific Hwy
Sherwood, OR 97140
503.625-5944
503.625-5947 fax

Land and Wildlife

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is located within the floodplain of the Tualatin River basin near Sherwood, Oregon. Its topography is predominantly flat bottom land bordered by uplands, and characterized by rivers and streams, wetlands, riparian woodlands, grasslands, and forested uplands. Refuge habitats include floodplain, seasonal emergent, forested, and scrub-shrub wetlands, Oregon ash riparian hardwood and conifer forests, and oak-pine communities. They are among the best representative examples of these severely depleted habitats remaining in the Willamette Valley. When flooded in fall and winter, the Tualatin River floodplain wetlands support thousands of ducks, arctic-nesting Canada geese, tundra swans, and a variety of other waterbirds. Dominant ducks consist of northern pintail, green-winged teal, mallard, and American wigeon. Canada geese include dusky and cackling sub-species. Tualatin River NWR supports significant breeding populations of wood ducks and hooded mergansers and, to a lesser extent, cinnamon teal, blue-winged teal, and mallards.

The Refuge is an important breeding area for neotropical migratory birds as well. Mammals that use the Refuge include deer, coyotes, beavers, river otters, and numerous small rodents. Several species

of amphibians and reptiles also use the Refuge. Threatened and sensitive species which frequent the area include peregrine falcon, bald eagle, western pond turtle, dusky Canada goose, northern red-legged frog and winter steelhead.

History of Establishment

In the early 1990s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began studying the idea to create a National Wildlife Refuge along the bottomlands of the Tualatin River. Many local residents and leaders recognized that the river and its floodplain had been highly modified by both agriculture and urbanization within Washington County. This recognition fueled a desire to preserve open greenspace and create an area where future generations could enjoy outdoor recreation and interpretation, and leave an educational legacy for children. The Service identified a need to protect and enhance floodplains, wetlands, riparian habitats, and upland buffers for a variety of wildlife and for the enjoyment of people.



The Refuge supports large numbers of wintering waterfowl.

An Environmental Assessment culminated in a decision, issued in February of 1992, to create the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge by acquiring and managing up to 3058 acres of land by fee title purchase, conservation easement and/or agreement. In 2004, an additional 2 acres were added and more recently in 2007, the Wapato Lake Unit was established--adding an additional 4,310 acres to the acquisition boundary.

Acquisition Authorities

Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929: "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds...."

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956: "... for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources..." and "... for the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in performing its activities and services."

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986: "... the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions...."



Refuge habitats support migratory songbirds and shorebirds.

Acquisition Status

The approved acquisition boundary incorporates 7,360 acres. Acquisitions have been and will be obtained only from willing sellers. An initial 12-acre private donation established the Refuge in 1993. From 1994 through 2009, 1,838 more acres have been protected for a current total of 1,850 acres. A total of 5,510 acres remain to be protected within the approved boundary.

Refuge Goals

- ◆Protect and restore a diversity of native habitats and associated populations of indigenous fish, wildlife, invertebrate, and plant species of the Tualatin River basin.

- ◆Provide high quality opportunities for wildlands and wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education to enhance public appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of refuge fish, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources with an emphasis toward urban residents.

- ◆Protect, restore, and develop a diversity of habitats for migratory birds such as neotropical songbirds, wading birds, and shorebirds with special emphasis on wintering waterfowl.

- ◆Protect and restore floodplain type benefits associated with the Tualatin River including water quality, flood storage, and water recharge.

- ◆Protect, restore, and develop habitats for and otherwise support recovery of federally listed endangered and threatened species and help prevent the listing of candidate species and species of management concern.



Public Use

The protection of fish and wildlife and their habitats on the Refuge provides the public with wildlife-oriented recreation, education, and interpretation opportunities. The Refuge public use program strives to foster environmental awareness to develop an informed and involved citizenry that will support fish and wildlife conservation. The Refuge opened to the public in June 2006 featuring new visitor service facilities including an entrance road and parking area, nature trails, wildlife observation overlooks, river overlook, interpretive panels, photography blind and environmental education study sites. Construction of a new Wildlife Center was completed in March 2008 and features a multi-purpose room, environmental education classroom, interpretive exhibits, and nature store. An environmental education shelter is also planned and will be completed by 2010. People of all ages now experience the beauty of the Tualatin River Valley, view abundant wildlife, and discover how this urban national wildlife refuge represents the larger National Wildlife Refuge System.