

National Elk Refuge News – June 10, 2013

Visitor Center Offers Fun Opportunities to Learn About Birds



National Elk Refuge volunteer Margaret Lozar helps a young duck impersonator with her final fitting of props that simulate air sacs, webbed feet, contour and down feathers, hollow bones, a bill, and nictitating membranes.

School ended for Teton County, Wyoming students on Friday, but not before nine classes of second graders from Davey Jackson Elementary School were able to enjoy an end-of-year field trip to the National Elk Refuge. The trip capped off the children's studies of Jackson Hole animals and was their second excursion to the Refuge this year to observe and learn about area wildlife.

Davey Jackson Elementary School, located along the Refuge's southern boundary, affords a wonderful view of the property owned and managed by the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service. The second grade classrooms are located on the school's second floor, giving the students an outstanding elevated view of the nearby preserved habitat.

While the focus of the students' February visit to the Refuge was wintering elk, the spring trip in late May centered on birds. Students rotated through stations to learn about bird characteristics, beak adaptations, and migration. The students also had an opportunity to observe birds and write in journals they've been keeping throughout the year.



A student climbs under plastic wrap used to represent a glass window during his race through a bird migration obstacle course. Other hindrances along the route included a predator, fragmented habitat, invasive species, and bright city lights.



National Elk Refuge volunteer Bob Dicken offers assistance with binoculars (top photo) while a classroom teacher helps a student with his journal entry (bottom photo), both part of a station where children watched birds, listened to bird songs, and recorded their observations.

This week, both Federal Duck Stamp and Junior Duck Stamp art work will be on display at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center. In the spirit of the traveling exhibits, Refuge volunteers have organized a “Duck Day” for Friday, June 14 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, offering some of the same learning stations to the public. Participants can navigate through the bird migration obstacle course, don props that allow them to learn about duck adaptations, and challenge themselves to pick up various sources of food with an assortment of tools to learn about different shapes and sizes of beaks. Friday’s programs are free of charge and guaranteed to be fun!

For information on the Duck Stamp exhibit or activities, please visit <http://1.usa.gov/1boQmKe> or call the Refuge administrative offices at 307.733.9212.