



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge**

*2016 Calendar of Events*



Photo Courtesy of Jo Dodd – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Wildlife

Friends of Crab Orchard Photo Contest 2014

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

# Becoming an Outdoors-Family



Beginning in 2016 Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is excited to announce the Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program! B.O.F. is a series of different Saturday courses and workshops that focus on teaching basic outdoor skills to you and your family to help you enjoy nature and encourage you to spend more time outdoors.

The courses taught vary greatly and cover everything from wilderness survival, to kayaking, and everything in between. Our goal is to reconnect families to the outdoors, to our Refuge, and to each other. Becoming an outdoors-family programs provide you with a safe and fun setting to learn new skills, improve skills you may already have, or pass important skills on to the next generation. All are welcome and all programs are free unless otherwise stated.

Each course will be taught by an expert instructor and will allow you and your family to learn the basics as well as gain hands on experience in an environment where questions are welcomed and fun is a given!

Check our 2016 Calendar of Events for a list of courses and the dates they will be offered. If you have any requests for a course please let us know. So find a course that inspires you to get outdoors and bring your kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews, brothers, and sisters and join us!



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge**



Welcome to Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Our Refuge is approximately 44,000 acres of beautiful oak hickory forests, open water, crop land, and hiking trails that we can't wait for you to explore! Our primary purposes are wildlife conservation, agriculture, industry, and recreation. Whether this is your first time at our Refuge or you are a long time visitor, there is always something new to see. So bring the family camping for the weekend, head out for a relaxing day of fishing, hike our trails, or do some bird-watching at our observation decks. If you have any questions please stop by our Visitor's Center on Route 148 and speak with our staff; it is our goal to ensure you get the most out of the time you've taken to reconnect with nature.

## **Directions, Address & Contact Info**

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

8588 Route 148

Marion, IL 62959

E-mail: [craborchard@fws.gov](mailto:craborchard@fws.gov)

Phone Number: 618-997-3344



## January

### Bald Eagle Tours

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>

Guided tours visit eagle nests and areas of the Refuge where eagles may be spotted.

The cost is \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for youth under the age of 12, and reservations are required.

## February

### Wildlife C.S.I.

#### Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

February 13<sup>th</sup>

Discover how forensic science is being used to help solve crimes against wildlife and learn a few tricks of the trade!

*Program begins at 10:00 am*

### Volunteer Recruitment Day

February 20<sup>th</sup>

Want to help out your local wildlife refuge? Come to the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Recruitment Day! Volunteerism is a large part of the Wildlife Refuge system and could include you!

## March

### Outdoor Spanish Immersion Class

#### Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

March 5<sup>th</sup>

Do you speak Spanish? Trying to learn Spanish? Do you have a child in Spanish class that needs some practice? One of the best ways to learn a new language is to immerse yourself in it. Our Spanish Immersion class lets you try your hand out at speaking Spanish on a beautiful hike with two of our bi-lingual rangers! The program includes a brief introduction at the visitors center followed by a short hike.

*Program begins at 10:00 am*

### Bicycling in the Restricted Area

#### Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

March 12<sup>th</sup>

Everyone knows that bicycling is great exercise, a great way to spend time outdoors, and a great way to spend time as a family. But did you also know it can be a great way to explore parts of the refuge usually gone unseen? Bring the whole family and join us for a bike trip through some of the restricted parts of the refuge!

Take in the sites and see how much wildlife you can spot along the way.





## March Continued...

### Refuge Ponds Open

March 15<sup>th</sup>

Our ponds are open yet again. Time to do some fishing!

### Wilderness Survival/First Aid Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

March 19<sup>th</sup>

Some of the best memories can be made in the great outdoors! But are you prepared for those worst-case scenarios? This program is led by a certified instructor to teach wilderness survival and first aid skills to everyone in the family. This will be a fun and exciting day that will give you some essential new skills we hope you never have to use.

*Program runs from 10 am—12 pm*

### Fishing Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

March 20<sup>th</sup>

Nothing brings families together quite like fishing. This program focuses on teaching the basics of fishing, all equipment provided, to the younger (or less experienced) members of your family. Bring the whole crew, prac-



## April

### Wildflower Walks

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, & 16<sup>th</sup>

Join a knowledgeable guide at the Rocky Bluff trailhead for a hike and an in-depth program about spring wildflowers.

*Reservations are recommended.*

*Program begins at 10 am at the Rocky Bluff Hiking Trail, Tacoma Lake Road*

### Invasive, Medicinal, and Edible Plants Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

April 30<sup>th</sup>

Want to expand your knowledge of the plants around you? Our guest speaker Kevin Rohling, from the River





## May

### **Cache River Nature Fest**

May 7<sup>th</sup>

The Refuge will be a part of Cache River Nature Fest, an event that highlights the rich diversity of habitats and wildlife in the Cache River Watershed! Guided canoe tours, bike trips, hikes, and special presentations will be scheduled throughout the day and will feature live animal demonstrations, and a variety of exhibitors.

For more information call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618)634-2231.

*9:00am-4:00pm at the Cache River Wetlands Center*

### **International Migratory Bird Day Festival!**

May 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>

Join the international movement and come celebrate migratory birds at Crab Orchard! Day one includes a basics in birdwatching course, photo opportunities, and bird-watching hike. Day two includes presentation on bird calls, migration, and a live mist netting demonstration!

*Program begins at 9 am both days*

### **Camping Skills & Outdoor Cooking Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

May 21<sup>st</sup>

Gear up for camping season with this instructional course for the whole family! Want to make sure everybody is prepared for that upcoming camping trip? Our rangers will teach you all the basics from setting up camp, to building a fire, to preparing some delicious meals.

*Program begins at 10 am*

### **Kayaking The Refuge Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

## June

### **Nature Photography Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

June 4<sup>th</sup>

Learn the basics of nature photography with the whole family. Learn from our certified instructors and then practice your new skills on a group hike!

*Program begins at 9 am*





## June Continued...

### **Kids Fishing Derby**

June 18<sup>th</sup>

The Kids Fishing Derby is a free event hosted by the Refuge and our many local sponsors and is a wonderful opportunity for families to spend a day together on the Refuge fishing. The Derby is for kids 12 and younger.

Registration begins at 8 am. Free lunch will be provided for participants and their families.

*Event runs from 8am - 12 pm, Prairie Creek Recreation Area*

### **Bicycling in the Restricted Area**

### **Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

June 25<sup>th</sup>

Everyone knows that bicycling is great exercise, a great way to spend time outdoors, and a great way to spend time as a family. But did you also know it can be a great way to explore parts of the refuge usually gone unseen? Bring the whole family and join us for a bike trip through some of the restricted parts of the refuge!

## July

### **Agriculture at Home Course**

### **Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

July 16<sup>th</sup>

This course will be taught by guest speakers from Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom. Learn a bit about farming, how it can be done with the family at home, the health and planetary benefits of at home agriculture, and composting! Bring the whole family to discover how you can make the most out of the land you have.

*Program begins at 10 am*

### **Nature Photography Course**

### **Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Learn the basics of nature photography with the whole family. Learn from our certified instructors and then practice your new skills on a group hike!

*Program begins at 11 am*

### **Kayaking The Refuge Course**

### **Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

July 30<sup>th</sup>



## August

### **Geocaching the Refuge Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

August 6<sup>th</sup>

A fan of geocaching? Have no idea what it is, but want to find out? Come join us in the biggest international treasure hunt. Wildlife Refuges are a little different when it comes to geocaching: the only people who can hide caches are the rangers. Bring the family to our first B.O.F Geocaching adventure and see if you can find what our rangers have hidden. Side effects may include fun, exposure to nature, family bonding, and learning new skills such as orienteering and how to use a handheld GPS.

*Program begins at 8 am*

### **Outdoor Cooking Course**

August 13<sup>th</sup>

Join us for a fun and delicious course! Learn from an expert how to whip up delicious meals over a hot fire and in a Dutch-oven. Bring the whole family down, learn a few recipes, and end with a well earned lunch!

*Program begins at 10:30 am*

### **Family Birdwatching Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

August 20<sup>th</sup>

Knowing how to “bird-watch” is a gift that keeps on giving. It opens your eyes to nature even if you aren’t in the most natural setting. Our family bird-watching course teaches future birders of all ages the basics of bird watching and bird identification. It is a great way to get the family together, enjoy nature, and enjoy the variety of birds we are lucky to have pass through Illinois.

*Program begins at 9 am*

### **Fishing Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**





## September

### **Kayaking The Refuge Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

September 3<sup>rd</sup>

Come kayak Crab Orchard NWR's lakes with us! Get an interpretive tour of the land around you, view wildlife as you pass by, and enjoy the breeze as you kayak out with our rangers. Boats are limited so if you are not bringing your own be sure to reserve your space! Ages 15 and up only

*Program begins at 9 am*

### **Butterfly Round-up**

September 10<sup>th</sup>

Monarch butterflies travel through our area each year on their way to spend the cold months of winter in Mexico. Visitors are invited to help catch and tag these butterflies as they feed and rest at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. ***Reservations are recommended.***

*Program Runs from 10am—12pm*

### **Refuge Clean-up**

September 17<sup>th</sup>

The Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge will be hosting the annual Crab Orchard Clean Up at the Prairie Creek Recreation Area.

Spend the day outdoors and help keep Crab Orchard beautiful.

*Event runs from 8am-1pm*

### **Hunting & Fishing Days**

## October

### **Family Birdwatching Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

October 1<sup>st</sup>

Knowing how to “bird-watch” is a gift that keeps on giving. It opens your eyes to nature even if you aren't in the most natural setting. Our family bird-watching course teaches future birders of all ages the basics of bird watching and bird identification. It is a great way to get the family together, enjoy nature, and enjoy the variety of birds we are lucky to have pass through Illinois.



## October Continued...

### **Family Archery Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

October 8<sup>th</sup>

Bring the whole family and learn the basics of archery! The course will be taught by certified instructors. Learn the basics and important safety information in a fun and safe environment then spend some time practicing on our range!

*Program begins at 10 am*

### **National Wildlife Refuge Week!**

*Pollinator Week at Crab Orchard*

October 10<sup>th</sup>—14<sup>th</sup>

To celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week Crab Orchard is hosting Pollinator Week! We will have several classes and activities free to the public to spread awareness about the importance of pollinators! Join us in celebrating bats, birds, bugs, and more! Keep an eye on our website for postings about the activities to come.

### **Nature Photography Course Becoming an Outdoors Family Program**

October 15<sup>th</sup>

Learn the basics of nature photography with the whole family. Learn from our certified instructors and then practice your new skills on a group hike!

*Program begins at 11 am*

### **Discovery Tours**

October 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>

We will open up the restricted portion of the refuge for a self-guided tour.

Tours begin at the Wolf Creek Causeway, volunteers will be stationed throughout the tour to answer questions.

*Gates open from 1—4 pm*

### **Family Archery Course Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

October 22<sup>nd</sup>

Bring the whole family and learn the basics of archery or come back to practice the skills you learned in our last course! The course will be taught by certified instructors. Learn the basics and important safety infor-





## November

**Family Birdwatching Course  
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

November 5<sup>th</sup>

Our family bird-watching course teaches future birders of all ages the basics of bird watching and bird identification. It is a great way to get the family together, enjoy nature, and enjoy the variety of birds we are lucky to have pass through Illinois.

*Program begins at 9 am*

**Wildlife C.S.I  
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

November 12<sup>th</sup>



## December

**Holiday Helper Course:  
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program**

December 10<sup>th</sup>

Creating Festive Decorations that Benefit Wildlife!

**Youth Waterfowl Workshop and Hunt**

December 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>

Sign up early for a day of fun and learning at the Youth Waterfowl Workshop. Learn all you need to know about waterfowl hunting and safety and stay for the pizza and prizes! The following day will be the hunt; hunters age 15 or younger may hunt



Head outdoors and enjoy some of the country's most magical places — refuges that normally charge entrance fees will offer an additional incentive — **free admission on these days in 2016:**

- January 18 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 13-15 – Presidents' Day Weekend
- September 24 – National Public Lands Day
- October 9 – First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week

