U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

2018 Calendar of Events

Photos Courtesy of:

Jim Osborn - Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer

&

Dana M. Malavé Miller - USFWS

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

Please note: the calendar may be subject to changes.

Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program

Photos Courtesy of:
Cheryl Stein - Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer
&
Dana M. Malavé Miller - USFWS

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 outdoor cooking 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 Program provides 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 2018 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!

Notes:

Volunteer Opportunities at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

Volunteers are very important and valuable for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Volunteer assistance is need in a wide range of activities. Throughout the years volunteers have generously given their time which have helped achieve the mission and goals of the System. In Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge your opportunities are limitless and we appreciate your valuable time.

- Assisting with the environmental education programs.
- Helping with the wildlife population surveys.
- Assisting with habitat modification projects.
- Maintaining hiking trails.
- Photographing natural resources and cultural events.
- Patrolling through the Refuge.
- Helping with tours and providing information to the public.
- Helping with the pollinator garden project.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

Photo Courtesy of - Jim Osborn

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer

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 Visitors 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

Phone Number: 618-997-3344

And visit us on Facebook!

January

Birding Tour
January 14th
Come and join us for a birding tour guided by Crab Orchard NWR Volunteers. Experienced birders will lead the tour.
Binoculars are available at the Refuge Visitor Center for check-out.
Program begins at 8:15 am at the Refuge Visitor Center
Reservations are required.

Fee Free Day
Monday, January 15th

Bald Eagle Tours
January 27th, 28th
Guided tours visit eagle nests and areas of the Refuge where eagles may be spotted.
Saturdays and Sundays at 8am, 11am and 2pm
Meet at the Crab Orchard NWR Visitor Center.
Reservations are required.
Reservations beginning December 26th.

February

Bald Eagle Tours
February 3rd, 4th
Guided tours visit eagle nests and areas of the Refuge where eagles may be spotted.
Saturdays and Sundays at 8am, 11am and 2pm
Meet at the Crab Orchard NWR Visitor Center.
Reservations are required.
Reservations beginning December 26th.

Birding Tour
February 11th
Come and join us for a birding tour guided by Crab Orchard NWR Volunteers. Experienced birders will lead the tour.
Binoculars are available at the Refuge Visitor Center for check-out.
Program begins at 8:15 am at the Refuge Visitor Center
Reservations are required.

Fee Free Day
Monday, February 19th

Art Teachers, Science Teachers and Homeschoolers:

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is the host of the Junior Duck Stamp Contest for the State of Illinois.

Enhance and enrich your student's appreciation and understanding of waterfowl through this nationally renowned contest!

As part of the Mississippi Flyway, Illinois is a great place for inspiration! This allows students to see waterfowl up close and personal. Encourage students to go observe these creatures in their natural habitat and use their artistic abilities to express what they experience. Students can also use personal photos as inspiration.

· Contest entries are due March 15th and are to be submitted by mail or dropped off to the Crab Orchard NWR Visitor Center.

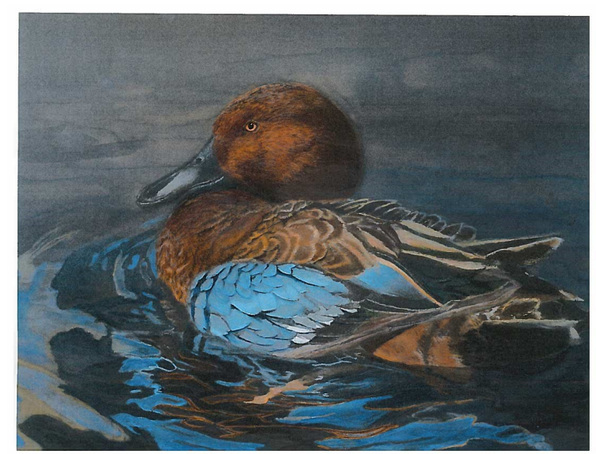
· See the Junior Duck Stamp website for complete entry details: www.fws.gov/juniorduck/

Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2018.

Send entries to:
Dana M. Malave-Miller
Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge
8588 Route 148, Marion Il, 62959-5822

Or for more information please call:

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge (618) 997-3344
Contact: Dana M. Malave-Miller at dana_malave-miller@fws.gov



Jil Brevick
2017 Illinois State
Best of Show Artwork

For Schools and Homeschoolers!

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge also offers a variety of environmental education programs designed to be an enriching educational experience geared toward Illinois State science learning standards. Environmental education gives students an opportunity to get outside and learn about nature, in nature. All programs are free of charge and available throughout the school year.

Quackers and Honkers
Season - Winter and Fall
Grades - 2nd -4th

This program shows students the diversity of migrating waterfowl that travel through Southern Illinois on their long journey south.

Earth Day Celebration
Season - Spring

This annual all-day event is an excellent opportunity for students to engage with nature conservation and understand the reason why we celebrate an Earth Day. Speakers present such topics as recycling, energy conservation, endangered species/habitat conservation, law enforcement, and wildlife management.

Forest Fun
Season - Fall

Student will learn the parts of a tree and its functions. They will also learn the differences between an evergreen and deciduous tree. As part of the program students will receive field journals that help them identify trees based on their leaf characteristics.

Amazing Owl Adaptations
Season - Winter

Students will learn about how the owls have adapted to be very successful hunters. Students will have the opportunity to see and feel an owl mount and dissect a real owl pellet to observe the remains of what these birds of prey eat.

Butterfly Round-Up
Season - Fall

The annual southern migration of the monarch butterfly passes through Crab Orchard. Students will be instructed on how to safely collect these delicate insects and will go out into the field with their own nets. Once collected, each monarch will be tagged, recorded in a journal, and released to help track the butterflies as they migrate to and from Mexico.

Wildflower Hikes
Season - Spring

Students will identify wildflowers, observe flower characteristics, and understand how they are grouped into families.

March

Birding Tour
March 3rd
Come and join us for a birding tour guided by Crab Orchard NWR Volunteers.
Experienced birders will lead the tour.
Binoculars are available at the Refuge Visitor Center for check-out.
Program begins at 8:15 am at the Refuge Visitor Center.
Reservations are required.

Volunteer Recruitment Day
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
March 10th
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!
Event is at the Visitor's Center from 10 am - 3 pm

Refuge Ponds Open
March 15th
Our ponds are open again! Time to do some fishing!

Family Archery Course
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
March 17th
Bring out the Robin Hood in your family! If you want to build your archery skills with all members of the family, come and join us in a basic introduction of archery. All equipment will be provided for all the members of your family.
Program begins at 10 am
Program meets at the Martha's Theater .
Reservations are required.

Youth Turkey Hunt Workshop
March 24th
Sign up early for a day of fun and learning at the Youth Turkey Workshop. Learn all you need to know about turkey hunting, safety and stay for some snacks and prizes!
Keep an eye on our website, Facebook Page or call to the Visitor Center for more information about this event.

April

Spring Nature Photography Course
Becoming an Outdoors Family Program
April 7th
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 10 am
Program meets at the Refuge Visitor Center.
Reservations are recommended.

Wildflower Walks
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
April 21st
Join a knowledgeable guide at the Rocky Bluff trailhead for a hike and an in-depth program about spring wildflowers.
Meet at the Rocky Bluff Hiking Trail, Tacoma Lake Road
First program begins at 10 am
Second program begins at 1 pm
Reservations are recommended.

Family Fishing
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
April 22nd
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, practice the basics, then end the day with a group bank fishing trip!
Visitors will meet at the Refuge Visitor Center .
Program runs from 1 - 3pm

May

Birding Tour
May 6th
Come and join us for a birding tour guided by Crab Orchard NWR Volunteers. Experienced birders will lead the tour. Binoculars are available at the Refuge Visitor Center for check-out.
Program begins at 8:15 am at the Refuge Visitor Center.
Reservations are required.

December

Youth Waterfowl Workshop and Hunt
December 14th & 15th
Sign up early for a day of fun and learning at the Youth Waterfowl Workshop. Learn all you need to know about waterfowl hunting, safety and stay for the pizza and prizes! The following day will be the hunt; hunters age 15 or younger may hunt ducks, geese, coots, and mergansers as long as they are accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age. The accompanying adult cannot hunt during the weekend.
Keep an eye on our website, Facebook Page or call to the Visitor Center for more information about this event.

Free admission Day at Crab Orchard National Wildlife

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 2018:**

- January 15 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 19 - Presidents' Day
- September 22 - 23 – Southern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days
- September 22 - Public Lands Day
- October 14 - First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week
- November 11 - Veterans Day

October

Outdoor Spanish Immersion Class
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
October 13th

¿ Habla español? 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 our bilingual ranger!
The program includes a brief introduction at the visitors center followed by a short hike.

Program begins at 10 am
Reservations are recommended.

Fee Free Day
Sunday October 14th

Discovery Tours
October 21st & 28th

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

Halloween Bat Program
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
October 28th

Come to Crab Orchard NWR for some Halloween Fun! Learn about the importance of bats and build bat boxes with us to encourage these important pollinators.

Program begins at 1:00 pm
Reservations are required.

November

Fee Free Day
Sunday November 11h

May Continued...

Outdoor Cooking
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
May 12th

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 10:00 am
This program will be at Martha's Theater
Reservations are required.

Bicycling the Back Roads of the Refuge - International Migratory Bird Day
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
May 19th

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.

Program begins at 9:00 am
Reservations are required.

Kayaking The Refuge
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
May 26th

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.
First program begins at 9 am
Second program begins at 1 pm

June

Kids Fishing Derby
June 9th

The Kids Fishing Derby is a free event hosted by the Refuge and our many local sponsors. It is a wonderful opportunity for families to spend a day together on the Refuge fishing. The Derby is for kids 12 and younger. Free lunch will be provided for participants and their families.

Registration begins at 8 am.
Event runs from 8am - 12 pm, Prairie Creek Recreation Area

June Continued...

Family Archery
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
June 23rd
Bring out the Robin Hoods in your family. If you want to build your archery skills with all members of the family, come an join us in a basic
introduction of archery. All equipment will be provided for all the members of your family.
Program begins at 10 am
Program meets at the Martha's Theater .
Reservations are required.

July

Kayaking The Refuge
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
July 14th
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.
First program begins at 9 am
Second program begins at 1 pm
Reservations are required.

August

Summer Nature Photography Course
Becoming an Outdoors Family Program
August 4th
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 10 am
Program meets at the Refuge Visitor Center.
Reservations are recommended.

Family Archery Course
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
August11th
Do you want to have a Family Archery Course? This is your opportunity! If you want to build your archery skills with all members of the family, come an join us in a basic
introduction of archery. All equipment will be provided for all the members of your family.
Program begins at 10 am
Program meets at the Martha's Theater .

September

Kayaking The Refuge Course
Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
September 1st
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.
First program begins at 9 am
Second program begins at 1 pm
Reservations are required.

Becoming an Outdoors-Family Program
Butterfly Round-up
September 8th
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

Hunting & Fishing Days
September 22nd & 23rd
Come join us out at John A. Logan College for the 29th annual Southern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days. Attend a casting workshop, watch the dock dogs compete, listen to the waterfowl callers and try archery, check out all the latest gear and much more.
September 22nd 8am-5pm & September 23rd 9am-4pm

Fee Free Day
Sunday, September 22nd & 23rd

Refuge Clean Up / National Public Lands Day
September 29th
The Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge will be hosting the first annual Public Use Lands Day at the Prairie Creek Recreation Area. Projects could include planting trees, painting, trash pick up, etc. Spend the day outdoors and help keep Crab Orchard beautiful.
Event runs from 8am - 1pm