



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Fall Calendar of Events September, October, November 2015



http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley

Monarch roost, photo US Forest Service



People are familiar with birds. We have watched and marveled at their migrations for millennia. But birds are large, hardy animals and they have many adaptations to help them survive, and even thrive, during migration. Shrink an animal down to the weight of less than a paper clip, add in fragile, tissue-paper thin wings, and their migration borders on miraculous.

Monarchs migrate from northern North America to Mexico starting in August. The last generation emerges from their chrysalis in August and September. They emerge in a state of reproductive diapause, which means that instead of expending energy for reproduction, like the rest of the summer-hatched monarchs, they instead use their energy to migrate. This is triggered by decreasing day-length, varying temperatures, and dying milkweed plants.

As daylight dwindles and nectar sources become scarce in the north, they start to fly south in search of food and warmth. As they glide they form large roosts at stop-over spots. Roosts are protected places that shelter and provide nectar for the monarchs during their journey. Plenty of nectar is critical to monarch survival during migration; in fact, some monarchs actually gain weight because they consume so much nectar on their journey! They arrive at their wintering grounds in the mountains of central Mexico by late October. There they cluster by the thousands in the perfect habitat of Oyamel Fir Tree Forest. This habitat provides shelter, a temperature just above freezing, and water. There they go into torpor. If they survive the winter, their life cycle will end in March when they mate, lay eggs, and die.

Their offspring will continue on, migrating north, breeding and laying eggs, until it is time once again to head back to Mexico.

Four generations of butterflies make this amazing trek each year, and the only generation to live longer than five weeks is the migratory generation, living up to nine months old. Amazing for an animal that weighs less than a paper clip.



Overwintering Monarchs, Photo WWF

September



6 Bird Language

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

6 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

11 Meeting Monarchs

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
11:00 am-3:00 pm

12 End of Summer Photo Hike

Lyndale Avenue Trailhead
7:00 am-9:00 am

12 Meeting Monarchs

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
11:00 am-3:00 pm

12 Colors of the Prairie-Purple

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
10:00 am-11:00 am

13 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
8:00 am-10:30 am

13 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

14 Bird Watching Trek

Bass Ponds Trailhead
8:00 am-10:30 am

19 Paddle with Ranger Judy Color Cruise

Belle Plaine to Jordan
11:30 am-4:30 pm

20 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

21 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-10:30 am

26 Bird Watching Trek

Bass Ponds Trailhead
8:00 am-10:30 am

26 Beginner Archery

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
12:30 pm-2:30 pm

27 Paddle with Ranger Judy Color Cruise

Lyndale to Fort Snelling State Park
11:30 am-4:30

27 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00

October



4 Bird Language

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

4 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

10 Fall Photo Hike

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
8:30 am-10:30 am

11 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:30 pm

12 Bird Watching Trek

Bass Ponds Trailhead
8:00 am-10:30 am

17 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center
8:00 am-10:30 am

17 Confluence: Where Culture Joins

Nature
Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
11:30 am-12:30 pm

18 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

24 Bird Watching Trek

Bass Ponds Trailhead
8:00 am-10:30 am

25 Call of the Wild Film Fest

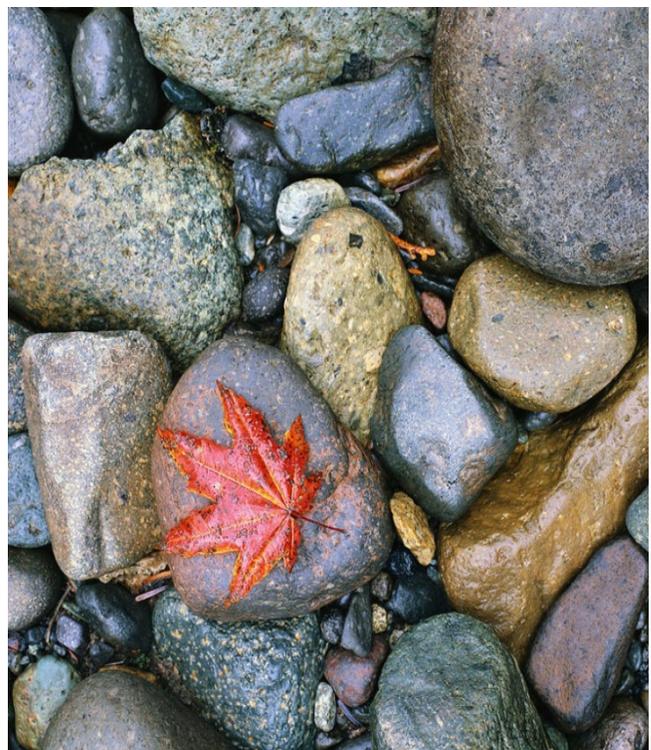
Bloomington Lake Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

Connect with the Refuge Online

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley

<http://www.facebook.com/MNValleyNWR>

<http://twitter.com/usfwsmnvalley#>



November

Program

Descriptions

7 Sunset Photo Hike

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:30 pm-5:30 pm

8 Bird Language

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

8 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

15 Bird Watching Trek

Bass Ponds Trailhead
8:00 am-10:30 am

16 Bird Watching Trek

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
8:00 am-10:30 am

21 Bird Watching Trek

Bass Ponds Trailhead
8:00 am-10:30 am

Beginner Archery

Aim for a rewarding and challenging afternoon by learning and practicing bow and arrow skills from a certified instructor. With step-by-step guidance from a certified instructor you can become an archer, too. Demonstration, hands-on practice, and progressive games provide an opportunity to develop and test your new skills. For ages 8 and up, this is a fun family activity. Equipment provided.

Judy Geck, Park Ranger

Bird Language

Join us as we gather on the slopes of the Minnesota River Valley to explore what the birds are telling us about our surroundings. We will split the time between the classroom and outdoors. Bring a notebook, pencils, and something to sit on outdoors. To register visit: <http://www.mntracking.org/> Donnie Phyllaier, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist

Bird Watching Trek

Join us for a bird walk on one of the many refuge units and learn about the birds that use the refuge for feeding and resting during migration. With the variety of habitats at the different units, you will want to explore them all. We will observe a mix of waterfowl, raptors, songbirds, and resident birds. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Bring along your binoculars and field guide, and dress for the weather.

Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist



Call of the Wild Film Fest

Join us on Sunday afternoons for films featuring our favorite wildlife and their unique behaviors, habitat needs, and special adaptations. You will also discover how a variety of community partners work together to protect natural resources and manage habitat for wildlife. Recommended for all ages.

September 6: Incredible Journey of the Butterflies

September 13: The Shape of Things

September 20: Duck and Goose Hunting

September 27: Crane Song

October 4: Blue Planet

October 11: After the Birds Taught Me to Fly

October 18: Winged Migration

October 25: A Murder of Crows

November 8: Encounters with Whitetail Deer

Colors of the Prairie-Purple

The restored prairie around Rapids Lake is a summer wave of color and a buzz of sound. Join Ranger Suzanne on a closer look at the beautiful blooms and visiting pollinators unique to each stage of the prairie summer. Photographers and artists are encouraged to stay and sketch, paint, or photograph the summer prairie.

Suzanne Trapp, Visitor Services Specialist



New England Aster, Photo USFWS

Confluence: Where Culture Meets Nature

Through thousands of years of ice, meltwater, flowing rivers, and erosion the Minnesota River valley was formed, creating refuge for wildlife, plants, and humans. The Refuge provides easy access to diverse natural features and provides a variety of recreational opportunities. As a resident or visitor, discover your integral place in this ecological community during an interactive presentation and half mile guided hike.

Judy Geck, Park Ranger

End of Summer Photo Hike

Late summer is a fantastic time for flowers, and this part of the refuge does not disappoint. In addition, there are some really nice views of the river. Our hike will take us through both wooded and open areas.

Don Tredinnick and Peter Berman, Volunteer Refuge Naturalists

Fall Photo Hike

Fall color should be peaking as we get into October. The Rapids Lake Unit has some fantastic tree-lined river views, remnants of an old farm, and lots of bursting milkweed. Of all the units on the refuge, this is my favorite for fall photography.

Don Tredinnick and Peter Berman, Volunteer Refuge Naturalists

Meeting Monarchs

Drop in anytime between 11 and 3 for EVERYTHING monarch. During your visit discover the wonder of monarch migration, help tag migrating monarchs, and make your own monarch glider to take home.

Suzanne Trapp, Visitor Services Specialist

Paddle with Ranger Judy Color Cruise

Join Ranger Judy for a paddle-with-a-view on the Minnesota River. On this guided 10 mile excursion we'll explore Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge from the water and discover some of the best wildlife habitat and scenery around! Provide your own canoe or kayak, equipment, and PFD. Basic paddling skills are required. To register contact Judy at 952-858-0731 or Judy_Geck@fws.gov

Sunset Photo Hike

An annual favorite, as we capture the setting sun over the refuge. The location is perfect as we capture the sun as it sets over the grasses which will be showing their full fall color. We will head down the trail and get into position. Sunset is at 4:55PM, so we will have plenty of time to prepare and get set-up. Don will go over some tips on capturing the sunset once we are in position. Don Tredinnick and Peter Berman, Volunteer Refuge Naturalists

Trailhead Addresses

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center

3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington
952-854-5900

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center

15865 Rapids Lake Road, Carver
952-361-4500

Old Cedar Avenue:

9500 Old Cedar Ave S, Bloomington

Chaska Unit, Carver Riverside Park:

725 West 1st Street, Chaska

Bass Ponds:

2501 East 86th St, Bloomington

Louisville Swamp:

3801 145th St. W, Shakopee

Wilkie Unit:

7701 County Road 101 E, Shakopee

Bloomington Ferry Unit:

11255 Bloomington Ferry Road, Bloomington