



News from the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

October 2016

Volume I

No. 4



*A late fall afternoon provides a beautiful sunset on the Bear River Refuge.
Credit J. Christopherson*

October-November-December

As fall arrives, the majority of shorebirds have left the Refuge. Only American avocet, marbled godwit and long-billed dowitcher remain. The fall waterfowl migration peaks in mid October at around 220,000. Late October heralds the arrival of tundra swans from their Alaskan breeding grounds as well as many of the diving duck species that frequent the Great Salt Lake Valley such as canvasback, common goldeneye and lesser scaup. Cinnamon teal head to warmer climates. November often brings the first freeze of the season, triggering an exodus by migrant waterfowl. When the Refuge freezes over, bald eagles pepper the edges of pockets of open water, where waterfowl have concentrated. Rough-legged hawks pushed from their northern breeding grounds can now be seen cruising the edge of the marshes for a meal. December typically brings a solid freeze. Most of the tundra swans will leave the Great Salt Lake Valley and finish the winter on the delta of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers in California. This is a great time of year to spot barn owls and great horned owls swooping low over vegetation hunting for unsuspecting mice and voles.

Spotlight on – Bookstore volunteers

The Refuge has four categories of volunteers: assistant ranger/tour guides, maintenance/facilities, bookstore, and biological volunteers. Our bookstore volunteers generously donate their time and skills to running the Avocet Corner Bookstore. These volunteers range from students attending Weber State University to retired folks finding a way to be engulfed in nature and good company. The Avocet Bookstore's purpose is to provide visitors with the opportunity to learn more about wetlands. Everything in the bookstore is education related. The Friends of Bear River Refuge run and operate the bookstore. They also sponsor educational events held at the Refuge. Without our bookstore volunteers, it would be difficult to hold event days such as Eagle Day, Swan Day and International Migratory Bird Day, the annual photo contest, and sponsor the Junior Duck Stamp Contest.



Tundra Swans / Lindsay



Landscape / Nelson

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Hardware Ranch is the place to be in the fall! The education continues at Hardware Ranch Wildlife Management Area up Blacksmith Fork Canyon, Hyrum, Utah. Owned by the state, the Bear River Refuge partners with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to implement the first section of the Mountain Wilds to Wetland Wonders program. As this is the beginning of the school year, students have the opportunity to kick off the year with an incredible field trip. They, along with some of their parents ride the bus to the ranch. There they are able to participate in four different stations taught by Refuge and State staff. They learn what a watershed is—an area where all the water flows into the same place. They learn what wildlife lives in the mountains of Blacksmith Fork Canyon such as, raccoons, mule deer, elk and mountain lions. Students learn about different plants types such as shrubs, grasses, trees and forbs. They are able to step into Curtis Creek with waterproof boots (provided by the Refuge) and use a kick net to catch macroinvertebrates. Lastly, the favorite of the stations, students follow a ranger along the trail looking for signs of wildlife.



J. Kiner

Shrub: A low growing woody plant. It has multiple stems or trunks. Bushy.



Tree: Tall woody plant with a single trunk or stem.



Forb: Herbaceous (green-not woody), plant with flowers. Solid stems (not hollow like grasses) and generally have broad, net veined leaves.



Grass: Herbaceous (green-not woody) plants having long narrow hollow leaves, with parallel veins. Leaves are attached to a main stem which has a seed head at the top.

Wetland Wings

Wetland Wings preschool program is held in partnership with Ogden Nature Center. Every Wednesday, Outreach Educator, Shawnee Sawyer from ONC comes to the Refuge and teaches preschoolers about wildlife. Shawnee will be teaching about owls in October. November we'll talk about eagles and migration. December brings those hooved animals (ungulates) who pull Santa's sleigh! Call Christine Melvin, Environmental Educator at BRMBR for more information 435-



Environmental Education Specialist Christine Melvin instructs preschool about amphibians.

Wildlife Education Center Closure Dates:

October 10th: Columbus Day —CLOSED!

November 11th: Veteran's Day —CLOSED!

November 24th-25th: Thanksgiving Break—CLOSED!

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Federal Duck Stamp

Do you know anyone who is interested in waterfowling?

One of the easiest ways that anyone can support bird habitat conservation is by buying Federal Duck Stamps - among the most successful conservation tools ever created to protect habitat for birds and other wildlife. Federal Duck Stamps are conservation revenue stamps; 98% of the purchase price goes directly to help acquire and protect wetland habitat and purchase wetland conservation easements for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Wetlands acquired with Duck Stamp dollars help purify water, aid in flood control, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. While waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older are required to purchase them, anyone can contribute to conservation by buying Duck Stamps. *In addition to serving as a hunting license and conservation tool, a current Federal Duck Stamp is also a free pass into any National Wildlife Refuge that charges an entry fee.* Because nearly all of the proceeds are used to conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife, birders, nature photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts buy Duck Stamps to help ensure that they can always see wildlife at their favorite outdoors spots.



Also known as the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, the Duck Stamp was conceived in 1934, when Congress passed and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act (later amended to the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Act). The first Duck Stamp was designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, then director of the Bureau of Biological Survey (forerunner to today's U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

In addition to being the only conservation revenue stamp, the Federal Duck Stamp is also unique in the way the stamp is created. Each year, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service holds an art contest, the only juried art competition sponsored by the federal government. Any artist 18 years or older may enter, and the winning artist sees his or her work featured as the design on the following year's Federal Duck Stamp.

The Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest is open to the public; anyone can witness a bit of history in the making as judges select the winning art from among hundreds of entries. For more information visit <http://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php> website.

To learn more watch the Million Dollar Duck, streaming now on Netflix!



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Friends of the Bear River Refuge

We are a not-for-profit support group whose members are wildlife enthusiasts who care about nature and wild places.

Photo Contest update: Participation in this years photo contest was truly great! We've received many entries from new photographers and a total of 97 photos. There is a special category this year "White Birds." Come and vote for your "Fan Favorite" until October 14th. The Award Ceremony will be held at the Wildlife Education Center on October 15th at 1:00 pm. Please join us!

2015 Entries



V. Shearer 2015



R. Welker 2015

What Can You Do?

You can participate solely with your annual membership, but we encourage you to become an active member by assisting with a variety of the organization's activities.

- ◆ Assist with special events or meetings
- ◆ Volunteer to staff the bookstore

Membership Benefits:

Members will receive a 10% discount in the bookstore. Pick up a membership application today in the Wildlife Education Center, 2155 West Forest Street Brigham City, Utah 84302, or visit our website at www.fobrr.org.



Welcome to the Avocet Corner Bookstore!

The Avocet Corner Bookstore is operated by Friends of the Bear River Refuge. The bookstore offers a wide variety of items to purchase. As the months grow colder, and the nights grow longer, we tend to spend more time inside. So, keep your mind sharp by stopping on by the bookstore and picking one of the many Professor Noggin's card games. These games will test your knowledge and skills. Questions such as "what is the largest member of the Heron family in North America?" (Answer: great blue heron) or "which of the following herons is the smallest: tricolored heron, cattle egret, or great egret?" (Answer: cattle egret) These are just a few of the items you will find in the bookstore.



Store Hours:

Tuesday-Friday: 10:00am to 5:00pm
Saturday: 10:00am to 4:00pm
Closed Sundays, Mondays and Federal holidays.



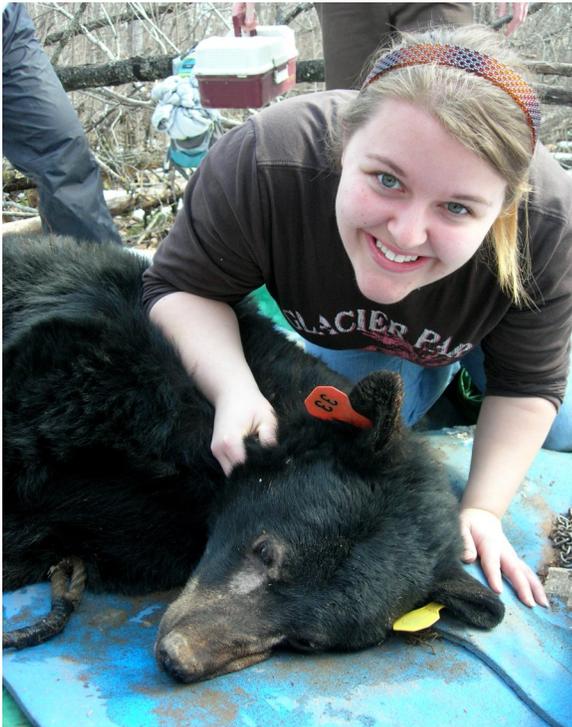
Education and Visitors Services Staff Update

Farewell

This month we are sadly saying goodbye to our wonderful Environmental Educator, Alyssa Stegmaier. She has been with us at BRMBR for two strong years and we have been so grateful! Not only has she taught thousands of children on and off site, but her knack for immense bird bio facts and love for animals has always added a special fun touch to each learning experience! She has truly engaged many and contributed to the overall mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service. We will miss your presence here at BRMBR and wish you luck in your new endeavors, Alyssa!



Alyssa Stegmaier bands ducks during the 2015 duck banding season.



Amber Brooks radio collars a black bear as part of a study in Cloquet, Minnesota.

Welcome

We welcome Amber Brooks our newest Environmental Educator at BRMBR! From Minnesota, she is excited to be stationed in Brigham City where small town meets wetland farms. She has a degree in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology with an emphasis in Wildlife Biology. Her varied experiences range from Bison Herdsman, certified tree inspector, and several years teaching children! Her energy, volume, and enthusiasm with kids keeps them engaged and ready to learn more about the environment. We are excited to have her as part of the EVS team and invite you to stop by and meet her. You may also often catch Amber out on the Refuge in her off hours taking beautiful photographs of wildlife! Welcome to BRMBR, Amber!

Past September Event: Natural Resources Field Days

Natural Resource Field Days began over 30 years ago in Cache Valley to promote natural resource education of Utah. Fourth grade classes of Cache County and Logan City School District have the opportunity for hands-on environmental education with four stations: Plants, Soils, Water, and Wildlife. Classes spend one day at the US Forest Service Guinavah-Malibu Campground for the four station rotation that correlates with their core curriculum. This year our BRMBR environmental education team, state employees, educators and volunteers partnered together to teach the rotations. NR Field Days lasted for two weeks of teaching and close to 1,800 students participated this year in the fun! Our BRMBR educators partnered with Utah DNR at the wildlife station teaching Migration Matters and Track Stories.



A. Brooks

Students migrate to the southern hemisphere led by Environmental Educator Christine Melvin.

Track Stories

Nature is full of stories - you just have to know where to look! At track stories students learn how naturalists such as Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' Nicaela Haig and Laura Howell from Hardware Ranch and BRMBR Environmental Education Specialists Alyssa Stegmaier, Christine Melvin, and Amber Brooks use environmental clues to put together wildlife tales. Students use their knowledge of wildlife behavior in combination with tracks, trails, and other signs of wildlife to create "track stories" to explain what these animals may be doing. The naturalist then teaches student show to sketch what they see in a nature journal. Students learn logical deduction skills as well as practical wildlife watching skills in a fun and hands-on way!



A. Brooks

Migration Matters

On it's surface migration matters is a fun game break from the days more serious subjects but in reality students are learning about the complex challenges facing migrating birds. During the game students assume the role of migrating birds and begin their journey from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere and back again. BRMBR Environmental Education Specialists Alyssa Stegmaier, Christine Melvin, and Amber Brooks guide students through the complexities and challenges of migration such as habitat loss, poisoning, and food shortages. Students have a blast migrating and learning at the same time!



A. Brooks

Naturalist Nicaela Haig sketches students track stories.

Do You Have Questions About BRMBR? Ask a Ranger!

If you have questions about Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge or refuge wildlife, ask a ranger! Submit your questions to bearriver@fws.gov subject line "Ask a Ranger" and check out the next quarterly issue to see if your question was selected!



Love birds? Wildlife? Conservation? Sharing with others? Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge



We're looking for friends to become volunteer team members!



Volunteering is one important way that you can participate with the Bear River MBR – It's a great way to get outside, get involved with wildlife conservation, learn about birds and their habitats, educate visitors, and meet other enthusiasts.



Bear River Refuge is currently seeking committed volunteers to assist with the reconstruction and refurbishing of birdfeeders to keep our feathered friends fed this winter. Interested? Call us at 435-723-5887.



Sunrise / Christopherson

Join our team! We're looking for:

- Asst. Ranger-Naturalist
- Environmental Educator
- Avocet Corner Bookstore Asst.
- Data Entry Specialist
- Social Media Assistant

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.

- Elizabeth Andrew



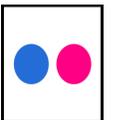
Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge was established in 1928. It provides feeding, resting, and breeding habitat for millions of birds annually.



Gadwall / Inman

Junior Ranger Backpack

Check out our Junior Ranger program! Come visit the center anytime during business hours and check out a Jr. Ranger backpack for FREE! Go to our website and print off the activity workbook with 15 fun activities and earn your Jr. Ranger patch today (available for purchase in the Avocet Corner Bookstore). Visit our website to print off the Jr. Ranger packet: http://www.fws.gov/Refuge/Bear_River_Migratory_Bird_Refuge/visit/just_for_kids.html



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2155 West Forest Street
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435-723-5887

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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