



THE EAGLE'S EYE



The Newsletter for St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Sep - Dec 2016

Milkweed Mafia: Refuge Update on Monarch Conservation

by Robin Will, Refuge Ranger

Last year, I wrote about the Monarch Initiative launched by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to restore over 200,000 acres of habitat for monarchs and support over 750 schoolyard habitats and pollinator gardens. I described how St. Marks NWR was going to develop a small milkweed nursery, reach out to local schools, reach out to local partners, and develop an outreach power point for volunteers to spread the message. The result is the self-proclaimed *Milkweed Mafia*, a wonderful group of staff and volunteers committed to growing, finding, and educating the public about native milkweeds – manna for monarch butterflies.

Two years ago, monarch populations declined from 144 million in 2012 to 33.5 million in 2014. This sharp reduction in population is also reflected in the size of the overwintering forest area in Mexico – now down to less than one hectare. According to Dr. Chip Taylor, Director, Monarch Watch, University of Kansas, the monarch population will continue to decline unless: 1) the annual loss of habitat (.5 to 1.5 million acres) due to conversion of landscapes to crops and development, is addressed and 2) large-scale restoration of milkweeds is initiated to offset habitat losses.

St. Marks NWR is committed to providing knowledge and native milkweeds to respond to the latter. Ranger Scott Davis and Refuge

volunteer Kara Driscoll have led the charge, hosting “Milkweed Thursdays” throughout the summer to identify populations of

native milkweeds, collect seeds, and sow them in the milkweed nursery at the Refuge work center. Over 22,000 milkweeds have been raised, with an additional goal to add 30,000 more plants by year’s end.

Educators and partners have attended multiple workshops at the refuge and are working to establish or enhance their pollinator gardens with milkweeds.

The nursery is raising milkweeds to share, and helps Davis and his crew learn about the best way to grow each species – St. Marks NWR and Wakulla County are host to 19 species of native milkweeds! The plants are not for sale, but will add to the restoration of hundreds of acres for monarchs and other pollinators. We have also learned that prescribed fire is a friend to milkweed. Growing-season burns, which benefit endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers and frosted flatwoods salamanders, also benefit the milkweeds and other nectar plants for pollinators.

This year, the 28th annual Monarch Butterfly Festival will be held on Saturday, October 22, 2016 from 10 am – 4 pm with the focus on milkweed propagation for all. Field trips to the milkweed nursery and other gardens will be offered and we are working with the Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail folks to provide information to engage Florida individuals and organizations to join this great monarch outreach trail. For more information on the Milkweed Mafia, visit the Monarch-Milkweed Initiative Facebook page or email monarchmilkweedinitiative@gmail.com. For more information about the Festival, email me at robin_will@fws.gov.



Volunteer Kara Driscoll address our partner workshop attendees.

Manager's Report by Terry Peacock, Refuge Manager

Lately it seems the seasons go from busy to busier! The timber sale in the Port Leon Unit started this summer. This cut will result in much better wildlife habitat in that area. I am excited to see the restoration of the natural historic system. Now if it will just stop raining long enough for them to complete the harvest.

Red-cockaded woodpeckers keep us hopping. We continue working on the new sub-population in the St. Marks area. The birds that were released in 2015 nested in the St. Marks unit last spring. This fall we will translocate an additional 5 pairs to the St. Marks sub-population. If you are interested in assisting with monitoring of red-cockaded woodpeckers, you can contact Jonathan Chandler at jonathan_chandler@fws.gov. He will get you set up to assist with this important work.

We expect to see our adult whooping cranes return as usual. This year's chicks are being released with adult cranes in the population. I am not sure if any will be released with the birds that are returning here since they are not nesting yet. The plan is being finalized and we will keep you all posted.

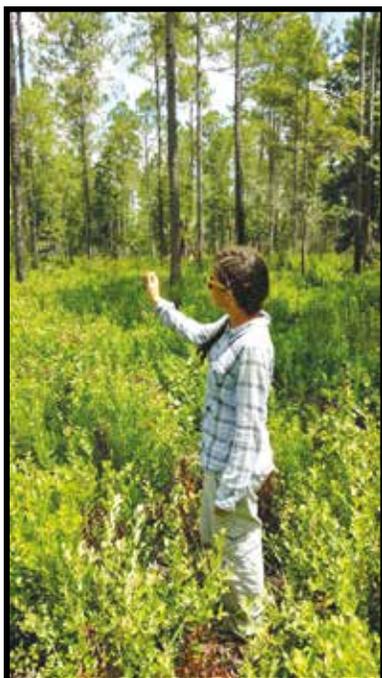
The refuge suffered the loss of a major refuge advocate with the passing of Lou Kellenberger. Not only was he a friend of conservation, he was a personal friend of many of our volunteers and staff including me. Lou will live on in the many photos that he left behind. I feel like my career at S. Marks was captured in photographs taken by him and his wife, Betsy. We thank you, Lou for all of the time you gave to the refuge. You helped to make St. Marks a better place. Betsy, we look forward to your return.



Lou promoted every program on the refuge, but he surely loved the whooping cranes. Here he is walking into the crane pen.

Forest Plots for Red Cockaded Woodpeckers by Tori Stackhouse, Jaclyn Selden, and Amanda Kearns, St. Marks NWR Biological Team

Over the past three weeks we conducted forest plot surveys to identify suitable habitat for the translocation of red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCWs).



There were 378 plots spread 150 yards apart, over roughly 2,000 acres in the St. Marks unit of the refuge. To conduct these surveys we arrived at a point and used a 10 factor prism to define the radius of our plot. Any trees within the plot were then measured with a

special tape, called a DBH tape, that measures the diameter of the individual tree at breast height. All data was compiled into Excel to calculate total basal area of all plots to determine how suitable the habitat is for various species on the refuge. We thank Alex Beaver, Elliot Tobin, and Dalton Pelt from the St. Marks fire crew, John Stark from St. Vincent NWR, Trisha Phy from Crystal River NWR, and Taylor Williams from FSU for all their help with this project.



Tori Stackhouse using the DBH tape.

Jaclyn Selden using the prism to determine which trees will be measured.



Entrance Fees, Because . . .

Salaries: for Rangers to keep the Visitor Center open on weekends and holidays; provide educational programs for children and adults; produce the refuge’s newsletter; operate the milkweed production nursery; conduct offsite outreach programs; and operate the hunt check station.

Printing: all public brochures (hunt, birds, species list, general leaflet, tear-off maps, etc.)

Miscellaneous: utilities for Education Center.

Law enforcement: more than \$10,000 for staff to patrol during special hunts, special events and weekends.

Deferred maintenance: roads; check stations; signs; custodial contracts at Mounds and Otter Lake; maintain and replace restroom fixtures.

Habitat restoration: improve pollinator gardens and remove invasive plants.

Direct operating costs of fee program: collecting and processing fees; fee envelopes; repairs to toll booth and running toll booth.



Monarch Milkweed Initiative, by Kara Driscoll, Workday Coordinator



The Monarch-Milkweed initiative at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was launched in response to the federal call to *Save the Monarch*. Eastern monarchs migrate from as far as southern Canada to southern Mexico and pass through St. Marks in fall and spring. Their decline is indicative of a problem spanning their entire range. In order to bring back healthy numbers of monarchs, we aim to increase numbers of their host plants, the milkweeds. Female monarchs only lay eggs on milkweeds as

it is the only source of food for caterpillars. More milkweeds = more monarchs!

Refuge Ranger Scott Davis has developed a long term plan to support the monarch butterfly by sourcing local milkweed ecotypes to provide an ongoing seed source for the refuge, as well as distributing as many seedlings as possible to conservation lands. The refuge nursery includes a green house, raised garden beds, and sheltered tables for holding flats of young plants. These species have dedicated beds: butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), sandhill milkweed (*A. humistrata*), whorled milkweed (*A. verticillata*), velvetleaf milkweed (*A. tomentosa*), aquatic milkweed (*A. perennis*), swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*), few flower milkweed (*A. lanceolata*), clasping milkweed (*A. amplexicaulis*), and the milkvine (*gonolobus* spp.). In 2015 we propagated near 11,000 milkweeds, and this year we have more than doubled our production.

Volunteer workdays are held on Thursdays during the summer and on most Saturdays during the other months.

Female monarchs only lay eggs on milkweeds as

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
 PO Box 68
 St. Marks, FL 32355
 850-925-6121
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/st_marks/

The Eagle’s Eye shares news about St. Marks and encourages people to participate in recreational activities, programs, and events.

Eagle photo on the cover by Nick Baldwin. 
 Blanket flower photo by Lou Kellenberger.

LIKE us, keep up with the latest news about St. Marks at
<http://www.facebook.com/SMSVNWRS>
<http://www.facebook.com/gotoSt.Marks>

Send comments to gail_fishman@fws.gov

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St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge, by Gail Fishman, Ranger

St. Vincent NWR announces the birth of the first red wolf pup since 2008! Check out the big ears and gangly legs on this little guy. May he survive and thrive on this barrier island refuge.

A record 104 loggerheads nested on the refuge's beach in 2015. This year a new record is in the making - now at 114..... and counting at the end of July!



St. Vincent Refuge Manager John Stark will be our *First Sunday at the Refuge* speaker on November 6. He'll bring updates and share more about the wildlife and history of this unique refuge.



With a Smartphone in hand, everyone can be a photographer. Technological advances have improved Smartphone camera editing functions too. Photography leads to an increased appreciation of nature and a desire to learn more and protect species and habitats.

Becoming familiar with using the Smartphone's camera settings is crucial to a good photograph even if the

picture is an informal snapshot taken on an outing. Attendees will learn how to compose the photo, light, angle, and how to judge if the subject is of interest.

Everyone gets to practice - Macro, Landscape, and Phonescoping - using a spotting scope and phone adapter to take close focus on a subject. Special thanks to the generous folks at Phone Skope for donating a variety of phone adaptors valued at \$1500 for these workshops!

Creating artistic photos using free downloaded editing apps adds to our fun. Finally, share your photos on the refuge's Facebook page.

Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Call 850-925-6121 to register ~ September 10 - 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., October 29 - 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. November 12 - 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., December 3 - Backcountry Photo Safari behind the gates for "graduates".

Scallop season closes September 24

Time changes on November 6 -- Gates will close at 7:00 p.m.

Check calendar for hunt dates before hiking!

Notes from Nature's Classroom

by Lori Nicholson, Environmental Education Specialist

I can't believe summer is almost over. It seems like yesterday that we gearing up for the end of school. I hope you've been connecting kids to nature and teaching them about all the wonders of the ecosystems around them over the summer.

This quote from a GoRVing source sums up our job as environmental educators: *"Along with milk and vegetables, kids need a steady diet of rocks and worms. Rocks need skipping. Holes need digging. Water needs splashing. Bugs and frogs and slimy stuff need finding."* I hope you and the children in your life enjoy these things, even if you don't go RVing!

We had a full summer of programs and camps finishing on July 28. We used dip nets in Plum Orchard Pond and Apalachee Bay to compare fresh water and salt water creatures. We learned the basics of archery, went on hikes, set scent stations, fished and tried our hands at Hoverball archery, and cooked s'mores and hot dogs. Several kids enjoyed getting muddy while searching for aquatic insects and life forms. This was "The best camp ever!" was commonly heard.

Two of our previous Jr. Refuge Rangers, Louis West and Tia Nicholson, and high school student Skyler Musgrove, helped with this year's camp by getting things ready, cleaning up, and keeping an eye on the kids. A special thanks goes to volunteers Carol Miller and Betsy Sullivan for all their hours of work in the heat making sure camp was a success!

I look forward to seeing everyone in the fall. Have fun, be safe and get outdoors!



Tips for Protecting our Wildlife and Visitors

by Gail Fishman, Ranger

A wide variety of plants and wildlife call St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge home. All are protected which means that deliberately killing (taking) or harming wildlife or removing plants is against the law.

If you see anyone harming or feeding wildlife, try to take a photo and get their tag number. Call our tip line or notify the Visitor Center Staff - 850-925-6121.

Pull on to the shoulder when stopping to observe or photograph wildlife. Respect their space; getting too close causes undue stress and could be dangerous to you. Please do not use drones or fly kites.

The speed limit is 35 mph and an expensive speeding ticket will ruin your day. Share the road with cyclists, motorcycles, photographers, birders, boaters, lighthouse fans, people of all ages and animals. Fall migration is in full swing so watch for tired birds stopping on the road or swooping low as they reach the first landfall.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service prohibits the launching, landing or disturbing of wildlife by aircraft (drones) on National Wildlife Refuges - 50 CFR 27.34/27.51

Dallas Becket (right), long-time Lead Maintenance worker, and Bryson Harvey, Maintenance Laborer, take a well-deserved break from constructing a secure evidence locker at the refuge work center.

Dallas is responsible for keeping the refuge running smoothly from keeping our equipment in good repair to master carpenter projects. He also built the accessible ramp at Headquarters Pond a few years ago.

Bryson is getting excellent on-the-job training from Dallas. Thank you Dallas and Bryson!



Welcome Dan Frisk, by Gail Fishman, Ranger

Dan Frisk comes to St. Marks with previous tours at Pee Dee (North Carolina), Ottawa (Ohio), Crab Orchard (Illinois) and Sacramento (California) National Wildlife Refuges.

Raised in the UP, Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Dan grew up hunting, fishing, and appreciating the outdoors. An undergraduate degree in Zoology from Northern Michigan University and a Masters in Biology, with an emphasis on Wildlife, from Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, where he also taught ROTC at the end of his U.S. Army Career, perfectly positioned Dan for his first assignment with the Department of Defense as an endangered species biologist at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. He began there shortly after Hurricane Hugo nearly decimated the longleaf pine forest in South Carolina. He jumped right in to create habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) by installing nest boxes, climbing tall ladder for banding nestlings, and using prescribed fire as an important habitat management tool.



Aside from his aerial introduction to the refuge, Dan's favorite activity was banding an RCW nestling.

He spent six years working with endangered species. During this time he met Pete Campbell, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's RCW Recovery Coordinator at the Carolina Sandhills Field Office. That led to starting his career with FWS at Pee Dee NWR.

Dan Frisk and volunteers Kara Driscoll, and Vicki Sharpe hunt for the savannah milkweed, *Asclepias pedicellata* (inset), in the experimental burn plots behind the Visitor Center.



On his second day at St. Marks, Dan was given a rare treat - a helicopter tour of St. Marks and St. Vincent refuges. Seeing the landscape from above, the huge expanse of green forest cleft by rivers and creeks and perforated by sinkholes and lakes, gave Dan an incomparable appreciation for the real Florida.

Dan praised James Burnett for leaving St. Marks in good stead and he plans to continue James's example. His heart is in biology and endangered species. He is excited about our focused work on the frosted flatwoods salamander, the red-cockaded woodpecker, and the milkweed nursery for monarchs. And for the big picture longleaf pine landscape restoration.

Dan understands that public use is our best message for people to recognize the value of our public lands. He is grateful for the commitment of our partners - the Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Apalachee Audubon Society, Florida Wildlife Federation, Tall Timbers, refuge volunteers, and the many, many visitors who love St. Marks refuge.

Because he began his career with FWS in the southeast, Dan described his post to St. Marks, "As like coming home."

Winter Birding by Don Morrow, Volunteer

A lot happens at St. Marks NWR between September and December. This period starts as summer's heat begins to ameliorate, and ends in winter. We will go from the height of fall migration to the peak of winter birding. Bats, bears, birds and dragonflies will move into, out of, and through the refuge.

September - The refuge is a mix of summer resident species, fall migrants and early arriving winter birds. The remaining summer residents seen at the refuge like yellow-billed cuckoo, ruby-throated hummingbird and prothonotary warbler include birds from further north and are part of the continuing push of songbirds that are migrating through. This is a good month to look for birds like American redstart and Swainson's thrush



Black-necked stilt,
Nick Baldwin



American avocet,
Nancy Thomas



Eagle on nest, Nick Baldwin

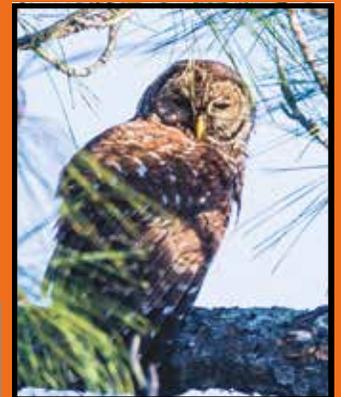
on the Mounds Trail. Shorebirds continue to pass through and this month we will see the last of the black terns. American bitterns and Virginia and sora rails begin arriving for the winter.

Once birds reach the Gulf coast, fall migration is mainly circum-Gulf rather than trans-Gulf. Species like hummingbirds will be traveling west to follow the Texas coast, while palm warblers and barn swallows migrate down the Florida peninsula.

head east to

October - Garlands of yellow grape leaves festoon the tree canopies. There's a touch of red to the sweet gum leaves. The winter ducks begin to arrive in earnest and migrating monarch butterflies begin to reach our shores. Winter songbirds like phoebe, catbird, ruby-crowned kinglet and yellow-rumped warbler arrive. White-faced ibis and vermilion flycatchers migrate in from the west. Bald eagles, northern harriers and accipiters return for the winter. Migratory dragonflies such as the green darner arrive along with kestrels that feed on them. This is the month when black bear sightings are most likely as they search for acorns and berries to pack on winter fat stores. Bats begin moving to their winter hibernation areas.

Barred owl,
Nick Baldwin



November - This is the best month to look for transient geese on Stony Bayou II - snow, Ross' and greater white-fronted - as the larger, later migrants including sandhill cranes move through. The winter duck populations at St. Marks increase, including newly arriving species like bufflehead and common goldeneye. This is the month that most of the common wintering sparrows - savannah, Nelson's, swamp and white-throated - arrive. Merlins and peregrines pass through.

Check the Calendar of Events and our Facebook page for our fall wildlife tours.



Pintail by Lou Kellenberger

December - By now the great horned owls and bald eagles are nesting. This is a month for prime winter birding at the refuge. Migration is over and wintering populations are at their peak. It is possible to see nineteen species of waterfowl and a total of a hundred bird species in a day at the refuge in December.

St. Marks NWR Photo Club by George Burton, Volunteer



Please take your camera, get out on your Refuge, and grab some memories!

As I write, the weather is still stifling but there are hints of cooler times to come. One way to be even cooler is to volunteer at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

In May, the Photo Club held the Annual Picnic at Picnic Pond instead of going to Otter Lake. The group enjoyed late afternoon socializing on the refuge, then photographing the sunset and moonrise on a late spring

Saturday evening.

The Photo Club was fortunate to have members Mike and Anne Urbaniak treat us to a photographic documentation of their two recent trips delivering brand new RVs to Alaska. It was a fantastic presentation that left several club members preparing to plan their own trip northwest.

The promise of relaxed temperatures and changing seasons has everyone looking forward to the Monarch Festival. Good times, to be sure!

But as we look far afield for incoming migratory friends and for year-round animal residents on the move, we need not ignore what's right at hand. Small critters, tiny flowers, fungi, dew covered webs are right there, patiently waiting to show their best side. Macro photography is eye-catching and helps us see the world up close and personal. There are many specialized pieces of equipment for capturing macro images. Contrary to the belief that those expensive specialty accessories are required for macro photography, folks are capturing exceptional images with kit lenses on DSLRs, point and shoot digital cameras, and cell phones and tablets! Give it a try... you might be pleasantly surprised.

Most importantly, get up, get out and take some photos! And bring your photos to the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Photo Club. We meet the third Saturday of every month at the Education Center to enjoy guest speakers, photo sharing or possibly a Photo Safari on the refuge.

For information on becoming a Photo Club member, please contact the Refuge at 850-925-6121, or Club President, Tom Darragh at thomasd@talstar.com.

Law Enforcement, by Gail Fishman, Ranger

Law enforcement (LE) on St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge means protecting wildlife but also making sure visitors have a safe experience. 70,000 acres of land and water is a lot of area to cover. In the early days, before roads were built, staff patrolled the refuge by boat, on foot, and on horseback.

Joey Lord, a Florida native, graduated from Florida State University with a degree in criminology. His first position was with the Florida Forest Service. He took a position with the U.S. Forest Service in 1997 before coming to St. Marks NWR in 1999. For several years, Joey and Volunteer Coordinator David Moody, both served as collateral duty law enforcement officers, meaning law enforcement was in addition to their regular job. Joey became our full-time LE officer in February 2016.

Working on the fire crew was another part of Joey's job. He'll still go with the crew but LE is his primary job.

When you see this truck you'll know that a Federal Wildlife officer is on patrol to keep everyone safe!



See! Learn! Grow! At St. Marks NWR

We're here to connect everyone with our nature. Whether your interest is photography, hunting, or hiking, we offer programs for families, toddlers, youth, and adults. Check our Calendar of Events on Page 10 for dates and times - Birding Tours, Tots on Trails, Families in Nature, First Sunday at the Refuge, hunt dates, and more.

Ambassador Report - Saturday, June 25, 2016, St. Marks Lighthouse

On the first day of scallop season, dawn temperatures in the mid 70s quickly rose into the upper 90s by mid-afternoon, and the coastal strand east of the Lighthouse was the comfortable place to be.

Activity at the boat ramp was dizzying, and the stream of powerboats trailing waves into Apalachee Bay kept a dozen or more kayaks bobbing offshore.

New Ambassadors, Sophia and David arrived during a brief lull around 10 a.m. We greeted visitors and when Carol Miller said it was OK, I introduced her to Sophia and David. They jumped right in and had a great time helping out with her *Coastal Explorers* activity; then returned to greeting regular visitors afterwards. Only then did they learn that 6 of their participants were Betty and Paul Hamilton with their daughter and her young family. It is much easier to encourage families to participate in **Families in Nature** once you experience it firsthand! I wish we could have *Coastal Explorers* all summer.

Things got busy enough to keep all of us answering questions, taking pictures for people, and trying to spread out the load on the trails, until Sophia and David departed. They both seemed much more confident by the end of their shift, and I believe they will be fine Refuge Ambassadors as they now step out on their own!

It seemed everyone wanted a picture taken next to the newly repainted Lighthouse historical marker! it. Quoting a town of St.



Milky Way over the Lighthouse by an anonymous friend

Marks resident: "I love it! It's so pretty, and so much easier to read."

A summer intern from Lower Suwannee NWR asked us to explain more about St. Marks NWR and what it has to offer a visitor. As we spoke, several other visitors joined us around the Info Table and a lively series of conversations ensued. It's always good to have people from the other Refuges in our complex visit. It provides the opportunity to share information on the similarities and differences among all these Big Bend ecosystems.

Our youngest visitor was a little girl of 6 weeks sleeping in her baby carriage; and the eldest was a 91-year-old who said he sat on John's bench "not because I'm tired - I just love this view."

Protect your belongings * Lock your car and take your keys * Take plenty of water when hiking * Keep pets on a leash at all times * Take your litter home
Be a responsible visitor!

September to December 2016 Calendar

Call the refuge at 850-925-6121 for Reservations and Information.

Tots on Trails and Families in Nature - Tots on Trails has activities for pre-school children and lasts about 45 minutes. Families in Nature programs engage the whole family. Call the refuge to sign-up. **First Sunday at the Refuge** meets at 2:00 p.m. in the Education Center next to the Visitor Center. **St. Marks Photo Club** meets on the third Saturday of every month. Call the refuge at 850-925-6121 for information.

SEPTEMBER

3 - Photo Class, 9 am. Call for reservation and for topic of class.

4 - First Sunday at the Refuge, No Program

5 - Labor Day, Visitor Center open

8 - Tots on Trails

10 - Tots on Trails AND St. Marks

 **Shutterbugs**, Smartphone photography workshop from 1 - 4 pm. Call 850-925-6121 to reserve a spot.

17 - Photo Club; Wakulla Coastal Clean Up, call David Moody at 925-6121 to volunteer 9 am - noon.

24 - National Public Lands Day - FEE FREE, Families in Nature, Volunteer field projects.

25 - Refuge Ramble - 4-5 mile walk, 9 am. Limit 15 hikers. Call 850-925-6121 to reserve a spot.

OCTOBER

1 - No Photo Class

2 - First Sunday at the Refuge, Dr. Ken Meyer, *Research on Swallow-tailed Kites*

8 - Tots on Trails, Hunter Safety Course

9 - The Big Sit! Competitive Bird survey at lighthouse. FEE FREE

9-15 - National Wildlife Refuge Week, enjoy your refuge!

13 - Tots on Trails

15 - St. Marks pools closed to boats, Photo Club

16 - e-Tram tour, 1:00 p.m. limit 10, call for space

22 - MONARCH BUTTERFLY  FESTIVAL
10 am - 4 pm

29 - St. Marks Shutterbugs Smartphone photography workshop, 10 am - 1 pm. Call 850-925-6121 to reserve a spot. AND **Halloween Ghost town**

bike ride to Port Leon, 10 am. Ride your mountain bikes to the old town of Port Leon on the St. Marks River with volunteer Carol Babcock. Call 850-925-6121 to reserve a spot.

NOVEMBER

1-5 - Fall Archery, Panacea unit

5 - Photo Class, 9 am. Call for reservation and topic of class.

6 - Time changes, refuge gates close at 7:00 p.m., **First Sunday at the Refuge**, John Stark, Refuge Manager, *All About St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge.*

8-12 - Fall Archery, Wakulla Unit

10 - Tots on Trails

11 - Veteran's Day - Visitor Center open - FEE FREE.

12 - Tots on Trails AND St. Marks Shutterbugs, Smartphone photography workshop, 1 pm - 4 pm. Call 850-925-6121 to reserve a spot.

19 - Fall Birding Tours at 9 am and 1 pm, **Photo Club**

20 - e-Tram tour, 1:00 p.m. limit 10, call for space

16-19 - St. Vincent NWR Archery Hunt

26 - Families in Nature

27 - Refuge Ramble, 4-5 mile walk, 9 am. **Limit 15 hikers.** Call 850-925-6121 to reserve a spot.

DECEMBER

3 - NO Photo Class AND special St. Marks Shutterbugs Reunion by invitation only!

4 - First Sunday at the Refuge, Chuck Hess, *Using Fire for Ecosystem Management*

8 - Tots on Trails

10 - Early Winter Birding Tours at 9 am and 1 pm, **Tots on Trails**

10-12 - General Gun, Wakulla Unit

10-12 - Mobility Impaired, Panacea/Buckhorn Creek

16-18 - General Gun - Panacea Unit

17 - Photo Club

18 - e-Tram tour, 1:00 p.m. limit 10, call for space; **Hunter Safety Course**

December 26, 2016-January 8, 2017 - Small Game, Wakulla and Panacea

Check our Facebook page for additional fall tours

<https://www.facebook.com/SMSVNWRS>

Nature Store News

We hear it over and over - "I had no idea this shop was here!" "Best selection of t-shirts ever."

We have gifts and mementos for yourself and friends and, yes, the kids and grandkids too.

If you aren't shopping here, there is no better time to start than today. The Nature Store provides about 52% of the income to the Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge. The shop is 100% volunteer managed by Joanne

Harrington. All profits directly benefit refuge programs - education, biological, and visitor services. No one draws a salary, so rest assured that the funds are being used only for the refuge that we all love. Wear a t-shirt. Place a window sticker on your vehicle. Join the Friends (and receive 10% off Nature Store purchases). Let everyone know you think St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is the place you'd rather be.

Preservation of the lighthouse began in May. For your safety, the construction zone is closed to visitors until the entire project is completed.

Work on the lantern room is complete - metal work repaired or replaced, new glass installed, and protective paint inside and out. Many

tasks to go. Thank you helping to save the St. Marks Lighthouse!



Friends of St. Marks Refuge, by Mary Smallwood, President, Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge

This has been a sad time for all of us who know Lou and Betsy Kellenberger. Lou passed away June 28, 2016, at the age of 78. His dedication to the refuge and the Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge and his personal generosity can't be overstated. He contributed to both in many capacities over the years. Lou and Betsy have indicated that no memorial services will be held at this time. However, contributions to the Friends' Endowment Fund can be made in Lou's memory. As many of you know, Lou played a major role in establishing the Endowment Fund. Lou's legacy and love of the refuge will live on in his beautiful photographs of our refuge that he shared with anyone who asked. Our thoughts are with Betsy and their family at this time. Lou, you won't be forgotten by anyone who had the great pleasure of knowing you and working with you.

There will be a special membership meeting and ice cream social on September 11, 2016, to consider adoption of revised bylaws. A notice has been sent out to all members with a synopsis of the changes. A copy of the bylaws has been posted on the Friends website. In addition to being treated to ice cream and toppings, the meeting will give members a chance to meet and greet our new Refuge Complex Manager, Dan Frisk. Dan has been very gracious in working with the Friends' board members, and we look forward to working with him on future projects to benefit the refuge.



Lou and Betsy

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

PO Box 68

St. Marks, FL 32355

850-925-6121

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

<http://www.stmarksrefuge.org>

www.facebook.com/SMSVNWRS

**St. Marks
Shutterbugs**
by Karen Willes



Join the crowd!
More than 40 people have learned how to take great photos with Smartphones or tablets in the St. Marks Shutterbugs class! Compose photos; capture images in 3 different ways; edit photos; and share with others using a Smartphone or tablet. Please call the refuge at 850-925-6121 to sign up for the upcoming classes that are open to all.

Classes are free with refuge admission. What attendees say about the Shutterbugs: "Best workshop I've attended." "You mean all of this is free?" Join us!

September 10 - 1 PM - 4 PM
October 29 - 10 AM - 1 PM
November 12 - 1 PM - 4 PM
December 3 - participants from previous classes will take a wagon safari to photograph the back country behind refuge gates.

**Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge
membership form**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

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- Student \$10
- Refuge Friend \$25
- Refuge Family \$35
- Wildlife Supporter \$50
- Refuge Steward \$75
- Habitat Leader \$100
- Eagle Club-Lifetime \$500
- Patron \$1000



Make checks payable to Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge and mail to Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, PO Box 368, St. Marks, FL 32355 or drop off at the Visitor Center. The Friends of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.