

News Release

Midwest Region



Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maankiki Marsh restoration project continues along wildlife drive

We at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service know that access to America's public lands increases your quality of life by being able to enjoy observing the wildlife that call these special places home. National wildlife refuges across the country offer quality opportunities to connect with nature in a variety of ways. Restoration is an important part of making these public lands sustainable for wildlife and for people to enjoy them.

In 2016, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge completed restoration of roughly 1,000 acres of Maankiki Marsh, the largest wetland restoration project to take place in the last 70 years within the Great Lakes Region. Restoration efforts like this continue throughout the refuge today and will provide improved habitat for secretive marsh birds, waterfowl and other wildlife. We are in the process of removing a dike between two pools, which will restore natural connectivity of water for the benefit of nesting waterfowl and other wildlife in the Ferguson Bayou. The material from the dike removal project will be used to construct a series of islands along the eastern bank of the newly restored Maankiki Marsh. These islands will ensure protection of the wildlife drive against the erosive forces of wave action. The restoration work also includes removing culverts within Maankiki Marsh to connect all existing borrow ponds and allow for improved fish passage during times of low water and draw down years.

Work on these projects began in February 2019 with the intention of completion before the opening of the wildlife drive for the season. Unfortunately, a very wet spring caused us to have to stop construction. For everyone's safety on the project and protection of the wildlife drive itself, it was necessary to delay work until soils dried up. As weather and conditions allow, contractors will resume restoration work using several pieces of heavy equipment. For your continued safety, we cannot have vehicles driving along the Wildlife Drive at the same time this heavy equipment is in operation. Therefore, the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge Wildlife Drive will not open this year until July 15th, 2019.

We know how much you value the refuge and specially the wildlife drive. We apologize for the loss of quality wildlife observation over the next few months and appreciate your patience as we work to make the area more protected for wildlife and safer for visitors. While the spring weather has slowed our restoration efforts and delayed the usual opening date for people to explore the area by car, we want to further clarify that the usual

September 30th closing date will remain in effect for this area of the refuge. This date is in place to protect the tens of thousands of migratory waterfowl that are present in our managed wetland units along the wildlife drive. Closing the area during migration helps to buffer the migrating waterfowl from the undo stress of people and vehicles as the birds rest and refuel for their long journey. If you have any questions about this restoration project, please feel free to contact refuge staff at 989-777-5930 or Shiawassee@fws.gov.

[Learn more about the wildlife drive project and other recreational opportunities at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge.](#)

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