

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Join Us for Free, Fun, Programs! *Parker River National Wildlife Refuge* **September, 2018**



REGISTRATION & CAPACITY:

All refuge programs are FREE, but space may be limited. Preregistration is required for all programs, unless otherwise indicated. Please call (978) 465-5753. **Please Note:** If a program requires preregistration, your registration is not confirmed unless and until you receive a phone call or voice mail message from a member of the refuge staff.

Programs conducted in the auditorium are limited to 85 attendees. Seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Admission of additional attendees will stop when capacity has been reached.

Please note that outdoor programs may be cancelled if there is inclement weather and/or insufficient registration. Visit us on the web for more information:

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/parker_river/ or call Refuge Headquarters. The refuge visitor center is located at 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA.

Behind the Scenes Refuge Tour of Parker River NWR

Held on the following days: Saturday, Sept. 1st @ 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, Sept. 2nd @ 1:00 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 8th @ 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, Sept. 9th @ 1:00 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 15th @ 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, Sept. 16th @ 1:00 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 22nd @ 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, Sept. 23rd @ 1:00 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 29th @ 9:30 a.m.; and Sunday, Sept. 30th @ 1:00 p.m.

Join a refuge ranger for a behind the scenes tour of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. Tour will be conducted via refuge van, with several brief "drive by" stops along the way. The tour will present an "up close and personal" look at the refuge through the multiple lenses of the cultural history of Plum Island and the Great Marsh, native wildlife and their habitats, and the role of refuge management in the conservation of these precious natural resources. Participants may be driven along areas on the refuge otherwise closed to the public. This guided, two hour program is most appropriate for older teens and adults. Binoculars and/or a camera are recommended, but not required. Meet the ranger in the lobby of the Refuge visitor center 15 minutes prior to the program start time. Each session is limited to 14 participants; no more than 4 individuals per sign-up. Again, this is a vehicle - based tour, with limited stops on the Refuge. **Preregistration is required for this program**, as enrollment is limited. Be advised that individual tours may be subject to cancellation. *Please note: Those who call and leave messages after hours, your registration is not confirmed until you receive a confirmation call from a refuge staff member. Please call (978) 465-5753; to register for this program.

Evening Program: Shorebirds of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Thursday, September 6th, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

The Parker River NWR is one of the best places along the Atlantic Coast to view shorebirds. During the spring, many species of shorebirds stop briefly. They feed ravenously to accumulate fat reserves - the fuel the birds need to power their onward flights to northern breeding areas. Some species, including willet and killdeer, stop at the refuge to establish territories and breed. In the fall, most species take a more leisurely pace as they move through our area to southern wintering grounds.

Bill Gette, founding Director of Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center and refuge volunteer, will show his shorebird photographs, describe the many aids to field identification, discuss each species' feeding strategy, and review the migration patterns of each species. Spaces in the refuge's 85-seat auditorium will be filled on a first come, first served basis. This free evening program is sponsored by the Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and the Parker River NWR. **NO preregistration for this program.**

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge - Behind the Scenes Tour!

Held on the following days: Friday, September 7th & Tuesday, September 18th – both sessions 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Join a refuge ranger for a behind the scenes tour of Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge, located in Newington, NH. Participants will have an opportunity to visit areas of the refuge that are not normally open to the public. See a diversity of wildlife habitats while learning how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is managing this very special landscape for conservation. Consider bringing along binoculars and a camera. The tour is limited to 8 participants; no more than 2 individuals per sign-up. This is a vehicle-based tour, with limited stops on the refuge. This guided program is most appropriate for older teens and adults. Meet the ranger in the lobby of the Parker River NWR visitor center in Newburyport no later than 9:00 am OR in the Great Bay NWR parking lot in Newington, NH no later than 9:45 am. (Indicate location you prefer at time of registration.) Be advised that individual tours may be subject to cancellation. *Please note: Those who call and leave messages after hours, your registration is not confirmed until you receive a confirmation call from a refuge staff member. Please call (978) 465-5753 to register for this program. **Preregistration required.** For directions to the refuge, click on this link: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Bay/visit/plan_your_visit.html

Meet a Sandpiper!

Saturday, September 8th, 9:00 -11:00 a.m.

In celebration of World Shorebird Day, come see a shorebird up close and personal. Every year, tens of thousands of shorebirds stop over at Parker River to eat and rest on their journey from the Arctic to South America. Refuge biologists are studying how and where these birds migrate. Come learn more about this research and these amazing birds up close. Meet at the Bill Forward Blind from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Docents will escort visitors to the banding site on a rotating basis. This program is appropriate for visitors of all ages. Visitors will need to walk on muddy, slightly uneven surfaces. **NO preregistration for this program.**

Photographic Society at Parker River NWR

Next Meeting: Saturday, September 8th @ 1:30 p.m.

The Photographic Society welcomes anyone who has an interest in nature, wildlife, and/or photography - whether you are a total novice or earn a living by taking pictures! The club meets every month, generally on the second Saturday afternoon. Club activities include special presentations, slide shows (of members' work), intra-club mentoring and training, photo shoots, on-line photo sharing, and involvement in the refuge's various photography-related programs, events, and outreach activities. Venue capacity is limited to 75 attendees (first-come, first-served). Admission to this program is free and **preregistration is NOT required.**

Focus on Birds: Special Behind the Scenes Tour of Parker River NWR

Monday, Sept. 10th, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.; Thursday, Sept. 13th, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.; Monday, Sept. 17th, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.; and Friday, Sept. 21st, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

This special edition of the refuge's Behind the Scenes (BTS) tour will be led by veteran birder, and refuge volunteer, Bill Gette. While the tour will follow the usual BTS route, the leader will place a special

emphasis on the birds that are typically found on the refuge in the fall. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars, if they have them. Tour is limited to 14 participants. Meet the tour leader in the refuge visitor center lobby 15 minutes before the program start time. This program is most appropriate for teens and adults. **Preregistration required.**

Bicycle Tour of Great Bay NWR

Thursday, Sept. 13th & Monday, Sept. 24th – both sessions 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Join a refuge ranger for a **behind the scenes tour, by bicycle**, of Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge, located in Newington, NH. Participants will have an opportunity to visit areas of the refuge that are not normally open to the public. See a diversity of habitats and learn how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is managing this very special landscape for wildlife. Cyclists will travel over generally level terrain on a combination of paved and unpaved surfaces. The distance covered will depend on how many stops are made and how much time is spent at each stop. Tour duration will be about 2 hours. Appropriate for adults and children age 16 or older. **Each participant must provide a either a hybrid or mountain bike, helmet, and water bottle.** Insect repellent, sun block, binoculars and/or a camera are optional (provided these items can be safely stowed while biking). Meet the ranger in the Great Bay NWR parking lot 15 minutes before the tour start time. Limited to 10 participants. **Preregistration required.** For directions to the refuge, click on this link:

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Bay/visit/plan_your_visit.htm

Fall Family Monarch Conservation Program & Butterfly Tagging!

Saturday, September 22nd, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Join Katie Hone, *The Monarch Gardener*, for this fun and interesting one hour program about the monarch butterfly. The program will include a presentation about monarchs with interactive role playing and live animals AND making milkweed “seed bombs” (to take home). **Meet, tag and release live monarch butterflies to the wild!** This program is geared to younger children and their parents. This program will take place in the refuge visitor center classroom. **NO preregistration for this program.**

Monarch Tagging Workshop (for Adults & Teens)

Saturday, September 22nd, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Katie Hone, *The Monarch Gardner*, will lead this 1.5 hour program that will include a presentation about monarch natural history, migration, history of tagging and how the data are collected and used. **All participants will have an opportunity to tag and release monarch butterflies** depending on how many animals are available at time of program. This program will take place in the refuge visitor center classroom. **NO preregistration for this program.**

Evening Program: Plum Island - New England's Cradle of Aviation

Tuesday, September 25th, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Great Marsh in Newbury was the site of New England's first flying field where, in 1910, W. Starling Burgess built a hangar and wooden runway where the dunes meet the marsh, near the current location of Parking Lot #2 in the Parker River NWR. The planes were brought there by boat; numerous test flights occurred and crowds visited the airfield to watch. Learn about Burgess, his colleagues, and the intrepid pilots who worked here from April to August 1910 to perfect their aircraft and their skills. Hear about the current Plum Island Airport's use for civil defense, pilot training, commerce and recreation. In 1971, the Little family donated the historic Spencer-Peirce-Little farm, which includes the airport, to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, now Historic New England. The airport now operates under the name Plum Island Aerodrome, Inc., which leases from HNE.

Ted Russell is a professional genealogist after retiring from a 36-year engineering career at GE Aviation. He is co-founder and past president of Plum Island Community Airfield, a grassroots group that

saved the airport from closing in 2001 and operated it until 2005. In 2002, he led a team of local volunteers that founded the Burgess Aviation Museum at the airport. He was previously on the board of the Massachusetts Aviation Historical Society and was a commissioner of the Essex National Heritage Commission. Ted holds degrees from Harvard University and the University of Illinois.

This program will take place in the refuge visitor center. Spaces in the center's 85-seat auditorium will be filled on a first come, first served basis. This free evening program is sponsored by the Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and the Parker River NWR. **NO preregistration for this program.**

Great Bay Shoreline Cleanup

Saturday, September 29th from 10:00 a.m. – Noon

With the help of community volunteers, we can keep our bay clean. Volunteers will be guided by USFWS personnel to closed areas of the refuge where they will remove garbage and debris from the shoreline. Let's promote clean water and a healthy environment for wildlife and people! Groups and families are welcome. We advise wearing long pants, long sleeve shirts, and sturdy boots. Bring sunscreen, bug spray, a light snack and water. Supplies provided include trash bags, gloves, and data tracking sheets. Meet at the parking lot at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge. **Sign up online at: <https://naturegroupie.org>.**

These Visitor Center Exhibits Change Monthly:

Artist of the Month Gallery: Each month a different photographer or artist displays their nature and/or wildlife-related fine art in the refuge visitor center auditorium.

Photographic Society Slide Show: Just inside the visitor center's front door is a large video monitor that displays the latest nature and wildlife-themed slide show that was produced by members of the refuge's very own photo club. A new slide show, set to music, and focusing on a unique theme, is produced each month.