

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Willamette Valley National Wildlife
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News Release



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NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES ANNOUNCE SPRING OPENING

On April 1, the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges, consisting of William L. Finley, Baskett Slough, and Ankeny Refuges, reopen major portions of these areas that had been closed to the public during the winter to provide undisturbed habitat for dusky Canada geese and other wildlife. This access provides the public with expanded opportunities to enjoy wildlife in their natural habitats.

The majority of **William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge** is open from sunrise to sunset from April 1 through October 31. This 5,325 acre Refuge is located approximately 8 miles south of Corvallis off State Highway 99W. Brown Refuge signs are visible prior to the turn onto Finley Road.

A variety of activities await visitors, including driving the auto tour route or hiking up to 12 miles of trails. Several habitat types provide opportunities to view wildlife like Roosevelt elk, bobcats, and numerous species of birds, as well as native plants common to the Willamette Valley. Cabell Marsh is another popular area to visit and is now easily accessible from the Homer Campbell Memorial Boardwalk. A newly-completed extension offers visitors direct access from the Boardwalk to the Marsh. Hikers may observe brilliantly colored cinnamon teal and wood ducks, or eagles and osprey perched in a snag. Historical enthusiasts will find William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge of special interest. Historical homes and barns can be found at various locations on the Refuge.

Visitors to Finley NWR may now find friendly faces to answer questions and provide directions on the weekends. Volunteers at the Wild Goose Nature Store, located within the Refuge headquarters building, are available Friday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Stop by to pick up brochures and trail maps, take a break, browse the Store, or just say “hi”.

Visitors are reminded that Finley Refuge Road is a Refuge road and falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. It is closed to all public access from sunset to sunrise, including through traffic.

The Snag Boat Bend Unit, located off Peoria Road, also offers wildlife watching opportunities from a boardwalk and trails near the Willamette River.

Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge also reopens on April 1 and will remain open through September 30 from sunrise to sunset. The Refuge can be accessed west of Salem on State Highway 22. Watch for the wildlife viewing area signs, which are located on the north side of the highway at mile post 14.

A wildlife viewing kiosk is located adjacent to State Highway 22. This facility offers visitors excellent wildlife viewing opportunities and is complete with interpretive panels, a viewing scope, benches, and picnic tables. The kiosk is fully accessible and is open year-round from sunrise to sunset.

The Rich Guadagno Memorial Trail and Baskett Butte Loop are popular hikes and offer panoramic views of the Willamette Valley. Look for the endangered Fenders Blue Butterfly and Kincaids Lupine in late spring. A kiosk is located at the trailhead off Coville Road.

The majority of **Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge** will also open from April 1 through September 30 from sunrise to sunset. Access may be found by traveling 10 miles north from Albany or 12 miles south from Salem on Interstate 5. Take exit 243, Ankeny Hill Road, and drive 1/4 mile west to an intersection. Refuge trails and overlooks may be found along Buena Vista, Ankeny Hill, Sidney and Wintel Roads. Watch for the brown wildlife viewing area signs.

A wildlife viewing kiosk is located adjacent to Buena Vista Road at Eagle Marsh Overlook. This facility offers visitors excellent wildlife viewing opportunities overlooking a large wetland area where bald eagles are frequently seen.

Spring and summer birding through scenic valley habitat may be experienced on Rail Trail. The trail passes through oak and maple woods and an Oregon ash dominated forested wetland. A 2,500 foot boardwalk and wildlife observation blind are included in the first section of the trail. This section travels through a wooded wetland and provides a new opportunity to enjoy nature in an intimate setting. The hike is well worth the time and effort for those interested in viewing a variety of habitats, plant and animal life. Another viewing blind and boardwalk are available on the north side of Wintel Road just west of the Rail Trail parking area. This short boardwalk parallels Bashaw Creek, ending at the viewing blind which overlooks Pintail Marsh.

The three Willamette Valley Refuges were created in the mid 1960's to provide habitat for the dusky Canada goose and to preserve and restore vanishing native habitats for a host of other wildlife and plant species. The Refuges support a diverse assemblage of rare, threatened, and endangered species of plants and animals. Each Refuge is managed to meet the needs of many species, especially those confined to small or limited ranges. These Refuges offer the public a unique opportunity to view up close Oregon's natural heritage. One of the overall management goals of the Willamette Valley Refuges is to provide high quality opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education.

Visitors can enhance their experience by bringing along field guides, binoculars and cameras to aid in identifying plants and wildlife. Come prepared for the weather with appropriate clothing. Poison oak may be found alongside some trails. Pick up a trail map and become familiar with the Refuge before setting out for a hike. Know Refuge regulations beforehand. Pets are allowed only in parking lots and at trail heads. They are not allowed on the trails or anywhere else on the Refuge.

For more information please contact the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters at (541) 757-7236. Office hours are Monday thru Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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