

Turnbull Wildlife Refuge Friends Newsletter

Friends of Turnbull President/Board Report Spring 2021

by Loma Kropp

It has been one whole year since our Friends group has opened the Nature Store, held a Beginning Bird Watching class or a gathering on the refuge, or attended a community education fair. We still are waiting for the green light to return to the outreach activities which we share with our community.

Although the Refuge is open and more people than ever are visiting, enjoying getting outside and walking the trails, the Refuge F&W staff mostly is working remotely, and the buildings are not open to the public. The Friends group has provided the Environmental Education program with use of our satellite dish for virtual programs with classrooms in our region. The internet service to the Refuge didn't have sufficient bandwidth to add the Environmental Education programs, so we are happy to share our resource, the connection in the Nature Store for sales.

We will be waiting patiently for the US Fish & Wildlife Service to give the go-ahead to Refuges and staff all over the country to re-open buildings -- hopefully sometime this summer.

We will be participating in a virtual Earth Day Vigil along with several environmentally-related programs and religious groups on April 22. This event, vigil for the Healing of the Earth, will be sent over Zoom. It is organized by the Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience, along with Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies, Faith Action Network, the Fig Tree and 17 other organizations. Each group is preparing a 2-minute video of what they are doing and how to become involved, and there will be a chance to interact in break-out rooms during the event. The Event will be on April 22, 2021, from 6 – 7:30 pm.

Topic: Earth Day Vigil

Time: Apr 22, 2021 05:45 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85992867962?pwd=ZDNSSlFzQ1RaaEswRDJCSlJtC3Uwdz09>

Meeting ID: 859 9286 7962

Passcode: 350975

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,85992867962#,,,,*350975# US

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+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

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+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 859 9286 7962

Passcode: 350975

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kbIKQROP8F>

World Migratory Bird Day on May 8, 2021 – the same day as our local Mayfest/FFF festival would be. These events will have to be virtual as well. You can visit: <https://www.birddaylive.com>. The World Migratory Bird Day offers you a chance to: “Sing, Fly, Soar . . . like a bird!! Their website offers activities, information and virtual programming to celebrate the freedom of birds, the beauty of their songs, and the spectacular phenomenon of their migrations.

There will be speakers and you can even join a wmbdchoir.com. <https://wmbdchoir.com/join/>
The activities will take place from April 23 – May. 8.

My advice is to keep supporting the Refuge by participating in the virtual events, taking some time to learn something new from the resources available, and thinking about volunteering when we are able to re-open our Nature Store. We will have to do training for everyone since it has been so long since we have used the store equipment! Also, we should get out to visit, enjoy the space and recreate responsibly.

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Visit our great website!
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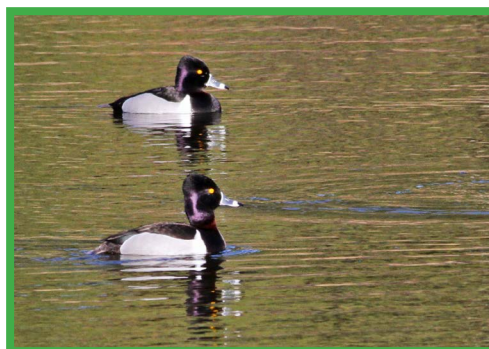
I went to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge for a walk and saw a variety of ducks and the young moose again. The American Wigeon duck males have a green eye patch and a conspicuous white crown, earning them the nickname “baldpate.”

It is interesting that the Bufflehead is the smallest diving duck in North America, averaging just one pound, and is one of the most popular birds among bird watchers.

Common Goldeneyes are diving ducks and forage mostly under water. Their rapid wingbeats produce a loud whistling sound in flight, easily identified even when the birds cannot be seen. Hunters call this species the “Whistler.”

The Hooded Merganser finds its prey underwater by sight. The nictating membrane (third eyelid) is clear and acts to protect the eye during swimming, just like a pair of goggles. The female’s appearance sure is camouflaged compared to that of the male!

I worked on getting some photos of the Ring-necked duck so you could see the neck ring, which is almost never visible. It also has two white rings around its gray bill. These ducks are monogamous only for one breeding season, and they start forming pairs during spring migration. They forage by diving, but are usually found in shallow water, where they forage and dabble at the surface as well. This duck is strong, fast and, unlike many diving ducks, can take flight directly from the water, without a running start.



American Wigeon pair, Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Ducks

All photos by Carlene Hardt

Refuge Happenings

by **Sandy Rancourt**
Visitor Services Manager

It has been a busy time of year despite the pandemic, and staff have been occupied working on reports, scheduling virtual programs and field surveys, administration, maintenance and prescribed fire. Although important to our conservation work, it is not super exciting stuff to report, so I will keep this Refuge Happenings article brief. We are gearing up for the field season, my favorite time of the year. The Visitor Center currently is still closed for the protection of staff, volunteers and the visiting public. The public restroom is closed for repairs and maintenance, however, all the vault toilets are open. Since the Refuge is a federal facility, we respectfully ask all volunteers and visitors to don masks and practice social distancing, especially when interacting with the staff, volunteers or the public.

Bluebirds arrived a few weeks ago and several volunteers are already monitoring their nest boxes. Chuck Kerkering, Buck and Sandy Domitrovich, Fran Haywood, Tim Holman, Charmaine Gural, and Gerry Hickman have been assigned and shown their monitoring routes and are enjoying their time at the refuge. Most biological surveys, including waterfowl pair surveys, point counts, and marsh bird surveys, will start next month.

Virtual Programming for Environmental Education (EE) has continued. I extended our virtual EE programming through the spring since actual field trips at the Refuge are, unfortunately, not yet an option. I have been busy scheduling a variety of virtual programs with teachers who have shown great interest and are excited to have this opportunity for their students. We are getting close to being fully booked, virtually, and I only sent an announcement about the extension last week. Kylie and Erik have done a great job of presenting programs for the students.

~Special Thanks~

I want to thank Friends of Turnbull for their continuing support. They graciously allowed us to use their Satellite internet as a backup for our virtual programming this year. They are a great group of folks who have worked tirelessly for the refuge.



New volunteer recruit Tim Holman checks out the bluebird nest boxes along Pine Creek (S. Rancourt)



Western Blue birds, Male and Female
© Scott Martin

Friends of Turnbull NWR
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Cheney, WA 99004

The Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, a nonprofit organization, supports the mandate of the refuge to protect and enhance wildlife and their habitats through education, research, habitat preservation and restoration.

Got email? Add it to your membership form for quick activity updates!

Membership Application

YES! I want to support the Friends of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge and its programs with my membership.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, and Zip _____
Daytime Phone _____
E-mail _____

Annual Membership: (Circle one)

Individual \$15
Family \$25
Business/Group \$35
Patron \$100
Benefactor \$500
Donation \$ _____
Endowment Fund Donation \$ _____
Amount Enclosed _____

New _____ Renewal _____

I would like to volunteer _____
Nature Store _____
Committee _____
Environmental Education _____
Where needed _____

My check is enclosed payable to
Friends of Turnbull N.W.R.
P.O. Box 294
Cheney WA 99004