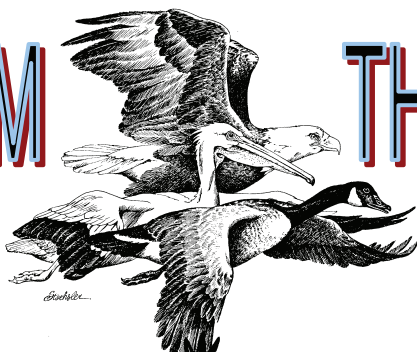


WORDS FROM

THE WETLANDS



WINTER

2009

NEWS FROM THE KLAMATH BASIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX

Lower Klamath Centennial Celebration a time to remember

*by Ron Cole
Project Leader*

With the New Year upon us, 2008 has come to a close and I am reminded of the many individuals and organizations which helped make the year-long Centennial Celebration of Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge a huge success. While the list of those who helped is long, several individuals and organizations merit special recognition for making this a truly memorable year. Their contributions throughout the year ensured that those who enjoy the sights and sounds of wild things were touched by nature's riches found in the Klamath Basin.

Special thanks go out to:

The Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association for being the lead sponsor of the Tule Lake Migratory Bird Festival and the August 8th Centennial Day celebration. Larry Hearne and Kim Kirby worked tirelessly to make these events truly memorable.

The Klamath Basin Audubon Society, Audubon Society of Portland, California Waterfowl Association who cosponsored the Centennial Celebration day events.

The Cal-Ore Wetlands and Waterfowl Council for cosponsoring the Centennial Day Celebration, the September Youth Hunting Day and other activities throughout the year.

The Shaw Historical Library for their 2008 Journal "*Wings that Fill the Sky... America's First Waterfowl Refuge*" which features Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges. Anne Hiller-Clark, Barbara Dittman and Doug Foster all deserve recognition for their significant contributions in making this possible.

The Klamath Falls Herald and News and Lee Juillerat for featuring the refuge Centennial Celebration in several news articles this past year.

The City of Klamath Falls and Eric Nobel for allowing the Refuge to put up street banners along Main Street in downtown Klamath Falls.

Former Refuge Manager **Bob Fields** who helped organize Centennial Day events.

Tupper and Madeleine Blake for hosting our Centennial evening dinner.

Anders Tomlinson for his many contributions including design of audio-visual and promotional materials featuring the refuge centennial.

Charlotte Kisling for assistance with setting up many field trips throughout the past year.

Refuge volunteer **Jim Rhodes** who consistently provided logistical support for many special events throughout the year.

Darrel and Dianna Samuels for their generous support during the Centennial Day Celebration on August 8th.

Liz Driver with **Badger Run Wildlife Rehabilitation** for providing live bird demonstrations during several refuge events this year.

Postmaster **Jana Ruppert** of the **Tule Lake Post Office** for making special centennial day postage stamp covers a reality.

Lower Klamath Continued

William Finley III for providing historical documents and photographs which helped us highlight the historical significance of Lower Klamath Refuge during the early years.

Edwin Selig who photographed many refuge events throughout the year.

We spent much of the past year looking back over the past 100 years at what has been quite a roller coaster ride for our nation's first waterfowl refuge. Lower Klamath had an inspiring beginning in 1908, but that soon turned into one of conservation's remarkable disappointments when the refuge was essentially dry from 1917-1943. The water returned after World War II and up until 2001, Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge lived up to its potential and beyond, becoming the most important, stable and consistent complex of wetlands in the Pacific Flyway. Then, the water crisis of 2001 reminded us all of just how vulnerable the grandfather of all waterfowl refuges really is.

As we close out 2008, I am thinking about this place we call Lower Klamath, wondering why it has caught the imagination and caring of so many for so long.

Perhaps it is simply the rarity of wetlands. We seem drawn to the underdog. We value things that are uncommon, unusual, or unique. Perhaps it is the open and vast landscape. Lower Klamath is a place which allows the eye and the spirit to travel unimpeded, always under the watchful eye of Mount Shasta. Perhaps it is the abundance of wildlife. Coyotes, bald eagles, meadow voles, mule deer, a bunch of small brown birds I can't identify, and meadowlarks which perch and sing with pure optimism. Perhaps it is the waterfowl. Millions of them, at times almost more than the sky can hold.

In the end, it really comes down people. We are forever a part of who came before. Lower Klamath helps keep our heritage alive for those who will follow us. A century ago our nation gave a remarkable gift to itself, and they called it Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. Today, Lower Klamath remains a gift that keeps on giving. With your continued support, we in the Refuge System promise to take care of it for you and those who follow. Thanks again.

HUNT PROGRAM Wrapping It Up *by Stacy Freitas* *Hunt Program Coordinator*

I hope everyone had a great hunt season; it is about time to wrap things up for 2008 / 2009. We had a great start the first few weeks then the weather just didn't want to cooperate. At one point I was thinking we should have been offering sun block for field hunters. Our overall averages are still good in spite of everything.

We had several changes this season that turned out to be little gold mines. Parts of the League of Nations and the "A" Spaced-blinds on Tule Lake NWR were flooded and made for great hunts. These areas were great for those hunters who are on foot or have canoes. Also on the Lower Klamath NWR Unit 9A turned out to be particularly good about the end of November. The Partner's Program has completed the improvements to the Orems 3 Unit. I anticipate this will be a big draw next year.

Hunters should be aware that the \$25.00 pass remains in effect for one year from date of purchase. To avoid complicating hunt plans, hunters purchasing passes over the phone should plan ahead and order passes at least 10 days prior to hunting, to allow sufficient time to receive passes in the mail.

Overall I think we had a good season; we have had positive feed back and good conversation with hunters and non-hunters. I look forward to seeing all of you next season. Remember we will be having our annual public hunt meeting in April at the Tulelake Fairgrounds. We will be reviewing this past season and looking at changes for the next. Keep an eye out in March for the Hunter Hotline update as I will be announcing the meeting date and other information. If you have questions or comments about this or any other hunt season issues, please feel free to contact me at the refuge 530-667-2231 or send an email to stacy_freitas@fws.gov Have a great year!

Words from the Marsh-An Update from Klamath Marsh NWR

*by Carol Damberg
Refuge Manager*

It has been a busy summer and fall for staff and volunteers working at the KMNWR. The Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) has been drafted and should be available for public comment by March 2009. During the public comment period the Refuge will hold several local informational meetings to answer any questions about the plan. The CCP will present the future management strategy of the Refuge for the next 15 years. After the Tribes, agencies, and public have provided comments on the CCP, the document will be finalized and implemented as funding and resources are made available. Additional information on the process is available at the Klamath Basin Complex Website (<http://www.fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges/index.html>) or call the Klamath Marsh Office if you're interested in receiving future information about the plan (541-783-3380).

Spring and summer biological surveys were completed for Oregon spotted frogs, sandhill cranes, bald eagles, and secretive marsh birds (rails and bitterns). Over 140 spotted frog egg masses were counted throughout various portions of the Refuge and indicated a slight increase in production from former years. The Oregon Spotted Frog is currently a Federal Candidate Species and the many organizations involved with surveying this species hope to avoid its listing as a threatened and endangered species by locating as many populations as possible. Private landowners interested in having surveys completed on their lands or curious to learn more about this amphibian, can contact the Klamath Marsh Refuge for assistance. A potential 61 greater sandhill crane pairs nested on or near the Refuge based on ground counts conducted on May 1. The number of pairs observed in 2008 was similar to 2007 numbers. Bald eagle nest surveys were completed by Refuge volunteers Jim Walthers, Monte Dehlinger, and Woody Morf. Five bald eagle pairs were identified as nesting near the Refuge and produced six young. The number of young produced in 2008 was slightly lower than in 2007.

This summer the Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) started to include aquatic birds in their research and monitoring programs. KBO is undertaking this project as part of the Intermountain West Joint Venture's larger scale efforts to conserve aquatic bird habitat throughout eleven western states. The objectives of the program include identifying and coordinating monitoring programs, identifying knowledge gaps that limit wetland bird conservation, and implementing new efforts that will measure the effectiveness of future wetland management strategies. As part of this effort KBO established an aquatic bird monitoring network throughout eastern Oregon (40 sites) that includes one secretive marsh bird survey route within the Klamath Marsh Refuge. KBO secretive marsh bird surveys focus on determining the presence of American bittern, least bittern, Virginia rail, yellow rail, sora rail, and pied-billed grebe at fifteen sites in southern Oregon. The 2008 survey efforts will lay the groundwork for long-term, coordinated aquatic bird monitoring in Oregon.



Sandhill cranes using an area on the Klamath Marsh Refuge that had been hayed the previous fall (2007). During the spring of 2008 this hayed area was flooded from spring snow melt and provided an ideal foraging area for cranes as well as many other waterbirds.

Maintenance Making a Difference for Wildlife

by David Champine
Park Ranger

This has been another busy year for the maintenance division. They continue to work on projects that benefit wildlife habitat and improve recreational opportunities. These include improved boat ramps in units 9b and 9c and improved parking areas at units 6b1 and 4D, E and F.

The crew improved the structural integrity and function of several roads on Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges. They worked on the road known as the 12 and 13 road. This road on Lower Klamath Refuge runs from intersection D south to the water pumps at the end of the road. On Tule Lake Refuge they worked with the Federal Highway Administration on Red Rock and Check Station roads and A-Dike road. These roads were both widened and strengthened at the base to improve both the function and aesthetics. They also worked with contractors to construct a new building in the maintenance compound to add storage and protection for refuge airboats. In what became the largest and most expansive project of the season work was done as part of the Walking Wetlands Program. This work was done on both Refuges covered thousands of acres and totaled hundreds of work hours. In brief, the Walking Wetlands Program is a program that develops wetlands on a rotational schedule on both public and private lands. This system has been found to provide habitat for wildlife, re-energize the soil and control pest that is beneficial for lands that will be farmed when dry. On Tule Lake Refuge they completed work in the League of Nations and Space blind units. On Lower Klamath Refuge the most expansive project was the work done in the Orems 3 unit. The project completed the third and final phase of the Orems unit property. In this phase up to 1500 acres were involved adding to the 2800 acres in previous stages. The final goal of the project to convert once irrigated pasture to seasonal wetlands improving habitat for ducks, geese and shorebirds. To do this the maintenance crew had to perform a total rebuild of infrastructure of the water delivery system. This a joint project with Ducks Unlimited with funds from California Department of Fish and Game state duck stamp money and other private donors. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife will continue to manage the land flooding it on good water years.

Newsletter Goes Green

You may already have noticed something different about this issue of *Words from the Wetlands*; It's entirely printed as a black, white and gray document. No more of those nice color pictures...and that's the point. It costs about 12 times as much to print in color as to print the same page as black and white. Thus; to go green we are actually going black and white; not only saving YOUR tax dollars but being more environmentally friendly.

Don't worry, you can still view the newsletter in full color on our web page "fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges". In fact, some subscribers have already signed up to receive this publication "on line" only, thus saving even more in printing and postage costs. We will notify these on-line subscribers by email when the newsletter is posted on the refuge web page. The newsletter will also be attached as a **pdf** file to these emails.

Please let us know if you are willing to become an email subscriber. We'll add you to the list. Of course, we will still send a paper copy of the newsletter (albeit in black and white) to those without on-line capability. **Either way, please let us know as the next issue of *Word from the Wetlands* is the last issue we will be sending to our entire mailing list.** To get on either the email list or remain on the mailing list you may contact us in the following ways:

Email: david_champine@fws.gov
Phone: David Champine (530) 667-2231
Mail: Refuge Newsletter editor
4009 Hill Road
Tulelake, CA 96134

Klamath Refuges Begin Master Planning

In previous newsletters you have been hearing about the major planning effort underway for Klamath Marsh Refuge. As the Draft Klamath Marsh plan nears completion, the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the other five refuges in the complex is about to begin. This spring or summer we are expecting to conduct public meetings to determine the scope of issues to be addressed in this major planning effort. When completed in 2012, the Comprehensive Plan will set the course for refuge management and development for the next fifteen years. Issues concerning refuge wildlife and habitat management, farming, pest management, hunting, public use and facilities development will all be on the table and public input is definitely being sought to help define a range of alternatives to best chart the course of refuge management in the future.

To be involved in the process, contact Dave Menke at dave_menke@fws.gov or (530)-667-2231. In addition to public meetings, written comments will be solicited and a number of informative planning updates will be sent out to anyone interested in commenting on the future management of Lower Klamath, Tule Lake, Upper Klamath, Bear Valley and Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuges.

Winter Wings Festival Presidents' Day Weekend

Come birding in the Klamath Basin during the 2009 Winter Wings Festival on Presidents' Day Weekend, February 13-15, 2009. The Festival will be hosted at the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) in Klamath Falls. This 30th Anniversary of the Festival promises to be a very special event. This year's program has been expanded to include 17 field trips, 9 workshops, 13 mini-sessions, and 4 receptions.

Keynote Speaker: Renowned birder Pete Dunne, Director of the New Jersey Audubon Society's Cape May Bird Observatory and well-known author, will give the keynote address on Friday evening, Feb. 13th. His talk will be preceded by a reception. Pete will also be on hand to do a celebrity birding tour for a small group on Friday and share his popular talk on "The Art of Pishing" on Saturday.

Expanded Canon Photography Programs: Back by popular demand is the Canon Photography Workshop and Photo Safari. This session includes both classroom instruction and the opportunity to check out new Canon camera gear to use on your self-directed photo safari at the local refuges or nearby birding spots. In addition to this program, Canon will present their Explorer of Light photographer Adam Jones in a special nature slide show on Saturday evening and a "Shoot with a Pro" field trip on Sunday.

Field Trips: Refuge staff will be participating in several of the field trips to share their expertise including two Behind the Scenes tours of the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges with Dave Mauser and a Discovery Refuge Photography field trip and Flyout with Brunch with Dave Menke. There is also a celebrity birding trip with Pete Dunne, hawks for beginners with Dick Ashford, raptor identification for more experienced birders with Jeff Smith, and a Big Day of birding to the local hot spots with Kevin Spencer and BJ Matzen.

New Workshops and Mini-sessions: Here are some of the presentations new this year: Beginning Raptor Identification, Birding by Ear, Neotropical Raptors, Who Was Steller?, Field Guides and Stewardship, What Can I Do with a Beak Like This?, It's Not in My Field Guide, and American Birding Milestones.

Family Activities: Beginning Friday afternoon and continuing all day Saturday are a host of free activities geared towards families. View live raptors, owls, ducks and other birds, participate in fun activities about butterflies and insects, and make crafts. Great fun and free!

Receptions: Relax at one of the four receptions across the basin and meet others who share your interest in nature. You will be both entertained and educated. Choose from the keynote reception preceding Pete Dunne's keynote at OIT, Aerie Afternoon (a tour of Lower Klamath plus culinary delicacies at a Bear Valley Refuge residence), Taste of the Arts (a fabulous catered evening reception at the home/studio of artist/taxidermist Stefan Savides), and Breakfast with the Eagles (an early outing to see eagles flyout from Bear Valley, special guest speakers, and a catered breakfast).

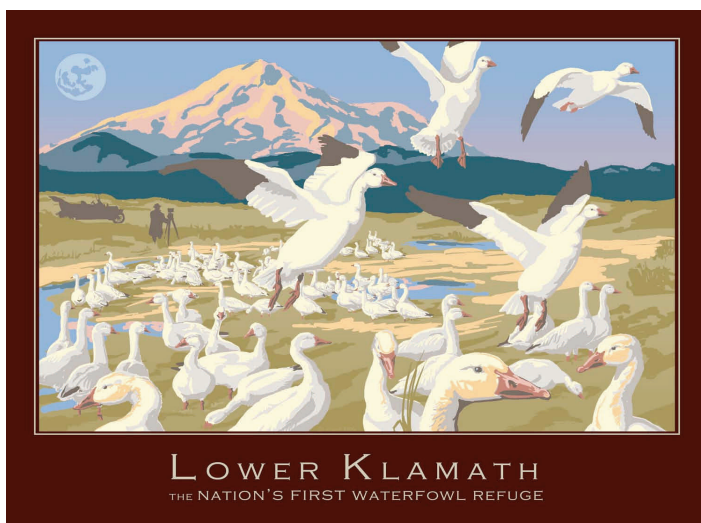
The schedule of events is available on the Winter Wings Festival website at www.WinterWingsFest.org. Participants may register on-line. Brochures are available at Travel Klamath, the Chamber of Commerce, many Klamath Falls hotels, Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, or the Lava Beds headquarters office. If you have questions contact Todd Christian, Festival Registrar, at (541) 850-0084 or at singing-bear@charter.net.

Colorful Posters of All Six Klamath Basin Refuges Now Available

The sales outlet at the Klamath Basin Refuges visitor center now has colorful posters for all six refuges. The Lower Klamath poster features artwork depicting snow geese and the refuge's centennial logo. The other posters feature wildlife and scenic landscapes of the other refuges in the complex. The posters measure 18 X 24 inches (Lower Klamath Tule Lake and Klamath Marsh Refuges) and 18 X 28 inches (Clear Lake, Upper Klamath and Bear Valley Refuges).

The artwork featured on all posters is reminiscent of the style of posters, postcards and artwork which was used to attract tourists to national parks and other scenic locations in the early Twentieth Century. The posters sell for \$5.95 each or \$30.00 for the set of six posters. Contact David Champine (530-667-2231) or david_champine@fws.gov for mail order costs or stop by the sales area for a first hand look!

Images of the posters are also found on the refuge web site at fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges.



**Lower Klamath National
Wildlife Refuge Poster**

Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association

By Kim kirby

2008 was a very busy year. We had a lot going on with the Civilian Conservation Corps building stabilization grant and the Centennial Celebration of Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. The C-Camp building stabilizing was truly an effort of historic love and preservation of the amazing past that our basin holds. Many friends and neighbors helped with this project, without who, none of the great work would have been able to be completed. Our sincere thanks to all of those who gave up their precious free time to work on this project. It is something that many generations to come will be able to enjoy thanks to their hard work.

The refuge association and friends support the refuge in many ways. This year the association was invited to help with the Centennial Celebration. During the terrific day, the association members sponsored a community barbeque for approximately 250 people. The food was great and everyone enjoyed the day immensely. Also, the Association played an important part of the annual Tule Lake Refuge Migratory Bird Festival. This event was enjoyed by approximately 150 people that were participating in activities like airboat rides and viewing live birds up close. The association will again do their part at this event on May 16, 2009.

Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association is always interested in having new members join with them to support the refuge. If there are any of you interested in being involved with the board, please contact Kim Kirby @ 530-667-2794, or Larry Hearne @ 541-850-2128.

As a reminder, there are still centennial items for sale at the Refuge bookstore. While supplies last there are hats, t-shirts, wine glasses and commemorative stamped envelopes.

We are looking forward to a prosperous 2009 at the visitor center and refuge. We hope to see you there.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Goldeneye

By Dave Menke—Outdoor Recreation Planner

These two related species are usually observed in the Klamath Basin during the mid and late winter. True to its name, the Common Goldeneye is most frequently seen of the two species, which makes finding Barrow's Goldeneye a special treat. These ducks frequent deep water including lakes and rivers rather than the shallow marshes, where most dabbling ducks such as Mallard, Pintail and Teal are found. Both nest in small numbers in high elevation locations in the northern Klamath Basin with tree cavities being the preferred nesting location.



Male (left) and female Barrow's Goldeneye



Female (left) and male Common Goldeneye

Identifying the two species of Goldeneyes can be challenging. As can be seen in the pictures above, the male Common Goldeneye has a round white spot at the base of the bill while the white marking on the male Barrow's is more triangular or crescent shaped. The Common Goldeneye also has a rounder head compared to the almost "rectangular" shaped head of the Barrow's Goldeneye. The female Barrow's Goldeneye typically has more pink or yellow on the bill than the Common Goldeneye which has a mostly dark bill tipped in yellow or pink.

During the winter, these two species can be observed on deep marshes on Lower Klamath Refuge and are often seen in the "English Channel" area on Tule Lake Refuge. Probably the most reliable location in the Upper Klamath Basin to find both species from November through March is at the southern tip of Upper Klamath Lake at Putnam's Point Park and along the Link River (both are located in the Klamath Falls city limits). During the summer months one or both species may be found on high elevation lakes. Both Goldeneye species are known to nest in the Diamond Lake area north of Crater Lake National Park.

KLAMATH BASIN WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION

Membership Application / Renewal

Name _____

Single \$15

Address _____

Family \$20

City / State / Zip _____

Sustaining \$35

Telephone _____

Benefactor \$50

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*Mail to: Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Association
4009 Hill Road, Tulelake, California 96134*

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Write or call Refuge Headquarters.