



FRIENDS OF MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Malheur Musings - October 2018



A male California quail calls to its flock
Photo by Dan Streiffert

President's Message

Dear Friends,

Ironically, 2018 is the 100-year anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This landmark agreement has been the cornerstone of migratory bird management across North America and has been used to protect birds from illegal killing. Unfortunately, recent policy changes have resulted in weakening protections from private companies whose activities kill birds. Read more about the Migratory Bird Act in this article by our conservation partner, Ducks Unlimited: [The Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#).

This is just one of many recent threats to our nation's wildlife, your National Wildlife Refuges and your public lands that we are extremely worried about. I urge you all to vote for politicians who support conservation of wildlife and public lands.

Thanks for all that you do!

Gary Ivey
President, Friends of Malheur Refuge



October Hours at Malheur HQ

On weekdays, the Visitor Center and Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store share the same hours:

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

On weekends, the Visitor Center is closed, but Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store is open from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.

Electrofishing the Blitzen River

Carp control at Malheur Refuge takes many forms, one which being annual "roundups" using electrofishing equipment to stun and remove the invasive fish. Each year, staff from U.S. Forest Service-Malheur National Forest and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge take part in a concerted effort to remove as many carp as possible from Malheur's waterways, focusing on different areas from year to year.



Carp roundup participants with the U.S. Forest Service
Photo by Peter Pearsall

This year, efforts centered on the stretch of the Blitzen River near Refuge HQ. Staff and partners removed about 8,000 carp (approximately 120,000 pounds of carp flesh) in two separate roundups, in late August and mid September. The Forest Service has been working with the Refuge for almost 15 years now on this annual project to help manage the carp population in various locations in Harney County.

Results from the Benton County Bird Sit

The 2018 Benton County Bird Sit Fundraiser took place Saturday, September 22. Jacob Matheson and Isaac Denzer, the lead participants, were joined by other birders throughout the day, including Tye Jeske, Joshua Galpern, and Kai and Ben Frueh. The group had reasonably good weather throughout the 15 hours spent at Finley NWR's Cabell Marsh blind, recording a total of 80 species! The BCBS group doesn't yet know the total amount of money raised, but will post it shortly. Donations go to four conservation non-profits, including FOMR. [Read the full report here.](#)



American avocet, one of the 80 species seen during the Bird Sit
Photo by Peter Pearsall

Duck Stamps Raise Funds For Conservation

Since 1934, the Federal Duck Stamp Program and Migratory Bird Conservation Fund have raised more than \$1 billion for habitat conservation in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Waterfowl hunters purchase duck stamps as an annual federal license; others purchase them voluntarily, to support the protection of diverse and important wildlife habitat. All proceeds go toward the acquisition or lease of habitat for the Refuge System.



Scot Storm's 2018 winning entry:
a wood duck drake and decoy
Photo courtesy of USFWS

Every year, artists across the country compete in the Federal Duck Stamp Contest, with the winner's artwork gracing the following year's stamp. The 2018 contest was held on September 15 in Las Vegas and Scot Storm of Freeport, Minnesota took first place. [Read more about the contest and the Federal Duck Stamp Program.](#)

The Incongruous Lewis's Woodpecker

Besides gnarled Western junipers, non-native Russian olives and the occasional grove of Fremont's cottonwood, there are few real trees to be found at Malheur Refuge. Despite this, five woodpecker species show up regularly at scattered locations throughout the Refuge, often associated with those intermittent stands of trees. One of those species is the Lewis's woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*), an anomaly in an already distinctive family of birds...[Read more here.](#)



Immature Lewis's woodpecker
Photo by FOMR volunteer
Loree Johnson

Volunteers in Action!



Volunteers at a sign-replacing work party last October
Photo by Lynn Fox

(Editor's note: We're introducing this section to our newsletter with the aim of highlighting the amazing volunteers we have at Malheur Refuge.)



Meet Loree Johnson. Loree is a professional nature and wildlife photographer who has spent the last four years volunteering at National Wildlife Refuges and other public-land sites across the country. If you follow FOMR on Facebook, you've likely seen some of the amazing images she's taken here. She began volunteering at Malheur Refuge in July 2018.

"As a direct result of the 2016 election and its ensuing assault on the environment in general, and public lands in particular, my travels have morphed from a random list of desired places to see, to a more focused

effort of doing a small part to help save our precious public lands for future generations," she said. Visitor services, which involves meeting fellow photographers and wildlife enthusiasts, answering questions about the refuge and its wild inhabitants, and generally promoting enjoyment of public lands, turned out to be a perfect fit for her.

"As a volunteer, I hope to add value and provide information for those who visit these extraordinary places. Over the summer, I have found Malheur to be not only a refuge for wildlife, but a respite for people. It seems almost as many visitors come here for the peace and wide open spaces as the wildlife." Loree will be moving on to a different site later this fall and we wish her well on her future endeavors. Thank you for all your hard work, Loree! You can keep up with her adventures and view her photography at www.loreejohnson.com.

Volunteer Debby de Carlo arrived at Malheur Refuge in September 2018 but has previously volunteered here, in fall 2015. She spent much of her early life in the Midwest before moving

to the Pacific Northwest 20 years ago. "When my daughter convinced me to leave Wisconsin almost 20 years ago, it was a tough decision," she said. "I had so many friends in Madison. But the chance to learn about and see western birds enticed me."



Debby volunteered at Malheur Refuge for five weeks in fall 2015. "While I came back to bird the Refuge the following spring, the visitor center was closed [after the occupation]," she said. "I was thrilled when I got the chance to volunteer at the Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store this September. I look forward to more opportunities like this in the future. It's great to meet people, answer questions, and give back a little to the place that means so much to me."

If you've ever had the desire to dwell among the multitudinous wildlife at Malheur Refuge Headquarters, while also providing much-needed visitor services support to the Refuge and Friends group, now is the perfect time to sign up for the 2019 season!

We're continually looking for volunteers to help us staff the Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store. If you're available to spend a month or more in southeast Oregon and have an RV or similar set-up to stay in, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact us at friends@malheurfriends.org if you are interested in this volunteer opportunity.

As always, stay tuned to our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for updates!

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