

Malheur Musings - May 2017

Refuge Visitor Center and Nature Store are Back in Business!



Photo by David B. Marshall



Malheur Refuge Visitor Center by Carey Goss.

It's a great relief that we are finally back in business at Malheur Refuge. Refuge HQ and our Nature Store re-opened on April 20th to welcoming refuge visitors during business hours and on weekends. The remodeled visitor center has added security to help protect staff and visitors from future miscreants. Lets celebrate Malheur's return to normalcy!

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Male Bobdink - Photo by Tim Blount

Let's jump for joy and celebrate by visiting Malheur! This is a good year to visit Malheur! Its a good water year, which means great opportunities for spring birding and photography in the Blitzen Valley. Most of the invasive carp in Malheur Lake died during the past 2 years of extreme drought, and the few survivors appear to be in such poor condition, that it is unlikely that many of them will be able to spawn this year. That means there won't be many carp to compete for the waterfowl food in Malheur Lake. With the above normal snow pack last winter, the lake is rapidly rising and will likely reach about 40,000 acres this year, and with low carp survivors, we expect that it will be used by tens of thousands of waterfowl next fall. Last week Malheur Lake waters reached The Narrows for the first time in about 4 years. Water at The Narrows means good birding for grebes, shorebirds, pelicans and waterfowl - right along Highway 205 where the Friends of Malheur developed a great visitor parking area. Please come enjoy your favorite refuge with us!



Malheur Greater Sandhill Crane by Sean Wirth April 2017.

We have a lot going on the next couple of months and we hope you can join us.

1. Nature Store Volunteers needed: Our Friends Nature Store is now open. If you might be interested in volunteering to help this spring or summer, [contact us at: friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org)

2. Membership Appreciation Tour - Saturday, May 20th. We will meet at refuge HQ at 7AM and will provide a guided birding tour of the Blitzen Valley; a caravan-style, carpooling adventure. The tour will end in early afternoon. [Please RSVP to friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org) so we know how large a group to plan for.

3. Friends of Malheur Annual Meeting - You are invited to our meeting from 2 - 4PM at Refuge HQ. We will give you an update on what your Friends Group has been up to and also have presentations from refuge staff. After the meeting we will reconvene in Burns for a No Host HAPPY HOUR at Steens Mountain. Brewing, 150 W. Washington St. Be the first to try new specially brewed MALHEUR BEER and snacks by Rhojos Restaurant. [Please RSVP to friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org) so we know how large a group to plan for.

4. Membership Appreciation Tour - Saturday, June 3rd. We will meet at refuge HQ at 7AM and will provide a guided birding tour of the Blitzen Valley; a caravan-style, carpooling adventure. The tour will end in early afternoon. [Please RSVP: friends@malheurfriends.org](mailto:friends@malheurfriends.org) so we know how large a group to plan for.

5. Volunteers needed to assist with refuge Bobolink count - Sunday, June 4th. We could use about 10 people to help with this annual count. Meet at 8AM at P Ranch. (Be prepared to possibly wade through knee high water). [To get on the list and for details, please contact Alice@malheurfriends.org.](mailto:Alice@malheurfriends.org)

6. Archaeological Roadshow in Burns - Saturday, June 10th. The Archaeological Roadshow, a program of the Department of Anthropology of Portland State is coming to Burns to provide a special opportunity for those interested in learning about the rich human history of the Refuge and Harney County. The Roadshow's goal is: "...developing activities that encourage adults and children to explore ways heritage enhances our lives and our connections to where we live." Friends of Malheur will have a table displaying information about the Refuge and our activities in support of it. Visit their website for more information: <https://www.pdx.edu/anthropology/archaeology-roadshow>

Fair in the Field Event - for Harney County Middle Schools



On April 6 & 7, the High Desert Partnership held a "Fair in the

Field" event to educate Harney County middle school students about the ecology of the Harney Basin. Students spent time with local partners Team leaders from the Burns High School Future Farmers of America



Joe Barnett and Ben Cade demonstrating how to measure water clarity by Gary Ivey

provided leadership to teams of 4 to 5 students. The students participated in 10 stations total, each of which examined a topic in our partner's area of expertise through a hands on activity. Everyone had a great

time!! Staff and scientists from various local agencies and conservation groups gave presentations to the kids about aspects of the ecology of the Harney Basin, habitat restoration needs and methods for wildlife studies.

Friends President, Gary Ivey was assisted by Joe Barnett, Malheur Refuge Fish Biologist, and Ben Cade, High Desert Partnership Aquatic Health Coordinator.

They demonstrated how invasive carp impact water quality and degrade wetlands, and how they effect waterfowl populations. The event was attended by about 60 kids and it exposed these young people to science - serving as a mini job fair.



Joe Barnett brought a live carp to let the kids touch and smell - photo by Gary Ivey

Spring Migration is Underway!



Common Yellowthroat by Rick Vetter

Spring migration is in full swing as many migrant birds have already returned to Malheur this season, but more are yet to come. We recently added a new tab to our web page which summarizes average arrival dates for common Malheur migrants. You can download a pdf of the arrival dates at this link: [Bird Migration](#)

We appreciate our Members!

I want to personally thank our members who have renewed memberships or made donations to us so far this year and I encourage those of you who haven't joined us to do so. If you haven't yet renewed, please do so and stay with us. There are increasing political threats to the welfare of our public lands which make our efforts to protect Malheur even more important. We, Friends of Malheur, are letting our voices be heard in the public lands debates. Your continued support will help us support Malheur Refuge and in our political struggle to support refuges and public lands.

Thank you all!

Sincerely,

Gary Ivey, President
Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Thanks for Supporting Malheur National Wildlife Refuge!

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