



FRIENDS OF **MALHEUR** NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Malheur Musings - April 2019



Western meadowlark singing its heart out
Photo by Dan Streiffert

Director's Message

Friends,

Where there was one or two ground squirrels scurrying there are now dozens. Where there had only been one yellow-headed blackbird among the swarms of red-winged blackbirds there are now up to ten. Where nests have sat empty since the fledging of last summer there are now doting pairs of red-tailed hawks, great horned owls and yes, for the first time in over 100 years, we have 2 confirmed bald eagle nests! The Refuge is alive and bustling with the stirrings of spring.

If you follow the Friends of Malheur NWR on Facebook (@MalheurFriends) you will have seen our very exciting announcement that eagles are confirmed to be nesting on the Refuge. The first pair, nesting adjacent to P Ranch, are believed to be the adult female and subadult male who were courting there last spring. It would seem this male

is now all grown up as the female is intensely attentive to their nest. The informational sign on the east side of the road and accompanying pull out will be cordoned off to deter folks from parking and walking in too close to the nest. The second pair was observed by Wildlife Biologist Alexa Martinez, and Portland Audubon Eastern OR Field Coordinator, Teresa Wicks, during a recent site visit to Sodhouse Ranch. At this time of year bald eagles roost in the statuesque cottonwood trees at Sodhouse and weekly surveys are conducted there. As a collective, the roosting eagles come into the trees at dusk and go about their daily business each dawn. Two, one male and one female, notable by their size, were lingering in later morning hours and through the afternoon. Her sitting squat in the nest and his diligent perching above along with obvious pair bonding behavior gave them away. Who is to say if either of these pairs will hatch and fledge chicks, but to be sure, all eyes are on them now! With this in mind, we are making a concerted effort to educate visitors on the importance of birding and photography ethics. Please help us to remind folks of the following:

- Please be courteous houseguests. A Wildlife Refuge is a special place that is managed and maintained specifically for the primary use of wildlife. Visiting a Refuge is akin to visiting someone else's home.
- Obey all closures. Malheur is a 'Closed Refuge', meaning there are limited and specific areas that are accessible to the public and the rest is left for wildlife. When wildlife, such as the P Ranch eagles, find suitable nesting habitat in or near a 'public space', a temporary closure will be put in place and must be adhered to just as any other closure.
- Minimize your presence. Approaching a nest, lingering near or crowding a perch are commonly known disturbances which should always be avoided, but lesser known and accepted is noise disturbance. Playing callback, making vocalizations, even driving your car too fast, too close or shutting your door too loud can all be disruptive to a nesting bird, let alone other wildlife.

Wildlife are not the only creatures making their first appearances across the landscape. You, our Friends, the visiting public, are also back! The Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store reopened on March 1st and we were off to a slow start, much the same as the landscape around us experiences. Now, with spring break upon us, we are invigorated with the energy of folks visiting the Refuge. People on solo road trips, family vacations, brand new retirees heading out to explore. People from Seattle or British Columbia, Arizona or Ohio. I can feel the energy you bring with you. Your passion and curiosity are inspiring. The birds are not the only thing migrating and bringing the basin back to life.

Thank you for being a Friend,

Janelle L Wicks
FOMR Executive Director



Malheur HQ Visitor Center

Every Day 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM 7 Days/Wk

March 1st - October 31st



From our timeless T-shirts to unique earrings and a full range books including Bird ID Guides, our Crane's Nest Nature Store has something for everyone! Best of all, proceeds support FOMR projects on the Refuge and in our community. Don't forget that Members are entitled to a 10% discount.



It's sandhill crane season and we see them everywhere - outside & inside - all over our merchandise. Take a look at new FOMR logo items including insulated stainless steel water bottles, ball caps, stickers and more!

Scratch & Dent Bin

Bird Festival Weekend - look for discounts on items in our Scratch & Dent bin. Items might be slightly less than perfect, but everything deserves a home! Check out discounts up to 50% OFF

Membership Minute

If you are not yet or no longer a FOMR Member, please consider 2019 the year to become a Friend as we celebrate our 20th Birthday all year!
If you are unsure of your Membership status please contact us at Friends@Malheurfriends.org today!



2019 Annual Members Weekend Event May 24th - 26th

Mark your calendars and plan for a fun filled Memorial Day Weekend!

Experience the Refuge
in a whole new way by
Birding with the Experts
along the Auto Tour
Route.

Enjoy a BBQ and Worthy
Pollinator Garden
Dedication at
Headquarters.

Attend an event w/
Authors & Avian
Aficionados Kenn
Kaufman & Alan
Contreras followed by
an auction to support
the Tribal Stewards
Program.

Sign up for exclusive
tours of either Boca
Lake or Double O.

For more information



MIGRATE WITH MALHEUR

A VERY BIRDY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

visit our [website](#) or
Facebook events page.

FRIENDS OF MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Meet expert birders
stationed at key
birding hot spots
along the Auto Tour
Route. Adventure on
your own or join a
van tour!



SATURDAY
MAY 25TH 2019



REFUGE
HEADQUARTERS



FREE
DONATIONS WELCOME



The Friends of Malheur NWR are celebrating 20yrs of promoting conservation and appreciation of natural and cultural resources. Join our BIRTHDAY Celebration with this FREE line up of events!

7:30 - 11:30 Explore the Auto Tour Route and encounter expert Birders eager to share what they are seeing! Optional presentations at Headquarters:

- 9:00 - Sandhillcranes on the Pacific Flyway
- 11:00 - Challenges of Trumpeter Swans on Malheur NWR

12:00 Worthy Pollinator Garden Dedication Ceremony

6:00 Presentations and Book signing at the Elks Lodge

- Kenn Kauffman; Migration Matters of the West
- Alan Contreras; The Fine Arts at Malheur
- Auction supporting NW Youth Corps Tribal Stewards Program
- Light fare provided - Suggested donation of \$10

Our Birthday Gift to You

Throughout 2019, we will
be giving away
commemorative 20th
Birthday enamel pins! All
new Friends will receive a
pin and current Friends
can get theirs one of 3
ways!

Birthday Bump

Renew your Membership in 2019 by bumping up to the next level. If you are currently an INDIVIDUAL Member, consider renewing with a FAMILY or DONOR Membership.

Forever Friends

Opt for renewing your Membership in 2019 through monthly recurring payments. For as little as \$5 or as much as comfortably fits your budget.

To do this, visit malheurfriends.org/support, click DONATE and choose to make this a monthly donation!

Volunteer

Join us for a work party, special project, staff the Crane's Nest Nature Store or lend us a hand by sharing your unique talents in any way you see fit! Keep an eye on this Newsletter and our Facebook page (@MalheurFriends) for upcoming volunteer opportunities.



47 Members have already earned their pins by making a Birthday Bump in their Membership contribution! Pins have just arrived and will begin making their way to you by early April.

We have 29 New Friends since Jan 1, 2019!

A Long-Awaited Return to Malheur

"I used to be a regular visitor to this amazing place, coming at least once a year for 20 years straight," writes visitor Steven Kratka. "So it was with much excitement that I return to the place that meant so much to me. I wondered if things had changed, if I would find my experience lacking from those I had enjoyed in the past."

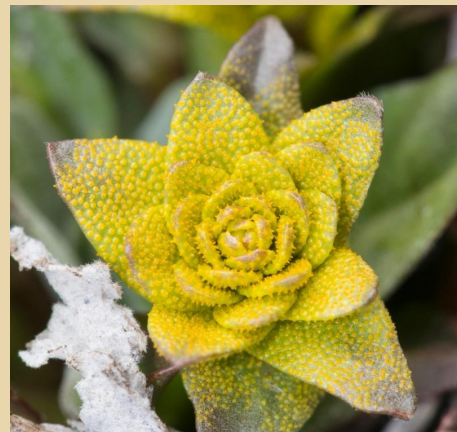
He didn't have to wait long to find out. "On the first day of my return to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, I was greeted with the trumpeting call of Sandhill Cranes flying high overhead. A good omen, I thought, and I was not wrong..." [Read more here.](#)



Great horned owl
Photo by Steven Kratka

The Ingenious Rust Fungus

A walk through the sage-steppe this time of year usually turns up some of the first high-desert wildflowers blooming between the dormant shrubs and still-brown grasses. Sagebrush buttercup, Beckwith's violet, yellow bells and several biscuitroot species are among the earlier species to flower. But there is another springtime plant, superficially flower-like in appearance, that bears a closer look...[Read more here.](#)



Close-up of the Puccinia "pseudoflower"



Conservation Corner

From Wildlife Biologist to Maintenance Supervisor, there is much important and exciting work being done at Malheur Refuge and they want to share it with you! Click the links below to read the full articles.

Prescribed Fire at Malheur Refuge

By Edwin Sparks, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Habitat Ecologist

In March this year, the Refuge conducted a prescribed burn along the Blitzen River's West Canal. We use prescribed fires in order to meet a few different objectives. One is that when we treat some of these areas with a prescribed burn, we can reduce the "fine fuel loads" and keep a larger uncontrolled wildfire from occurring on the Refuge. Another is to stimulate plant growth by releasing stored carbon back to the soil in the form of charcoal and to enhance habitat...[Read more here.](#)

Volunteer Spotlight

URGENT NEED: MAY & JUNE 2019

volunteer

WITH FRIENDS OF MALHEUR NWR

APRIL 28 - JUNE 1 & JUNE 2 -29; 24 HRS/WEEK

STAY ON REFUGE AT THE VOLUNTEER RV SITES

WIFI - FULL KITCHEN- LAUNDRY- BATHROOMS

CONTACT FRIENDS@MALHEURFRIENDS.ORG

FRIENDS OF MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

ATTENTION: Are you looking for a way to spend a month at Malheur NWR? Here is your chance! An opportunity to be a resident volunteer for the months of **May and/or June** just opened up! This is an exciting time to be on the Refuge as we watch migrants arrive along with many visitors!

Volunteering this spring will also guarantee you tickets to the World Premier of the Malheur Symphony, an opportunity to conduct Rookery Monitoring Surveys at Sodhouse Ranch, and attendance to the full line-up of events during our Annual Members Meeting weekend!

****Volunteers must have housing on wheels that can be set up at the volunteer RV park at Refuge Headquarters or be local enough to commute each work day.****

Interested? Email friends@malheurfriends.org today!

Pollinator-palooza in 2019 - STILL NEEDED!

We are in the final stages of our long-awaited Pollinator Garden that will be going in the ground this spring! Volunteers can join us for one or both work party weekends:

April 27th & 28th - We will spend the weekend building and setting the raised garden beds for the Pollinator Garden. This will require light to medium physical ability and use of hand and power tools. Volunteers will have the opportunity to stay on site at the Refuge Fire Bunkhouse the nights of April 12th, 13th and 14th. This is a special treat, as lodging is a scarcity during the Annual Harney County Migratory Bird Festival! **Please email friends@malheurfriends.org**

May 11th & 12th - Finally, the plants will be planted! A weekend of gardening on behalf of the pollinators will include some light lifting, bending, squatting, etc. These plants will attract and support native pollinators and bring joy and exploration to Refuge visitors. Again, volunteers will enjoy an overnight stay in the Fire Bunkhouse at Refuge HQ. **Please email friends@malheurfriends.org**

Shout-Outs!

Jody Newman is a local Friends of Malheur Member who has stepped up and helped out a great deal in March! Visitors were delighted to be greeted by someone who is knowledgeable about the area willing to share that knowledge with them. We want to thank her for being a critical part of being able to keep the Crane's Nest Nature Store open 7 days/week! Most notably, just today, Jody noticed a rather large porcupine sitting in a tree adjacent to the HQ parking lot! A visitor then set up their scope and allowed others to take in the site.

Thank you Jody!

If you are interested in volunteering this spring, or have general questions about volunteering at Malheur Refuge, please contact us at friends@malheurfriends.org.

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

[Become a Member!](#)

[Renew Membership](#)

[Donate](#)

Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge | www.malheurfriends.org
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36391 Sodhouse Lane
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STAY CONNECTED:

