



Tennessee Refuge Reflections

**Tennessee National
Wildlife Refuge**
3006 Dinkins Lane
Paris, TN 38242

(731) 642-2091
<http://TennesseeRefuge.fws.gov>

Refuge Manager
John Taylor

Office Hours
M-F 7:00 to 3:30

Benefactors

Johnny Allen

Sandra Anderson

Randy Collins

Corporate Sponsors

Mrs. Jeanette Rudy

Hardcastle Construction

Paris Plumbing Supply,
Inc.

Peppers Automotive

Moody Realty

The Crittendon Press, Inc.

Henry County
Chiropractic Clinic

Presidents Page

Hello To Our Friends:

What a first year! I want to say thank you to the Board of Directors for their tireless efforts to establish and organize the Friends of the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge. I am pleased to say that all of the Board Members have agreed to remain and serve for another year. Special thanks to Joyce North for her accomplishments during her term as President and for taking on the task of writing grants for Friends Group project funding

The number of non-profit groups that have gone from a concept to an approved 501 (c) 3 organization in one year is small indeed, but this group pulled it off. In close cooperation with the refuge staff we have set realistic, attainable goals and are working to make them reality. We seek accomplish projects that benefit the refuge and its resident wildlife and at the same time provide activities for our members that allow them to experience first hand the natural beauty of the refuge and learn of its unique qualities. A major accomplishment of the Friends Group was the shoreline clearing project that was completed just before the refuge closed for the season. The removal of the willows has led to a visible increase in the ducks and geese utilizing the crop fields of the refuge to feed. Our next major project is restoration of the Cherokee Trail just north of Big Sandy for hiking and wildlife viewing.

As a group we have held our annual membership meeting in conjunction with a cookout at the V L Childs Overlook. We have just recently conducted a winter wildlife tour for members at the Duck River Unit. Both of these events were well attended and received. Building on these activities with the coming of spring we wish to dedicate the Britton Ford Hiking Trail and conduct a guided tour for members with a discussion of the refuge habitat: the environment, shelter and food sources that make it valuable to wildlife.

Our membership has grown rapidly and we are adding new members each and every month. A favor that I would ask of you is to spread the word about our group. If you have friends or relatives that you think would be interested let them know what we are about, our accomplishments and goals, and invite them to join. New members are so much more than a source dues. They provide us with valuable ideas and opportunities to grow and improve our efforts.

As a Friend we welcome your input. Please feel free to offer suggestions for projects that the Friends can pursue and activities we can conduct as a group to educate and inform. We hope that you will enjoy being a part of this organization and that you can gain as much from our efforts as the wildlife we support.

Dan Dziekonski
Friends President



Manager's Corner

What a great year we have had! Starting its second year the Friends of Tennessee Refuge already has over 60 members, thousands of dollars in the bank, has been awarded a \$5,000 grant, and Joyce is putting the final touches on a huge grant to restore the Chickasaw Trail. The Friends Group has already contributed more than \$6,500 to refuge projects and law enforcement support, and we have had two great Friends get-togethers. What can I say but “wow....you guys are awesome!!”

Since you know what a great year the Friends of Tennessee Refuge has had, I thought you might be interested in what's happened in 2005 on the rest of the 540+ refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Here is the year in review:

2005 National Friends Conference -- “Friends in Action” – The refuge community came together in Washington, for the National Friends Conference. Friends and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) staff attended (including Anne Williams and Joyce North from the Friends of Tennessee Refuge and Refuge Ranger Joan Stevens), representing 100 refuges in 45 states. Later, over 120 Friends met with members of Congress to expand Congressional support and draw attention to the Refuge System's funding shortfalls.

Director - On October 12, Dale Hall was sworn in as the Fish and Wildlife Service's Director. This 27 year veteran of the Service last served as Regional Director of the Southwest Region of the Service, but before that tour, was the Deputy Regional Director of the Southeast Region. While there he visited Tennessee Refuge and even helped judge one of our Junior Duck Stamp contests. We are very pleased to have this seasoned, career veteran who knows Tennessee Refuge and our issues as our new Director.

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker -- 2005 saw the dramatic announcement by the Department of the Interior that the ivory-billed woodpecker, long thought extinct, had been found in the Cache River NWR, Arkansas. The ivory-billed woodpecker was lost its southeastern old-bottomland habitat due to the fragmentation and harvesting of contiguous forests. Presumed extinct for decades, there have been unconfirmed sightings in a number of southeastern states, but no confirmation of live birds until now.

FY 2006 Interior Appropriations – In July, Congress sent for the president's signature a \$26.2 billion Interior-Environment spending bill, the first 2006 appropriations bill passed. The bill provided the FWS- Refuge System funding of \$391.5 million after rescissions. This was an approximate increase of \$7 million over FY 2005 but, a 1% across-the-board rescission passed in December cut an additional \$4 million from the refuge budget. Therefore, the final O&M budget is approximately \$387M. Included in the bill is \$1 million to continue and expand the Volunteer Invasives Monitoring Project (VIMP) and provide competitive grants to refuge Friends groups on invasive species control.

Gulf Coast Hurricane Damage -- One of the biggest stories of 2005 was hurricanes hitting the Gulf Coast. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused severe damage to refuges in the Gulf Coast region, later Hurricane Wilma inflicted damage across Florida. Estimates of damage to refuges from the storms exceed \$240 million; this is over half the Refuge System's annual operating budget. In October, the Administration requested \$61 million for restoration and repair costs on refuges, however, the House and Senate approved only \$30 million for those repairs. This number is woefully short of the actual Refuge System needs.

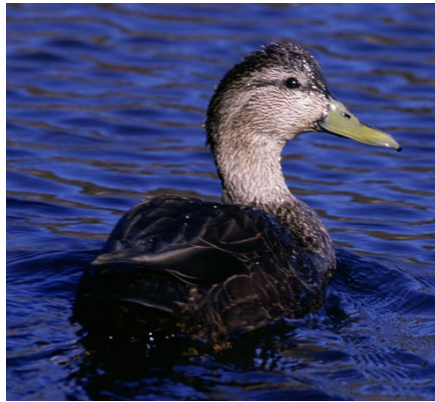
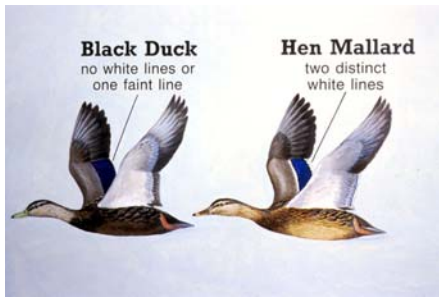
Arctic NWR – In November, the Senate approved a Budget Reconciliation bill that included language allowing drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Following the Senate vote, the House approved a bill that did not include the Arctic drilling language. Republican leaders were forced to drop the provision from the final bill. However, Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, added the language to a “must-pass” Defense Appropriations bill in the final days before Christmas. With letters and calls pouring in from all across the country, the Senate Republican leadership could not overcome a filibuster threat, and was forced to, again, drop the Arctic drilling provision. In the eyes of many conservation groups, this was a huge victory and a great way to close out the year.

So as you can see, it has been a challenging year for the Refuge System. Nevertheless, with folks like the Friends of Tennessee Refuge fighting for it, I'm optimistic 2006 will be bigger and better!

John Taylor, Refuge Manager

Critter Corner

The Black Duck



The Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge forms a significant habitat for the American Black Duck. It is a large, dark, dabbling duck of eastern ponds and marshes. It feeds mostly on grains and seeds and to a lesser extent on invertebrates. The Black Duck can be found on any body of water but it prefers wooded ponds or lakes.

Nationally populations have dropped significantly with less than 50% as many birds now as there were before 1950. Here at the refuge we have seen the numbers fall from 32,000 in the 1970's to around 8,000 today.

It is declining rapidly due to many factors. Large scale clearing of forests for agriculture and urban development on breeding grounds in the North has harmed this species that thrives in woodland lakes. These practices provided suitable habitat for Mallards to move in and effectively take over American Black Duck populations. The Mallard is a much more aggressive species and it hybridizes with the Black Duck. There is no conclusive evidence to determine the exact cause of the decline.

The Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge provides critical wintering habitat for roughly half the population in the Mississippi flyway.

Quick Facts

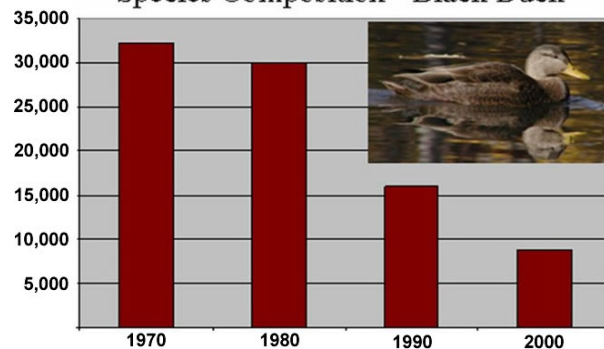
Length: 12 Inches
Wingspan: 36 Inches
Weight: 5-8 Lbs
7-11 eggs

Identification:

Sooty brown
Greenish-yellow bill
Legs red or brown
Sexes similar

In flight – very dark with flashing white wing linings

Waterfowl Populations
Species Composition - Black Duck



Thanks to our New Members!!

Benefactor: Randy Collins

Bill & Judy Thompson

Bobby Travillian

Mansard Island - Frank & Kim Martino

John & Fran Pierson

Quade & Sheila Pierson

Richard & Marion Graves

Robert & Christi Morris

Bob & Susan Woods

Alex & Kristie Julian

Raye & Dan Nilus

Our Mission

Friends of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. is an independent, non-profit corporation dedicated to supporting the primary purposes for which the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge was established and promoting the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, foster its use and enjoyment by the public consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates.

Membership Annual Dues

\$15 Individual
\$25 Family
\$100 Corporate
\$500 Benefactor

Mail to:

Friends of Tennessee
NWR
3006 Dinkins Lane
Paris TN 38242



The Friends group assisted with a shoreline clearing project on Britten Ford area of Big Sandy Unit. The shoreline was cleared to allow waterfowl better access to agricultural crops.



The refuge conducted part of the clearing, but the project was stalled due to lack of funds. A total of \$6,500 from the Friends group was paid to a contractor with specialized equipment to conduct the clearing project.



Friends Members Treated to Special Tour of Refuge

Four times a year, one in each season, our friends members are treated to special tours of the refuge. In the fall we had a cookout on the refuge in which 35 members were treated to hamburger and hotdog meal and went on a night hike and owl prowl on the new Britton Ford hiking trail. Recently, on Saturday January 14th we had 30 members climb into vans for a special “behind closed areas” tour of the Duck River Bottoms area. Refuge staff were on hand to guide this tour which included 14 people that had never visited the refuge before.

Approximately 10 different species of waterfowl were observed by the thousands. Members were also treated to views of bald eagles, white pelicans, herons, deer, wild turkey and many species of hawks. At one point in the tour members were invited to get out of the vans to hear the “roar” of many thousands of ducks feeding in a remote location of the bottoms. The ducks were not visible as they were screened by a crop of corn, but the roar of so many ducks together was quite impressive. The tour was topped off by waterfowl pouring in to the sunset and large orange moonrise in which ducks could be seen flying silhouetted in front. The hungry passengers were then taken to the Four Seasons Restaurant in New Johnsonville to enjoy a large seafood buffet.

What's next?

A spring birding trip to Big Sandy Peninsula and Pace point will take place approximately mid April. In the summer will be a wood duck banding opportunity in July or August. Look for a special flyer announcing these next tours.



A SPECIAL GIFT TO THANK OUR MEMBERS!!

As a thank you for your membership, we offer one of the following: lapel pins, refrigerator magnets and cloth patches with the Friends Group Logo that appears on the newsletter. Additional patches, pins or magnets may be purchased for \$5.00 each. If you have not already received yours please select one item and mail this form to the following address or send an e-mail at Joan_Stevens@fws.gov.

Friends of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge

3006 Dinkins Lane
Paris, TN 38242

Name _____ 1 Lapel Pin 1 Refrigerator Magnet 1 Patch

Additional Pins ____ Magnets ____ Patches ____ Total Included \$ _____

Membership: Membership to the Friends of TNWR and Corporate Sponsorship is for one year. To those that joined in 2005 as we were becoming established your membership will be extended to run through December of 2006.