



Tennessee Refuge Reflections

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

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

Refuge Manager
Barron Crawford
Office Hours
M-F 7:00 to 3:30

Benefactors

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Paris! Magazine

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Presidents Page

Hello to all,

We are all very much in tune with the role our refuges play right here in Tennessee and across the nation. Refuges are hidden gems that preserve and protect our wildlife and often go unnoticed within their communities. Our refuges are acknowledged as the world's premier system of lands and waters dedicated to the preservation of wildlife and we have one of the best right here in our own back yard.

We would like to thank Senators Alexander and Corker for co-sponsoring a Refuge Week resolution, acknowledging the important contributions that refuges make to the nation and its natural heritage. They also provided a big thank you to the 42,000 volunteers in friends groups like our own that contributed over 1.5 million volunteer hours to the refuge system in the last year.

Tennessee NWR provides hunting and fishing opportunities to many in the community that would not otherwise have access to open lands and waters. As the number of acres of private land that is open to hunting and fishing declines, the refuge will play an ever more important role in preserving our outdoor heritage.

With the construction of the new headquarters and visitor center, Tennessee will be poised to take the lead in environmental education. Our schools and visitors will have both a theater area and biology class room to enable learning about the flora and fauna right here at home. As a visitor, you will be able to use both, in addition to viewing and learning from all of the exhibits in the center. I hope you are as excited about these possibilities as we all are.

As this year winds down, and we begin to look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the next, I would like to take a moment to welcome home an old friend. Barron Crawford has begun his duties as Refuge Manager. Until leaving in 2005 to serve as the manager of Charles M Russell NWR, he was the Deputy Manager right here at Tennessee and so, with Barron, we welcome the new and retain a little of the old. Barron and his wife, Wendy, were instrumental in the formation of the Friends Group here. He brings a wonderful combination of knowledge of the refuge and experience in its operation along with a host of fresh ideas.

Barron has hit the ground running and so I will extend a challenge to you and ask "what can you do in the coming year to improve our refuge"? If you have an idea let me know and we'll run with it.

Dan Dziekonski
Friends President

Manager's Corner

By Barron Crawford

Greetings to those of you that I have not had the pleasure of meeting. I am Barron Crawford the new refuge manager for the Tennessee NWR Complex. I reported for duty on Monday October 25, 2010 and I have been getting up to speed on all the projects and challenges associated with the refuges since I left in June of 2005.

The Refuge Manager position at Tennessee NWR has been a dream of mine since my first position with the National Wildlife Refuge System in 1998. I began this journey in 1988 when a young, up and coming refuge manager named Mr. John Taylor spoke at a Wildlife Society meeting at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. John spoke about his adventures as a Student Trainee at various refuges across the Southeastern Region, being refuge manager in Washington and Alaska, then moving to Alligator River NWR and working with the red wolf recovery program. After hearing of John's adventures I knew that I wanted to work with wolves and be a refuge manager.

I graduated from the University of Tennessee Knoxville with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science in 1989 and I received my Masters of Science degree in 1991. In 1991 I began my federal career as a biological science technician with the National Park Service in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park working on the red wolf recovery program. In 1993 I transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services branch in Asheville, NC as a wildlife biologist with the red wolf recovery program. After spending 7 years working with wolves, I took a position as a wildlife refuge operations specialist at Chincoteague NWR in 1998. At Chincoteague I was responsible for the maintenance program, working on piping plover/least tern management, Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel management, moist soil and water management and assisting with an extensive public use program.

After two short years at Chincoteague, I was asked to transfer to Prime Hook NWR in Milton, DE as the deputy refuge manager. After being at Prime Hook for six months I was promoted to refuge manager. At Prime Hook NWR I was responsible for overseeing a series of fresh water units and salt marsh areas, cooperative farming program, controversial mosquito control program, and land acquisition program.

I kept in touch with Mr. Taylor and in 2002 I got a call from John letting me know the deputy refuge manager at Tennessee NWR was vacant. As deputy refuge manager at Tennessee Complex I was responsible for providing guidance and oversight to a diverse staff for the day to day management of the refuges. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with one of the greatest refuge managers in the Service. It was a great experience and I learned a great deal about refuge management during this time. I spent three great years in Paris and I decided to leave only so I would be more competitive for the manager's job when John retired.

In 2005 I accepted the refuge manager position at Charles M. Russell (CMR) NWR Complex in central/eastern Montana. The CMR complex consists of six NWRs, a wetland management district and three easements. The CMR/UL Bend NWRs contain 1.1 million acres and stretch for 135 miles along the Missouri River. CMR is a highly complex refuge with numerous issues such as grazing management, fire management, wilderness management and road access. Habitat management consists of livestock grazing, the use of prescribed fire and wild fire management, riparian restoration and native prairie restoration.

My wife and I are excited to be back in Paris with our two boys, Graysen (3years old) and Wyatt (2years old). I look forward to working with the highly dedicated and motivated staff at Tennessee and Cross Creeks to carry on John's tradition of working with our partners and the communities in providing quality wildlife habitat and wildlife dependent recreational opportunities. I am looking forward to working with the Friends members and volunteers on a variety of refuge projects. There are several exciting projects on the horizon such as the new Headquarters and Visitor Center on Britton Ford, the TVA levee reconstruction at Duck River Bottoms and the Federal Highways projects at Britton Ford and Duck River Bottoms. As I get settled into the job (and a house) I look forward to identifying future projects. Again it is great to be back in Paris and I look forward to getting to know each of you and I encourage everyone to drop by and say hello.

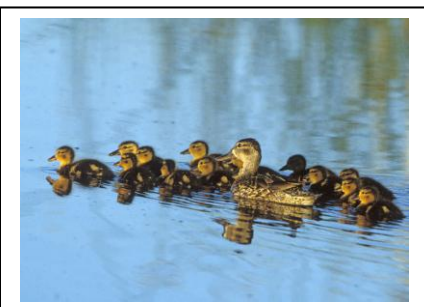
Barron Crawford, Refuge Manager



Male Blue Winged Teal



Males In Flight



Female With Ducklings

Quick Facts

Length: 14-16 inches

Wingspan: 24 inches

Weight: 1 lb. max

No. Eggs: 10-12

Lifespan: Up to 10 years

Typical diet: aquatic vegetation, seeds, insects and large amounts of aquatic invertebrates

Critter Corner

Blue Winged Teal

Teal are one of several species of small freshwater ducks. Blue Winged Teal are among the very first ducks to reach Tennessee heading south and some of the last to migrate north in the spring. They are fast and travel in small flocks. Blue Winged Teal turn in unison and flash their blue wing bars, making them easily identifiable. With the recent cold weather many of ours are now gone.

The male has blue shoulder patches and the secondary wing feathers are iridescent green. It has a grey head with a white crescent in front of the eye. The female is mottled brown with paler blue shoulder patches.

The Blue Winged Teal nest in central North America and are most common in the prairie pothole region of the mid-west. Their habitat are marshes, shallow ponds and lakes. The nest is a small depression located near water, lined with grass and down and usually hidden by vegetation. The hen lays 10-12 eggs and incubation takes from 21-27 days. During incubation the hen stays on the nest and the male finds cover and molts. Like most ducks, it goes through an eclipse plumage and molts most of its feathers simultaneously, including the primaries, and so is flightless until new feathers grow in. The young can walk to water within 12 hours but do not fledge for 6-7 weeks.

Teal are dabbling ducks and feed near the surface, unlike other duck species that dive for food. Their diet consists of vegetation, stems and roots of aquatic plants such as duckweed, and seeds of plants that grow on mudflats such as smartweed, nutgrass and millet. Twenty-five percent of their diet is composed of insects and aquatic invertebrates such as mollusks and crustaceans.

Their predators include man, skunks, minks and weasels, snakes and snapping turtles, crows and magpies. About half of the nest failures are due to mammals, and skunks make up 2/3 of those. All nest losses caused by birds are due to crows and magpies.

Because they arrive early and feed on aquatic vegetation and invertebrates, mud flats are very important habitats for teal. Delays to the draw down of Kentucky Lake adversely affect their food sources and ability to feed during their migration. Mudflats are key to their long term survival and an early draw down of Kentucky Lake provides a critical food source to these birds.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STAFF

New Refuge Manager BARRON CRAWFORD



Barron Crawford has reported for duty as the refuge manager of Tennessee NWR Complex in Paris, TN. Barron has worked for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service for the past 19 years. Barron was the refuge manager of the Charles M. Russell (CMR) NWR Complex in central MT.

Prior to arriving at CMR, Barron was the Deputy Refuge Manager at Tennessee NWR Complex from 2002 to 2005. During this time Barron oversaw the day to day operations of the Tennessee NWR and Cross Creeks NWRs and such projects as Duck River Auto Tour Route, TVA levee repair project, the Port Boat Ramp improvement and the Pool 8 restoration at Duck River Unit. Also Barron with his wife Wendy assisted former Refuge Manager John Taylor and Refuge Ranger Joan Stevens with the formation of the Friends of Tennessee NWR.

Barron has also served as the Refuge Manager at Prime Hook NWR in Milton, DE, Primary Assistant Refuge Manager at Chincoteague NWR in Chincoteague, VA, Wildlife Biologist in Asheville, NC, and Biological Science Technician in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Barron has worked on endangered species recovery projects, shorebird and waterfowl management, big game management and focusing on restoring ecological processes that influence vegetative communities.

Barron was raised in Estill Springs, TN and graduated from Franklin County High School. Barron attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, TN and earned a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. Barron and his wife Wendy have been married for 21 years and have a three year old son Graysen and a two year old son Wyatt. Barron and Wendy are looking forward to raising their sons in the area and becoming active in community projects.

JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER!

For those members who joined the Friend's Group before July 1, 2009, and have not yet paid your yearly renewal, you can do so by stopping by or mailing your checks to the Refuge Office. We value your membership and hope you will renew! If you aren't sure if you're current...call Joan at 731-642-2091.

Art Show – September



Monarch Tagging – October



Duck Banding – July
At Duck River



Aquatics and Mussells – August



Geo-Caching on the Refuge
June



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Amy McKinney
Tim, April &
Emma Quails
Eddie Watkins
Adam Cosey

Pat Palmer
Syd Freeman
Sam Savage
Harold W. Fisher

Check out the new Friends Website at:
www.inwtrnds.org

Friends of Tennessee
National Wildlife Refuge
3006 Dinkins Lane
Paris, TN 38242



**Friends Of Tennessee
National Wildlife Refuge
Board Members**

Dan Dziekonski - President
Connie McSwain - Vice Pres.
Vickie Miller - Secretary
Joyce North - Treasurer
Laurien and Ann Stapp
Carlton Gerrell
Kim Miller
Richard Graves
Ski Witzofsky
Joe Casey

Upcoming Events

Call the Refuge Office at 731-642-2091 for information about any of these events.

January 8th – Members Only Water Fowl Tour – details to follow

Tuesday, January 11th What's at my Feeder?

6:30 pm at Refuge Office Do you wonder what that little bird that walks headfirst down the tree is called? Would you like some tips for identifying the most common birds you'll see? Come join us for a class on those birds that you'll find right in your own back yard and what it is you can do to attract them. For more information call the Refuge Office at 642-2091.

Tuesday, February 8th Backyard Habitat

6:30 pm at Refuge Office When you look out across your backyard do you see birds and butterflies? If you would like to see more wildlife, come and get some simple tips for improving your own back yard. Dan Dziekonski will offer suggestions to make your yard more pleasing to your eye and to the critters as well. For more information call the Refuge Office at 642-2091.

Tuesday, March 8th Build a Home for a Friend

6:30 pm at Refuge Office Bring the kids to the Refuge Office and join us as we learn about our friends the Blue Birds and build a home for them. Mitz Bailey will start with getting to know our back yard friends and all of the good they do for us. You will then get a chance to build a blue bird house that you can take home to make your own back yard a welcome place for Blue Birds to live. For information call the Refuge Office at 642-2091.