



FRIENDS of
WILLAPA
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Winter 2022

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Otters at Tarlatt Unit WNWR - Jerry Broadus/USFWS

Winter Wonders of Willapa

by Hope Presley, Visitor Services Specialist

Quiet and still, winter often echoes the sensation of an abandoned town. But embrace the stillness and you just might experience nature like never before. While some species are hibernating, have migrated, or dropped their leaves, many plants and animals use this opportunity to explore, forage, and practice resiliency. Winters vary from year to year, some providing consistent flows of wind and rain while others provide dustings of gloriously white snow.

There are many opportunities for wildlife observation even during these harsh winter months. Grab your cold weather gear and head out for a hike along our all-weather trails! South Bay and Parker Slough Trails are located and built in such a way that prevents flooding. Water from heavy rainfall flows off the trail, into the sloughs, and eventually into the ocean. A compressed granite surface prevents muddy boots and slippery slopes. Venture along these trails to experience a variety of habitats and wildlife like wintering ducks and geese, shorebirds, river otters, and black-tailed deer! *A portion of Parker Slough Trail is closed October 1 through February 10 for the waterfowl hunting season. [Read more](#)



One of the newly-installed art tables; photo by Pat Welle

Holiday Giving to the Friends

When considering holiday gifts, please consider a donation to the Friends through the [Pacific Community Foundation](#) that manages several funds for local nonprofits.

The Friends fund supports completion of the Convergence Art Tables at the Refuge. This installation introduces the Refuge's unique habitats and wildlife to visitors and schoolchildren. Your donation will fund 36 stool-tops, each featuring a different wildlife or plant species, that complement the four installed tables. Your support will also help fund an interpretive sign to help visitors understand the refuge's unique ecosystems. Thank you for helping refuge visitors enjoy and learn about its treasures.



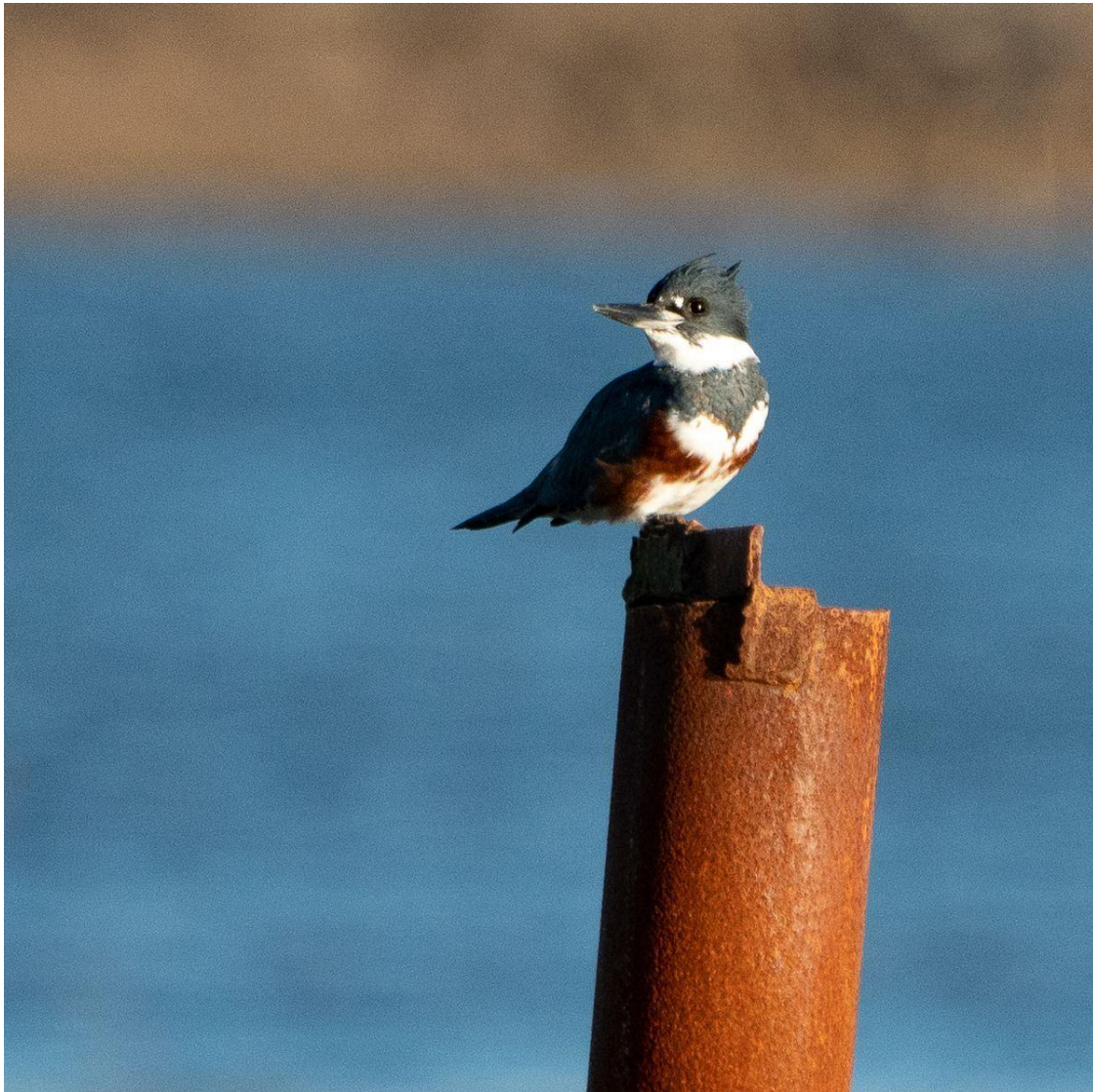
King bolete mushroom (*Boletus edulis*)

Mushrooms at the Refuge

By David Campiche

Imagine an underworld network of fungal threads or hyphae that unfurl and tangle for miles underground. In the Pacific Northwest, mostly during the autumn, the fibers produce fruit, and that fruit are the mushrooms that delight our inner hunter-gatherer and explorer.

Fungi come in a vast array of colors and sizes. They come by the thousands worldwide. The most edible are coveted. A few others carry deadly poisons, and a handful, hallucinogenic properties. Gathering requires care. [Read more](#)



Belted Kingfisher; photo by Pat Welle

Nature Notes Coordinator Needed

Have you been looking for a way to help support awareness and appreciation of the natural world? The Friends Board is seeking a coordinator for our popular Nature Notes radio program.

The coordinator's job is to solicit writers to provide short, 250-300 word, pieces about any topic that pertains to our local environment. The coordinator reviews

these submissions and provides them to the producers at Coast Radio 91.9 KMUN.org for a twice weekly broadcast.

The coordinator job can be done from anywhere. All you need is a computer, internet access, and a desire to help listeners better understand and appreciate our natural environment. You can listen to past broadcasts here: <https://kmun.org/series/willapanaturenotes/>.

Bob Duke, the retiring coordinator, said, "This is a very rewarding position that involves a very small part of one's time. Nature Notes is a very important addition to the North community. It's well liked by all and would be sorely missed should it be discontinued."

Interested? We will give you training, support, and plenty of appreciation! What more information? Contact the Friends incoming President, Pat Welle, at pat-willapa@patwelle.com.



Fun Winter Crafts for Birds

Birdseed ornaments

This is a fun and easy craft for adults and children. Younger children will need assistance with making the water and gelatin mix.

- 2 cups mixed birdseed (try Black oil sunflower seeds --hulled or not -- thistle and safflower seeds, and cracked corn, are good options to use for a mix)
- 2 packages powdered gelatin
- 1/2 cup of water
- Cookie cutter is various sizes
- Straws cut into 2" pieces (to form holes for the ribbon)
- Ribbon or twine

Instructions

1. Bring water and gelatin to a slow boil on the stove until gelatin is dissolved. Remove from heat and let cool for a minute or two.
2. Add the birdseed and stir to mix well.
3. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Spring cutters with cooking spray and set on the pan.
4. Fill the birdseed mix into each cookie cutter, pat down firmly with the back of the spoon. Fill the cookie cutter to its top, again pressing firmly to pack tightly.
5. Insert a straw on the top to make a hole to hang the ornament. Then pack the birdseed mixture around the straw.
6. Refrigerate for about an hour or until the gelatin is set or allow the mix to dry inside overnight. When they are set, gently push them out of the cookie cutters and remove the straw. Make sure that the straws have punched a hole all the way through.
7. Tie the ribbon or twine through the hole and then allow ornaments to cure for a few more hours.
8. Give them to someone special or hang in your backyard and enjoy the birds all winter long!

[Read more](#)

Holiday Wild Gift Ideas

Here are some gift ideas for the bird lovers on your list.

Bird books with great reviews:

The Genius of Birds. Jennifer Ackerman

A Most Remarkable Creature: The Hidden Life and Epic Journey of the World's Smartest Birds of Prey. Jonathan Meiburg.

The Thing with Feathers: The Surprising Lives of Birds and What They Reveal About Being Human Paperback. Noah Strycker.

What It's Like to Be a Bird. David Allen Sibley.

World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds. Scott Weidensaul.

Bird books for Kids:

Birds: Feathers, Eggs, and Beaks. Scarlett Wing. Smithsonian Kids.

National Geographic Little Kids First Big Book of Birds. Catherine Hughes.

Backyard Birds, Jonatan. P Latimer. Peterson Field Guides for Young Naturalists.



Northern Harrier near Willapa Bay; photo by Pat Welle

President's Corner

As we look to the end of the past year, and the promise of a new one, we often reflect on the highlights of the past and the hopes of the new. We have had a good year and have a great one planned.

If you did not have a chance to join one of our guided hikes, you must plan to do so in the coming year. Of all the events that the Friends sponsored, both the hikes and the barge trips to Long Island topped the list of the things that you liked best. And we plan on doing both!

The other highlight of our past year's activities was the return of the Wings Over Willapa festival. Guest speakers, artists, hikes, birdwatching, and a fun-filled Nature Play Day in downtown Long Beach topped the activities. Not to mention a successful on-line auction that raised funds to support Refuge environmental education programs and interpretative facilities. We hope you were able to participate this past year, and plan on attending next year's festival. [Read more](#)

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