



Willapa Tidings

Vol. 7 No. 4 ~ Summer 2007

Newsletter of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Purple Martins Return to Willapa Refuge

Page 2



Plant and Bird Hike Highlights



Page 5



**Willapa Refuge Celebrates
70th Anniversary
October 13, 2007**

Page 7

Purple Martins Arrive at Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

By Russ Lewis

Purple martins finally arrived during the last week of May at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. It's a new year and it's that time to raise their young again. These trim and sleek birds have been on the wing lately, traveling up from their non-breeding wintering grounds in South America, from places as far away as Brazil. They are known as Neotropical migrants. You could say that each year they follow summer back and forth between our earth's two hemispheres to optimize their best chances at survival. Summer warmth means plentiful insects which equates to consistent food availability for these largest members of the swallow family. You soon realize that these birds are tireless and streamlined fliers capable of tracking down any insects near them, over and over again. This even includes mosquitoes which instantly make them one of our trusted allies in the war against biting insects. They have been known to even fly after nightfall under favorable conditions such as the presence of insects, light winds and moonlight.

Male purple martins appear at first glance to have an overall ebony black color that becomes a deep steely blue-purplish metallic sheen when seen at certain angles in sunlight. The females have dark dusky like upper parts while most of the lower portions of her body are somewhat a pale tan to a slightly off-white color. Both sexes measure about 8 inches from tip of bill to end of tail. They have a huskier appearance when compared to plentiful barn and violet green swallows who also are sharing the same airspace out at the refuge. Martins make somewhat pleasing sounds while mainly in flight, twittering notes almost metallic in quality, especially in areas where they are nesting. Life is not perfect for them either. They have competition from starlings who aggressively try to take over nesting boxes by nesting, especially before the martins' spring arrival. Screech owls have been known to pick off martins during the night at their nesting sites.

These birds are cavity nesters using old woodpecker cavities in snags and cavities in cliff faces, particularly in the Rocky Mountain States. They are very social and nest in colonies. People love their martins. The Purple Martin Society offers plenty of great information about every facet of the purple martin. Look it up on the net. Martins know a good thing when they find it. They have adapted and readily accepted mans kind offerings of free housing designed to meet the martins every need. Artificial martin houses in the form of hard shelled gourds and elaborately constructed martin condos are widely accepted by martins in the eastern United States and a little less so on the west coast. Anywhere from 3 to 8 eggs are laid with 4 to 5 eggs being average. Incubation takes from 14 to 16 days whereas the babies fledge in approximately 28 days. ready to begin life's work snapping up insects and following the sun.



There is a small colony of martins that call a large grassy expanse of open area near Willapa Bay at the southern end of the refuge home for the summer months. Several old single unit martin houses are attached to a couple of old, out of service utility poles which await the martins' arrival. This is the journey's final destination endpoint that originated earlier in the year from the South American continent for these migrating birds. It would probably just amaze the most seasoned of human travelers of all the sights these martins must have passed along the way from the southern to the northern hemisphere. Two new martin houses were recently placed on the poles below the old houses. The first house was only up for 24 hours before a pair of eager starlings had claimed jumped one of the new housing units for a new nesting site. The starlings seemed so excited about their good fortune in securing a new manufactured home with a great view of Willapa Bay, but we then promptly evicted them before onset of any nest building activity. The entry holes were then blocked from further access until the arrival of the martins. Soon after arriving the old established martin houses were quickly claimed by some of the more dominant martin pairs. No vacancy had become a reality for the later arrivals. The two new martin houses were then opened up for use just a few days ago. The remaining martins were checking them out even though it was foggy and cold. Time will tell...

Calendar of Events

June 27th	Board Meeting
June 28th	Open Aire Art Event
June 30th	Elk River Survey
July 17th	Open Aire Art Event
July 25th	Board Meeting
August 6th	Poster Contest Judging
August 11th	Annual BBQ & Hike
August 22nd	Board Meeting
September 26th	Poster Event
October 13th – 70th	70th Anniversary Celebration

**Mark
Your
Calendar!**

Renewal Notice Billing Change

In the interest of more accurate bookkeeping, we are changing the timing of our renewal notices. Beginning July 1st, 2007 all memberships will be due for renewal in the third fiscal quarter. July, August, and September.

Members who are due to renew in the last quarter of this year, or the first or second quarter of 2008 will not be asked to renew until July of 2008. We expect this change to streamline our system and eliminate some of the glitches we've experienced in the past.

New Interpretative Artwork selected for Willapa Wildlife Refuge

Additional Artwork is Selected for Headquarters' Creek from Student submissions

By Kelly Rupp

"We're pioneers in using public artwork to interpret wildlife habitat," notes Charlie Stenvall, Project Leader for the Willapa Complex. "Our interpretive trail is a first-in-the-nation application." Charlie shared these comments in introducing the student proposals for additional public artwork for the Headquarters Creek interpretive trail in early June. Over two dozen students from the University of Washington's Public Arts department submitted proposals for sculpture and landscape additions to the existing stream trail which celebrates the site's restored salmon habitat. The students' design proposals capped a ten week studio class within the university's public art curriculum, during which they visited the Willapa Refuge, researched its flora and fauna, and applied their creative inspiration to the interpretive needs of the existing boardwalk and trail. The proposals were submitted in competition for 2007 commissions sponsored by the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

The creativity of the student designs was evidenced by the diversity of structures, materials, and opportunities for visitor interaction. Selected pieces include Jacque Jones imaginative set of five huge upright sculptures titled, "Upbringing," to depict the metamorphosis of Willapa's unique Tailed Frog and other species including the Western Brook Lamprey and the Western Pearlshell Mussel. Kristen Boraca's fifteen foot tall steel sculpture titled "Spiral Flock" will depict the abstracted upward unison flight of shorebirds. Allison Blevins will add her "Story in Shards" bronze forms to the existing boardwalk planks to represent plant oils floating on the tidal mud surfaces resulting from natural decomposition processes. Becca Weiss will bring over ten bird species to life on the trail with her "Migration" series of imagery, and Gary Carpenter will deliver a functional picnic table produced in terrazzo that is titled "Charismatic Minifauna". Construction and installation of the selected artwork will be completed in the upcoming summer months.

"Our thanks to the selection committee – Angie Chapman, Charlie Stenvall, John Ivie, Kelly Rupp, Marie Fernandez – for their thoughtful review in choosing from among these tremendous entries," said Katherine Mack Driscoll, President of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. "The lasting impressions of this interpretive trail on its visitors is beyond measure."

Additional financial support from Friends members is welcomed to help these student artists complete their proposed interpretive additions. Tax-deductible contributions to support the interpretive trail can be made online at www.friendsofwillaparefuge.org or by mail to the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, 3888 State Route 101, Ilwaco, WA 98624-9707.

Fifth Annual Long Island Hike and BBQ
Saturday, August 11th
By Bev Arnoldy

Don't forget to put this date on your calendar!

This year the hike will begin from Smokey Hollow Campground. The BBQ will be held on Long Island, near the maintenance shed. One new twist to our annual BBQ is that because of the tides that day, we will be hosting the hike and BBQ in the afternoon and early evening.

The tentative schedule for that day is:

- 1:00 Arrival at Refuge Headquarters and loading onto barges
- 1:30 Barges depart for Long Island (Note: There will be only one barge trip to Long Island it will leave promptly at 1:30 pm)
- 2:00 Arrival at Smokey Hollow Campground on Long Island, starting point for the hike to the Cedar Grove and to the BBQ location.
- 4:00 Barges back at HQ for transport of people not participating on the hike but who would like to attend the BBQ
- 4:30 BBQ
- 6:30 Last barge shuttle back to HQ

Look for an invitation coming your way in the mail in July. This event is for Friends of Willapa NWR members and their guests.

SEE YOU THERE!

Highlights of the Plant-Birding "Dike" Hike
on South Willapa Bay
By Bev Arnoldy

On Saturday morning June 2nd, several Friends of Willapa NWR members took a leisurely stroll up the hill to an old farmstead and ambled on the dike road starting from the Lewis Unit. Due to a family memorial on that day, Kathleen Sayce was not able to lead the hike, so I became the "guest" plant hike leader, with Friends members Sandy and Tony leading the birding portion of the hike.

Armed with Pacific Northwest wildflowers books and Kathleen's plant list for the Lewis Unit, there were several lively discussions on plant identification -- always referring to the plant books for confirmation. With group effort, we were able to identify 90% of the plants we spotted.

Continued next page

Hike Continued...

The focus of the plant hike was on the common plants of the area from daisies to sedges, in three different habitats: salt marsh, freshwater marsh, and upland forest. Flowering wildflowers were abundant; there were also many species of sedges, rushes and grasses in flower. Wildflowers included Smith's fairybells, cow parsnip, common sow-thistle,



Smith's Fairybell

yellow pond-lily, and Pacific silverweed. We also identified an invasive plant called the "herb-robert



Pacific Silverweed

geranium", which I later informed the Refuge staff of its existence at the Lewis Unit.

The Lewis Unit is also a good site for waterfowl and shorebirds in spring and fall during migration periods. Thanks to everyone who came on this plant/birding hike. We had a great time and came away with increasing knowledge of the plants and birds located at the Lewis Unit.

Thank You!


*Please Welcome
New Members*

Business
Independent Books


Family
Bart & Debbie Daly
Steve & Pam Grant
Tony & Cindy Heckard
James & Carol Houk
Martin & Janis Jenkins
Howard & Diane Lauridsen
Carol Prather
Cathy Russ

Individual
Gayle Borchard
Dierdre Duewel
Chris Goodwin
Dan Grogan
Helen Harrington

**Wetland
Plant Identification**
Remember...
Sedges have edges...
Rushes do not.
their hollow.



Rush



Sedge

Save This Date
Willapa Refuge Celebrates 70th Anniversary - October 13, 2007



1937
Willapa
National
Wildlife
Refuge
Is
Established

Willapa Refuge was established in 1937 to protect migrating and wintering populations of brant, waterfowl, shorebirds, and other migratory birds. The refuge was created at a time when many estuaries were rapidly being destroyed by diking, draining, dredging, sedimentation, and pollution.

The Friends of Willapa NWR will be celebrating 70 years of the Refuge by sponsoring a 70th anniversary celebration on Saturday, October 13 as part of National Refuge Week. Activities will include:

- Guided walks on the refuge
- Indoor environmental education demonstrations
- Local artist displays highlighting the local wildlife, Willapa Refuge, and Willapa Bay
- Raffle ticket items including an original print of Louis Agassiz Fuytes, framed
- Dedication of the new public art on the Willapa Refuge Salmon Trail
- Kayak tour of Long Island sponsored by Skamokawa Center
- Posters for sale commemorating the 70th anniversary of Willapa Refuge

This event will be open to the public.

If you are interesting in volunteering to help organize this special event, contact Bev Arnoldy at 665-0115 or at beva@pacifier.com.

Other upcoming Friends activities and events include family hikes on the Refuge as well as the 5th Annual Long Island hike and BBQ on Saturday, August 11.

Friends of Willapa Complete 7th Year of Fourth Grade Program with Field Trip

By Bev Arnoldy

Over a three-day period from May 15th through 17th, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge hosted over 170 fourth grade students from Ilwaco, Naselle, Astoria Star of the Sea and South Bend, who anxiously took turns at environmental educational science stations to learn more about the environment and how to be good future stewards. Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and Willapa National Wildlife Refuge annually co-sponsor this educational event as part of their 4th graded environmental education program. The field trip is a culmination of a yearlong program where 4th graders learn about the refuge system, bird basics, habitat, and the local amphibian population in the classroom.

Volunteers from the Friends group as well as Ilwaco High School students worked the seven field stations at Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Tarlett Slough Unit. From life in the pond to identifying skulls (to determine whether or not they are herbivore or carnivore), to identifying items from the forest by touch, to exploring life in the bay, as well as learning what one might hear if they are quiet in the outdoors, for a moment or two. They experienced first-hand, developing skills in wildlife viewing, wetlands' animal and plant identification, aquatic shellfish and invertebrates identification, the amphibians' lifecycle, an introduction to geology, and an appreciation for animal behaviors based on interpretation of bone structure. Students excitedly passed the three hours of field trip under mostly clear skies.

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge has supported a very successful and comprehensive education program for the past four years to the six 4th grade classrooms in Ilwaco, South Bend, and Naselle. The four in-class sessions and field trip exercise provided each year are recognized by educators as especially effective in instilling a sense of conservation stewardship and Refuge appreciation. The field trip to the Willapa NWR is the highlight of Friends-developed curricula, which introduces Pacific County youth to wildlife management and conservation.

Willapa NWR staff and Friends' volunteers thank the educators and parent chaperones of Pacific County schools for their participation during the field trip. "We're fortunate that educators throughout the county appreciate the unique natural resources of the Willapa watershed and include this introduction to wildlife stewardship in school programs," commented Kristine Weisbrod, Outdoor Recreation Planner for Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

See photo next page.



"Friends member Joanne Jambor points out the invertebrates from Willapa Bay to South Bend 4th graders"

Photographer: Kristine Weisbrod

Many Thanks to our Business Members for their Support

- Autodesk, Inc
- Bailey's Café
- Bay Center Mariculture, Inc.
- Beachdog.Com. Inc
- Coast Seafoods Co.
- Cottage Bakery & Deli
- Depot Restaurant
- Ekone Oysters
- Green Angel Gardening
- Harmony Soapworks
- Heckes Oyster
- Independent Books
- Jack's Country Store
- Jarvis Appraisals
- Lighthouse Realty
- Northern Oyster Co.
- Okie's Sentry Market
- Port of Peninsula
- Sandridge Topsoil & Bark
- Seatow
- Shoalwater Restaurant
- Sid's Supermarket
- Taylor Shellfish Farms



Willapa Tidings

Published quarterly by Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge
Volume 7, Number 4
 Suzy Whittey, Editor

To request an address change, to contribute items of interest (including photos), or to submit articles for publication, please contact Friends of Willapa NWR

Mailing Address
 3888 State Route 101
 Ilwaco, WA 98624-9707
 Phone: 360-665-0115

E-mail
president@friendsofwillaparefuge.org

Web Site
www.friendsofwillaparefuge.org

Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, Friends of Willapa National wildlife Refuge was established in July 2000 to provide support and assistance to Refuge programs and to enhance awareness and appreciation of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

Board of Directors

- President: Katherine Driscoll
- Vice President: Amy Cook
- Treasurer: Kelly Rupp
- Secretary: Michael O'Meagher
- Directory Membership: Bill Hutton
- Director Publicity: Carole Wiegardt
- Director Education: Shawn Stern

President's Letter

"Conserving one thing conserves many."



This was a notion presented at a breakout session at the "Beyond the Boundaries Workshop" earlier this year in Washington, DC. The workshop was organized by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to address threats to national refuge boundaries.

Immediately the events of last year came to mind, when, within the boundaries of Willapa NWR, the *pink sandverbena* plant (not seen here for 65 years) and the *streaked horned lark* were discovered, on the same day! The same area had seen the return of the *Oregon silverspot butterfly*, recorded shortly before. *Western snowy plover* habitat restoration had been the goal for this particular area, and great strides had been made for that species as a result, but much more had been accomplished. Truly a fine example of how "*conserving one thing conserves many*".

As a result of salmon restoration activities last year, an incredible bat nursery was discovered. Protection and a study are now in effect for this "nursery" and it is believed that several species of bats use this particular place.

What other "*things*" await our discovery as we continue to reclaim migratory bird habitat and shellfish growing areas through our efforts to control *Spartina*, to protect old growth forests and the species making their home there through forest management practices? This is an important time to participate and share with one another the jewel that is Willapa NWR.

The "*Friends*" continue to reach out to raise awareness and educate through the 4th Grade Education Program, which ended in May with a week long series of field trips to the refuge, through the presentation of scholarships to area high school graduating seniors, through the Salmon Interpretive Art Trail which is open to the public year round and is currently undergoing an expansion of interpretive art involving the U of W Public Art Program students. In addition, we are looking forward to the Annual Hike and BBQ and, *something new*, the celebration of the refuge's 70th Birthday beginning with a series of events in early summer and finalizing in October with a grand festival.

Please check the Calendar of Events in the newsletter and watch for special notices of these upcoming ways to participate, support and appreciate the refuge.

Katherine Mack Driscoll
President

Membership Form

- New Member
 Renewal

Invite a friend to Become a Member !

Make checks payable to: Friends of Willapa NWR

Send to: Friends of Willapa NWR
3888 State Route 101
Ilwaco, WA 98624-9707

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Yes! I want to receive Friends e-mail announcements.

My e-mail address is _____

Contributions to FWNWR are tax deductible.
No goods or services are provided in exchange for your donation.

Memberships

- Individual (\$10)
Family (\$15)
Patron (\$50)
Benefactor (\$100)
Sustaining (\$250)
Advocate (\$500)
or more

} \$ _____

Scholarship Fund Donation

\$ _____

Other Donation
(Supports education Program)

\$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Volunteer Interests

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Restoration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Recruitment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail and campground maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects and Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorebird and waterfowl monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and amphibian monitoring |

Thank you for Your Membership and Support!