

AMIGO

Aransas Matagorda Island Guardian/Orator

Aransas NWR Hunt Results for the 2009 Season

An Archery Hunt for white-tailed deer and feral hogs was held from October 3-11, 2009. 240 permits were issued for the 9-day hunt. 30 hunt refunds were submitted due to the closing of the Refuge on Oct. 3 and the morning of Oct. 4 due to a wildfire. By the end of the hunt, 5 bucks, 5 does and 12 hogs had been harvested. The largest rack was a 3.5 year old 8 pt. buck weighing 60 lbs. and the heaviest was a 5.5 year old 6 pt. buck weighing 95 lbs. The largest hog was an 80 lb. boar taken from East Shore Rd. area. Hunter Brandon Strelczyk was the winner of the archery hog contest with a harvest of 2 hogs from the Point Pasture area.

Rifle Hunts for white-tailed deer and feral hogs were held on four weekends in Nov. and Dec. 372 permits were issued for the Rifle Hunts. 37 bucks, 43 does (total deer 80) and 26 hogs were harvested. The largest rack was a 3.5 year old 10 pt. buck weighing 85 lbs. and taken from the Burgentine Lake area. The heaviest were two 8 pt. bucks aged at 4.5 years and weighing 96 lbs. each. These were harvested from the Burgentine Lake and Walker Mill areas. There were fourteen 8 pt. bucks harvested. Hunter Daniel Salinas was the winner of the rifle hog contest with a harvest of 3 hogs

from the Johnson Mill and Burgentine Lake areas.

A Youth Rifle Hunt was held from Dec. 20-21, 2009. The Refuge partnered with the Texas Wildlife Association to hold a hunt for white-tailed deer and feral hogs on the Tatton Unit. Refuge Bio Tech Jeremy Edwardson and his father were hunt masters. Seven youth with an accompanying parent participated. Two bucks, 3 does and 1 hog were harvested. The largest buck was an 8 point, 3.5 years old, weighing 90 lbs. The hog was a large 82 lb. boar. Attendees stayed overnight in the Youth Environmental Education Area campground. Youth not only hunt, but also participate in environmental education activities and hunter education where they learn about the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuges along with good sportsmanship and hunting tips and techniques.

As we go to press, the second Youth Rifle Hunt was just completed on Matagorda Island. This was also held in cooperation with the Texas Wildlife Association. Ten youth with a parent spent a frigid weekend on the Island.

Youth hunter and parent studying wildlife skins in the Visitor Center.

Photo by: Bernice Jackson



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Happy New Year! We can only hope that 2010 will be a better weather year for the whooping cranes than 2009 was. Although we did receive rainfall relief from the drought in the later part of 2009 it was too little too late to reduce bay water salinity to a level conducive to blue crab reproduction. On a positive note, the precipitation received was sufficient to recharge the groundwater table and fill the recently excavated waterholes in our Water for Wildlife Project. Cranes have been observed this year drinking directly from the marsh and not having to fly to waterholes. Unfortunately, all indications are the first part of 2010 will pose a serious food shortage for cranes as our blue crab transects have revealed only one blue crab per 1500 meters.

At last count (01/05/10) Tom Stehn's census of whooping cranes totaled 264 of which 20 were chicks. This was a very pleasant surprise since it exceeded our estimate by 19 birds. As of this writing the Refuge fire crew has conducted two burns on Matagorda and three burns on the Black Jack which will benefit whooping cranes. The burns are vital in the absence of abundant blue crab as the burns afford the cranes improved foraging opportunities. In anticipation of yet another very dismal food shortage year the Refuge prepared an Environmental Assessment seeking public comment on whooping crane supplemental feeding. The proposed food supplements may include whole kernel corn, protein pellets, a combination of both, and possibly blue crab. The comment period ended on December 20, with 19 comments received. Of the 19 comments approximately 11 were in support of feeding and 8 were opposed. A Finding of No Significant Impact, in support of feeding, was prepared by the Refuge and is presently being reviewed by the Regional Office in Albuquerque.

The new observation tower is undergoing retrofitting to stabilize the vertical columns to minimize its tendency to sway to less than 3 inches. The contractor, Casey Civil Engineering has stabilized four of the nine columns. In anticipation of the new tower being complete, we are making arrangements to demolish the old tower. The demolition is proving to be a monumental task given the absence of any funding specific to that project and the enormity of the old concrete tower. We hope to accomplish the task by utilizing a Maintenance Action Team (MAT) which is comprised of especially skilled refuge maintenance employees from around the region and specialized equipment requested through the Regional Refuge Equipment Rental Fund.



Our Visitor Services Program staff has undergone reorganization which has resulted in a net gain of two employees bringing the total number of employees to six and includes weekend duty hours. A weekly lecture series will occur every weekend on Saturdays with guest speakers speaking on various subjects. New interpretive panels are now in place along the auto tour route and provide helpful interpretive information on refuge wildlife, vegetation, and habitat types.

The Refuge Nature Store was renovated and is looking great thanks to FAMI, Annie Clayton and Cindi Barrett.

The Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) which charts the course for the management of the refuge for the next 15 years will soon be made available for public comment. A notice of availability will soon be published in the Federal Register followed by the release of the document and associated Environmental Assessment for a 60 day comment period. The public is urged to review the plan and provide comment.

It is my pleasure in serving as Refuge Manager of your National Wildlife Refuge.

BIG SIT!!!

Submitted By: Barbara Bruns

Report of 11 Oct. 2009

Our team the 'FAMI Whoopers' organized again for the 3rd year in order to participate in the BIG SIT! annual, international, noncompetitive birding event. Lucky for us it happened to fall on the first day of National Wildlife Refuge Week and gave us a chance to bird watch and inform Refuge visitors of our purpose.

The day was overcast, cold strong breeze, heavy mist and rain showers with the temp in the 60's all day. No break in the weather would give us any advantage from the 'top of tower' view. Flocks of ducks cruised by along the shoreline but never settled down. Hundreds of swallows migrated through all day. A Peregrine Falcon showed up for the first sitters and an American Oystercatcher appeared at the end of tally as the rain showers started to roll in.

A big THANKS go out to the diehards--- Bron Rorex, Maggie Baker, Claudia Dorn, Diana Rushing, Valerie Smith, Olive Smith, Ken & Barbara Bruns, David Clayton---who managed to stick it out and gave their best for the team and count. We had a grand total of 39 species and were only able to be on location from 7 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. due to the inclement weather. Anyone interested in the other Wildlife Refuge reports for that day, please go to: www.birdwatchersdigest.com for the Big Sit! Results.

WEEKLY REFUGE BIRD SURVEY

Submitted By: Barbara Bruns

Who? For many years now, volunteers have been doing weekly bird surveys. There are four teams and each picks a specific week of the month and one day during the assigned week. **When?** We start in September and follow thru the end of May. This enables us to catch the fall and spring migration. Above all, we get to welcome the whooping cranes during the winter season!

Why? The goal is to find as many bird species in the public use area during that day. We arrive at daybreak and at the end of survey we complete the checklist which is kept at the visitor center desk and makes the current tally accessible to interested visitors. Also, we list these species in a record book and report rare birds for the Refuge bird checklist. This lends continuous bird record-keeping in support of Aransas NWR. To date, the Refuge has an overall count of 400+ bird species!

Where? The coverage includes: areas around the Visitor Center/Headquarters, Rail trail, Heron Flats trail, Picnic/fishing pier area, Dagger Point, Jones Lake, Tower/Boardwalk area, and Hog Lake. Habitats covered are salt marsh, oak woods, freshwater lakes, grassland and shoreline. With weather and time permitting, we may get a chance to explore Big Tree trail or Birding trail #2. It becomes a real challenge when the day is rainy, cold, windy or with mobbing mosquitoes. But as we all know the next time could be a birder's delight!

Photos by Ken Bruns



No matter the season, the weather, day of week or time of day, you will undoubtedly have a surprise around the corner. It could be a female javelina with young in tow, a stately 8 pt. buck at roadside, a coral snake slithering across the road (well worth a snapshot), an approaching alligator as you try to get off the pier, a beautiful bobcat sitting in the middle of road, the scare tactic of a frog leaping into the water, a magnificent Swallow-tailed Kite cruising along the edge of Big Tree trail, a Bald Eagle showing up over the visitor center during the CBC, adding a first bird record for the Refuge and then lucky enough to be present during a fall-out in the spring. There are many more instances experienced by the bird surveyors that keep our enthusiasm looking for the next amazing find! For more information or to join one of the counts contact Barbara Bruns @ 361-575-5505 or call the Refuge @ 361-286-3559

WINTER WHOOPING CRANE NUMBERS ARE UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH

by Tom Stehn, Whooping Crane Coordinator, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Very unexpectedly, an additional 19 whooping cranes at Aransas were found on the first census flight of the New Year. This was the first count done since December 10th when some cranes had still been in migration.

On January 5th, biologist Tom Stehn with contract pilot Gary Ritchey of Air Transit Solutions out of Castroville, Texas sighted 244 adults and 19 chicks = 263 total. With one juvenile that had become separated from its parents during the migration last seen Christmas Day in northern Oklahoma, the flock total is 244 + 20 chicks = 264.

The estimated flock size of 264 is surprisingly high but indicates that survival between spring and fall, 2009 was excellent. The 20 wintering chicks that successfully migrated out of the 22 fledged in Canada, when added to the estimated flock size of 247 in spring 2009, meant that a maximum of 267 cranes could have arrived at Aransas this fall. The fact that we are accounting for 264 out of the potential 267 is excellent news and quite a Christmas present. One crane seen injured in Saskatchewan in the fall is believed to have perished. Often as many as 20 white-plumaged whooping cranes are lost between April and November, with most of the mortalities believed to occur during migration periods. With 20 of the 22 August chicks accounted for, that meant survival of the juveniles between August and the end of the year was high.

The aerial census took all day to cover thoroughly the 35+ miles of coast over which the whooping cranes are spread. A larger area was searched since whooping cranes were leaving the marsh and flying to upland areas to find food. Numbers sighted throughout the day were running as expected as the airplane flew over the final stretch of marsh at Welder Flats. However, the uplands adjacent to Welder Flats still had to be checked. On our last upland transect as we flew on the edge of where houses are present, we found eight whooping cranes at a game feeder. We then turned the airplane towards home, and I could see the refuge in the distance. Based on a sighting of cranes at Burgentine Lake made by the refuge's fire crew back on December 10th, I decided to check out that area. The lake was empty, but around the corner on the nearby creek were seven more cranes, including a family group. These last two "fortunate" finds that accounted for 15 additional cranes gave us our high total. Call it luck or call it science, good fortune is always part of a successful census flight.

The discovery of 19 additional cranes is really good news. However, if cranes moved around during the flight, I am concerned that perhaps this tally is artificially high by a few birds due to double counting them. Future census flights will attempt to pin this down. The bad news discovered during the flight was that the observed crane distribution indicated that crane foods are in short supply this winter. Sixty-five cranes were located in unburned uplands, 10 were on refuge prescribed burns, 12 were at feeders on private lands, and two were on shell roads. The presence of so many cranes in the uplands and cranes traveling longer distances than usual into uplands is indicative of food scarcity. A crab count conducted December 18th found only one crab on the transects walked. The cranes since Christmas have not been observed catching blue crabs, whereas before that, some crabs were still being taken. A few wolfberries were still available to the cranes the week before Christmas but have tapered off since then. With blue crabs in very short supply and the wolfberry crop finished for the year, the cranes are entering the period of the winter when food shortages sometimes occur and the cranes end up using up fat reserves to survive. The refuge is doing a full complement of prescribed burns to help the cranes through this tough period. At least salinities in San Antonio Bay are currently 14 parts per thousand, low enough that the cranes are drinking directly from the salt marsh and a good omen for a rebound of the blue crab population when temperatures get warmer.



January 5th - Recap of whooping cranes (264) found at Aransas and Oklahoma:

	<u>Adults + Young</u>
San Jose	57 + 4 = 61
Refuge	59 + 6 = 65
Lamar	12 + 1 = 13
Matagorda	87 + 5 = 92
Welder Flats	27 + 3 = 30
Hynes Bay	2 + 0 = 2
Oklahoma	0 + 1 = 1*
Total	244 + 20 = 264*

Photo submitted by Cindi Barrett

Aransas NWR's Christmas Bird Count

December 22, 2009

By: Darrin Welchert, Wildlife Biologist

This year marks Audubon's 110th Christmas Bird Count; these surveys are conducted throughout the country during a 24 hour time period from mid December to January. Christmas Bird Counts have been beneficial in tracking species distribution, range changes, and relative abundance. Since climate change is upon us, monitoring species range shifts and abundance is more important now than ever. This year's count was conducted on Aransas NWR on December 22, 2009.

This was my first year compiling the count with help from Paul Julian as co-compiler. Previous counts for at least 10 years were compiled by Barbara and Ken Bruns. Words cannot describe how much their efforts meant to the refuge, birding community, and wildlife of the area. The refuge would like to thank FAMI for hosting the annual count by providing breakfast, lunch and participation fee. A total of 48 birders participated in this year's count representing Michigan, Wisconsin, Utah, California and several areas of Texas.

A Christmas Bird Count circle has a diameter of 15 miles with Aransas NWR's circle being centered on the Blackjack Peninsula. Other areas covered by the count circle include agricultural fields, a portion of Matagorda Island, Tatton, and Lamar units. Several habitat types are represented during the count including grassland, woodland, open bay, freshwater and estuarine wetlands. This year all areas were covered by refuge staff and volunteers traversing over 321 miles on foot, boat and car. A total of 37,855 birds were counted representing 176 species with an additional species (wood duck) being seen during the count week. The wood duck was actually seen during the Aransas Photography Club's meeting prior to the count. At least 16 rare bird species were documented on this year's count (see Table 1). Number of species



Photo by: John Masin

seen this year was the same as last year however, total bird numbers decreased by 55%. A number of observers had similar comments which included lack of waterfowl numbers in bays and bird occurrence in freshwater wetlands. Thanks to recent rains a number of freshwater wetlands were full within the count circle but the water has not been present long enough to provide adequate wetland vegetation and other aquatic food sources which may explain the lack of bird use in these areas.

Table 1.- Rare Bird Species Occurrences- Christmas Bird Count December 22, 2009.

Species Common Name	Count	Species Common Name	Count
Reddish Egret	19	Aplomado Falcon	1
Stilt Sandpiper	30	American Woodcock	1
Eurasian collared-Dove	14	White-winged Dove	163
Least Flycatcher	2	Vermilion Flycatcher	1
Eastern Kingbird	1	Great Kiskadee	3
Carolina Chickadee	9	Black-crested Titmouse	3
Yellow-breasted Chat	1	Olive sparrow	1
Western Meadowlark	25	Pine Siskin	1

A Splash of Color

Submitted by Amanda Diaz

The migrating birds aren't the only splash of color on the Refuge this winter. The kiosks standing at the Alligator Viewing Area, Dagger Point trail and the Observation Tower are now complete with new eye-catching signs.

Each kiosk, built by FAMI members, holds two large panels with information, photographs and illustrations describing the surrounding habitats and species to look for.

The signs are a colorful addition to points of interest along the tour loop. With increasing visitation during the winter season, the Refuge is excited to see these improvements put to good use.



Photos by Amanda Diaz

AND NOW A WORD FROM THE NEW DEPUTY PROJECT LEADER....

Hello and thank you for this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Denise Ruffino and I'm thrilled to serve as the new Deputy Project Leader for the Aransas NWR. I arrived in late September and have been going nonstop ever since, visiting the different refuge units, getting to know the staff, and learning a whole new vocabulary of acronyms. New to both the Refuge System and to the Service, I bring with me to this position over 21 years of wildlife management experience attained with the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (WS). Working most of that time in Texas, I specialized primarily in invasive species management and wildlife disease surveillance, serving 6 years as a rabies research biologist. In 2008, I was promoted to the APHIS headquarters in Riverdale, MD to serve as the WS liaison to the National Rabies Program, National Wildlife Disease Program, Emergency Management Program, and to serve as a WS representative on a variety of interagency APHIS committees. However, the stress of D.C. politics, people asking me about my accent (what accent?) and what seemed to this native Texan as constant frigid temperatures, I longed to return to the Texas Gulf Coast.

I grew up in the northern rural outskirts of Houston and am very happy to be back within driving distance from my parents, siblings, friends, and my 2 big dogs that stay with my parents. I am also glad to be able to fully participate again in various youth educational activities, including the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, wildlife conservation summer camps sponsored by the Texas Chapter - The Wildlife Society, and chaperoning youth activities at my church.

Likewise, I look forward to the opportunity to participate in our own youth activities here at the refuge. I personally feel that educating our young people about the natural world around them is one of the greatest gifts we can give them; it is also one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves, as the satisfaction of watching kids become fascinated with nature is truly a rewarding experience. Oh, and did I mention the Aggies? Yes, it's true: both my B.S. and Ph.D. are from Texas A&M University and I'm a huge Aggie fan. (Whoop!) Now for those of you that don't know, Aggies yell "Whoop" anytime and anywhere when they hear the name of Texas A&M. How special it is for me to be reminded of my Aggie roots while enjoying the sight of such spectacular birds as the whooping cranes!! (Surely that can't be a coincidence, can it?) Life could not be any better for me and I feel very fortunate to be here at Aransas. Surrounded by such natural beauty and strolling wildlife, I am excited by the many new challenges that lie ahead. Please feel free to drop in on me anytime you are at the refuge. I look forward to the opportunity to meet all of our wonderful FAMI supporters and attending FAMI events. Til then, I'll see you in the field!!



CHECK OUT OUR REMODELED STORE!!!

Photos by Kay Thoday



National Wildlife Refuge Update

Submitted by Amanda McLaughlin

The big sit, bird observation, kicked off National Wildlife Refuge Week events on October 11th. The week concluded with a variety of activities; interpretive van tours were led by volunteers. Visitors were able to see javelina, turkeys and white-tailed deer. The new FAMI sponsored Nature Photography Club had their first meeting. The club spent the day on the Refuge and then came back to look at their photos as a group to get coaching. An amateur radio operator had a Radio Station or “Ham Radio” set-up outside the Visitor Center. He was able to make contact with other Radio Stations set up at various National Wildlife refuges across the USA. Rockport Fly Fishers had a fly tying demonstration while the Austwell Post Office offered a Special Cancellation for the Matagorda Island postage stamp. Artist and Refuge Employee, Amanda Diaz was on hand to sign autographs. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Education Specialist, Brock Minton came and spoke on White-tailed Deer and Feral Hogs. Kids were able to enjoy activities all day long including learning about the life cycle of frogs & butterflies, and various Refuge critters’ animal tracks.



*Clockwise-
Kids enjoy
activities, Brock
Minton gives talk
on White-Tailed
Deer and Feral
Hogs, Amanda Diaz
signs autographs
for the Matagorda
Island Special
Postage Stamp
Cancellation,
FlyTying
Demonstrations by
Rockport Fly
Fishers*

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge hosted over one hundred students for the annual environmental education event, Creatures of the Night. On November 17th students went from booth to booth and learned what creatures go bump in the night. This half a day event taught students about owls, coyotes, snakes, bats, opossums and moths. The Texas Zoo participated and brought out their 10 year old screech owl, Beaker.



Photos by Amanda Diaz

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you

Submitted by: Cindi Barrett

The Friends would like to thank Bob Anderson for his efforts helping with the Nature Store remodeling. Single handedly with minimal supervision, he hung the new panels for the merchandise displays.

The Friends are grateful to Gills Landscape Nursery in Corpus Christi for providing us with small pots of Bluebonnets. Everyone who attended the Annual Meeting was able to take a potted Bluebonnet home. Thanks to the staff at Gills' for helping us find an appropriate Texas native plant.

Thank you to Terry Holslinger, who helped Cindi Barrett prepare the Water for Wildlife grant proposal that was submitted to ConocoPhillips. Terry had never written a grant proposal but graciously volunteered to use his government contracting experience to help write the proposal.

Thanks to Katherine Cullen and Beverly Kirk who both made pots of soup to feed the Christmas Bird Count volunteers. Next year we're going to have to collect recipes in advance for the birders who always say they want the recipes.

Thank you to the HEB stores in Rockport and Port Lavaca as well as Walmart in Rockport. All three stores provided gift cards that helped the Friends defray expenses for feeding the Christmas Bird Count volunteers.

Thank you to Miranda Farias for all the help with greeting members, helping them get signed in and for helping to set up the tables.

Special thanks to Joanie and Jeremy Ed-wardson, Dick and Sherry Wilson, Henry and Bev Kirk, Kay and Bill Thoday, Dorothy Anderson and Cindi Barrett for their help wrapping the bluebonnet pots before the annual meeting.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

By: Annie Clayton

Happy New Year! We are off to a good start to 2010. We have the remodel completed at the bookstore. Be sure to come by and check it out. We have also agreed to host a Lecture Series event once a month. We are going to try and focus mostly on children's stories and activities. Come early, have lunch at the picnic area and then come up to the visitor center to hear the current lecture. On Jan. 16th Captain Tommy Moore will be there to read & autograph his book "The Lobstick Prince" and on Feb. 13th Kathy Lynn Copeland will be there to do a presentation on the Indian Legends of animals that are at the Refuge. Be sure and check the calendar at friendsofaranasas.org for future events.

We are also increasing our involvement in festivals by setting up booths to help Visitor Services with outreach for the refuge. Our next event is going to be The Texas Coastal Bend Regional Tourism Council fair on the 27th of January in Aransas Pass. It is a one day event and there will be door prizes so come down and say hi.

We also have need of volunteers for several different areas. FAMI needs help with a large scanning project that has to be done at the refuge but there are several different days a week that it would be possible for someone to come out for anything from a few hours to all day. Another need we have is for someone to do public relations for us. This consists of contacting radio and television stations, newspapers and doing flyers to post in local businesses in the small towns in the areas surrounding the refuge when we have events planned. This is a very part time commitment and can be done from your home. If you are interested in either of these, contact Annie at 361-286-3559 ext 222 or at president@friendsofaranasas.org for more information. We will also have several volunteer opportunities at the refuge coming up soon. Watch the website, friendsofaranasas.org for the Volunteer Opportunity column to see what you may be interested in doing.

The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge Nature Photography Club met for 2 days in December and a great time was had by all. Several people commented that John Noll, our Club leader, was an excellent teacher and really helped them a lot. He has another event scheduled for January 23rd and 24th. If you are interested in nature photography, no matter your skill level, you should check out the website friendsofaranasas.org/photoclub to get more information and to join.

FAMI Membership Cards

Several of you have called the Refuge indicating that you had not received your membership card even though you had sent in your membership renewal. In an effort to save money and be more green, the Board of Directors voted to not mail out membership cards this year. Each member is entered into the Point of Sale system when their payment is received. When visiting the Refuge just give the person working the front desk your name and you will automatically have the discount applied to any purchase you make.



Aransas Interpretive Series

Noon Program Schedule

2010 Season

*Programs meet from 12:00 p.m. – 12:50 p.m. in the Visitor Center Auditorium.
(Times for guided trail walks to be determined)*

January 16th – “The Lobstick Prince” Reading and book signing by author Tommy Moore and illustrator Evelyn Atkinson.

January 23rd – “Beach Treasures” by Calhoun County Extension Agent Rhonda Cummins; “Rachel Carson: A Guided Walk” on Rail Trail by Refuge Interpretive Specialist Amanda Diaz.

January 30th – “Whooping Cranes” by Refuge Interpretive Specialist Amanda Rocha.

February 6th – “White-tailed Hawk Study” by Refuge Biologist Carey Strobel.

February 13th – “Native American Story Telling” by author Kathy Lynn Copeland.

February 20th – “Texas/ Toxic Coastal Critters: Red Tide and *Vibrio vulnificus* (the flesh eating bacteria)” by TPWD Biologist Meridith Byrd; “Guided Walk of Heron Flats trail” by Refuge Biological Tech Greg Otterstein.

March 6th – “Matagorda Island Sea Turtle Project” by TMN Ray Kirkwood.

March 13th – “Birding 101: A Walk through Headquarters Habitats” by Bron Rorex.

March 20th – “Sea Beans” by Sam Burnett.

March 27th – “Guided Walk of Heron Flats trail” by Refuge Biological Tech Greg Otterstein.

April 3rd – “Wildflower Walk” by TMN Ernie Edmundson.



January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 *
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 **
24 *	25	26	27 **	28	29	30 *
31						

Wade and pier fishing is permitted through the winter from the Picnic Area only.

*** Photography Club event. More information can be viewed at www.friendsofaranasas.org/photoclub/**

**** The Refuge and FAMI will staff a booth at the Texas Coastal Bend Regional Travel Council Travel Fair in Aransas Pass on Jan 27. Refuge brochures and information will be available. Come see us!**

February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 *
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 *
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 *
21	22	23	24	25	26 ***	27 ***
28 ***						

***** The Refuge and FAMI will staff a booth at the Whooping Crane and Other Birds Festival in Port Aransas from February 26-28. Refuge information and FAMI Nature Store items will be available. Come see us!**

Interpretive Van Tours are held Jan-April on Saturdays and Sundays at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Tours run for approximately two hours and are conducted by trained Refuge Volunteers. Visitors have an opportunity to learn about the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge Complex in particular with its rich natural and cultural history. Visitors may see alligator, javelina, whooping crane, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, armadillo and a variety of other birds including ducks, geese, sandhill cranes and wading birds. Reservations are required due to limited seating. Wear appropriate outdoor clothing and bring binoculars & a bird book, if you have them. We do loan binoculars to visitors. Inquire at the front desk.

March 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 *
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 *
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 *
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 *
28	29	30	31			

***Please refer to page 9 for more information on the Lecture Series details.**

Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip code _____
Home Phone _____
Other Phone _____
Email _____

Check here to go green, indicating that you will read your newsletter online and no longer receive it in the mail.

Membership Categories

- Senior (age 62+) - \$10.00
- Student (up to age 21) - \$5.00
- Individual - \$15.00
- Family - \$25.00
- Life - \$300.00
- Business - \$150.00
- Corporate Sponsor - \$500.00
- Additional contribution \$ _____
- Senior Couple (ages 62+) \$20.00
- \$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed

**Memberships expire
September 30th each year.**

Make checks payable to:

Friends of Aransas & Matagorda Island

Mail to: P. O. Box 74

Austwell, Texas 77950

FAMI Mission Statement

Friends of Aransas of Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge (FAMI)

will work to support and assist the Aransas and Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex in its goal of enhancing habitat and wildlife and encouraging compatible wildlife-dependant public uses of the refuge through educational, interpretive, scientific and other activities appropriate to the mission of these Refuge.

Friends of Aransas/Matagorda Island
National Wildlife Refuge
P O Box 74
Austwell, TX 77950

