



Coming Up This Winter

Join a Ski Trek

Don't let the winter blues get you down, come out and enjoy the refuge. Winter can bring some of the best wildlife watching. With leaves off the trees you can see deeper into the forest and the snow pack absorbs sound, making listening for wildlife crisp and clear. Each fresh snowfall creates new opportunities to explore the tracks left by the wild travelers of the refuge. Much of the refuge is open to hiking, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing throughout the winter. Since there is no vehicle traffic on access roads, it's a great place to investigate by foot, ski or snowshoe.

Tamarac Trek on Skis

January 28, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

February 24, Saturday, 12:00 p.m.

Learn about winter wildlife as you enjoy the snow this winter. Join a Tamarac Park Ranger on a cross-country ski trek Sunday, January 28, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm or Saturday, February 24, from 12 noon to 3:30 pm. Participants will need to bring their own skis.

You'll leisurely glide along, and stop occasionally, to admire the fascinating world of winter wildlife. The January trek is a 2 mile ski— perfect for beginners— so bring the whole family. The February event will traverse around Pine Lake, nearly 6 miles. Grab your skis, dress in layers and head to the Pine Lake Ski Trail at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. The trail head is located just north of the town of Rochert on County Highway 29, six miles north of State Hwy 34. The ski programs will be cancelled if temperatures drop below zero that day.

For more information on this free event, contact Kelly Blackledge at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge at 218/847-2641.



Photograph by Denis Mudderman

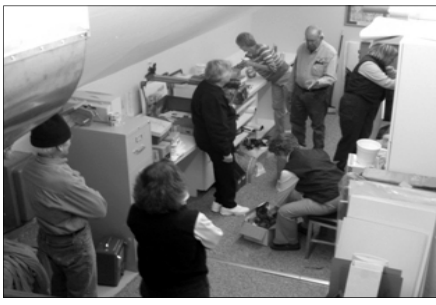
Skiers, participating in the Tamarac Trek on Skis, enjoy the sunny, crisp weather last February 5th.

Sibley to Highlight Event

The Tamarac Interpretive Association manned a table with gift shop items, bird treats, and information on TIA at the Holiday Bazaar held at the Washington Square Mall in Detroit Lakes on November 11. Board member Ruth Olson is pictured on the left with the heated bird bath; Wayne Olson was taking the picture. On the right is Rosie Greenland, TIA Board President.



On November 2, TIA board members and refuge staff cleaned out and organized the Visitor Center storage area which will be used as the TIA office.



TIA Receives Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant

The TIA board learned Nov. 20, that a grant proposal submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$4,998 will be funded. The 15 month project will enhance TIA's capabilities through computer technology tools and training. A desktop computer, laptop, and related equipment will be purchased for TIA's new office. Technological improvements will also be made to the giftshop operation. An extensive training strategy of workshops and individual tutoring will be scheduled in 2007. The computer and training support parallels the development of TIA committees to better carry out our work and our support of the refuge. Information about computer workshops scheduled for May through August will appear in the spring newsletter.

By Festival Co-Chairs Cleone Stewart and Kelly Blackledge

The Festival of Birds committee is excited about the 10th annual Festival of Birds coming May 17-20, 2007. Plans include workshops on wildflowers, dragonflies and birds.

Our special guest is David Allen Sibley! Most birders have a copy of one of his books that they regularly refer to, *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Sibley seriously began watching and drawing birds at the age of seven. Since 1980 he has traveled the continent watching birds and serving as a tour leader. John Voz, a member of the Festival committee, has been in contact with Sibley and his publicist for three years to get Detroit Lakes on Sibley's schedule. Sibley will be one of the field trip leaders on Saturday morning, sign his books in the afternoon and serve as the Saturday evening key note speaker.

Watch for the program

and registration online at www.visitdetroitlakes.com, as well as sponsorship opportunities.

The Tamarac Interpretive Association along with Tamarac Refuge are sponsors of this event. This year Sibley will be birding on Tamarac! This Saturday fieldtrip will make stops on both Tamarac and Hamden Slough refuges. A second Saturday fieldtrip option will take participants exclusively through Tamarac Refuge to look for nearly 25 species of wood warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, Marsh Wrens, and plenty more.

This event provides great exposure to the birding community for US Fish and Wildlife Service habitat management efforts. Along with Tamarac and Hamden Slough refuges, fieldtrips will also feature Detroit Lakes WMD Waterfowl Production Areas, and Agassiz NWR. Previous years have included Rydell and the new Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuges.

Tamarac Interpretive Association, Inc.
35704 County Hwy. 26, Rochert, MN 56578
(218) 847-2641, www.tamaracfriends.org

The Tamarac Interpretive Association is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to facilitate activities and programs that interpret, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

Annual memberships are: Student - \$10, Seniors (62 & up) - \$10, Individual/Family - \$15, Patron - \$100, and Life Member - \$250. Membership dues are paid annually October 1st. Members receive four newsletters a year, invitation to special tours, and a 10% discount in the Tamarac gift shop.

Rosie Greenland, President	Detroit Lakes, MN	Term Expires 2008
Ruth Olson, VP	Detroit Lakes, MN	Term Expires 2008
Theresa Haney, Secretary	Rochert, MN	Term Expires 2006
Wayne Olson, Treasurer	Detroit Lakes, MN	Term Expires 2007
Denis Mudderman	Rochert, MN	Term Expires 2008
George Weatherston	Fargo, ND	Term Expires 2007
Penny Nielsen	Detroit Lakes, MN	Term Expires 2008
Donna Stewart	Rochert, MN	Term Expires 2007
Ron Jenson	Detroit Lakes, MN	Term Expires 2009

Refuge Advisors to the Board

Barbara Boyle, Tamarac Refuge Manager 218-847-2641
 Barbara_Boyle@fws.gov

Kelly Blackledge, Tamarac Visitor Services 218-847-2641
 Kelly_Blackledge@fws.gov

Denis Mudderman, Newsletter Coordinator, Webmaster tamaracweb@yahoo.com

Becky Hastad, Newsletter Editor rhastad@tvutel.com



Tamarac Interpretative Association

Nature Gift Shop and Bookstore

Do your holiday shopping at Tamarac and use your 10% member discount.

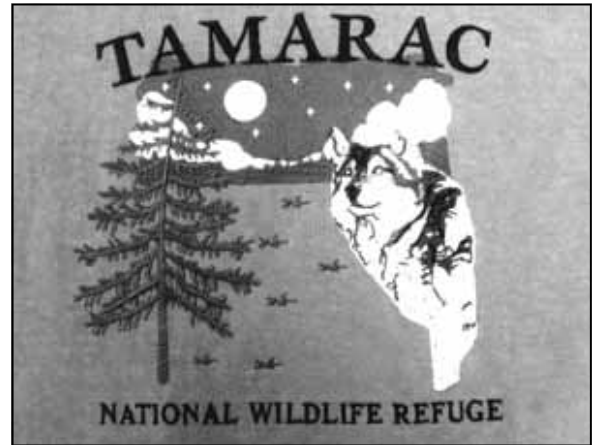


A Guide to Nature in Winter

By David Stokes **\$14.95**

Stokes Nature Guides

The best guide available for the winter season, it will lead you to all of the exciting things you can discover in winter and make the season come alive. This book reveals fascinating details about the lives and behavior of the plants and animals highlighted in it.



Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge
Sweatshirts \$35 each

S, M, L, XL, 2XL - red, green, light brown

Discover Nature in Winter: Things to know and things to do.

By Elizabeth P. Lawlor **\$14.95**

Stokes Nature Guides

In Discover Nature in Winter, informative background information on winter stargazing, wildlife behavior, deciduous and coniferous trees, melt-freeze cycles, and much more, are paired with hands-on explorations that bring this season to life.



Stocking stuffer ideas:

Little critters mini-playing cards - \$3.00

Loon or Bear pens - \$4.00

Wild Republic miniature stuffed animals - \$3.50

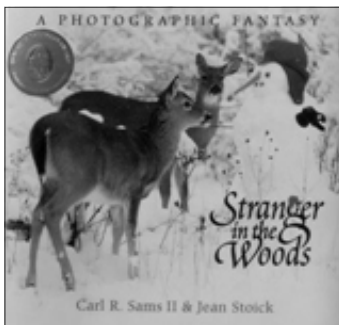
Audubon birds with real bird calls - \$ 3.99

Toysmith compass whistle - \$1.99

Deerfly patches (for next summer) - \$1.90

Miniature Native American drum - \$6.00

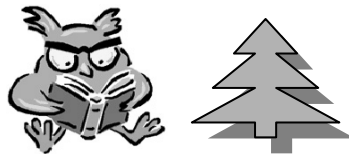
Turtle or arrowhead necklace - \$6.00



Stranger in the Woods: A Photographic Fantasy

By Carl R. Sams II & Jean Stoick **\$19.95**

Carl and Jean's camera lens opens up the heart of childhood and the soul of wildlife in this touching, joyous, unforgettable modern fable.



Give a Gift Certificate !

For the Tamarac Nature Gift Shop and Bookstore



Gift certificates can be purchased at the gift shop or purchased by mail.

To purchase by mail:

Send payment by check or money order. Identify the amount of each gift certificate - minimum \$10. Gift certificates will be mailed postage paid.

Tamarac Nature Gift Shop
35704 Co. Hwy. 26
Rochert MN 56578-9638

Volunteers Participate in Loon Monitoring

By Del Bergseth

Sure, it is only 20 miles to Detroit Lakes. But to Warren Lavoie and me, it could have been 2,500 miles. It could have been the wilderness of Alaska or the Boundary Waters of Minnesota!

We were doing the loon survey at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, canoeing on pristine Little Chippewa Lake. The canoeing wasn't easy because the wild rice and the floating mats of vegetation were thick on the lake's surface. The wild rice was so thick that we could not find the channel of the Ottertail River, which runs through the lake. There were no other boats on the lake, nor was there any other sign of mankind to detract from our idyllic voyage. We were a couple miles from the main road, so the feeling of solitude was complete—a rare feeling in central Minnesota these days.

The loon count is an annual event at the Tamarac and usually occurs early in July. We were unpaid volunteers, doing one of the many jobs that volunteers must perform for the refuge personnel to keep this area a unique experience for us all. We were enjoying it.

Flocks of mallards and dozens of terns were flitting about. Sandhill Cranes and other local birds were spotted. They weren't too happy with us because they were accustomed to having this lake to themselves. Ultimately, we discovered two adult loons and no juveniles after much paddling

around the lake. It wasn't all fun and games since it was quite hot out; the sun was merciless and so were the horse flies. However, Warren and I will be "front and center" next year when it is time to do the loon count again.

Enjoying the wilderness without leaving home is a unique and diminishing experience. Warren and I are well aware of how lucky we are to have this pristine area in our back yard. In fact, there are three US Fish and Wildlife managed areas in our county, an unusual circumstance. So volunteer, or just enjoy!

Ski Trail Groomer Needed

Interest in winter activities on the refuge has expanded with outstanding opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and wildlife watching. The refuge is in desperate need of a ski trail groomer, either directly donated or funded. Volunteers have helped with occasional grooming of the Pine Lake Ski Trail, but with increased demand, more regular grooming is needed. An available groomer would also make it possible to further enhance winter wildlife watching opportunities. TIA is helping with this effort, and as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, donations are tax deductible.

The Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program is a long-term project of the Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program. Since 1994, nearly 1,000 volunteer observers annually have gathered information about common loons in six 100-lake regions or 'index areas' of the state. The data these generous citizens collect provide the Nongame Wildlife Program with an early warning system for detecting changes in the numbers of loons and the health of their lake habitats in Minnesota. Tamarac biologists and volunteers have been supporting this program since its inception and Tamarac biologists have been collecting loon population information for over 20 Years. This past summer volunteers counted 66 adult loons and 15 young loons on Tamarac lakes.

For more information on the Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program, visit:
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecological_services/nongame/projects/mlmp_state.html



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Photograph

Banding Experience Is “Just Ducky”

By Diana Malvick

A few of us volunteers meet at the shop on the refuge with one of the rangers to start off our early morning adventure in duck banding. Since it is my first time to band ducks and I am curious about how it is done, rising early before the sun was no problem for me, especially when I was about to do something exciting with wildlife.

Once briefed by the ranger on the process, we split up into two vehicles. Upon reaching our destination, we had to be really quiet so that we would not scare off the ducks. I could already feel the excitement. From a distance I could just hear the sounds of the ducks. It seemed as if they were chatting to each other.

Inside the hut, where we hid from the ducks, the ranger explained the process of rigging up his hand-held electric charge box. Three steel pipes filled with small charges were attached to one end of the net and the other end was secured to the ground. In a short time we started to see wood ducks and mal-

lards approaching the net, which had been baited with corn. The ranger gave a three-count and set off the charge, sending the long net up and over the ducks. With the sky full of smoke, we all ran to the net to secure the sides so the ducks would not escape.

Immediately, the second ranger pulled up with the cages and banding gear, and we began carefully to remove the ducks from the net and place them in the cages as a holding pen. The rangers shared their knowledge with professionalism and showed us how to tell the difference between the males and females, the young and old, by looking at the color in their wings and body.

To band the duck, I cradled it in my arm like a baby with its feet up, which made it very easy to place the metal band around its leg. The ducks seemed quite calm in this position. Once the duck was banded and recorded I released it by tossing it into the air.

It was a wonderful feeling being able to participate in something like duck banding and be a part of the wildlife refuge work. Thank you Tamarac refuge staff and TIA for giving me this wonderful opportunity!



Photograph by Denis Mudderman

A wood duck is cradled as a duck band is clamped to her leg.



Photograph by Denis Mudderman

Lowell Deede and Wayne Bringer gather wood ducks after the ducks were netted during a duck banding effort on September 11, 2005.

2006 Banding

Accomplishment Report

Wood Duck - Actual (Quota)
Adult Males - 93 (25)
Adult Females - 9 (25)
Immature Males - 15 (25)
Immature Females - 6 (25)
Total banded = 123

Mallard - Actual (Quota)
Adult Males - 5 (100)
Adult Females - 26 (100)
Immature Males - 45 (100)
Immature Females - 39 (100)
Total banded = 115

Although there was no quota for Green-winged Teal, 55 were banded during this operation. Mallards had plenty of wild rice to feed on this year. Therefore, they were not attracted to the corn and could not be netted in sufficient numbers to meet the quotas.

Life Can be Pretty Wild on the Tamarac



Photograph by Denis Mudderman

Refuge biologist Lowell Deede stands on top of a massive beaver dam that measures nine feet high and over 150 feet long. According to Lowell, it is the largest beaver dam on the refuge. The dam would have taken the beavers multiple seasons to construct.

A buck was found by Rufus, the golden retriever hunting partner of Chuck Blackburn of Park Rapids. As they were grouse hunting along the cross country ski trail near Tamarac Lake, Rufus put his head down in the grass and wouldn't move. When Chuck went to check on what was so mesmerizing to Rufus, he found a deer trapped in a deep hole. Chuck contacted refuge staff. Maintenance worker Tom Franklin was able to pull the deer out far enough for the deer to catch a good grip on the ground with its hooves. It took off like a bullet. Thanks to Rufus' discovery, refuge staff was able to see that this old homestead site well is no longer a threat to wildlife or hunters.

Photograph by Barbara Boyle



Join TIA

Annual memberships are: Student - \$10,
Seniors (62 & up) - \$10,
Individual/Family - \$15

Volunteers Rock!

By Janice Bengtson

Each year, volunteers and Friends groups generously give their time, expertise, and resources to the National Wildlife Refuge System. They play an important role in helping to serve the nearly 40 million visitors who enjoy our refuge lands each year.

Nationwide, volunteer assistance is significant. During fiscal year (FY) 2005, nearly 38,000 volunteers donated more than 1.4 million hours. The value for their labor was more than \$25 million. The largest number of volunteer hours, more than 584,000, were donated to programs related to wildlife and habitat work, with programs that deliver quality wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education

coming in a close second. In addition, the total number of Friends organizations has increased to over 200.

Here at Tamarac, during the last year (FY 06), volunteers donated over 3900 hours, doubling last year's total. Their work is valued at \$70,000.00! Following the national trend, our program has grown significantly over the last few years. In 2003, we had 38 active volunteers while this year the number was 54. The total number of volunteers who contributed during this past year actually exceeds 200—taking into account groups such as the Frazee First Graders who planted trees. Members of the Tamarac Interpretive Association have also played a key role in this growth.

Volunteers contribute in many ways.

Work is categorized into six areas. These include habitat and wildlife monitoring; wildlife dependent recreation, such as guiding tours; environmental education; maintenance; cultural resources; and 'other' which includes administrative work. The majority of our volunteer hours fall into wildlife dependent recreation and "other." We are hoping to increase field opportunities over the next few summers.

With plummeting budgets, volunteers are vital to the Fish and Wildlife Service in order to fulfill its mission of "putting wildlife first." Thank you to all the volunteers of Tamarac. If you are interested in volunteering, come grow with us! Contact Janice Bengtson at 218-847-2641 or Janice_Bengtson@fws.gov.

Volunteers Needed for

December 18 Christmas Bird Count

More than 50,000 observers participate each year throughout the U.S. and Canada in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas.

The Tamarac Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Monday, **December 18**. Although good bird identification skills are preferred, volunteers will be paired with staff or other experienced bird watchers. If volunteers want to come and help search the refuge for birds they need to call Lowell or Kelly to sign up. We will meet at the Visitor Center at 8:00 am that day to get assignments. Generally, we travel a section of the refuge until about 12:00 noon identifying and counting birds with the challenge of finding the most unique species. Upon returning to the Visitor Center, we'll share our sightings and indulge in a feast, so participants are asked to bring a dish or treat to share. A few groups will return to the field to complete a thorough trek through the refuge in the afternoon. In years past we've also seen otter, porcupine and, even, wolves.

Featured Volunteer

By Gary Hawthorne,

2005 Volunteer of the Year

I enjoy volunteering at the Tamarac Wildlife Refuge. It is different from my previous volunteering experiences, where I worked within a service organization or on a board of directors. When I belonged to Rotary and Kiwanis, I worked with groups of people doing a variety of philanthropic projects. I also served on hospital boards and on the Chamber of Commerce, where I worked with only a small group of people making decisions about policy. I like the kind of volunteer work I do at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge the best.

I work at the Visitor Center

every Wednesday morning. This gives me a chance to chat with the tourists and answer any questions they have about the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, in particular, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, in general.

Twice a year, I participate in the bird counts. In the spring, we do the grouse drumming count. In December, we do the Audubon winter bird count. For

each event, I accompany a Tamarac ranger, and that provides me with an enjoyable learning experience.

Tamarac operates a deer check station every opening weekend of deer season. Two years ago, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources asked those manning the checking stations to biopsy some deer for CWD, Chronic Wasting Disease. We took some specified neck glands from dozens of deer and sent them to Minneapolis for diagnosis. All came back negative for CWD. Routinely, we weigh the deer and determine if it is a yearling or an adult. If it is an adult, we extract a tooth, and again, it is sent to Minneapolis for sectioning. This gives Tamarac biologists an idea of the age of the deer being harvested.

Volunteering at Tamarac is fun and fulfilling for me. I enjoy being with the tourists, as well as the hunters. I like discussing and learning about wildlife from the staff. They are friendly, helpful, and professional. It is a "win-win" situation.

NEWSLETTER OF THE
TAMARAC INTERPRETIVE
ASSOCIATION

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge
35704 County Highway 26
Rochert, MN 56578
Website: www.tamaracweb.org

Phone: 218-847-2641

*Tamarac Interpretive Association's mission
is to facilitate activities and programs that
interpret, protect and restore the natural
and cultural resources of Tamarac National
Wildlife Refuge.*

*TIA Website:
www.tamaracfriends.org*



The bird's eye view of the Tamarac Visitor Center was taken October 6, 2006, about a week past peak fall colors. Jim's Marsh is in the foreground with the refuge headquarters and Visitor Center to the left of the center of the photo. Photograph by Denis Mudderman.