



## Volunteer of the Year

# George Weatherston Selected

This year's volunteer of the year has been with Tamarac just over 4 years. With his soft-spoken, friendly manner, he has effectively promoted the refuge and its mission.

**As a Roving Ranger and Tour Guide** he has taken the time to learn about Tamarac's natural and cultural resources and shares that knowledge with many visitors. He has also made recommendations to the Tamarac staff on upgrades to both the Visitor Center Trail and the Old Indian Hiking Trail. In the past year, he has represented the refuge

at the Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds, written articles for the Tamarac Interpretive Association Newsletter, become a TIA board member and is serving on the publicity committee. He is always willing to help out in any way, whether it be cleaning up the kiosks or picking up trash.

**Traveling from Fargo** to spend time in a "national treasure" is one of Tamarac's treasures, George Weatherston. Congratulations, George – our 2004 Volunteer of the Year!



Previous recipient, **Kay Hartness** of Rochert, MN, presents **George Weatherston** of Fargo with the 2004 Volunteer of the Year Award.

# 2004-05 TIA Accomplishments

- Sponsored a bus for a fall visit for residents of a local senior care center
- Sponsored the Fall Open House in October
- Purchased a new spotting scope for the Visitor Center overlook
- Donated funds for a portable LCD projector for refuge off-site programs
- Completed a new sales wall in the bookstore
- Matching funds provided to refuge to purchase a broadcast seeder for prairie restoration
- Reorganized and updated all Inventory Records
- Transferred all treasury transactions to Quickbooks
- Sponsored the Festival of Birds event
- Created and entered wildlife themed wreaths for the Festival of Wreaths fund-raiser
- Made a site visit and established a new agreement for book/gift shop at Agassiz NWR
- Received \$3800 grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for Capacity Building
- Developed a Strategic Plan
- Developed a new membership dues structure
- Became an affiliate member to National Wildlife Refuge Association
- Designated a website for TIA [www.tamaracfriends.org](http://www.tamaracfriends.org)
- Became a Member of the Lake Country Scenic Byway
- Added new videos to the movie collection so the refuge could host weekly nature films
- Purchased Insect Swoop nets and several other tools for youth programs
- Hosted a membership booth at the mall for National Wildlife Week
- Hosted a membership booth at the mall for Earth Day
- Attendance at the Minneapolis Gift Mart – new products now in gift shop
- Set up the Bookstore at the Festival of Birds earning over \$2000 in sales
- Designed a new look for the Newsletter, recruited a volunteer editor, expanded issues
- Donated funds to refuge for prairie restoration: Mud Lake, Evans Lake, Visitor Center
- Made contribution to International Wolf Foundation: received posters & ed. materials
- Initiated an Oral History Project that will focus on the historic land uses of the refuge
- Adopted an official logo



**Mission:** To facilitate activities and programs that interpret, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

## 2005-06 Tamarac Interpretive Association

### Board of Directors

Nancy Moulden, President	218-847-1391	Detroit Lakes
Rosie Greenland, VP	218-847-4662	Detroit Lakes
Theresa Haney, Treas.	218-847-5118	Rochert
Shar Legenhausen, Sec.	218-847-8832	Rochert
Ruth Olson	218-847-2375	Detroit Lakes
Wayne Olson	218-847-2375	Detroit Lakes
Rosie Greenland	218-847-6227	Detroit Lakes
Peter Aschbacher	218-847-0681	Rochert
George Weatherston	701-232-8796	Fargo
Penny Nielsen	218-844-2826	Detroit Lakes
Kelly Blackledge	218-847-2641	Refuge Rep.
Becky Hastad	218-983-3788	Newsletter Editor

## Wildlife Watch

# Eagles on Par, Swans Above Average

By Wayne Brininger,  
Tamarac Wildlife Biologist

### Tamarac Eagles

**Our eagle productivity flight** was on July 7, which was a little later than what we normally like for conducting our productivity survey, but that was the earliest our pilot was available.

**It appeared** our number of occupied territories as well as active nests is about average but our productivity (0.71 young/active nest) is down from the recent average (1.23 young/active nest). It is possible that several eaglets may have fledged just prior to our survey, thus, lowering our productivity estimate. It is also likely that windstorms may have had some effect this year, as well.

**By the end of the** season, we were able to determine that there were 21 active nests, and that two nests blew down this year sometime after hatching, but prior to fledging. A total of 15 eaglets fledged from the refuge.

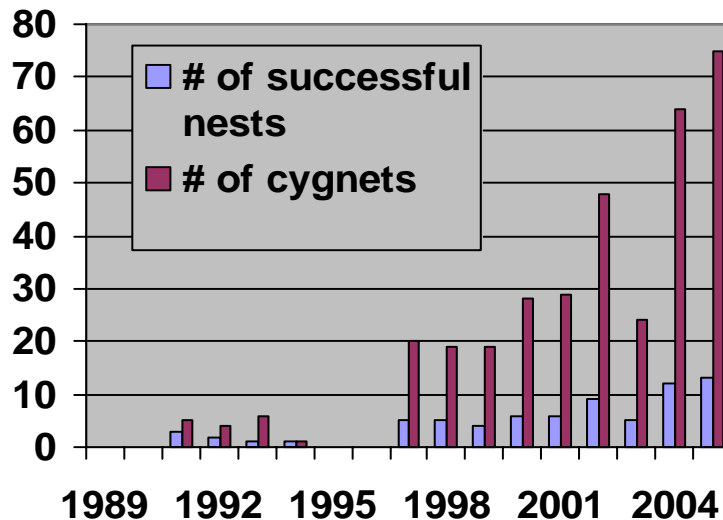
### Tamarac Trumpeter Swans

**Trumpeters continue** to do well as we have again set a record productivity.

**A total of 75 cygnets** were produced from 13 pairs. A total of 17 breeding pairs/nests were documented by refuge biologists Lowell Deede and Wayne Brininger this year, but four nests failed to produce cygnets.

**Tamarac continues** to be one of the premier Trumpeter Swan production sites in the lower 48 states.

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge  
Trumpeter Swan Nesting Success



## Waterfowl Breeding Populations Down

By Kelly Blackledge

**Tamarac biologists** annually assist with state waterfowl counts. According to the 2005 spring Minnesota Waterfowl Breeding Population Survey, breeding pairs are down significantly from last year in all categories, and most are below the 10 year average. Tamarac Biologist Wayne Brininger agrees, "We've seen very similar results this spring on Tamarac, as well." The survey consists of aerial observations supplemented by more intensive ground counts on selected

routes to determine the proportion of birds counted by the aerial crew.

### Survey Summary:

- Wetland conditions were improved from 2004 but similar to long-term averages.
- Mallard abundance (238,500) declined significantly from 2004 (375,313) ( $P=0.02$ ) but remained near the long-term average (223,000).
- Blue-wing teal abundance (194,125) declined significantly from 2004 (353,209) ( $P=0.02$ ) and was below the long-term average (229,000).
- Duck abundance for most other species declined relative to 2004.
- Canada goose numbers, unadjusted for visibility bias, decreased 15% from 2004 but were 4% above the 10-year average.





# Renew or Give a Gift

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## Be a Part of Something Special!

Joining today will help us promote a better understanding and appreciation of the natural history and natural environment of the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

Your membership supports the educational programs and events, volunteer program, habitat restoration efforts and more!

## Membership Application for the Tamarac Interpretive Association

Check one:

\$ 10.00 Student       \$ 10.00 Seniors (62 & up)

\$ 15.00 Individual/ Family

\$ 100.00 Patron       \$ 250.00 Life Member

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Memorial contribution in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other contribution

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Winter Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

This membership is a gift from: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a special refuge greeting card notifying them of their new membership.

Make checks payable to: **“Tamarac Interpretive Association”**

Mail to:      **Tamarac Interpretive Association, Inc.**  
                 **35704 CO. HWY 26**  
                 **Rochert, MN 56578**

*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.*



## By Janice Bengtson, Tamarac Park Ranger **Dance of the Deer**

**F**or Minnesotans, seeing a white-tailed deer may invoke visions of Bambi, hunting that trophy buck, a garden pest or a road hazard. But for many Native Americans, deer held a special place in folklore and legend. For the Hopi Indians the deer dance was to bring rain. For the Zuni, it was to bring a cure for illness. The Yurok White Tribe of California believed that their dance to the deer would bring an abundant crop. To prevent frostbite in their winter travels, the Cherokee would rub their feet in warm ashes and would chant to acquire the powers of those animals whose feet never were frostbitten—opossum, wolf, fox and deer. Not only did deer serve a purpose in the spiritual world, they provided food and clothing. Every part of the animal was used in some way. The bones were made into many different tools including needles, hoes, hide scrapers, cutting tools, and beads. The hair was used as insulation in moccasins and in embroidery.

**Deer have a fascinating natural history**, as well. *Odocoileus virginianus*, the scientific name for the whitetail is derived from Greek meaning “hollow tooth.” All deer have hollow teeth and are even-toed ‘ungulates’ or split-hoofed animals. Others belonging to this group include elk, moose and pronghorn antelope. Whitetail males can weigh between 100 and 300 pounds while females weigh 85 to 130 pounds. Coat color varies from reddish brown during the summer months to a darker coat of grayish brown in the winter. For several months out of the year, males or bucks will sport antlers. Antlers grow from April to August and are covered with a soft velvet skin which provides a blood supply to the growing tissue. Antlers

grow 1-2 inches per week. By late August growth stops and this ‘velvet’ is rubbed off just prior to the rut or breeding season. Antler size is determined by the age, nutrition and genetics of the individual. You can not accurately age a deer by the points on its antlers. Tamarac biologists age deer by examining a tooth.

**Deer have an excellent sense of hearing** which allows them to escape predators such as wolves, coyotes and bears. Because a deer’s eyes are located on the side of its head, it has the advantage of seeing 310 degrees around. The disadvantage of this is that a deer cannot focus on one location with both eyes. Therefore, their depth perception is rather poor. Their sense of smell is quite good, however. Like dogs, their noses are wet and can pick up odor particles. A deer may smell you several hundred yards away. Because of these highly developed senses, they can slip quietly away without your even noticing them. When seriously frightened, a deer will snort and dash away quickly raising its tail to reveal the white underside as a warning to others.

**Deer are browsers**—eating the leaves, stems and buds of woody plants. In late summer and fall, they also consume fruits and nuts. Like cows, they are ruminants, having a four-chambered stomach. This allows them to gather a significant amount of food to be chewed and digested later. Whitetails are very adaptable creatures and live in a variety of habitats. You can see them in prairies, forests, swamps and agricultural fields.

**Bucks are generally solitary animals** except during

the rut. The rut usually occurs in November and can extend into early December. This is an extremely stressful time for males. During this period, they rarely eat or sleep. They will challenge and fight other bucks. They will also be busy marking territories by rubbing their antlers against small trees and by scraping and urinating on the ground. Females will often be seen in small groups. Females will give birth to their fawns in early summer after a gestation period of 200 days. As with most ungulates, newborns are almost scentless and are camouflaged with white spots – blending in with the patchy sunlight on the forest floor. These young will stay with their mothers until the next spring.

**In Minnesota** alone there are between 900,000 and 1,000,000 deer! That’s more deer than the habitat can support. Too many deer in an area can cause over browsing of the forests. Deer eat the trees, shrubs and small plants that provide habitat for other wildlife. Some bird populations have declined due to the loss of nesting and feeding areas. Because of this, harvesting of deer is a must to control the population. The deer season, corresponding with the rut, is just around the corner. Every year between 150,000-200,000 deer are taken by hunters. Last year 466 deer were harvested by hunters at Tamarac.

**So, when the crisp air of autumn** drifts this way along with the brilliant colors of the season, take time to appreciate this enchanting creature of the forest – one of beauty, grace and survival.