

WILD NEWS

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Nature Program Calendar

July - September 2007

A Tiger in the Lab?

By Jennifer Keyser

The Refuge's fishing and touring programs are widely known as outstanding recreational opportunities. But the Visitor Center's Wildlife Learning Lab offers "up close and personal" animal experiences. The Lab features an active honeybee hive, several native fishes, and numerous displays about the Refuge's natural history. The Lab also hosts one of Colorado's most common amphibians — the tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*).



Tiger salamanders are the largest land-dwelling salamanders (reaching up to 14 inches in length) and have a widely varied diet which includes the larvae of such insects as caddis flies, midges, and mayflies. Tiger salamanders are both hunters and hunted, as larger animals such as raccoons, white pelicans and largemouth bass all consume salamanders.

With such a long list of predators, the tiger salamander's survival might seem in doubt. Fortunately, the Refuge's lakes and wetlands provide excellent habitat for tiger salamanders throughout their life cycle. That cycle begins each spring when females lay their eggs in shallow water. Salamander eggs hatch into larvae which look much like adults, except for six feathery-looking gills along the neck. Larvae normally shed their gills as they transform into air-breathing adults during the summer of their first year. But if environmental conditions outside the water they are born into appear unfavorable, as in drought years, they will retain their gills into adulthood. This condition is called *neoteny*, and is just one of the survival mechanisms which allow this amphibian to adapt and thrive on the Refuge.

Be sure to check out the Wildlife Learning Lab, see all it has to offer and spend a moment with the Refuge's resident *tiger*.

Sources:

Natural Diversity Information Source, Colorado Division of Wildlife - "Tiger Salamander" page.

<http://ndis.nrel.colostate.edu/wildlifespx.asp?SpCode=020202>

Great Plains Nature Center

"Barred Tiger Salamander" page.

<http://www.gpnc.org/barred.htm>

The Refuge Will Be Open To *Wild Walk*
Participants Only on Wednesday, July 4th.
Our Apologies For The Inconvenience.

Wild Walk

July 4th

9 am - 12 pm

6K and 1M

Great Fun! Great Exercise!

Have fun while getting fit in the great outdoors! Walk the Refuge trails along lakes, through shortgrass prairie and woodlands. Walks start every hour.

Prizes for all participants.

Space is limited.

Call to register

303-289-0930

Sponsored by LiveWell Commerce City,
Tri-County Health Department, and USFWS.

Refuge News



Now available to purchase at the
Refuge Visitor Center:

America the Beautiful

The National Parks and Federal
Recreational Lands Pass

Annual Pass: \$80.00

Senior Lifetime Pass (age 62 and
older): \$10.00

*Personal Check, Money Order, or
Cash accepted*



Fishing News

The 2007 Refuge
public fishing
season will end on
Sunday, October
14, 2007.



Please check the website for
fishing rules and regulations.

*www.fws.gov/
rockymountainarsenal*



SPECIAL FREE FISHING DAY

*Saturday September 29 Na-
tional Public Lands Day*

WILD TREKS PROGRAM

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays

Refuge Hours:

6:00 am – 6:00 pm

Visitor Center Hours:

7:30 am – 4:00 pm

WILD RIDES

Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

TOURS EN ESPAÑOL EN EL REFUGIO

Llame al 303-289-0864

MOBILE PHOTO BLIND SESSIONS

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

& 12:00 - 4:00 pm

**Call for more information
303-289-0930**



Nature Programs

July - September 2007

*Reservations are required for these
FREE popular programs. Space is
limited. Call 303-289-0930 to register.
Please dress for the weather. All
children must be accompanied by an
adult. Assistance dogs are welcome.
Refuge staff reserves the right to cancel
or reschedule programs due to
unforeseen circumstances.*

JULY

Prairie Dog Tails

Saturday July 14

1:00 - 3:00 pm

This presentation and outdoor field exploration will help you discover why prairie dogs are key to the shortgrass prairie. Binoculars are a must for close up eavesdropping on family gossip and observing unique prairie dog behaviors.

Wildlife, Camera, Action!

Tuesday July 24

7:00 - 10:00 am

Photographers rejoice! Pack your camera, zoom lens and extra film for the chance to capture those unforgettable wildlife shots.

Friends of a Feather

Saturday July 28

Sunday July 29

7:00 - 10:00 am

Bring your binoculars, field guides and camera for these early morning birding expeditions.

AUGUST

Owls Underground

Saturday August 4

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Burrowing owls are known for their quirky behavior and unique features. Don't look up in the trees for these small owls! We will show you where they live and tell you about their homes underground.

Animals of the Marsh

Saturday August 11

8:00 - 9:30 am

Discover the marsh zone on this animal search adventure! Waders will be provided.

Family Fishing Fun

Tuesday August 14

5:00 - 7:00 pm

Discover the joys of family fishing! We'll teach first time anglers how to tie knots, bait hooks, cast and reel in a trophy-sized fish. Bring your own equipment or borrow ours.

Un-nature Nature Trail

Saturday August 18

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Come and explore what makes things natural vs un-natural during this guided stroll on our trails! Recommended for kids ages 5-12.

Family Bike the Refuge

Saturday August 25

8:00 am - 10:00 am

Take the family on a naturalist led, leisurely bike ride past prairie dog towns, lakes and woodlands. We will stop and talk about the wonderful wildlife we see along the way. Water and puncture-proof tires recommended. Helmets are required.

Bike the Refuge

Sunday August 26

Tuesday September 25

8:00 - 11:00 am

Pedal your way around the Refuge! This guided tour is intended for experienced, adult riders. Come prepared with water and puncture-proof tires. Helmets are required.

SEPTEMBER

Evening Under the Stars

Saturday September 8

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Join the Denver Astronomical Society for this unique opportunity to learn about the cosmos while star gazing under the Refuge sky.

Home on the Range

Sunday September 9

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Come and meet the newest Refuge residents — the great American bison.

Discover interesting facts and learn about the history of North America's largest land mammal.

Photo Basics

Wednesday September 19

1:00 - 4:00 pm

Calling all amateur photographers! Learn the basics of wildlife photography including techniques and ethics.

Birding Basics

Saturday September 22

7:00 - 10:00 am

Novice birders unite! Learn to identify some common Refuge bird species by sight and sound before heading out into the field to try out your newly acquired skills.

Song Dogs

Saturday September 29

5:00 - 7:00 pm

The coyotes howl is called the "song of the West."

Listen for barks, yelps and howls during this evening hayride. Remember to dress for the weather.



TUESDAY TOTS

July 3

August 7

September 4

10:00 - 11:00 am

Teach your kids to love nature! Offered the first Tuesday of each month, these hour long programs use nature to stimulate senses, develop positive attitudes and encourage learning through games, songs, crafts, stories, hikes and catching critters. It's a different adventure every month full of creative activities! Child must be 2 to 5 years old and accompanied by a caregiver over 18.



SAVE THE DATE

October 13, 2007

Wild Things 2007 - The Bison are Back!



Come help us celebrate the return of wild American bison and our western heritage during National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Location: Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Entrance at 56th Avenue and Havana Street

Time: 12:00 – 6:00 pm

Cost: FREE!!

Activities: Hayrides
Bison Tours
Catch-and-release Fishing
Western Crafts
Native American Storytelling inside a Teepee
Refuge Campfire
Photos with Barker, Honker, and Elliot
Buffalo Chip Toss



Stage performances by Colorado Historical Society Sodbusters and Adams City High School Mariachi Aguilas. Chuckwagon Supper available at a small cost. **Check our website for more information!**



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U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service
PERMIT G-77

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Commerce City, CO 80022-1748

DIRECTIONS TO THE REFUGE:

Enter the Refuge at 56th Avenue and Havana Street. Proceed 1.5 miles to the Visitor Center to check-in.



Visit our website at www.fws.gov/rockymountainarsenal or call 303-289-0930

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