

Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/pacific>

# News Release



For Release on February 10, 2009  
Contact: Amy Gaskill, (503) 231-6120

R1-09-012

## **This Valentines Day Fall in Love with Nature** *Visit one of your National Wildlife Refuges*

Valentine's Day is a perfect time to fall in love with nature in the Pacific Region. Go outside to experience the excitement of a majestic bald eagle or the thrill of a black oystercatcher with bright red eyes, whether in your own backyard or at one of America's national wildlife refuges. There is a national wildlife refuge just an hour's drive from most major metropolitan areas, and all are inviting portals to the natural world.

The Pacific Region has 64 National Wildlife Refuges located in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. They encompass wetlands, estuaries, grasslands, nesting seabird colonies, forests, remote atolls with extensive coral reef ecosystems, high mountain deserts and all of the variations in between. Visit <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/refuges> to find a refuge near you.

The Service's "Let's go Outside" Web site ([www.fws.gov/letsgooutside](http://www.fws.gov/letsgooutside)) contains a wealth of information to help families connect with nature, including:

- Electronic Valentines, featuring bald eagles, red foxes and even turtles, that are great to send to friends and family.
- Fact sheets about numerous wildlife species, including bald eagles, moose, sea turtles and cardinals.
- Tips on how youngsters and their families can start observing wildlife.
- Links to maps and a special events calendar that can help families find places to go and see nature up close.

The following are just a few National Wildlife Refuges in the Pacific Region where you can experience the love of nature:

- **Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge** (Sequim, Washington, (360) 547-8451, <http://www.fws.gov/washingtonmaritime/dungeness/wildlife.html>) which hosts a large number of eagles and one of the largest concentrations of wintering black brant populations in the lower 48 states. This time of year, they also play host to the Red-breasted merganser, the red-throated loon and the red head duck. And don't miss the abundant Pacific harbor seals playing just off the shoreline.

- **Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex** (Headquarters – Newport, Oregon, (541) 867-4550, <http://www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/index.htm>) Sea ducks and waterbirds are most abundant during the winter. Common species include surf, white-winged and black scoters, harlequin ducks, common and Pacific loons, and western, horned, and red-necked grebes. Estuaries host wintering ducks, geese and a variety of raptors.
- **Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge** (Sherwood, Oregon, 503-625-5944, (<http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/>) a unique place, one of only a handful of urban wildlife refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System and one of the only refuges located on a city bus route. Visitors can take the Portland Tri-Met bus route #12 directly to the Refuge entrance on Highway 99W. Winter is a spectacular time to visit. Large numbers of waterfowl such as cackling Canada geese, northern pintails, and mallards blanket the Refuge as they eat the rich source of seeds and plants grown in summer. The Refuge boasts an average of 20,000 waterfowl during mid-winter, and in some years, over 50,000 have been observed in a single day.
- **Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge** (Jefferson, Oregon, 503-588-2701, (<http://www.fws.gov/willamettevalley/ankeney>) Many types of crops are grown on the refuge to provide winter browse for wintering waterfowl, but other species benefit from the bushy edges and hedgerows left around the farm fields. Red foxes feed in the fields but seek protection from predators among the thick growth on the edges.
- **Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge** (Ridgefield, Washington, 360-887-3883, <http://www.fws.gov/ridgefieldrefuges/ridgefield/>) The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge was established to provide wintering habitat for waterfowl, especially dusky Canada geese. Birds species such as mallards, great blue herons, and red-tailed hawks are year-round residents are abundant during the early winter months. Black-tailed deer are the largest mammal on the refuge. Coyote, raccoon, skunk, beaver, river otter and brush rabbits are occasionally seen while walking on the open trails or on the driving tour of the River “S” Unit.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).