

# Volunteer Newsletter

## Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge



Photo © Louis Ruth

February 2016

Cooper's hawk by Lake Lowell

### **Don't Miss These Volunteer Opportunities** *Volunteers especially needed for:*

**Maintenance Crew** (*Wed & Fri mornings*)—Volunteers needed ASAP to help chip Russian olive branches.

**Wood Duck Box Surveys** (*Feb 23-25 & Mar 2-3*)—Survey, clean, and repair Refuge wood duck and owl boxes. **Winter Star Party** (*Mar 12*)—Staff a table or guide an activity at our newest Refuge event.

**Environmental Education** (*dates starting in March*)—Help connect kids with nature on the Refuge and off.

### **What's New?**

You never know what you will see when you pause to look around you.

It was a foggy, 25-degree day. Louis Ruth (*LouisRuthPhotography.com*) was sitting in the Refuge bird blind when a Cooper's hawk landed on a nearby branch and turned its head to face the camera. A moment later the bird was gone, but not before Ruth captured one photo with perfect detail.

### **Cheers!**

"When I was a kid," says volunteer Bob Ruesink, "we would take off and climb trees or catch tadpoles in the creek." Today, he says, a lot of kids don't get to do that. "There's a nature deficit."

That's why Ruesink has volunteered in the Refuge Discover Wildlife Journeys (DWJ) field trip program since its inception: "I believe strongly in getting

kids involved in hands-on, outdoor activities." DWJ brings school kids to the refuge to do things like look at animal tracks, search for bugs, and use binoculars to spot birds. "DWJ gives kids a chance to explore," says Ruesink.

Special thanks to Bob and all the other volunteers who make it possible to do Refuge programs that connect kids with nature.

*Do you want to help connect today's youth to nature? Great news! See next page for details about how to sign up.*

### **Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge**

The Friends of Deer Flat is a non-profit organization that supports Refuge activities. Thinking about joining? *Do it before March 15th and earn an incentive award from the Refuge bookstore.* Friends memberships are tax deductible. Email [friendsofdfwr@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdfwr@gmail.com) for more info.



House finch near viewing blind  
(Photo © Louis Ruth)



## **Upcoming Events**

***Unless otherwise stated, events take place at the Visitor Center.***

### **Junior Duck Stamp Art**

**Days—Feb 13, 20, 27 & Mar 5.**

K-12 students are invited to drop in to draw and learn about Idaho waterfowl. All art supplies are provided for them to create their own Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest entry. Entries are due by Mar 15th.

**Reading at the Refuge—Mar 7 & 21, 10a and 2p.** Preschoolers are invited to a wildlife-



*Saw-whet owl in a wood duck box  
Photo USFWS*

focused story time. *Note that Reading will not be held on Feb 15th due to the President's Day holiday.*

### **Refuge Star Party with Boise Astronomical Society**

**—Mar 12, 5:30-8:30p.**

Bring your family to the Refuge for an evening with the stars! There will be activities for kids including story times (in both English and Spanish) and an indoor star lab. There will be a short presentation at dusk, followed by outdoor stargazing.

## **Don't-Miss Volunteer Opportunities!**

***Think you might not have the skills needed to help? Don't worry! Training is provided.***

**Maintenance Crew—Wednesdays and Fridays, 7:45-12:00.** Join the volunteer maintenance crew and help with various projects around the refuge. *Volunteers needed ASAP to help chip Russian olive branches.*

**Wood Duck Box Surveys—Feb 23,24,25; Mar 2, 3; 8:30a-3:00p.** Help survey, clean, and repair over 100 wood duck nesting boxes and 6 barn owl nesting boxes around Lake Lowell.

**Refuge Star Party—Saturday, Mar 12,** *various shifts from 4:30-8:30p.* Participate in an evening of star-gazing and learning! Help staff a table or guide an activity at our new astronomy event.

**Discover Wildlife Journeys Field Trip Leaders—Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays in April & May.** Connect 4th-6th graders with nature! Training session early April.

## **Other Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities** **Environmental Education Activities**

**Water Quality Field Trip Assistants—Mar 28 & Apr 1, 8:30a-2:30p.** 7th graders will be visiting the refuge to collect science fair data. Help chaperone, help them collect water samples, or lead another activity.

**Elementary Science Extravaganza—Apr 7, 6:00-8:00p.** Help K-5 students get excited about science at Andrus Elementary in Boise.

**Birch Elementary Field Trip—Apr 26, 3-4:30.** Lead a group of elementary students at an after-school Refuge field trip .

**Earth Day Leaders—Saturday, Apr 23.** Celebrate Earth Day at Deer Flat! Crew leaders needed, as well as volunteers to improve habitat for wildlife by removing noxious weeds and litter, and maybe more. Deadline to register—Crew leaders: Mar 28; Crew members: Apr 18.