

AMIGO

Aransas & Matagorda Island Guardian/Orator

Fall 2008, Volume 10 No. 4

Introducing Dan Alonso, Refuge Manager

I am a native of Texas, born and raised in San Antonio. My wife, Gloria, is also from Texas born and raised in Sinton. We both attended Texas A&I University in Kingsville now known as Texas A&M Kingsville. We have three very beautiful and academically astute teenage daughters, who rule my world, or so they think. And of course, we have the standard refuge employee black Labrador.

I started my career at Laguna Atascosa NWR releasing Aplomado falcons for the Peregrine Fund. We then moved to Chicago, IL for a permanent position with the Service in the Division of Law Enforcement, as a Wildlife Inspector. After two years we



moved to the Anahuac NWR, as an Assistant Manager working with Dom Ciccone as the Project Leader. From there we moved to the Hart Mtn. Refuge in Oregon and served as the onsite Refuge Manager working with Barry Reiswig and later Mike Nunn as the Project Leaders. We then moved to the Ouray NWR in Utah and I presently serve as the Project Leader. I am 46 years young and after only 21 years in the business, I welcome the challenge of managing the Aransas NWR and other Refuges to come.

My hobbies include hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, bird watching, foreign travel, do-it-yourself classic car restoration, and home remodeling. Pretty much in that order, but the latter often consumes most of my time.

WARNING!

THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

FAMI's membership year is from October 1st through September 30st each year.

Now is the time to complete the membership application on the outside cover of this newsletter and return it along with you membership dues to:

Friends of Aransas & Matagorda Island

P O Box 74, Austwell, TX 77950

Special Delivery

On May 23, 2008 ConocoPhillips presented a \$12,000 check to the FAMI Board of Directors. In an effort to use these funds in the most productive way the Board requested a wish list of projects and purchases from the Refuge staff. It was difficult but two purchases were chosen from the six pages of worthwhile projects.

We agreed to match the Refuge's purchase of nine 8' walk-thru recycled plastic picnic tables which will replace the concrete tables at the Picnic Area. FAMI will assist in the installation of all 18 tables in the near future.

And we replaced the old cotton wagon used to transport workers, guests and materials from the boat dock on Matagorda Island to the compound. Doc McAlister's old cotton wagon has been sorely missed since breaking an axle. The new trailer was custom built by McMahon Welding in Cuero, Texas and delivered in time for the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic held on August 9, 2008. The Board of Directors wishes to thank FAMI Projects Coordinator, Carroll Marsh for putting this project together.

Our thanks go to ConocoPhillips for making these purchases possible.



Left - June 2005
The Navy working on Matagorda Island siding project ride on the old cotton wagon. Photo by Carroll Marsh.

Right - August 2008
New custom trailer delivered August 2008. Photo by Charla Marsh.



Caution: Horny Toad Crossing

By Ashley Inslee

An extensive study of the Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) and its habitat preference was conducted on Matagorda Island this past summer. The objectives of this study were to characterize habitat types, estimate relative abundance and density for the island, and collect a tissue sample for isotope analysis. Samples were also collected for a genetics study being conducted by Texas Christian University.

Five volunteers spent tireless hours in the field setting up 24 drift-fence arrays in various habitat types during early May. Only three horned lizards were captured within the traps; however, their hard work was not in vain. Eighteen other species ranging from Bobwhite quail to Western diamondback rattlesnakes were captured in the traps, which provides invaluable data on diversity, abundance, and habitat preference of those species for the Refuge.



Andy Smith, Stacy Westlake, Richard Conger & Ashley Inslee setting up drift-fence arrays. 5/7/08



Juvenile Texas horned lizard – Megan Hughes 7/28/08

Alternatively, forty-one horned lizards were captured along middle road. They ranged from 4cm long juveniles to large females potentially carrying young. It was surprising to find that most of the horned lizards captured were crawling into very dense vegetation.

Megan Hughes, my field assistant, and I would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to all those volunteers who helped us set-up traps, collect data, and make Matagorda Island an enjoyable place to spend a summer. Thank you and I look forward to working with you all again next year!

Why Visit ANWR in the Summer?

By David Clayton

We all know that Aransas and whooping cranes go together like bread and butter. Those magnificent birds deserve our attention and efforts to bring them back from the brink of extinction. Because the cranes spend the winter months in Texas Aransas NWR sees many more visitors during those months than during the summer. Why would anyone want to spend time at ANWR when the cranes, and most other birds, are gone? The answer lies in what a remarkable place Aransas is every day of the year.

Recently I found myself at the refuge on a hot July evening with a few hours on my hands. I elected first to walk Heron Flats trail. At 1.4 miles this is the longest trail on the refuge and probably my favorite to visit. In the ponds on the marsh I didn't find a large variety of birds, but I did see large numbers of them. Numerous tricolored herons, white ibis and great egrets were busily feeding in every pond. Also present were laughing gulls, reddish egrets, great blue herons, little blue herons and snowy egrets.

Working my way along the trail I came to the series of fresh water ponds that are home to many alligators. The hot, dry weather this summer has seemingly drawn more alligators to these ponds. I found over twenty large adults with no difficulty – some in the water, some basking on the banks.

Something is always blooming at the refuge. On my walk I especially enjoyed Turk's Cap, Indian Blanket and lovely lavender blossoms of mist flowers. Just as colorful as the flowers are the insects. I found six varieties of dragonflies and lots of the beautiful palamedes swallowtail butterflies. Under the edges of the trees farther on I discovered dozens of small, inverted-cone depressions in the sandy soil. These are the homes of the larval stage of an insect known as an ant-lion. The larvae are voracious predators on ants and small spiders. The ant-lion hides at the bottom of the cone barely covered with sand, until something slides down the soft side of the cone. As adults the ant-lions give up their predatory ways and feed on pollen and nectar.

After my walk I drove slowly down the main road encountering armadillos, feral hogs, javelina, leopard frogs and Gulf coast ribbon snakes. As the shadows lengthen along the roadside more and more animals are to be seen emerging from the trees.

A quick stop at Jones Lake was rewarded with two more alligators, bullfrogs, white-tailed deer, a family of feral hogs and the call of a green tree frog. Scanning the far banks of the lake with my binoculars turned up several birds, including a group of black-bellied whistling ducks.

As I neared the observation tower the shadows of the trees nearly covered the road. Laying right across the center stripe of the road was a Diamondback rattlesnake. It was not a large one, certainly no more than two feet long. It never moved as I inched my car around it. I hadn't gone fifty yards when I came upon another snake moving beside the road. This one turned out to be a blotched water snake. These snakes are highly variable in color and this one was quite beautiful.

As I turned around at the tower parking lot a swamp rabbit emerged from the brush. Two turkeys were pecking the soil and a young white-tail deer buck bolted into the woods. I thought I was having a pretty good night. I got my last treat as I neared the rattlesnake again. He hadn't moved.

I parked some way back from him, just watching – when another snake began to slither across the road. It was small, and marked with whitish stripes on a dark background. I got out of my car and carefully moved up a bit closer – just not too close! The diamondback did nothing more than flick his tail a little. The smaller snake sped up, but I knew right away it was a juvenile cottonmouth moccasin. When he got to the side of the road he flicked his tail in the dry grass to make a rattling sound, then coiled up and showed me his white mouth. He added a few hisses for good measure. I backed away slowly, keeping an eye on both of those venomous snakes.

Heading back to the exit I knew I had just experienced a great night at a very special place. If you do choose to make an evening visit, be prepared. The Visitor's Center closes at 4:30 P.M., so be sure to bring water and snacks if you need them. If you have a refuge pass be sure to display it on your vehicle. If you don't have a pass you can pay your entrance fee at the box provided outside the Visitor's Center front door. Do watch where you put your feet and please drive slowly. Not every creature on the road can get away from a fast-moving car. Many other refuge residents can be seen near sunset – keep an eye out for opossums, raccoons, coyotes and bobcats. The adventure is always there – even in summer!

Congratulations Turtle Patrol

By Ashley Inslee

Seventy-seven days after Turtle Patrol began, the season concluded with record nest numbers, three war-torn club cars, and four rehabilitated turtles sent back home. For the first time since the inception of the Turtle Patrol the resources and personnel were provided to operate 3 teams of patrollers on the beach. Over 3,300 man hours were put into covering over 11,600 miles of beach to find stranded and nesting turtles (as well as many other beach artifacts and wildlife!). A total of thirteen nests were found on Matagorda Island this year. This number is up nearly 25% from last year. 1,041 eggs were excavated and transported to the Padre Island National Seashore incubation facility. The average hatchling success rate was consistent with the rest of the Texas coast at 84%. Three wild turtles were tagged and measured as well. The season culminated with the discovery of the nest that hatched out *in situ* on June 25th. An estimated 96 hatchlings left the nest and fought their way to the sea where the tracks ended. It is inconclusive as to how many of those hatchlings survived since no witnesses observed the hatchlings except for the one hatchling found in the nest cavity. 21 stranded turtles were also found washed up on the beach. Five of the turtles were found alive and sent to the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (one Loggerhead, two Greens, and two Hawksbills). Four of those five turtles have been released back to the sea, yet the fifth one may never leave the facilities due to the injuries sustained to its mouth. The value of Turtle Patrol is essential to the survival of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle. This fact is augmented by the nest found depredated by hogs, the five live stranded turtles sent to the ARK that would have perished on the beach, and the current realization that some of our sand

may be unsuitable for eggs. Thank you to all of those individuals who make turtle patrol possible and for all of the volunteers who put in tireless hours. We look forward to seeing all of our dedicated volunteers next turtle season!

For more information about Turtle Patrol please contact Ashley Inslee at a_inslee@yahoo.com



Top Left: Releasing a wild turtle found 6/3/08
(L to R) Kendal Keys, Megan Hughes, Tom Shearer,
Ashley Inslee & Barbra Threatt.

Above Right: Kemp's Ridley Hatchling (B.T. 06-25-08)

Left: Kemp's Ridley with Shark Bite (MP, 04-23-08)

Refuge Volunteers



Photos by Charla Marsh

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic Held

By Bernice Jackson

On Saturday August 9th volunteers gathered at the Refuge for food, friendship and an opportunity for the staff to say a big "THANK YOU" for their work in 2008. Fifty people attended the event dedicated to those Aransas volunteers and a staff member who had passed away. Delicious barbecue brisket and sausage was brought in from Mumphord's in Victoria and provided by the Refuge. Volunteers brought salads, vegetables and heavenly desserts.

After the meal, a few remarkable statistics were revealed. ORP Jackson noted that 140 volunteers currently have agreements with the Refuge. In 2008, these volunteers contributed 19,856 hours to the Refuge, equal to 9.5 employees working full-time and at a value of \$387,391 to the Refuge. Volunteers worked in Biology conducting turtle patrol, weekly bird surveys, Christmas Bird Count, Big Sit count, plover surveys, waterfowl counts deer censusing, frog counts, assisting with whooping crane/crab counts, Matagorda Island fluorescent bulb pickup project, horned lizard surveys, dove banding, seed gathering for prairie restoration and lots of data entry. In Visitor Services volunteers staffed the Visitor Center, greeted and oriented visitors and operated the FAMI store. They conducted interpretive van tours for over 500 visitors and assisted with training of van tour interpreters, provided programs from monthly lecture series, website updating, helping with special groups such as bus tours and those with special needs, assisting the Environmental Education specialist with large groups of school children, special events and activities we host throughout the year, staffing festival booths and working with the Boy Scouts on their service project and badge requirements. Maintenance included mowing, trimming trails, refurbishing the Matagorda Island education center, helping construct the new fishing pier at the picnic area, constructing kiosks for new exhibits, rehabbing the Jones Lake and Hog Lake viewing areas, cleaning bathrooms and signs and picking up trash. With FAMI, volunteers work tirelessly to help the Refuge. Several hold Board of Director positions and volunteer as President, President Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, Publications Coordinator, Computerized Cash Register Expert Extraordinaire, Business Manager, Projects Manager and Grants Coordinator. FAMI receives donated funds regularly and has been awarded thousands in grants for several projects including marsh restoration, prairie restoration, windmills, benches, a new Visitor Center exhibit and environmental education.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife volunteer pins were awarded. Several volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours during the year. Very interesting information about Turtle Patrol accomplishment, FAMI accomplishments and birders history was also presented. The latest FAMI project, a new EE touring trailer to be used on Matagorda Island was parked outside for everyone to see. It was a great afternoon and we look forward to the next one. See you there!

Whooping Crane Production Update

By Tom Stehn

As reported by Brian Johns, the Canadian Wildlife Service completed August 2008 whooping crane fledgling surveys in Wood Buffalo National Park and surrounding areas. The flying weather was great and there were more young than expected. Water levels looked "pretty good".

They counted 41 total young surviving from the 64 chicks present in June that had hatched from a record 66 nests. The total of 41 chicks included 2 sets of twins, down from the 12 sets that had been present in June.

Three family groups present in June could not be found, so there could be 1 or 2 additional fledglings. However, additional mortality could occur this summer or in the fall migration. I'll be hoping to see the number of juveniles approaching 40 this winter at Aransas. Aransas had 39 juveniles last winter with a total record flock size of 266. I'm anticipating counting about 285 whooping cranes this winter.

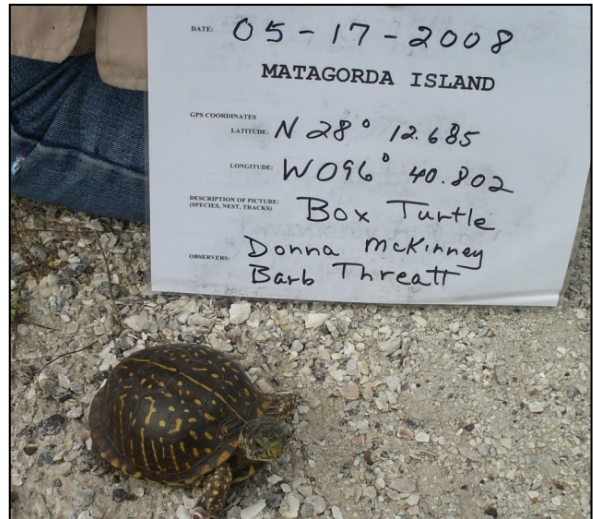


BOX TURTLE SIGHTINGS

By Ashley Inslee

In coordination with Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge has been collecting information on the Ornate box turtle (*Terrapene ornata*). Box turtles are characterized by having a single hinge at the anterior portion of the plastron, allowing them to fold it up and close the front of the shell completely. They also have a hooked beak which other Texas native turtles lack. The most distinguishing characteristic between males and females is eye color. Male box turtles have red eyes, while female box turtles have a yellow or golden iris.

A total of 15 Ornate box turtles have been recorded between February 12, 2008 and June 26, 2008. The dominant habitat in which the turtles were found consisted of native grassland habitat along Middle Road on Matagorda Island. A majority of the turtles were found between the hours of 7:30am and 11:00am. The temperature ranged from 65°F to 83°F with an average of 76.2°F. Of the 15 box turtles, 8 were identified as males, 3 were female, and 4 were unidentified. The plastron length ranged in size from 81mm to 129mm with an average length of 124mm.



Box Turtle

D.M. 5/17/2008)



Refuge Accepts Fall/Winter Hunt Applications

Applications for the Refuge's annual archery and rifle hunts for white-tailed deer and feral hogs are available now at the Refuge Visitors Center.

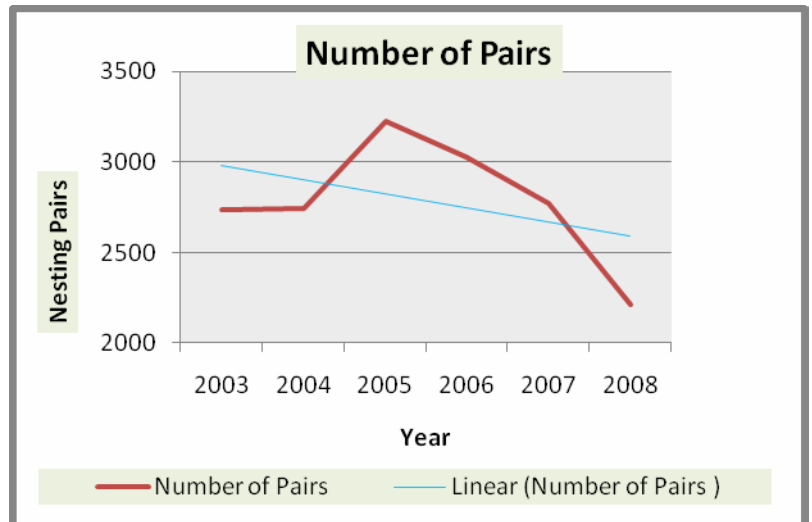
The archery hunt is for nine days from October 4 - 12 the fee is \$60.00 per hunter. The rifle hunt consists of four weekend hunts on November 8 - 9, November 22 - 23, December 6 - 7 and December 20 - 21. The fee is \$125.00 per hunter per weekend.

Call the Refuge at 361-286-3559 for more information.

Colonial Waterbird Survey

By Chad Stinson

The annual Colonial Water Bird Survey is designed to monitor colonial bird breeding populations within the Refuge and adjacent bay systems. This survey enables biologists to detect and track significant population shifts. During 2008, 37 island and inland colonies were surveyed, 23 of which had active nests. Survey results identified a 20 percent decline in nesting pair numbers within the Aransas count zone relative to 2007. This decline is the result of moderate decreases in gull-billed tern and tricolored herons nesting and significant declines in sandwich terns and laughing gull nesting numbers. There were two species that reported increased nesting activity in 2008: Royal and Forster terns. Over the last six years within the Aransas NWR survey zone, nesting pair numbers have experienced an overall decline of over 4,000 pairs (Graph 1.CS1).



Graph 1.CS1- Nesting Pair Results 2003-2008

Managing the Feral Hog Menace

By: Amanda Diaz

In an effort to protect and maintain the sensitive ecosystem on Matagorda Island, employees of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge conducted a hunt to control the fast-spreading feral hog population.

In only three days, beginning on May 19th, 392 feral hogs were exterminated as part of the federally supported Animal Damage Control (ADC) program. To achieve this task, six USDA employees and several Refuge personnel traveled to and from Matagorda Island daily.

The ADC program was implemented primarily to protect agricultural interests by controlling predator populations but personnel recognized the challenges posed by the large feral hog infestation on Refuge grounds.

Aside from being a night-time driving hazard, feral hogs have a severe environmental impact, most notably the destruction of habitat of native wildlife and predation of wildlife.

This is especially important to Matagorda Island during the summer months when endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtles come ashore to nest. Turtle patrollers on Matagorda Island watch for signs of nesting and excavate the eggs when they find nests. The eggs are then sent to be incubated, hatched and released in an effort to revive the endangered species. Hogs threaten this process because they are known to dig up and eat turtle eggs. They will also prey on sea turtle hatchlings trying to make their way to the sea for the first time.

However, it is not only the turtles that suffer. Since feral hogs compete for food with other animals, including white-tailed deer, turkey, bobcat and javelina, other native species suffer because of the hogs rapidly growing population. The feral hogs will also prey on the young of these other animals.

Feral hog hunting on Matagorda Island will help ensure that native wildlife and their habitat are protected from the menacing effects of the feral hog overpopulation.



DOVE BANDING PROJECT

Article and Photos by David Clayton

This summer ANWR is participating in a special project banding doves. I heard about the project too late to take the training, but I asked if I could accompany one of the volunteers on a day of trapping and banding. Permission was granted with the stipulation that I was not to touch any birds since I didn't have a permit from the training. That was how I ended up pulling into the refuge headquarters area one morning just before dawn to meet Carroll Marsh.

As we loaded the truck we were taking out Carroll explained to me that this banding project is a cooperative effort among several states and agencies. At ANWR the project is being handled by a combination of staff, interns and volunteers. The targeted birds for the project are white-wing and mourning doves. The hope is to track movements of doves across several states. To do that most accurately a certain number of doves need to be banded from each area. The goal for our area is 200 doves.

With mosquito repellent on, and all of our supplies in the truck, we headed out for the Tatton Unit of ANWR. For anyone who isn't familiar with the Tatton Unit it is the portion of the refuge which sits along Highway 35 between Tivoli and Rockport. The unit is mostly a prairie environment and very little is open to the public. At the roadside picnic area visitors can walk out to an observation platform. Carroll took us to a gate near the picnic area, unlocked it, and we started our days efforts.

"Road" is a very kind term for the path we followed to the first site. It was very rough. Alongside the path were firebreaks that had been disked by the refuge fire crew to contain controlled burns. At the first trapping site Carroll and I turned over the small wire traps. The traps are made of wire and very short so as to catch only birds feeding on the ground and to minimize any hurt they might take in struggling to escape. Each trap has two entrances which confuse the bird once it is inside. We sprinkled seed – milo, safflower and millet – around the trap; taking care to make a trail leading into the trap.

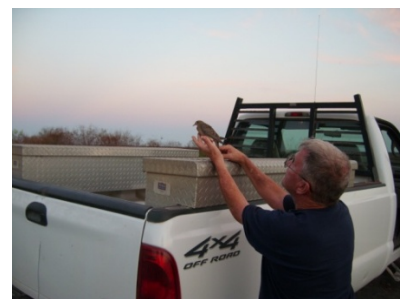
We continued on to three more sites. Between two of them a group of six little feral hog piglets bolted across the road right in front of the truck. Each site on the Tatton has at least two traps. Carroll told me about some of the difficulties the teams had encountered so far. It seems that deer and feral hogs have found the traps a bountiful place to pick up a snack. They shift the traps around and scatter the seed. One trap site had also attracted a large, ill-tempered cottonmouth moccasin the day before, although we saw no sign of him that day.

Once all the traps were set we settled in to wait. The traps have to have some time undisturbed, but on such a hot day it is very important not to leave a bird in a trap for too long. The heat, lack of water, and confinement stress the birds very quickly. The traps must not be left in the "catch" position more than two hours. We passed the time nicely with chat and watching the many white-tailed does with their fawns moving through the grasses. The playful fawns are very entertaining.

Our morning run back through the traps didn't produce any doves. We did catch a few red-wing blackbirds which we quickly released. We turned each trap over as we went so as not to trap a bird during the hottest part of the day.

We now had several hours of free time before the evening trap run. Carroll offered to show me some of the trap sites on Blackjack peninsula. This was a treat for me as he took me back into some generally non-public areas of the refuge. As we rode along he explained how the trapping team had chosen the sites and then divided them up into runs for the trappers. We followed that with lunch, a few special chores for staff members - and a refreshing nap for me!

Around 7:00 P.M. we headed back to our Tatton Unit traps. Once again we went through our sites baiting and setting the traps. A pleasant breeze picked up as we sat in the truck watching one site in the distance with binoculars. Many birds were on the move in the area within an hour. The deer were also on the move again. Dozens of them, including many fawns, came across our field of view.



DOVE BANDING , continued

At last it was time to check the traps again. We went through our first three sites with only cowbirds, red-wing blackbirds and one sparrow. We had a success at the last site. There was a single mourning dove in one of the traps. Carroll quickly covered the trap with a cloth to settle the bird down. He blocked the entrances and opened the top to remove the bird while I took photos. We took the bird to the cool of the truck to handle the banding and record-keeping.

The dove was determined to be a young one; in his hatch year. The age is determined from details in their feathers. We recorded which band was placed on the bird and where it was trapped. Carroll opened the metal band and then carefully closed it around the bird's leg. All that was left was the release. For some reason the bird was reluctant to leave for a moment, but it flew off nicely.

By now it was nearly dark. We were tired from a long day in the heat, but satisfied with our late-day catch. I was thankful to have had an opportunity to participate in the project in a small way. I am looking forward to whatever chance will come along next and lead me out into the special places of Aransas.

Note: Staff and volunteers constructed a total of 90 traps which were distributed among 52 different sites on the Refuge and privately owned lands. Pre-baiting of the sites began on June 9, 2008 then trapping took place from June 23, 2008 through August 28, 2008. Over 1,000 man-hours were dedicated to this project and a total of 200 mourning doves and 37 white-winged doves were captured and banded.



Friends of Aransas & Matagorda Island Speakers' Bureau

Earlier this year FAMI received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation which funded purchases of equipment and the construction of our information center "Brag Board" located in the Visitors Center. The grant also made it possible to purchase a color laser printer, as well as software and equipment needed to develop a speakers' bureau. The speakers' bureau would draw from a pool of volunteers with special knowledge and expertise relating to local topics. A series of 30 minute Power Point presentations would be developed to assist the bureau volunteers in making presentations at RV parks, schools, scout troop meetings and other local organizations. We expect these presentations to stimulate interest in the Refuge and FAMI. If you are interested in volunteering your time and would like to participate in the speakers' bureau please contact cindibarreATAol.com.

Danger! Danger!

You are in danger of losing your FAMI benefits. What are they you ask?

- 1) Being associated with possibly the best place in the world to see an amazing variety of birds included the majestic Whooping Crane as well as other wildlife.
- 2) A unique and interesting quarterly newsletter - even if I do say so myself.
- 3) A 15% discount on all purchases made at the FAMI bookstore. Did you know that the bookstore is operated by volunteers and that all profits go to support the goals of the Refuge?
- 4) An annual membership meeting that includes a complimentary Whooping Crane boat tour, a delicious lunch and a very short business meeting.

These are just a few of the many benefits you will miss if you don't renew your membership today. So complete the application on the cover page of this newsletter and mail it along with your dues to:

Friends of Aransas & Matagorda Island, P O Box 74, Austwell, TX 77950.

Know someone who has everything **Except** a FAMI Membership? WOW what a great gift idea!

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

September 2008						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

September 11 – 14: Hummer/Bird Celebration, Rockport – The Refuge has a booth at the festival and needs help working it on Sept 12 & 13. For information contact Bernice Jackson at 361–286–3559 or Bernice_Jackson@fws.gov.

September 30: Membership expires – send in dues immediately!

Weekly Bird Survey is conducted at the Refuge from September thru May. If you are interested and would like to get involved, contact Barbara Bruns at 361–575–5505 or the Refuge at 361–286–3559 for more information.

OCTOBER 2008						
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October 4 & 5: Refuge Visitor Services & Fire personnel will staff a Texas NWR booth at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Expo in Austin at the TPWD Headquarters. If you’ve never been to the Expo, it is quite the outdoors extravaganza and worth the drive. There are several acres of nature related booths, activities and freebies.

October 12: A ‘Big Sit Day’ will be observed at the Refuge. For more information contact the Refuge at 381–286–3559 or Barbara Bruns at 361–575–5505.

October 16: The Refuge is hosting a booth at the Calhoun County Fair in Port Lavaca. For more information contact Bernice Jackson at 361–286–3559 or Bernice_Jackson@fws.gov.

October 18: In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week (Oct 12 – 18) the Refuge will offer a Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Walk at 9 am (Reservations Required), several outdoor information booths, van tours at 10 am and 1 pm (Reservations Required) and at noon TPWD Education Specialist Brock Minton will present an Aransas Lecture Series program entitled “Tips & Techniques for Hunting White-tailed Deer and Feral Hogs at Aransas NWR”

Weekly Bird Survey is conducted at the Refuge from September thru May. If you are interested and would like to get involved, contact Barbara Bruns at 361–575–5505 or the Refuge at 361–286–3559 for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2008						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

November 1: Van Tour Guide training. Come learn to be a tour guide. For more information contact Bernice Jackson at 361-286-3559 or Bernice_Jackson@fws.gov.

November 22: Aransas Lecture Series program on Alligators presented by Norman Hirsch starts at noon. Van tours available at 10 am and 1 pm (Reservations Required).

Weekly Bird Survey is conducted at the Refuge from September thru May. If you are interested and would like to get involved, contact Barbara Bruns at 361-575-5505 or the Refuge at 361-286-3559 for more information.

DECEMBER 2008						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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December 6: Annual membership meeting – ting boat trip, good eats and then a short business meeting.

December 13: Aransas Lecture Series program on Sea Turtles presented by Ray Kirkwood starts at noon. Van tours available at 10 am and 1 pm (Reservations Required).

December 29: The Refuge will host the annual Christmas Bird Count. Participants will have the opportunity to accompany expert birders and learn how to identify birds by sight, call and habitat. Aransas has one of the highest bird counts for this event in the country. Contact Barbara Bruns at 361-575-5505 or the Refuge at 361-286-3559 for more information.

Weekly Bird Survey is conducted at the Refuge from September thru May. If you are interested and would like to get involved, contact Barbara Bruns at 361-575-5505 or the Refuge at 361-286-3559 for more information.

Fishing is open from all access points now through October 15 and is allowed year round from the fishing pier. Guided van tours every Saturday and Sunday from January - April, contact the Refuge at 361-286-3559 for more information.

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip code _____

Home Phone _____

Other Phone _____

Email _____

Membership Categories

- Senior (age 62+) - \$10.00
- Student (up to age 21) - \$5.00
- Individual - \$15.00
- Family - \$25.00
- Life - \$300.00
- Business - \$150.00
- Corporate Sponsor - \$500.00
- Additional contribution \$

\$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed

**Memberships expire
September 30th each year.**

Make checks payable to:

Friends of Aransas & Matagorda Island

Mail to: P. O. Box 74

Austwell, Texas 77950

FAMI Mission Statement

Friends of Aransas of Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuges (FAMI) will work to support and assist the Aransas and Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex in its goal of enhancing habitat and wildlife and encouraging compatible wildlife-dependant public uses of the refuges through educational, interpretive, scientific and other activities appropriate to the mission of these Refuges.

Friends of Aransas/Matagorda Island

National Wildlife Refuges

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