Rich’s habitat and hunting update for the Wanaket Wildlife Area

Please visit this site for weekly hunting data updates during the upland and waterfowl seasons. You will also find periodically updated information on wildlife habitat projects.

Volunteer Opportunity

June 17th, 2019: Burrowing Owl nest structure project. We are seeking volunteers to help establish eight new nesting structures. 2018 was an exciting year for the Burrowing Owl artificial nest site project. Wanaket staff observed a single Burrowing Owl at a nest site in Wanaket eastern uplands. Wanaket staff returned a month later to band the bird(s) and any owlets, if present. The pair had moved to an adjacent nest site and had produced eight owlets. Ultimately, four owlets developed hard feathers and fledged. This was the first time in 20 years that a nesting pair produced a fledgling at Wanaket. Please contact me to be added to the volunteer list. We will meet at the main check station across from McNary Beach access road on Hwy 730, 8AM. richscheele@ctuir.org This Project has been postponed on 6/14/2019 sorry for the short notice!!!!! Will again call for volunteers when the project is scheduled-Rich S

Adult male Burrowing owl in artificial nest structure 2018
Update: Thank you to the Pendleton Bird Club for assisting Wanaket staff on January 17th constructing the 16 burrows that will be installed June 17th 2019. Wanaket staff also marked all of the GPS locations where the structures will be placed on Wanaket. Remember to bring a shovel or a rake to the installation day and a lunch and water it will be a long day of fun!!! Thanks for all that you do.

WORLDS Wetland Day

Update: Thank you to Pendleton Ducks Unlimited Chapter for their assistance with cleaning and maintaining the wood duck boxes on World Wetland Day. Below are a few pictures from the day.

Feather identification
Volunteer cleaning wood duck box
Wanaket staff checking wood duck box
Wanaket staff and Pendleton chapter Ducks Unlimited inspecting Wood Duck box
February, 2019: Irrigation Canal Sediment removal.

March, 2020: We are seeking volunteers to help clean, inspect and repair Mallard nest cones and Wood Duck boxes

**Hunting Report**

Hello fellow outdoor enthusiasts! Some game bird hunting seasons are still open and here are some harvest numbers that were collected from December 21-25 2019. Yearly totals below. Wetlands are looking great with more mallards moving in off the Columbia from the heavy winds. We will have rain and winds from the southwest Friday evening and Saturday morning.

**Attention:**

Pheasant season is closed but California quail is open through the end of January.

**Upland game birds:**

Pheasants 27

California quail 55
Total Harvest 82
Total Hunted 116
Total Hours 192
Hours per Hunter 1.7
Birds Per hunter 1.4

**Waterfowl:**

January 18-22
Ducks 2  American Widgeon, Green wing teal and Mallards most harvested.
Geese
Dark 3
White 0
Weekly Harvest 2
Weekly Hunted 3
Weekly Hours 9
Weekly Hours per Hunter 3
Weekly Birds per Hunter 1.5

**Yearly Total:**
Ducks 483  American Widgeon, Teal and Mallards most harvested.
Geese
Dark 9
White 3
Total Harvest 495
Total Hunted 241
Total Hours 755.5
Hours per Hunter 3.1
Birds per Hunter 2.1
1/19/2020  I conducted a Waterbird survey 396 Ducks documented many Ringneck and Green-Wing Teal have recently moved in. Mallards consisted of about 8% of the population. There were also 41 Dark geese surveyed with a total number of waterfowl surveyed 437.

1/24/2020 Only 3 hunters showed to check into the Wildlife Area for Waterfowl hunting this week. I checked the wetland conditions the last 2 days and there is open water in the wetland complex. The self-check has been removed and I will be there Saturday to conduct the draw. Saturday is the last day for Waterfowl hunting on Wanaket. Thanks for everyone that participated in 2019-2020 hunting season on Wanaket. I will be updating this site for wildlife volunteer opportunities and habitat restoration projects. Open Consumptive use period for wildlife viewing starts February 15th 2020-Marrch 31st 2020. Remember no dogs are allowed on the area for this period.

Thanks for everyone that came out and enjoyed a day on Wanaket.

**Wetland Habitat Project**

September 2018: Wanaket staff conducted a wetland enhancement project. Before the work began, the 1-acre pond 25B was entirely filled with wetland vegetation, and no open water habitat was present. Wanaket staff excavated the pond to greatly increase the area of open water. In 2019, we plan to remove Russian olive in the area north of Pond 25B. Following the olive removal, a head gate structure will be placed between pond 25A (hunt pond 10) and pond 25B, which will allow us to control water levels in this chain of wetlands. During the past 10 years, Wanaket staff have completed 9 wetland habitat restoration projects, which increased open water habitat through vegetation and sediment removal as in the pond 25B work. In addition, and four historical wetlands were reclaimed by adding water to dry depressions via canal improvements.

**Russian olive Removal Project**

Project completed March 2019,

**Update:**

*This project turned out very successful with the cutting and piling of the Russian olive tree and the burning of the invasive weeds and Russian olive piles. Listed below the objectives that this project identified and met.*

- Cut remover Russian olive trees.
- Remove old decadent vegetation and piles of Russian olive trees through burning
- Burn mono culture vegetation such as cattails and other vascular plants to provide regrowth for nesting and hiding cover for broods and other wildlife
- Increase open water habitat
- Provide regrowth for native grasses.
Mule Deer Surveys
Did not survey

Waterfowl Pair Surveys
N/A

Remember: Antler shed hunting is prohibited on Wanaket.

Misc.
Wanaket staff completed signing the entire boundary of Wanaket with “Restricted access” signs. The open access periods remains the same in 2020 for Upland and Waterfowl hunting as well as the Non Consumptive Use Period (Feb15th-March31st). Wanaket staff posted the non-consumptive use period information in the parking lot kiosk. Dogs are only allowed on Wanaket during the waterfowl and upland hunting seasons. Remember that there is no fishing at the Wanaket ponds.
-Rich Scheele,
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