



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

December 2023: *The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is presently located in twenty-two different locations in the four primary Connecticut River watershed states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge is located in ten locations on the mainland and near shore islands along the northern shore of the Long Island Sound in Connecticut.*

Staff Appreciation At The McKinney Refuge



A BIG THANK YOU to S.B. McKinney seasonal staff Jeremy Keeler, Rianna Albert, and Izzy Martinez who did a stellar job installing the new metal roof of the storage shed (seen behind them in the photo) at Calf Island, Greenwich. Roofing isn't easy, especially if it's your first job. It also isn't easy to repeatedly travel to Greenwich, CT from Eastern Connecticut, load and unload supplies, launch a boat to get to an island, and then complete the roofing job. So "Hats Off" to these exceptional employees whose hard work, dedication and enthusiasm for their work is greatly appreciated.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Reaching The Community Through Libraries



Visitor Service Staff at the Fort River Division have been active with three local libraries this fall, providing educational programming to a youth and families of all ages. This month we spent time at the library in Hadley, MA, engaging with participants on a variety of topics, including birds and bird biology, seasonal weather changes, and animal winter survival. As the new year approaches, we look forward to continuing our community engagement with families from our surrounding communities.

Photo credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

December 2023

Slowing The Spread Of Invasives



Photo Credit: USFWS

S.B. McKinney Refuge wildlife biologist and visitor services manager spent time this month at the Milford Point Unit pulling spotted knapweed, a non-native invasive perennial species that has spread into areas of the barrier beach, that are also home to rare plants. By removing spotted knapweed, the refuge staff is making more room for native plant species along our shoreline.

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Winter Recreation At The Nulhegan Basin Division—Vermont



Photo Credit: USFWS

Every year roughly 25 miles of gravel roads at the Nulhegan Basin are groomed by local snowmobile clubs to provide winter recreation opportunities. The groomed trails on the wildlife refuge are used for snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Individuals using Snowmobiles on the trail system must have their machines registered, insured and obtain a VAST trail pass. Snowmobile season in Vermont is December 16th to April 15th. At the end of the season the refuge gates will be closed and locked until Memorial Day weekend.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Excessive Rain At Fort River Division



Photo Credit: USFWS

December brought about excessive rain at the Fort River Division, bringing the water level in one of the impoundments to a point where it breached the berm and began to erode the soil. Refuge staff caught the issue early, and were able to triage the situation using plywood and opening the release valve. We hope that the rain events become less frequent, and more snow starts to fall in the winter months.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov