



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Silvio O. Conte

## *National Fish and Wildlife Refuge*

### Refuge Happenings: August 2024

The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge presently includes twenty-three different divisions and units, located 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.

### Fixing Bridges at Nulhegan

USFWS staff, working in conjunction with the Connecticut River Conservancy, constructed a 35 foot bridge over the Yellow Branch of the Nulhegan River. The bridge replaced an undersized culvert that was impacting the hydrology of the stream. The bridge is located on the Eagles Nest Road, which is a primary public access corridor at the Nulhegan Basin Division. Permitting and project design began in 2023. The steel frame of the bridge was custom made for the site, and was designed to handle transporting heavy equipment and log trucks. The new bridge was designed to be structurally resilient to large storm events that have been impacting Northern Vermont in greater frequency in recent years. The project was funded through the Inflation Reduction Act as part of the climate resilience funds allocated to Northern Forest National Wildlife Refuges.



Photo: USFWS

For more information contact: [Steve\\_Agius@fws.gov](mailto:Steve_Agius@fws.gov)

### Service Interns Learn Archery at Fort River Division

US FWS Interns Evan Bartow and Elena Campbell organized an outing for other interns working in the Regional Office this summer. The group visited the Fort River Division of the Conte Refuge, learning and practicing their archery skills. Both Evan and Elena are certified archery instructors, and led the group through proper archery methods. Regional Director Wendi Weber stopped by to say hello to the interns, and offer her support and gratitude for their work.



Photo: USFWS

For more information contact: [Jennifer\\_Lapis@fws.gov](mailto:Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov)



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#### Meeting Visitors At The Forest Park Zoo

Refuge Staff and Interns hosted two information tables at the Forest Park Zoo in Springfield, Ma this month. One table session focused on canines, their biology and behavior, while the other table session focused on the illegal wildlife and pet trade. Over the two day period, refuge staff interacted with over 300 people, introducing them to the US Fish & Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuge System.

For more information contact: [Jennifer\\_Lapis@fws.gov](mailto:Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov)



Photo: USFWS



Photo: USFWS

#### Early Detection, Early Action At Fort River

Deputy Refuge Manager Dean Rhine jumped into action at the Fort River Division this summer when the invasive purple loosestrife was found growing in several locations throughout the division. Refuge staff helped to locate and hand pull the flowers, stems, and roots of the plants found in the wetland areas. If we do not act quickly to remove this fast growing plant, it will take over the newly restored wetland habitats. Although the plant is pretty to look at, it is devastating to the native species that grow in the refuge.

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#### Annual Butterfly Walk

On August 10, 2024, volunteer naturalist Tom Kelly conducted the annual butterfly walk at the Salt Meadow Unit of the McKinney Refuge in Westbrook, CT. The sixteen participants observed butterflies (that were carefully captured and released) through a transparent case, which allowed an intimate look at the colorful and delicate creatures. In total, ten species were identified, including common swallowtails and the less common, buckeye. The program was made possible through a partnership with the Connecticut Butterfly Association.

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Photo: USFWS

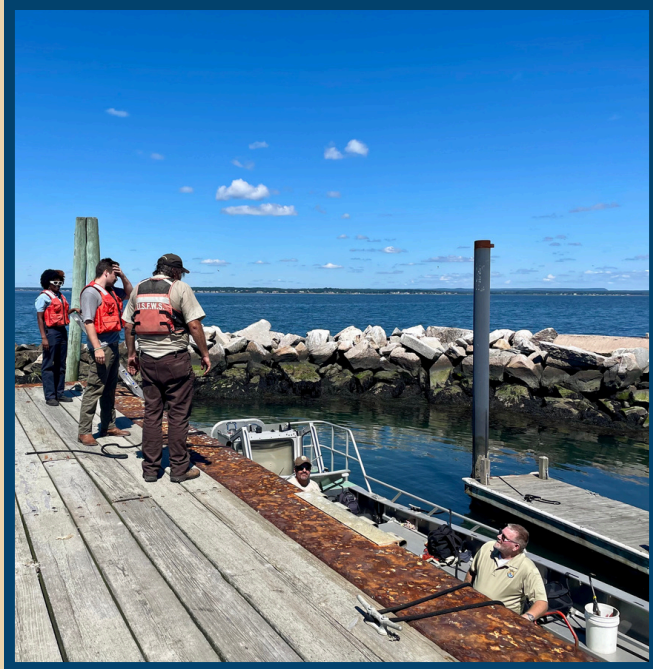


Photo: USFWS

#### Refuge Staff Remove Docks At Falkner Island

The end of summer means it is time to remove the docks at McKinney Refuge's Falkner Island. Refuge Manager Rick Potvin led a group of seven Refuge staff and volunteers, directing the team through the series of steps required to safely and efficiently remove the docks. The team disassembled the docks, and towed them back to the mainland, where they were then loaded onto a trailer and transported to their winter storage location.

For more information contact: [Shaun\\_Roche@fws.gov](mailto:Shaun_Roche@fws.gov)