

Two River National Wildlife Refuge prepares for summer habitat management

May 27 2016 3:36 PM



BRUSSELS - Although waterfowl, including ducks and geese, are spending the summer in their breeding grounds this is the time for Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge along the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers to prepare habitat for the fall and spring migrations.

The wildlife refuge provides important food and shelter for hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese during their migrations. In the fall, these birds depend on energy-providing plants so that they can continue south. In the spring, insects living in the wetlands provide vital nourishment, ensuring the birds can continue on to the breeding grounds in the northern Midwest and Canada.



To ensure plants grow in the wetlands refuge staff slowly remove water to expose the soil, allowing sunlight to germinate the seeds found in the seed bank. This process, called a drawdown, will be performed at the refuge's Swan Lake in lower Calhoun County, Gilbert Lake near the Brussels Ferry in Jersey County and Prairie Pond in Batchtown, Ill.

During the drawdown the refuge wetlands may look more like fields than ponds. There is still vital habitat provided during this time for reptiles, amphibians, insects and lots of birds. Visitors will see herons and egrets eager to gobble up fish and frogs in the shallow water.

Refuge staff is available to answer questions about habitat management at the refuge visitor center near Brussels, Ill. During the summer months the visitor center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and the first two weekends of each month October through April.

For more information, call 618-883-2524.