



FOOTPRINTS

SEASONAL IMPRESSIONS OF CLARK COUNTY WETLANDS PARK



Photo by Yolanda Scaggs

FALL 2018

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Clark County Wetlands Park preserves and enhances **natural** and **cultural** resources and provides **educational, recreational,** and **research opportunities** for the **public**.

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Cover photo "*Splash of Color*" entry submitted by Yolanda Scaggs.

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A RIDE IN THE PARK

Every day, people are discovering the Wetlands Park bike trails. Cyclists can always experience something beautiful and new whether traveling exclusively within the Park or just passing through on a connecting trail.

There are several entrances to the bike trails within the Park but one of the most enjoyable parts of a ride is the open area that follows the north side of the Las Vegas Wash. It is completely paved, mostly flat, and features a few fun bumps, a couple of good hills, and some awesome bridges; all with views of flowing water, birds, geology, plants, trees, flowers, and critters. Add to this an excellent view of the Las Vegas skyline, and all the possibilities for an exciting bike outing start to come into focus. Below are some ideas for different options available to cyclists from novice to experienced:

Easy Ride (stay within the park): There are several places to start riding the Park's bike trails, such as Neighborhood Park, Sunrise Trailhead, Wells Trailhead, Pabco Trailhead, and City of Henderson's Terrazza Park.

Extend Your Ride (connect outside the park): You can connect to some major valley trails as well. The *Flamingo*

Arroyo Trial is the first major trail created by Clark County as a part of the growing complex of trails in Southern Nevada. *Duck Creek Trail* is another County trail that connects to the Park from the west at the Duck Creek Trailhead. The *River Mountains Loop Trail* is a 35-mile long loop that connects to the Wetlands Park via the *Wetlands Connector Trail* near Terrazza Park.

Always keep in mind that bicycles are not allowed everywhere. The Nature Preserve within the Wetlands Park is a special area designated for pedestrians only. This is still good news for cyclists since that leaves miles of trails available to experience from your own two wheels. Be sure to check out the Wetlands Park website (www.ccwetlandspark.com) for specific information about bike trails and maps. 🌸



Cyclist enjoying the Monson bike trail

SEASONAL FLORA & FAUNA FORECAST

Fall is transition time for many plants and animals, a time to fatten up and store food. Night arrives earlier, temperatures begin to fall, and deciduous trees begin to shed their leaves. Here is a sampling of what you may encounter in the Park this time of year:

FLORA: Look for plants to transition from blooming & green to browning, such as the Fremont cottonwood, marsh fleabane, tamarisk, as well as sandbar and seep willows.

Some plants will remain green throughout the fall, such as salt grass, iodine bush, and the Goodding's willow.

Look for lots of seed pods either brown and/or opened, such as bulrush, four-wing saltbush, screwbean mesquite, quailbush, and milkweed.

FAUNA: Continue to look for insects, such as ants, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, and wasps. In particular, keep

your eyes open for monarch and queen butterflies and their chrysalises and caterpillars.

Look to the ground for Gambel's quail, greater roadrunner, desert cottontail, and northern flicker.

Look to the water for American coots, common gallinules, herons, double-crested cormorants, killdeer, and turtles.

Look to the trees and the sky for black-tailed gnatcatcher, hummingbirds, belted kingfisher, northern mockingbird, phainopepla, loggerhead shrike, vultures, hawks, and falcons. 🦋

MONARCH CHRYSALIS



Photo by Sheila Glennie

MILKWEED SEED PODS



Photo by Sheila Glennie

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS



Photo by Sheila Glennie

NATURE CLOSE-UP: BLACK-NECKED STILTS

Elegant looking with its striking black and white plumage, needle-like bill, long neck and stilt-like red legs, the black-necked stilt is both arresting and delicate in appearance. Their thin, red legs are the second longest in proportion to their bodies of any bird, exceeded only by the flamingo. Despite its fragile appearance, the Black-necked Stilt manages to thrive on sunbaked mud flats around shallow ponds and lakes, some of them in searing hot climates.

A gregarious bird, black-necked stilts typically nest in loose colonies, sometimes mixed with avocets. The rudimentary nest, built by both sexes, is on bare, open ground near water or on a slight rise surrounded by water. Parents will take turns incubating the eggs over about 25 days. On very hot days, the adult may go into the water and wet belly feathers to help cool the eggs. While tended by both parents, the downy chicks are able to feed

themselves and leave the nest a few hours after hatching. Age at first flight is generally four to five weeks.

If a predator approaches the colony on foot, black-necked stilt adults may fly some distance away and perform a distraction display. Adults may pretend to sit on a nest only to move to another spot and again pretend to guard a nest. Sometimes adults mimic a broken wing to draw predators away from nesting sites.

A group may also use an anti-predator display called a "popcorn display" where they encircle a predator, hop up and down, and flap their wings.

If you would like to learn more about the birds that can be found at Wetlands Park, consider joining our Java Jaunt Birding walk with a Red Rock Audubon Society birding expert. Enrollment is limited and pre-registration is required. 🌿



Photo by Timothy Olsen

A black-necked stilt wades in the water at Wetlands Park

BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN

How do you enjoy the outdoors when it's over 100°F? This summer Wetlands Park offered exciting programs to celebrate nature and the outdoors from inside the comfort of the Nature Center.

Discovery Day was held Saturday, July 7 with over 600 people attending. Imagine the Nature Center and Exhibit Hall filled with interesting and fun science activities for kids and adults. Cool partner agencies like Nevada Division of Wildlife, Red Rock Audubon Society, Lake Mead NRA, Discovery Children's Museum, Get Outdoors Nevada, Clark County Parks and Recreation, and so many others brought fun activities and information to share. Where else can you go to play Bird Bingo or Create-a-Critter,



Photo by Timothy Olsen

Getting up close and personal with a snake

hold live snakes, inspect scorpions, crawl with desert tortoises, take your picture with Mojave Max, and participate in a drum circle?

Science Fun Summer Field Trips were specially designed for Clark County Parks and Recreation Summer Day Camp kids. 232 kids, ages 6-12 years, from Pearson and Desert Breeze Recreation Centers, as well as Leaders of the Future came on reserved dates to learn, discover, and

play. The mornings began with a short walk to spark the children's imagination before they enjoyed a scavenger hunt in the Exhibit Hall and "designed" far-out wetlands creatures. The kids also learned about scientific observation with equipment and tools that scientists use, like compasses and binoculars, or sifting through watery muck looking for macroinvertebrates with microscopes and hand lenses. Whether inside or outside, everyone learned that science in the summer rocks! 🌻

**JOIN US FOR OUR
NEXT EVENT**

HAUNT THE WETLANDS

**October
26**



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteer Steven Hoffman greeting visitors with a smile

Passionate volunteers are priceless. They are the heart and voice of Wetlands Park. Steve Hoffman is one such volunteer. We were able to catch up with him to find out what attracts him to Wetlands Park.

What is your background?

My grandfather came to the United States in 1864 and opened a bakery in Delaware. That bakery was in business for 125 years. I worked in the family

business in Ohio until it was sold about 25 years ago. I then went to work for a large company in the food industry. I had always wanted to move out west. When the company offered me a position in Las Vegas, I grabbed it. I left that position about 10 years ago and went to work at Mandalay Bay as the Buffet Manager. I have two sons that are grown and living in Ohio.

How did you come to volunteer at the Park?

I was looking for a place to go where I could just chill out! I found the Wetlands and realized I found a diamond in the rough. I fell in love with the park. I did notice all the trash and garbage accumulating and it bothered me! I wanted to be part of the solution to clean up the park. That's when I discovered the Wetlands Watch program. Unfortunately, shortly after that I broke my leg riding my bike. The Wetlands found a home for me in the Exhibit Hall while my leg healed.

What kinds of things do you do during a typical volunteer shift as Wetlands Watcher?

I try to make it to the Wetlands once or twice a week. I like to bring my bike for exercise while I pick up trash. I also started bird watching recently and I love doing that while collecting. I believe that whatever you carry in you should carry out!

Why do you like volunteering at the Park and what advice would you give someone thinking about volunteering?

I want to be part of the solution and have others join me as a volunteer. Mandalay Bay has a volunteer program and I always recommend the Wetlands to staff when they put together places for their employees to volunteer. It is my way of giving back to the community.

What is your favorite spot in the Park?

I love the area surrounding the bike trails out to Lake Las Vegas and the new Tropicana Wash area with all the wildlife. 🌿

WETLANDS WALKERS ON THE MOVE

Walking is good for one's physical health, and a walk in nature is even better!

Wetlands Walkers, a group of **112** health and nature oriented individuals, track their miles whenever they walk Park trails and earn rewards at various milestones. As a group, their mileage is tallied to reach a yearly goal matching the migration distances of one of the Park's visiting species. In 2018 the Walkers are recognizing the black-

necked stilt and have a collective goal of trekking 5,000 miles. To date, the walkers have traveled **3,926 miles** of the goal!

To learn more about the Wetlands Walkers program and the black-necked stilt, stop by the Exhibit Hall in the Nature Center.



FUN BLACK-NECKED STILT FACTS:

- They peck, snatch, and plunge their heads into the water in pursuit of their food, and will herd fish into shallow waters to trap them.
- The oldest recorded black-necked stilt was at least 12 years, five months old.
- The best time to see them in Wetlands Park is during the spring and fall, with peak months being April and September. 🌸

WHEN WILDLIFE IS IN DISTRESS

Visitor activity increases significantly beginning in September due to the milder weather. There is also an increase in phone calls and visits by people requesting information on abandoned animals or animals in distress, either in the Park or their neighborhood. People often ask if they can drop off animals, birds, fish and reptiles in the Park. Animals from outside the Park are not permitted to be brought inside

the Park boundaries. This is to protect the various animal species who already live in the Park, including turtles, fish, birds, beavers, reptiles, frogs, coyotes, and insects. Animals from outside the Park may carry disease, prey upon, or become prey for animals in the Park, or cause instability in the populations of established Park species.

What can you do? Avoid physical contact with wild animals. Doing so may cause the animal anxiety or distress with

unpredictable reactions. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (ndow.org) is the primary agency involved in wildlife in Nevada. They are able to answer questions and recommend not touching the animal, picking it up, or moving it. Many times its family is probably still taking care of it or feeding it where it was originally found. *Wildlife in the Wetlands Park rely on our efforts to protect and preserve them and their natural habitat in order to survive.* 🌿

CALL FOR WETLANDS PARK PHOTOS!

Want to see your Wetlands Park photo featured in an upcoming newsletter?

Photo Subject: "Weather in Action"

Submit your high resolution photo(s) to: wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov by 5pm on November 15, 2018 to be considered. Include your name, date, and location of the photo.



Oak Leaves by Claudia Drake

CALL FOR WETLANDS PARK ARTWORK!

Have you created artwork in one of our Studio WP Art Programs that you would like to share? Want to see your artwork featured in an upcoming newsletter?

Submit your high resolution artwork(s) in digital format to: wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov

Include your name, date and the Studio WP art program in which the piece was created.



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