

Baskett Slough is birding paradise

Photos and story by Danielle Peterson

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Rays of afternoon sunlight stream across the water like glitter, casting delicate shadows and silhouetting a pair of mallards floating lazily across the wetlands of Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge.

The estimated 2,500-acre refuge consists of wetlands, pastures and forest and is a winter home for waterfowl including Canada geese and ducks.

But the area is shared with many other creatures — bald eagles, a variety of reptiles and amphibians and even a rare blue butterfly.

People, such as Ron and Connie Kuest of Monmouth, come to the refuge often to soak up the scenery and enjoy the wildlife.

A well-kept trail winds through a forested area where deer often are spotted and leads up to a viewpoint that overlooks the wetlands and all its inhabitants — a ideal place for visitors to get out the binoculars and scan the landscape.



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The estimated 2,500-acre refuge is home to Canada geese, deer, bald eagles and many other species of wildlife.

If you go

Travel time: About 15 minutes from Salem

Directions: Travel west on Highway 22 (toward Dallas and the Oregon Coast) for about 11 miles, until signs for the refuge are visible

Information: Go to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife site at www.fws.gov/WillametteValley/baskett

Travel tips, tidbits

-The refuge is open from sunrise to sunset.

-No hunting or fishing is allowed and dogs are not allowed on the trails.

-Bring binoculars, wear comfortable walking shoes and consider bringing a picnic lunch.