



PHOTO COURTESY OF KARA ROBERTS

Friends of the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge

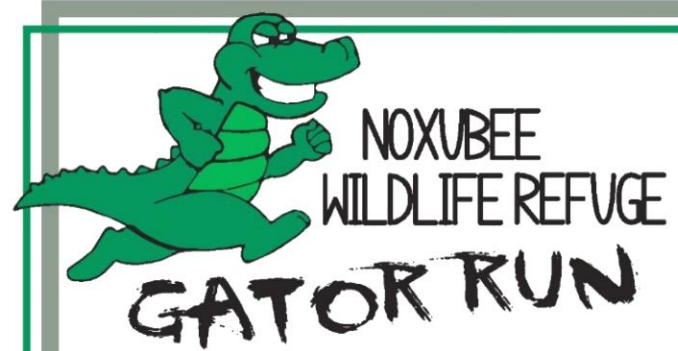
Spring 2018

Calling all Friends of the Refuge!

The Friends are hosting the first ever Gator Run to help people get out and connect with nature while also helping fund the many projects the Noxubee Refuge currently has going on and hopefully some really great future projects that are in the works!

You can run, walk or dance your way to the finish line on a one-of-a-kind course in one of Mississippi's most beautiful refuges!

Register for an amazing race experience today online at www.Time2Run.net or pick up a form at the refuge office.



MARCH 24, 2018

LOCATION:
SAM D. HAMILTON
NOXUBEE WILDLIFE REFUGE

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.TIME2RUN.NET

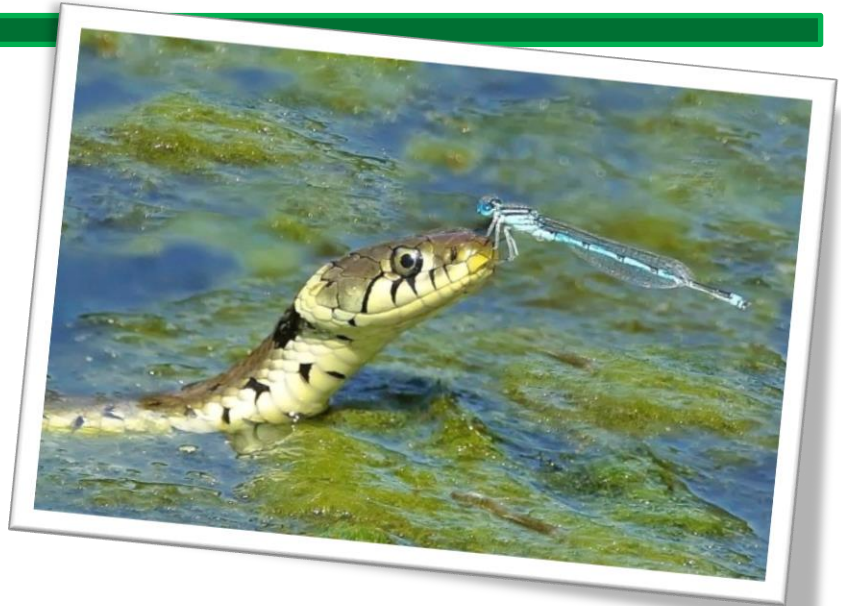
—OR—

PICK UP A RACE FORM AT THE REFUGE OFFICE

SKEETER HAWKS AND SNAKE DOCTORS

By: Tom L. Gregory

Photo Credit: Tom L. Gregory



When as a kid running around in summertime Mississippi, we frequently saw skeeter hawks and snake doctors. We were told to leave them alone as it was bad luck to mess with them. Snake doctors were those skinny things sorta like skeeter hawks that set on the end of our fishing pole while we waited for a nibble. Never saw one doctoring up a snake but we never doubted that it happened. Now skeeter hawks were another matter. They were always cruising around and then zip off quicker than a wink and catch a skeeter. Since we all hated skeeters, they were always welcome. Now that I'm all grown, skeeter hawks are still welcome and a fascinating insect.

There are renowned entomologists in the Friends organization that I very much respect and will no doubt be able to discuss dragonflies and damselflies in depth. However, I will try to give a few fun facts I dug up about them for you to remember while you are out and about the refuge and happen to take note of this amazing insect.

Dragonflies and damselflies belong to the order Odonata. The people who purposely go out dragonflying just call them Odes. Course they just cousins so they differ somewhat, different suborders and whatnot, but while perched dragonflies always hold their wings horizontal and damselflies hold theirs folded up. Since skeeter hawks are my friends and snake doctors are a little mysterious, I will concentrate on the skeeter hawks for now.

Like any clan skeeter hawks are made up of families. There are six families; Darners are big suckers with eyes that connect in the middle of their face. Club tails have eyes that don't touch at all; Spiketails have eyes that only barely touch; Cruisers have a yellow stripe down their side; Emeralds have a narrow yellow or white ring. Everyone else is a skimmer. Reminds me of some families I know. Ode watchers try to identify as many species of these families in one area as possible which is not easy because they are so fast.

These bugs are the best fliers in the animal kingdom. Not only can they fly 15 to 20 miles an hour but can turn on a dime and give two bits change. They can go up, down, left, right, forward, backward or hover in place. This is possible because one third of its body mass is flight muscles and can move all four wings independently. They move so fast scientist use high speed cameras to study just how they do it. Scientist at Harvard say that a dragonfly can launch into midair, snag a bug, flip upside down and glide back to perch in about a second. They can do this all day long and have a kill ratio of about 90 to 95%. No wonder the military studies them. To be this good they have got to have good eye sight and buddy these guys got eyes that see in every direction except a small spot directly behind and also see in a very wide range of different colors Think miniature stealth fighters with HD radar. This is how skeeter hawks help keep the world from being overrun by skeeters and biting flies as well.

A large number of dragonflies also indicate a clean water source. They live a couple years or more as underwater nymphs and require unpolluted water to make it to adulthood. If we will help keep our streams and lakes clean and pure then the dragonflies will help keep the mosquitoes away. This is another example of the cosmic order of things. The Native Americans venerated the dragonfly and knew it as a sign of happiness, speed and purity. They intrinsically knew this famous quote: "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed." - Albert Einstein; *Mein Weltbild* (1931).

Dragonflying is becoming like birdwatching and you don't have to get up so early either since they need to warm up before becoming active. It can be a very interesting hobby. Dragonflies though out history have always been admired and are adored in jewelry, tattoos, home decor, folklore, myths, books and now even movies. Yep - remember that one with Kevin Costner? Now can you name the movie with the dragonfly as the lead in credit?



Photo Credit: Vicki Maples



Photo Credit: Loraine Walker



Photo Credit: Regina Snow



Photo Credit: Vicki Maples



Photo Credit: Keith Martin

Keith Martin
PHOTOGRAPHY

Letter from the President

As we've started another year, we'd like to thank past president Bob Fuller and past vice-president Joe Mulrooney for all their time and hard work they've put in for the Refuge!

As the days grow longer, there will be more activity on the Refuge and more wildlife will be seen. Don't forget to check out the Rookery camera during nesting season for a chance to see the newborns. You can find the link on our webpage (www.friends-of-noxubee-refuge.org) or view the camera live the next time you are in the Visitor Center.

In the next few months, there will be many activities and opportunities to volunteer with the Refuge. We are working on lining up volunteers to open the Visitor Center on Sunday afternoons. If you are interested in volunteering, contact

Andrea Dunstan at the Visitor Center for more information.

On March 24th, the Friends will host a 5k Gator Run. This will be a trail run and ought to be a lot of fun. The Refuge staff has made this a fee free day, so no parking pass is required. Come out and enjoy the day!

The Refuge will host their annual Youth Fishing Derby on April 14th and volunteers are always welcome. In the past, Friends volunteers have worked the sign up booth, baited hooks, weighed fish, and anything else the Refuge staff needs help with. Consider coming out and volunteering at this event!

Also in April, the popular canoe days resume. Help is always needed with unloading and loading

the canoes and getting them launched. The first canoe day is scheduled for April 21st. Canoe day takes place the 3rd Saturday of each month, April - October.

One final reminder: the Friends have a car tag and need to sell 300 tags in order to make it official. We are offering to pay the \$31 specialty tag fee for the first 300 applicants for the first year. Once we have 300 tags sold, our tag will be on the official list of tags to choose from. The application can be found on our website or the Friends Facebook page.

Lots of activities happening - see you at the Refuge!

Kara Roberts

President FONR

Beaver or Nutria?

Article courtesy of: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/348260>

Photo credits: Kara Roberts

The American beaver is a native mammal that plays an important ecological role in our watersheds. It's also a species of management concern for some landowners. These are a few facts about how to tell the difference between beavers and nutria.



American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)

Characteristics

- Broad (horizontally flattened) and almost hairless tail
- Length is between 39 and 47 inches
- They weigh between 35 and 50 pounds or more.
- Fur color appears reddish brown to black
- Each foot has five digits
- The hind feet have webbing, but the front do not

Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*)

Characteristics

- Much smaller than the beaver; much larger than the muskrat
- May reach a maximum of 20 pounds
- Mature adults are about two feet long
- Muzzle is covered by white coarse hair
- Tail is hairy and round (not compressed from side to side) and pointed at the tip
- Hind legs are much longer than the front legs, giving them a hunched appearance when on land
- Hind feet are webbed
- Large incisors are yellow to orange-red



Application

Specialty Car Tag

"Friends of Wildlife Refuges"

(Authorized by State Legislature – 2017)



(All fields are required by the State; if submitting by email, make sure to include your signature.)

Motor Vehicle Owner Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, ST Zip _____

County of Residence: _____

Current Tag Number: _____

Specialty Fee: \$31 - paid by Friends of Noxubee Refuge for first 300 applicants for first year of tag; subsequent years paid by applicant when tag is renewed.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

- The MS Department of Revenue will begin production of these distinctive tags after 300 tag applications have been submitted.
- The applicant will be notified that his/her tag may be picked up at the tax collector's office in his/her county of residence within 60 days. (If tag not picked up within 60 days of notification, an additional specialty fee of \$31 will be required, this time from the applicant.)
- The specialty tag may be transferred to a vehicle different than the one with the tag number listed above.
- In subsequent years when purchasing this specialty tag, \$24 of the Specialty Fee is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

Submit application by mail:

Friends of Noxubee Refuge
 Attn: Specialty Car Tag
 13723 Bluff Lake Road
 Brooksville, MS 39739

Submit application by e-mail to:

Friendsofnoxubeerefuge@gmail.com
 (Please put "Specialty Car Tag" in the subject line.)



Sam D.
 Hamilton
 Noxubee
 National
 wildlife
 Refuge

13723 Bluff Lake Rd
 Brooksville, Mississippi
 39739
 662-323-5548