

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Will Hold Public Comment Meetings on the Draft  
Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Assessment for Humboldt National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex in Northern California**

Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex will host a series public meetings beginning March 3, to gather comments from the public concerning the proposed future management of Humboldt Bay and Castle Rock National Wildlife Refuges in northern California. The public is encouraged to comment on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (*CCP/EA*), which articulate conservation issues and management alternatives for the 4,000-acre Humboldt Bay and 14-acre Castle Rock refuges.

"In addition to the value these refuges provide to fish, wildlife and plants, these natural places are an important part of the outdoor experience for many people along California's northern coast," said Refuge Manager, Eric Nelson. "We want to involve the public as much as possible as we make plans for the future."

Humboldt Bay NWR will be the focus of meetings held Tuesday, March 3, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Thursday, March 5, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters and Visitor Center, 1020 Ranch Road, Loleta, California.

Castle Rock NWR will be the focus of the meeting on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, from 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Lighthouse Inn, 681 Highway 101 South in Crescent City, California.

Written comments on the Humboldt Bay NWR Complex Draft *CCP/EA* are welcomed at the meetings and may also be submitted by mail, E-mail or fax to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California and Nevada Region, Refuge Planning, Attn: Sandy Osborn, 2800 Cottage Way Suite W-1832, Sacramento CA, 95825; 916-414-6497 (fax) or [fv8plancomments@jws.gov](mailto:fv8plancomments@jws.gov). The review period officially begins on February 6, 2009. Comments will be accepted through March 23, 2009 (45 days). The Draft *CCP/EA* (with management alternatives), and basic information about the Refuges and the CCP planning process are available on the Service's Planning website at: <http://www.fivs.gov/humboldtбай/ccp.html>.

More information about the meetings or the Refuge is available by contacting Refuge Manager Eric Nelson, Humboldt Bay NWRC, PO Box 576, Loleta, CA 95551; tel. (707) 733-5406, fax 707-733-1946 or E-mail [Eric\\_T\\_Nelson@fws.gov](mailto:Eric_T_Nelson@fws.gov).

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Humboldt Bay NWR is located on Humboldt Bay on the northwest California coast near Arcata. The refuge protects wetlands and bay habitats for fish, wildlife and plants, especially migratory birds. The refuge includes the Lanphere Dunes Unit, one of the most pristine remaining dune ecosystems on the west coast of North America. The refuge complex also administers Castle Rock NWR, an island located less than a mile off the California coast just north of Crescent City, which contains the largest breeding population of common murrelets in California and provides a roost for Aleutian geese during migration.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

More information about Humboldt Bay NWRC is available on the Internet at <http://www.fvs.gov/humboldt/bav/>