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Outdoor Enthusiast Pens Field Guide

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Outdoor enthusiast pens field guide



Kelly Warren '07 has been an avid waterfowl hunter since first slogging through the marsh with his father and grandfather at age 2.

So when Warren, an environmental studies major at Linfield College, set out to find a topic for his independent research study, he turned to the subject he knows best – geese. After deciding to identify and analyze the seven Canada goose subspecies found in the Willamette Valley, Warren contacted state and national environmental agencies for background material.

While sorting through Oregon's complicated hunting regulations, Warren saw the need for a better hunter education tool and took the initiative to develop the "Identification Field Guide to the Geese of the Willamette Valley and Lower Columbia River." It was a major undertaking but one that will aid the average hunter, according to Brad Bales, a migratory game bird biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for 26 years.

"Kelly took thousands of digital photos, which adds to the overall field guide," Bales said. "It took a tremendous amount of time."

Warren took some 4,300 photos, which he narrowed down to 95 for the publication, and included information on the geese such as history, behavior, management and maps charting breeding and wintering areas. The final product is a 40-page field guide targeted to hunters, biologists, birders and the general public.

The project ultimately earned Warren an A in his Linfield class, along with a byline on a field guide now distributed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Warren is also collaborating on a DVD to accompany the publication.

"This is something that I've been passionate about all my life," Warren said. "To tie it into school work is an extra plus."

Hard work and hundreds of hours in the field by Kelly Warren '07 are represented in a field guide now distributed by state and national wildlife agencies. The guide and a DVD will be available this fall at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/ODFWhtml/InfoCntrWild/goose_testing.htm.

Warren's interest in wildlife biology has broadened while at Linfield, where the liberal arts environment nurtures students to think within larger contexts, according to Tom Love, professor of anthropology and Warren's project advisor.

"Kelly took his interest in geese and developed it into a first-rate project which will be widely used," Love said. "In addition to the academic skills he's developed at Linfield, Kelly has a sixth sense, which a good hunter has, about habitat, reading a landscape and knowing waterfowl behavior. On top of all that, he has admirable drive and perseverance."

Warren plans to build on this project with a senior thesis on the one subspecies that nests in the valley and has become a local nuisance.

He later plans to attend graduate school in environmental policy, and ultimately obtain an environmental law or teaching degree.

The project also sparked a new venture for Warren, who has started a photography business as a result of requests from the field guide.

– Laura Davis

