

Karnack students learn about wetlands and its inhabitants

By Staff Reports, Marshall News-Messenger

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KARNACK — George Washington Carver Elementary School students celebrated World Wetlands Day with a visit from the Friends of the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge Tuesday morning.

Nancy Summers, Carver Elementary School secretary, said officials set up animal displays that included animal skins, stuffed owls and antlers inside the school's gymnasium to promote awareness and appreciation of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The event was staged for students age 3 through the sixth grade.

Ms. Summers said this was the first year the school has hosted such a program.

According to the organization's Web site, the mission of the Friends Group is to work with the community to "conserve, protect, and enhance native fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats within the Caddo Lake NWR for the continuing benefit of the American people."

World Wetlands Day was celebrated for the first time in 1997.

"I thought it was great. We have a wetlands area here in the Karnack area," said Ms. Summers, referring to Caddo Lake in nearby Uncertain. "I especially like the idea that the children were able to touch things. The folks made it a point that they were free to handle the objects."

According to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Web site, World Wetlands Day is each year Feb 2 — marking the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on Feb. 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Since then, 158 countries have signed the treaty, including the United States, and 169 million hectares of wetlands (1,828 sites) have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance. In the United States, there are currently 25 designated sites including Caddo Lake.