

National Wildlife Refuges

Note: Only refuges with recreational and educational visitor opportunities are listed. The Fish and Wildlife Service is working hard to provide universally accessible facilities for all visitors. Always check with the refuge manager for information regarding accessibility, activities, fees, weather conditions, etc. before making a trip to a refuge.

NWR-National Wildlife Refuge NWP-National Wildlife Preserve NWD-National Wildlife District NVA-National Wildlife Area NWP-Production Area NWR-National Wildlife Refuge

Table with 4 columns: Best Wildlife Viewing Systems, Educational & Interpretation, Observation & Photography, Fishing & Hunting. Rows list various states and their corresponding refuge symbols.

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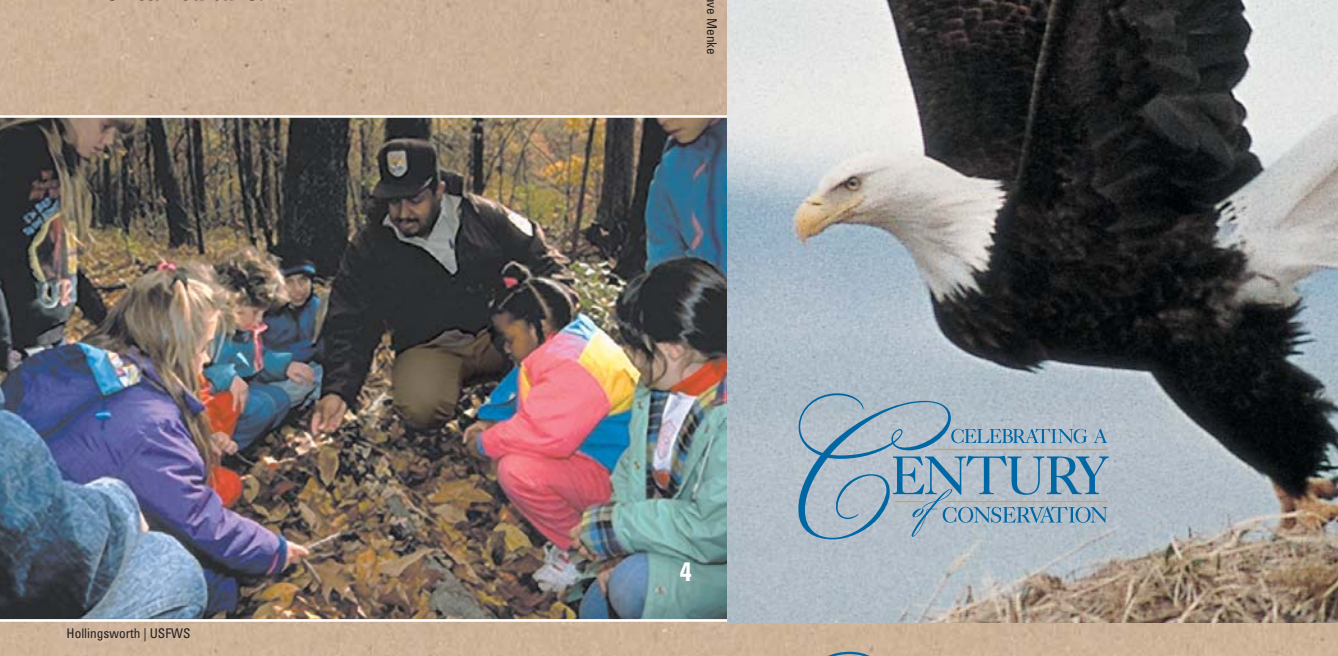
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America's Best Kept Secret

National Wildlife Refuge System A Visitor's Guide

National wildlife refuges are far more than havens for wild plants and animals. In fact, visitors—nearly 40 million each year—are welcome on 98 percent of wildlife refuge land. Visitors join in a variety of outdoor activities, especially hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, interpretation, and environmental education.



Wildlife refuges host recreational hunters at more than 300 locations and welcome anglers at more than 200—a testament to the abundant wildlife resulting from successful conservation and management programs. Diverse visitors from around the globe visit wildlife refuges to be saved by amazing congregations of our feathered friends, numbering in the tens of thousands at peak migration in many locations. And there's no better place than wildlife refuges for children and adults alike to learn about the natural world. More than 250 wildlife refuges attract visitors with innovative educational programs showing how we manage refuges to ensure that future generations can experience America's wilderness. Still, the discovery opportunities don't end with wildlife. Wildlife refuges also protect important historic sites, from Native American campsites to World War II artifacts, preserving interesting facets of the American culture.

Caring for Wildlife and Their Surroundings

For millennia, America's wildlife thrived in natural surroundings stretching across millions of acres. Areas that in recent times have been reduced to a fraction of their original size—but are still crucial to the survival of wild species—require active, consistent, research-based management. The National Wildlife Refuge System oversees the world's most comprehensive wildlife management programs, combining biological research and monitoring with strategic habitat management. In Alaska for example, brown bears are fitted with global positioning system collars to track their movements. We build secure floating nests on the California coast to attract and protect rare light-footed catterpillar rail during breeding and nesting season. Periodic burning stimulates plant growth providing food and cover for elk, endangered Attwater prairie chickens, and waterfowl alike.

There are more than 500 National Wildlife Refuges throughout the United States. There is at least one refuge within an hour's drive of most Americans. At a refuge, you can learn about our environment, take a friend hunting or fishing, or snap pictures of wildlife. I am proud to be one of nearly 40 million Americans who visit National Wildlife Refuges.



“Wake up with the birds.” Arrive in the early morning (or late afternoon) when wildlife is most active.

visit us online: refuges.fws.gov

Why Wildlife Refuges?

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation. Home to more than 700 types of birds, 220 different mammals, 250 reptiles, and more than 200 kinds of fish, the amazing variety of wildlife found on refuges reflects America's beautiful heritage. Many wildlife refuges were created to protect and enhance the resting and feeding grounds of migratory birds, creating a chain of stepping stones along major migration routes. Others were established to conserve our natural homes of our rarest wild species, including bald eagles, bison, and whooping cranes.

“Contact the wildlife refuge before you visit for up-to-date information on access, special activities, weather conditions, and more.”

“Bring binoculars to get the best view.”

Watch wildlife from a distance. When you appreciate wildlife from a distance you can see its natural behavior.

From the Smallest Beginning . . .

President Theodore Roosevelt established the first wildlife refuge in 1903, Florida's scenic Pelican Island, to protect cypress, herons, and other birds from market hunters who killed these birds by the thousands to satisfy the demand for the fashion industry. From this humble beginning, Americans have embraced the concept of providing unique places for wildlife to flourish, while also allowing for many forms of wildlife dependent recreation. Through cooperative efforts with a growing number of partners and committed citizens, the National Wildlife Refuge System has become a model of stewardship where all Americans and International visitors can enjoy our precious natural resources.

A hundred years in the making, the National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of carefully chosen habitats that support abundant wildlife, protect a healthy environment, and provide unparalleled outdoor experiences for all Americans.

USPS—Pacific Region 911 NE 11th Avenue, Eastside Federal Complex Portland, OR 97232-4181 (CA, IL, IN, NV, OR, WA)

USPS—Southwest Region P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103 (AZ, NM, OK, TX)

USPS—Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region 1 Federal Drive, Federal Building Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056 (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI)

USPS—Southeast Region 1875 Century Blvd, Atlanta, GA 30345-3203 (AR, AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, PR)

USPS—Northwest Region 300 West Gate Drive, Hadley, MA 01035-9589 (CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, WA)

USPS—Mountain Prairie-Region Box 25486, Denver Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225 (CO, KS, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY)

USPS—Alaska Region 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503 (AK)

USPS—Publications Unit National Conservation Training Center Route 1, Box 166, Shepherd Grade Road Shepherdstown, WV 25443

U.S. Department of the Interior U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Visit us online at http://refuges.fws.gov/

“To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

OUR MISSION

For additional copies of this guide, please contact your Service office listed below, or call 1 800 344 WILD.

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There is at least one refuge within an hour's drive from every major American city.

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