



News Release

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For Immediate Release:

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WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE DESIGNATED AS IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

The Oklahoma Audubon Council recently recognized the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge as an Important Bird Area (IBA) to Oklahoma. Important Bird Areas are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds. IBAs range in size from just a few acres to thousands of acres, but are usually discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape.

A panel of Oklahoma's leading avian researchers reviewed species data and descriptions for a number of significantly threatened bird species. The panel agreed that the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge qualified for recognition at the state level.

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is home to over 240 species of birds, including ones that are considered near-threatened, threatened or endangered at international, federal or state levels. The Black-capped Vireo, an endangered species, resides on the refuge during their breeding season. The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge supports the second largest breeding population of Black-capped Vireo's in the world. Painted Bunting, Northern Bobwhite Quail, Red-headed Woodpecker and Chestnut-collared Longspur are some of the other species that helped qualify the site for designation.

The public is invited to attend a ceremony on Saturday, July 25 at the WMWR Visitor Center, located at the intersection of Highways 115 and 49, in celebration of the IBA designation. A guided tour for people wanting the opportunity to view some of these endangered or threatened species will begin at 7 a.m. The designation ceremony followed by a series of presentations about bird research currently being conducted on the refuge will kick-off at 9 a.m. Children are invited to join the celebration by participating in fun, bird-related activities from 1-4 p.m. in the Discovery Room. For more information contact the WMWR Visitor Center at (580) 429-2197.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.