

Spring Canyon Wetlands

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area



Wetlands in Spring Canyon.
NPS Photo

Water Is The Key

Nestled deep in Spring Canyon is a place unlike most of the High Plains. Spring water comes bubbling up and provides a key building block for a complex community of plants and animals, that might look very different from the lake and prairie ecosystems commonly visited at Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. The term *wetlands* can refer to many water-dependent ecosystems such as marshes, swamps and bogs. Wetlands vary widely because of differences in types of soil, topography, climate, water chemistry, and nearby vegetation. The plants that grow in these areas thrive in wet soil conditions! Likewise, insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals that live in the wetlands are uniquely adapted to these wetter conditions.

*“When the well’s dry,
we know the worth
of water.”*

*- Benjamin Franklin,
Poor Richard’s Almanack*

Wild Residents

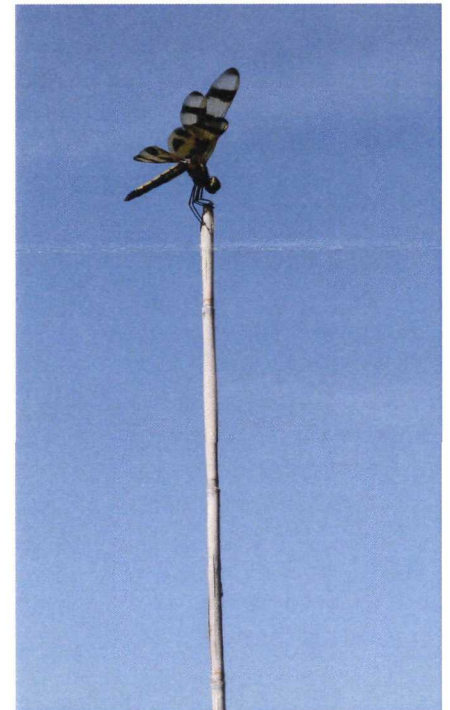
Spring Canyon wetlands provide habitat for many species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Upland wildlife often use the wetlands for food and shelter. Wetlands are particularly vital to many migratory bird species. For example, wood ducks, mallards, and sandhill cranes winter in the flooded bottomland marshes here. About 35% of all plants and animals listed as threatened or endangered species depend on wetlands for survival, including the whooping crane and the bald eagle. Nearly 7,000 plant species in the United States live in wetland ecosystems like Spring Canyon – many cannot survive outside of wetlands such as these.



Great Blue Heron
NPS Photo

Amazing Wings

- A bee flaps its wings about 300 times per second, but a dragonfly flaps its wings only 30 beats.
- Dragonflies, which eat insects as adults, are a great control on the mosquito population. A single dragonfly can eat 30 to hundreds of mosquitoes per day.
- A dragonfly is very strong and can fly at speeds of up to 35 miles per hour.
- There are approximately 5,000 species of dragonflies worldwide. 450 species can be found in the United States.
- Nearly all of the dragonfly’s head is eye, so they have incredible vision that encompasses almost every angle except right behind them.
- Some scientists theorize that high oxygen levels during the Paleozoic era allowed dragonflies to grow to monster size.



A dragonfly perches atop a dried cane.
What do you think it is looking at?
NPS Photo

Wetlands in the National Parks



A red-eared slider (above) retreats to the safety of its shell, while a dragonfly shows off above the water (right).

NPS Photo



This could be your view as you paddle Spring Canyon (right).

NPS Photo

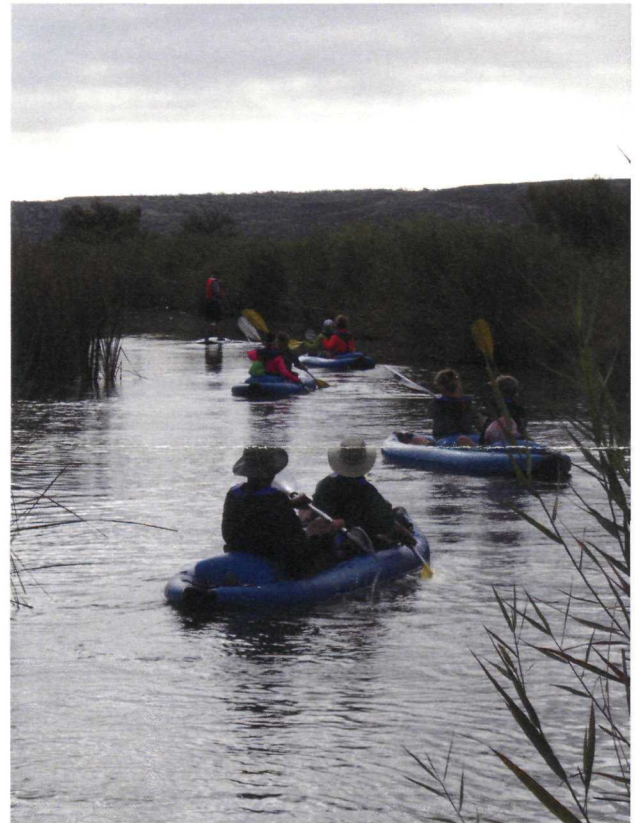
- More than 16 million acres of wetland are protected by the National Park Service (NPS).
- NPS Wetlands Protection Guidelines require the identification, mapping, protection, management, and restoration of wetlands in the parks.
- In the arid regions of the West, wetlands are common along rivers and springs and often contrast noticeably with the surrounding upland vegetation. Take a look around you when you visit Spring Canyon. It looks very different than most of the Texas Panhandle!
- Wetlands act as natural water purifiers, filtering sediment and absorbing many pollutants in surface waters.
- The NPS plays an important role in boosting public awareness about wetlands by providing recreational opportunities, interpretive programs (Ranger-guided tours), and public outreach programs.

Experience Wetlands

New recreational activities such as kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding provide a unique opportunity for sightseeing, bird watching, and photography of the beautiful wetlands in Spring Canyon. Reserve your place on a Ranger-guided kayaking tour to view this diverse group of plants, birds, fish and reptiles. Dip your paddle in and learn about these wetlands as you glide through them!

Paddler's Essentials:

- Be a swimmer
- File a float plan
- Wear your lifejacket
- Carry a spare paddle
- Wear a hat or helmet
- Carry a compass, chart or map
- Bring sunscreen
- Carry a first aid kit
- Have self-rescue devices
- Bring potable drinking water
- Dress for an unexpected flip
- Wear proper footwear
- Bring eye protection, such as sunglasses
- Do not disturb wildlife
- Know the conditions of the water
- Pay attention to all safety warnings



A ranger-guided kayak trip through Spring Canyon.
NPS Photo

For more information, contact us at:

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
PO Box 1460, Fritch, TX 79036
806.857.3151
<http://www.nps.gov/lamr>
Find us on Facebook: LakeMeredith