

# Audubon

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
NORTH DAKOTA

## On-Refuge Recreation

Audubon Refuge is open to sightseeing, tours, wildlife photography, and bird-watching. An eight mile interpretive (auto) trail follows the lake shore from headquarters, and is open to the public year-round. The trail passes typical wildlife habitat such as marshes, the open lake, islands and prairie grasslands. Early mornings and late afternoons are the best times to observe wildlife.

The refuge is open for ice fishing in the winter and big game hunting for deer during the State open season.



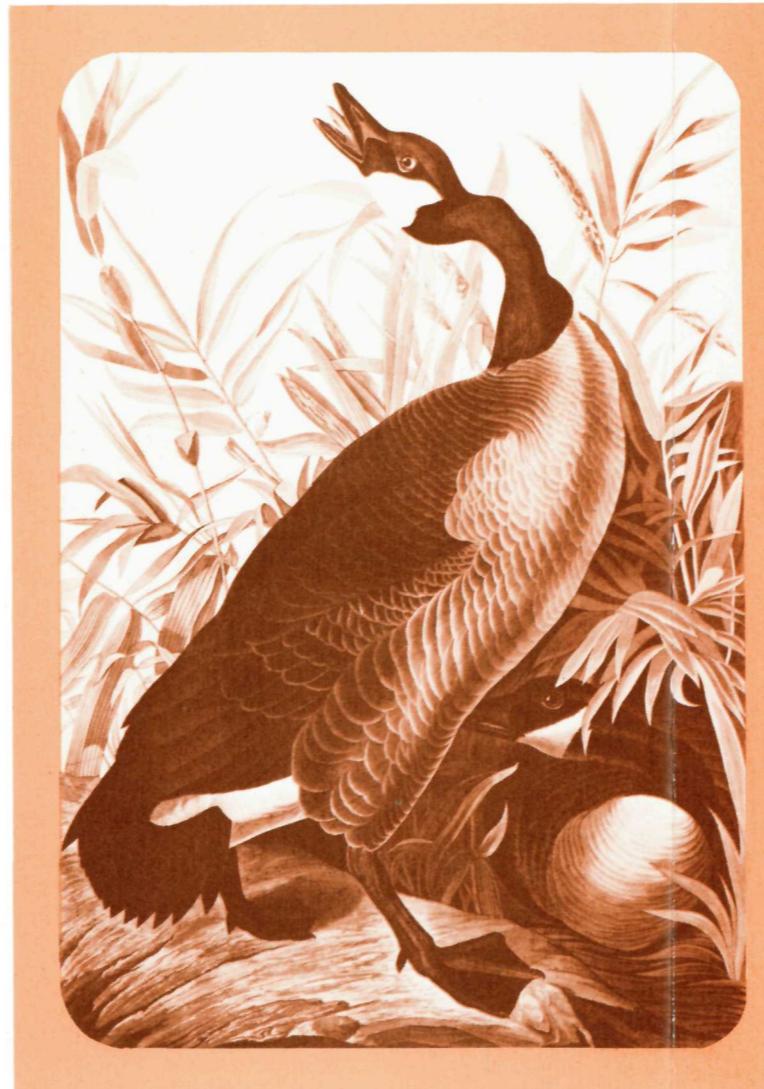
Reproductions of Audubon paintings are by courtesy of the National Audubon Society.

## Sightseeing

The most spectacular birds seen in summer are the soaring flocks of white pelicans, and the concentrations of double-crested cormorants on Lake Audubon. Shore birds, including the American avocet, marbled godwit, willets, common terns and gulls nest in swarming colonies on the reservoir islands. Upland sandpiper and killdeer sound their mournful calls across the prairies, and the burrowing owl peers at the visitor from its hole in the ground.

The keen-eyed visitor may also see the shy, nocturnal badger and the red fox. Photographers and naturalists visit the refuge in spring to watch the sharp-tailed grouse go through its courtship ritual on the dancing grounds of the refuge.

Stone "tipi" rings left by the Mandan Indians when the prairies were still wild may be seen on some of the undisturbed hilltops on the refuge.



## Hunting and Fishing

Much of the refuge is open to hunting white-tail deer during the regular State season. Archery hunting for deer is also allowed following the close of the State firearms season. Ice fishing is permitted on the refuge usually from early December to mid-March. Access to the ice is restricted to signed locations.

State managed lands, reservoir lands, and private farmlands offer good waterfowl hunting. For detailed, current information and special regulations on hunting and fishing, contact the Refuge Manager at refuge headquarters.

## Off-Refuge Recreation

Lake Sakakawea, impounded by Garrison Dam, is a recreational bonanza for the visitor. The Lake has hundreds of miles of shoreline and thousands of acres of water. Camping, hunting, fishing, boating and picnicking areas are available. There are two State parks within a short drive of the refuge.

Lake Sakakawea State Park is located on the south side of the lake, just west of Garrison Dam, and Fort Stevenson State Park is on the north side of the lake, three miles south of the city of Garrison.

The three State Game Management areas are intended primarily for hunting and fishing. There are no camping facilities on the Game Management areas. Lake Audubon is not recommended for either water skiing or speed boating because of underwater obstructions.

A word of warning: both Lake Audubon and Lake Sakakawea are big and deep. Summer storms can blow up very quickly, and there are few sheltered areas. Be careful in boating and obey both the Coast Guard and State regulations on boating.

## Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery

Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery, located just below the Dam, supplies many of the sportfish stocked in North Dakota. An aquarium and outside rearing facilities are open to the public.

*Pintails*



When North Dakota's Garrison Dam was built on the Missouri River and Lake Sakakawea was formed, a National Wildlife Refuge was established on the Snake Creek watershed of the lake. The Refuge helped to compensate for the loss of waterfowl habitats flooded by the dam.

The refuge, established in 1955, is administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. It is part of the Audubon Wildlife Management Area jointly operated by the Service and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. The refuge consists of 14,735 acres on the south side of Lake Audubon and the State manages 11,200 on the north side.

Lake Audubon is a sub-impoundment of Lake Sakakawea, separated from it by an embankment, a few miles northeast of Garrison Dam. The embankment is a causeway more than 2 miles long and 50 feet high. Snake Creek flows into Lake Audubon.

In addition to water from the Snake Creek watershed, water is taken into Lake Audubon from the main reservoir through the Snake Creek Pumping Plant. The lake now has 18,000 surface acres of water surrounding more than 140 islands, some as large as 80 acres. In addition to its function as a wildlife area the Lake serves as a reservoir for the Garrison Diversion Irrigation Project administered by the Bureau of Reclamation.

## History

Audubon National Wildlife Refuge is located on the sweeping bend of the Missouri River as it completes its eastward swing through Montana and western North Dakota and angles southward toward the Gulf of Mexico. At this bend, the Great Muddy touches the Coteau du Missouri, the rolling pothole-studded glacial hills which bisect the heart of the continent's "duck factory."

In the winter of 1804-1805, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's historic "Corps of Discovery" expedition made winter camp 12 miles south of Audubon Refuge, hunting and repairing gear while they waited for spring to continue their trek westward. Their journals mentioned Snake Creek, or "Miry Creek" as they called it, and the large number of "brant" migrating up the river that spring. Later on, Phillippe Regis de Trobriand, Commandant of the Fort Stevenson military post, hunted along Snake Creek and was surprised at the abundance of wild geese there.

John James Audubon made one of his last collecting and painting expeditions up this section of the Missouri River in 1843. He spent the summer at Fort Union northwest of here, collecting birds and mammals typical of the northern plains and taking part in buffalo hunts.

In 1967, to commemorate his trip up the Missouri, Snake Creek Refuge was renamed Audubon National Wildlife Refuge, honoring one of the great naturalists and wildlife painters of the 19th Century.

## Wildlife

Many species of wildlife inhabit the mixed grass prairies of the refuge. These lands are within prairie pothole country, often referred to as the cradle of North American ducks. Mallard, gadwall, teal, pintail, and lesser scaup are common nesters.

Although Canada geese had traditionally nested here, they essentially disappeared by the 1930's. Since the establishment of the refuge, this welcome harbinger of seasonal change, now nests in abundance on the islands and in the general area.

Migratory birds—ducks, geese, shorebirds, and others—sweep into the refuge during the spring and fall months. Water, food, and sanctuary await them.

Refuge lands also support wildlife that make the northern plains their year-round home. Ring-necked pheasants, Hungarian partridge, and white-tail deer are among these hardy residents. White-tails are relative newcomers to the open prairie and have adapted well. With forested protection miles to the east, white-tails have turned to shelterbelts and marshes for winter shelter.



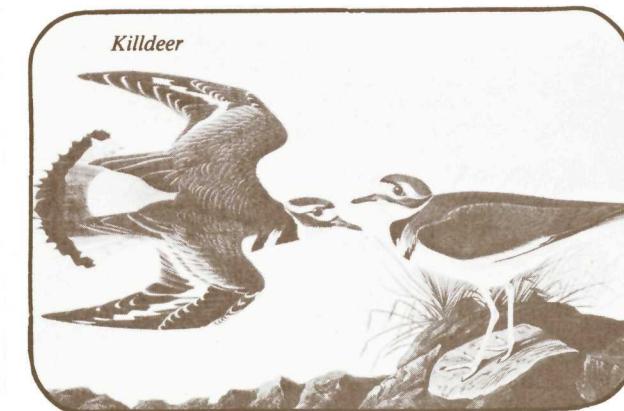
Mallards



White-tailed Deer Fawn



Green-winged teal



Killdeer



## Headquarters and Accommodations

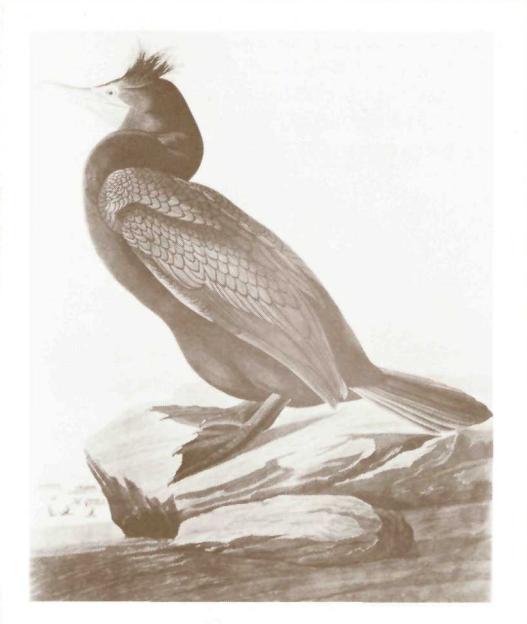
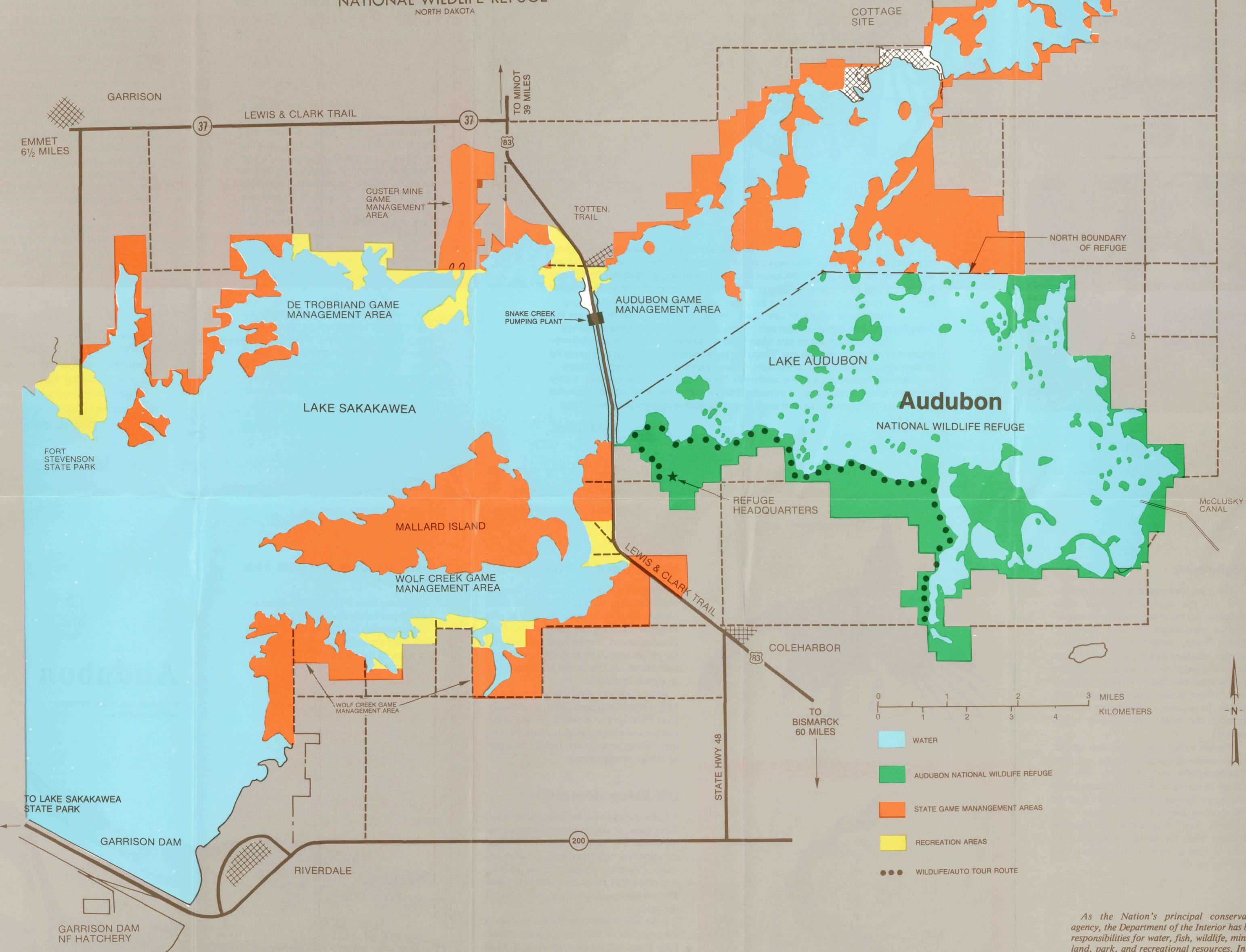
U.S. Highway 83, the main road between Bismarck and Minot, passes the west edge of the refuge on the sub-impoundment embankment. Refuge headquarters are  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile east of that highway; a half mile south of the embankment, or 3 miles north of Coleharbor.

Coleharbor, a village of 100, has a cafe, gas and small store. Food, lodging and other services are available at Garrison and Underwood. Fishing bait, licenses and other supplies are available at most of the local towns. Minot, 45 miles north, and Bismarck, 65 miles south, are transportation centers and offer a wide range of services.

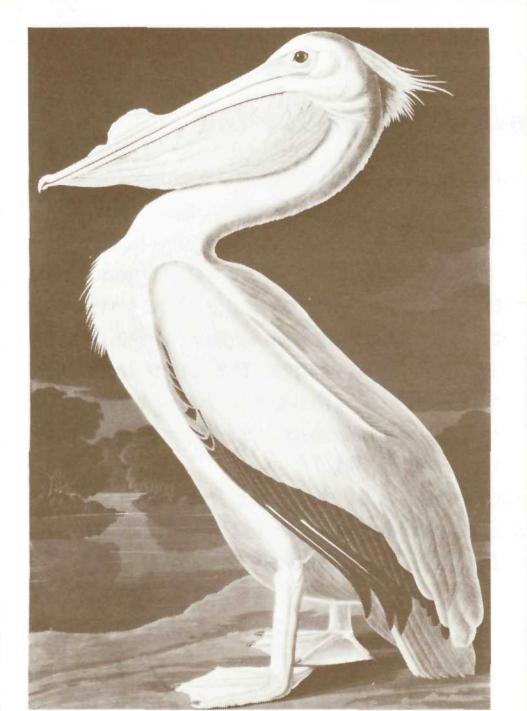
For further information write to the Refuge Manager, Audubon National Wildlife Refuge, Coleharbor, North Dakota 58531.

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Double-crested cormorant



White pelican

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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