

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

America's National Wildlife Refuge System



CELEBRATING A
CENTURY
of CONSERVATION

Places of Refuge for All Americans



America's National Wildlife Refuge System

Celebrating a century of conservation successes, America's National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's most extensive network of protected wildlife habitats. A chain of vital rest stops along major migration routes, wildlife refuges host millions of birds each spring and fall. Wildlife refuges are safe havens for recovering America's rarest wildlife, including prehistoric loggerhead sea turtles, regal whooping cranes, grand bison, gentle manatees, native trout, and the bald eagle, our national symbol. Wildlife refuges preserve open spaces and natural scenery and help prevent pollution in our communities.

Wildlife refuges are the most wild and scenic places left in America, yet there is at least one within an hour's drive of every major city, providing much-needed sanctuary for people as well as wildlife. Each year, some 40 million people visit wildlife refuges to connect with nature, enjoy unparalleled outdoor activities, or simply to escape from their everyday surroundings. Most come to see flocks of birds by the thousands and many other wildlife spectacles. Nature photographers find unique opportunities to capture plants and animals of every variety and the breathtaking natural landscapes that support them. Sportsmen enjoy some of the finest fishing and hunting in settings of solitude. School children learn first-hand about our natural world and what it really means to take care of it.

Beginning in 1903 with President Theodore Roosevelt's protection of a tiny island for birds in Florida, today's National Wildlife Refuge System spans more than 535 wildlife refuges and thousands of small prairie wetlands where waterfowl breed. Nearly 100-million-acres-strong, this magnificent collection of special lands is steadfastly cared for by experts with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, numerous conservation partners, and thousands of dedicated volunteers, who ensure America's dwindling natural places can continue to support bountiful wildlife for future generations to value and enjoy.



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Wild species thrive here in abundance, following instincts as old as the continent itself: migration, competition, reproduction, and survival.

Visitors thrive here too, exulting in the abundance of opportunities: hunting and fishing, watching and photographing wildlife, learning about the natural world and their place in it, or simply relaxing amidst the majesty and spectacle of wild America.



Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge | Hollingsworth | USFWS

more online:

 For more information about the National Wildlife Refuge System, please visit refuges.fws.gov

There is a wildlife refuge within an hour's drive of every major U.S. city.

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