

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cibola

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



The Cibola National Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 500 refuges throughout the United States. These National Wildlife Refuges are administrated by the Department of the Interior; Fish and Wildlife Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service mission is to work with others “to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitat.”



This blue goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Welcome: A Birders Paradise

Cibola National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1964 as mitigation for channelization and dam construction on the Colorado River in the 1930s and 1940s. The refuge is located in the floodplain of the Lower Colorado River and provides important habitat for migratory birds, wintering waterfowl, and resident species. The refuge contains several miles of historic river channels and backwaters that provide key habitats in a changed environment.

Refuge Wildlife



Canada Goose
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.

About 240 species of birds use the refuge during the year. Cibola NWR provides important riparian and upland nesting areas for a variety of songbirds and is a critical wintering area for Canada geese and greater sandhill cranes. Several endangered or threatened species use the refuge. Included are the willow flycatcher, brown pelican, peregrine falcon, bald eagle, Yuma clapper rail, bonytail chub, and razorback sucker. Other resident bird species include Gambel's quail, kestrel, Harris' hawk, roadrunner, phainopepla, and burrowing owl.

Mule deer, coyote, and bobcat are common mammals on the refuge. Visitors occasionally spot mountain lion, kit fox, gray fox, and badger on the refuge as well. Many species of reptiles and amphibians, including the western diamondback and sidewinder rattlesnakes also call the refuge home.



Sandhill Crane
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.

The refuge actively manages a variety of habitat for wildlife. About 2,000 acres are farmed to provide food for migrating and wintering waterfowl, cranes, and other species. Farmers harvest hay in the summer and leave alfalfa, corn, milo, millet, and other crops for wildlife during the winter.

Managing for Wildlife

Management activities include creating and maintaining moist soil units, and restoring and flooding old river meanders and backwaters. Much time is spent restoring native vegetation on the refuge. Dense stands of salt cedar trees are replaced with native species such as mesquite, cottonwood, and willow trees.

Things to Do at the Refuge

The headquarters and visitor center are located in Arizona at the north end of the refuge. They are open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm weekdays. Call for extended winter hours. Refuge brochures are also available in outdoor kiosks. An auto tour route near refuge headquarters offers the opportunity to see waterfowl, mule deer, and other wildlife. Winter viewing of geese, cranes, and ducks is particularly good along this drive. A one-mile nature trail located on the north leg of the route is surrounded by a gallery of cottonwood, willow, and mesquite. The year round trail leads to a wildlife viewing observation deck that overlooks a 40-acre pond used by wintering geese, ducks, and cranes. A photo blind is nearby. Adjacent to the headquarters an observation platform provides a view of the largest farm management unit.



Great Blue Heron
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.

Wildlife Watching Tips

Dawn and dusk are the best times to see wildlife.

This is a warm climate, so little is moving on hot summer afternoons or on windy days.

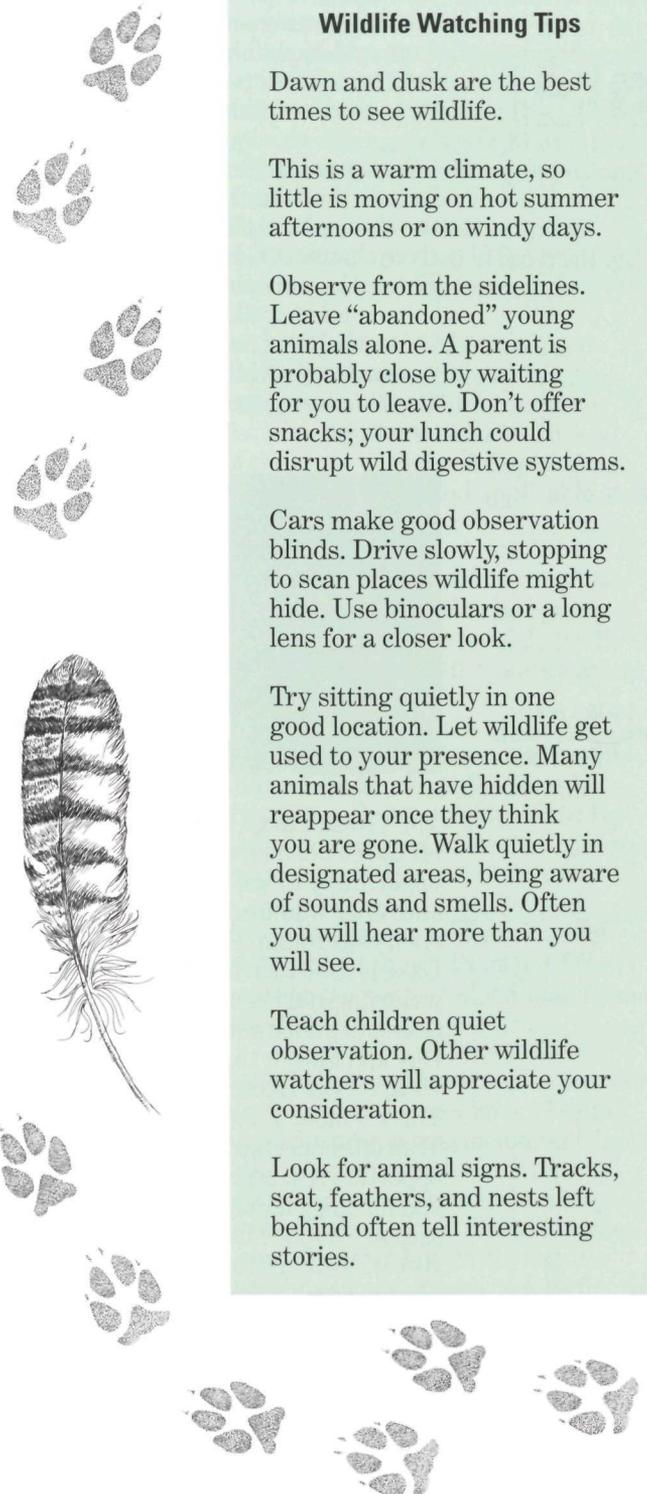
Observe from the sidelines. Leave “abandoned” young animals alone. A parent is probably close by waiting for you to leave. Don’t offer snacks; your lunch could disrupt wild digestive systems.

Cars make good observation blinds. Drive slowly, stopping to scan places wildlife might hide. Use binoculars or a long lens for a closer look.

Try sitting quietly in one good location. Let wildlife get used to your presence. Many animals that have hidden will reappear once they think you are gone. Walk quietly in designated areas, being aware of sounds and smells. Often you will hear more than you will see.

Teach children quiet observation. Other wildlife watchers will appreciate your consideration.

Look for animal signs. Tracks, scat, feathers, and nests left behind often tell interesting stories.



Wildlife Watching



The auto tour provides excellent wildlife viewing and photography from mid-November through mid-February. Visitors should remain in their cars to avoid disturbing wildlife.

Other popular areas to explore include the Island Unit (between the channelized river and the old river channel), Cibola Lake, and Three-Finger Lake. Upper and lower levee roads parallel the channelized Colorado River on both the east and west sides, providing convenient access to many parts of the refuge (see map).



Canada Geese
Photograph by John &
Karen Hollingsworth.

The Cibola Lake Overlook, on a bluff off the eastern levee road, provides an opportunity to see herons, pelicans, and other wildlife. The Overlook is open year round. Because Cibola Lake is used heavily by migratory waterfowl during the winter, it is closed to public entry between Labor Day and March 15. Areas of the Island Unit, Cibola Lake, Hart Mine Marsh, Three Finger Lake, and the Nature Trail offer spectacular birdwatching opportunities, especially during spring and fall migrations. During hunting season (October through January), visitors should check with refuge headquarters about the best times and places for viewing. Bird, reptile, and amphibian lists are available.

Hunting and Fishing



The refuge provides extensive hunting opportunities for deer, waterfowl, dove, rabbit, and quail. Fishing is open to the public throughout the year on the old and new river channels. Cibola Lake is open for fishing between March 15 and Labor Day. State hunting and fishing licenses and stamps are required. The refuge has additional special regulations, provided in the boating, hunting, and fishing brochures.

Refuge Regulations



All applicable federal, state, and local regulations apply within the refuge boundary. For a complete list of regulations, refer to Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Federal Register, and applicable state regulations.

Vehicles



All operators and vehicles must be licensed and insured to be operated on the refuge. Motor vehicle traffic is limited to designated roads (see map).

Firearms



Possession of weapons or explosives is not permitted unless specifically allowed for hunting (See Refuge Regulations). All weapons must be unloaded and cased when transported in a vehicle or boat.

Pets



Pets must be on a leash and under control at all times. Dogs used for hunting are permitted without a leash while hunting.

Boating & Water Skiing



General boating and water skiing are permitted on the new river channel. All backwater areas, including Cibola Lake, are “no wake” zones and additional special regulations may apply. Cibola Lake is closed between Labor Day and March 15. See the boating and water activities leaflet for more information.



In addition, the following are *not* permitted:



fires
overnight camping
fireworks
disturbing, destroying,
or removing plants or animals
littering or dumping
searching for, damaging,
or removing rocks, mineral
specimens, or objects of
antiquity.

**For more
information
contact:**



Refuge Manager
Cibola National Wildlife Refuge
66600 Cibola Lake Road
Route 2, Box 1
Cibola, Arizona 85328
928/857-3253
928/857-3420 Fax



Clapper Rail
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.



Greater Roadrunner
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.

Cibola NWR Facts

Where is it?

Refuge headquarters is located 17 miles south of Blythe, California. Office hours are from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

When was it established?

In 1964.

How big is it?

Over 18,500 acres.

How was it paid for?

Mostly from revenues from the sale of Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps (Duck Stamps).

Why is it here?

To preserve and enhance wintering grounds for waterfowl and other migratory birds.

*Sandhill Cranes
in flight.*

Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.



Some Commonly Seen Species at Cibola NWR

Gambel's Quail
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.

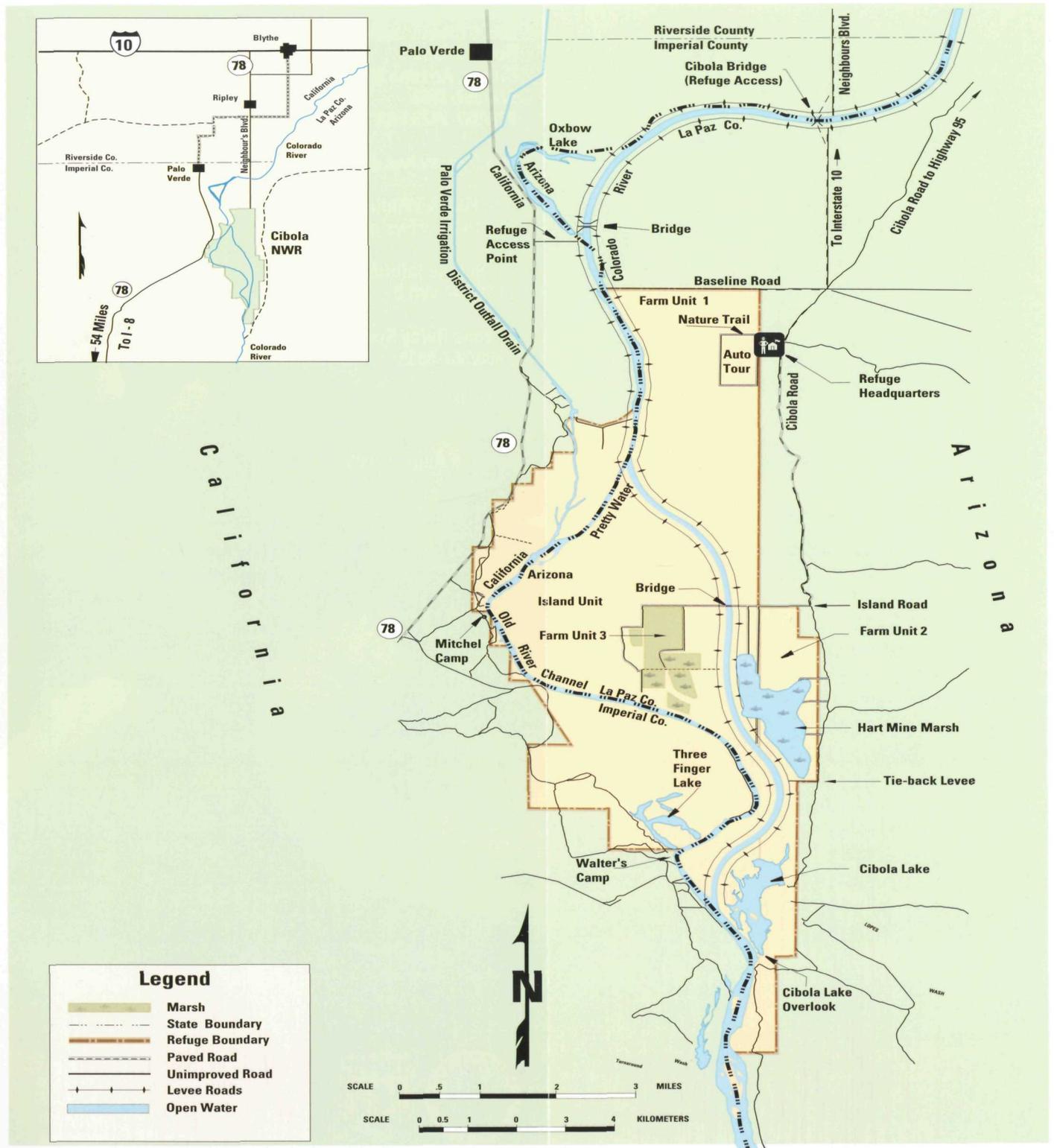


American Coot
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.

Coyote
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.



Mule Deer
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth.



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<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/>

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For Refuge Information
1 800/344 WILD

Arizona Relay Service
1 800/367-8939

Canada geese
Photograph by John & Karen Hollingsworth

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