

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fort Niobrara

National Wildlife Refuge



Bison bull
John & Karen Hollingsworth

Fort Niobrara
National Wildlife Refuge
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Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge straddles the Niobrara River in north-central Nebraska. The Refuge was established to provide habitats for native birds, bison, and elk. Six major plant communities converge along the Niobrara River, a result of the unique blend of topography, soils, and rock formations along with differing exposures to the sun, wind, and rain. Over 230 species of birds are attracted to this 19,131 acre Refuge. Approximately 350 bison and 70 elk are managed to conserve herds representative of those that once roamed the Great Plains.

During your visit you can observe birds, prairie dogs, and bison along the auto tour route, float the Niobrara River, or hike in the wilderness area. Fort Falls water fall and nature trail are popular attractions. A scenic overlook offers views of the Fort Niobrara Wilderness Area, Niobrara River Valley, and Nebraska Sand Hills. The Refuge is open during daylight hours year-round. A visitor center is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays, and on weekends during the summer months. The center is closed on Federal holidays.

The Refuge is located 4.5 miles east of Valentine, Nebraska. From Valentine, take State Highway 12 heading east.

