

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Hagerman

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



The 11,320-acre Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 500 refuges throughout the United States managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is the only national system of lands dedicated to conserving our wildlife heritage for people today and for generations yet to come.

**Welcome:
Waterfowl
Touchdown**

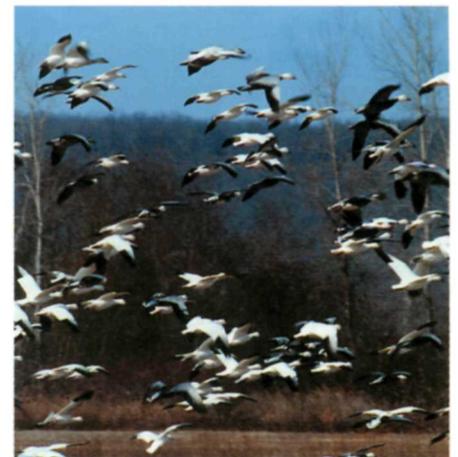
Snow geese descend like a prairie blizzard upon Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. Just 75 miles north of Dallas where the Red River etches the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas, migratory birds by the thousands refuel for long journeys. A main road through the refuge offers outstanding views of the restless flocks.

Canada geese spend the entire winter loafing here on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma. Mississippi kites and scissor-tailed flycatchers hunt the summer skies for insects. Great blue herons call the refuge home in every season. Birds top the wildlife diversity list with 316 species recorded since the refuge opened its gates in 1946.

Wildlife Calendar
*Fall/Winter:
Reserve Early*

If birds needed lodging reservations, they'd have to book early for Hagerman NWR. Great flocks of waterfowl following the Central Flyway arrive in late fall from breeding grounds to the north.

The honking of up to 7,500 Canada geese drowns out the sounds of other birds from October through March. Snow geese check in about November. By March, they are refreshed for the tough flight back to



*Snow Geese. Photo
by John and Karen
Hollingsworth*

the top of the continent. Occasionally, as many as 10,000 will land for a few days, transforming Hagerman NWR into a feathered convention. White-fronted and Ross' geese form the rest of the winter geese gaggle.

Mallard, pintail, teal, redhead and ring-necked ducks sweep in throughout the fall. Some will refuel and head farther south. Others will take up winter quarters.

*Spring/Summer:
Easy Living*

Mississippi kites race the winds in pursuit of flying insects, while roadrunners speed along the ground hunting lizards. Some 5,000 white pelicans wing into the refuge in April and again in September. The pelicans glide in swirling clouds, riding columns of rising warm air.

Warblers trill from the woodlands. Dickcissels stake out fenceposts. Painted and indigo buntings rival the prairie wildflowers for breathtaking color. Great blue herons and egrets stalk the shallows. Least bitterns freeze like marsh statues. Shorebird migrations in late July and August can be spectacular.

Birds aren't the only attraction. Watch for bounding white-tailed deer, bobcats with young in the summer, mink, armadillos, and beaver. Listen for the coyote chorus at day's end.



*Armadillo. Photo
by John and Karen
Hollingsworth*



Egrets at Sunrise. Photo by Andy Crosthwaite

**Lending a Hand
for Wildlife**

For thousands of years, our nation's waterfowl flew north and south along a lifeline of jeweled lakes, marshes, prairies, and forests. Today, birds follow the same Central Flyway, but the landscape has changed dramatically. Wetlands are vanishing every day and so are open spaces.

National wildlife refuges like Hagerman act as lifeboats in a stormy sea for today's waterfowl. To make up for the losses of places for food, rest, and shelter, the Fish and Wildlife Service actively manages this refuge for healthy habitat.

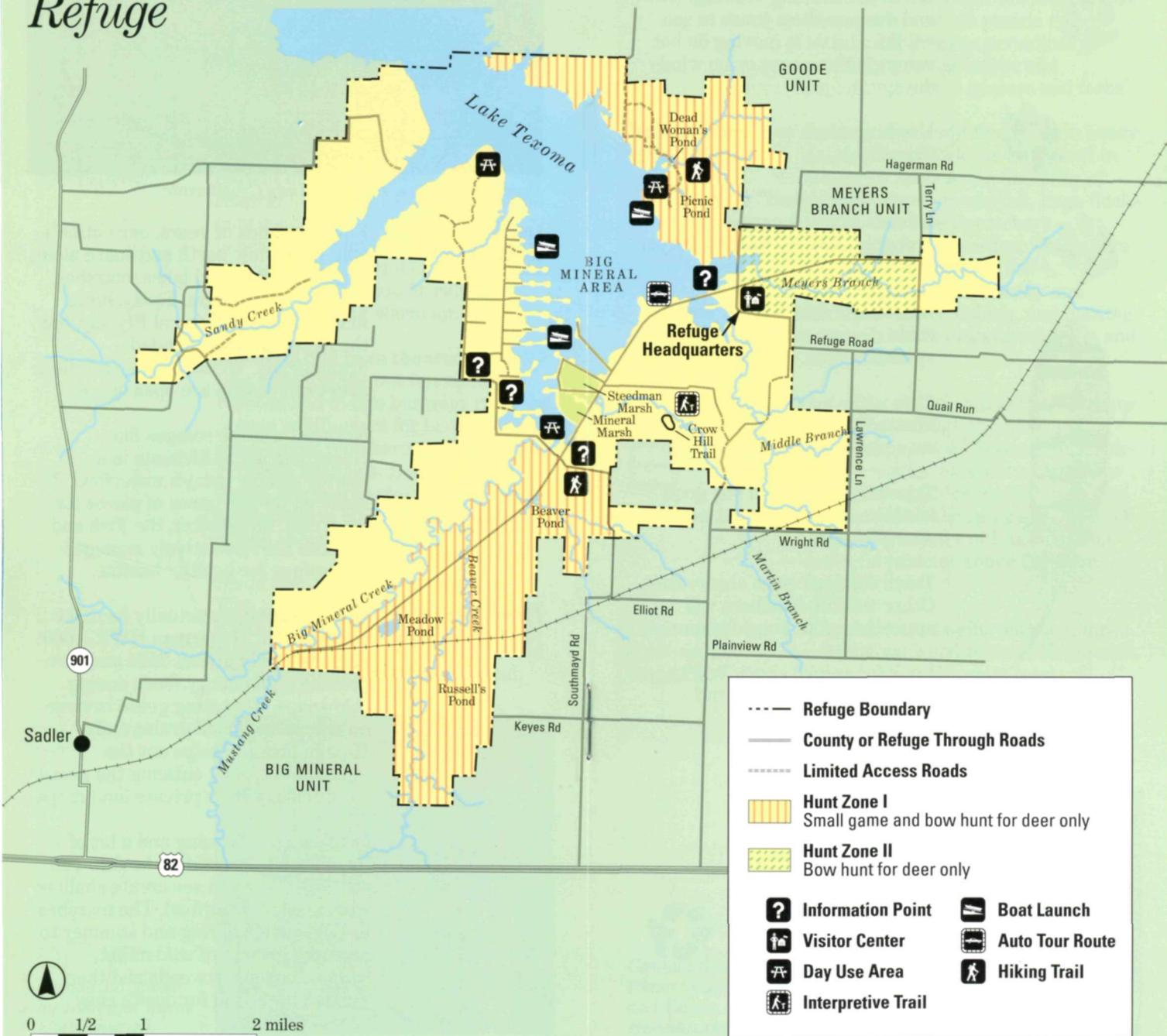
*Farming to
Feed Thousands*

In fact, managers actually farm for waterfowl at Hagerman NWR—600 acres worth of grains. Milo and corn provide high energy foods during cold snaps. Wintering geese browse on wheat and small grains daily. Refuge farming helps out the neighbors, too, by enticing the geese to stay away from private land crops.

It takes both farming and a bit of engineering for wildlife health. The earthen dikes you see create shallow marshes for waterfowl. The marshes are drained in spring and summer to promote growth of wild millet, sedges, and smartweeds and then flooded in the fall for duck's easy access to food.

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Wildlife Watching Tips

Fall and winter months attract big flocks of ducks, geese and pelicans. The main lakeshore offers outstanding viewing. Dawn and dusk are best times to see wildlife. Little is moving on hot summer afternoons or on windy days.

Use binoculars or a long lens for a closer look.

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.

Try sitting quietly in one good location. Let wildlife get used to your presence.

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

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

*Nature
Knows Best*

Things to Do at the Refuge

Waters and farmland alone aren't enough for a full-service refuge. Native prairies protect the soil and supply wildlife food and cover. Naturally, these prairies burned frequently and relied on grazing from bison and other hoofed animals. Managers recreate prairie cycles by burning grasses periodically, carefully grazing cattle, and replanting native grasses and forbs.

Birdwatchers will find birds in every season, from flocks of waterfowl in winter to an amazing diversity of sparrows and, in mid-fall, huge flocks of scissor-tailed flycatchers preparing for migration. The refuge offers plentiful places for photography, nature study and hiking. Boating, fishing, and hunting are welcome in designated areas and seasons.

*Take a
Wildlife Drive*



A 4-mile, self-guided auto tour route proceeds through the heart of Hagerman NWR. Take time to look over roadside exhibits and leaflets along the way, designed to help you appreciate all the refuge has to offer. Enjoy the beauty of Lake Texoma and wild prairies above the farm fields.

*Hagerman
History: The
Town That Was*

The auto tour begins with a glimpse into the vanished town of Hagerman. An exhibit at the main road pull-off features the town that stood in the way of Lake Texoma, formed by Denison Dam in 1945.

*Canada Geese.
Photo by John
and Karen
Hollingsworth*



Hiking Trails to the Past

Step back into history when a sea of native prairie grasses stretched across miles of Texas. The 1-mile, Crow Hill trail leads you through native prairie, past interpretive displays to an overlook. In season, larkspurs, coneflowers, daisies, and pink penstemon wildflowers illuminate the grasses. Ask the refuge staff for other hiking suggestions along trails and field roads.

Meeting Your Needs

You'll find restrooms at the day-use areas and the visitor center, also the best source for information and exhibits. Hagerman Flowing Well (north of Headquarters) supplies safe drinking water. For help with accessibility, contact Refuge Headquarters.

Help us Protect the Refuge



Leave plants and wildlife undisturbed to give them the room they need to thrive. We do allow limited, non-commercial gathering of pecans, berries, mushrooms, and other fruits. Please ask the refuge staff for details.



To safeguard the wealth of wildlife depending on this refuge, we do not allow any of the following activities: spotlighting animals using vehicle headlights or any artificial lights, swimming, water skiing, camping, guns (except in transit through the refuge), or night use, with the exception of through-traffic on main roads.

Fishing



Striped bass, crappie, black bass, and channel cat flourish in Lake Texoma. Anglers are welcome year-round during daylight hours only, and following state regulations. Feel free to fish in refuge ponds, which are open only from April through September. The rest of the year, the ponds belong to wintering waterfowl who need to rest and build up strength without disturbance.

Trotlines may not be attached to any fixed object (anchored jugs only), or set in any ponds. Do not fish from bridges.

Hunting



The refuge offers limited hunting for dove, quail, squirrel, rabbit, and deer (archery). A separate flyer explains open and closed areas, seasons, and permits.

Boating



From April through September only, you may tour the refuge by boat. Launch at designated sites shown on the map.

Pets



Pets must be on a leash to protect wildlife.

Vehicles

Vehicles must stay on improved roads (graveled).

Fires



Fires are permitted only in the fire pits provided.

Refuge Hours

The refuge is open from dawn until dusk.

Hagerman NWR Facts

Where is it?

From Dallas, go north 60 miles on US 75 to Sherman-Farm Market 1417 exit, then north 13 miles on 1417 to refuge sign, and left 6 miles to entrance.

When was it established?

In 1946.

How big is it?

11,320 acres.

Why is it here?

To protect migratory waterfowl and other birds.

*View from Auto
Tour. Photo by
John and Karen
Hollingsworth*



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Cover: Common Egrets.
Photo by Andy A. Crosthwaite