

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Upper Souris

*National Wildlife
Refuge*





Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge is part of the picturesque Souris River Valley of the Prairie Pothole Region of the northern Great Plains. In the valley, you can find steep, native prairie grass-covered hills, shrub-filled coulees (ravines), and a clear, slowly meandering river lined with hardwoods. This unique landscape, formed by glacial activity 6,000 to 12,000 years ago, is home to hundreds of wildlife and fish species.

Creation of a Vision



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

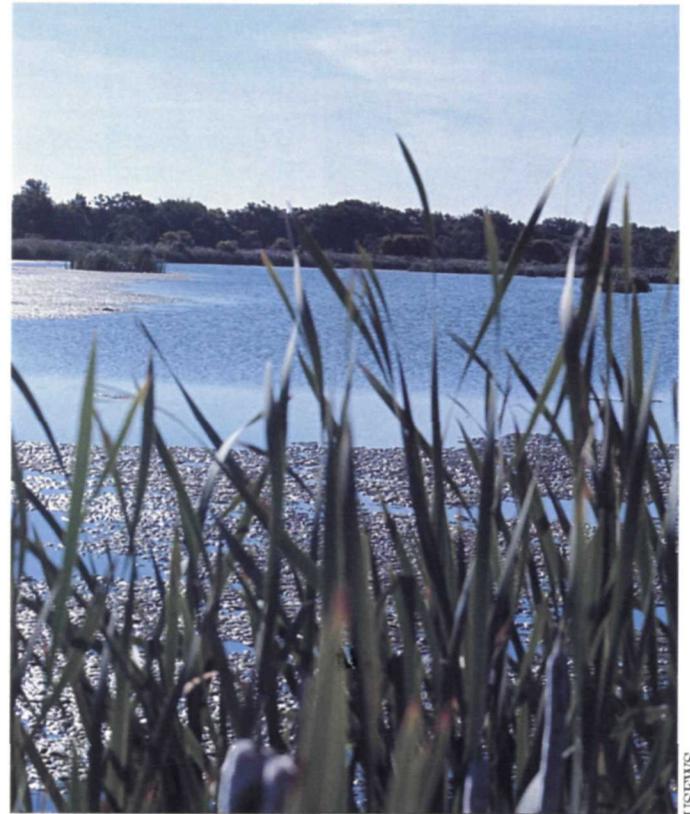
Ducks and the "Dirty Thirties"

Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) extends more than 35 miles along the Souris River corridor. The Refuge is an important link in the Central Flyway as a migration stopover for tens of thousands of waterfowl, some of which also nest on the Refuge. The Refuge also provides habitat for a diversity of shorebirds, terns, small mammals, fish, insects, and other wildlife.

Upper Souris NWR is one of over 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifically for wildlife. The Refuge System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife and habitat for people today and generations to come.

In the 1930s, drought brought the dust bowl to the Great Plains. The drought dried out the land, and the wind covered everything with dust, leading to the name, "Dirty Thirties." As the water levels dropped in the region, many wetlands dried out, and duck populations plummeted to all-time lows. Conservationists began to act to reverse this trend.

In 1934, a political cartoonist from Iowa, J.N. "Ding" Darling, became Director of the newly formed Bureau of Biological Survey. Darling helped push the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act through Congress in 1934. Commonly referred to as the "Duck Stamp Act," this act requires every waterfowl hunter 16 years and older to purchase a Federal duck stamp. Proceeds from duck stamp sales are used to buy and lease waterfowl habitat.



Riverine wetlands were created in the Souris River floodplain to provide habitat for wetland animals.

Civilian Conservation Corps

In 1935, J. Clark Salyer, "Ding" Darling's top aid, used duck stamp money to help purchase three refuges on the Souris River, including Upper Souris Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. The Refuge was established by Executive Order on August 27, 1935, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt "... as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife ..."

From 1935 to 1941, the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Project Administration provided large labor forces which built dikes, roads, fences, and water control structures on the Refuge. Camp Maurek, a military-style camp located southeast of Lake Darling Dam, housed as many as 250 men. Members of Camp Heintzelman, located in Mohall, developed wildlife habitat and facilities on the north end of the Refuge.

A Place for Wildlife



American avocets
(above); *American bittern*
(right)

Upper Souris NWR provides habitat for a rich variety of wildlife species characteristic of the mixed-grass ecosystem of the Northern Great Plains. Dominant grass species in this area are needlegrass, wheatgrass, blue grama, and big and little bluestem.

Waterfowl numbers may exceed 200,000 during spring and fall migration. Species such as the tundra swan, northern pintail, canvasback, and lesser snow goose use the Refuge for nesting or foraging. Six species of grebe – horned, eared, red-necked, pied-billed, western and Clark’s – as well as American white pelicans and black terns, may be found on the Refuge during the summer months. Several nesting colonies of double-crested cormorants and great blue herons can be found near Lake Darling. Numerous marshes and wet meadows provide habitat for sora rails, marsh and sedge wrens, and yellow-headed blackbirds.

In late spring and early summer, northern leopard, western chorus, and wood frogs can be heard calling on the Refuge. A variety of songbirds such as red-eyed vireos, least flycatchers, ovenbirds, and Baltimore orioles occur in Refuge coulees and river bottomlands.

A number of mammal species occur on the Refuge. Muskrats are common, and careful observation will reveal raccoons, voles, mink, weasels, and coyotes. White-tailed deer are abundant, and an occasional antelope or elk can be seen on the hills above the valley. Moose sightings on the Refuge are increasing.



Managing Wildlife

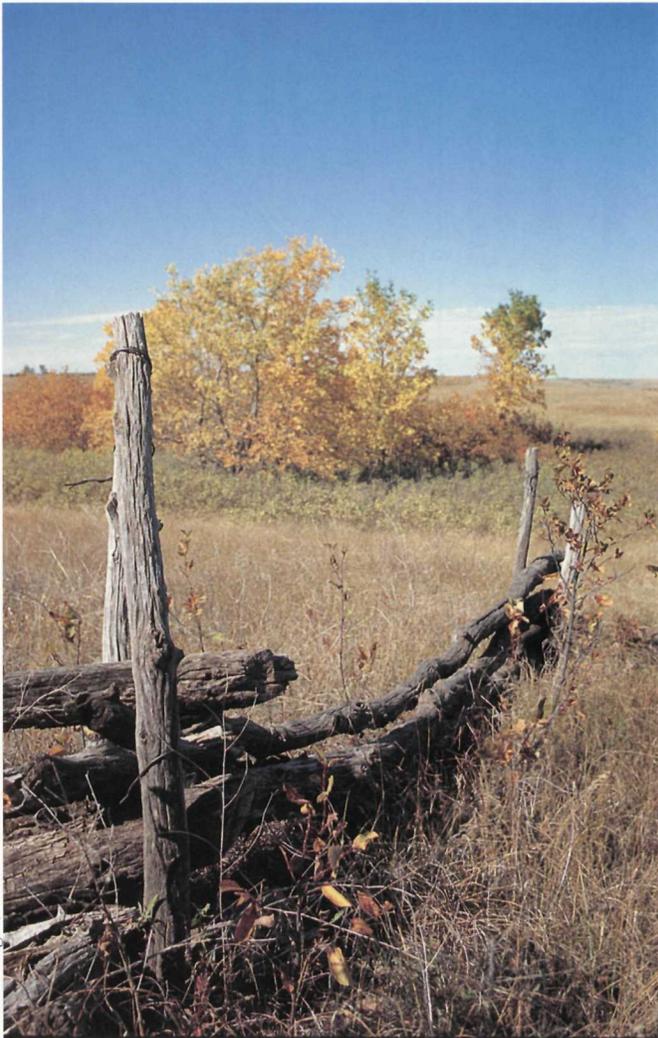
Refuge staff use a number of management tools to maintain and improve habitat for a diversity of wildlife species. Grasslands are periodically grazed, hayed, burned, and rested to provide good forage, healthy nesting and hiding cover for wildlife, and to increase the diversity and condition of native vegetation.

Water level management is also an important tool at Upper Souris NWR. Lake Darling, a 9,700-acre lake named in honor of Ding Darling, is the largest of several water impoundments on the Refuge. The lake’s primary purpose is to provide water to downstream Refuge marshes, including the large marshes on J. Clark Salyer NWR. Lake Darling was designed to hold a 2-year supply of water to protect downstream marshes against the threat of drought. In 1998, the dam also became an integral part of the Souris River Flood Control Project that assists in providing 100-year flood protection for the city of Minot.

A Place for People

Recreational opportunities at Upper Souris NWR include wildlife observation, wildlife photography, fishing, hunting, and canoeing. The Refuge is open to visitors between 5:00 am and 10:00 pm. Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the Refuge activities discussed in this leaflet.

Accessible interpretive displays, an information kiosk, and rest rooms are located at Refuge headquarters. For more information about other accessible facilities throughout the Refuge, please contact the Refuge staff.



Refuge Headquarters and Visitor Center

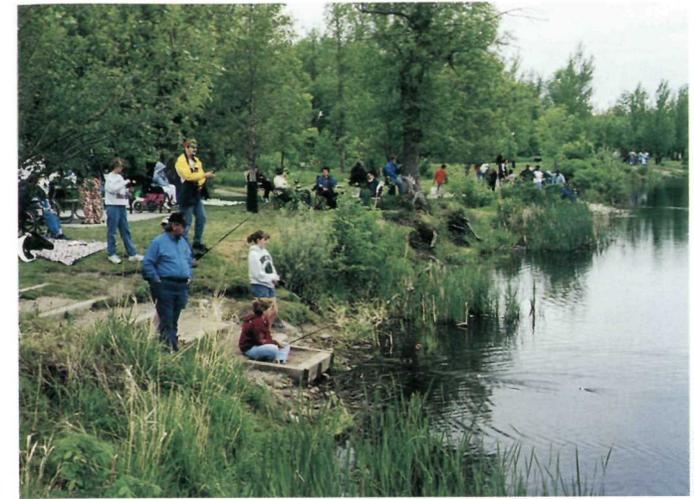
The Refuge headquarters and visitor center is located southeast of Lake Darling Dam and is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. To reach the Refuge, take Highway 52 to 1 mile north of Foxholm, then north 7 miles on County Road 11. The Refuge can also be reached by traveling 18 miles north of Minot on Highway 83, then west 12 miles on County Road 6.

Interpretive exhibits and the Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association book store outlet at the Refuge headquarters and visitor center allow visitors to learn more about the Refuge. Brochures on fishing and hunting opportunities; the auto tour route; walking and canoeing trails; and the mammals, birds, and native grasses are available at the Refuge headquarters and visitor center, as well as at the information kiosk located southwest of Lake Darling Dam.

Wildlife Observation and Photography

Opportunities for viewing and studying wildlife and plants are available along the 3-mile Prairie-Marsh Scenic Drive. Wildflowers such as pasqueflower, purple coneflower, western red lily, prairie rose, and goldenrod brighten the landscape. The Cottonwood, Pelican, Oxbow, Overlook, and Centennial Wildlife Nature Trails provide visitors with diverse opportunities to see and photograph wildlife. Avid birders may wish to look for small prairie birds including Baird's, LeConte's, grasshopper, savannah, clay-colored, and sharp-tailed sparrows, as well as Sprague's pipit and bobolinks. During April, photo blinds may be reserved for close-up viewing and photographing the extraordinary dance of the sharp-tailed grouse.

*Fall prairie colors (left);
angling opportunities (upper right);
a successful hunt (lower right).*



Fishing

A popular recreational fisheries program is available at the Refuge. This program is a cooperative effort between the Refuge and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Office. Northern pike, walleye, yellow perch, and smallmouth bass may be caught in Lake Darling and the Souris River.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted in designated areas and at designated times for deer, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, and ring-necked pheasant.



USFWS

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Canoeing

Two easy stretches of the Souris River are open for canoeing and experiencing the solitude of the river. A quiet trip along the river may reveal beavers constructing mud and stick homes, deer drinking and browsing, mink searching for aquatic food, cormorants roosting in dead trees, great blue herons chasing minnows, or a wood duck brood catching insects on top of the water.

Accommodations

Camping is not permitted on the Refuge. Camp sites are available in the towns of Carpio and Mohall, and at Mouse River Park.



Opportunities abound to view birds such as bobolinks.

Refuge Regulations

Pets

Upper Souris NWR is a special place for wildlife and people. Yet, as a national wildlife refuge, it is a place where the needs of wildlife and habitat come first. By observing the following rules, visitors will make the Refuge an enjoyable place. Contact the Refuge Manager for updated visitor activities and regulations.

Pets must be kept on a leash at all times, except dogs used while hunting. Dog training on the Refuge is **not** allowed. The use of horses for wildlife viewing may be allowed with advanced permission from the Refuge Manager.

Water Sports

Fishing from boats and canoes is allowed from May 1 to September 30 in designated areas. Sailing, water skiing, and swimming, the use of jet boats or personal watercraft, and recreational boating are **not** allowed.

Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles are allowed on designated roads only. The use of all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and other off-road vehicles is **not** allowed.

Fishing

Please see the Upper Souris NWR fishing brochure for regulations and a map of the Refuge fishing areas.

Hunting

Please see the Upper Souris NWR hunting brochure for regulations and a map of the Refuge hunting areas.

Partial List of Prohibited Items and Activities

Prohibited items and activities include remaining on the Refuge between 10:00 pm and 5:00 am; open fires; fireworks; littering; trespassing in closed areas; intoxicated and disorderly conduct; underage possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages; open container of alcoholic beverage in vehicle; geocaching or similar activity; collecting, injuring, disturbing, destroying, or harming any animal or plant, except legally harvested fish and game animals; and searching for, disturbing, or collecting prehistoric or historic artifacts.



Duane C. Anderson / USFWS

Refuge Signs and their Meaning

Canada goose goslings (above)



Refuge boundary sign – entry by permission only.



Open to public fishing.



Sanctuary area – closed to the public unless otherwise specified.

Accessibility Information

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 7-1-1 for a free connection to the State transfer relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 701 / 468 5467, or the U.S. Department of the Interior; Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge
17705 212th Avenue, NW
Foxholm, ND 58718
701 / 468 5467
701 / 468 5600 fax
uppersouris@fws.gov
<http://uppersouris.fws.gov>

For State transfer relay service
TTY / Voice 711

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD

June 2004



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Snow goose
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