U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cabo Rojo
National Wildlife Refuge

photo: USFWS

photo: USFWS

photo: USFWS

photo: USFWS

Susan Silander, Project Leader
Caribbean Islands NWR Complex
Oscar Díaz-Marrero, Refuge Manager
Cabo Rojo NWR
P.O. Box 510, Boquerón, PR 00622
Phone: 787/851 7258, Fax: 787/255 6725
E-mail: Caribbeanisland@fws.gov
www.fws.gov/caribbean/refuges
www.facebook.com/caborojonwr

Like

Photos (top to bottom)
Environmental education

Visitor Center interpretive exhibits

Greenhouse

Interpretive Center

Refuge Facts
Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1974 when 587 acres of land were obtained from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an upland buffer for the Cabo Rojo Salt Flats and as potential habitat for migratory birds.

The 1,269 acre Cabo Rojo Salt Flats were purchased and added to the refuge in 1999. The Salt Flats are now managed under a special use permit with a private operator who continues to manage water levels as part of a commercial salt-harvesting operation, in accordance with the needs of shorebirds.

- Acres: 1,856.
- Location: from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico (PR) drive south on Route 2 and exit Route 100 towards Cabo Rojo. When Route 100 ends, turn left onto Route 101. Drive .8 miles, then turn right onto Route 301. Drive approximately 3 miles and look for the refuge sign on the left.
- Administration of Cabo Rojo NWR is accomplished by the Caribbean Islands NWR Complex. The headquarters of the complex is located in Cabo Rojo, PR.

Natural History
- Salt mining began as an industry in Puerto Rico in 1511. It has been over 500 years of active harvesting of this precious mineral.
- The Cabo Rojo Salt Flats is the first site in the Caribbean to be designated by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. The site is also designated by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area.
- The refuge is designated as Critical Habitat for the Yellow-shouldered Blackbird.
- The refuge is an important stop-over point for birds that migrate between North and South America. These birds use the refuge during the cooler months, while resident species are present year-round.

Refuge Objectives
- To restore and enhance native wildlife and plants, particularly the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird and the endangered grass, *Aristida chaseae*.
- To increase the level of environmental awareness among residents and visitors.
- To protect one of the most important shorebird habitats in the Caribbean.

Management Tools
- Habitat restoration and reforestation.
- Vegetation and wildlife monitoring.
- Scientific research.
- Law enforcement, collaboration with PR Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.
- Environmental education/ Interpretation.

Public Use Opportunities
- Visitor centers.
- Environmental Education/ Interpretation.
- Hiking.
- Biking.
- Wildlife observation and nature photography.
- Bird watching.

photo: USFWS

photo: USFWS

photo: USFWS

photo: Mike Morell

photo: Mike Morell

photo: USFWS

Photos left, (top to bottom)
Hiking trails at Salt Flats area

Salt extraction

Reforestation with youth programs

Endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird

Photos above
Endemic Adelaide's Warbler

Troupial

Questions and Answers

What visitor opportunities are available at the refuge?

- **Cabo Rojo NWR**
  The Visitor Center, located on Route 301 km 5.1, is open Monday through Saturday from 9 am until 4 pm. It is closed on all federal holidays. At the Visitor Center, you will find exhibits and a short movie about the refuge's natural history; excellent for group tours. Hiking trails near the Visitor Center are open Monday through Friday from 7 am until 4 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm; excellent for bird watching, photography and wildlife observation. For further information or group reservations, please call 787/851 7258.

- **Cabo Rojo NWR at the Salt Flats**
  The Interpretive Center, located on Route 301 km 11.0, is open Thursday to Sunday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The Interpretive Center is equipped with exhibitions highlighting the importance of the area for migratory birds. There are three hiking trails and one 5-mile biking trail adjacent to the Center. For more information or group reservations, please call the refuge's Friends Group "Caborrojeños Pro-salud y Ambiente" at 787/851 2999 or 787/254 0115.

What resident bird species might I see at the refuge?
Visitors may see species such as the Puerto Rican Tody, Adelaide's Warbler, Caribbean Elaenia, Troupial, and the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird and Snowy Plover, among many others.

Are any other national wildlife refuges close to Cabo Rojo?
Yes, Laguna Cartagena NWR is just a short drive from Cabo Rojo.