

Cabo Rojo

National Wildlife Refuge



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Photos (top to bottom)

Birdwatching

Least Tern

Cabo Rojo NWR Salt Flats Unit

Vegetation monitoring

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 added to the refuge in 1999 through a conservation easement.

■ Acres: 1,856.

■ Location: Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico (PR). from Mayaguez, 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, Puerto Rican nightjar 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



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Questions and Answers *What visitor opportunities are available at the refuge?*

■ **Cabo Rojo NWR**

The headquarters of the complex is located in Cabo Rojo NWR on route 301 km 5.1. It is open Monday through Saturday from 8 am until 2 pm. It is closed on all federal holidays.

This area offers hiking trails excellent for groups, photography, birdwatching and wildlife observation.

For group reservations or additional information, please call 305/587 7856.

■ **Cabo Rojo NWR Salt Flats Unit**

The Interpretive Center, located on route 301 km 11.0, is open Friday and Saturday from 7:30 am to 2:00 pm. The Interpretive Center is equipped with exhibitions highlighting the importance of the area for migratory birds. There are three hiking trails and one biking trail adjacent to the Center.

For group reservations or additional information, please call 305/587 7856.

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, located in the Municipality of Lajas, is just a short drive from Cabo Rojo.

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

Observation Tower

Reforestation with youth programs

Endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird

Photos above
Endemic Adelaide's Warbler

Troupial