

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Arapaho

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



*Arapaho National
Wildlife Refuge is
comprised of a
variety of habitats.
Sage-steppe uplands,
wet meadows, willow
riparian areas, and
open-water wetlands
support a diverse array
of wildlife species.*



Welcome to Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge



The Blue Goose is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1967, primarily to provide suitable nesting, rearing, and stopover habitat for migratory birds. It was created, in part, to offset losses of nesting habitat in the Prairie Pothole Region of the Midwest. Since the Refuge's establishment, numerous wetlands have been developed or enhanced using irrigation water from the Illinois River and other management techniques. The Refuge is one of over 565 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Refuge System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife for people today and for generations to come.

The 25,521-acre Refuge is located in an intermountain glacial basin in north-central Colorado, situated at an elevation of 8,200 feet. The basin opens north into Wyoming and is rimmed on three sides by mountain ranges. The Park range is on the west, Rabbit Ears range on the south, and Medicine Bow range to the east. The basin is known locally as North Park. Slow, meandering streams, which crisscross the basin, flow toward the north to form the North Platte River. Most of the flood plain is irrigated meadow, while the adjacent uplands are characterized by sagebrush steppe.

Gadwall



USFWS

Habitat Management



Ann Timberman / USFWS

Prescribed burning

In order to provide suitable habitat for nesting, brood rearing, and migrating waterfowl, other migratory birds, and wildlife, several habitat management tools are used throughout the Refuge. These include grazing, prescribed burning, noxious weed control, and the most important tool for Refuge wetlands – water management.

Water is diverted from the Illinois River and directed through a complex system of ditches to irrigate meadows and fill ponds. Pond water levels are manipulated to facilitate growth of aquatic vegetation for food and escape cover. These ponds also produce many insects and other invertebrates which are an important food source for wetland-dependent wildlife species and their young.

Diverse Habitats and Wildlife

The Refuge provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including 208 species of birds, 37 species of mammals, 6 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 10 species of fish.

Wetlands

Refuge wetlands provide habitat for many migratory birds. Gadwall, lesser scaup, wigeon, mallard, cinnamon teal, northern shoveler, and Canada geese are the primary waterfowl species that nest on the Refuge. Numerous shorebirds and wading birds also use these wetlands. Look for Wilson's phalarope, American avocet, and willet along the shoreline and shallow edges of ponds. Black-crowned night herons, great blue herons, white-faced ibis, and pied-billed and eared grebes also use the various Refuge wetlands for nesting and feeding.

Arapaho

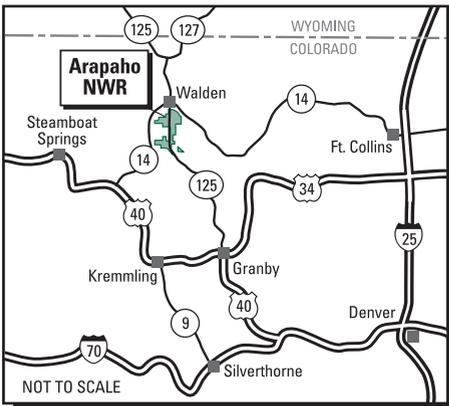
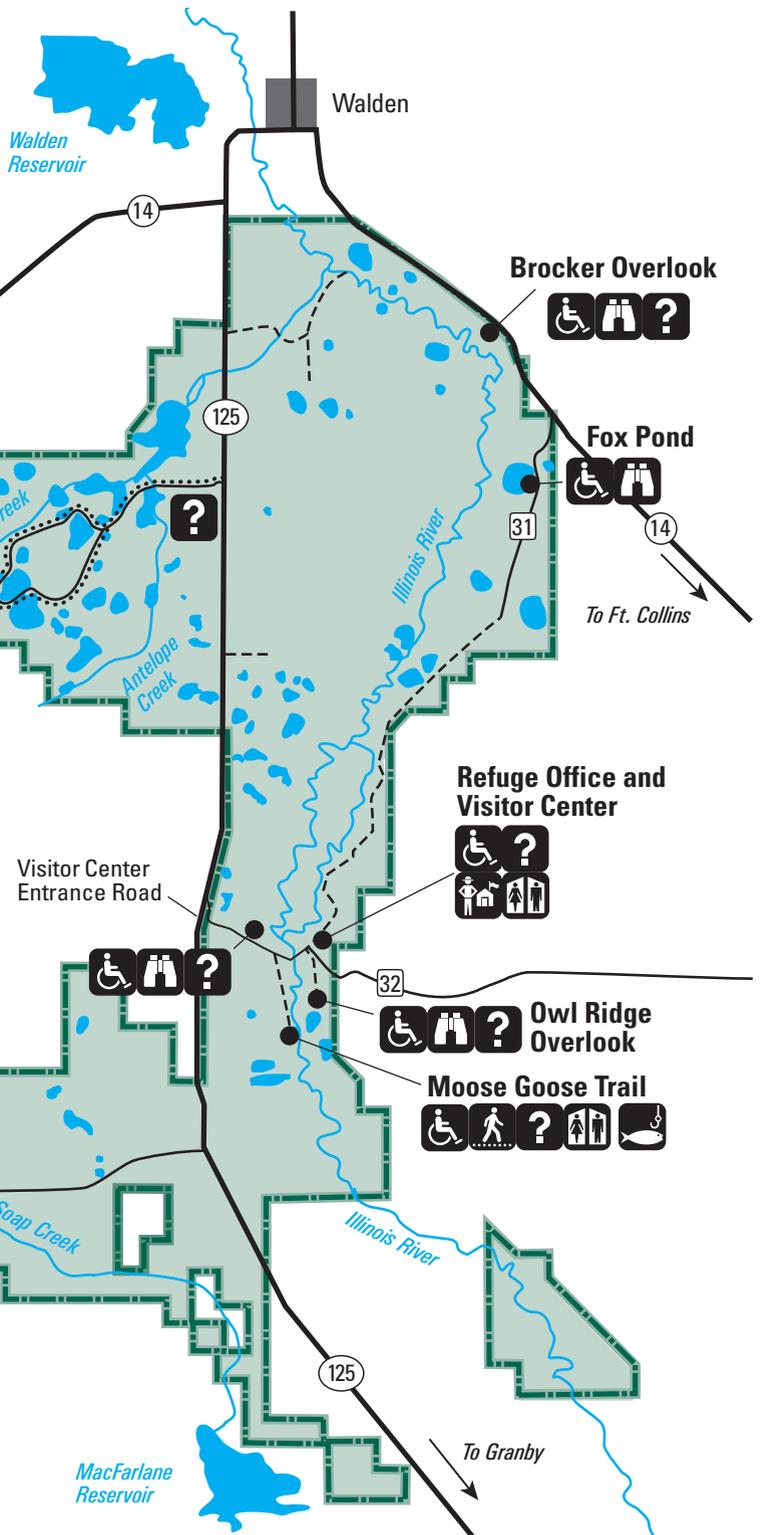
National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge boundary
- State highway
- County road
- Wildlife auto tour
- Refuge road (seasonal)
- Water
- Refuge Office and Visitor Center
- Information
- Restroom
- Linked symbols designate accessible features
- Wildlife viewing
- Fishing access
- Nature trail
- Parking

To protect wildlife and their habitat, the only areas open to the public are the roads and trails shown on this map, and some areas during special activities.

During the winter season, some roads maybe closed due to snow and to protect sensitive winter habitat.

To Steamboat Springs



NOT TO SCALE

Irrigated Meadows

Irrigated meadows provide primary nesting habitat for waterfowl, prime forage for elk in all seasons, important feeding areas for greater sage-grouse broods, and much more. Sora and Virginia rails, both shy and secretive birds, are numerous in meadows, but seldom seen. Wilson's snipe, northern harriers, and short-eared owls also find the irrigated meadows to be excellent nesting habitat. Song birds, such as the western meadowlarks, savannah sparrows, and vesper sparrows are abundant in the meadows. These meadows are also a home to a variety of mice, voles, and shrews, which in turn provide a rich food source for coyotes, owls, and hawks. Although rare, northern leopard frogs and wandering garter snakes can be observed in wet meadows.

Riparian Areas

Riparian areas, such as those along the Illinois River, support a large diversity of wildlife species. Neotropical song birds, such as the yellow warbler, song sparrow, and Lincoln's sparrow abound. Moose, a species native to the area, were re-introduced to North Park in the late 1970s by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Today, moose are again a common sight on the Refuge. Beaver, muskrat, and an occasional river otter may be spotted swimming silently through the water. Porcupine, weasel, mink, raccoon, and mule deer, also make their home in these lush riparian areas.



River otter

Bull moose



Tom Koerner / USFWS

Uplands



Scott Somershoe / USFWS

Swainson's hawk

Accessibility



Kent Olson / USFWS

American avocets

Uplands provide year-round essential habitat for pronghorn and sage-grouse. Pronghorn herd up in the fall, and sage-grouse gather in large flocks during the winter. Golden eagles, Swainson's hawks, prairie falcons, and other raptors circle the skies above the uplands searching for food. Peregrine falcons and bald eagles are occasionally seen on the Refuge. Their prey includes Wyoming ground squirrels, white-tailed jackrabbits. Other birds that frequent the uplands include vesper sparrows, sage thrashers, and horned larks. As many as 1,200-1,500 elk winter in the Refuge meadows and uplands.

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. For more information please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, www.doi.gov/eo.

Male greater sage-grouse



Stephen Torbit / USFWS

Enjoying Your Visit

Wildlife-dependent recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, photography, and hiking are available in designated areas on the Refuge. Any activities not mentioned in this leaflet are not allowed due to their incompatibility with the wildlife conservation mission and goals of the Refuge.

Hours

The Refuge is open from one-half hour before sunrise to one half-hour after sunset. The Refuge headquarters and visitor center is open year-round, staff permitting, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm, except on Federal holidays.

Wildlife Observation Opportunities

A 6-mile self-guided auto tour route takes you through a variety of Refuge habitats, providing excellent opportunities to view and photograph waterfowl and other water birds. You may also see pronghorn, badgers, and white-tailed prairie dogs. Also, the ½-mile Moose-Goose nature trail winds along the Illinois River, providing great opportunities to view songbirds and other riparian residents.

Refuge Access

Motor vehicles are permitted on improved Refuge roads only. Roads marked as “Closed” or “Authorized Vehicles Only” are closed to the public. Visitors on horseback or bicycle must stay on roads that are open to public use. Parking is permitted in designated areas only. ATVs and snowmobiles may not be used on any portion of the Refuge. Camping, fires and overnight parking are not allowed.

Fishing and Hunting

The Refuge is a great place to enjoy hunting and fishing. See the Refuge’s Hunting and Fishing brochure for detailed information and a map.

Pets

All pets must be leashed, with the exception of trained dogs used for hunting during the appropriate hunting seasons.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).

Collecting

Molesting, injuring, disturbing, or destroying any animal or plant except legal take of fish or game in season, is prohibited. Artifacts and historic items are protected on Refuge lands by Federal law. It is unlawful to search for or remove these objects from Refuge lands. Removal of any plant, animal, or parts thereof, except as allowed in the hunting brochure, is prohibited.



Blanket flower

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www.fws.gov/refuge/arapaho

For State relay service
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For Refuge Information
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