

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bear River

*Migratory Bird
Refuge*



Welcome



This blue goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge (MBR) is distinguished by the vast number of water bird species, especially shorebirds, that migrate through each spring and fall. This nearly 80,000-acre mix of open water, alkali mudflats, marshes, and uplands brings diverse species to the Refuge. Over 250 species can be seen migrating through this area to rest and feed or to nest and raise young on an annual basis.

The Refuge lies on the eastern fringe of the Pacific Flyway and the western fringe of the Central Flyway. It is associated with the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, which provides critical habitat for migrating birds. As part of the Bear River Bay, the Refuge is designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site, a globally important shorebird area. The Refuge is one of over 565 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a system of lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, set aside to conserve wildlife and habitat for people to enjoy today and for generations to come.

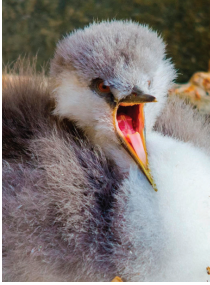


© S. Hilton

Snowy egret displaying breeding plumage.

In the 1920s, due to the loss of marshes and huge bird die-offs from botulism, local citizens and conservation organizations urged Congress to protect the land and water as a valuable natural resource in Northern Utah. Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge was created by Presidential Proclamation in 1928.

Seasons of Wildlife



Spring: The wide range of birds displaying their bright and colorful breeding plumage and courtship rituals make this an exciting time at the Refuge.

Summer: May, June, and July bring a variety of new babies on the Refuge. By late summer, millions of shorebirds stop at the Refuge's insect-rich marshes and mudflats, to refuel for their long trek south.

Fall: Up to 500,000 migrating ducks and geese concentrate on the Refuge marshes in the fall. Tundra swans begin to arrive in mid-October.

Winter: November through March brings northern harriers, rough-legged hawks, falcons, owls, and bald eagles to the Refuge, hunting the frozen land for their next meal.

Forster's terns during courtship (top); Western grebe chick begging for food (bottom).

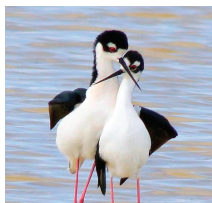
Wildlife Watching

The best way to observe the Refuge and its wildlife is to drive or bike the 12-mile auto tour road. Morning and early evening hours are generally best for viewing wildlife.

Visitor Center

The Visitor Center offers interactive exhibits, a wetland diorama, and other displays featuring information on the birds and wetlands of the Great Salt Lake ecosystem. Just outside the Visitor Center is ½-mile paved accessible walking trail and a one-mile trail that meanders through the nearby wetland.

Environmental Education



J. Cisar/USFWS

A variety of environmental education programs and events are offered throughout the year. Teachers are encouraged to assist with the field trip experience and work with staff to customize programming to what students are learning in class.

Interpretive Programs

Interpretive programs are open to the public and are free. Topics range from tundra swans to bald eagles and are hands-on and family-friendly. Check the Refuge website or stop by the Visitor Center to learn more about available programs.

Hunting, Fishing, Boating, Canoeing

Hunters may use boats/canoes during designated State seasons only. Please consult the Refuge hunting and fishing brochure for more detailed information, as well as the Utah State Proclamations publications.

Friends of the Bear River Refuge

The Friends of the Bear River Refuge is a non-profit organization that assists the Refuge with a variety of projects. For more information and to volunteer, please go to friendsofbearriverrefuge.org



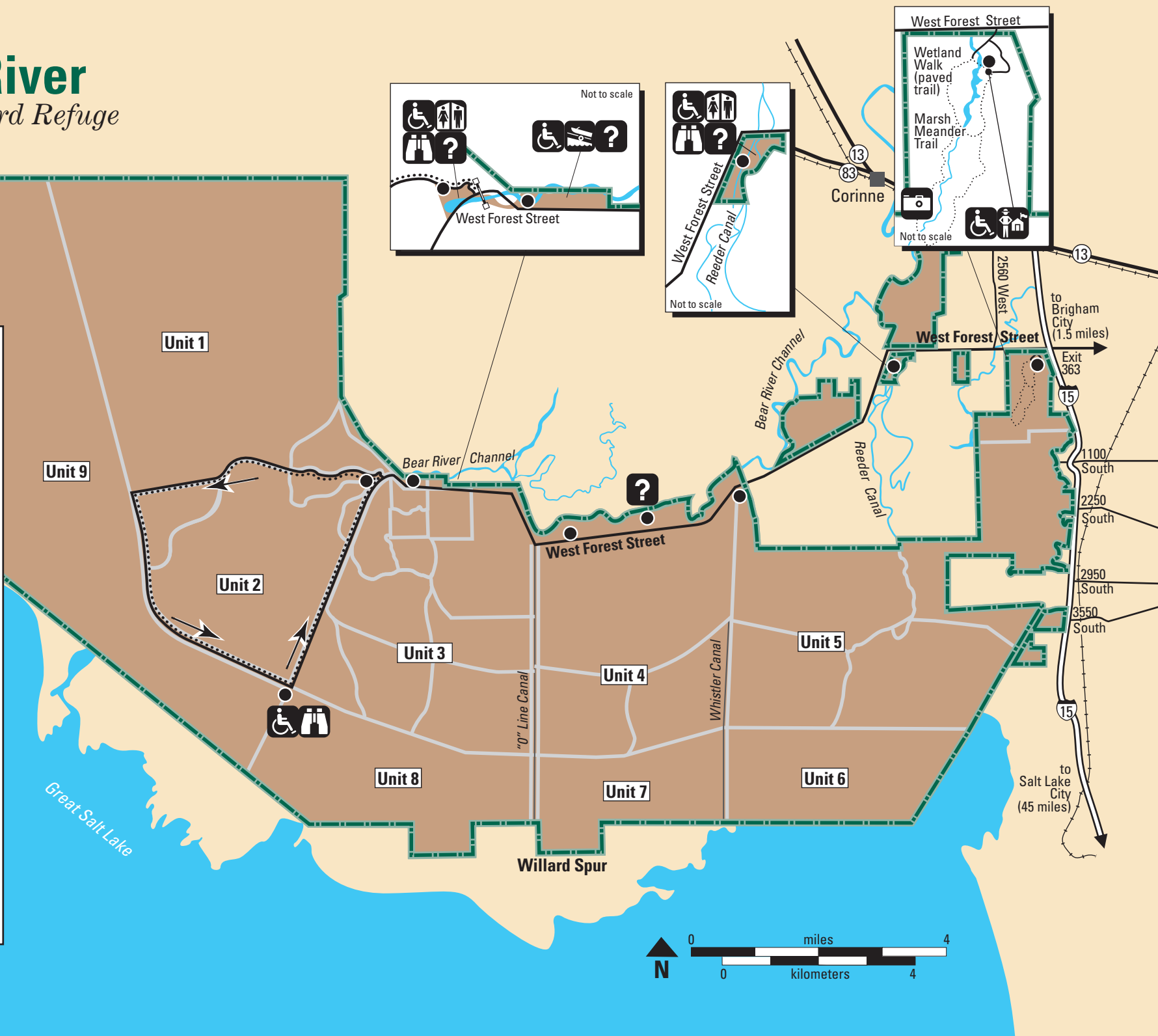
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*Black-necked stilts engaged in courtship ritual (above);
A golden afternoon at Bear River Refuge (below).*

Bear River

Migratory Bird Refuge

- Refuge boundary
- Federal interstate highway
- State highway
- Secondary road
- Auto tour road (one way)
- Auto tour road access gate
- Dike
- Nature trail
- Refuge land
- Unit 0** Refuge management units
- Visitor Center and Refuge Office
- Information kiosk
- Restroom
- Accessible facility
- Wildlife observation area
- Photo blind
- Boat ramp
- Parking



Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge
2155 West Forest Street
Brigham City, UT 84302

(435) 723-5887
bearriver@fws.gov
fws.gov/refuge/bear-river-migratory-bird

Telecommunication Relay Service
TTY / Voice: 711

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

For Refuge Information
(800) 344-WILD

August 2025



Accessibility

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/accessibility.

Hours

The Visitor Center is open Tuesday - Saturday and closed on Federal Holidays, see our website for details on hours of operation. The auto tour and trails are open sunrise to sunset every day, weather and road conditions permitting.