

# News Release - UPDATE

## *DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Services*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge Hosts a Large Concentration of Bald Eagles, Migratory Ducks and Geese**

**Missouri Valley, Iowa** - Bald eagles, ducks and geese are flocking to the wetland and river habitats at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is providing a resting and feeding spot for the migratory birds. The recent bird count conducted on Tuesday saw a total of 174 eagles, more than 58,000 ducks and more than 15,000 geese.

With this many eagles congregating on the refuge, there is a good chance for visitors to spot one. The eagles are being seen perched in trees along the Missouri River, from the visitor center windows (visitor center closed Monday, February 18 in observance of President's Day), on the ice near the south end of the lake and from the Bob Starr Wildlife Overlook.

While eagles can be seen all along the river valley, DeSoto Refuge provides a sanctuary for migratory birds and excellent viewing opportunities. Be sure to bring binoculars or spotting scopes for the best viewing as eagles may be a distance from the road. Other migrating bird species present on the refuge include common goldeneye, common merganser, mallard and Canada geese.

The spring migration is underway early this year and with warm weather the ice cover on DeSoto Lake is gone. Due to these conditions **the gravel section of the refuge tour road and the paved section past the turn to Bertrand / Cottonwood along the Missouri River to the south entrance gate are closed through April 14th.** Those sections of roads are usually opened after the fall migration in January and February to allow ice fishing access to DeSoto Lake. This closure minimizes impacts on migrating birds but still allows a variety of refuge access and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Please note that the south entrance gate is also closed through April 14th. All entrance to the refuge is through the north gate along U.S. HWY 30.**

An entrance permit is required for all vehicles on days other than fee free days. The regular daily entrance fee for private vehicles is \$3.00. Permits may be obtained at the pay stations near the entrances or at the Visitor Center. The charge for commercial vans and buses is \$20, or \$30 if 21 or more people are aboard. Annual permits, including the \$15 DeSoto Refuge Pass, can be obtained at the visitor center.

DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges are located north of Omaha, Nebraska along on U.S. Highway 30 between Missouri Valley, Iowa and along U.S. Highway 75 near Ft. Calhoun, Nebraska. For more information contact 712/388-4800 or email the refuge at [desoto@fws.gov](mailto:desoto@fws.gov). Check our websites, [www.fws.gov/refuge/desoto/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/desoto/) or [www.fws.gov/refuge/boyerchute/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/boyerchute/), for refuge updates. Like us on Facebook - search for DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges.

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