

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Browns Park

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge is located along the Green River in northwest Colorado. Situated between the Cold Springs and Diamond Mountains, this remote river valley has long been an oasis to both wildlife and humans seeking shelter from the surrounding harsh, semi-arid environment.

Welcome to Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge



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

Throughout time, this sheltered valley known as Browns Park has been and remains a place for wildlife and people. Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1965 by Public Land Order to provide sanctuary for migratory birds, conserve endangered and threatened species, and offer wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities. Wildlife, solitude, scenic beauty, and cultural history combine to make the Refuge a national treasure.

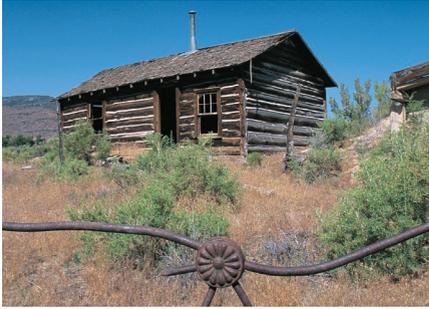
The 12,150-acre Browns Park NWR is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Refuge is one of over 560 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. The Refuge System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife and habitat for people today and for generations to come.



Western meadowlark

History of Browns Park

Archaeological studies at Browns Park show that prehistoric people were present as much as 8,000-10,000 years ago. These people probably visited the area to hunt big game. By approximately 3,500 years ago, the valley was being used by prehistoric farmers to grow corn.



2-Bar Ranch

In 1832, on land that would later become part of the Refuge, Fort Davy Crockett was built for trading with native tribes. Later, the area was settled by ranchers, and it was frequented by outlaws.

Although most of the evidence of these early inhabitants is archaeological, there are a number of historic log cabins still standing. For example, Lodore School and 2-Bar Ranch are listed on the Register of National Historic Places. For more information on Refuge history, please see the historical brochure.

Managing Habitat for Wildlife

Historically, waterfowl were given management priority on the Refuge. However, Refuge management is now focused on maintaining a variety of native habitats and wildlife with emphasis on all migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and species of special concern.

Thanks to current management techniques, Refuge habitats support a rich diversity of wildlife species including 68 species of mammals, 15 species of reptiles and amphibians, and at least 223 species of birds.

Riparian Habitat

The riparian habitats found along the Green River, and Vermillion and Beaver Creeks at Browns Park



Damselfly

NWR are made up of cottonwoods, buffaloberry, willows, and many other plants that are restricted to flood plains or areas with permanent underground water supplies. Similarly, many wildlife species depend on riparian plants to fulfill their life needs.

Thousands of migrating songbirds, like the Lazuli bunting and Wilson's warbler, rely on riparian habitat for food and rest as they travel north to their breeding grounds. Other songbirds, such as the black-chinned hummingbird and Bullock's oriole, stop to nest. Moose and river otter also raise their young in the riparian area.

Water development has caused the Refuge riparian habitats to change over time. The riparian area along the Green River has been affected by the Flaming Gorge Dam. Before construction of the dam, the Green River's water levels responded solely to the uncertainties of nature. Flooding usually occurred in the spring, tapering off to reduced flows in summer. Spring flooding was the primary source of water for the natural wetlands bordering the river.

After construction of the dam in 1962, people began to control the river flows. Human control has resulted in a decrease in spring floods and a reduction in the amount of sediment carried by the river. This has resulted in the gradual deepening of the river channel, further reducing the likelihood of flooding. This makes it difficult for tree and willow roots to reach water and inhibits the germination of new seedlings within the riparian habitat.

Field research has confirmed that the riparian cottonwood forests are aging and not being replaced. Instead, nonnative, invasive species such as perennial pepperweed and tamarisk are overtaking this habitat. Pepperweed and tamarisk do not provide forage or appropriate nesting cover for the wildlife species that rely on this area. Research is ongoing to help determine how to increase the regeneration of new cottonwoods and willows in the riparian areas.

Wetland Habitat

The seven wetlands at Browns Park NWR provide essential foraging and resting grounds for migratory waterfowl during their spring and fall migrations. During the summer, these wetlands provide critical nesting habitat for pied-billed grebes and several species of ducks. Other species dependent upon the wetlands include American bitterns, Woodhouse's toads, and white-faced ibis. Note that some wetlands are subject to seasonal closures to protect nesting waterbirds - watch for signs indicating closures.



*White-faced
ibis*

Because seasonal flooding no longer naturally replenishes the wetlands along the Green River, the Refuge staff pumps water from the river into these areas. Water is also diverted from Beaver and Vermillion Creeks. These water diversions create 1,755 acres of wetlands. Surrounded by arid, semi-desert uplands, the Refuge and the adjacent State of Utah's Waterfowl Management Area contain the only significant wetland habitat for many miles around.

Grassland Habitat



Nearly 1,700 acres of the Refuge are covered by grassland plants such as alkali sacaton, inland saltgrass, western wheatgrass, and Great Basin wild rye. These plants provide nesting cover for waterfowl, northern harriers, and songbirds such as the savannah sparrow. The grasslands also provide habitat for small mammals, like the montane vole, and crucial winter range for elk and mule deer. Over time, vegetation in the grasslands becomes heavily matted, and its habitat value decreases. The Refuge staff uses prescribed fire to remove the matted vegetation which restores the grassland habitat.

Upland Habitat

Semi-desert shrubland dominates the upland habitat. Approximately 7,612 acres of semi-desert shrubland exists on the Refuge. The dominant plant species are shadescale, Wyoming big sagebrush, greasewood, needle and thread grass, and the non-native, invasive cheatgrass. Refuge species that rely on the semi-desert shrubland for breeding include sage grouse, Brewer's sparrow, loggerhead shrike, Ord's kangaroo rat, and sagebrush vole. The shrubland also provides winter range for mule deer, elk, and, to a lesser extent, pronghorn.

*Above: Ladybug
on Great Basin
wild rye; Below:
Eastern fence
lizard on rock*



The upland habitat also consists of about 1,083 acres of pinyon pine and Utah juniper, as well as interspersed areas of exposed rock along the southern boundary of the Refuge. Many species depend on this arid environment away from the river, including gray flycatchers, pinyon jays, several species of bats, and lizards.

Habitat Management Tools

In their continuing effort to enhance Refuge habitats, the Refuge staff use a variety of management tools, such as prescribed burning, native plant seeding, big game hunting, and control of invasive weeds. On thousands of acres, invasive plant species, such as perennial pepperweed, cheatgrass, tamarisk, and Canada thistle, have become dominant, greatly reducing the value of the habitat available to wildlife on the Refuge. Biological, mechanical, and chemical controls are used to manage these invasive plants.



Tiger moth

Enjoying Your Visit

River's Edge Wildlife Drive

Recreational activities abound at Browns Park NWR. While you are here, take advantage of opportunities to fish and hunt, or take a hike to observe and photograph wildlife.

An 8-mile auto tour route takes you through a variety of Refuge habitats and provides good opportunities for viewing wildlife. The route is passable by passenger vehicles. All other dirt roads are only seasonally passable and are not maintained. Four-wheel drive or high-clearance vehicles are recommended for these roads. Seasonal road closures may be in effect. See posted signage for Public Access.

Hiking

Hiking is permitted throughout the Refuge, so park your car, and do some exploring on foot. Please avoid disturbing animals by getting too close. You know you are approaching too close when animals stop feeding, when they stand up after they have been resting, when they change their direction of travel, or when they turn and start moving away.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are permitted in designated areas. Please see the Refuge Hunting and Fishing brochure for regulations and additional information.

Getting to the Refuge

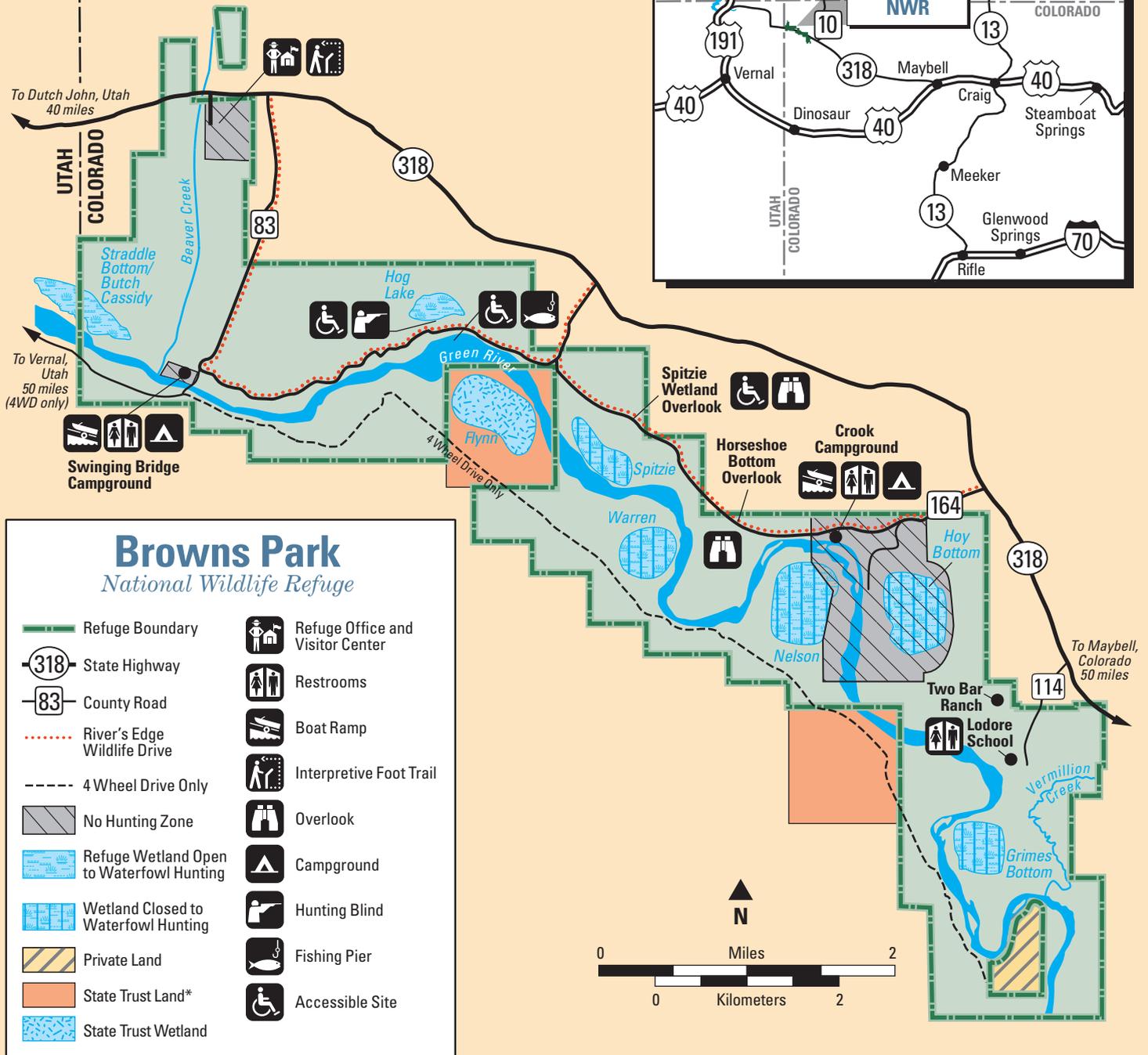
Browns Park NWR is 60 miles northwest of Maybell, Colorado, and 95 miles south of Rock Springs, Wyoming. Please call the Refuge staff for directions and road conditions.

The Refuge office is located approximately 1 mile east of the Colorado and Utah border on State Highway 318. Because of the remoteness of the Refuge and lack of cell phone coverage, visitors should be prepared in case of an emergency. Bring extra water, food, and warm clothes.

*Two sections of State Trust Land border Browns Park NWR.

Contact the State Land Board at 970 / 824 2850 for current regulations on State Trust Land.

Contact the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at 970 / 826 5000 for current regulations on BLM lands adjacent to the Refuge.



Refuge Regulations	Special regulations are necessary to protect wildlife and habitat. Please familiarize yourself with the Refuge regulations, and respect the privileges of other visitors. Your understanding of regulations will make your visit a safe and enjoyable one. Please consult the Refuge Manager for complete information on Refuge regulations.	<i>Accessible Facilities</i>	campgrounds overnight. Horses may be corralled in the corrals by the Swinging Bridge Campground if the corrals are not in use by local ranchers. An accessible waterfowl hunting blind and accessible fishing pier are located near Hog Lake. An accessible overlook is located near the Spitzie Wetland.
<i>Hours</i>	The Refuge is open daily from sunrise to sunset. After sunset, public activity is limited to the Swinging Bridge and Crook campgrounds. The office and visitor center are open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and are closed on Federal holidays.	<i>Firearms, Explosives, and Other Weapons</i>	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 discharge firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).
<i>Access</i>	To protect wildlife from disturbance and minimize habitat damage, vehicles and bicycles must stay on developed roads. The speed limit on all Refuge roads is 25 mph unless posted otherwise. Off-roading by any type of vehicle is prohibited.		Carrying, possessing, or discharging explosives, including fireworks, is strictly prohibited. Target shooting is prohibited.
<i>Parking</i>	Vehicles must park in pullouts or within 10 feet of the road. Overnight parking is not permitted unless camping in the designated campgrounds. Overnight parking for river floaters is allowed with prior approval from Refuge staff.	<i>Animal and Plant Life</i>	Collecting, possessing, or destroying any plant or animal or part thereof (alive or dead) is prohibited (except legally taken game). This includes shed antlers and firewood.
<i>Camping</i>	Camping is permitted only in designated sites at the campgrounds and is limited to 14 days in a 28-day period. To protect the solitude of the Refuge, the use of generators is allowed from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm only. Pack out all your trash. Campfires should never be left unattended. They must be completely extinguished. Firewood collection is not permitted.	<i>Introduction of Plants and Animals</i>	Plants and animals, or their parts, may not be introduced or placed on the Refuge.
		<i>Historical Artifacts and Other Valued Objects</i>	Searching for, removing, or damaging historic items, Native American artifacts, or fossils are prohibited. No person shall search for or remove rocks, stones, or mineral specimens. Possession and use of metal detectors are prohibited.
		<i>Pets</i>	Pets must be confined or leashed (except hunting dogs when participating in a legal hunt).
<i>Horses</i>	Horseback riding is permitted. Use of certified weed-free hay is recommended to minimize further introduction of invasive plants. Horses are not permitted in	<i>Disposal of Waste</i>	Dumping of litter, sewage, liquid wastes, or any other material on the Refuge is prohibited.



Refuge Signs and their Meaning

The following information is provided to help you understand the meaning of the regulatory signs that you will see on the Refuge.



These signs indicate the legal boundary of the Refuge. The areas behind these signs are open to permitted activities only. The fence line is not always the boundary line. Regulations and further information are available at the Refuge office.



The areas behind this hunting sign are closed to all hunting.



The areas behind this vehicle sign are closed to all motorized vehicle traffic, including cars, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and motorcycles.

Accessibility Information

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. Dial 711 for a free connection to the State relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information, contact the Refuge staff at 970 / 365 3613, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge
1318 Highway 318
Maybell, CO 81640
970 / 365 3613
970 / 365 3614 fax
brownsark@fws.gov
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/browns_park

For State relay service
TTY / Voice: 711

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD

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