

Long Lake NWR Complex  
12000 353rd Street SE  
Moffit, ND 58560-9740  
701 / 387 4397  
701 / 387 4767 fax  
longlake@fws.gov  
<http://longlake.fws.gov>

For State transfer relay service  
TTY / Voice: 711

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

For Refuge Information  
1 800 / 344 WILD

July 2005



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Long Lake

*National  
Wildlife Refuge*



The "rushing" behavior by western grebes includes synchronized water dances and courtship behaviors.  
Dr. Gary Nuechterlein



### *Fishing*

Long Lake Creek provides recreational fishing opportunities for northern pike, yellow perch, and occasionally, walleye. Fishing is permitted from designated shoreline fishing areas on Long Lake Creek and Unit 1 (the westernmost pool of the lake).

Ice fishing is allowed on Long Lake Creek and Unit 1; however, be careful because ice conditions are highly variable from year to year and location to location. Vehicles are not allowed on the ice anywhere on the Refuge, and ice houses must be removed daily.



### *Boating*

Canoes and small boats are restricted to Long Lake Creek. Boats may be used in the creek from May 1 through September 30 only. Shallow depths restrict motors to small outboards with a maximum of 25 horsepower and to electric motors. No boat ramps are available, limiting boat access to "lift in, lift out."

### **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 7-1-1 for a free connection to the State transfer relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 701 / 387 4397 or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



### *Wildlife Observation*

The Refuge offers optimum viewing for waterfowl, marsh birds, and shorebirds from April through early June and from late August through October. The best times of day to view wildlife are during the first hour after sunrise and the last hour before sunset. This is when lighting angles enhance the colors and hues, and Refuge wildlife is most active. Many wildlife species can be observed from public roads on the Refuge.

Bird watching opportunities abound on the Refuge. Visitors are encouraged to get a Refuge bird list from the Refuge headquarters to assist in locating different bird species. Spring visitors can view the sharp-tailed grouse courtship “dance” from one of our public viewing blinds. Blinds are available by reservation. Bird watchers and photographers may also be authorized by the Refuge Manager to hike in and place observation blinds within the Refuge.



### *Plant Observation*

Visitors interested in wildflowers will find an artist’s pallet of species and colors, many located in close proximity to the Refuge office. The flowering period extends from April through August. Collection is prohibited, but all are welcome to view and photograph the plants of the Refuge.



### *Hunting*

Upland bird and deer hunting are allowed. Special Refuge regulations exist regarding open areas and seasons. Consult the Refuge hunting guide for details.

*The diverse habitats at Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge – lake, marsh, shoreline, and upland – provide breeding grounds for a wide variety of birds. If you investigate beyond the bird life of the Refuge, you will also find a diverse array of native plants, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.*

## Welcome to Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge



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

Long Lake, a large, shallow depression in the prairie landscape, was created during the most recent ice age. Long Lake is a haven for migratory birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and more.

Recognizing the value of the Long Lake area to wildlife, President Herbert Hoover approved the establishment of Long Lake and its adjacent uplands as a national wildlife refuge in 1932. Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is one of over 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifically for wildlife. The Refuge System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife and habitat for people today and generations to come.

Located near the community of Moffit in south-central North Dakota, Long Lake NWR contains 22,300 acres, the majority of which are wetland habitat. The lake itself is approximately 18 miles long and up to 2 miles wide. The wetlands on the Refuge are surrounded by rolling prairie.

The purpose of Long Lake NWR is to provide habitat for migratory birds that use the migration corridor in the central region of North America. This migration corridor, called the Central Flyway, extends from Alaska and Canada to Mexico.

## Recreational Opportunities

Visitors are invited to participate in a variety of wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities, including wildlife observation, photography, fishing, and hunting. Seasonal highlights include sharp-tailed grouse and western grebe courtship dancing in the spring, shorebird migration in the spring and fall, daily movements of thousands of sandhill cranes each fall, and winter activities of various bird and mammal species.



Laura Hubbers / USFWS

*Bird watching is the most popular activity on the Refuge.*

Long Lake NWR is open daily during daylight hours. The Refuge office is open weekdays from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, except for Federal holidays. When the office is closed, rest rooms, brochures, maps, and other Refuge information are available in the office entry foyer. The Butte viewing area is open daily during daylight hours.

In order to protect wildlife and their habitats, visitor access is restricted to certain areas of the Refuge. Consult Refuge information bulletins, information kiosks, and the Refuge staff for regulations.

## Refuge Management

The Refuge is managed to create a diversity of habitats for the wide array of native wildlife that live here. Prescribed fire, grazing, and water management are the primary tools used to manage and maintain habitats. Farming and haying are management practices used occasionally to restore grassland habitats.



Natoma Business / USFWS

*Prescribed burning and other habitat management practices maintain habitat diversity.*

Prior to the creation of Long Lake NWR and during the Refuge's early years, avian botulism was a major issue on Long Lake. For many years, botulism killed up to 250,000 birds (primarily ducks) annually. Development of dikes and the resultant deeper water levels in the lake have reduced the frequency and magnitude of avian botulism outbreaks.

## The Refuge and the Works Progress Administration

During the late 1930s, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was borne out of circumstances brought on by economic depression. The WPA provided the initial labor force for Long Lake NWR facility development.

A WPA crew was officially assigned to the Refuge on May 6, 1940, and was comprised of Burleigh County, North Dakota, residents. The crew's work included constructing dikes, water control structures, facilities, and buildings. Trucks and teams of men and horses moved rock and gravel to form dikes and 19 duck nesting islands throughout the Refuge's expanse. Crews also constructed an office/shop building, a residence, and other structures using field stone from the local area. These structures are still in use today, and they represent the artistic design and functional construction techniques characteristic of the era.

## An Ever-changing System

Long Lake is a dynamic system. During wet periods when the lake sustains depths of 4-6 feet for several successive years, excellent fisheries develop. As water levels recede, substantial habitat changes occur; and Long Lake becomes a mecca for waterfowl and shorebirds.

*Providing quality habitat to support waterfowl populations is a key management objective at Long Lake NWR.*



Dave Menke / USFWS

## Birds of the Wetlands

The Refuge wetlands host nesting colonies of a variety of water birds, including Franklin's gulls, black-crowned night-herons, Forster's terns, and white-faced ibis. It is in the security and seclusion offered by the Refuge marshes that these species thrive.

### *Sounds of the Refuge*

*If you glance around the Refuge, you will quickly see a variety of wildlife; however, you can also experience the wildlife of the Refuge in another way – by listening to it...*

*On a calm spring morning, close your eyes for just a moment to listen to the sounds of the Refuge. You may hear the winnowing of a Wilson's snipe high overhead. If you are near the lake's edge, your ears may pick up the shrill "kleeps;" short, rapid water slaps; and the concluding "swoosh" of the western grebes' courtship dance. You may also hear a deep, triple-noted pumping noise (glump...glump, glump) from a male American bittern defending its territory and attempting to attract a mate.*

## Birds of the Uplands

The prairie uplands also provide important habitat for a variety of bird species. Birds that can be found in the Refuge's prairie uplands include Baird's sparrows, Sprague's pipits, sharp-tailed grouse, and Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrows, as well as a host of other birds.

## Mammals of the Refuge

Certain prairie mammals are dependent on the Refuge and its resources year-round. Visitors may see raccoons "washing" their catch along the rip-rapped shoulders of a Refuge dike or red fox pups emerging from their dens to relish the warmth of the midday sun. It is common to see white-tailed deer does and fawns during the summer; as well as herds tended by majestic bucks during the fall. Occasionally, small numbers of mule deer can be seen on the Refuge. A visitor's likely encounter with a coyote is a glimpse of a moving gray streak. Often, the coyote stops to look back and satisfy its curiosity after fleeing a short distance.

*White-tailed deer fawns appear and disappear in the Refuge's tall summer grassland habitat.*

The Refuge "builders" include muskrats and beavers. These animals construct huts and pile up food caches to support them through long winters. Badgers can occasionally be seen sunning themselves on dirt mounds near their burrows.



Dave Menke / USFWS

On late August evenings, dense flocks of Franklin's gulls roost on the open waters of the Refuge. From mid-September through late October, the Refuge hosts thousands of migrating sandhill cranes, as well as occasional whooping cranes. Each morning, the cranes perform spectacular exits from their marsh roosts in seemingly endless small flocks to agricultural fields that serve as feeding areas. The cranes return to their marsh roosts each evening at sunset.

### *Sights of the Refuge*

*As summer nears its end, fluttering, dipping, wading, and wave-chasing shorebirds can be seen on the shallow, exposed mudflats. At the water's edge, the birds fatten up on invertebrates and insects, increasing their energy reserves for their long and miraculous migrations. In the air, the sandpiper flocks perform in unison, with nothing but a breath of air between their wings.*

*Long Lake NWR is one of the Central Flyway's fall migration staging areas for sandhill cranes.*



Hollingsworth / USFWS

*Prairie sparrows, such as this Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, as well as other grassland birds, attract bird watchers from considerable distances.*

Craig Bihrie



### **Migration**



*The Refuge is designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site and as a Globally Important Bird Area (above); white-rumped sandpipers (right).*

Hollingsworth / USFWS



In both spring and fall, Long Lake NWR becomes a focal point for large concentrations of migratory birds. When adequate water levels occur in the local area, 25,000-30,000 Canada geese, several thousand white-fronted and snow geese, 30,000-50,000 ducks, 10,000-15,000 sandhill cranes, and 20,000 shorebirds use the Refuge lands and waters. However, when the wetland habitat found outside of the Refuge decreases due to drought, water birds concentrate in even larger numbers on the Refuge. Under these conditions, Long Lake NWR can support 250,000 ducks, 50,000-100,000 geese, 20,000 sandhill cranes, and 100,000 shorebirds.

# Long Lake

National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Boundary
- U.S. Highway
- Gravel Road
- County Boundary
- Refuge Headquarters
- Information Kiosk
- Viewing Area
- Public Fishing Area
- Rest Rooms

