

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cold Springs

National Wildlife Refuge



A cinnamon teal duck is shown in profile, swimming in a pond. The duck has a reddish-brown head and neck, a black bill, and a prominent red eye. Its body is covered in dark, mottled feathers. The water is dark, and there are green lily pads in the foreground and tall reeds in the background.

In arid northeastern Oregon, Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge lies in sharp contrast with its agricultural surroundings.

This 3,112-acre Refuge, with its tree-lined reservoir and mix of habitats, serves as an important wintering and resting area for migratory waterfowl.

About the Refuge

In the early 1900s, many people across the nation recognized that populations of migratory birds and other wildlife were dwindling. Thus, a strong national conservation movement developed, calling for the establishment of wildlife preserves across the country in an effort to boost wildlife populations. Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the fifth wildlife haven set up on the West Coast, was established by President Theodore Roosevelt on February 25, 1909 as a “preserve and breeding ground for native birds.”



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Porcupine

Cold Springs NWR continues to be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the lead wildlife and habitat conservation agency in the federal government. Currently, a national network of over 550 refuges strives to accomplish the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service “...to conserve, protect and enhance the Nation’s fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

The Refuge overlays Cold Springs Reservoir, the primary source of water for local agriculture. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the lands whereas the reservoir’s water levels are regulated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Full pool occurs in May with 1,550 acres of open water. By late August an average of only 200 acres of water remain. Although the water levels drop drastically in summer, Cold Springs NWR attracts a variety of wildlife throughout the year.

This wooded area is often flooded by Cold Springs Reservoir, offering wetland habitat for a variety of animals.

© Jaynee Levy/USFWS

Refuge Habitats & Wildlife

The mix of several distinct habitat types — open water, riparian, shrub-steppe upland and seasonal wetland — attracts a variety of wildlife to the Refuge. The open water habitat of the reservoir provides isolation for the resting needs of migrating

waterfowl. Large numbers of waterfowl, primarily Canada geese and mallards, can be seen on the open water in winter. They move between the reservoir and the river daily, looking for food or quiet space.



Mule deer

especially important because it offers wildlife many food and shelter choices. The thick underbrush provides excellent habitat for many species of songbirds. It is also a good place to look for deer, elk and other animals feeding or resting.



Northern harrier
© Chuck and Grace Bartlett



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Yellow-headed blackbird

A Variety of Habitats

The shrub-steppe upland consists of sagebrush, rabbitbrush and native bunchgrasses. Mule deer, coyotes, badgers, ring-necked pheasants, California quail and the small resident elk herd can be seen using the uplands throughout the year. Look for American kestrels, and Swainson's, Cooper's and red-tailed hawks soaring over the uplands.



© Gordon Warrick

*Nuttall's
cottontail*

The shrub-steppe, representative of plant communities once very common in this part of the country, is threatened by invasive exotic plants such as cheatgrass, false indigo and Russian olive. The native plants cannot compete for water and nutrients as well as these exotics, which thrive in stressed or disturbed conditions. Wildlife, having been sustained for ages by the native plants, start to decline because exotic plants do not typically provide the needed food or shelter.

Why Manage Habitat?

To help wildlife, refuge staff utilizes a variety of habitat management techniques to maintain, recover or enhance wildlife values in the shrub-steppe as well as in the other habitats. Controlled burning, mowing, experimental bio-control insect



Coyote

releases and seeding are all techniques used to help native plants in the shrub-steppe recover. Willow and cottonwood saplings are planted to expand and strengthen wildlife values in the riparian zones.

Water levels in Memorial Marsh are carefully monitored and controlled to foster desired plant growth or to inhibit weed growth. Sometimes, sensitive areas are closed to the public so that the land can recover more quickly.

The Seasons of Wildlife



Western kingbird

Birds flying along the Pacific Flyway – the migration route linking Alaska, Canada, the western states, Mexico and South America – use Cold Springs NWR as a stopover during their journeys. Thousands of songbirds find food and shelter here during the winter months. Large numbers of waterfowl can be seen as they spend a part of their day resting on the Refuge. Bald eagles can be seen during these months watching the waterfowl, waiting for a possible meal.

As winter fades to spring, most of the waterfowl and songbirds depart for northern nesting grounds. However, some mallards, teal, wood ducks and many songbirds stay to nest and raise their families.



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Black-necked stilt

When water levels recede in the summer months, look for shorebirds, such as least sandpipers, killdeer, western sandpipers, long-billed dowitchers and American avocets, probing the exposed mudflats for food. Colonial nesting birds, like great blue herons and double-crested cormorants, can also be seen.

Although migration times provide spectacular wildlife scenes, animals use the Refuge year-round. California and ring-billed gulls are year-round residents, as are California quail and ring-necked pheasants. Look for signs of beavers in the riparian areas. Deer can be seen browsing or resting in both riparian and upland areas. Also, look for upland birds, such as long-billed curlews and burrowing owls.

Hints for Watching Wildlife

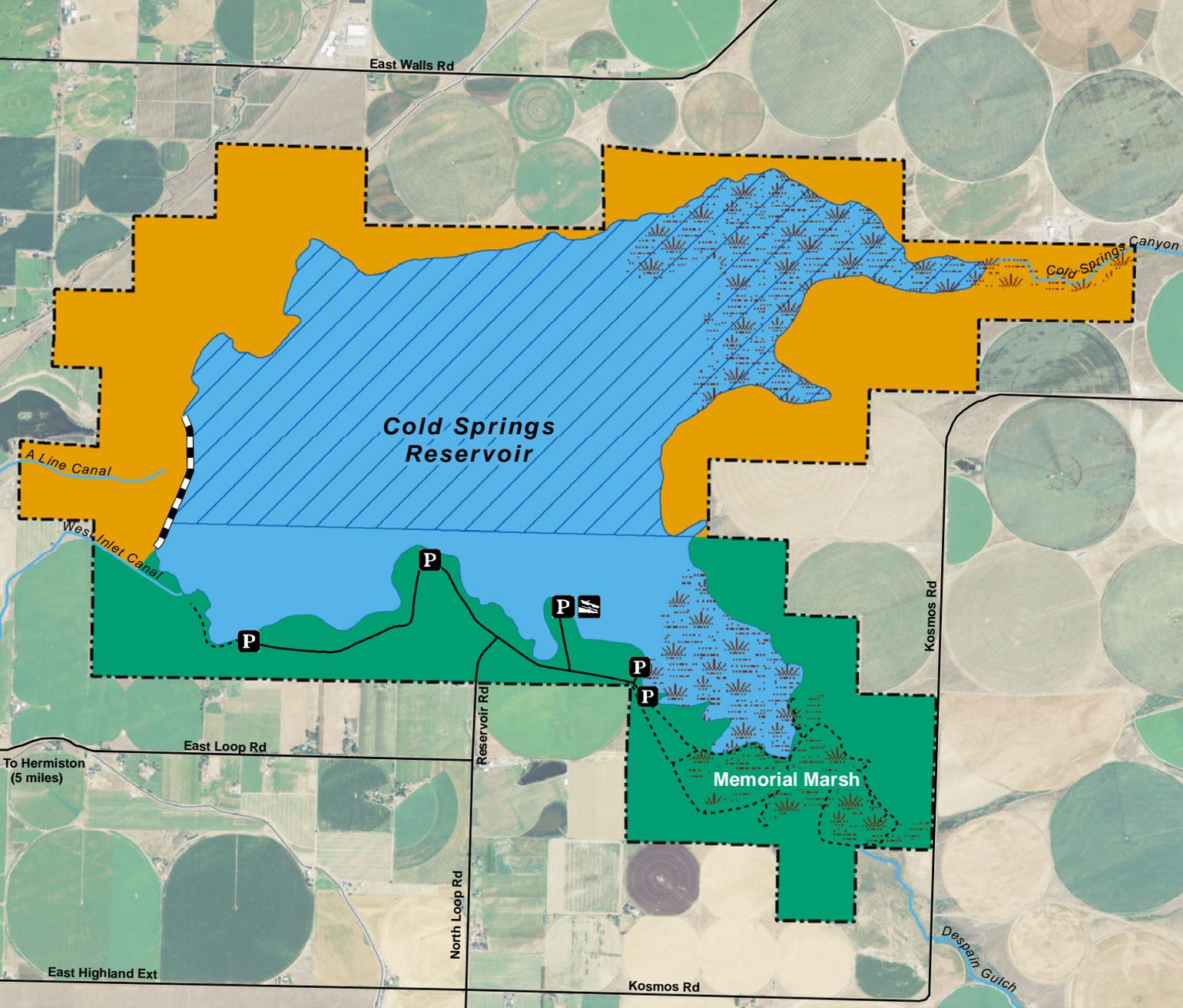


© Jane Abel

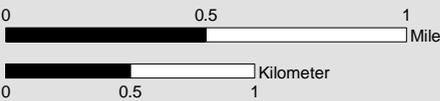
Black-billed magpie young

Watching wildlife can be a fun or a frustrating endeavor. Some basic suggestions for a more successful visit are:

- Move quietly and maintain distance between yourself and the animals.
- Use binoculars or spotting scopes to view wildlife from a distance.
- Plan your visit according to the season and time of day. Mornings and early evenings during migration are best for viewing large numbers of migratory waterfowl.
- Watch for wildlife in areas where two habitat types meet. Animals, moving frequently in these transition zones, are attracted to the many types of food and shelter offered here.



Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge



Parking



Boat launch



Public road



Foot trail



Dam



Marsh



Refuge boundary



Closed waters
October 1– February 28/29

Open to all access

Closed to all access

Refuge Headquarters is located at
64 Maple Street
Burbank, WA 99323

To Stanfield (5 miles) v

Enjoying the Refuge

Visiting Hours



The Refuge is open from sunrise to sunset. Special hours apply to sport hunters in season. A separate “Hunting Regulations” publication is available from the Mid-Columbia National Wildlife Refuge Complex headquarters or at www.fws.gov/mcriver/regulations/.

Access



Visitors access the refuge via Loop Road. Just less than two miles of gravel roads are open for visitor use in the Refuge. Visitors must not exceed the posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour.

Parking



All visitors are required to park in designated areas.

Prohibited Activities



Camping, off-road driving and open fires are prohibited on the Refuge at all times. For a comprehensive list of prohibited activities and regulations, refer to 50 CFR.

Restrooms



There are no permanent restroom facilities available at the Refuge.

Lodging, Telephone and Supplies



Lodging, phone, gas and supplies are available year-round in Hermiston. See www.hermistonchamber.com or phone the Chamber at 541-567-6151.

Disabled Visitors



Access difficulty varies by area. Contact the refuge manager for suggestions for using the area safely.

Year-round Activities

Wildlife Observation



Wildlife observation and photography are encouraged. Do not enter closed areas in order to minimize disturbance to plants and animals.

Hiking



Hiking is allowed in all areas open to the public.

Horseback Riding



Horse riding is only allowed on public access roads open to motor vehicles.

Bicycling



Bicycling is only allowed on public access roads open to motor vehicles.

The Blue Goose Sign



The “Blue Goose,” designed by conservationist J.N. “Ding” Darling in 1934, is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

You will see this sign as you approach any national wildlife refuge boundary. This brochure identifies what activities are permitted beyond this sign.

Raccoon



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Seasonal Activities

Fishing



Fishing is allowed per Oregon State regulations.

Bank Fishing

Bank fishing is permitted year-round in the open area of the Refuge, along the shore (see map). It is particularly popular from the western-most parking area.

Boating



March 1 -
September 30

Only non-motorized boats and boats with electric motors are permitted. Gasoline or other internal combustion engines are prohibited. If these types of motors are permanently affixed or built into the boat, they must be temporarily rendered inoperable by removing gas tanks, batteries, etc.

Hunting



Sport hunting is permitted on the Refuge for goose, duck, coot, dove, snipe and upland game birds, but not for big game. Hunters must abide by all Oregon State and Federal Refuge-specific regulations. In order to execute best wildlife management practices, regulations change frequently. Hunters must consult:

Oregon State regulations at www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/upland_bird/ and also Refuge-specific regulations at www.fws.gov/mcriver/regulations/.



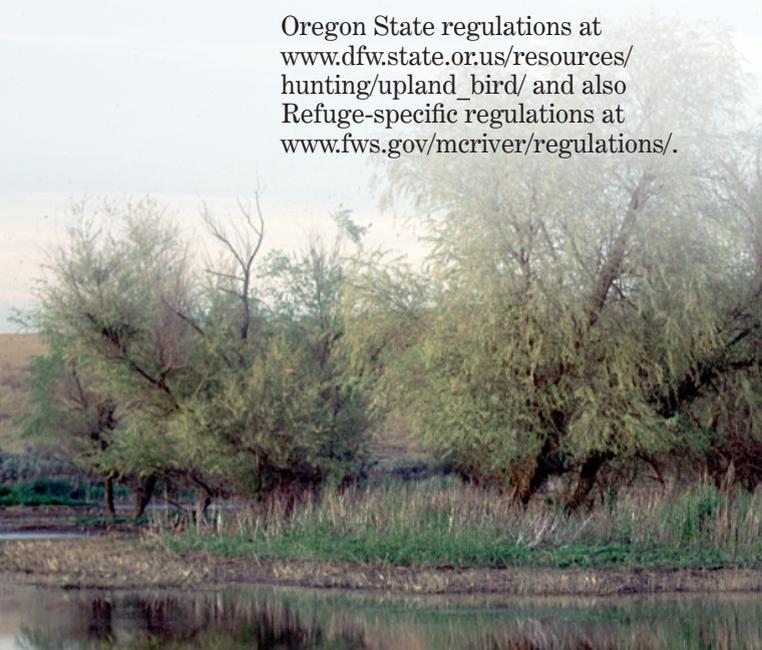
American bittern

© Chuck and Grace Bartlett



Golden currant

© Gordon Warrick



Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge
Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife
Refuge Complex
64 Maple Street
Burbank, WA 99323
509-546-8300
www.fws.gov/refuge/cold_springs/

Oregon Relay Service
TTY 1-800-735-2900
Voice 1-800-735-1232
ASCI 1-800-735-0644
SP 1-800-735-3896

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

Nationwide Refuge information
1-800-344-WILD



This brochure is available in
an alternative format upon request.

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Cover photo: *Common snipe*

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