



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

Protecting Birds and Connecting People to Nature

Refuges: For the Birds!

There is no better place to celebrate the Centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty than at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The Refuge is within the Central Flyway, a massive flyway that follows the Great Plains in the United States and into Canada. Thousands of birds migrate through to northern destinations or spend the winter here. From nesting American Kestrels in the bosque to foraging Cattle Egrets in the flooded agricultural fields, these areas are important to birds throughout the year.

Historically, the Rio Grande and its associated floodplains, created an oxbow through the property that is now Valle de Oro NWR. This area once held wetlands surrounded by riparian forests of cottonwoods and willows with adjacent upland, or desert, landscapes where prickly pear cactus and various prairie grasses once grew continuously. Seasonal flooding rejuvenated the

landscape into an oasis of aquatic plants and brought the dry desert to life. However, with the construction of residential and industrial areas and the conversion of the land into laser-leveled agricultural fields, the natural landscape of the Middle Rio Grande Valley was heavily degraded. This

had a negative impact on riparian and grassland species of birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, and amphibians, as one might imagine.

Through planning and active habitat restoration and conservation activities, Valle de Oro NWR is preparing to bring back and to protect the vastly disappearing native riparian and upland area that once dominated the Middle Rio Grande Valley. The Refuge manages the landscape to provided habitat for migratory and resident wildlife as well as for the enjoyment of people.



- Valle de Oro NWR will be the first refuge to be established that will address stormwater drainage and flood relief.
- Birders and biologist have documented over 200 species of birds at the Refuge.
- Valle de Oro NWR recently received a \$1 million budget boost under the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program to engage urban communities and youth in conservation and outdoor recreation.

Get Involved!

If you have any interest in birds or enjoy working outdoors or with people, consider joining the refuge's volunteer staff. Volunteers are an essential part of operations because they help staff conduct necessary biological surveys, conduct outreach and environmental education programs, present interpretive walks and talks, restore habitat, and more.

Visit www.volunteer.gov to learn more.

www.fws.gov/refuge/valle_de_oro



Species to watch for:

- Summer Tanager
- American Kestrel
- Sandhill Crane (above)
- Western/Eastern Meadowlark
- Swainson's Hawk
- Bald Eagle
- Cattle Egret

Did you know...

- Valle de Oro NWR is the first urban national wildlife refuge in the southwest.
- The Friends of Valle de Oro NWR was created before the Refuge was even established.
- The community, in fear that the land would be developed for more housing or industry, rallied together half of the funds to purchase the Refuge with USFWS putting up the other half.

Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial 1916-2016

100 Years of Migratory Bird Conservation
Conserving today's birds for tomorrow



Why Celebrate the Migratory Bird Treaty?

The year 2016 marks the centennial of the Convention between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds (also called the Migratory Bird Treaty), signed on Aug. 16, 1916. The Migratory Bird Treaty, and three others that followed, form the cornerstones of our efforts to conserve birds that migrate across international borders.

The Treaty connects the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with our federal, state, private, non-governmental, tribal, and international partners, who share a long, successful history of conserving, protecting, and managing migratory bird populations and their habitats. Celebrating the centennial of the first Treaty allows us to bring together those who have contributed to its success, and to galvanize efforts to protect migratory birds for the generations to come.



Migratory birds

- ...connect people with nature and add beauty, sound and color to our world. They provide countless opportunities for enjoyment by birders, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts and have cultural and spiritual importance.
- ...contribute environmental benefits, including pollination, insect and rodent control, and seed dispersal.
- ...are good indicators of environmental health because they are so visible and relatively easy to study. Studying birds can give us a picture of what is going on in the world.
- ...play a key role in the U.S. economy, supporting recreational opportunities that create jobs and generate billions of dollars in revenue.

Goals and Objectives

Create **awareness** about the importance of migratory bird conservation

- Encourage stories in news media about Treaty achievements, migratory birds, and habitat conservation
- Connect people to migratory bird conservation via social media

Promote key **actions** to help conserve birds

- Increase participation in citizen science programs
- Expand property/homeowner use of best practices (lights out, reduce collisions, wildlife-friendly gardens)

Increase **support** for migratory bird conservation programs and initiatives

- Strengthen international partnerships
- Increase knowledge and understanding of key legislation

Our Goal

Create awareness, promote key actions, increase support, and expand opportunities for engagement in the conservation of migratory birds

Expand opportunities for engagement in bird watching, hunting, and conservation

- Support bird-focused programs and festivals in Urban Bird Treaty Cities and Urban Refuge Partnerships
- Increase participation in Duck Stamp and Jr. Duck Stamp
- Promote youth birding and hunting events at National Wildlife Refuges

Next Steps

Throughout 2016 the Service will work with partners to create awareness, promote actions, increase support, and expand engagement in the conservation of migratory birds.

A national strategy provides a framework for working together to achieve mutual goals and objectives. This centennial celebration is a big one, and we hope your organization will join us. We need your input, ideas, and commitment to participate.

Help shape and lead this effort to celebrate the legacy of the Migratory Bird Treaty. Together we can inspire the next 100 years of international collaboration for bird conservation.

Contact us to learn more and get involved:

Email: MBTreaty100@fws.gov

Web: <http://fws.gov/birds/MBTreaty100>

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