



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex
752 County Road 99W, Willows, CA 95988
530-934-2801

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/sacramento/>



SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY BLIND GUIDELINES **Updated April 2016**

The Colusa NWR photo blind (#3) is scheduled to have water through July 2016 and thus provide photography opportunities this spring and early summer. Wood duck nest boxes have been placed adjacent the blind to attract wood ducks. Typically from April-July, photographers have the opportunity to photograph wood ducks, mallards, cinnamon teal and gadwall. Male ducks molt in May/June and ducklings typically are present in May-July.

1. Summer Photography Blind Availability 2016

Colusa NWR's photo blind will be available on a first-come, first-serve reservation basis from April – July. There are no restrictions to the day of the week (unlike the winter use where blinds are only available Wednesday – Sunday).

2. Processes for Requesting Use of the Blind

Photographers should contact the Colusa NWR Refuge Manager to schedule an exact day to use the blind. Users may contact the manager within one to two weeks of the date. Contact Mike Peters at 530-458-2666, 530-510-0377, or email mike_peters@fws.gov.

3. Payment of Photography Blind User Fee

There is a non-refundable component to the blind user fee for all blinds: a \$15 daily fee for each day. **Cash and checks should NOT be left in the folder.**

Photographers must pay the blind fee within one week of using the blind via mail or by stopping in the visitor center at the Sacramento NWR. Photographers may make checks payable to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and drop off at the visitor center or mail to: Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Photography Program, 752 County Road 99W, Willows, CA 95988. The visitor center is open Monday - Friday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and closed on federal holidays.

4. Registration

On the photography day, photographers must pick up a "Photography Blind Folder", which is located in the black mail box across from the observation deck on the Colusa NWR auto tour. The folder should be placed on your vehicle's dashboard while at the blind. The folder contains a Photography Blind Report form, directions/map to the blind, and other important information.

5. Proceed to Blind

Photographers must be in the blind at least 1 hour before sunrise. Photographers must park in the designated parking area and proceed directly to the assigned blind on foot.

Vehicle access to the blind is from the Colusa NWR auto tour. A space for parking is located approximately ¼ mile from the observation deck, before you cross the bridge and is marked with a brown sign “Photoblind #3, By Reservation Only” on the right (north side of the auto tour). Place the “Photography Blind Folder” on the dash of your vehicle. Proceed north on foot and follow the directional signs along the levee road (about 200 yards) until you reach a sign that will direct you into the water. At this site, a small sled is available for transporting your gear to the blind. The water in this section of the pond is about 3 feet deep, so chest waders are needed. Follow the reflective markers about 150 yards to the blind. If the sled is used, it should be hidden in the cattails behind the blind. Please return the sled to the edge of the pond, turn it upside down to keep the inside dry and latch it to the post.

A flashlight will be needed to follow the route. Sometimes only one guide stake can be seen at a time. While in route to the blind photographers may encounter deep water (max of hip high during the summer), ankle-deep mud, and slippery footing. Use chest waders and proceed with caution.

6. Blind Description

Blind #3 has interior dimensions of 5’ deep X 6’ wide X 5’ high at the front and 4.5’ at the back. It has 3 sets of openings on each side and the front. There are two folding chairs and a can of wasp spray in the blind. Tree snags and logs have been placed in the water about 30-50 feet from the blind to provide sites for water birds and turtles to use.

7. Check Out

Photographers must check out of the blind by returning the "Photography Blind Folder" with a completed report form to the mailboxes. Photographers may leave the blind at any time, but once the blind has been vacated, returning to the blind is not permitted.

8. Cancelling

If you will not be able to use the blind on your designated date, please contact the refuge manager as soon as possible.

9. Refuge reserves the right to revoke photography privileges

Anyone found to be in violation of any of the conditions in these guidelines or refuge regulations will have their photography privileges immediately revoked and will be asked to leave the area. Users must fill out the evaluation to assist staff in knowing when the blind was used. If users consistently do not show up to use a photo blind without cancelling and there was no weather issues, restrictions may be placed on future reservations.

10. Other

During warmer months, stinging insects including wasps are more active and may be found in the blinds.

Checklist of helpful items to bring to the blind:

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| -flashlight | - snacks and water |
| - warm clothes or layers | - sack for garbage |
| - field guide(s) | - chest waders |
| - binoculars | - tripod or bean bag camera rest |
| - insect repellent | - writing utensil to fill out the evaluation |