Humans have inhabited the area now known as Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge for thousands of years. Ancient ruins and pottery shards provide evidence of their presence.

The Pueblo Revolt was the culmination of eighty years of cruelty and mistreatment by the Spanish. It caused great upheaval including the abandonment of the four major Piro Pueblos. These encompassed the Sevilleta Mission, Alamillo Mission, Socorro Mission, and the Senequ Mission. The Pueblo people drove the Spanish out of New Mexico and into Mexico.

In the eighteenth century, the Spanish Land Grant System was put into effect in New Mexico and four square leagues were granted to ten married men who promised to establish a town.

On June 1819, Occupants of the land now known as Sevilleta NWR were given a land grant and their area became known as the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant.

Fort Craig was established in 1854 to defend local citizens against Native American raids. Later its purpose was converted to repel the small amount of Confederate raids that occurred. One such was in 1862, when Confederates retreated right through the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant.

The atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad comes through the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant, thus bringing more industry to the communities.

The Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant was acquired by General Thomas D. Campbell with assistance from the Raskob Family. The Campbell Family ranched these lands for the next several decades and also leased land to other ranchers.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service was established as an agency under the Department of the Interior. The Wildlife Refuge System was then managed by this department.

The first National Wildlife Refuge was established by President Theodore Roosevelt. He established fifty-one refuges and became known as the father of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad comes through the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant, thus bringing more industry to the communities.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service was established as an agency under the Department of the Interior. The Wildlife Refuge System was then managed by this department.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service was established as an agency under the Department of the Interior. The Wildlife Refuge System was then managed by this department.
The Campbell Family Foundation donated the Sevilleta land to the Service through The Nature Conservancy with the assistance of Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. The land was established as a refuge. The purpose of Sevilleta NWR is “...to preserve and enhance the integrity and natural character of the ecosystem of the property by creating a wildlife refuge manages as nearly as possible in its natural state, employing only those management tools and techniques that are consistent with the maintenance of natural ecological processes...not to be subjected to commercial exploitation...and the land and the plants and animals supported by it to be managed to permit the natural ecological succession and processes typical of the area to prevail...and that portions of the property be made available to educational institutions and conservation organizations for scientific research and study.”

December 28th, 1973

For more information, visit these nearby sites

*From Sevilleta NWR:*

- Fort Craig: 10.8 miles
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Site: 60 miles
- Old Mission in Socorro, NM: 21 miles
- Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monuments: 36 miles

June 2016