



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

All Refuges

# Colusa

National Wildlife Refuge | California



A UNIT OF THE  
National Wildlife  
Refuge System

Visit

Wildlife & Habitat

Seasons of Wildlife

About the Refuge

## About Colusa National Wildlife Refuge



**Colusa National Wildlife Refuge** is part of the **Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex**. It is located about 70 miles north of the metropolitan area of Sacramento and one mile southwest of the town of Colusa in Colusa County. The refuge consists of 5,077 acres consisting primarily of wetlands, with some grasslands and riparian habitats.

Colusa NWR was established in 1945 as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife and to reduce damage of agricultural crops caused by waterfowl.

The refuge lies in the Colusa Basin and is bisected by the Colusa Basin Drain, which drains the basin southeast to the Sacramento River ([click here to see a map](#)). The low topography and presence of the Colusa Basin Drain makes refuge lands subject to regular winter flooding.

Thousands of waterfowl are present from September through March. Peak populations occur in December and January. Colusa NWR typically supports wintering populations of more than 200,000 ducks and over 75,000 geese. Many birds including nesting wood ducks and mammals can be seen year-round.

The habitats include seasonal marshes, permanent ponds, and uplands. The seasonally



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### WHAT WE DO

*Resource Management*

*Conservation*

*Get Involved*

*Partnerships*



### Did you know?

*Often small groups of  
northern shovelers bring food*

flooded, saline-alkali soils provide great habitat for the palmate-bracted bird's-beak, a federally listed threatened plant species. It is an annual herb in the snapdragon family and its petals are divided into two lips with the upper one shaped like a bird's-beak, leading to its name.

*to the surface by swimming rapidly in a circle while swinging their bills side to side. They strain aquatic vegetation, plankton, and tiny invertebrates through the comblike edges of their shovel-shaped bill.*

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### Visitor Opportunities:

Enjoy wildlife viewing and photography as you drive the three-mile, graveled auto tour through wetlands. Visitors on the auto-tour are required to stay in their vehicle to prevent disturbance to the wildlife. Walk a one-mile trail (visit the [trails](#) page on Sacramento NWR's page) along a lush riparian slough. Relax and enjoy the scenery on the viewing platform. A photography blind (visit the [photography](#) page on Sacramento NWR's page) is available by reservation only. The refuge is open one-hour before sunrise to one-hour after sunset year-round.

Waterfowl and pheasant hunt is permitted seasonally. Access the Sacramento NWR's [hunting webpage](#) for more information.

To see a [Map with Directions](#), click on the links below:

- Directions to [Colusa NWR Auto Tour and Walking Trail](#)
- Directions to [Colusa NWR Hunter Check Station](#)

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### Learn More About Visitor Opportunities on the Complex:

- [Visitor Activities](#) (link to the Sacramento NWR's page)
- [Wildlife and Habitat](#)
- [Photography](#) (link to the Sacramento NWR's page)
- [Hunting](#) (link to the Sacramento NWR's page)

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### Other Watchable Wildlife Areas in California:

Colusa NWR is part of a network of wildlife viewing areas dedicated to celebrating the State of California's wildlife and diverse habitats by acknowledging and elevating the value of wildlife viewing to benefit individuals, families, communities, and industries while fostering awareness and support for conservation and protection of wildlife and habitats. To visit the California Watchable Wildlife website and learn about other wildlife viewing areas, [click here](#).





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