



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

All Refuges

# Sacramento

National Wildlife Refuge | California



A UNIT OF THE  
National Wildlife  
Refuge System

Visit

Wildlife & Habitat

Seasons of Wildlife

About the Refuge

## About Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge



**Sacramento 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 7 miles south of the town of Willows in Glenn and Colusa Counties. The refuge consists of 10,819 acres primarily of wetlands, with some grasslands and riparian habitats.

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 with funds from Emergency Conservation Fund Act of 1933 to provide refuge and breeding habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, provide habitat and manage for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species, and alleviate crop depredation. Historically, the area of the refuge was known as the Colusa Plains which was a vacant, windswept plain with short grasses, shrubs and forbs. In January 1937, the federal government purchased 10,775-acre Spalding Ranch and christened it the Sacramento Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. From 1937-1942 the Civilian Conservation Corp's (CCC) "Camp Sacramento" housed up to 200 men at the current headquarters area. The men constructed levees, water control structures, and delivery ditches to create and sustain wetlands across the majority of the refuge. Mosquito bitten, sunburned, dust-choked men worked non-stop even on 100-degree days to create the refuge.



Print



Share



**ALERT - CURRENT  
CONDITIONS 2020-  
21**

### FOLLOW US ONLINE



MAPS



MULTIMEDIA

### WHAT WE DO

*Resource Management*

*Conservation*

*Get Involved*

*Partnerships*



### Did you know?

*Often small groups of  
northern shovelers bring food*

Today, the refuge is known as the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge ([click here to see a map](#), pdf) and it functions as the headquarters for the entire Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The refuge supports over 250 species of birds. Most notable are the huge wintering concentrations (November - January) of 500,000 to 750,000 ducks and 200,000 geese. Raptor numbers swell as the waterfowl numbers increase, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons. Waterfowl viewing is good between October and March. In addition, shorebird numbers peak in the spring and fall, while some waterfowl and numerous migratory songbird species nest here during the summer. Many birds and mammals provide year-round viewing.

*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.*

---

## Visitor Opportunities:

The refuge is open daily from one-hour before sunrise to one-hour after sunset. Numerous recreational opportunities are available including the popular six-mile auto tour and two walking trails ([click here for brochure](#), pdf), which meander along marshes and riparian areas. The auto tour provides visitors with great views of wildlife. Visitors are required to stay in their vehicles to prevent disturbance to the wildlife while on the auto tour but can get out at three stop-and-stretch locations including the platform. The two-mile Wetland Walk trail is an accessible trail from the visitor center. The Logan Creek Trail is six miles and is open from February 15 through June 30 ([click here for brochure](#), pdf). Fourteen in-ground concrete blinds and one above ground site are available along the trail on a first-come, first-serve basis for photographers. This area is accessible off of Road 68, 2.5 miles east of 99W.

Visitors can also enjoy a wildlife exhibit, bookstore, and Discovery Room in the Visitor Center. The Center is open daily from 9 a.m. through 4 p.m. November through February, and weekdays only the rest of the year. Interpretive kiosks, picnic tables, benches and restrooms are located outside the Visitor Center making them available year-round. Dogs are permitted on trails if on a six-foot leash. On a separate area of the refuge, waterfowl and pheasant hunting are permitted seasonally.

The refuge collects a \$6 day use fee to pay for visitor facilities and wildlife habitat improvements. Holders of a Federal Duck Stamp (\$25) or an America the Beautiful - Interagency Annual, Senior, Access or Volunteer Pass (or the past equivalent Golden Age Pass) enter free. We also offer a \$12 annual pass for the frequent visitor. Visit the [permits page](#).

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

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

- Directions to [Sacramento NWR Headquarters and Visitor Center](#) (pdf)
- Directions to [Sacramento NWR Hunter Check Station](#) (pdf)

---

## Learn More About Visitor Opportunities on the Complex:

- [Visitor Activities](#)
- [Wildlife and Habitat](#)
- [Photography](#)
- [Hunting](#)

## About Other Watchable Areas in California:

Sacramento 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](#).

Page Photo Credits – Mike Peters

Last Updated: Feb 21, 2016

---

[Sacramento Home](#) | [Regional Office](#) | [Refuges/Districts Nearby](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [News](#) | [Jobs](#)



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
**National Wildlife Refuge System**

[Notices](#) [Accessibility](#) [Disclaimer](#) [Privacy](#) [FOIA](#)



**Department of the Interior**  
USA.gov