

BEAR RIVER

MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE



Canada geese and snow geese. By Wesley F. Kubichek.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, on the delta of the Bear River where it empties into Great Salt Lake in northern Utah, is one of the outstanding waterfowl areas in North America. This is one of the few remaining marshlands where ducks and geese nest in great numbers, and fall concentrations occur in flocks that resemble the descriptions of early explorers.

The refuge, containing about 64,900 acres, was established by an act of Congress in 1928 to safeguard waterfowl against the tremendous losses caused by botulism. This has largely been accomplished. Further study and experimentation have resulted in a fuller knowledge of the duck malady and methods of combating it.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE



Refuge headquarters are about 15 miles west of Brigham City and near the center of Bear River Valley, with the Promontory Mountains on the west and the Wasatch Range on the east. These mountains rise abruptly from the valley floor, which is at an elevation of 4,200 feet above sea level, and extend upward to 9,700 feet at the highest peaks.

Visitors may reach the refuge headquarters, which are open to the public daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., by traveling west from Brigham City, Utah, over a hard-surfaced road. This city has a population of 11,700, has available hotel and auto court accommodations, and is on U.S. Highways 30-S and 91. After free registration at refuge headquarters, a panoramic view of the refuge may be had from the 100-foot tower. Visitors are permitted to drive their cars around Unit No. 2, one of the five large artificial lakes and marsh areas. This is a trip of 12 miles over a gravel road constructed on top of the artificial dikes that impound and distribute the waters from the Bear River.

These marshes are teeming with life even in summer, the more quiet season between migrations. Of the 200 species of birds recorded on the refuge, about 60 are known to nest. It is not uncommon for refuge personnel to flush a dozen Canada geese from nests in one day while making nesting studies. Hundreds of broods of ducks and geese can be seen feeding on the open water units during June and July. The refuge produces approximately 45,000 ducks and 2,500 geese annually. The Canada is the only goose that nests in this vicinity. Principal nesting ducks, in order of abundance, are the gadwall, cinnamon teal, mallard, pintail, and redhead. Egrets, herons, ibises, and shorebirds nest in great profusion in the lower marshes and on the alkali flats, islands, and dikes. A birdlist may be obtained at refuge headquarters.



Black-necked stilt.

By S. A. Grimes.



Snowy egret. By W. Grant McFarland

While driving, the visitor might watch for some of the species more or less peculiar to the West and to this area; the western grebe, yellow-headed blackbird, American avocet, black-necked stilt, long-billed curlew, Wilson's phalarope, white-faced ibis, snowy egret, Franklin's gull, ruddy duck, cinnamon teal, and gadwall. Special permission is not required for photographing wildlife during the course of a tour.

Duck populations in early fall occasionally exceed a million birds. The species composition at this time changes, and during the fall migration, pintails are predominant, with green-winged teal in close competition. American widgeons, mallards, redheads, and shovelers also occur in large numbers. Wintering populations include canvasbacks, buffleheads, goldeneyes, and other diving ducks. Whistling swans also are prevalent through the late fall and winter.

A portion of the refuge is open to hunting in season, and the excellent shooting attracts hunters from all parts of the United States. Shooting is carefully controlled by refuge personnel; all hunters are checked in and out and the results are tabulated. No cars are permitted to travel the refuge roads during the hunting season. Fishing on the refuge, in compliance with State laws, and carried on so as not to disturb wildlife, is permitted on certain waters and at times announced by the manager. Information on permits, hunting, fishing, and trapping, together with copies of the regulations governing these activities, may be obtained by addressing the Refuge Manager, Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Brigham City, Utah.

YELLOW-HEADED
BLACKBIRD

RUDDY DUCKS

COOT

WESTERN
GREBE

CINNAMON
TEAL

WHITE-FACED
IBIS

HEADQUARTERS

TO BRIGHAM CITY →

GREAT
BLUE
HERON

BLACK-CROWNED
NIGHT HERON

FRANKLIN'S
GULL

SNOWY
EGRET

LONG-BILLED
CURLEW

AVOCET

CANADA
GOOSE

WHISTLING
SWAN

WILLET

BLACK-NECKED
STILT

WHITE
PELICAN

KILLDEER

WILSON'S
PHALAROPES

DOUBLE-CRESTED
CORMORANTS

CALIFORNIA
GULL

FORSTER'S
TERN

BEAR RIVER

MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

