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Wildlife at Rocky Mountain,...

PAM FILE

Wildlife at Rocky Mountain Arsenal



A Habitat Island . . .



Colorado's state bird, the lark bunting, sings from atop a thistle.



Mule deer bucks and the Denver skyline.

Animals need many of the same things we need to survive - food, water, shelter and space. The 27 square miles of land at Rocky Mountain Arsenal provide these features, collectively referred to as habitat... all within ten miles of Denver, Colorado.

A high altitude view of the Arsenal reveals an island of wildlife habitat surrounded by agricultural fields and urban development. Neither of these two land uses can sustain most wildlife throughout the seasons. Grassland, woodland, and wetland habitats support a rich and diverse plant and animal community.



This bald eagle is one of an estimated one hundred eagles which use the Arsenal during the winter months.



A bird of the prairie, the familiar western meadowlark trills its song from atop a yucca plant. Birds use plants like the yucca to proclaim their territorial boundaries during the breeding season.

Stop and Study . . .

The more common animals of the Arsenal are visible to even the casual observer.



Two ferruginous hawks squabble over a potential meal. Extensive prairie dog towns attract hundreds of hawks to the Arsenal during the winter months.



A blacktail prairie dog scans its surroundings for danger. Once numerous throughout the western prairie, prairie dogs are victims of both urban and agricultural development.

Cottontails freeze when alarmed. They seek shelter in burrows, near brush piles and sometimes near buildings.



A mullein stalk supports the weight of a burrowing owl. These owls nest below the ground in abandoned prairie dog burrows.

Look To See . . .

A movement caught out of the corner of the eye may reveal more secretive Arsenal residents.



Several dozen coyotes inhabit the Arsenal. They earn their reputation as survivors in the face of human development by being generalists in their food habits.



Sandy washes with scattered rocks and low-growing bushes offer good escape cover for side-blotched lizards.



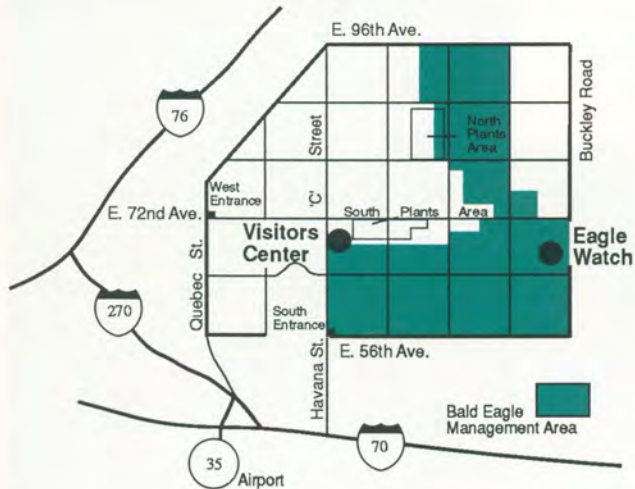
Search For . . .

Close scrutiny may yield a glimpse of some elusive or uncommon Arsenal residents.

Dense cover camouflages this long-eared owl. Night time hunters, owls use their well-developed sense of hearing and sight to locate their prey.

The Arsenal's wetlands provide breeding and feeding grounds for water-dependent birds like this immature black-crowned night-heron. Stalking the shallows for fish and invertebrates, these birds are not easily seen.





The U. S. Army acquired land at the Arsenal from private landholders in 1942 to produce weapons for World War II. Private companies, through lease agreements with the Army, used Arsenal industrial sites for manufacturing pesticides and herbicides. Currently, the sole operational mission at the Arsenal is cleanup of environmental contamination caused by past waste disposal practices. No weapons or chemicals are produced or stored at the site.

The U. S. Army and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide tours to the public and special interest groups at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. Both wildlife resources and cleanup activities may be viewed during these tours. For wildlife tour information contact the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at **(303) 289 - 0132**.



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