

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
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Kansas Relay Service
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

For Refuge Information
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PAM FILE

Quivira

National Wildlife Refuge

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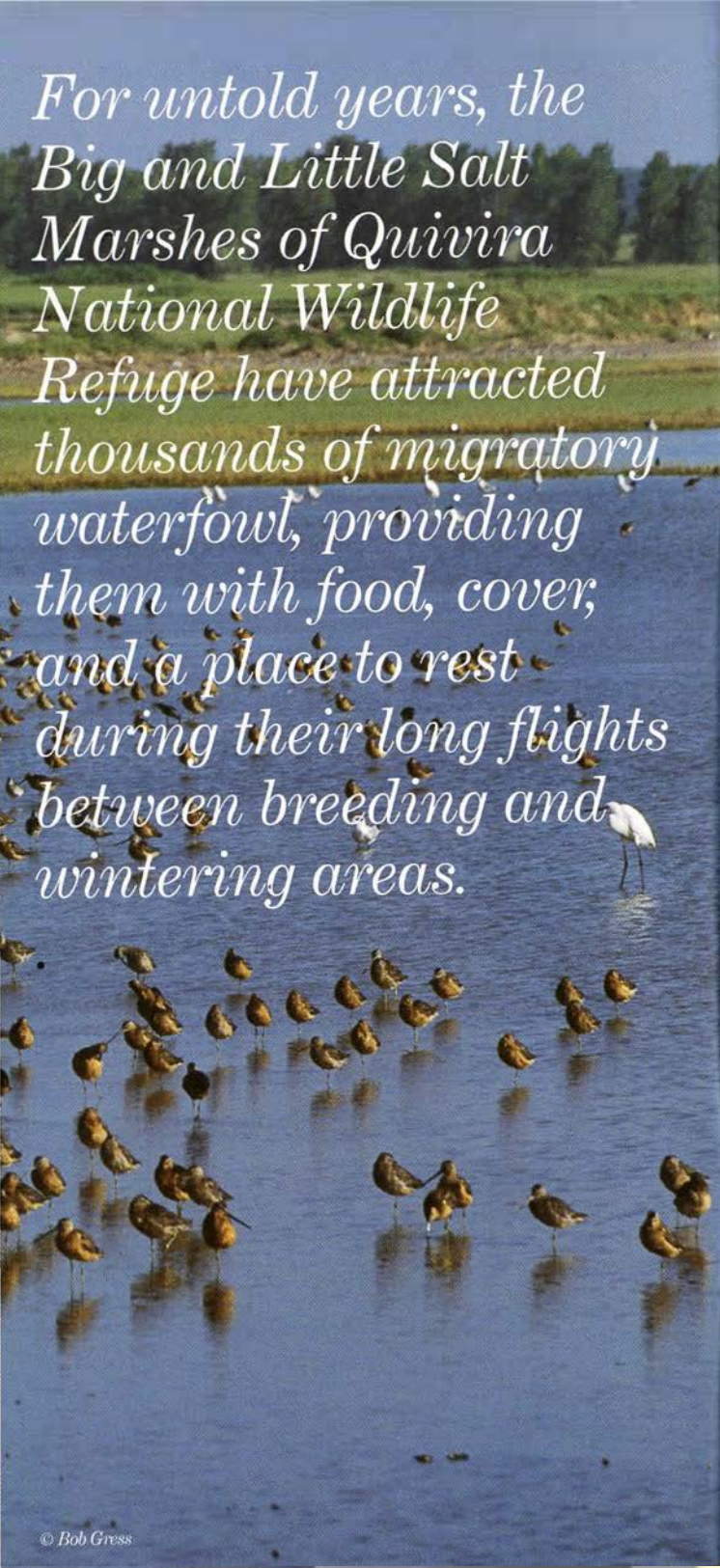


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For untold years, the Big and Little Salt Marshes of Quivira National Wildlife Refuge have attracted thousands of migratory waterfowl, providing them with food, cover, and a place to rest during their long flights between breeding and wintering areas.

About the Refuge



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

A Place Known for Wildlife

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) located in south central Kansas, lies in an area where the eastern and western prairies meet and blend. In 1955, the Migratory Bird Commission approved the purchase of land to create the Refuge, thus providing food, water, and nesting areas for migratory waterfowl in this area of Kansas.

Quivira NWR is one of a network of over 500 refuges across the United States. Refuges are vitally important, providing habitat for hundreds of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and plants. National Wildlife Refuges are managed to protect endangered plants and animals, to provide for the needs of migratory birds, to preserve natural diversity, and to provide places for people to understand and enjoy wildlife.

The name "Quivira" comes from a Native American tribe living in the area when the Spanish explorer, Coronado, visited in 1541. In quest of gold, treasures, and the fabled "Seven Cities of Cibola," he found instead fertile grasslands, abundant wildlife, and small agricultural villages. The Native Americans, and later, the early settlers, hunted waterfowl in these marshes. Shortly after the turn of the century, commercial hunting provided wagon loads of waterfowl to Kansas City restaurants and other eastern cities.

With the decline of commercial hunting came the establishment of hunting clubs. The lands bought up by these clubs helped preserve valuable waterfowl habitat from further development. Moreover, these hunting clubs worked to improve the habitat to attract migrating birds. Canals and water control structures were later added, providing the entire area with a more dependable water supply. Today, these marshlands remain a major stopover for thousands of migrating birds.

Wildlife Throughout the Seasons

Located where the relatively lush vegetation of the east blends into the more arid grasslands of the west, Quivira NWR supports numerous and varied plant communities. This variety of plant communities attracts birds common to both eastern and western North America. Over 300 bird species have been observed on the Refuge.

Fall Flights

Thousands of Canada geese, ducks, and other migratory birds, such as sandhill cranes and shorebirds, pass through the Refuge from September to December. The shallow west edge of the Big Salt Marsh is a favorite roosting area for the sandhill cranes. Endangered whooping cranes may make a brief visit as they move along their migration routes from mid-October through November. This is the best time to view these rare visitors. The whooping cranes may make a return visit in mid-March through mid-April on their way north to nesting areas.

*Sandhill cranes
silhouetted at sunset.*



© Bob Gress

Winter and Spring Visitors

Bald and golden eagles winter on the Refuge from November until March. Over 500,000 ducks and geese visit the Refuge until severe weather drives them southward to winter along the Gulf Coast and in Mexico. During March and April, the Refuge becomes a staging area once again for ducks, geese, shorebirds, American white pelicans, gulls, and other migrants en route to traditional nesting grounds in the prairie potholes of the north central United States and Canada.

*American white
pelicans in the marsh.*



© Bob Gress

Summer Residents

Summer residents include Swainson's hawks and Mississippi kites, while northern harriers, American kestrels, and red-tailed hawks are common throughout the year. Ring-necked pheasants and bobwhite quail are often seen in the Refuge grasslands and grain fields. Look for wild turkey along the edge of tree groves and shelter belts where they often seek food and cover.



Wild turkey (above left), black-tailed prairie dog (above right), white-tail deer (middle), mallards (far right)



© Bob Gross



Farming for Wildlife

In the cooperative farming program, crops are planted on the Refuge by local farmers who work on a share basis. Over 1,300 acres are planted with crops to provide food for the migrating birds and resident wildlife. The fields are rotated between winter wheat and milo, with cow peas planted periodically to enrich the soil.

The farmers harvest their two-thirds share of the milo, leaving the Refuge share standing in the field as food for wildlife. Wheat fields are completely harvested, with the farmers receiving a three-quarters share. The remaining quarter of the harvest is left on the Refuge as food and cover for wildlife. Migrating geese browse on the tender young shoots of wheat growing in these harvested fields.

Grazing Now and Then

Historically, great herds of bison grazed the grasslands of this area. They would graze an area only for a short time, then move on, thus allowing the native grasses to regrow and continue the cycle. Since bison no longer roam the Great Plains, Quivira NWR imitates this natural cycle of high intensity grazing over a short period of time with cattle. Through this management

Managing Land for Wildlife - the Work of the Refuge

Common summer nesting species on the Refuge include snowy plovers and American avocets. Black-necked stilts and white-faced ibis nests have been recorded in recent years. In addition, a colony of endangered least terns use the salt flats at the north end of the Refuge as nesting habitat. Other wildlife frequently seen on the Refuge include white-tailed deer, black-tailed prairie dogs, beaver, raccoons, badgers, and coyotes. Bird watchers can pick up a Refuge bird list containing more detailed information at the Refuge headquarters.

Quivira NWR is managed primarily to provide migratory waterfowl with food, water, and shelter. Other migratory birds, endangered species, and resident wildlife, such as deer and pheasant, also benefit from habitat management programs. Primary habitat management programs conducted on the Refuge include cooperative farming, grazing, prescribed burning, and water control.



© Bob Gress



Dave Hilley, USFWS



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Wild turkey (above left), black-tailed prairie dog (above right), white-tail deer (middle), mallards (far right)

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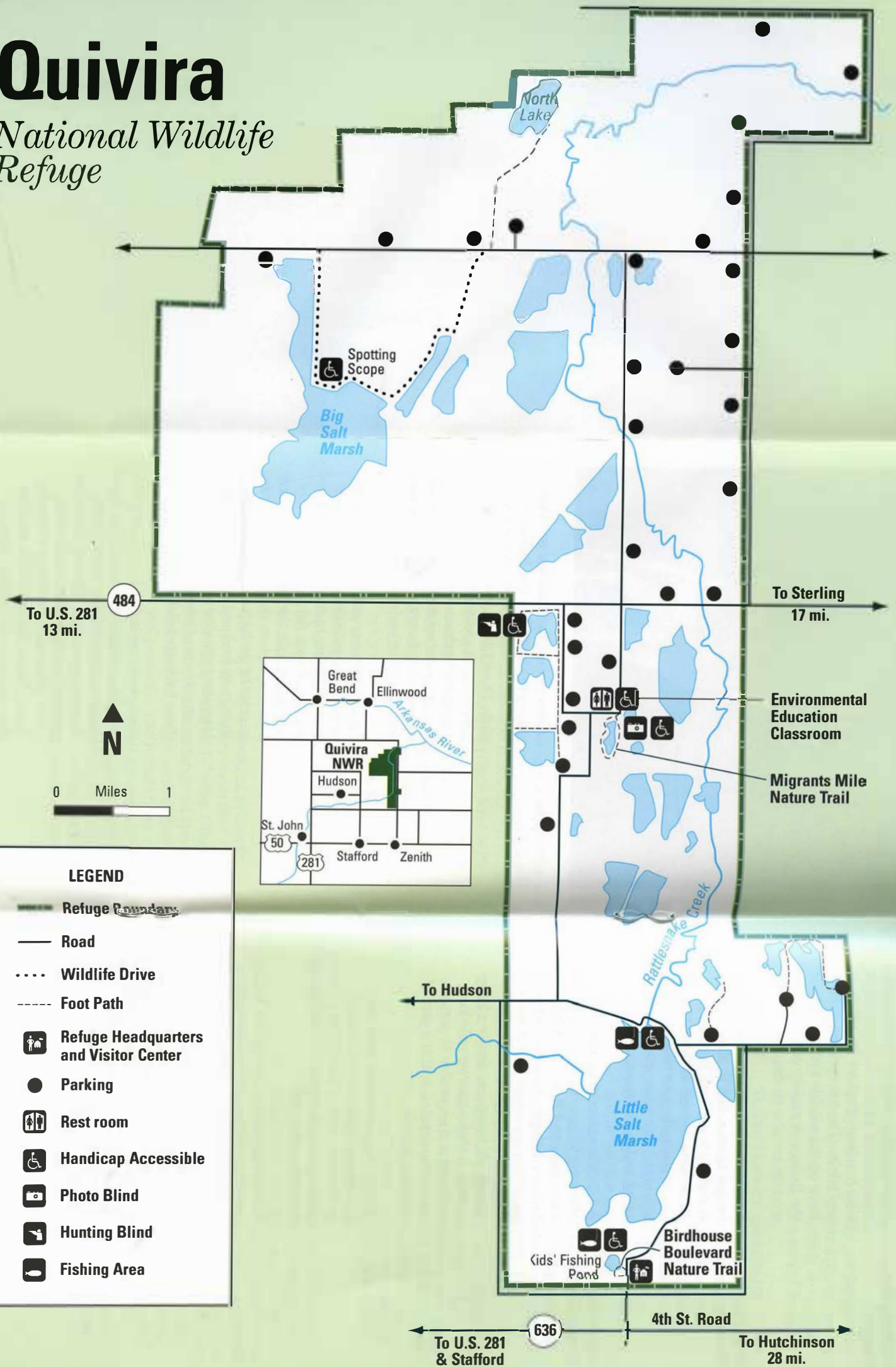
Water for Wildlife

program, local ranchers are permitted to graze their cattle on the Refuge, but only in specially chosen areas for short periods of time, often no longer than a few days. Once grazed, the area is seldom used again during that season, thus allowing the plants to regrow. Grassland birds and animals, feed, nest, and rest in these areas. Deliberate, well-planned, controlled burns also improve the habitat for wildlife nesting and cover.

Twenty-one miles of canals and numerous water control structures divert water to over 34 wetlands ranging in size from 10 to 1,500 acres and totaling over 7,000 acres of marshlands. Through the use of these canals and water control structures, water management, either flooding or removing water from an area, allows the Refuge staff to influence the types of plants that grow in the wetland. For example, by manipulating the water levels, large stands of cattails that have limited value to wildlife, can be replaced by waterfowl food plants. Most waterfowl and other migratory birds use the wetland areas for food, escape cover, nesting, loafing, and pair bonding during breeding season.

Quivira

National Wildlife Refuge



LEGEND

- Refuge Boundary
- Road
- Wildlife Drive
- Foot Path
-  Refuge Headquarters and Visitor Center
-  Parking
-  Rest room
-  Handicap Accessible
-  Photo Blind
-  Hunting Blind
-  Fishing Area

**Enjoying the
Refuge**
Visitor Center

Located in the Refuge Headquarters building, the Visitor Center is filled with hands-on displays for children and adults. The interpretive exhibits focus on the wildlife and habitats of the Refuge. A variety of wildlife mounts are also on display.

*Wildlife
Observation*

Spring and fall are the best seasons to visit Quivira NWR, since wildlife, especially waterfowl, is abundant and more easily viewed at these times. Try to schedule your visit early or late in the day when wildlife is most active and more frequently seen.

*Interpretive
Nature Trails*

A 1.2-mile nature trail, the Migrants Mile, is located south of the Environmental Education Classroom. It loops through shaded woodlands, along marshy edges, and through native grasslands. An elevated boardwalk takes you across a large marsh. A three-quarter mile loop, surfaced and accessible to persons using wheelchairs, is also a part of the nature trail.

A 1,000-foot accessible trail, the Birdhouse Boulevard, is located on the west side of the Visitors Center parking area. A variety of birdhouses line this scenic trail.

*Auto Tour
Routes*

The 14-mile drive through the Refuge provides visitors many opportunities to pull over and view wildlife.

The 4-mile Wildlife Drive, at the north end of the Refuge, offers wildlife watching opportunities and views of the Big Salt Marsh and surrounding habitats. An accessible spotting scope is provided to assist visitors in watching wildlife.

*Wildlife
Photography*

Photography blinds are located at the Little Salt Marsh and on the Migrants Mile nature trail. The photography blind on the Migrants Mile nature trail is accessible. Both blinds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

*Environmental
Education*

Guided tours are available for schools and other groups. Educators are encouraged to investigate one of the many different educational activities for field trips available at the Refuge. Please call the Refuge staff for more information or to schedule guided tours, field trips, and/or teacher workshops.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted on 8,000 acres of the Refuge. The hunting program is managed in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Only waterfowl, pheasants, quail, dove, snipe, rails, squirrels, and rabbits may be hunted on Quivira NWR. Special Refuge regulations also apply, as listed in the Quivira NWR hunting and fishing leaflet available at the Refuge Visitor Center. An accessible waterfowl hunting blind is available by reservation only.

Fishing

Fishing is permitted on the Refuge. The fishing program is managed in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Special Refuge regulations, listed in the Quivira NWR hunting and fishing leaflet, also apply. An accessible fishing area is located on the north end of the Little Salt Marsh. The "Kids Fishing Pond" is located west of the Visitor Center. This pond is reserved for kids 14 years and younger. An accompanying adult may fish with the youth. An accessible pier is also located at this pond.

Refuge Regulations

Although the following rules and regulations may seem inconvenient or overly restrictive to some, they are necessary for the protection of wildlife and their habitats, and, in some instances, for the safety of visitors. By observing these rules, visitors will make the Refuge a better place for themselves and the wildlife they come to enjoy.

Visiting Hours

The Refuge is open to visitors from daylight to dark. The Visitor Center is open from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Access and Parking

Motorized vehicles are permitted only on developed roads and parking areas. Driving off-road or on roads closed by signs or barriers is prohibited. Parking in front of gates, on bridges, or on water control structures is prohibited.

Rest Rooms

There are rest rooms at the Visitor Center, inside the Environmental Education Classroom building, and just outside the Classroom building. All rest rooms are fully accessible.

Access for Visitors with Disabilities

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental disability. For visitors using TDD, contact the Kansas Relay Service at 1 800/766-3777. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact Refuge staff at 316/486-2393 or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Hiking

All of the Refuge is open to hiking.

Camping

Overnight camping is not permitted. All visitors must leave the Refuge at the end of each day.

Bicycling

Bicycling is permitted on the Refuge but restricted to established roads and trails. Bicycles are prohibited on both interpretive nature trails.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is permitted, but for safety purposes, Refuge staff must be notified before any riding activities take place. Horses are restricted to established roads and trails. Horses are prohibited on both interpretive nature trails.

Boating

The use of boats and canoes is not allowed on the Refuge.

Fires

No fires of any type are permitted within the Refuge.

Firearms

The possession of firearms is prohibited except as authorized during the hunting season.

Littering

Littering is prohibited on the Refuge. Please remove all trash from the Refuge.

Nearby Accommodations

Gas, food, and lodging can be found in the nearby communities of Stafford, Sterling, Hutchinson, and Great Bend.

Refuge Signs and Their Meaning



Refuge Boundary -
Authorized entry only



Public Hunting Area -
Area behind this sign
open to hunting



No Hunting Zone - Area
behind this sign closed to
all hunting.



Non-toxic Shot Zone -
Non-toxic shot must be
used for all hunting

Would You Like To Help?

Friends of Quivira

The Friends of Quivira is a nonprofit group established in 1998 to assist the Refuge with their environmental education and stewardship goals. This group sponsors and volunteers at educational events held throughout the year. Some annual events include: the "Peeps and Pastries" birding tour; "Fathers' Day Out," a father and child event; the Kids' Fishing Clinic; "Monarch Mania," a butterfly tagging event; and a week-long celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week. For more information about the Friends of Quivira, contact:

Friends of Quivira
c/o Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
RR #3, Box 48A
Stafford, KS 67530

