

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

For Refuge Information
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Tewaukon

National Wildlife Refuge

Auto Tour Guide



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Welcome to Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge

Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1943 as a resting and nesting place for migratory birds. Located on the eastern edge of the Central Flyway, the Refuge is a unique place where birds from both the Central and Mississippi Flyways can be seen. During the year, visitors have the opportunity to see more than 243 bird species here.

A variety of wildlife habitats are found on the Refuge. The Wild Rice River flows through the Refuge from west to east, then outlets to the north through Lake Tewaukon. Numerous wetlands, called potholes, dot the gently rolling glacial plains of the Refuge and surrounding southeastern North Dakota.



As part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Tewaukon NWR is managed primarily for migratory birds and other wildlife. The National Wildlife Refuge System, consisting of more than 500 refuges, is the largest system of lands in the world managed mainly for wildlife.

Prairie Lake Auto Tour

The Prairie Lake Auto Tour is 8.5 miles long and will take approximately one hour to complete. Along the way, you will have an opportunity to look at different habitat types and some of the management techniques used to create and enhance these habitats. The best time to see wildlife is early or late in the day.



The auto tour road is gravel. After hard rains or early in the spring, it may be soft and slippery, so please drive carefully. For your safety and to reduce disturbance to wildlife, please keep your vehicle on the tour route at all times.

Each auto tour route interpretive stop has a sign that corresponds to a symbol in this brochure. Read the information in this brochure to learn more about the wildlife habitat found near this stop.

Each interpretive stop has a place to safely pull your vehicle off the route and enjoy all the sights and sounds. To minimize disturbance to migratory waterfowl, the auto tour route is closed to the public from October 15 until May 1.

Seasonal Wetlands

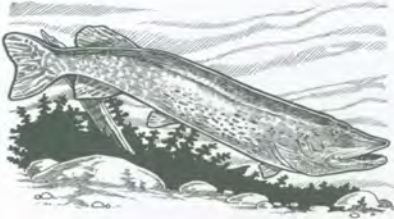
Seasonal wetlands, like the one to your left, may hold water for only two weeks, or they may remain wet through the middle of summer. How are wetlands that dry up good for wildlife? They are shallow and

warm up quickly in the spring, providing a rich source of food for migrating waterfowl and other birds such as golden plovers, great blue herons, and red-winged blackbirds. Small seasonal wetlands are also important places for male and female ducks to pair up and complete courtship.



"Son of Heaven" Lake

According to legend, Lake Tewaukon was named for an ancient religious leader Te Wau Kon, or "Son of Heaven." The lake is shallow and covers more than 1,000 acres. Lake Tewaukon, along with Sprague Lake (8 miles to the west), are open to public fishing. Anglers can try their luck casting for northern pike, walleye, or yellow perch. *(Please consult Refuge Manager for regulations.)*



If you are interested in fishing, more information about the Refuge fishing program is available at a kiosk located at the end of the road to your right. Rest

rooms are also found at this location. Three boat ramps, shown on the brochure map, are available for boat launching.

Look to your left to see one of the four large concrete dams along the Wild Rice River. These large dams help hold water to create wetland habitat for many species of waterbirds. The auto tour continues straight ahead.

Partners Farming for Wildlife



Every year, local farmers work with Refuge staff in a win-win partnership. The local farmers plant crops in Refuge fields, providing a food source for wildlife. Farmers who participate in the program harvest and keep a portion of the crop. The other portion is left for wildlife. Winter wheat or other green browse provides a nourishing treat for waterfowl migrating north in the spring. Fall row crops, such as corn, are available for waterfowl during their southern migration. White-tailed deer and ring-necked

pheasants also benefit from crops left throughout the winter. All landowners in the area benefit from this program through reduced waterfowl feeding on surrounding private property.

Home Sweet Home



Birds that nest on the ground, such as mallards, blue-winged teal, pheasants, grasshopper sparrows, and meadowlarks, need thick cover in which to hide their nests. Thick cover helps protect nests from red fox, skunks, raccoons, and other predators that enjoy a tasty egg dinner. The field on your left is a planted mixture of alfalfa, sweet clover, and wheat grass, which provides good nest protection. In winter, deer and pheasants use this thick cover for protection from harsh winds and cold temperatures.

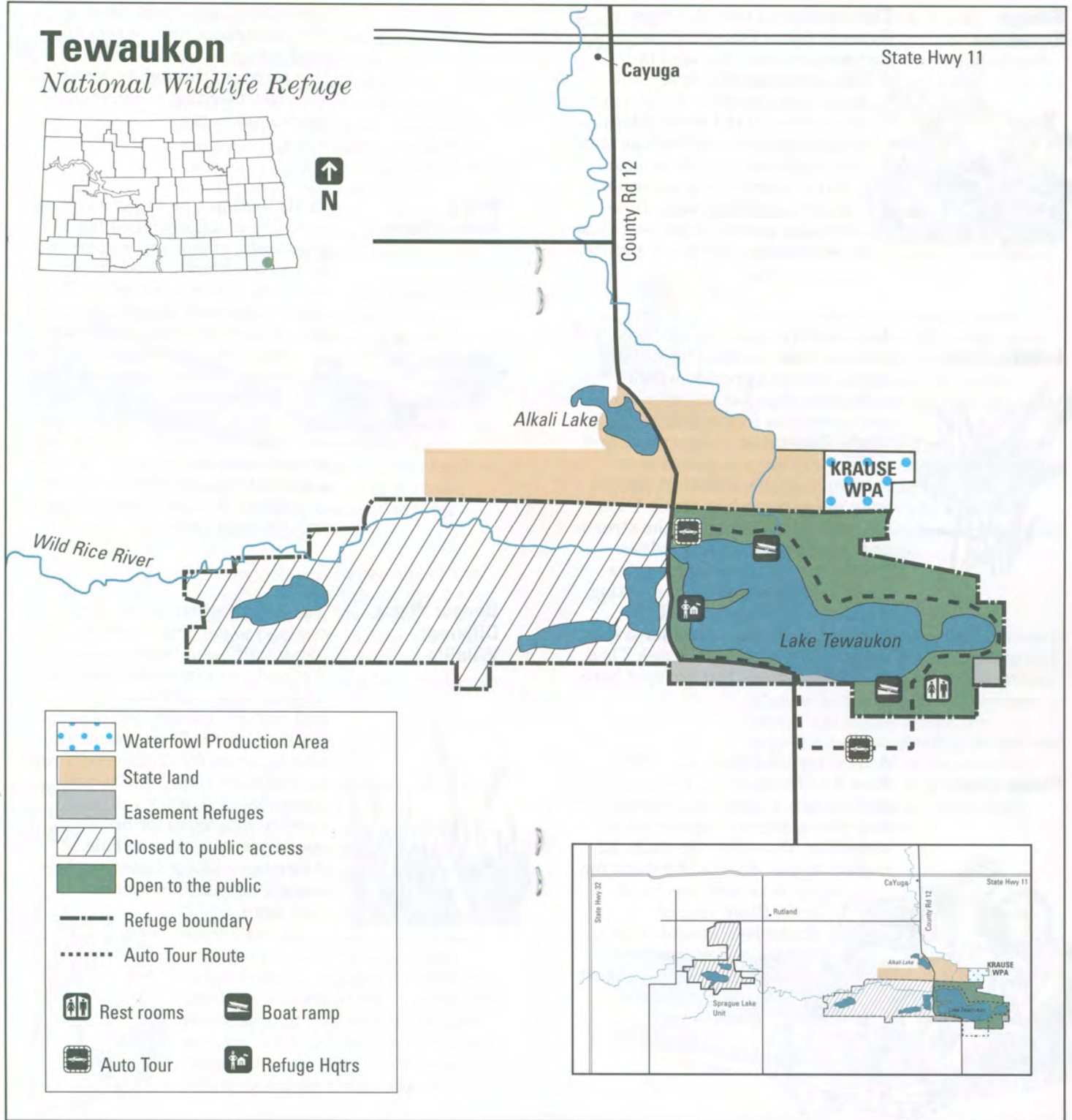
Deeper Water, Different Wildlife





The deeper water in this large wetland to your right provides a habitat different from the seasonal wetland you saw at the first stop. This wetland holds water all year and contains cattails and other wetland plants. These plants provide nesting areas for diving ducks such as redheads, ruddy ducks, and canvasbacks. Larger wetlands provide safe areas for broods of all species of waterfowl to hide. American white pelicans, grebes, and cormorants can also be seen here.


Tewaukon


National Wildlife Refuge





 Waterfowl Production Area


 State land


 Easement Refuges

 Closed to public access


 Open to the public

 Refuge boundary

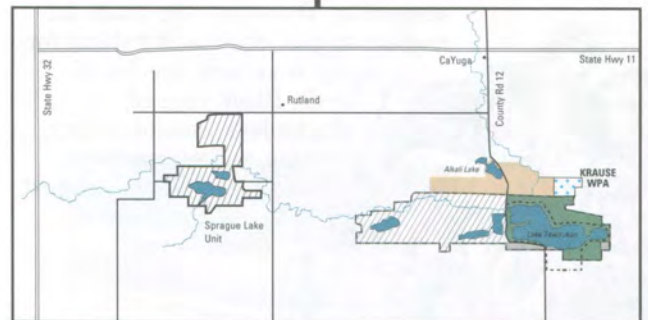
 Auto Tour Route

 Rest rooms

 Boat ramp

 Auto Tour

 Refuge Hqtrs



Sibleys Expedition

This monument tells the story of General Alfred Sibley's expedition that camped near this spot in 1863.

The native prairie beyond the monument probably looks much the same as it did when Sibley's troops camped here. Refuge staff burn this area every two to three years to help maintain healthy prairie plants. June through August is the best time to see wildflowers on the prairie.



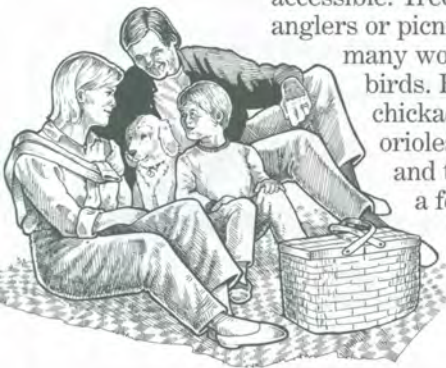
LaBelle Creek

As you drive from this spot, you will cross LaBelle Creek. The willows along the creek provide wildlife with relief from hot summer sun and protection from cold winter winds. Vegetation along creeks and other waterways is known as a riparian corridor, a distinct habitat from the surrounding areas. Look for beavers swimming in the stream or working on dams and lodges. Beaver are an important species because of their knack for creating wetlands. The common yellow-throat, a wren-sized warbler with a yellow chest and black "mask," is a delightful species you can spot here.



Picnic Area

A right turn will take you to the East End Picnic Area. The picnic shelter, tables, grills, boat ramps, rest rooms, and fishing pier are all accessible. Trees provide shade for anglers or picnickers and habitat for many woodland species of birds. Black-capped chickadees, wood-peckers, orioles, yellow warblers, and tree swallows are just a few of the species found here.



Restoring Prairie

On the left side of the road, cropland is being restored to prairie. The area was burned, then seeded with native grasses. Eventually, wildflowers will be added.

If you look across the field in the late summer and fall, you will notice a tall native grass with a branched seed head. It is big bluestem, also called "turkey foot," because the seed head resembles a turkey's foot.



Male bobolinks are small, robin-sized, black birds with white spots on their back and wings. They often perch on the top of tall prairie grasses to sing their bubbling song.

From this stop, drive 1/2-mile south to a "T" intersection, then turn right and go 1 mile to the next intersection and turn right again. You can see Lake Tewaukon and are now back on the Refuge.

Lake Tewaukon

From here you have a scenic view of Lake Tewaukon. During spring and fall migration, large concentrations of snow and blue geese often rest here. Bald eagles follow the migrating geese, feeding on sick and dying birds. During the summer, groups of American white pelicans and western grebes can be seen fishing on the lake.

