

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Salt Plains

*National Wildlife Refuge*

---

*Harold F. Miller Auto  
Tour Route*



**Welcome:  
Harold F. Miller  
Auto Tour Route**

Welcome to the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge and the Harold F. Miller Auto Tour Route. The tour route was named in honor of a local resident who devoted 38 years to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Miller's dedicated service at Salt Plains Refuge through 1984 will long be remembered.

As you travel the 2.5 mile tour route, please follow these few rules for your safety and wildlife viewing pleasure:

- When stopping, allow room for other vehicles to pass.
- Remain in your vehicle except at walking trails.
- Keep loud noises (radios, horn blasts) to a minimum.
- Do not approach wildlife.
- Help us keep the refuge beautiful; do not litter.
- Comply with Area Closed signs (which prohibit vehicle and foot entry).

**Habitat**



A habitat is a home that provides the necessities—food, water, and shelter—for the animals living there. This densely wooded area is home to raccoon, opossum, and red squirrel.

On a wildlife refuge, we manage the environment to meet the particular needs of wildlife. Management practices may include manipulating water, burning, grazing, farming, or simply putting up bird houses like this purple martin house.

**Pond**



This pond attracts many birds in spring and early summer. Great blue herons and snowy egrets hunt for fish among the large, round leaves of the American lotus.

**Little Marsh**



At the upper end of Little Marsh, wood ducks nest in the boxes perched above the water. Wood ducks usually nest in hollowed-out nesting trees, but natural hollows are in short supply. The boxes serve as substitutes. As soon as the ducklings hatch, the family leaves the box.

To enhance this habitat for wildlife, we drain the pond in May so that birds may feed on wild millet and grass seeds that grow during the summer. In November or December we reflood the area to make the seeds available for migrating birds.

**Puterbaugh Field**



Puterbaugh Field is one of the 15 farm fields maintained in the northeastern and southern ends of the refuge. This field is planted to wheat or cowpeas to attract deer, turkey, and quail. Other fields are planted to provide food for geese, sandhill cranes, and whooping cranes.

**Nesting Sites**



Trees provide roosting and nesting sites for many of the songbirds in the area. Look for cardinals, warblers, and the Oklahoma state bird, scissor-tail flycatchers. At the southeastern end of this pond is an artificial nesting structure for the giant Canada goose, a subspecies that has been introduced into this area.

**School Marsh  
Overlook Trail**



This short trail leads to School Marsh Overlook. In late spring, we gradually drain this area, then plant it to Japanese millet. During the draining phase, herons, white-faced ibis, and egrets feed on crayfish, minnows, and insects. In the fall, when the millet has matured, we flood the marsh, which provides millet seed and invertebrates for mallards and green-winged teal to eat.

**Mink Run Pond**



The small islands in Mink Run Pond provide nesting habitat for Canada geese. The water surrounding the islands offers protection from predators such as coyotes and bobcats.

**Wilson Pond**



Wilson Pond is a brood pond for mallard and wood ducks. Look for ducklings in the spring and summer. They seek protection from egrets, herons, and other predators by hiding beneath the large leaves of the American lotus.

**Casey Marsh  
Tower**



An easy quarter-mile stroll leads to the Casey Marsh Tower where it is possible from October to April to catch a glimpse of undisturbed waterfowl. Ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, and whooping cranes frequently use this area.

**Cattails and Cottonwood Trees**

10

Cattails and young cottonwood trees flourish in this 70-acre shallow pond. These plants pose a management problem, as they grow so densely in the marshes that ducks cannot use the shallow water. Refuge personnel keep the plants under control by disking, mowing, and burning.

**Land Management**

11

As you have seen, refuge personnel periodically flood and drain ponds and moist soil units to provide a continual supply of food for birds and other wildlife. This delivery canal supplies water from Sand Creek to these wildlife management sites.

Managing land for wildlife is a complex task. Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge must be carefully protected and managed to provide the best habitat for a broad array of wildlife.

Enjoy your visit!



*View from the Harold F. Miller Auto Tour Route*  
FWS Photograph

**Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge**  
Route 1, Box 76  
Jet, Oklahoma 73749  
580/626-4794  
580/626-4793 Fax

<http://southwest.fws.gov>

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
<http://www.fws.gov>

**For Information on the  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
1 800/344 WILD**

**September 2001**

