

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Hart Mountain

National Antelope

Refuge





More than 30 million pronghorn once roamed North America. By the turn of the 20th century, only a few small bands were left. Hart Mountain was one of the last strongholds of this fleet-footed species.

Set aside as a home for pronghorn, the Refuge is renowned as a dramatic landscape rich in wildlife diversity.

*Pronghorn with Beaty Butte in the background.
Aaron Collins*



The Refuge

Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (NAR) was established in 1936 to provide range for remnant pronghorn herds. Refuge management has since been broadened to include conservation of all wildlife and native plant species characteristic of this high-desert habitat. Public enjoyment, education, and appreciation for the species and habitat found here is encouraged.



Hart Mountain NAR is one of over 560 National Wildlife Refuges located throughout the country. The blue goose insignia represents this system of lands established for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Landscape



Ruth Miller/USFWS



Looming high above the surrounding rangelands, Hart Mountain is a massive fault block ridge that rises to an elevation of 8,017 feet. The west side ascends abruptly some 3,600 feet from the floor of the Warner Valley in a series of rugged cliffs, steep slopes, and knifelike ridges.

The east side of the mountain is less precipitous, descending in a series of hills and low ridges to the sagebrush-grass ranges typical of southeastern Oregon and the Great Basin.

The Refuge is an oasis in the desert. Snow melt and springs feed many seasonal and year-round creeks. A natural hot spring nestled against the eastern base of Warner Peak provides a soothing retreat for area visitors.

Water is a valuable commodity in this dry desert landscape. Precipitation (an average of 12" annually) comes primarily as winter snow or spring rains. Temperatures vary between extreme cold in the winter and hot, dry summer conditions.



Pronghorn

Able to run up to 60 miles-per-hour, pronghorn are the fastest land animal in North America. Their great speed evolved thousands of years ago at a time when two species of cheetahs hunted in North America. Healthy pronghorn can outrun any modern-day predator. Coyotes, bobcats, and golden eagles are a threat only in the first few weeks of a pronghorn's life.



About the size of a large house cat at birth, pronghorn grow to over 100 pounds. Most of this weight is amassed in their thick bodies with extremely large lungs necessary for distance running. Pronghorn rely on speed and keen vision for protection. Their large eyes see the world as you would if using binoculars with 8 power magnification.

Female pronghorn give birth to singles or twins each year in May or early June. Until they are able to run with the herd, fawns are kept hidden in the low sagebrush and grasses of the fawning grounds.





Mule deer buck

Wildlife Diversity



Red-naped sapsucker

C. Reeb/USFWS



Ground squirrels



Common poorwill

R. Blacker/USFWS



Horned lizard



Killdeer

K. Voget/USFWS

Diversity in habitat creates variety in wildlife. Hart Mountain NAR's diverse landscape and habitat are alive with over 340 species of wildlife, primarily birds (246 species) and mammals (69 species). Mammals such as California bighorn sheep, coyotes, and rabbits are generally year-round residents of the Refuge while most pronghorn, birds and even many deer come and go with the seasons.

Hart Mountain NAR is renowned for its upland habitat and wildlife: pronghorn race across the low sagebrush expanses of the Refuge's east side, Greater sage-grouse nest under large sagebrush bushes in the heart of the Refuge, mule deer roam the mountain mahogany and bitterbrush habitats found at higher elevations, and California bighorn sheep nimbly scale the rocky cliffs of the Refuge's west face.

Other important areas on the Refuge for wildlife include shallow playa lakes, grassy meadows watered by snowmelt and streams, riparian areas along streamsides, aspen stands, and secluded pine groves. Habitats closely associated with water support the greatest richness of wildlife species.



Blyth Brown



Greater sage-grouse

The drumming chest and elaborate strut of the male sage-grouse is a renowned spectacle of the high desert. This early morning courtship dance occurs on numerous refuge strutting grounds (leks) in late March and April. Hens build a nest, generally under a sagebrush bush, and lay about 9 eggs. Sage-grouse were once so plentiful that settlers gathered buckets of eggs for camp fare. Through careful research and management, it is hoped that sage-grouse will recover some of their former abundance.



California bighorn sheep

Agile California bighorn sheep move skillfully in the steep and rugged terrain on the west face of Hart Mountain and Poker Jim Ridge. A ram's massive, curled horns, which can weigh nearly 30 pounds, set it apart from the female sheep whose horns are much smaller.

Once abundant, these majestic animals fell victim to diseases from domestic livestock and over-hunting and were eliminated from Hart Mountain by 1915. A very successful process of reintroduction began in 1954. Now bighorn sheep once again call the Refuge home.



Wildlife Viewing

Viewing wildlife in its native environment is a richly rewarding activity for the young and old. A few tips will help you see and enjoy Refuge wildlife.



Coyote pups. Bill Stormont/USFWS

Early morning and late evening is when wildlife is most active and easiest to spot, especially in the heat of the summer.

Your car makes an excellent observation blind. Many types of wildlife can be approached more closely in a car than on foot, but take care not to approach too closely and disturb their natural behaviors!

Because road access is very limited on the Refuge, hiking into more remote areas may provide excellent opportunities to view animals, take in the beautiful scenery, and experience the solitude and wildness of the Refuge. Hike quietly to improve your odds of wildlife encounters.

Binoculars or spotting scopes are very important for viewing wildlife across the great expanses of Refuge habitat.

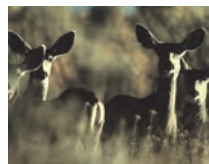
Sandhill cranes
R. Blacker/USFWS



Pronghorn



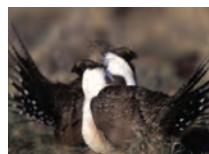
California bighorn sheep
J. Webb/USFWS



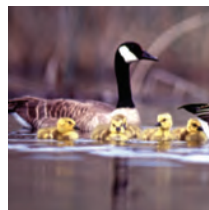
Mule deer
R. Blacker/USFWS



American avocet
Dan and Lin Dzurisin



Greater sage-grouse



Canada goose and brood

Pronghorn may be seen throughout the rolling sagebrush habitat on the eastern half of the Refuge. The Frenchglen Road and Lookout Point on the Blue Sky Road are the best places to spot pronghorn.

Bighorn sheep can be seen year-round from the base of Hart Mountain. Stop near Camp Hart Mountain or any other location along the road and scan with binoculars for herds of sheep. You are unlikely to see them with an unaided eye.

Mule deer frequent the mountain mahogany and aspen stands found in the hills and the higher elevations of the Refuge. Travel Skyline Drive (open seasonally to vehicles) for the best viewing opportunities.

Over 200 resident and migratory birds species use the Refuge. Riparian areas, such as the Hot Springs Campground, are especially good areas for birding. Blue Sky supports a wealth of birds that are attracted to this isolated stand of ponderosa pine.

During summer sage-grouse gather around meadows in the areas between refuge headquarters and the top of the mountain. We suggest an early evening walk along any meadow edge or a trip along Skyline Drive at sunset.

To avoid disturbance during their mating season, you must have a Refuge special use permit and follow special rules when viewing or photographing sage-grouse from March 1 until June 1.

Nesting geese and sandhill cranes can occasionally be seen in meadows along Rock and Guano creeks. The Warner Wetlands, at the base of Hart Mountain is a mecca for migratory waterfowl. Blinds have been built at Hart Bar.

Managing & Restoring Wildlife Habitat



To wildlife, habitat is home: a place to eat, rest, and raise young. With steep rocky cliffs, rolling hills with bitterbrush and mahogany, aspen groves along narrow streams, and wide open expanses of sagebrush grasslands, Hart Mountain NAR habitat is as diverse as the wild things that call it home.

Providing high quality, diverse habitat for wildlife requires research, management and restoration.

Natural systems have been altered in many different ways. Through management, we strive to minimize or compensate for these changes. Native Community Restoration – restoring the condition under which native species at the Refuge evolved – is the theme of Hart Mountain NAR habitat management.

Fire is an essential part of the Refuge ecosystem – it revitalizes wildlife habitat and creates biological diversity. Where the risks from wildfire are too great, we use fire as a management tool under specific prescriptions to mimic these effects. While burned areas may look devastated immediately after a fire, grasses and many flowering plants quickly recover as habitat is reborn.



Before There Was a Refuge



Jack Richardson/
USFWS

Hart Mountain's past is a story of change and adaptation, not only for the land itself but for the people who have lived here for over 10,000 years. The climate was once more cool and moist, and people thrived on and near the Refuge by gathering abundant roots, seeds, and berries and by hunting animals. More frequent drought cycles may have forced inhabitants to leave the mountain in search of homes with more reliable water, plant, and animal resources.

By historic times, the environment looked much as it does today and was used by the Kidütökadö band of the Northern Paiute. These people moved through Warner Valley into adjacent uplands on Hart Mountain in the spring and summer to gather plants and hunt. Historic accounts indicate they hunted bighorn sheep, pronghorn, and deer. They also gathered grass seeds and roots on the rocky flats of the mountain and wild plums and berries along creeks.

Archaeological sites on the Refuge reflect a long history of human use. Circles of rocks up to 10 feet in diameter remain from house foundations at summer base camps. Occupants of such camps traveled from these central locations to collect plants and hunt before returning to their winter villages at lower elevations.

Hunting blinds along canyon rims and other stacked rock features attest to a wide range of hunting activities which occurred over time on the mountain. Scatters of obsidian flakes from tool manufacturing are evidence of hunting camps and plant collection areas.



*Petroglyphs
can be found
throughout the
refuge.*

The early inhabitants of the mountain also left artistic images for us to enjoy. Petroglyphs (images pecked into stone) can be found on rimrocks and outcrops throughout the Refuge. Ranging from abstract or geometric designs to representations of animals and humans, these images have many interpretations. Are they associated with hunting activities? Are they symbols of contacts with the spirit world? Do they represent the abundance of plants and animals available in an area, or ancient graffiti? No one knows for sure.

Refuge Recreation

Wildlife-dependent recreation is a priority at National Wildlife Refuges

All public use recreational activities on Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge are regulated to protect wildlife, this differs from regulations on other public lands. While managed to protect wildlife and maintain the rugged, remote, and undeveloped character of the Refuge a wide variety of opportunities are available for visitors to experience and explore.

As a visitor it is your responsibility to understand and follow the rules and regulations to protect wildlife and to insure your own safety.

Be safe - be prepared - be responsible!

Unless an activity is specifically allowed by federal regulation, refuge sign or publication – it is prohibited!



Wildlife Observation & Photography

are the most popular recreation activities on the Refuge. Refer to the Wildlife Viewing section of this brochure for more information.



Pets must be leashed or confined, except dogs used for bird hunting. Hunting dogs must be kept under the immediate control of their handlers at all times.



Camping is permitted year-round for up to 14 days only in designated campgrounds or with a backcountry permit. Camp Hart Mountain and Hot Springs campgrounds are road accessible year-round, except for inclement weather related temporary closures. Road access to other camping areas may be open during specially designated times. All campgrounds are primitive with pit toilets.

Backcountry Camping is a great way to experience some of the more remote parts of the Refuge. A self-issued permit explaining additional rules and regulations is required before you depart. Permits are available at the Refuge Headquarters or online.



Campfires are permitted only in designated firerings where provided. The use of campfires may be further restricted during periods of increased fire danger – check for campfire restrictions posted at the Refuge Headquarters or at the campground. Bring your own firewood because collecting firewood within the Refuge is prohibited.



Garbage collection, trash cans, and septic dumping facilities are not provided on the Refuge. Discarding trash or leaving items on the Refuge is prohibited – please do your part by packing out what you pack in!



Fishing is allowed only in Rock Creek, Guano Creek, and Warner Pond. Check current Oregon state regulations for seasons, limits and other requirements.



Hunting for some big game and upland bird species is permitted in accordance with state and federal regulations. All hunting is strictly prohibited within 3 miles of the Refuge Headquarters. We allow chukar hunting on the western slopes of Hart Mountain and Poker Jim Ridge and the use of ground blinds in accordance with special Refuge regulations. Hunting within the Refuge may be more restrictive than state regulations. Consult all current federal (www.fws.gov/refuges/hunting) and state regulations (www.dfw.state.or.us) prior to hunting on the Refuge. **All other wildlife is protected.**



Firearms and their possession within the Refuge is allowed in accordance with Oregon state law. The discharge of any firearm and the possession or use of weapons other than firearms, except as allowed for purposes of legal hunting, is prohibited.



Collecting removing, disturbing, digging, or cutting resources such as artifacts, arrowheads, petroglyphs, trees and other plants is strictly prohibited. Observe and enjoy refuge resources in place.

Getting Around
You can access the Refuge by various means by following these rules.

The Refuge is easily accessible by paved and well maintained gravel roads from the nearest full service communities of Lakeview, Oregon (65 miles west) and Burns, Oregon via Hwy 395 (120 miles north). Gas and groceries are available in the smaller communities of Plush (10 miles west), Fields (80 miles southeast) and seasonally in Frenchglen (28 miles east).



Vehicles (both motorized and nonmotorized) are allowed **ONLY** on designated Open Routes (see map). Roads are open as indicated by road signs, refuge maps, or other information subject to weather and road conditions and for resource/habitat protection.

NOTE: Don't assume that because a road is marked open you will be able to drive through! Any road on the Refuge can become hazardous and impassable, or may be closed due to storm events, drifting snow, wet and muddy conditions, landslide, other natural events, or increased fire danger – check for vehicle restrictions posted at Refuge Headquarters or along roadways.

Vehicle use on any road not marked with the Open Route sign, and vehicle use off-road, is prohibited. You may pull off the road one vehicle length, subject to seasonal fire danger restrictions.

The Hart Mountain-Frenchglen Road, Blue Sky Road, and the Hot Springs Road are open and maintained year-round and are easily traveled by passenger vehicle.



Other roads within the Refuge are NOT maintained and use of four-wheel drive vehicles with high clearance is strongly recommended. The Barnhardy Road is typically open Aug 1 – Dec 1. Other unimproved seasonal roads normally open June 15 - Dec 1.

Before venturing off the primary road through the Refuge be well informed and well equipped for backcountry travel! Always carry a shovel, axe, or Pulaski, tire chains, first aid kit, emergency food, and at least one extra gallon of water in your vehicle.



Speed on the Refuge is 25 m.p.h. unless otherwise posted – for the safety of you and the wildlife.



Hiking and Horseback Riding is allowed throughout most of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. While there are no designated routes or trails, most seasonal roads are

Remember... Be Safe!

closed to vehicles from December through early June and provide easy access free of vehicle travel.

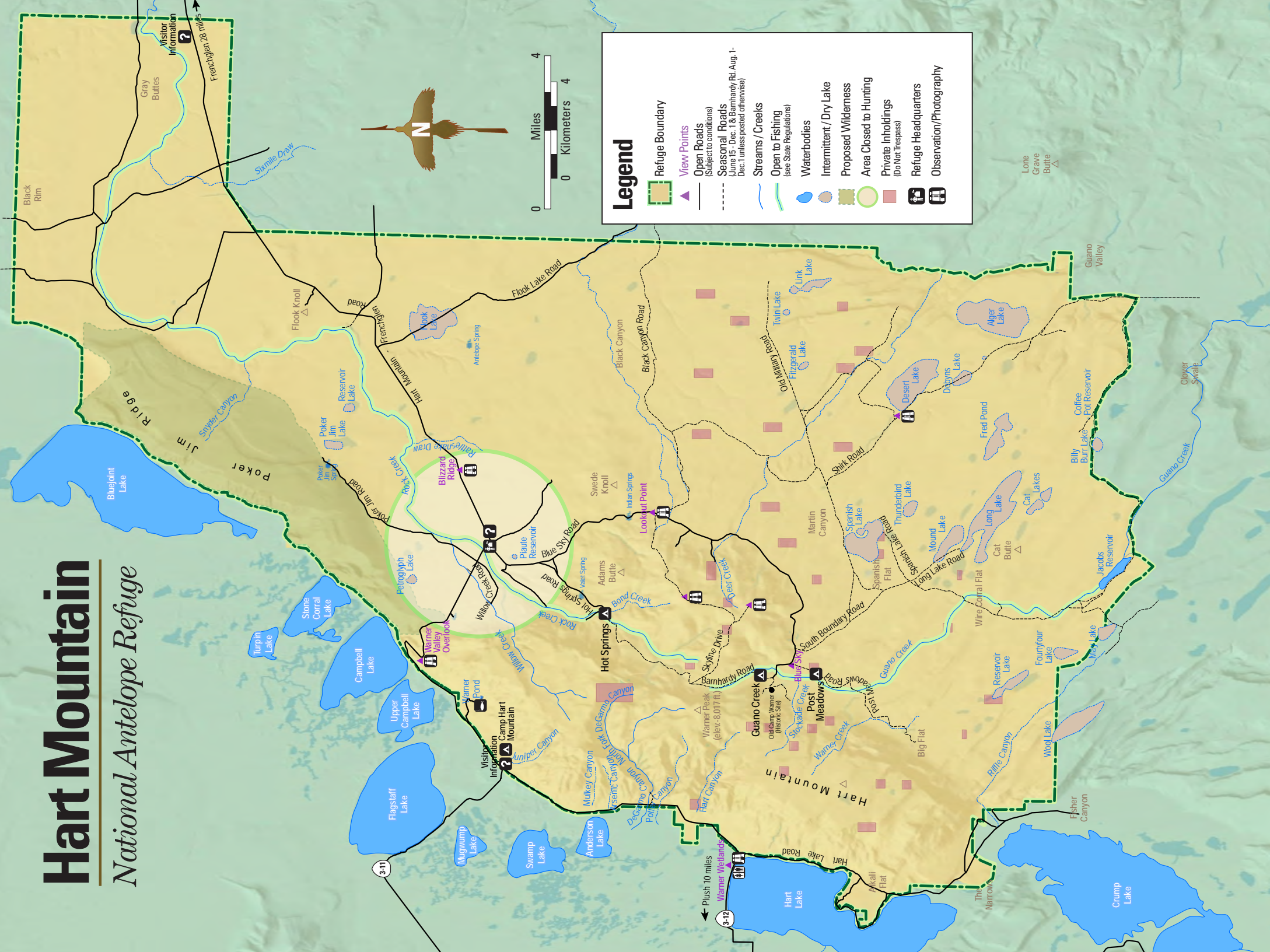
Post Meadows Campground is the only road accessible site for overnight stock use on the Refuge. To avoid introducing weeds, only pelletized feed or certified weed free hay is allowed. Additional information about popular hiking routes, backcountry camping permits and stock use are available at the Refuge Headquarters or the Refuge website @ <http://www.fws.gov/sheldonthartmntn/Hart>

The Refuge covers a remote expanse of the Great Basin high desert. It is a very remote and rugged area. Emergency services, roadside assistance, cell phone coverage and extra supplies are not readily available.

Please - PACK OUT what you PACK IN	Please - PACK OUT what you PACK IN											
	Campsites	Wheelchair Accessible	Trailer	Toilets / Outhouses	Campfires	Drinking Water	Picnic Tables	Generators	Fishing	Boats	Pack Stock	Visitor Information
Location												
Camp Hart Mountain	8	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Hot Springs <small>*(Trailers 24 ft. maximum)</small>	25	X	X*	X	X			X	X			
Post Meadows	4	X	X	X					X		X	
Guano Creek <small>(Vehicles OK Aug. 1 - Dec. 1)</small>	10			X					X			
Warner Pond		X		X					X	X		
Headquarters				X		X						X

Hart Mountain

National Antelope Refuge



Legend

- Refuge Boundary
- View Points
- Open Roads (Subject to conditions)
- Seasonal Roads (June 15 - Dec. 1 & Barnhardy Rd. Aug. 1 - Dec. 1 unless posted otherwise)
- Streams / Creeks
- Open to Fishing (see State Regulations)
- Waterbodies
- Intermittent / Dry Lake
- Proposed Wilderness
- Area Closed to Hunting
- Private Inholdings (Do Not Trespass)
- Refuge Headquarters
- Observation/Photography

Lone
Grave
Butte
△

**Hart Mountain
National Antelope Refuge
P.O. Box 111
Lakeview, OR 97630**

**Refuge Headquarters 541/947-2731
Lakeview Office 541/947-3315
fax: 541/947-4414
web: <http://www.fws.gov/sheldonthartmtn/Hart/>**

**For National Wildlife Refuge
information: 1 800/344 WILD**

**Visitors with disabilities may
be reasonably accommodated
upon request, and/or receive an
alternative format publication.**

**Oregon Relay Service
TTY 1 800/735 2900
Voice 1 800/735 1232
ASCI 1 800/735 0644
SP 1 800/735 3896**

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