

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Pahranagat

National Wildlife Refuge





*Water is always the
most precious resource
in life.*

-Native Elder, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe

Introduction

The Nuwuvi (southern Paiute and Chemehuevi) oral history and the geologic record indicate that thousands of years ago Nevada was much cooler and wetter than it is today. Many valleys contained lakes which dried up as the climate warmed, leaving white mineral deposits on valley and canyon walls. Today, Pahrnat National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) contains several lakes and marshes, similar to those which once occurred throughout many parts of southern Nevada.



Mineral deposits at Maynard dry lakebed

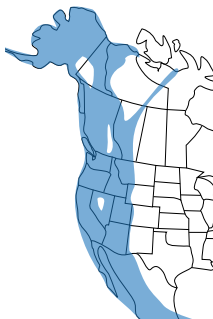
In the Paiute language, Pahrnat can mean “feet sticking in water,” an apt name for this wetland oasis straddling the Mojave and Great Basin Deserts. Pahrnat NWR is a paradise for many species of wildlife and plants. Here you can watch as hundreds of ducks and geese alight on the lakes after a long journey north or south, thrill at the sight of a soaring bald eagle, photograph the desert in bloom after rain, or be fascinated by a blazing sunset.



Viewing wildlife at WHIN dike

In 1963, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized the value of the Pahrnat Valley and designated 5,380 acres of lakes, marshes, wet meadows and desert uplands as Pahrnat National Wildlife Refuge. Located on the Pacific Flyway, the refuge is an essential stopover for waterfowl and songbirds as they migrate south in the fall and back north in early spring.

Pahrnat NWR is one of more than 560 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife and habitat for people today and generations to come.



Pacific Flyway

Seasons of the Refuge



Spring

Migrating birds arrive during the spring to fuel up for longer journeys north or to begin nesting. Greater sandhill cranes feed in grasslands and wet meadows in February and March. Geese and ducks begin to arrive in March and shorebirds, such as Wilson's phalaropes, stop over in April and May. Early morning visits to cottonwood and willow groves yield views of chorusing songbirds, including numerous yellow warblers.



Sandhill Cranes

Following spring rains, wildflowers paint the desert yellow, orange, and red. Threatened desert tortoises emerge from their burrows to feed on these succulent plants.



Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

Summer

The first duck broods of redheads and mallards appear in May. Herons and egrets stalk the shorelines and marshes for food. Endangered southwestern willow flycatchers nest in large willows or cottonwoods. Young rabbits and mule deer fawns venture out of cover. These animals are hunted by resident carnivores such as golden eagles, coyotes and mountain lions, which also need food for their young. Young coyotes can be observed learning how to catch mice and voles, and adult red-tailed hawks are frequently seen carrying food to young still in the nest.



Mallard

Yellow Warbler



Seasons of the Refuge



Fall

Cottonwood and willow leaves turn brilliant yellow in autumn. Marsh plants begin to change color as well, creating a mosaic of yellows, tans, and reds. Large numbers of ducks, shorebirds and songbirds migrate south, stopping to rest and refuel.



Mule Deer

Lizards, snakes and tortoises become less active due to cooler temperatures. Mule deer begin breeding, and mature bucks with large antlers may be observed.

Winter

In winter, tundra swans, Canada geese and a variety of ducks feed in lakes and marshes. Shovelers, pintails, redheads, canvasbacks, mallards and teal can all be seen on Upper Pahranaagat Lake. Bald eagles and osprey arrive to hunt for ducks and fish. Large numbers of raptors, particularly the northern harrier, can be seen near marsh and meadow habitats searching for food.



© Allen Woosley

Bald Eagle



Tundra Swan

Habitats of the Refuge



Ruddy Duck

At Pahrnanagat NWR, refuge staff maintain and restore habitats to provide food, water and shelter for wildlife. Five major habitat types are managed according to the needs of wildlife.

Large thermal springs north of the town of Alamo provide water for lakes and wetlands, a rare and precious habitat in southern Nevada. Water is stored in Upper Pahrnanagat Lake and released as needed to nurture habitats in the central and southern portions of the refuge.



Green-winged Teal

Lakes and Wetlands

Upper Pahrnanagat Lake and the North Marsh Lake, which have the deepest water, attract diving ducks such as canvasbacks, common mergansers and ruddy ducks. The shallower Middle Marsh and Lower Pahrnanagat Lake are preferred by dabbling mallards, pintails and teal as well as wading herons and egrets. Northern harriers, marsh wrens, yellow headed blackbirds, muskrats, and even the occasional bald eagle or peregrine falcon, also benefit from marsh habitats.



White-faced Ibis

Seasonal draining of marshes exposes mudflats, a prime feeding area for white faced ibis, American avocet, and killdeer.

Habitats of the Refuge



*Cottonwood
Spring*



Prescribed burn



S. Schafer/USFWS

Riparian Habitat

Cottonwood and willow trees line the refuge's lake shores and springs. Riparian habitats (a word that refers to moisture-dependent vegetation that grows along watercourses) are among the most endangered habitats in the Southwest.

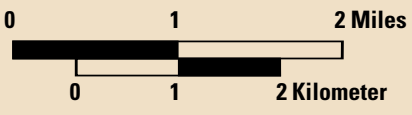
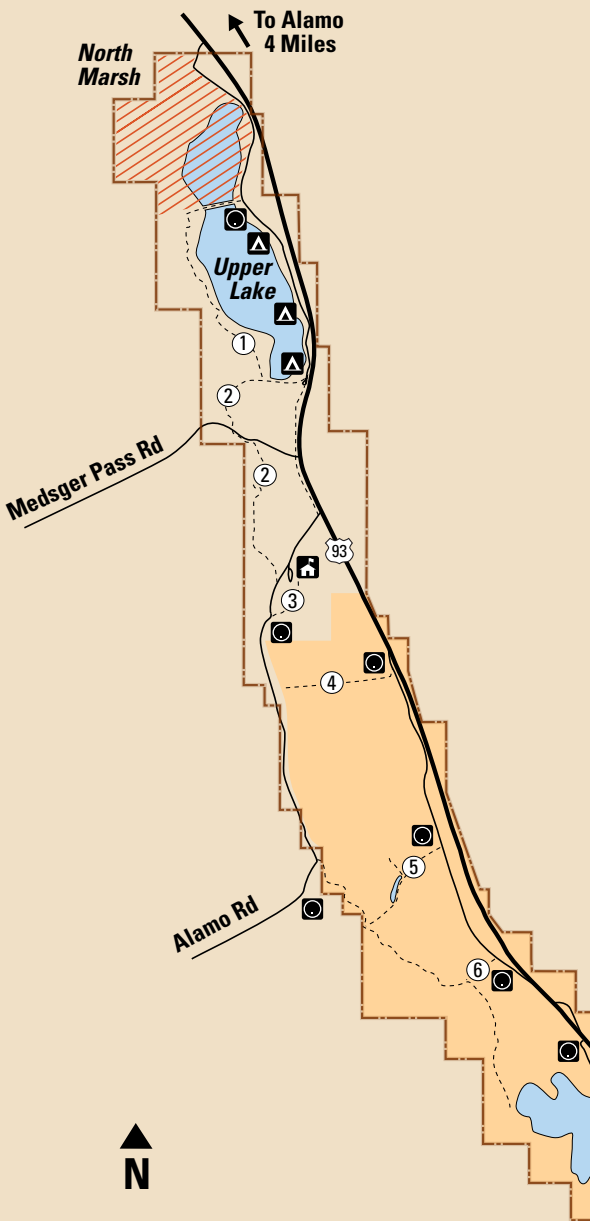
Riparian habitat provides feeding and nesting areas for birds that migrate here from the tropics, such as the yellow warbler, Bullock's oriole, and the endangered Southwestern willow flycatcher. Nonnative tamarisk (salt cedar) trees, which add toxic salts to soils and use large quantities of valuable ground water, are removed, as are Russian olive trees.

Meadows

Moist meadows are home to many rodent species. These small mammals provide food for raptors and coyotes. Refuge staff irrigate meadows to provide green forage for sandhill cranes, waterfowl and wading birds. Meadows and other grasslands are sometimes burned or mowed to remove old plants and stimulate new growth.
















Desert Uplands

Since the refuge straddles both the great Basin and Mojave desert, a diversity of upland plants grows here, including sagebrush, saltbush, creosote and yucca. They provide shelter and food for reptiles and small mammals, which are hunted by coyotes, raptors and roadrunner.



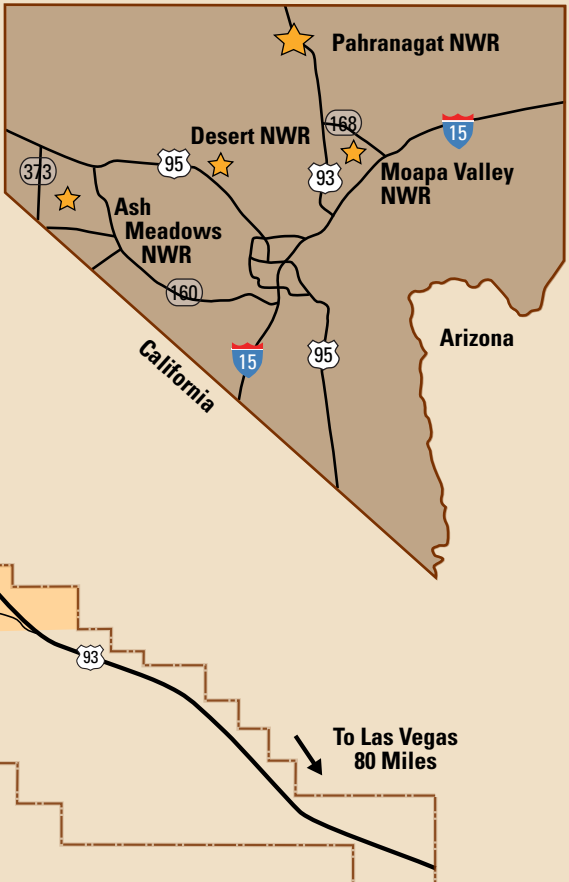
Pahrnanagat

National Wildlife Refuge

-  Refuge Boundary
-  Highway 93
-  Gravel Road
-  Trail
-  Visitor Information
-  Camping
-  Visitor Center
-  ① Upper Lake Trail
-  ② Davenport Trail
-  ③ Cabin Trail
-  ④ Dove Dike
-  ⑤ WHIN Dike
-  ⑥ Middle Marsh Dike
-  Seasonal Hunting Area
-  Area Closed

Nevada

Area Enlarged



Visitor Activities

Hiking



The three mile **Upper Lake Trail** encircles the lake and provides an excellent opportunity to see waterfowl throughout the year.



Running between the Upper Lake Trail and the refuge's Visitor Center for 1.5 miles, the **Davenport Trail** climbs into drier desert habitat of the refuge and offers several scenic overlooks.

The half mile **Cabin Trail** winds along a stream bed through groves of cottonwoods and meadows before reaching the refuge's two historic cabins.

Hunting & Fishing



Hunting of ducks, goose, coot, moorhen, quail, snipe and rabbit is permitted on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays in the refuge's public hunting areas during the official hunting season. Dove hunting is permitted daily during the month of September, and starting October 1 dove hunting is permitted on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays for the remainder of the state season.

Catfish, carp, and largemouth bass may be found throughout the refuge. The North Marsh is closed to fishing from the first of October to the first of February.



For more information on state regulations call 702/486-5127 or visit ndow.org. A complete guide to refuge policies can be found in *Pahrnagat Hunting, Boating, & Fishing Regulations brochure*.

Boating



Boating is permitted on Upper Pahrnagat Lake, Middle Marsh, and Lower Pahrnagat Lake. Access is limited to non-motorized boats or boats with electric motors. Trailer launching prohibited.

Visitor Activities

Camping



Camping is offered on a first come, first served basis. Quiet hours are 10pm to 7am. Camping is limited to 14 days within a 28 day period.

Campfires



Fires are allowed only in provided fire pits and grills. Please bring all of your own firewood. Collecting downed wood is not permitted. It provides habitat for wildlife and returns nutrients to the soil.

Garbage



Please help keep your refuge clean—pack out all garbage and food waste. A dumpster is provided on campground road near Hwy93.

Pets on Leash



Even the best behaving pet can unintentionally scare or harm our wildlife. Please keep your pet leashed at all times and remember to clean up after them.

Prohibited Activities



The lakes and marshes are home to rare and endangered species. Please keep them and their home safe - no swimming or wading.



Use of ATV, UTV, or dirt bikes is prohibited. Horses are not permitted on the refuge.



Do not remove any archeological artifacts, plants, animals or natural objects—it not only prevents future visitors from being able to enjoy them, but is also a violation of federal law.



Use of drones is not permitted on the refuge.



Railroad Tie Cabin



