



Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge

Photography Navigation Guide



Overview

Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge is located at 6465 Refuge Road in Sherman, TX 75092-5817 (GPS Coordinates 33.739026, -96.751935). The refuge lies on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma, which is on the Red River between Oklahoma and Texas. Established in 1946, the refuge includes 3000 acres of marsh and water and 8000 acres of upland and farmland. Consisting of about 12,000 acres, the Refuge provides a variety of habitats for birds and wildlife.

Hagerman is along the Central Flyway, which makes it an excellent site for viewing migratory birds in the Spring and Fall. In fact, Hagerman is home to many of the more than 338 recorded species of birds.

Getting to Hagerman

From Dallas, go north on US 75 to US 82 West. Take US 82 West to SH 289. Go North on SH 289 then turn left on Refuge Road. The visitor center is 4.1 miles on the right.

From Fort Worth, go north on IH 35-W to US 82 East. Take US 82 East to SH 289. Go North on SH 289 then turn left on Refuge Road. The visitor center is 4.1 miles on the right.

From Eastern Oklahoma, go South on US 75. Take FM 120 West to FM 1417 South. At Refuge Road, turn right. The visitor center is 6.1 miles on the right.



On the MAP page of Friends of Hagerman website, you will find an interactive map, which will give directions from your starting point. The link to the map is as follows:

<https://friendsofhagerman.org/Information-Maps-Trails>

Access

All of the areas of the refuge are open from dawn to dusk, and admission is free. While touring the Refuge, please keep in mind that vehicles must stay on improved (graveled) roads.

Visitor Center

Be sure to stop in the Visitor Center to obtain maps of the Refuge and its hiking trails. The friendly staff and/or volunteers will answer any questions you may have, and there is a restroom. The official Refuge Headquarters' office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays. Volunteers staff the center during the weekends. It's open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Binoculars are available for checkout if needed.

There is a *Butterfly Garden* across from the Visitor Center. Good spot to do macro shots of butterflies, flowers and insects. There have been 95 species of butterflies seen at Hagerman NWR.

What to Bring

In terms of photographic equipment, bring your favorite:

- camera, batteries, SD cards
- lens (suggested focal length is 300-600 mm)
- tripod/monopod
- beanbag (optional, but helpful if you're planning to do the auto tour)
- binoculars/spotting scope (optional, but helpful)
- GPS (optional, but helpful for the hiking trails and auto tour)
- fill flash (optional, but nice on cloudy days)

Also wear layers of clothing, hiking boots/walking shoes, hat, kneepads for ground shots, sunglasses, and a hat. Sunscreen, insect repellent and water are also important items to bring and use.

Weather

Spring and fall are normally pleasant. However, summer can be very hot with daytime temps in the low 100's. Winter can be cold and windy, but there are occasional 60-70 degree days, which are perfect for exploring the Refuge.

What to Watch Out For at the Refuge

Noxious: Unfortunately, Hagerman is home to a variety of poisonous snakes, plants and insects. Be sure to keep an eye out for cottonmouths (water moccasins), copperheads and timber rattlers. Poison ivy, oak and sumac may be seen along the trails and should not be touched. Black widow and brown recluse spiders also claim Hagerman as home and should be avoided. There are also tree bark scorpions, which sting and may cause an uncomfortable sensation.



Wildflowers: Plants within Hagerman are protected. Please do not collect or disturb them during your visit. In the spring, you may find Indian Paintbrush, Evening Primrose, and Indian Blanket. In the summer, Black-eyed Susan, Sunflowers, American Basketflower, Butterfly Weed, Coneflower, Saw-leaf Daisy, Plains Coreopsis, Mexican Hat, Compass Plant and Bee Balm are common sights.

Photo by Brenda Edwards

Butterflies: Look for Funereal Dusky Wing, American Snout, Question Mark, Common White, Checkerspot, Tawny Emperor, Monarchs, Morning Cloak, Hackberry, Common Sulfur, American Lady, Painted Lady, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Variegated Fritillary, Red Admiral, and more.

Common Mammals: Hagerman is home to armadillo, beaver, White-tailed deer, opossum (nocturnal), striped skunk, cotton-tail rabbit, fox squirrel, feral pig, coyote, raccoon, and bobcat.

Reptiles and Amphibians: American bullfrog, tree frog, alligator snapper turtle, western ribbon snake, red-ear slider turtle, snapping turtle, western cottonmouth, three-toed box turtle, Great plains rat snake, and timber rattle snake.

Birds: Please check the Friends of Hagerman website for the latest bird census. You may find it in the “Bird Survey Highlight” section at this link:

<https://friendsofhagerman.org/Birding-Jack>

Trail Maps

Brochures (including maps) for the various trails at Hagerman may be picked up at the Refuge Headquarters/Visitor Center, or you may download them from the Friends of Hagerman website. The brochures contain more detailed information about each trail than is provided in the overview below. The link to the trail brochures is:

<https://friendsofhagerman.org/Information-Maps-Trails>

1. Wildlife Drive Self-Guided Auto Tour

A great way to become familiar with Hagerman is to take the auto tour. Proceed from the Refuge Headquarters heading north, and turn left onto Wildlife Drive. The tour actually begins at the old Hagerman town site display and travels along the lakeshore.

Wildlife Drive anchors a two-mile, self-guided auto tour route, which proceeds through the heart of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. Along this drive, you will most likely see open water, marshes, and moist soil units as well as croplands that are farmed for wildlife.

Turn right onto Egret then cross over to Tern. As you exit Tern, turn right then left onto Silliman. Follow the signs to Crow Hill Trail.

Along the auto tour, you may expect to see wildflowers and the following wildlife:

- Birds: Ducks, Geese, Swans, Herons, Bitterns, Egrets, Vultures, Kites, Eagles, Hawks, Plovers, Stilts, Avocets, Sandpipers, Phalaropes, Gulls, Pigeons, Owls, Jays, Crows, Swallows, Chickadees, Titmice, Wrens, Gnatcatchers, Thrushes, Mockingbirds, Starlings, Wood Warblers, Sparrows, Cardinals, Blackbirds, Orioles, Finches, Goldfinches
- Amphibians: Frogs
- Reptiles: Snakes, lizards, turtles
- Insects: Butterflies, dragonflies

2. Meyers Branch Unit:

In the Meyers Branch Unit, you may find an Artesian Well, along with various shore birds, ducks and geese around the low water crossing. The low water crossing is also a great fishing spot.

Photo by Nancy Miller



Raasch Trail

The Meyers Branch Unit also contains the Raasch Trail, which heads east from Wildlife Drive toward Terry Lane. This trail is a three-mile round trip, which used to be an old railroad bed with a level, gravel surface. You may expect to see wildlife such as feral hogs, deer, rabbits, and squirrels. There is also an abundance of hardwoods in this area, which attracts a variety of birds. The field at the beginning of the trail is also a great spot to watch and photograph the Snow geese during their migration in winter.

3. Goode Day Use Area:

Heading north from the Visitor Center along Refuge Road, follow the road across the low water crossing, up the hill, and around the curve into the Goode area.

In Goode, you will find Picnic Pond, Dead Woman's Pond along Haller's Haven Nature Trail. This area and the trail are great for viewing birds, wildflowers, trees, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. Turkey, deer, feral hogs and ducks are common subjects. Less common is bobcats.

Haller's Haven Trail

In the Goode Day Use area, right down from the restroom, where the road will curve to the left, is the trail head for Haller's Haven Trail. The trail varies from ½ mile to 4 miles roundtrip, depending on how much time and effort you want to expend. From this entry, Dead Woman's Pond is only a ½ mile walk. As you walk the road, you will see and hear wading birds of all kinds. This trail is a good place to see turkeys, feral hogs and deer.

Continue on up the hill and walk a mowed loop trail to look for upland birds. After ½ mile, turn to the south on an old road and ¾ mile to a "T" in the trail. Choose to head back or go left for a view of Lake Texoma. After returning to the "T", the hike is less than 1 ½ miles to the parking area.



4. Harris Creek Unit



Photo by Keith Jantz

The Harris Creek Trail is just south of the Refuge Headquarters. There is a graveled parking area at the trail head. About 100 yards in, there is an observation blind overlooking Duck Pond.

This trail has two parts, the lower being the wetland area, which is called Crawfish Pond Loop, and the upper, which consists of a dryer Prairie Loop. The lower loop is approximately 1 ¼ miles, and the upper loop is 2 ¼ miles.

The Harris Creek area is home to owls, ducks, wading birds, songbirds, bluebirds, turkey, dove, deer, raccoons, butterflies, dragonflies, frogs, turtles, snakes and wildflowers.

Photo Blind

East of Harris Creek Trail there is a photo blind overlooking a pond. Parking is right off the road up from the first pond you see before the Visitor Center. About a 100 yard walk to the north is the Photo Blind.

Here you could see ducks, songbirds, frogs, snakes, dragonflies, turtles, and owls.

5. Big Mineral Unit

Crow Hill Trail

Photo by Charlotte Sorrell



Take Wildlife Drive to Silliman and go south. Follow the gravel road to the first right. There is a parking area at the trailhead. Crow Hill is a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile easy walk with several interpretive signs to assist you in your journey.

Just a few yards into the Trail, you will find a picturesque meadow, which is filled with wildflowers in the spring. This trail gives you the opportunity to look for common songbirds, turkeys, deer, feral hogs, rabbit, squirrel, and armadillos.

About $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the starting point, there is an observation tower, which provides a panoramic view of the Refuge and lake.

Paddock Roads, Mineral Marsh, Steadman Marsh and Muleshoe Marsh:

From Wildlife Drive, you will see several offshoots. These include Plover, Tern and Egret Roads. From the pads, you may see the same things that you see on Wildlife Drive, but in closer proximity. In the marshes, you will find shorebirds, ducks and geese. Herons and egrets, hawks, vultures, red-winged blackbirds, and crows are frequent inhabitants.

Several spots along these pads are great spots to get a sunset photo.

On occasion you might spot a river otter or even a beaver in the marshes.



Photo by Stacey Morris

Wildlife Drive, West End

Traveling on Wildlife Drive, past the marshes on the south side is an open field. During the Fall and Winter months, there are deer and geese on this field. Coyotes and wild hogs can be seen here as well.

This is also a good area to get a good landscape picture with pretty clouds in the sky.

Photo by Pam Rendell Bass



Meadow Pond Trail

From the Visitor Center, follow Wildlife Drive along the lake about two miles to the yellow gate where the road T's. Please park at the trail head or in the day use area on the right. This trail can be up to a six mile round trip.

The trail is a level graveled road, and it is lined with trees on both sides. It is a great place to see and hear songbirds. About ½ mile from the starting point, you will find Deaver Pond on the left. It harbors wading birds and ducks. There are also usually several vultures. Deer, turkey, and coyotes are frequently sighted in the meadows along with wildflowers and insects.

The two mile marker is Meadow Pond. Raptors, wading birds, and feral hogs may be seen. In summer months, enjoy the many lotus in bloom.



Photo by Larry Petterborg

Bennet Lane

Go north at Meadow Pond Trail on Bennet Lane. As you cross over the bridge, you could see Beaver or River Otter in the creek. After you cross the bridge you curve to left. You could see owls, woodpeckers, and song birds. When you get to low water crossing, you could see Egrets or ducks. Around that curve and up the hill you will come to L Pad, feel free to explore it. On up the hill on the right, you will come to Oilfield Road. Go straight for about a mile and on the right is Sandy Road that will take you to the Sandy Unit.

Oilfield Road

Oilfield Road has several offshoots, which are labeled A through L. Feel free to drive through each of these roads to look for roadrunners, owls, woodpeckers, ducks, shorebirds, turkeys, and geese. Coyotes, deer, and bobcats also inhabit this area. This is a heavily wooded area so expect to see and hear songbirds.



Photo by Jeffrey Gladden

6. Sandy Unit

In the Sandy Day use Area, you may see Osprey in the summer and Bald Eagles in the winter. Roadrunners are common. On the road to the picnic area, watch for deer in the open areas and various birds, including Cardinals, Wrens, and Painted Buntings in the wooded sections. Wildflowers attract bees and butterflies along the road. Raptors such as Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrel frequent this section of the Refuge.

Areas of the Refuge are closed during various hunting seasons, and signs are posted to indicate which sections are not open. For more information, please contact the Visitor Center.

7. Godwin Unit

The Godwin Unit is on the far northwest side of the Refuge. To get there head west on Bennett Lane then go south and west on Brooks Lane. Take Old Sadler Road north to Dickey Road. At the locked gate on Dickey Road, you may travel by foot only into the Unit. In the late 1980's/early 1990's, turkeys were introduced to both Godwin and Sandy Units. Both of these units are heavily wooded, and you should see deer, forest habitat songbirds, and owls in both places.

Lodging/Dining

There are several named motels in Sherman, or Denison, which is closer, to stay. There are also several B&B's in Pottsboro by the lake if you prefer, which is also close and convenient to the Refuge.

Snacks are not available at the Visitor Center. Suggest you bring drinks, snacks, or lunch and enjoy one of the picnic areas available. There is a Brookshire's in Pottsboro if you need any last minute items.

Other Opportunities

If you'd like to make a weekend (or longer) trip out of your visit, please consider visiting these other local parks:

- Eisenhower State Park
- Tishomingo Wildlife Refuge
- Caddo National Grasslands
- Little River National Wildlife Refuge

References

The Friends of Hagerman website has several links that may be of interest at:

<http://friendsofhagerman.org/links.asp?cat=links>

Contact Us

The phone number for the Visitor Center is 903-405-1215.

If you have further questions, please send them to info@friendsofhagerman.org

If you have questions about the Friends of Hagerman Photo Club, please send them to photoclub@friendsofhagerman.org.