

Enjoy Your Refuge

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (CPNWR) offers excellent opportunities to explore one of the most biologically diverse deserts in the world. The Sonoran Desert may seem like a harsh environment, but with quiet observation the many forms of life in the desert will reveal themselves to you. These visitor rules and regulations will help ensure visitor safety and preserve the integrity of CPNWR for future generations.

Wildlife Protection

All wildlife on the refuge is protected in accordance with state and federal laws. CPNWR is home to over 275 different species of wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep and the endangered Sonoran pronghorn. The collecting, processing, disturbing, injuring, destroying, removing, transporting of any plant, animal or part thereof, is strictly prohibited on the CPNWR.

Visitor Permits

A current Visitor Permit is required for each visitor 18 years old and older. One copy of the permit must be clearly displayed in the vehicle a second copy must be on the visitor's person at all times. Before entering the refuge, visitors must register at an entry kiosk.

Camping

Visitors are encouraged to camp at one of the established campgrounds on the refuge, although dispersed camping is allowed. The campgrounds are primitive with no amenities other than picnic tables. Camping is limited to 14 days within any given 28-day period. No camping is allowed within ¼ mile of wildlife waters or water sources. Vehicles must stay within 50 feet of the centerline of the road.

Garbage and Waste

Pack out all garbage and waste products. Practice "Pack it in, Pack it out." Individual human waste and paper should be buried well below the soil surface and be at least 200 feet from water sources and camp areas. The disposal or dumping of portable toilet contents is illegal anywhere on the refuge. Use approved dumping sites off the refuge. These sites can use be found at R.V. or trailer parks.

Hunting

All hunting on the refuge must be in accordance with Arizona Game & Fish Department rules and regulations. All bighorn sheep hunters must obtain a refuge-issued Special Use Permit. Contact the refuge, visit our website, or consult our refuge hunt brochure for more information about hunting on CPNWR.

Water

There are no sources of safe drinking water on the refuge. You must bring your own water supply. A minimum of two gallons per person per day with a two-day reserve is recommended.

Fires and Firewood

Charcoal or propane stoves are recommended for use on the refuge in order to preserve the natural appearance of campsites. However, wood fires are permissible by adhering to the following rules:

- Only allowed at designated campsites. See refuge map.
- Visitors must bring their own wood. Due to the scarcity of wood and wildlife habitat, the collection of firewood or vegetation of any kind is prohibited, with the exception of backcountry hikers. Backcountry hikers may use dead and down wood for campfires outside of designated campsites, provided that proper fire safety protocol is followed.
- Use established fire rings or fire grates. Do not create new fire rings. Before leaving camp make sure the fire is out and cold.

Treasure Hunting/Geocaching

The use of metal detectors or the excavation or removal of antiques or archeological artifacts is prohibited. Geocaching or leaving any personal property is expressly prohibited on all national wildlife refuges.

Ordnance

In the past, CPNWR was used by the military as a gunnery and bombing range. Many types of ordnance still remain. If you encounter an ordnance, leave it alone. Do not touch ordnances.

Abandoned Mines and Wells

Abandoned mines and well shafts are dangerous and closed to the public. Mines provide excellent habitat for several bat species. Both for your safety and the wellbeing of these species, please avoid mine and well sites.

Please contact the refuge with any further questions or inquiries about public use regulations.

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge

1611 North 2nd Avenue
Ajo, Arizona 85321
(502) 387-6483



Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge is home to over 275 species of wildlife, as well as nearly 400 species of plants. Please help protect this fragile desert ecosystem by adhering to all public use rules and regulations. Photo: Renee Tressler/USFWS

Cover Photo: Renee Tressler/USFWS

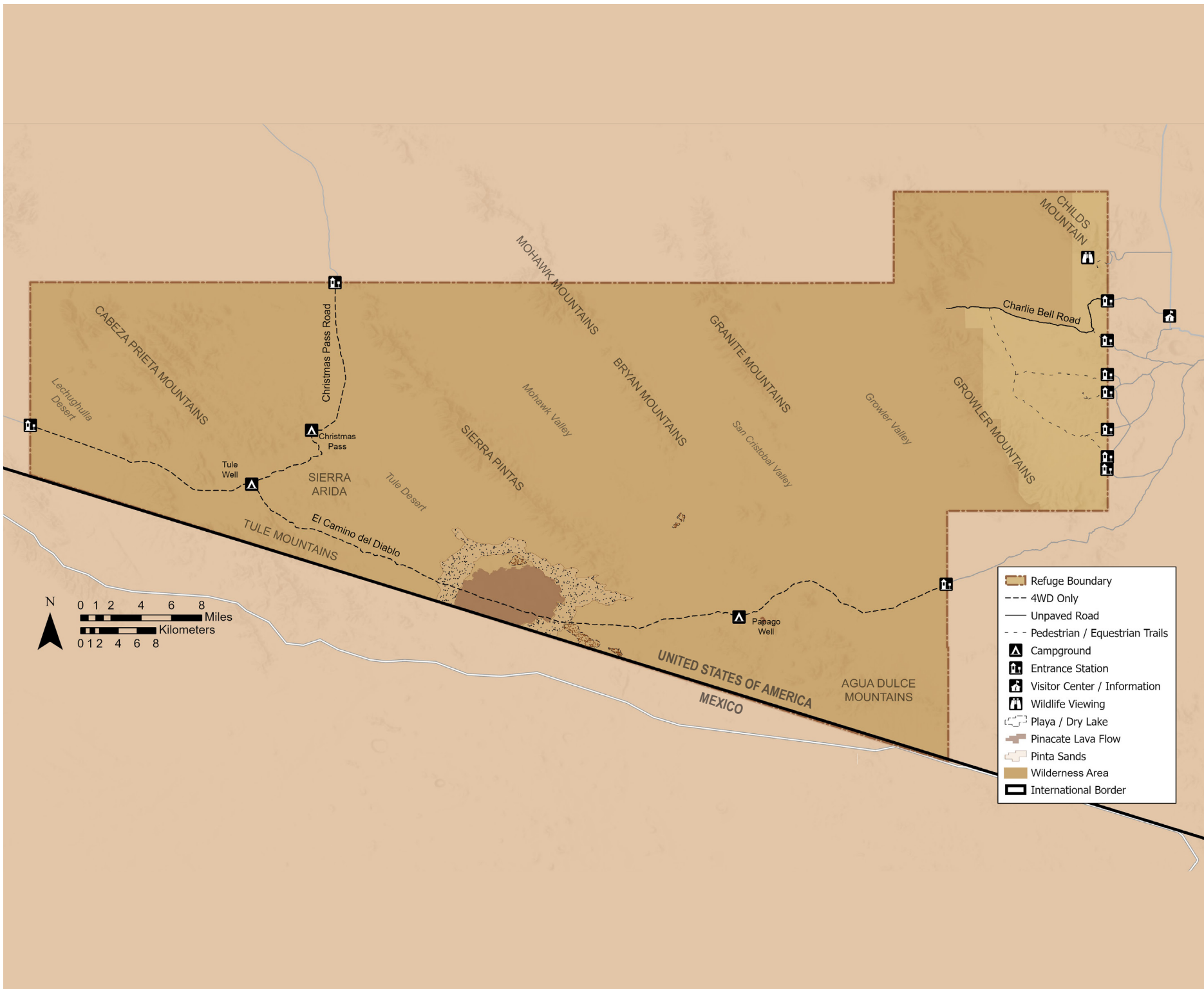
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Cabeza Prieta

National Wildlife Refuge

Map & Public Use Information





Roads and Vehicles

Only street-legal motorcycles and street-legal off-highway vehicles (OHVs), as defined by Arizona state law, are allowed on Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

Motorcycles and OHVs must be fitted with an 80 square inch high-visibility flag that extends a minimum of eight (8) feet above ground surface.

All vehicles (including motorcycles and OHVs) must stay on public roads (see refuge map). Vehicle travel on any other roads, trails, or off-road is prohibited.

All public use roads are primitive, unpaved and minimally maintained. Non-OHVs must be high clearance and four-wheel drive to use El Camino del Diablo and Christmas Pass roads. Two-wheel drive vehicles with high clearance may use Charlie Bell Road.

If a road is impassible due to flooding, mud, deep sand or a lawful closure, do not drive off-road to circumnavigate such areas. For this reason, it is best to be prepared with enough fuel for unexpected turn backs. Visitors should contact the visitor center for the latest travel and safety information.

Visitors should be aware of their surroundings, including other vehicular traffic, at all times. Law enforcement traffic may travel at high speeds in the course of duty.

If there are more than four vehicles in your group, contact the refuge. A Special Use Permit may be required.

There are no services or facilities on CPNWR. This includes fuel, restrooms, and cell service.

Horseback

Pack and saddle stock are allowed under a Special Use Permit. Contact the refuge for more information.

Leave No Trace

Practice an outdoor ethic to sustain a healthy, vibrant refuge and other public lands for all people to enjoy now and into the future.

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors