

# Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge

## Photography Navigation Guide



Photo by  
Rick Cantu

### 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.

The Refuge also provides many recreational opportunities. Bird and wildlife observation, an auto tour, hiking trails, fishing, hunting, and boating (April through September only) are examples of available activities. Hagerman is open from sunrise to sunset, and there is no entrance fee.

Weather in north Texas is variable. Extremes of temperature occur in winter and summer, while more moderate temperatures occur in spring and fall.

### 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 ahead 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 ahead 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 ahead 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:

<http://www.friendsofhagerman.com/map.asp>

### 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.

### **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.

### **What to Bring**

In terms of photographic equipment, bring your favorite:

- camera
- lens (suggested focal length is 300-600 mm)
- tri/monopod
- beanbag (optional, but helpful if you're planning to do the auto tour first)
- 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, Bluebonnets, Evening Primrose, and Indian Blanket. In the summer, Black-eyed Susan, Sunflowers, American Basketflower, Butterfly Weed, Coneflower,

Saw-leaf Daisy, Plains Coreopsis, Mexican Hat, Compassplant and Bee Balm are common sights.



Butterflies: Look for Funereal Dusky Wing, American Snout, Question Mark, Common White, Checkerspot, Tawny Emperor, Viceroy, 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:

<http://friendsofhagerman.com/news.asp?cat=13#articles>

## **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:

<http://friendsofhagerman.com/news.asp?cat=2&id=306>

### **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 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, Mute Swans
- Amphibians: Frogs
- Reptiles: Snakes, lizards, turtles
- Insects: Butterflies, dragonflies
- Wildflowers

## 2. Meyers Branch Unit:

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



### Old Trains and Terry Lane Trail

The Meyers Branch Unit also contains the Old Trains and Terry Lane 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 and 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 are bobcats and fox.

Photo by



Carol Pfeiffer

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.

#### **Haller's Haven Trail**

In the Goode Day Use area, Haller's Haven Trail begins at the yellow gate. 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 walk 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 lot.

#### **4. Harris Creek Unit**

The Harris Creek Trail is just south of the Refuge Headquarters. A wood rail fence defines the small parking area and trail head.

Photo



Laurie

Sheppard

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.

#### **5. Big Mineral Unit**

##### **Crow Hill Trail**

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 ¾ 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 ½ 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.



Photo by Mike Chiles

### **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.



Photo by USFWS

The two mile marker is Meadow Pond. Raptors, wading birds, and feral hogs may be seen.

The three mile marker is where the old and new railroad tracks meet.

## **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.

### **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, fox, deer, and bobcats also inhabit this area. This is a heavily wooded area so expect to see and hear songbirds.

## **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**

The Friends of Hagerman site has links to several local establishments for lodging. Please visit <http://friendsofhagerman.com/links.asp?cat=lodging> to find out more information.

### **Local Resources**

Binoculars are available for checkout at the Refuge Headquarters/Visitor Center.

### **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.com/links.asp?cat=links>

### **Contact Us**

The phone number for the Refuge Headquarters/Visitor Center is 903.786.2826.

If you have further questions, please send them to [friendsofhagerman@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhagerman@gmail.com).

If you have questions about the Friends of Hagerman Photo Club, please send them to [fohphotoclub@gmail.com](mailto:fohphotoclub@gmail.com).