



# Visitor Use and Regulations

## *Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge*

### Visitor Regulations

Each visitor 18 years old and older must have a current Visitor Permit. One permit pertaining to the vehicle must be displayed in such a manner that it is visible to Law Enforcement, when the vehicle is unattended. Each visitor will keep a permit with them when away from the vehicle. Each permitted visitor must register at one of the entry kiosk prior to entering the wildlife refuge.

### Roads and Vehicles

The following stipulations apply to all vehicles that access the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

*All vehicles* (including motorcycles and ATVs) must stay on public use roads which include only the El Camino del Diablo, Christmas Pass, and Charlie Bell roads (see map). **All other roads and trails are to be considered closed and off-limits.** All vehicle operators are required to have proof of *insurance* (ARS§28-4142A) and a current registration (from the state the vehicle is domiciled at.) Travel into wilderness is not permitted by motorized vehicles or mechanized transportation, including bicycles.

There are *no services* on the CPNWR. Therefore, non-OHV vehicles such as SUVs and pickup trucks must be four-wheel drive with a high clearance to use the El Camino del Diablo and Christmas Pass roads. All-Wheel drive cars are not allowed as they do not have the clearance necessary to safely navigate the above named roads. Two-wheel drive vehicles with high clearance may use the *Charlie Bell Road*.

Vehicles are permitted to be parked up to 100 feet from the center line of the road, however, if feasible, they must be parked within an existing disturbed area.

All visitors to the refuge are reminded that the speed limit is 25 mph (and will be strictly enforced) and that they should be vigilant to their surroundings and other vehicle traffic as law enforcement officers may occasionally exceed the speed limit while in pursuit of illegal border crossers.

Only street-legal motorcycles and street-legal all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), as defined by Arizona state law, are allowed on the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. To meet Arizona State law requirements to be street-legal, such vehicles must have:

- Brakes adequate to stop and hold the vehicle (ARS§28-1179A.1).
- Muffler or noise dissipative device that prevents sound above 96 decibels during prescribed stationary sound testing (ARS§28-1179A.3).
- Headlights and taillights (ARS§28-1179A.2).
- Brake light and at least one red rear re-reflector (if taillight does not reflect) (ARS§28-927).
- License plate securely fastened to the rear of the OHV and clearly visible (ARS§28-2512D.1&2).
- License plate light (ARS§28-925C).
- Rearview mirror (ARS§28-964B).
- Seat and footrests for the operator and passenger if vehicle is designed to carry a passenger (ARS§28-964B).
- Spark Arrestor that is USDA approved (ARS§28-1179A.4).
- Horn audible from a distance of at least 200 feet (ARS§28-954).

In addition to the above requirements, the State requires that *eye protection* be worn when operating vehicles not equipped with a windshield (ARS§28-964A) and that a *helmet* that is properly fitted, fastened and has a USDOT safety rating for those under 18 who ride on an OHV (ARS§28-1179B). **Motorcycles and ATVs must be fitted with a mast displaying an 80 square inch orange flag that extends a minimum of eight (8) feet above the ground surface.**

Three-fourths of the wildlife refuge is closed annually from **March 15th to July 15th** for the Sonoran pronghorn fawning season. Open areas include the western boundary of the refuge (south of Wellton, AZ,) to Tule Well. From Tule Well east along the El Camino Del Diablo, the road is open for approximately 4 miles. From Tule Well northeast along Christmas Pass the road is open for approximately 5 miles. See map for details.

If there are five or more vehicles in your group, you must apply for a Special Use Permit prior to entering the refuge. The SUP issuant is at the discretion of the refuge manager.

Groups of less than five vehicles, including ATV's and motorcycles, which are part of a larger, organized event, are subject to the same Special Use Permit requirements.

If a road is impassable due to flooding, mud, deep sand or a lawful closure, do not drive off-road to circumvent such areas. For this reason it is best to be prepared with enough fuel for unexpected turn-backs.

### Unexploded Ordinance

The military has used these areas as gunnery and bombing ranges since World War II. Many types of ordinance remain, some buried and some on the surface. If you encounter unexploded ordinance:

- Leave it alone— for your safety, **DO NOT TOUCH**
- Note its location. Report location to proper agency staff (see telephone numbers on front of map).

### Abandoned Mines and Wells

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

## Wildlife Protection

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

## Hunting

Desert bighorn sheep hunting is the only hunting activity permitted on the refuge and is in accordance with Arizona Game & Fish rules and regulations. All hunters must obtain a refuge-issued Special Use Permit. Contact the CPNWR for additional information.

## Water

There are *no* sources of safe drinking water on the wildlife refuge. To protect your health and preserve valuable water sources for wildlife, you must bring your own water supply. A minimum of 2 gallons per person per day with a 2-day reserve is recommended.

## Fires and Firewood

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

- Wood fires are allowed at the designated primitive campsites at *Papago Well, Tule Well and Christmas Pass*. Visitors must bring their own wood into the refuge. It must be readily identified as wood not native to the refuge. Wood such as pine, juniper, or construction lumber is appropriate wood to bring into the refuge. Do not use wood with any metal hardware attached to it, such as hinges or nails. *Due to the scarcity of wood and valuable wildlife habitat, the collection of firewood or vegetation of any kind is prohibited within the Cabeza Prieta NWR with the exception of back-country hikers.* They may use dead and down wood for campfires.

- Use established fire rings or fire grates at each site listed above. Some sites have more than one fire ring or grate in order to accommodate multiple visitors. Do not create new fire rings. After you are done with the campsite, make sure the fire is out and cold and take any trash with you that did not burn completely. You may leave extra wood at the campsite.

- All other undesignated camping sites must use charcoal or propane stoves.

## Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying fire-arms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of Federal, State and Local laws. Target shooting or the discharge of a weapon is strictly prohibited except for legally licensed and permitted hunters while actively hunting during the hunt season.

## Camping

Visitors are encouraged to camp at one of the designated unimproved camp grounds. Campsites on the refuge cannot be reserved. When you break camp, as much as possible, remove all traces of human visitation. This practice ensures a pleasant camping experience for all visitors. Camping is limited to 14 days within any given 28-day period. No camping is allowed within ¼ mile of any game water source.

When camping or parked along the public roads, vehicles must be parked within 50 feet of the *center line of the road*.

Take all trash with you. There are no cleanup crews to clean the campgrounds. Practice "Pack it in, Pack it out."

Pack and saddle stock are allowed into the wilderness, subject to a *Special Use Permit*. Contact the refuge office for further guidelines on the use of pack and saddle animals prior to taking them onto the wildlife refuge.

## Garbage and Waste

Pack out all garbage and waste products. 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. Disposal of portable toilet contents must be done at proper sites off the wildlife refuge.

## Treasure Hunting/Geocaching

Excavation or removal of antiques or archeological and paleontological artifacts is prohibited. Furthermore, the use of metal detectors for any reason is also prohibited due to the risk of setting off unexploded ordinances. Geocaching or the leaving of any personal property is expressly prohibited in any national wildlife refuge.

Your visit to the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge should be one that will bring fond memories for years to come.

To help insure a memorable trip, the Visitor Rules and Regulations are for visitor safety and well being, as well as preserving the integrity of the wildlife refuge for all future generations.

Visitors are encouraged to contact the refuge visitor center for the latest travel and safety information including sensitive wildlife areas and other information.

## Permit-Issuing Agencies

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge  
1611 North 2nd Avenue  
Ajo, Arizona 85321  
520/387-6483  
[www.southwest.fws.gov/refuges](http://www.southwest.fws.gov/refuges)

Bureau of Land Management  
Phoenix Field Office  
21605 North 7th Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85027  
626/580-5500  
[www.az.blm.gov](http://www.az.blm.gov)

Luke Air Force Base  
Gila Bend Auxiliary Field  
Security Operations Building 300  
Gila Bend, Arizona 85337  
928/683-6200 or 623/856-5241  
[www.luke.af.mil/rmo.visiting.html](http://www.luke.af.mil/rmo.visiting.html)

U.S. Marine Corps Air Station  
Range Management Department  
Main Gate MCAS, P.O. Box 99160  
Yuma, Arizona 85369-9160  
928/269-7150  
[www.yuma.usmc.mil](http://www.yuma.usmc.mil)

In case of an emergency, contact the BLM Interagency Dispatch at 800/637-9152. Thank you for helping to preserve the natural resources by staying on the public-use roads.

**Illegal entry and drug smuggling activities are common in the region. Be aware of your surroundings. Do not travel alone or approach suspicious people or activities. If you see suspicious activity, leave the area and report it as soon as possible to the nearest law enforcement agency.**