

SIPE

White Mountain WILDLIFE AREA

Discover Nature Up Close



Welcome to the Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area

What is Sipe?

Purchased through a partnership of public and private funds in 1993, the 1,362-acre Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area reflects Arizona's concerns for wildlife of all kinds. Surrounded by the Apache National Forest, eagles, osprey, deer, elk, turkey, antelope, waterfowl, and much more can be observed here at varying times throughout the year.

Since its acquisition, the Arizona Game and Fish Department has steadily enhanced habitat values of the property and attractions for visitors. A small visitor center, a series of hiking trails, complete with interpretive signage and wildlife viewing sites, and a day-use picnic area offer the public the opportunity to learn more about Arizona's unique wildlife and their habitat needs.

Where is Sipe?

The Sipe Wildlife Area lies in the shadow of historically famous Escudilla Mountain in eastern Arizona, a few miles southeast of the towns of Eagar and Springerville. Take Highway 191/180 south toward Alpine; you'll see the turnoff signs on top of a mesa two miles out of Eagar. Follow the improved dirt road five miles to the property. Many of the facilities are barrier-free, and there is no entrance fee to the wildlife area or visitor center.

Visiting the wildlife area

Park your car at one of two parking areas. You are welcome to walk, bicycle, or horseback ride on the property. The easiest way to get around is to follow the hiking trails. They'll take you to wetlands, meadows, old homesteads, and scenic vistas.

Hunting is allowed on the property. Other recreational opportunities include wildlife viewing and photography, picnicking, and observation of historic and prehistoric cultural sites.

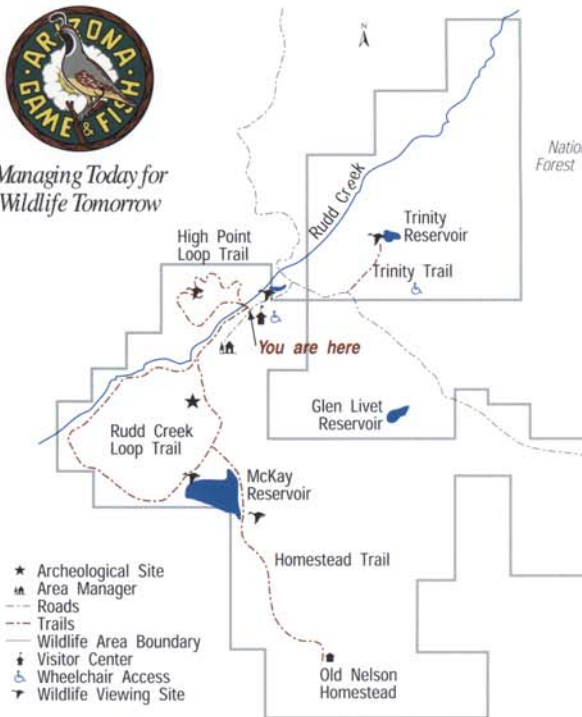
Preserving the legacy

To maintain the ecological integrity and recreation opportunities of the Sipe Wildlife Area, the Game and Fish Department requests that you explore the area on its own terms. Make demands on yourself, not the land. Help ensure that the qualities you experience at the wildlife area will be there for those who follow.

- Please obey all posted regulations and closures.
- Please keep pets on leash.
- Please do not chase, harass, or feed wildlife.
- To preserve these important habitats for wildlife on the property, motorized vehicle access is restricted to improved, open roadways and parking areas.
- The wildlife area is open to the take of wildlife during regulated seasons. However, discharge of a firearm within 1/4 mile radius of any building is prohibited.
- Please use *your* wildlife area responsibly and keep clean. Leave no trace of your presence; pack out what you pack in.
- Please respect the rights of other visitors as well.



Managing Today for
Wildlife Tomorrow



When can wildlife be best observed?

WINTER — While elk can be seen throughout the year, winter is the best time, especially after a hard snow. Winter is also the time to see bald eagles around the reservoirs. Look for them perched in snags along the rimrock of mesas. If there's open water, you'll usually find a variety of waterfowl on the reservoirs.

SPRING AND AUTUMN — The best time for waterfowl, however, is during the migration periods of spring and fall. Other migratory birds, such as sandpipers and white-faced ibis, can also be seen at this time around the wetlands and reservoirs. Look to the sky for ospreys, kestrels, hawks, eagles, and, if you're lucky, a rare peregrine falcon. Autumn is also the time to see and hear elk during their annual rut or breeding season. If you've never heard the bugle of a bull elk in the wild, you've missed one of nature's most awesome sounds.

SUMMER — While birds are present all year, there are seasonal variations. In summer, nesting birds include the rufous and broad-tailed hummingbird, Lewis' and acorn woodpeckers, and mountain bluebird. Other wildlife to look for are pronghorn antelope, mule deer, coyote, Merriam's turkey, ground squirrels, and elk.



Escudilla Mountain, Arizona's third highest point, stands watch over McKay Reservoir at Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area.

Ultimate wildlife watching and etiquette

Wildlife viewing is fun, offers a learning experience, and incorporates and demands ethical behavior. When watching wildlife, bear in mind that you are entering the animals' home and you should conduct yourself as a guest. The following are some tips from successful wildlife watchers.



The positive wildlife viewing experience - A good wildlife watcher slows down, is quiet and patient, and discovers a wild animal without altering the animal's behavior. As a result of this rewarding experience, the watcher gains a greater appreciation of the natural world about them. Remember to look above and below you, and look for small clues that wildlife is present, such as a burrow, track, or feather.

Enjoy wildlife from a distance - Wild animals should be allowed to forage for food, care for their young, and sleep without human disturbance. Use binoculars or telephoto lenses to view and photograph wildlife to avoid stressing them.

Watch at dawn and dusk - These are the times when wildlife species are most active and can be best seen. "Edge habitats," the area between two habitat types such as open meadow and trees, are good places to watch.

Use the right tools - A field guide, a pair of binoculars, and a comfy set of shoes are a good start. Wear natural colors, not whites, and quiet fabrics.



Don't feed wild animals - Feeding wildlife can put you and the animals in danger. Animals that receive "food rewards" just once may become aggressive towards humans. To protect people and property, these animals may need to be destroyed by wildlife managers. Animals used to human food may eat aluminum foil, plastics, or other wrappings. These can severely damage their digestive systems and may even cause death.



Children and wildlife - Wildlife, unlike zoo, farm, and captive animals, pose special dangers to children. Explain to them the differences between wild and domestic animals so they will know why it is important not to approach, touch, or feed wildlife. For their own safety, children should always be within close sight of guardians, avoid playing in or near dense cover, and refrain from squealing or making other animal-like noises while hiking or playing.

Your safety is your responsibility! - Never approach, crowd, or follow a wild animal. It may respond by charging. Don't put yourself, loved ones, or wild animals in danger. Stay away from newborn or young animals, and their nests or dens. Your presence could alarm a mother and could attract a predator.



Sipe Visitor Center.



Artifacts excavated from Rudd Creek Ruin.

Sipe offers a variety of wildlife viewing opportunities.

Protecting the values

The primary goals of this acquisition are to conserve sensitive wildlife species, such as the Little Colorado spinedace, a silvery, three-inch native fish, and to protect sensitive stream/riparian habitats along Rudd Creek, which flows through the wildlife area. The property features 175 acres of wetlands and reservoirs, with significant water rights used to maintain water levels in Rudd Creek and the reservoirs. The area is used year-round by mule deer and antelope that graze its pastures and uplands, and it provides valuable winter range for hundreds of elk. All in all, the area contains diverse, quality habitats which helps conserve Arizona's wildlife heritage.



A conservation legacy

Who paid for the Sipe Wildlife Area? Arizona's Heritage Fund dollars paid for most of the acquisition costs. The Heritage Fund, an Arizona-voter initiative passed in 1990, annually allocates lottery dollars toward the conservation of Arizona's wildlife and their habitats, especially those that are of special concern.

Arizona's waterfowl hunters, through the Department's Waterfowl Conservation Fund, also helped pay for Sipe through their purchase of waterfowl stamps and art prints.

Completing the property costs were Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration dollars generated by hunters. These funds come from a national tax on firearms and ammunition.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, a sportsmen's group active in elk conservation, purchased the 18,000-acre grazing lease associated with the Sipe property. They waived the lease back to the U.S. Forest Service under an agreement that would emphasize management for wildlife habitat on this leased land.



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