

## Amateur Radio Station

An empty rectangular box with a black border, likely intended for a signature or name.

Operations Manual – Wildlife Areas

## OPERATIONS MANUAL – WILDLIFE AREAS

**You must obtain permission from the Refuge Manager to operate within the boundaries of an NWR.**

**Enter refuges or habitats at your own risk. Following the guidelines set forth in this manual does not guarantee your safety, the safety of others, or compliance with the terms of the Refuge Manager's authorization for your operation. Risks may include animals, reptiles, insects, terrain features and/or residuals of an area's former military or industrial use. Consult with the Refuge Manager before your operation.**

### Requirements for Operators & Volunteers

Your presence within a wildlife refuge or other habitat is at all times subject to the Refuge Manager's authorization as well as stipulations issued by the FCC licensee. At a minimum, the requirements for your operation are:

1. Operate only in areas and within the time frame, and in the manner authorized.
2. Keep noise and movement to a minimum.
3. Wear headphones or adjust equipment volume to the lowest setting.
4. Do not approach, disturb or feed wildlife.
5. Respect others who are viewing wildlife.
6. Remove all evidence of your presence in the refuge or wildlife area.
7. Leave the grounds as the same or in better condition than you found them.
8. Complete the *Wildlife Area Stewardship Checklist* at the close of your operation.

You may not alter your operation in any way unless expressly directed to make such changes by the Refuge Manager or his/her official representative(s). You may suspend or terminate the operation at your discretion for reasons related to safety or stewardship.

If a visitor suggests a change, note the suggestion and either inform the Refuge Manager at your convenience or refer the visitor to the Refuge Manager. You may not make any changes based solely on a visitor suggestion no matter how well intentioned. The *Contact List* for your operation will include the names and telephone numbers needed to inquire about making changes in your operation.

## Goals

The goals for your operation include maintaining a passive presence in wildlife areas. Photographers and others have developed guidelines for passive enjoyment of wildlife areas that have been adapted for Amateur Radio as set forth below. This manual may be updated from time to time. Please ensure that you have the latest revision.

## Guidelines

These guidelines are subject to the refuge or wildlife area Refuge Manager's specifications for your operation.

1. Blend in. Wear natural colors and unscented lotions. When possible, wear clothing that doesn't rustle.
2. Stay within the designated perimeter. You probably are too close to wildlife if animals are looking at you with head up and ears pointed toward you or are jumpy when you move or make a noise. If you see these signs, sit quietly or slowly move away until the behavior changes. Be especially sensitive to adults with young.
3. Keep movement and noise to a minimum. Your movements should be slow, smooth and steady. If you must advance, take a roundabout route; never move directly toward an animal. Avert your gaze as animals may interpret a direct stare as a threat. If possible, allow animals to keep you in view; do not surprise them. Avoid animals that behave strangely or aggressively. They may be ill.
4. Don't feed wildlife. Let animals eat their natural foods. Animals may become conditioned to handouts, eventually lose their fear of people and/or vehicles. This may put them, and you, into potentially dangerous situations.
5. Respect our public lands. Plants and the landscape are important parts of wildlife habitat. Please do not damage or remove them. Stay on designated trails or roads.
6. Take time to enjoy your surroundings. Remember to observe animals from a safe distance. Keep your distance and use binoculars or scopes to view wildlife. This allows you to observe animals without disturbing them.
7. Keep pets on a leash at all times. Pets can harm wildlife, and reduce viewing opportunities.

## On Air

1. Connect those you contact with the wildlife in a positive way.
2. Use the name of the refuge or wildlife area. Describe its location, history and features, including any wildlife you see or hear. Reference QSL route, web sites, etc.

## Safety

1. Wear long pants and old tennis shoes that have good treads and cover your entire foot.
2. Avoid tall grass (snakes, ticks, etc.) Ask the Refuge Manager or ranger about other hazards.
3. Learn to recognize noxious plants like poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. Examples:



Poison Ivy



Poison Oak



Poison Sumac

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The information in this manual includes guidelines set forth in the following reference works: *Providing Positive Wildlife Viewing Experiences – A Practical Handbook*, by Deborah Richie Oberbillig (Colo. Div. Of Wildlife, March 2000); *Watchable Wildlife*, California Department of Fish and Game; *Watchable Wildlife*, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and *British Columbia Wildlife Watch*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.