

spring and fall migration periods. Bald eagles, ferruginous hawks, and rough-legged hawks use the area for winter-feeding.

Passerine birds regularly nesting in or near the area include common yellowthroats, horned larks, marsh wrens, red-winged blackbirds, Savannah sparrows and song sparrows. Uncommon passerine birds documented on the area include blue grosbeak, ash-throated flycatcher, black phoebe, and Western bluebird.

FISH RESOURCES

Throughout the ponds, ditches and sloughs of the MVWMA, populations of sportfish and nongame fish are present. Largemouth bass are the most sought-after game species on the area during the late spring and summer and are found throughout the area. Rainbow trout, brown trout, bowcutt, and tiger have been regularly stocked for recreational fishing in Hinkson Slough and North Pond. Channel catfish, bullhead catfish and bluegill are also found throughout most of the area. The majority of nongame fish species inhabit the Walker River. Common carp are a non-native species found throughout the area and can grow to large sizes. Sterile grass carp have been introduced to North Pond and Hinkson Slough in an effort to reduce excessive vegetation. Tui chub, Lahontan reaside shiner, and Tahoe sucker, are some of the native fishes found on the area.

WATER RESOURCES

The Walker River is the most important water source for MVWMA. The East and West forks of the Walker River originate in the Sierra Nevada, come together in Mason Valley, and empty into Walker Lake, a deep desert lake of increasing salinity. Because precipitation and snowpack vary tremendously from year to year, annual flows in the river are highly variable and the actual amount of water delivered to the MVWMA varies considerably. MVWMA also has numerous wells that draw upon underground water supplies for crop and wetlands irrigation, and supply water for the hatchery operation and facilities.

NDOW has also utilized a variety of alternative water supplies to support wetlands on MVWMA. The Mason Valley Fish Hatchery provides about 5,500 acre-feet of water which is available for reuse on MVWMA for wetland enhancement. In addition, secondarily treated effluent is received via pipeline from the City of Yerington Municipal Wastewater Treatment and retained in Cinnamon Pond. Another alternative water source on the MVWMA is the cooling pond water which is piped from the adjacent Fort Churchill Generating Station operated by NV Energy, NDOW, NV Energy, and Ducks Unlimited jointly sponsored the North Pond Pipeline Project to create and enhance a diversity of wetland habitat types.

Water for the MVWMA is obtained primarily from the Walker River via the Walker River Irrigation District's water distribution system with an irrigation season from March 1 to November 1. Upon entering the WMA, water is routed through a series of canals which supply water to various ponds. Proper water management is the key to the success of the operation of MVWMA. Water level management is probably the single most important technique in controlling undesirable vegetation and promoting desirable vegetation for wildlife.



AREA MANAGEMENT

FARMING

Of the almost 18,000 acres which makes up the MVWMA, NDOW cooperatively farms about 900 acres to enhance and increase wildlife habitat by growing specific grain and hay crops annually. Farming includes production of wheat, barley, corn, sorghum and other grain crops as well as alfalfa hay or other leguminous cover type crops of equal value to wildlife. Many species of wildlife have adapted to the croplands on MVWMA including doves, waterfowl, deer, turkeys and small mammals.

GRAZING

At the MVWMA, carefully regulated grazing is used as a management tool to remove decadent vegetation, stimulate green-up, provide succulent feed, and open overgrown areas for resting and feeding by waterfowl and other wildlife.

PRESCRIBED BURNING

Area management includes prescribed burning to improve habitat conditions for resting, nesting and feeding waterfowl and other wildlife. Fire removes excess litter and optimizes forage production. Prescribed burns on the management area are typically done in late winter and spring.

HERBICIDE SPRAYING

Application of herbicides is an effective method to control undesirable vegetation. Aerial spraying is conducted annually to open stands of cattail and hardstem bulrush to make wetlands more desirable for waterfowl and other wetland species.

INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL

The invasion of non-native plants has become a major threat to the native habitats on MVWMA. Controlling these invaders is a difficult and time-consuming management concern. The competitive nature of these plants, and their ability to spread, negatively impacts the natural plant diversity and ultimately the diversity of animals on MVWMA. Problematic invasive species on MVWMA include tamarisk, tall whitetop and hoary cress.

FISH MANAGEMENT

Fish population sampling is conducted regularly to assess the general health and productivity of fish populations on the MVWMA. In late summer, electro-fishing techniques and/or beach seines are used to assess species composition, abundance, age class structure and growth rates which help biologists determine the effectiveness of management strategies such as stocking rates, fish introductions, and water management.

PUBLIC USE

Hunting and fishing are the major public use activities on the area. Road counters, bag checks, check stations, creel censuses, angler drop box surveys and the statewide hunter and angler questionnaires are used to estimate hunter use and harvest and to estimate angler use and catch rates.

HUNTING

Waterfowl hunting is the major hunting activity on MVWMA. During the waterfowl hunting season, hunting is allowed only on Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays and specified state holidays. Check stations are operated periodically during waterfowl, upland game and deer seasons.

UPLAND GAME HUNTING

Turkey hunting is an extremely popular form of upland bird hunting at MVWMA with participants being selected through a drawing process. The first Rio Grande turkey season in Nevada began in the spring of 1991. Introduction of the wild turkey to MVWMA has provided considerable recreational opportunity to Nevada's sportsmen. Quail hunting is also very popular on the area although hunting is very difficult due to the heavy vegetative cover. Rabbit harvest is very light on MVWMA and is probably incidental to the pursuit of other game.

BIG GAME HUNTING

MVWMA is located within NDOW's Unit 203 of Management Area 20. Archers are normally provided a 28-day season in August. Tagholders wishing to hunt on the area in November must only hunt on specified hunt days because the



deer season runs simultaneously with the waterfowl season. During this time, high-powered rifles are not allowed in Smith and Mason valleys due to safety reasons, so tag holders usually employ shotguns with slugs.

FISHING

The fishing season at MVWMA typically runs from the second Saturday in February through September 30th. There are four main fishable waters on the area including Hinkson Slough and Bass, Crappie and North ponds. All of these waters have largemouth bass populations, while North Pond and Hinkson Slough also have productive trout populations. Other fishable waters within or near MVWMA include the Walker River and the eastside wetland ponds which are open to fishing from August 16th to September 30th each year. The Fort Churchill Cooling Pond, which is owned by NV Energy just off the north boundary of the management area, is open to fishing during the same period as the management area. This pond is stocked with channel catfish and trout but also hosts a nice largemouth bass population. Kuenzli Pond and Hatchery Outponds 1, 2 and 3 are open to fishing the first Saturday in May from 8am to sunset. The highly productive fisheries resources on the MVWMA provide the potential for trophy largemouth bass and trout angling, therefore, special regulations regarding size limits and harvest are in place to maximize this opportunity. Anglers are encouraged to consult NDOW's fishing guide for up-to-date regulations. Special regulations regarding size limits and harvest are in place to maximize fisheries health.

WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATION

Wildlife observation, sightseeing, photography, horseback riding, camping, educational activities, picnicking, and hiking are some of the wildlife-related activities available on MVWMA.

The Mason Valley Fish Hatchery, which produces trout for all of northwestern Nevada and numerous other waters statewide, is located within the boundaries of the management area. Visitors are encouraged to tour the hatchery between the hours of 7:30 am and 4:30 pm seven days a week. Aquatic invasive species are of particular concern for the hatchery therefore visitors are encouraged to obey posted signage and decontamination procedures.

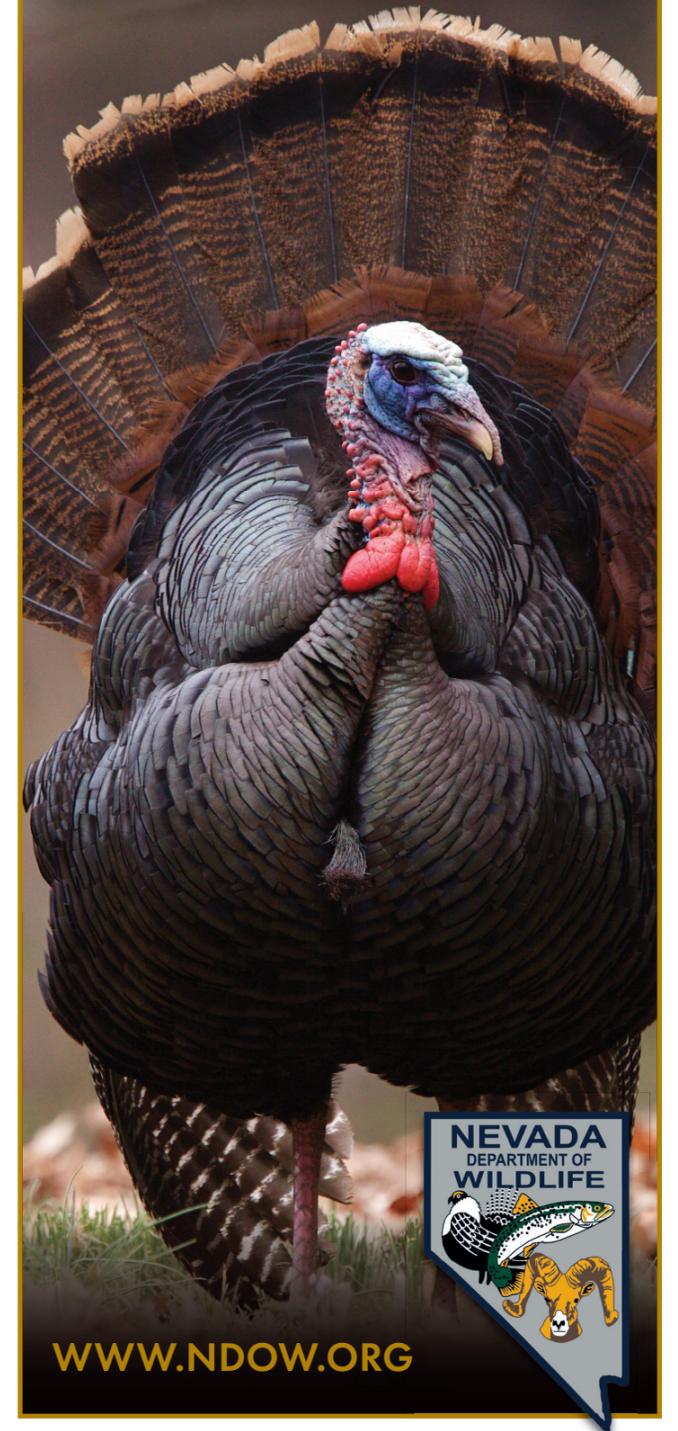
There are two Primitive campgrounds on the MVWMA. The Sandridge campground is located west of the hatchery and there is one located west of North Pond. There is no fee for camping on the area. Camping is allowed at the sites for up to eight days. Boats are frequently used on the MVWMA by anglers and waterfowl hunters. There are seasonal restrictions on boating in many waters of the MVWMA so boaters are encouraged to consult NDOW's fishing guide for boating restrictions.

Roads throughout the area provide excellent viewing of wetland-dependent and upland wildlife.

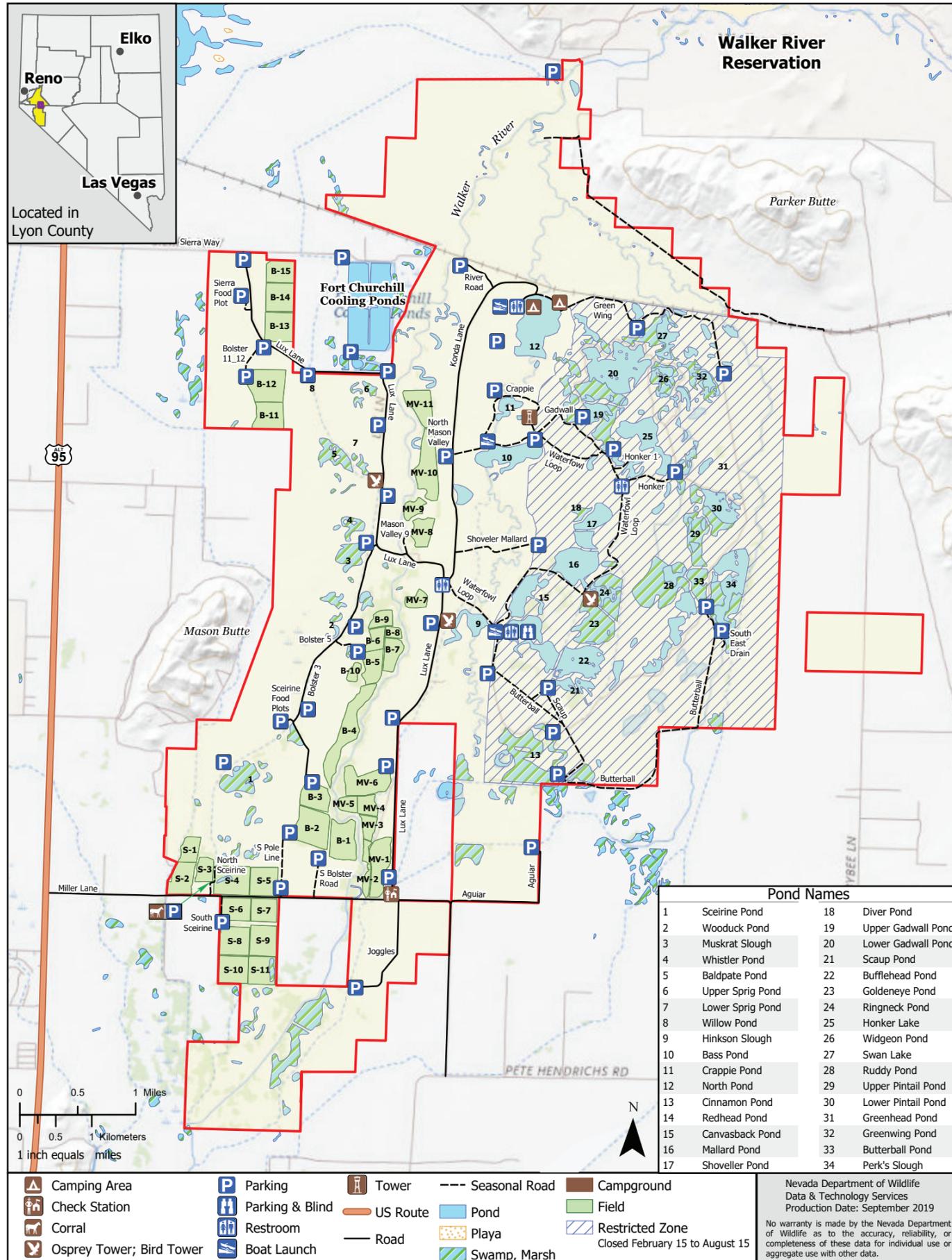
GETTING THERE

- From Reno take I-80 west to USA Parkway, then take U.S. Alt. 95 south from Silver Springs. The main entrance to the area is about seven miles north of Yerington, off Miller Lane with a second public entrance available off Sierra Way.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA MASON VALLEY



WWW.NDOW.ORG



INTRODUCTION

The Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area (MVWMA) is located in Mason Valley, Lyon County, Nevada. The area is located about 70 miles southeast of Reno via Interstate 80, USA Parkway and U.S. Alternate 95. The main entrance to the area is about seven miles north of Yerington.

Before European settlement, the Paiute tribe of Native Americans inhabited Mason Valley. N. H. A. Mason, for whom Mason Valley was named, discovered the value of the valley for grazing while driving cattle to California and built the first house in Mason Valley in 1860. In the early 1900s, the Mason Valley Ranch was owned by Miller and Lux and the Pacific Livestock Company, followed by the Antelope Valley Land and Cattle Company. The Nevada Department of Fish and Game recognized the wildlife potential of the property and purchased it from the Wray Estate in 1955 for the creation of the MVWMA. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has since purchased additional surrounding properties and the area now totals approximately 18,000 acres.

HABITAT TYPES

From desert shrub lands to wet meadows and riparian corridors, the habitats of the MVWMA support an abundance of fish and wildlife species that contribute significantly to the biological diversity of western Nevada. Wetlands on MVWMA include pond and reservoir, fresh emergent wetland and wet meadow habitat types. The riverine habitat type consists of the Walker River riparian corridor, which has an extensive shoreline meandering through the area. The desert riparian habitat includes the entire floodplain of the river. The pond and reservoir habitat type includes open water habitats such as North Pond Reservoir, Bass Pond, Crappie Pond, and Hinkson Slough. The deep-water areas provide habitat for fish, and feeding areas for osprey, loons, and pelicans. Shallow littoral zones of the reservoir provide feeding areas for waterfowl and shorebirds. Alkali desert scrub is an upland plant community that is the most extensive on MVWMA and across Nevada.

WILDLIFE AND FISH

The fauna of MVWMA is extremely diverse due to the mosaic of habitat types. The Walker River system is dynamic with high and low flows. NDOW's efforts to develop wetland habitats are the result of optimizing available water. The exceptional diversity, in such a relatively small area, emphasizes the biological importance of the area.

WATERFOWL

Over 21 species of ducks have been recorded on MVWMA—the most common species being mallard, gadwall, northern pintail, green-winged teal, redhead,

ruddy ducks, ring-necked ducks and canvasback. Duck populations generally reach their highest numbers in October and early November and again in March and early April. Up to 12 species of ducks breed and raise their young on the area. The peak of hatch takes place between the first of June and the last of July.

Canada geese are the most common geese in the area and can be observed during all months of the year. Occasionally, snow geese and greater white-fronted geese are also observed during the winter months, but their numbers are usually low. Tundra swans generally use the area from November through April. Swans are normally found on the larger ponds including North and Pintail ponds, Perk Slough, and Swan and Honker lakes.

UPLAND GAME AND MAMMALS

California quail are found in brushland and riparian habitat types on MVWMA. Rio Grande turkeys were introduced on MVWMA in 1987, marking the first attempt by NDOW to establish this subspecies within the state. Mourning doves are common on the cultivated land and riparian habitat where cottonwood trees are abundant.

Mule deer on MVWMA prefer the brushland, agricultural and river riparian communities, particularly where habitat types come together forming an edge. Both the black-tailed jackrabbit and the cottontail are found throughout the area. Furbearers on MVWMA include bobcat, coyote, spotted skunk, striped skunk, long-tailed weasel, badger, kit fox and others. Mountain lion presence on the area is occasional.

NON-GAME WILDLIFE

Although the MVWMA was originally purchased and developed to preserve wetland habitat principally for waterfowl, many other wildlife species including wading birds, shorebirds, and raptors have benefited from this project.

Wading birds, including great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, egrets, and bitterns, utilize the emergent vegetation in the pond areas for nesting. White-faced ibis nesting occurs sporadically in small numbers. A rookery of great blue herons is present in large cottonwood trees on the southern boundary of the area.

Shorebirds found on MVWMA include American avocets, black-necked stilts, common snipe, sandpipers, yellowlegs, dowitchers, plovers, phalaropes and others. Other marsh dependent birds present on the area include eared grebes, pied-billed grebes, and Forster's terns. Emergent habitat provides suitable habitat for Virginia rails, soras, American bitterns, and least bitterns. MVWMA is utilized by a variety of raptors during all seasons. Nesting species of raptors on the area include great horned owl, short-eared owl, Cooper's hawk, red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, Swainson's hawk and northern harrier. The area typically supports a number of osprey pairs which nest and fledge offspring every year. Golden eagles and prairie falcons use the area primarily for feeding. Peregrine falcons and merlins use the area seasonally during the

