

## Columbia National Wildlife Refuge

Contributed by Administrator  
Last Updated Monday, 28 January 2008

Columbia is a scenic mixture of rugged cliffs, canyons, lakes and arid sagebrush grasslands. The favorable mixture of lakes and surrounding irrigated croplands, combined with generally mild winters and protection provided by the refuge, attracts large numbers of migrating and wintering mallard ducks, Canada geese, and other waterfowl, including tundra swans. In the spring and fall large numbers of Sandhill Cranes use the area as a resting stop on their migratory journeys.

With its location in the rain shadow of the Cascade Mountains, annual precipitation on the refuge averages less than 8 inches, creating an arid, desert environment. Most precipitation is received during the late fall, winter, and early spring when weather is generally cloudy and often foggy. When spring moisture is sufficient, refuge uplands bloom with a multitude of wildflowers. Spring days are sunny and windy. Summers are generally sunny, hot, and dry.

Located within the Columbia Basin of east-central Washington, Columbia is one of more than 500 national wildlife refuges in the nation's system, which totals more than 90 million acres of land and water. This refuge includes approximately 23,000 acres. For additional information go to: [www.fws.gov/columbiarefuge](http://www.fws.gov/columbiarefuge)

Photographs in this section are courtesy of Landscape Photographer Teri Pieper. [Click Here to visit Teri's Great Website](#)

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