

Sandhill Crane Viewing Blind - North River WMA



A free crane viewing blind is available for public use and is located at the North River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The blind is first-come, first-served. The trail to the blind will be ready for guests by March 10, 2023.

Directions: from Hershey, drive north on North Hershey Road 3 miles to Wildlife Road, turn right and go almost 2 miles east on the gravel. The far east parking lot will be on the south side of the road. Follow signs.

Getting to the blind requires a half-mile hike from the parking lot over mostly level terrain. Small signs with reflective tacks and solar lights lead the way on the trail. The blind has room for about eight adults. No permits are required to use this free blind, but funding for wildlife management areas comes from the purchase of habitat stamps. Hunters purchase the stamp as part of their hunting permits, but birders, hikers and others that utilize these areas should consider helping maintain these valuable wild places. Stamps cost \$25 and are available online at outdoornebraska.org. Help keep these public areas available for years to come by purchasing a habitat stamp.

Dress accordingly for the weather, wear waterproof hiking footwear, and abide by crane viewing etiquette.

1. First-come, first-served; reservation cannot be made.
2. For morning use of the blind, arrive at the parking area at least 1 hour before sunrise, earlier would be better to allow time to get into blind and set up under the cover of darkness- keeping in mind rule #4 below. Morning users should remain in the blind until all cranes have left the river.
3. For evening use of the blind, arrive at the parking area at least 2 hours before sunset to allow time to get into blind and set up prior to cranes starting to arrive at the river. Evening users should stay in the blind until it is completely dark – keep in mind rule #4 below when heading back to parking area.
4. No artificial lights within 100 yards of the riverbank before sunrise or sunset. Follow signs on the trail.
5. No flash photography from inside or near the blind.
6. Keep camera/cell phone/tablet use to a minimum at low light levels so cranes don't see light in the blind. Silence ringers on phones while in the blind.
7. Be respectful of others in the blind – minimize amount of equipment and supplies you take to the blind to avoid overcrowding. Pack out what you pack in.
8. Latch all windows and blind door locks when leaving the blind.
9. Keep sounds to a minimum while in the blind or within 100 yards of the river.
10. Stay on the designated trail to get to and from the blind to avoid interfering with other WMA users. DO NOT cross fences and stay on public land.
11. Report problems with the blind to the NGPC North Platte office (308) 535-8025.
12. Report use of the blind and satisfaction of the experience to number above or to Julie Geiser at Julie.geiser@nebraska.gov. Feel free to share photos or video of your experience with us!
13. Enjoy the experience – It's Time Well Spent!



Legend

- Parking Area
- Viewing Blind
- Trail
- WMA Boundary