

Compatibility Determinations – Tijuana Slough NWR

Compatibility is a tool refuge managers use to ensure that recreational and other uses do not interfere with wildlife conservation – the primary focus of refuges. For purposes of this document, uses are any recreational, commercial, research, or other use of the refuge by the public or a non-FWS entity. These types of uses are discretionary. Before they are authorized, they must be found compatible. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 stipulates that the needs of wildlife must come first and defines a compatible use as a use that “. . . in the sound professional judgment of the Director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System or the purposes of the refuge.”

Tijuana Slough NWR was established under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The Refuge was established specifically to protect habitat for and enhance recovery of the endangered light-footed clapper rail. The official purpose of the Refuge is “. . . to conserve (A) fish and wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species . . . or (B) plants . . .” That is the purpose against which proposed secondary uses are tested during a compatibility determination.

On FWS fee-title land of Tijuana Slough NWR, FWS has full jurisdiction. On NWR lands operated under the 1984 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Navy and on state tidelands operated as part of the NWR under the 1980 Lease No. PRC 5938.9 of the California State Lands Commission, FWS exercises jurisdiction only as specified in the MOU and Lease, and does not have complete jurisdiction over all secondary uses.

The following secondary uses of Tijuana Slough NWR have been determined to be compatible with the purpose(s) of the Refuge, as qualified in the individual compatibility determinations (which are on file at the San Diego NWR Complex Office in Carlsbad, CA).

- Environmental Education: found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 1, 1994.
- Pest Management (including removal of exotic vegetation and mosquito control): found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 21, 1994.
- Research (including population monitoring and surveys): found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 1, 1994. (Note: Individual research proposals may be subject to additional compatibility determination.)

- Boating (non-motorized): found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 1, 1994.
- Wildlife Observation and Photography: Compatibility Determination in preparation.
- Wildlife Interpretation: Compatibility Determination in preparation.
- Trails (including hiking, bicycle, and equestrian trails): Compatibility Determination in preparation.