



Oregon Coordinated Aquatic Bird Monitoring:
Description of Important Aquatic Bird Site



Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

BCS number: 48-18

Site description author(s)

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Site location (UTM)

Datum: NAD 83, Zone: 11, Easting: 354146, Northing: 4799534

General description

“Located in the center of the southeast quarter of the state, central Harney County, (Malheur NWR) is one of the premiere sites for birds and birding in the U.S. The refuge consists of over 187,000 acres of habitat which includes wetlands, riparian areas, meadows, and uplands. Refuge lands are configured in roughly a "T" shape, 39 miles wide and 40 miles long” (National Audubon Society 2008).

Boundaries and ownership

Boundaries: The western portion of Malheur NWR is approximately 20 miles southeast of the town of Riley, the eastern portion is about 5 miles southwest of the town of Crane, and the town of Lawen is almost directly north of the middle of Malheur NWR. The length and width of this refuge both extend to about 35 miles.

Ownership: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Dept of Interior. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private lands border the refuge, see Figure 1 for BLM Burns District ownership map.

Focal species use and timing

Focal Guild/Species	Wintering	Breeding	Migration
Secretive Marsh Birds*	Absent	Present	Present
Colonial Nesting Waterbirds	Absent	Present	Present
Ground-based Aquatic Birds	Absent	Present	Present
Migrating Shorebirds	Present (Snipe)	Present	Present
American White Pelican	Absent	Present	Present
Barrow's Goldeneye	Absent	Absent	Present
Black-necked Stilt	Absent	Absent	Present
Bufflehead	Present	Present	Present
Dusky Canada Goose	Present	Present	Present
Franklin's Gull	Absent	Present	Present
Greater Sandhill Crane	Absent	Present	Present
Long-billed Curlew	Absent	Present	Present
Snowy Egret	Absent	Present	Present
Red-Necked Grebe	Absent	Absent	Absent
Upland Sandpiper	Absent	Absent	Absent
Western Snowy Plover	Absent	Present	Present
Yellow Rail	Absent	Absent	Absent
Bobolink	Absent	Present	Present
Eastern Kingbird	Absent	Present	Present
Trumpeter Swan	Present	Present	Present
Burrowing Owl	Absent	Present	

*The focal species for Oregon's secretive marsh bird monitoring are PBGR, LEBI, AMBI, VIRA, SORA, YERA

Location of type 1 and 2 habitat within the site*

Guild	Type 1 Habitat	Type 2 Habitat
Secretive Marsh Birds	Tall emergent vegetation	Open Water
Ground-based Aquatic Birds	Shorelines, Mowed fields	
Migrating Shorebirds	Shorelines, Ponds	Riverbank
Colonial Nesters	Shorelines, Ponds, Tall emergent vegetation	Open water, Trees

*See Figures 2 through 5 for USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (2008) layer in Google Earth (2008).

Access to Type 1 and 2 habitat and visibility/audibility of birds

Refuge land is federally owned, and access to type 1 and type 2 habitats is good. The visibility and audibility of birds at Malheur NWR is good. See Figures 6 and 7 for road maps of the area.

Past and current surveys

In 2008, Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) surveyed for six focal secretive marsh bird species (Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Yellow Rail, Sora, and Virginia Rail) during peak breeding season (May and June). These surveys were conducted twice, at 10 stations at the Double-0 Ranch, and three times at 10 stations at a site near Frenchglen. At Double-0 Ranch, Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Sora, and Virginia Rail were detected. At the Frenchglen site, all species surveyed were detected except Yellow Rail.

Conservation issues

- Invasive species and noxious weeds
- Water availability and distribution
- Presence of carp
- Wildfire

Conservation measures taken, in progress, or proposed

- Use of sheep for control of noxious weeds
- Spraying of invasive species
- Carp barriers, pond draining used to control carp
- Rehabilitation of burn areas using temporary employees and contractors

Potential survey methods

a. Description:

b. Selection Bias:

c. Measurement error and bias:

Manning and Hartley (2006) suggest that a ground-based survey for all aquatic birds, a migrating shorebird survey, and a survey of breeding colonies would be valuable, and would probably need to be conducted by staff.

Potential pilot studies

Literature cited

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U. S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
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<http://www.fws.gov/malheur/pdf/refugemapwithcpr.pdf>. Accessed March 22, 2008.

Figure 1: BLM Burns district ownership map. The red box indicates Malheur NWR.

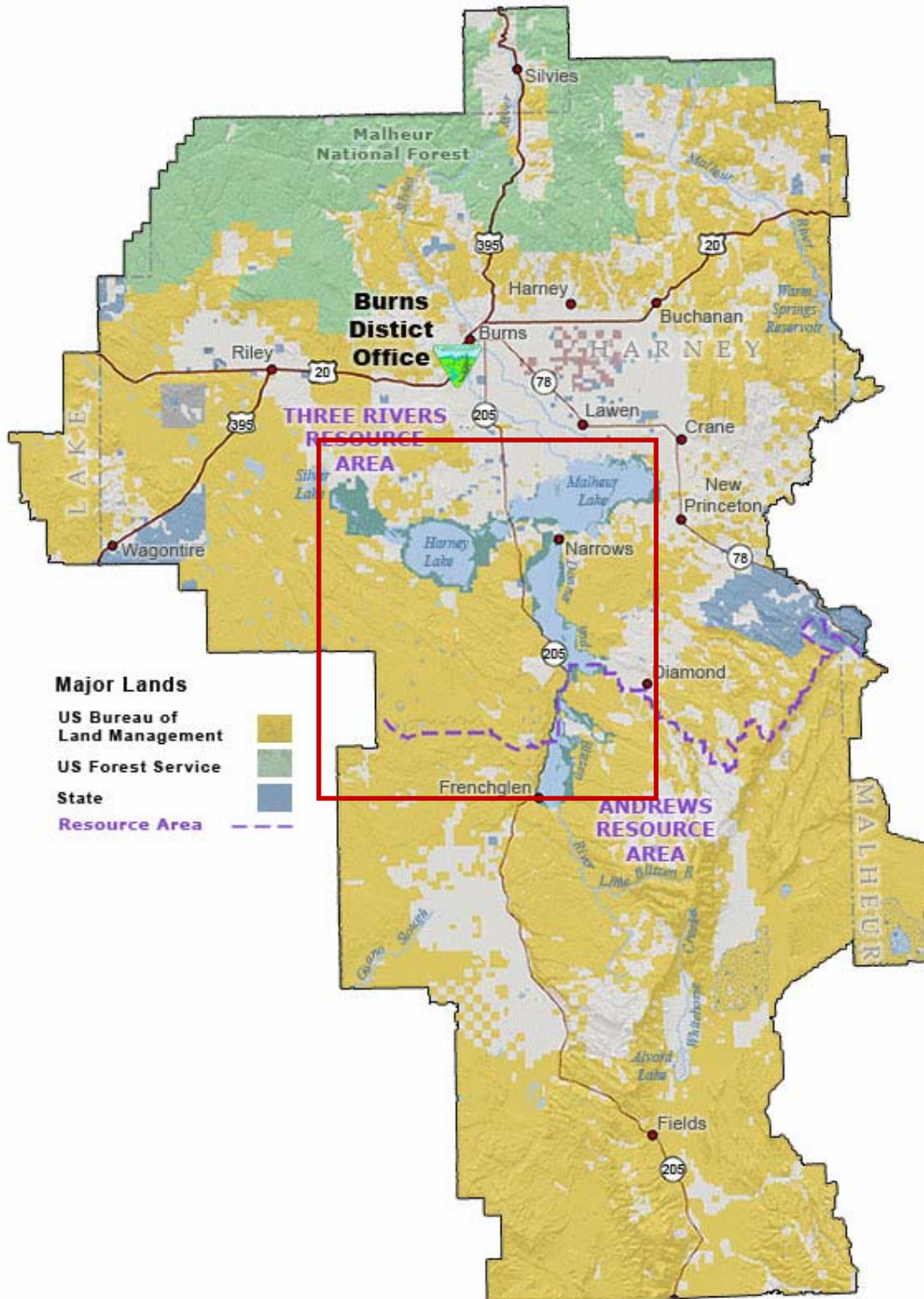


Figure 2: Google Earth (2008) map of Malheur Lake with the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (2008) layer.



Figure 3: Google Earth (2008) map of the area between Malheur and Harney Lakes with the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (2008) layer.

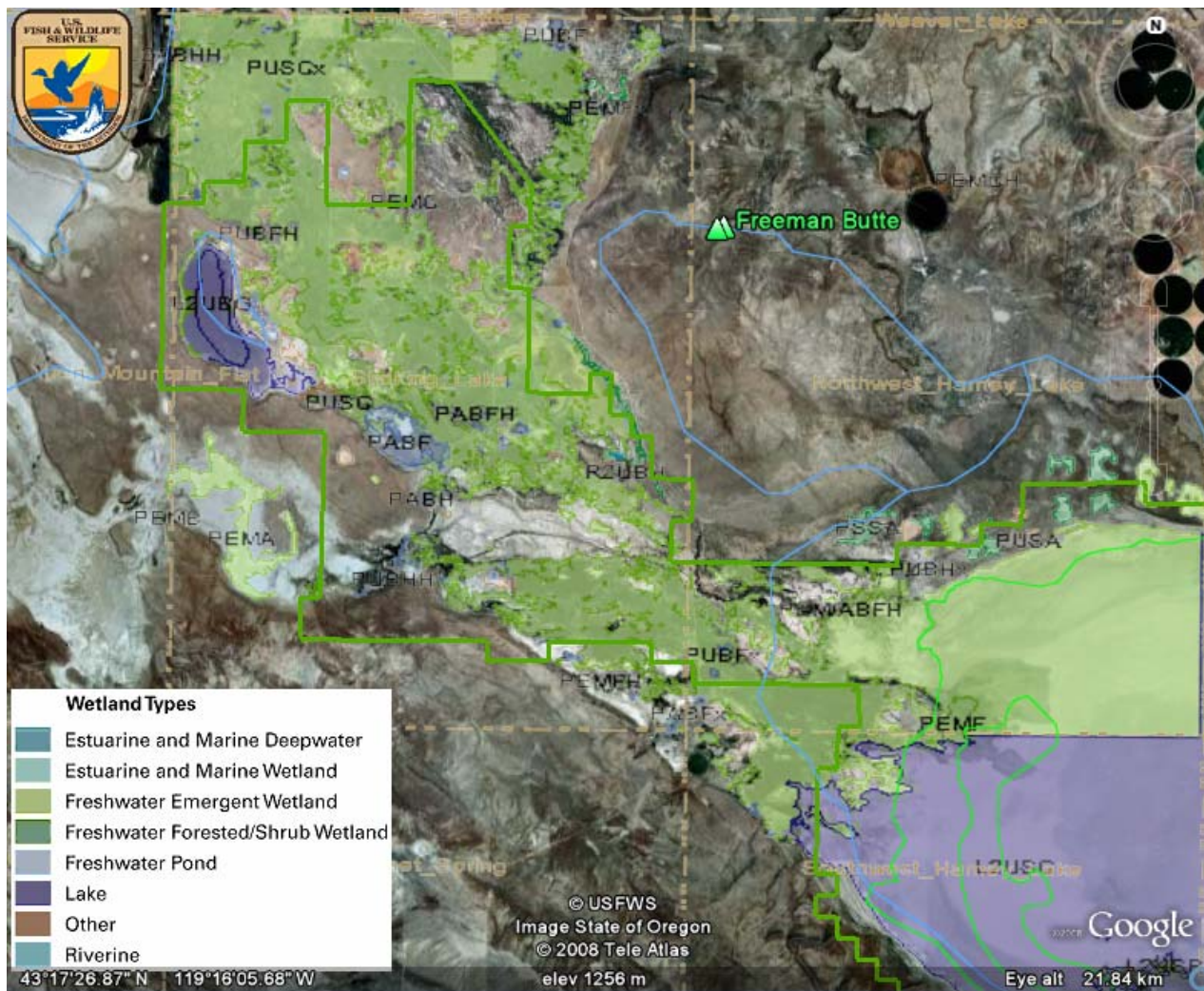


Figure 4: Google Earth (2008) map of the area south of Malheur Lake with the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (2008) layer.

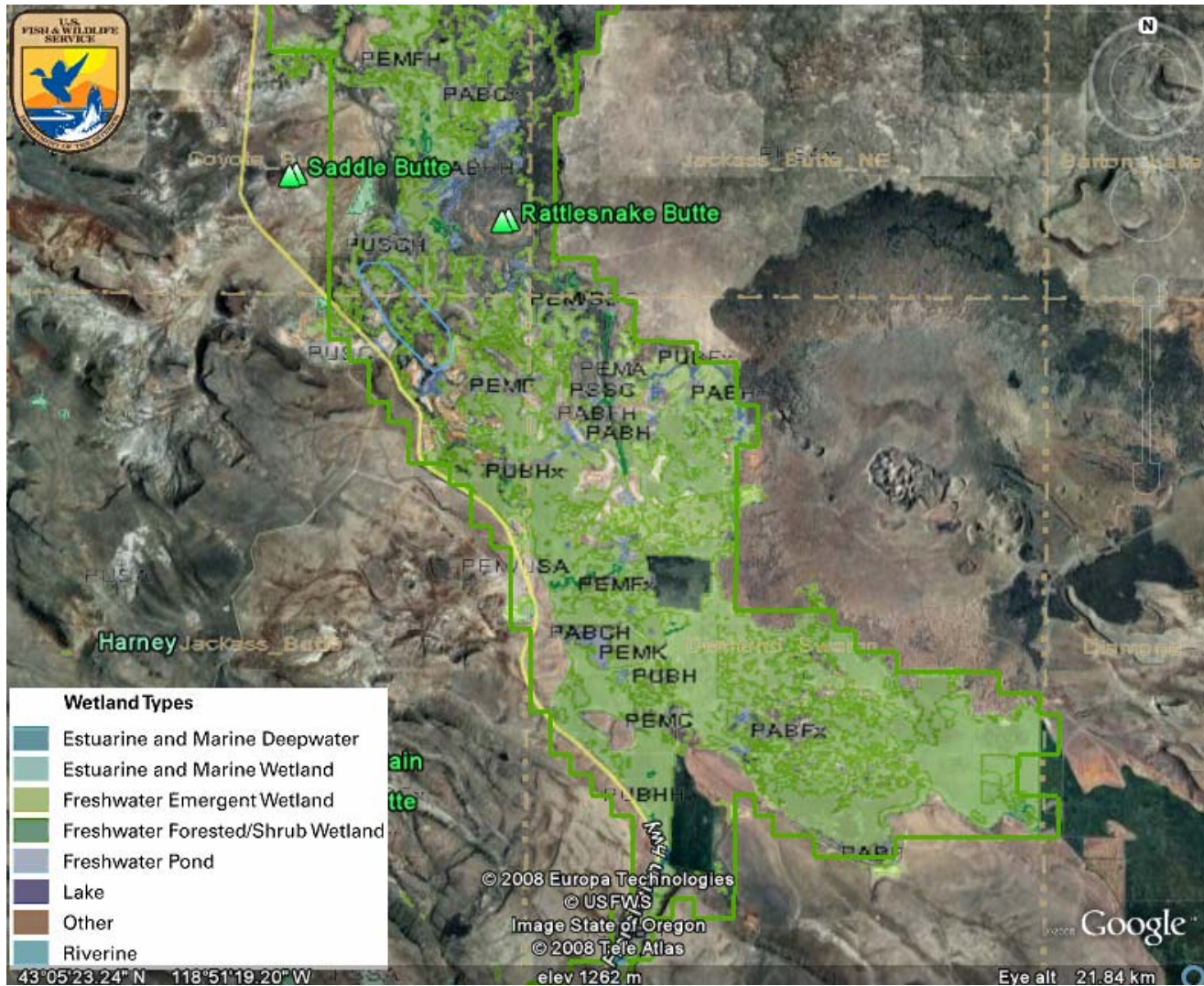


Figure 5: Google Earth (2008) map of Frenchglen area with the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (2008) layer.

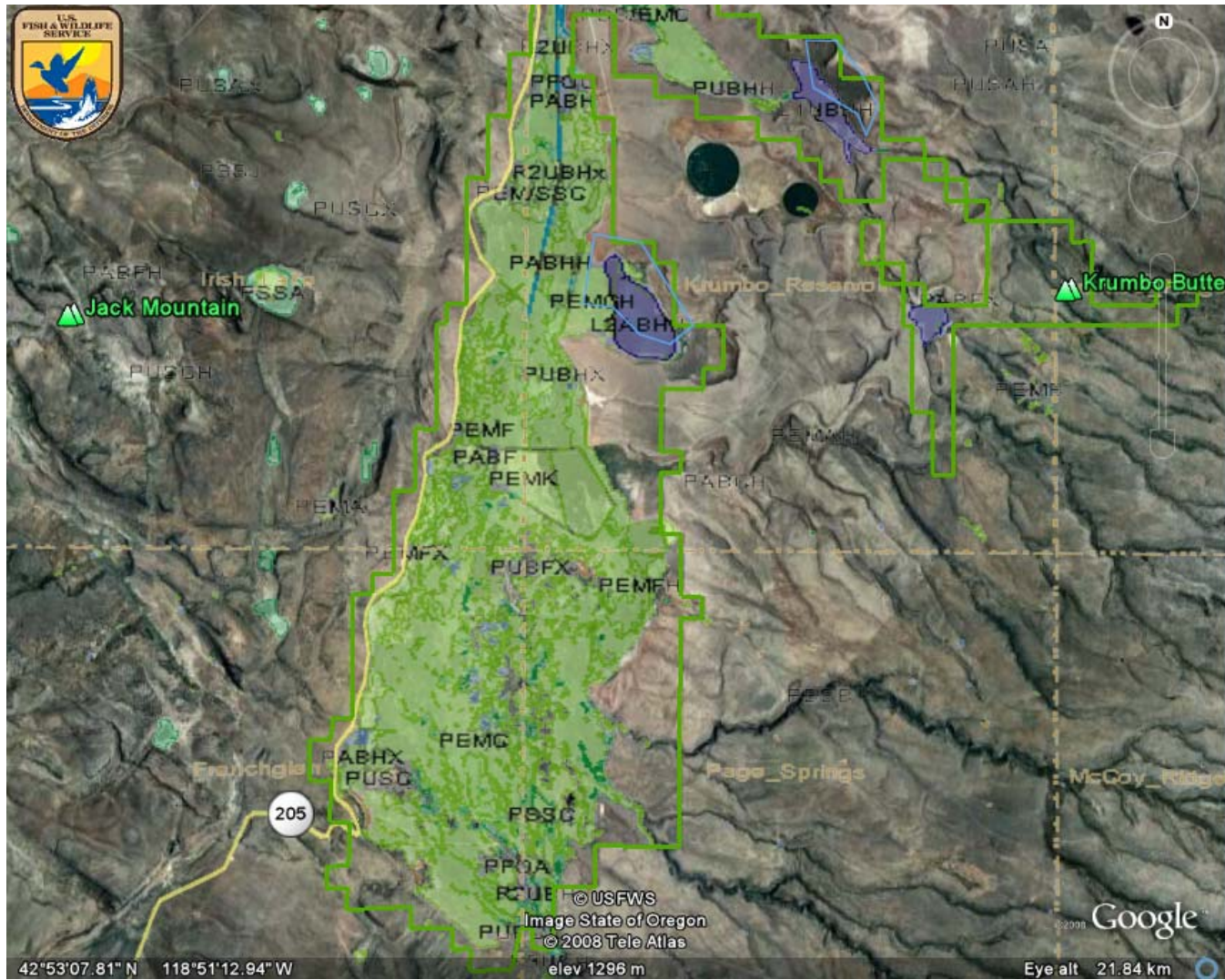


Figure 6: Google Map (2009) road view of Malheur NWR.



Figure 6: Road map from Malheur NWR pamphlet.

