

Bitter Lake



Located: South edge of Waubay, South Dakota.

Day County, Twp 121N Rng 54W

Access: Public access off paved highway (447th Ave), parking lot, boat ramp, pit toilet.

Bitter Lake Heron Rookery (photo by Laura Hubers, USF&WS)

Description:

Several species of colonial nesting birds are found at this location. Three islands located in the southwest corner of the lake provide nest sites for the American white pelican, Double-crested cormorant, Great blue heron, Great egret, Snowy egret, Cattle egret, Black-crowned night-heron, Ring-billed gull, California gull, Caspian tern, and Common tern. Several other colonial nesting species are found in the northwest corner of the lake. These species prefer to nest in the cattail marsh found at this location and include Eared grebe, Western grebe, White-faced ibis, Franklin's gull, and Black tern. These colonies should never be disturbed or trespassed upon, view from adjacent roads and shoreline where possible or from a safe distance on the water. Bitter Lake is also a good location to view shorebirds like the American avocet, Willet, and Marbled godwit. The Piping plover formerly nested along Bitter Lake. However this species has not been observed since 1990 possibly due to changing water conditions caused by flooding in the late 1990s that resulted in the lakes elevation rising by twenty-feet, and the lakes water becoming less alkaline.

