

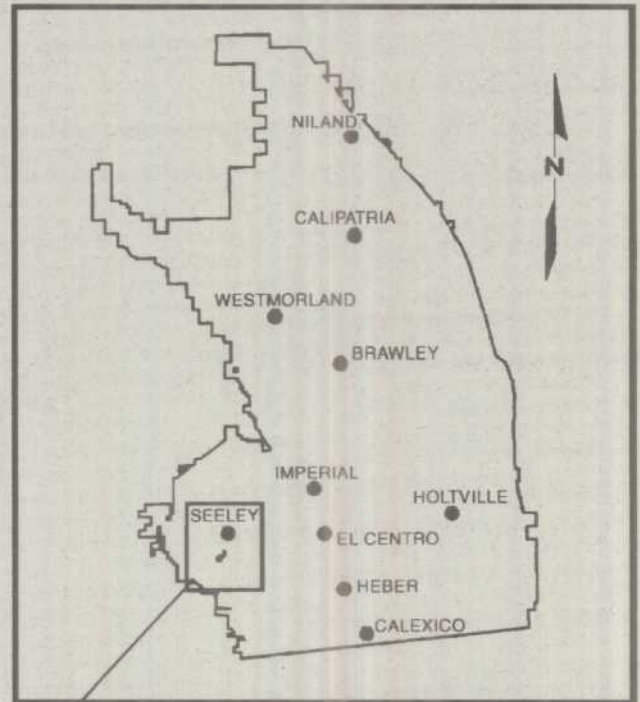
FACT SHEET: The Fig Lagoon

Watchable Wildlife Area

Background

Sometimes the solution to an immediate problem can produce unforeseen dividends. The Fig Lagoon is one such story. The pond was created from the need to repair the Fig Drain, which was damaged during tropical storm Kathleen in September of 1976. Flood waters from the surrounding desert and agricultural drains washed out the drain outlet. During reconstruction of the area near the New River channel, the outlet was enlarged creating an evaporation pond which reduced the amount of water flowing to the Salton Sea. As the pond filled with water, wildlife and waterfowl were attracted to the area. Not only has the experiment of an evaporation pond paid off, but this side benefit of wildlife habitat has become a national attraction as well.

The Fig Lagoon has become so popular that it has been included as part of the National Watchable Wildlife Program. The Lagoon is located just west of El Centro just off Interstate 8, near Seeley. The future promises to bring even more visitors to the area thanks to the exposure it has received through the Salton Sea International Bird Festival.



To make viewing wildlife easier, IID constructed a paved parking area and information signs. Fig Lagoon's success has encouraged IID to consider future sites for similar treatment.

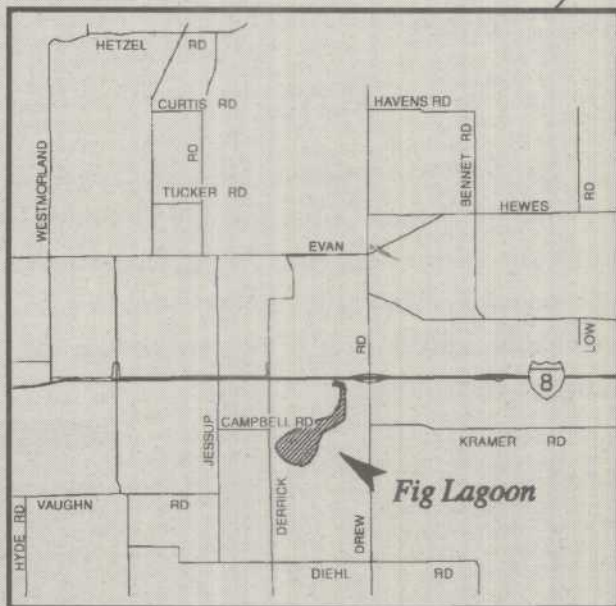
The Habitat

The area in and around the Lagoon features a full array of habitats ranging from desert, lake wetland and ocean. These habitats are defined by the varied bird species that call the Lagoon their home at various times throughout the year.

Facts

The water area covers approximately 80 acres. Drain water from the Fig and Wixom drains feed the pond a combination of agricultural drainage and irrigation carriage water. This insures a year-round supply and water of good quality to support a large wildlife population.

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Unique Bird Habitats

The Imperial Valley offers an exceptional opportunity to watch birds because it contains five distinct types of habitats within its boundaries. They are: towns and gardens; farmland; an ocean or the Salton Sea; desert and shrub land; and marshes, lakes and canals.

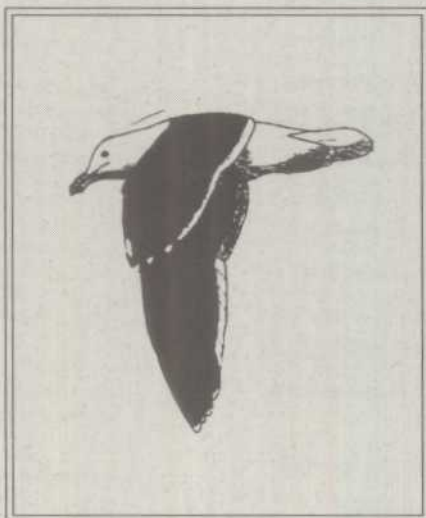
These very different habitats attract an unusually large variety and number of birds and wild-

life. Imperial Valley is home to nearly 400 species of birds, more than almost anywhere else in the United States. A number of rare and endangered species can be seen as well as several species rarely seen in the U.S. Because the Imperial Valley has become an important stopover on the Pacific Flyway, each season brings new, and often, unexpected birds to watch.

Here's a sample of what you can expect to see.

Desert

In desert environments you can expect to see birds such as the Cactus Wren, Gambel's Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Nighthawk, Mourning Dove, Phainopepla, Turkey Vulture, White-crowned Sparrow, Verdin, Lesser and Costa's Hummingbird.



Salton Sea

In this zone watch for birds such as the American White Pelican, Brown Pelican, Caspian Tern, Long-billed Dowitcher, Willet, Ring-billed Gull, Foster's Tern, Western Sandpiper, Black-necked Stilt and Double-crested Cormorant.

Marsh

Many different birds can be seen in the shallow waters of the marsh environment. Included are the Snowy Egret, Clark's Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, Common Moorhen, Redhead (Duck), Ruddy Duck, Great Egret, Red-winged Blackbird, American Coot and Black-necked Stilt.

Town

Around parks, cemeteries and homes in town, expect to see the Western Tanager, Yellow Warbler, House Finch, Anna's Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Hooded Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Rufous Hummingbird, Great-tailed Grackle and Abert's Towhee.

Agricultural

In this zone look for the Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Western Meadowlark, Western Kingbird, Cattle Egret, Burrowing Owl, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Great-tailed Grackle, House Sparrow, European Starling, Killdeer, Brewer's Blackbird, Northern Mockingbird, White-faced Ibis and Ring-necked Pheasant.

Enjoy

The Imperial Irrigation District, County of Imperial, California Department of Fish and Game and Kuhn Farms hope that the Fig Lagoon provides a memorable viewing experience and this watchable wildlife area brings enjoyment for many years to come.

-February 2000