

## KOFA National Wildlife Refuge

Named after one of the most famous gold mines in Arizona -- King of Arizona Mine

Established in 1939. 665,400 acres of pristine desert and habitat for Desert Bighorn Sheep, California Fan Palm, etc.

Primarily a wilderness area (80%) with private insets for mining operations that are still in progress.

Extensive dirt trails through the area, approx 3 days needed to explore all the major trails in the preserve.

Camping is allowed within 100 ft of roads. Good spots can be found at the end of the cherry stem trails as they end at mountain base. Fires are allowed using dead/down/detached wood found in the preserve.

Striking scenery of mountain ridges because of relatively recent volcanic activity. Sharp peaks and jagged skylines in central mountain range.

Three mountain ranges run east/west in the preserve. The most striking is the central range, KOFA Mountains, followed by the Castle Dome Mountains in the south (Northern range is Plumosa and New Water Mountains

KOFA is bracketed by the Yuma Proving grounds on the east and west sides.

KOFA is bordered on the west by Hwy 95 and runs from about 40 miles north of Yuma to about 10 miles south of Quartzite, which is east of Blythe (and Colorado River) on I-10.

IMHO Most scenic route is to enter KOFA on Castle Dome, which starts at Hwy 95 about 40 miles north of Yuma (Milepost 55. The road is graded dirt until you reach the Castle Domes Mines Museum and Ghost Town. This is a "must see" stop and will take you several hours to explore the 10 acres of mining and desert history. I've been there twice and will be going back again. The museum is a 'living' museum in that you are not separated from the artifacts.

Continuing north on Castle Dome Road, you will head into the heart of KOFA via McPherson Pass, which can be a bit rough in places (2+) but should present no problems for high-clearance vehicles.

Maps are readily available for KOFA either on-line or through the BLM. The best map I've found is the BLM "KOFA and New Water Mountains Wilderness" map.

One nice feature of KOFA is that the many trail intersections have numbered signposts that are keyed on the map.

In the northwest section of the preserve are two areas worth mentioning that are near the preserve boundary. Palm Canyon Road is off Hwy 95 about 15 miles south of Quartzite and will take you to a canyon for a short hike to the only native California Fan Palms in Arizona. Another area readily accessible from the preserves eastern boundary is Crystal Hill, a BLM-authorized mineral collection area that is very popular with Rock Hounds.

While you're close, drop by Quartzite, especially in the winter when the "Snowbirds" descent on the town. There are a lot of outdoor swapmeets with gems, fossils, and RV equipment on display and for sale.

Desert Magazine:

Jan 1941  
Sep 1941  
Dec 1941  
Feb 1942  
Apr 1949  
Jan 1957  
Aug 1965  
Jul 1974 (best!)