



Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Photo credit: Photo by Rod Colvin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ASH MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, NEVADA

THE PLACE:

[Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge](#) is a lush oasis within the arid Mojave Desert ecosystem, where dozens of springs form expansive wetlands. Known as the “Galápagos of the Desert,” the 23,000-acre wildlife refuge in southern Nevada’s Amargosa Valley is one of the most biodiverse places in North America.

WHY IT'S SPECIAL:

Ash Meadows harbors 25 species of fish, plants, insects and snails found nowhere else on Earth. Twelve of these species are protected under the Endangered Species Act including the extremely rare Devils Hole pupfish, the Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish, the Warm Springs pupfish and the Ash Meadows speckled dace. The United Nations has designated the refuge a [RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance](#), one of just four in the U.S. Ash Meadows is within the traditional territory of the Newe (Timbisha Shoshone) and Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute) peoples.

THE STAKES:

Ash Meadows is surrounded by large deposits of lithium. Lithium mining threatens to deplete the refuge’s scarce water resources and imperil the plants and animals that depend on this water to survive. In the final days of the Biden administration, the Interior Department announced a two-year pause on new mining claims on land adjacent to Ash Meadows in Amargosa Valley and began reviewing a full 20-year withdrawal of the land from mining claims to protect the refuge from pollution. The new proposal and previous mining bans are necessary to protect Ash Meadows and its many plants and animals from groundwater threats posed by extensive exploratory drilling and mining in or adjacent to the refuge. The Ash Meadows mining withdrawal is a likely target of the Trump administration.

Contact:

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