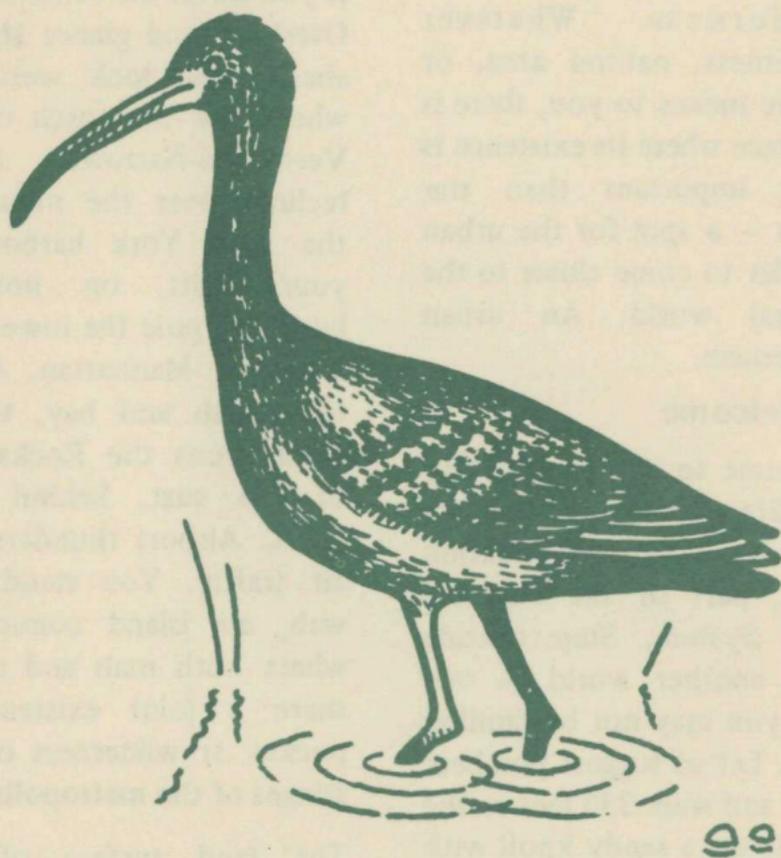


# The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge



*glossy ibis*



U.S. Department of Interior  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
GATEWAY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA



## Introduction

Everyone has their own notion of wilderness. Be it a terrace with potted plants on the 25th floor of a high-rise apartment, a local park for a cool stroll under a woodland canopy in summer or a silent trespass through snow in winter. Perhaps vast sweeps of ocean or distant mountain summits conjure up wilderness. Whatever wilderness, natural area, or nature means to you, there is no place where its existence is more important than the cities — a spot for the urban dweller to come closer to the natural world. An urban wilderness.

## A Welcome

Welcome to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, a unit of Gateway National Recreation Area, part of the National Park System. Step outside into another world — one that you may not be familiar with. Let us suggest you bear right and walk 330 feet to the Overlook, a sandy knoll with a wooden bench and the highest point in the refuge. Stand and look around you. The refuge boundaries embrace about 9,155 acres of tidal marsh and open water. From every point one note is clear — the sanctuary is a cradle of wilderness in the arms of the largest city in the world. Located under the

Atlantic Flyway, a migratory path in the sky, and possessing a variety of habitats, including salt-water marsh, fresh-water pond, garden and upland expanse, the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is uncommonly attractive to birds. Over 315 species have been recorded to date.

If you sit on the bench by the Overlook and glance straight ahead, you look westward, where the long arch of the Verrazano-Narrows bridge reclines over the mouth of the New York harbor. To your right, on northern horizons, pole the towers and spires of Manhattan. Across the marsh and bay, to the south, runs the Rockaways. In the east, behind you, J.F.K. Airport thunders with air traffic. You stand in a web, an island community where both man and nature share a joint existence, a pocket of wilderness on the fringes of the metropolis.

The land surface of this planet is not unlike the face of an ocean — in constant change. All the land around you, including the refuge you now stand in, has seen both man-made and natural change. It is changing this moment. A path on the left leads downward to the South Garden. Brambles line the walk that enters a willow oak

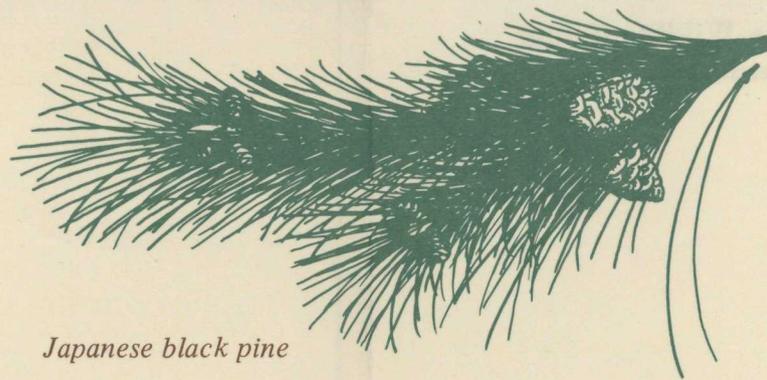
grove. These trees were planted, as were many plants here, by Herbert Johnson, first superintendent of the nature reserve. The plantings include fruit trees and shrubs to attract songbirds and conifers where owls roose in winter. Take a glance at the oak trees. Do you see a typewriter row of small holes in the bark? Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, after drilling these holes, disappear. Sap dribbles out, luring insets. Guess who returns for a tasty, six-legged morsel?



sapsucker holes



white-rumped sandpiper



Japanese black pine

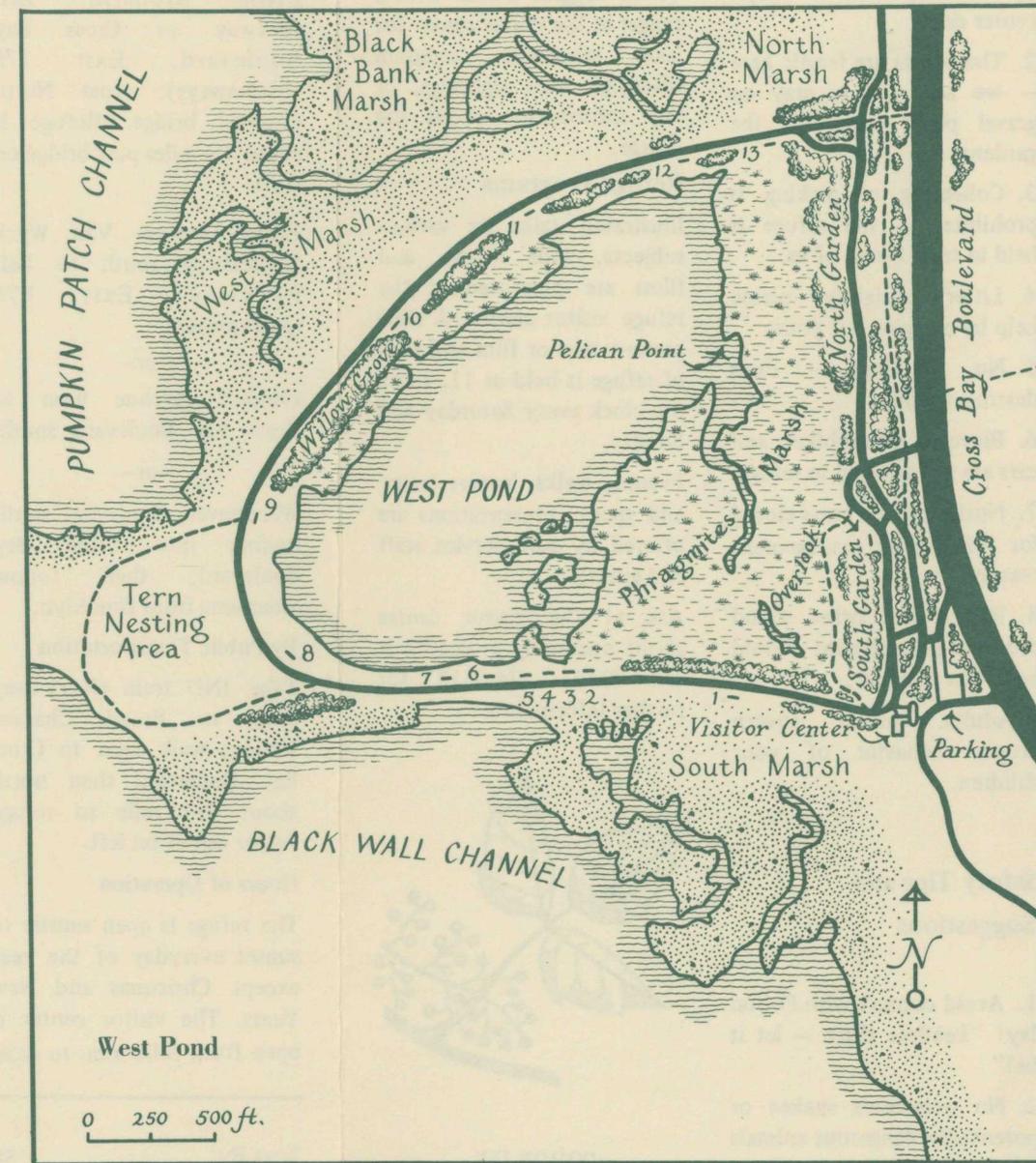
Through greenery of autumn alive, Japanese Black Pine, and tall stands of Phragmites or reed grass, a gravel path meanders up to the main trail. Open your senses wide-walking from lush gardens to salt-water marsh is a sensory delight. Salt-marsh, the most productive ecosystem in the world, surrounds you. Knowing the refuge lies within the bounds of New York City, and is an important oasis for migrating birds along the Atlantic Flyway, is doubly exciting. White-rumped Sandpipers nest along the Arctic Circle and winter in South America — for these and hundreds of other long-distance migrants, the sanctuary becomes an essential feeding and resting



short-eared owl

stopover.

The gravel path circles the fresh-water pond, eventually, after 1 3/4 miles, returning to the visitor center. Take all the time in the world. Look for a Glossy Ibis in summer or a Short-eared Owl in winter. Listen to the wind, the water. Feel the freedom of open, wide space. Visit us at evening and watch the moon and stars rise over the salt-marsh. Let your feelings for the natural world reawaken as you experience the mystery and beauty of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.



West Pond

0 250 500 ft.

benches are numbered

**For a Pleasant Visit and to Safeguard The Refuge,  
Please Follow Visitor Rules:**

1. Obtain permit at visitor center desk.
2. The plants are fragile here — we ask you to stay on gravel paths except in the gardens.
3. Collecting or picking is prohibited — the refuge is held in trust for all of us.
4. Litter is unsightly — please help by carrying out yours.
5. No smoking! — Fires destroy wildlife.
6. Bicycles, motor-bikes, and cars are not allowed in refuge.
7. Notice certain areas closed for wildlife or management reasons.
8. Radios and other sound producing equipment should be left in your car.
- 9 Adults, please govern proper behavior of your children.

4. We suggest a chat with a ranger at the visitor center for tour schedules, program offerings, bird sightings, or any information about the refuge.

**Refuge Programs**

Illustrated talks on various subjects, slide shows, and films are presented at the refuge visitor center. A slide presentation or film and tour of refuge is held at 11, 1 and 3 o'clock every Saturday and Sunday.

Evening walks, lecture series, and special presentations are offered by park service staff and guests.

Ask at the visitor center about upcoming programs or call (212) 474-0613 for further information.



*poison ivy*

**Safety Tips and Suggestions**

1. Avoid contact with Poison Ivy! "Leaflets three — let it be!"
2. No poisonous snakes or potentially dangerous animals inhabit the refuge.
3. Bird watchers, bring your binoculars; camera buffs, bring your cameras — there is so much to be seen here.

**Directions to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge**  
Cross Bay Boulevard, Howard Beach, Queens

**By Bus or Car**

From Brooklyn: Belt Parkway to Cross Bay Boulevard, Exit 17S (Rockaways); cross North Channel bridge. Refuge is about 1½ miles past bridge on right.

From Queens: Van Wyck Expressway south to Belt Parkway, Exit 17S (Rockaways).

—or—

Conduit Avenue west to Cross Bay Boulevard south.

—or—

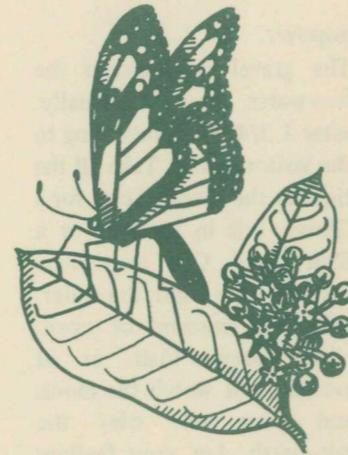
Woodhaven Boulevard south leading into Cross Bay Boulevard; then follow directions from Brooklyn.

**By Public Transportation**

Take IND train (Rockaway line) to Broad Channel station; walk west to Cross Bay Boulevard then north about ¾ mile to refuge visitor center on left.

**Hours of Operation**

The refuge is open sunrise to sunset everyday of the year except Christmas and New Years. The visitor center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — later hours according to season.



*monarch butterfly on milkweed*

**Telephone**  
(212) 474-0613

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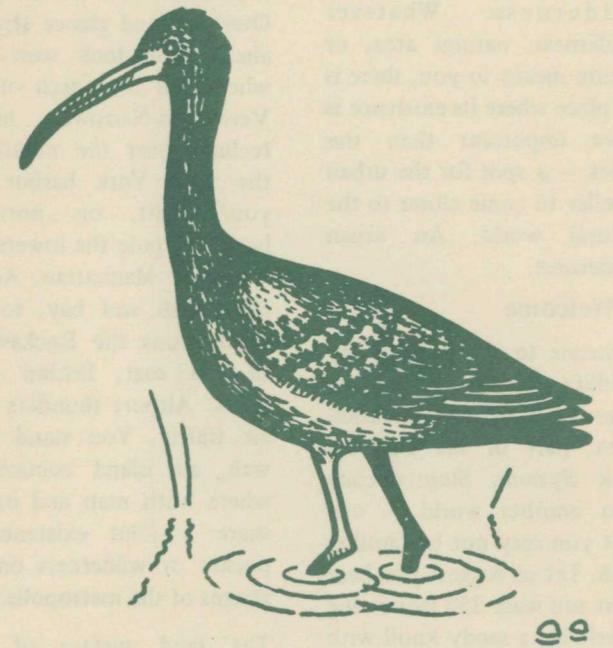
To Conserve: Please return this folder if you no longer need it.

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Floyd Bennett Field, Bldg. 69  
Brooklyn, New York 11234

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Wildlife Refuge**



*glossy ibis*



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