

Bands turned in by hunters and reports of recaptures by banders at other banding stations provide information on migration and other aspects of bird life history. The information is valuable for proper management including formulating hunting regulations.

Species using Blackwater include whistling swans, Canada and snow geese, and more than 20 species of ducks.



DIKED IMPOUNDMENT



Great Egret

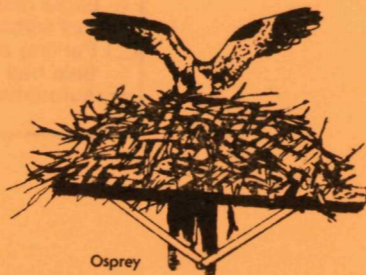
From here you can see typical habitat used by waterfowl, marsh birds, and muskrats. The dike you are on separates the freshwater impoundments on your right from the salt or brackish MARSH on your left. By carefully controlling the water level of impoundments, natural foods and resting sites are made readily available to the waterfowl that depend on the refuge through the winter.

In late winter the brackish marsh is carefully burned off to expose the new growth of succulent natural vegetation relished by waterfowl, muskrats, and nutria. The three-square bulrush is the favored food of these marsh dwellers.

During the summer egrets, herons, and other water birds feed on the fish and crustaceans of this brackish marsh. They also feed on frogs and snakes in the impounded fresh waters.



OSPREY NESTING PLATFORMS



The OSPREY NESTING PLATFORM on your left at the water's edge helps to compensate for the scarcity of suitable tall trees near water that would be natural platforms on which to build a nest. The shallows surrounding the structure provide an excellent fishing habitat for this "fish hawk."

The osprey, victimized by pesticides and increased human activity in its nesting areas, is staging a comeback helped by proper management techniques. Even with hopeful signs there remains a need for continued vigilance.



EAGLE RESTING SITES

Another victim of pesticide residue and chemical contamination in the environment, loss of nesting, and feeding habitat, and illegal shooting, is the bald eagle.

The CLUMP OF DEAD TREES to your left is a favored resting spot for this majestic bird as well as for hawks, vultures, herons, and egrets.

Areas on Blackwater Refuge where eagles nest are protected from human encroachment. The mere presence of people during nesting periods poses an added threat to the survival of this endangered symbol of our country.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U. S. administration.

For further information, write:

Refuge Manager
Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
Route 1, Box 121
Cambridge, Maryland 21613
Telephone: (301) 228-2677

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



WILDLIFE DRIVE GUIDE



**BLACKWATER
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND**

WELCOME

Wildlife is very sensitive to the human form, so please **remain in your car** except at the Marsh Edge Trail, the Observation Tower, and the Woods Trail.

National Wildlife Refuges provide protection, food and cover for wildlife through specific land management programs.

This guide points out some of Blackwater's wildlife management programs. It is keyed to observation points along the drive.



FRESH WATER POND



Painted Turtle

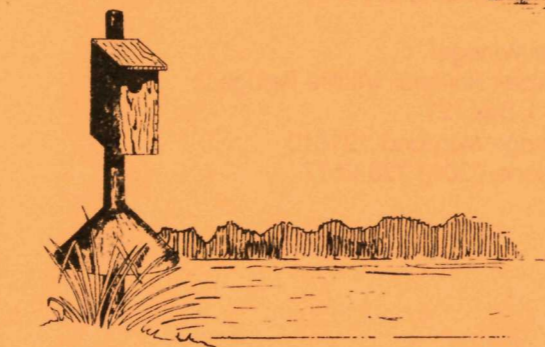
Fresh water habitat is scarce in Blackwater refuge and in other nearby marshes because of the predominantly brackish conditions in the vicinity. This FRESH WATER POND was constructed to add to the diversity of habitat for wildlife.

The small islands provide cover and nesting habitat for waterfowl and also serve as roosting areas for egrets and herons in summer.

Scan the shallow edges for puddle ducks, wading and shorebirds, or turtles which are often seen sunning themselves on the logs.



NESTING BOXES

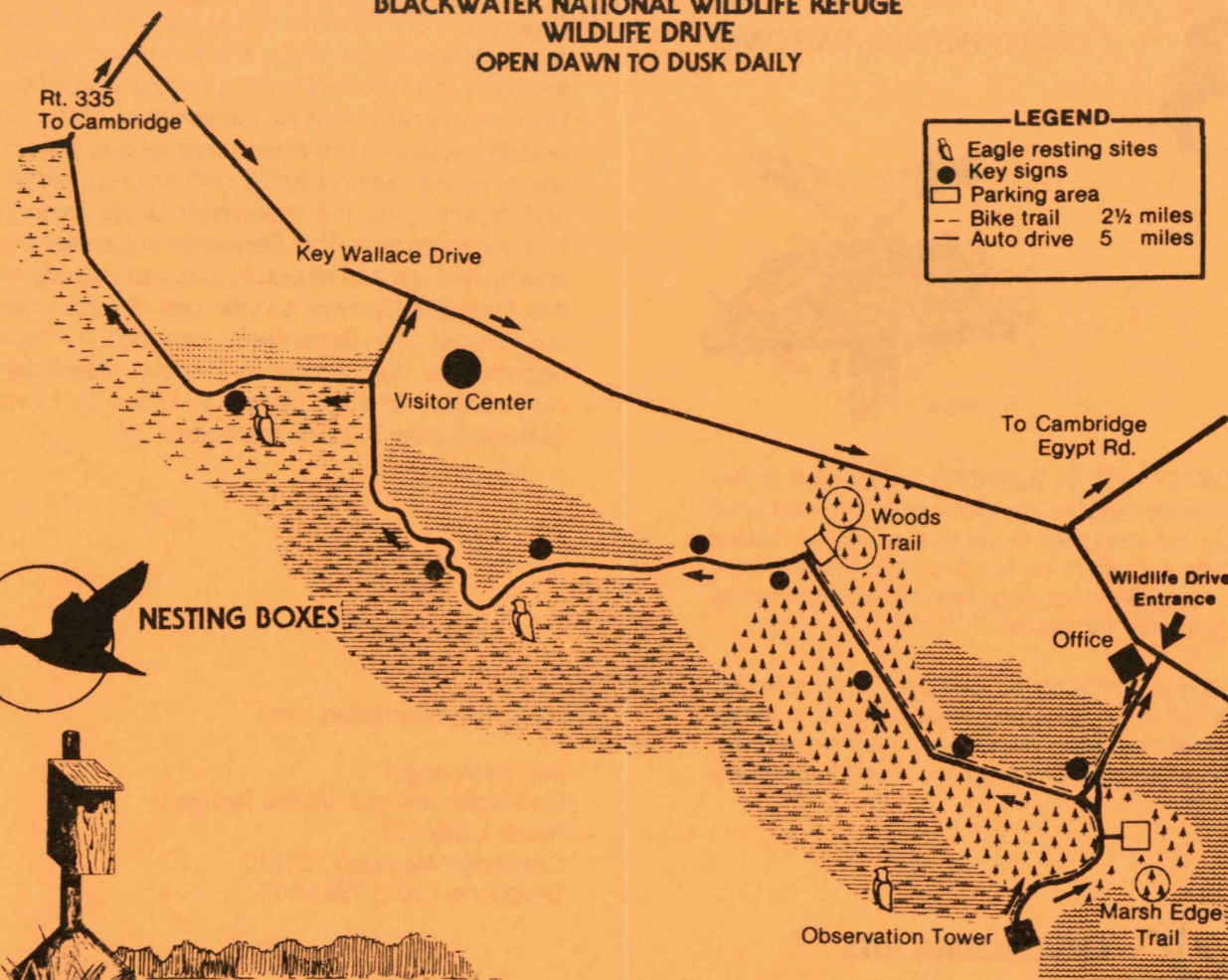


A few duck species use hollow trees for nesting. At Blackwater, wood ducks are the only ones found searching for suitable cavities in the spring. Increasing demands for land and lumber have created a scarcity of such cavities; therefore, NESTING BOXES are used to replace diminishing natural sites.

When not occupied by waterfowl, the boxes may have flickers, sparrow hawks, owls, or starlings as tenants.

A shield keeps out predators such as raccoons and insures greater nesting success.

BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WILDLIFE DRIVE OPEN DAWN TO DUSK DAILY



WOODLAND

This WOODLAND is being managed to provide habitat for the endangered Delmarva Peninsula Fox Squirrel which prefers a mature forest with little undergrowth.

These large, light gray squirrels, which are now unique to Maryland's Eastern Shore and the Chincoteague refuge in Virginia, have been driven to the brink of extinction due, in part, to a loss of suitable woodlands to agriculture and development for human uses.



FIELD



White-tailed Deer

The FIELD adjoining the woodland is maintained primarily for white-tailed deer, which prefer areas where forests, meadows, and croplands are close together.

Like many forms of wildlife, deer are usually seen during the early morning or late evening feeding periods.



BANDING



Banding

In the trap to your right, wintering waterfowl are caught, identified, BANDED, and then released. As each numbered aluminum band is placed on a bird's leg, its species, age, sex and date and place of banding are recorded by the refuge staff. The records are then forwarded to the Banding Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland.