

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge  
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TTY users may reach Emiquon through the  
Federal Information Relay System at  
1-800-877 8339

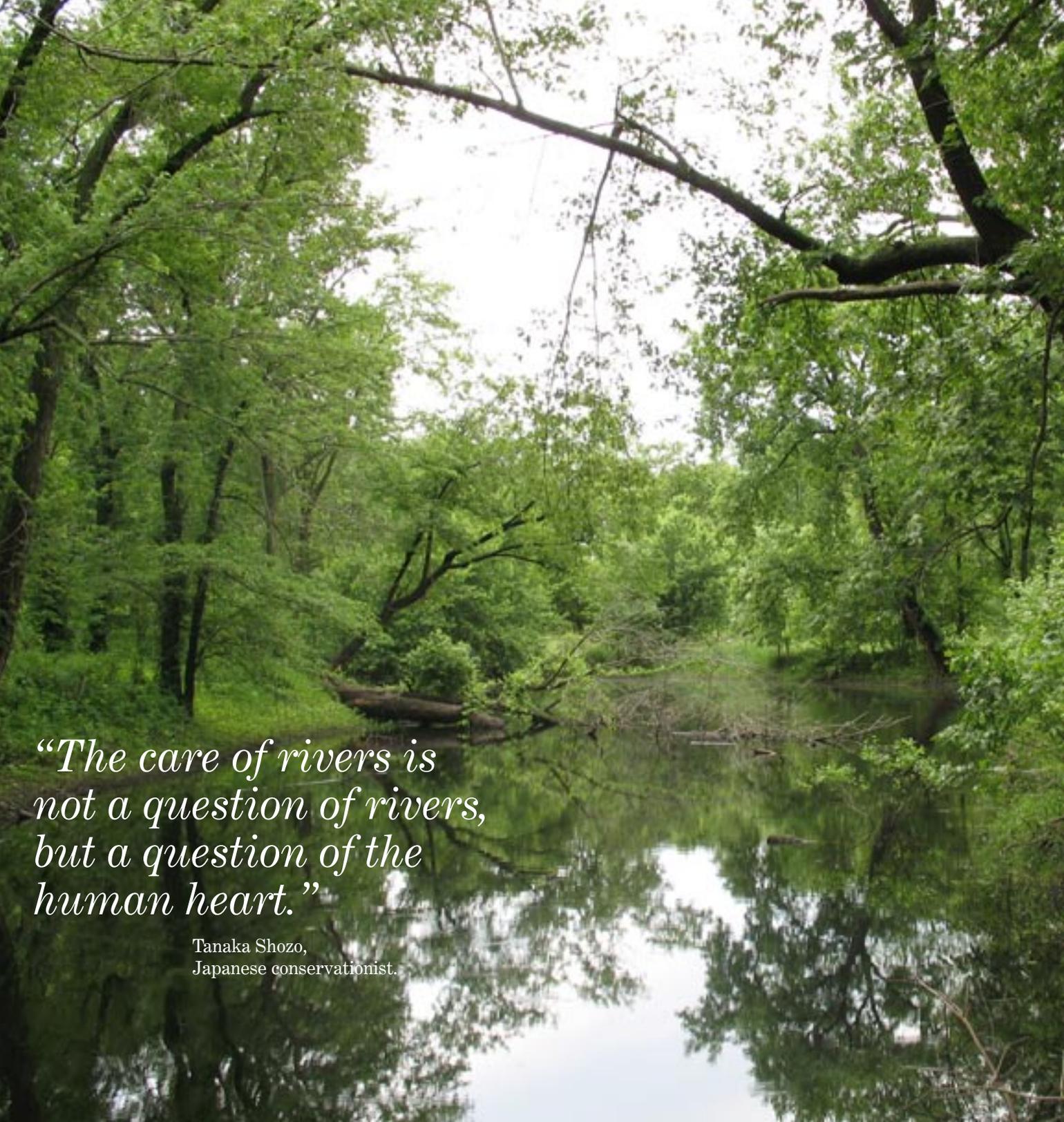
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# Emiquon

## *National Wildlife Refuge*

*American Toad,*  
Courtesy of Michael Jeffords  
Illinois Natural History Section



*“The care of rivers is  
not a question of rivers,  
but a question of the  
human heart.”*

Tanaka Shozo,  
Japanese conservationist.



*This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*



*Emiquon is part of a national system of over 540 refuges across the country.*



## Welcome to Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge

Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge is one important part of the National Wildlife Refuge System - one of America's greatest conservation success stories. It consists of more than 540 refuges located throughout the United States, and is the only national system of lands dedicated to conserving our wildlife heritage for people today and for generations to come.

Emiquon refuge was established in 1993 to restore and protect wetland habitats at the confluence of the Illinois and Spoon rivers. The first tract of the refuge was purchased on December 29, 1993. The refuge has since grown to 2,114 acres. In total, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has authorization to purchase 11,122 acres within the Emiquon Project area.

Emiquon refuge is managed as part of the Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge Complex. This complex stretches along 124 miles of the Illinois River in west central Illinois, and consists of three refuges; Emiquon, Chautauqua and Meredosias, totaling 12,163 acres of backwater lakes, bottomland forests, floodplain wetlands and upland habitats.

In addition to Service managed lands, The Nature Conservancy owns over 7,000 acres adjacent to Emiquon refuge. This area, called Emiquon Preserve, is managed by The Nature Conservancy to restore functional floodplain habitats along the Illinois River. The property includes Thompson Lake which was once one of the most ecologically significant backwater lakes in the Illinois River floodplain.



*Wood ducks and red-eared slider,*  
Don Wright



*Bonaparte's gull,  
blue-winged teal,  
ring-billed gull,*  
Don Wright



*Mallard with  
ducklings,*  
USFWS



## Diverse Habitats

Floodplain habitats in the Emiquon Project area have a rich and diverse biological legacy. Historically, Thompson Lake and the surrounding bottomlands were a productive ecosystem that supported a variety of fish and wildlife and contributed to the ecological health of the Illinois River. While Thompson Lake was a central part of this floodplain site, the area also had a variety of other habitats including brushy woodlands, bottomland forests, prairie and seasonally flooded wetlands.

## Refuge Management

Most of what is now Emiquon refuge was previously farmland utilized to produce agricultural crops such as corn and soybeans. Because of past land uses, extensive restoration work is necessary to recreate wildlife habitats on the refuge. Staff and volunteers have reseeded areas to native grasses, planted trees, conducted prescribed fires and controlled noxious weeds to restore and improve habitats on the Emiquon refuge. Much work has been done, but much work remains.

## A Bird Haven

The diverse habitats at Emiquon refuge, The Nature Conservancy Emiquon Preserve and the nearby Chautauqua NWR make this area a primary stopping point for migrating and nesting birds. Bottomland forests provide abundant nesting and migratory habitat for woodland birds. Wetland habitats benefit a variety of bird species including egrets, herons and shorebirds. Waterfowl flock by the thousands during spring and fall migrations as they move between Lake Chautauqua, Thompson Lake and the Spoon River bottoms.

*Green heron,*  
Don Wright



*Red-eared slider*, Don Wright

### **More Than Just for the Birds**

Resident wildlife such as white-tailed deer, bobwhite, cottontail rabbits, coyotes and turkey are also abundant on the refuge. Temporarily and seasonally flooded wetlands provide important breeding areas for frogs, toads and salamanders. Small mammals such as prairie voles and deer mice also find abundant food and cover in the floodplain habitats of Emiquon NWR.



*Paddlefish*, Greg Sass

Floodplains are vitally important to the health of the river and river dependent aquatic organisms. During flood events, bottomland areas provide habitat for many fish species. Fish utilize bottomlands for spawning while others move into floodplain areas to feed.



*Three ridge mussel*, Kevin Irons

Even aquatic organisms which do not move from the river into the floodplain are benefited by the floodplain habitats. Flood waters from the river stretch across the floodplain capturing and transporting valuable nutrients back to the river as flood waters recede. These nutrients are vital for river species such as mussels and paddlefish.

In addition to fish and wildlife values, floodplains provide an important societal benefit by temporarily storing floodwaters decreasing the magnitude and extent of flooding.



*Taking Flight!*, Joshua Stafford



*Early archaic spear points*, Michael Brohm, Courtesy of Illinois State Museum.

### **A Bigger Story to be Told**

While wildlife is the showcase feature at Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge, the Emiquon area has a much bigger story to tell. This story encompasses thousands of years of human and natural history. The rich plant and animal life that once thrived in this area provided resources that sustained human cultures for over 12,000 years. A trip to the Illinois State Museum Dickson Mounds will provide abundant opportunities to explore this rich story. The museum is located just north and west of the refuge.

## Public Use Activities



- Whether bird watching, fishing, hunting or taking pictures, there are many ways to enjoy refuge lands! All land and water areas on the refuge are open daily from sunrise to sunset.



- Take a scenic walk along the Bellrose Trail. This trail is named for the late waterfowl biologist Frank C. Bellrose.



- Pets are welcome, but must be leashed except when participating in legal hunting activities.

- The possession and consumption of alcohol is prohibited on the refuge.

- Off road vehicle use/ATV use, fires/fire works, and camping are prohibited on the refuge.

- This is your National Wildlife Refuge! Please remember to pack all your trash out with you.

- Please contact the refuge for additional details regarding activities permitted on Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge.



- Watch waterfowl and other birds from refuge trails, levees and other access points. Peak waterfowl migrations occur in early-March and mid-November.

- Pick mushrooms and berries; collect nuts.

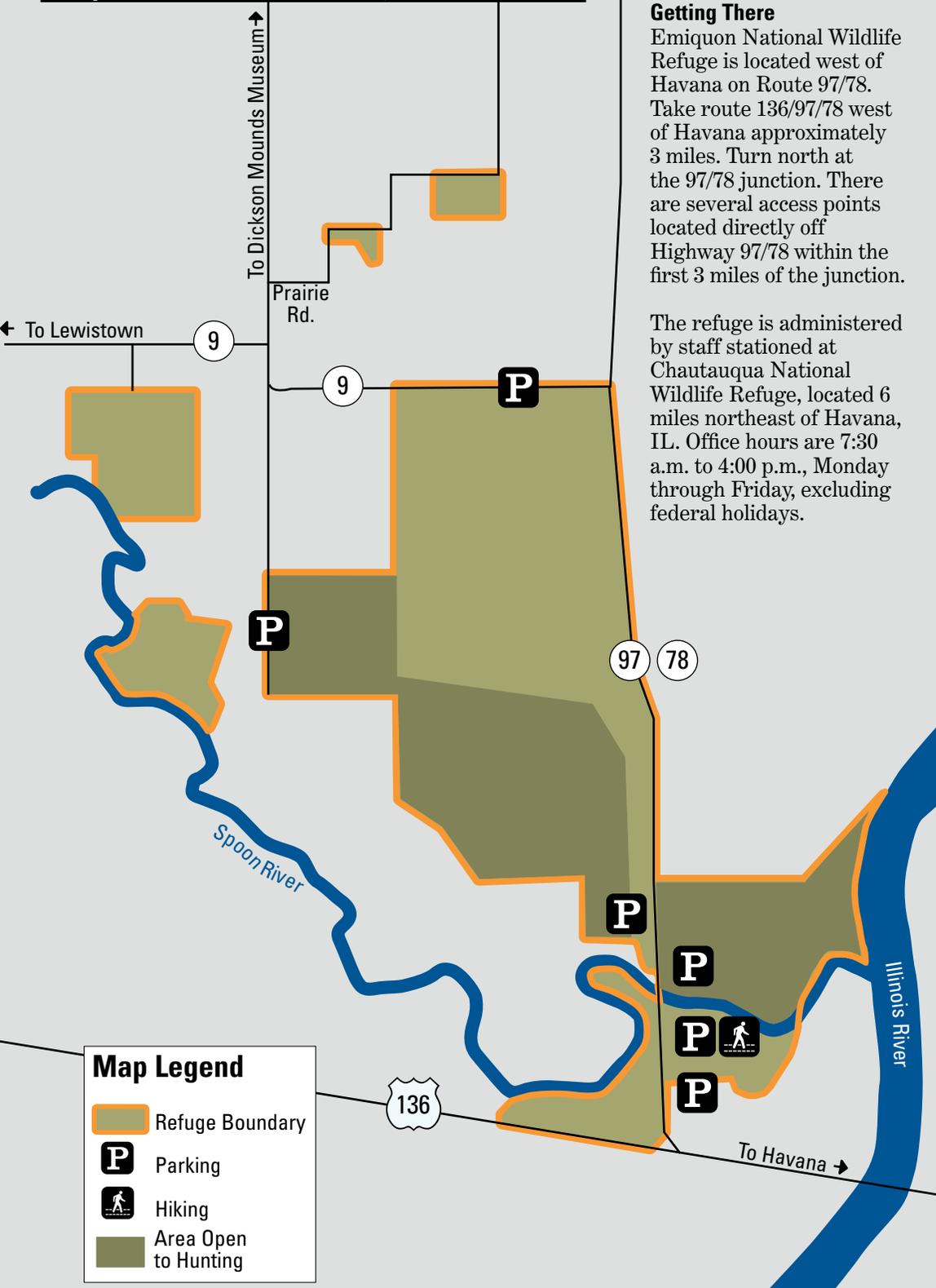


- Sport fishing is permitted on any refuge waters. Remember that the use of motorized boats are permitted at no wake speeds only.



- Hunting is open on specified areas north of the Spoon River. See refuge regulation sheet for detailed hunting information.

## Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge



### Getting There

Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge is located west of Havana on Route 97/78. Take route 136/97/78 west of Havana approximately 3 miles. Turn north at the 97/78 junction. There are several access points located directly off Highway 97/78 within the first 3 miles of the junction.

The refuge is administered by staff stationed at Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge, located 6 miles northeast of Havana, IL. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays.

### Map Legend

- Refuge Boundary
- Parking
- Hiking
- Area Open to Hunting

## Illinois National Wildlife Refuges

### Enjoy Your National Wildlife Refuges!

