

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Patuxent

Research Refuge



Established in 1936 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Patuxent Research Refuge is the nation's only national wildlife refuge established to support wildlife research. With land surrounding the Patuxent and Little Patuxent Rivers between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, MD, the refuge has grown from the original 2,670 acres to its present size of more than 12,800 acres and encompasses land formerly managed by the Departments

of Agriculture and Defense. Throughout decades of change, Patuxent's mission of conserving and protecting the nation's wildlife and habitat through research and wildlife management techniques has remained virtually unchanged.

Introduction



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

Patuxent Research Refuge supports a wide diversity of wildlife in forest, meadow and wetland habitats. The land is managed to maintain habitat for the protection and benefit of native and migratory species. During the fall and spring migrations, many species of birds stop to rest and feed on the refuge. Approximately 270 species have been seen.

Loss of forest in the area due to urban development threatens the health of many animals such as migratory birds, box turtles, bats, amphibians and pollinating insects. The refuge supports one of the largest intact forests of the mid-Atlantic region that can still provide critical nesting, foraging and stop-over habitat for a variety of wildlife.

Patuxent Research Refuge consists of three areas: 1) north tract, formerly a military training area; 2) central tract, where administrative offices and the study sites of many research biologists are located; and 3) south tract, where the National Wildlife Visitor Center is located. The south and north tracts are the only areas open for visitor activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography and educational programs.

Hooded merganser drake



Tim McCabe



N. Baldaecchino/USFWS

Researchers

North Tract

The north tract of refuge (east of Laurel) includes 8,100 acres that were formerly a military training area. This entrance is located off MD Route 198, just 1.4 miles east of the Baltimore/Washington Parkway (Route 295). The land was transferred from the Department of Defense to the refuge in 1991, and it is open for visitor activities that are compatible with research and wildlife management objectives.

The visitor contact station is located on Bald Eagle Drive, one mile south of its intersection with MD Route 198. All visitors must check in and receive an access pass. The north tract is open daily (except federal holidays) from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. Call 301/497 5770 to confirm operating hours and for more information.

Central Tract

The central tract is the location of the headquarters offices of both the Patuxent Research Refuge and its research partner, the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research

Center. It is also home to offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management. Central tract is closed to public visitation due to the sensitive nature of much of the scientific work.

South Tract

The south tract is the location of the National Wildlife Visitor Center (visitor center), with access off of Powder Mill Road between MD Route 197 and the Baltimore/Washington Parkway (Route 295), south of Laurel. The visitor center is one of the largest science and environmental education centers operated by the Department of the Interior. This unique facility seeks to impart to young and old alike an increased knowledge of and appreciation for the earth's vital resources. It highlights the work of those who strive to improve the condition of wildlife and their habitats.

The visitor center features interactive exhibits which focus on global environmental issues, migratory bird studies, habitats, endangered species, the tools and techniques used by scientists, and the role of the National Wildlife Refuge System in wildlife conservation. The south tract also offers wildlife observation trails,

Environmental Education



USFWS



N. Baldaecchino/USFWS

Hunting

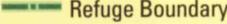
seasonal tram tours, seasonal fishing, wildlife management demonstration areas and outdoor education sites for school classes. A large auditorium and meeting rooms can accommodate scientific conferences and meetings, teacher workshops, lectures and traveling displays. An educational bookstore/gift shop, *Wildlife Images*, is operated by the Friends of Patuxent (a non-profit cooperating association). It offers a variety of conservation books and other educational materials. The visitor center is open daily from 9:00 am until 4:30 pm. Wildlife observation trails are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Both visitor center and grounds are closed on federal holidays. You may call 301/497 5763 or visit the refuge web site to confirm operating hours and for more information.

Hunting

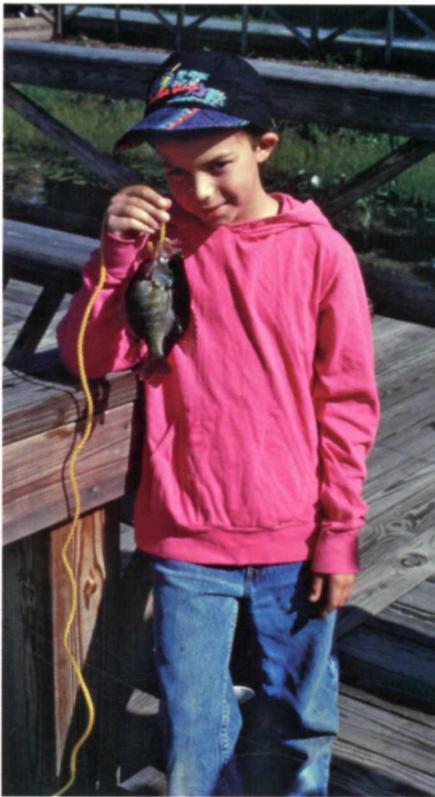
The refuge hunting program is administered by the refuge in conjunction with Meade Natural Heritage Association (a cooperating association). Hunting is typically

Patuxent Research Refuge

LEGEND

-  National Wildlife Visitor Center
-  Visitor Contact Station
-  Refuge Boundary
-  Wildlife Viewing Area
-  Hunting Control Station





N. Baldacchino/USFWS

Fishing

permitted only during established Maryland hunting seasons (usually September–January). A valid Maryland hunting license, verification of completion of a hunter safety course and other applicable documents are required. You may listen to a hunting information announcement by calling 301/317 3825. More information is available by calling 301/317 3819 during the hunting season. You may also visit the refuge website (www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent/) or www.mnha.net.

Fishing

A Maryland non-tidal sport fishing license and a free Patuxent Research Refuge vehicle parking pass for fishing are required. Anglers may fish seasonally at Cash Lake, located off of MD Route 197 on the south

tract of the refuge. Anglers may fish year-round (with some exceptions) at the north tract of the refuge. Hours may vary by season and location. Refuge fishing regulations, maps, and vehicle parking passes are available at both the north tract visitor contact station and at the south tract National Wildlife Visitor Center. Common species include bluegill, largemouth bass, catfish, black crappie, pickerel, eel, suckers, warmouth and pumpkinseed.

Wildlife Observation and Photography

The refuge offers many opportunities to observe and photograph wildlife. The thousands of acres of cool green forests laced with waterways and wetlands make birding during the spring migration spectacular. Rewarding sightings of birds, butterflies, frogs, turtles and interesting plants can be found at any season. At the north tract, approximately 20 miles of roads and trails exist for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. The Baltimore Gas and Electric Company has contributed to the creation of a wetland and wildlife viewing area where visitors may see waterfowl,

Birding



N. Baldacchino/USFWS



*The National Wildlife
Visitor Center*
N. Baldaachino/USFWS

shorebirds, raptors and songbirds in an area that was formerly an artillery firing range. At the south tract, approximately five miles of trails exist for hiking only (no bicycles are allowed). Trails and seasonal tram tours highlight wildlife habitat and management practices.

Educational Programs and Special Events

Staff and volunteers offer guided bird and nature walks as well as environmental education programs throughout the year at both the north and south tracts. Announcements of upcoming programs and special events are posted at refuge contact facilities, in local newspapers and on the refuge website. The website also features special information for teachers, scout leaders and other group leaders interested in visiting the refuge.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important part of the refuge. They assist with public use programs, wildlife management activities, environmental education programs, trails maintenance and clerical assistance. See the refuge website or visit the refuge for more information.

Visitor Regulations

The staff at Patuxent Research Refuge strive to maintain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission to conserve, protect and enhance wildlife and their habitats. It is the visitor's responsibility to ensure that wildlife has a place to grow and survive for future generations by respecting and obeying refuge regulations. In all cases, public access, use, or recreational activities not specifically permitted are prohibited. Please inquire at the north tract visitor contact station or National Wildlife Visitor Center to ensure your activity is permitted. All visitors to Patuxent Research Refuge are expected to comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations, as well as with the following conditions:

The refuge speed limit is 25 mph unless posted otherwise. Traveling off roads, off trails and in closed areas is prohibited. An exception to the "off-trail" policy applies to specifically designated "discovery areas" where children (and adults) can explore nature.

Pets must be kept on a leash (no longer than 10 feet) and under control

Volunteer
L. Garrett



at all times. Pets are not allowed in refuge ponds or waterways.

Please do not litter. Take trash (including pet waste) with you and dispose of it properly.

Plants and animals (living or dead) may not be disturbed, introduced or removed—with the exception of legally harvested game and fish.

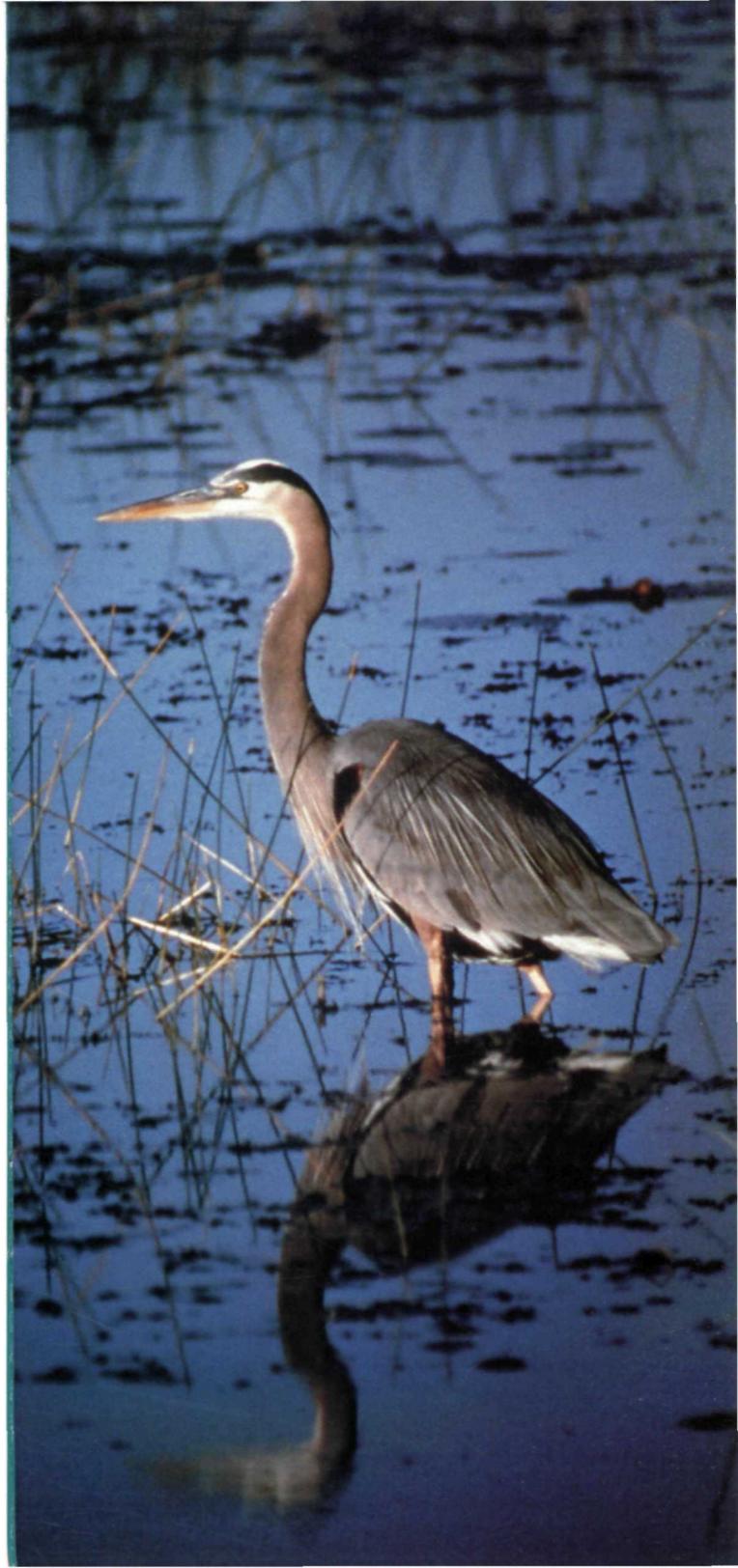
Activities such as swimming, tubing, rafting, picnicking and sunbathing are not allowed on the refuge. The use of boats for fishing is permitted only at Cash Lake with a valid refuge vehicle parking pass for fishing.

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on national wildlife refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

Great Swamp is one of more than 560 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat and represent the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world.

Great blue heron
H. Stein



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Patuxent Research Refuge
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708-4027
301/497 5580
301/497 5763
www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent/

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
800/877 8339
301/497 5763 through Relay Service

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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