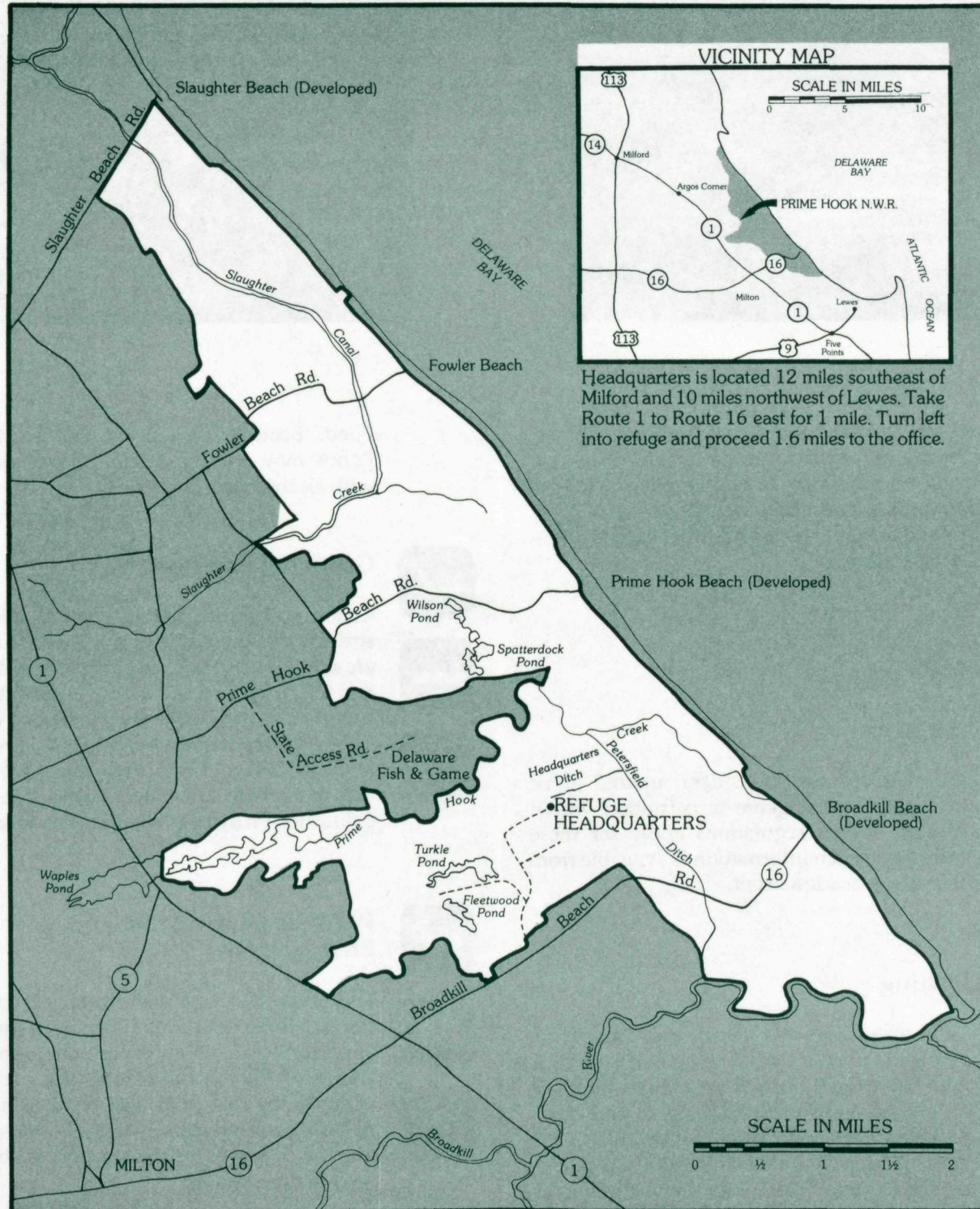


# Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge



93-686709

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Prime Hook is one of more than 470 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 represents the most comprehensive wildlife resource management program in the world. Units of the system stretch across the United States from northern Alaska to the Florida Keys, and include small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific. The character of the refuges is as diverse as the nation itself.

The Service also manages National Fish Hatcheries, and provides Federal leadership in habitat protection, fish and wildlife research, technical assistance and the conservation and protection of migratory birds, certain marine mammals and threatened and endangered species.

For further information contact:

Refuge Manager  
 Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge  
 RD #1, Box 195  
 Milton, Delaware 19968  
 Telephone: (302) 684-8419



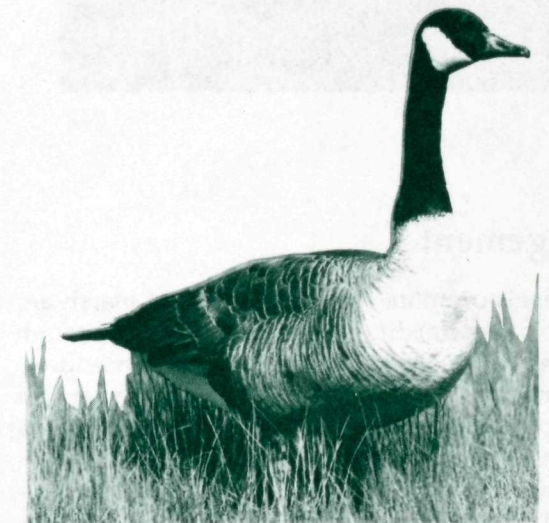
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

RL-51560-1

October 1991

# Prime Hook

## National Wildlife Refuge



Delaware



## Welcome

The Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1963 primarily to preserve coastal wetlands as wintering and breeding habitat for migratory waterfowl. It is located on the west shore of Delaware Bay, approximately 22 miles southeast of Dover, the State capital, and 64 miles southeast of Wilmington, Delaware.

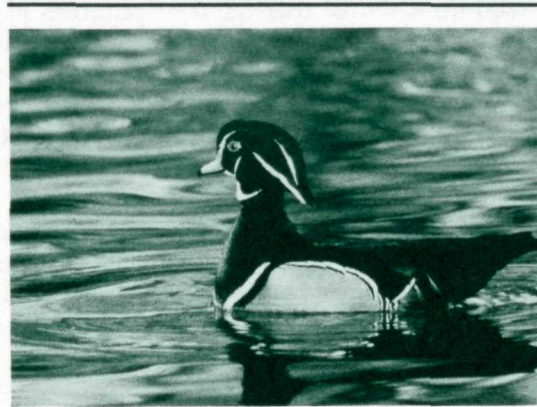
The refuge consists of 8,817 acres, approximately 6,800 acres of which are fresh marsh, tidal marsh, and water. Other habitat includes 850 acres of timber and brush and 1,100 acres of grasslands and croplands.



## Management

Water levels on more than 4,200 acres of marsh are raised or lowered at different times of the year through a system of low dikes and water control structures. This management stimulates the growth of emergent aquatic plant species for wildlife use. Management of the water level is important for restoring and maintaining suitable resting and feeding habitat for migratory and wintering waterfowl. The refuge provides nesting habitat for wood ducks, black ducks, and other species. Overall refuge management is directed toward providing a variety of habitat types for maximum wildlife diversity.

Upland fields are managed under an agreement with local farmers who leave a portion of the crop in the field to provide supplemental food and cover for waterfowl and other wildlife.



## Wildlife Calendar

The varied marsh habitat of the Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge provides homes for numerous species of birds, mammals, fishes, reptiles, and amphibians.

Spectacular concentrations of migrating waterfowl can be observed during certain periods in the spring and fall.

Migrations through the refuge provide an excellent opportunity for nature study. Fall concentrations of Canada geese, snow geese, black ducks, mallards, and wood ducks are of particular interest. Many waterfowl winter on the refuge. A variety of herons, shorebirds, terns, and songbirds provide additional interesting observations. May is the best time for viewing shorebirds and warblers. Several species of waterfowl and other waterbirds commonly nest in the marshes.

Spring is the best time for observing reptiles and amphibians. The most frequently sighted wetland species are the red-bellied and painted turtles, while various frog species such as spring peeper, cricket, and



bull frogs can be heard and sometimes seen. Upland species frequently spotted are garter and black rat snakes, red-backed salamander, American and Fowler toads, and the less commonly seen fence lizard. A list of reptiles and amphibians using the refuge is available at headquarters.

## Public Use



### Hunting

Hunting of waterfowl, deer, upland game birds, and small game is permitted within season. Special regulations apply for these hunts, and such information is available from the refuge headquarters.



### Fishing

Tidal waterways and Turtle and Fleetwood Ponds are open to sportfishing in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Large-mouth bass, pickerel, white perch and crappies are most sought after and abundant. Favorite fishing sites are Prime Hook Creek, Petersfield Ditch, Turtle Pond, and Fleetwood



Pond. Boats using Turtle and Fleetwood Ponds may only be propelled manually or with electric motors.



## Canoeing and Boating

Canoe enthusiasts have over 15 miles of streams and ditches to enjoy. Favorite routes are along Prime Hook Creek, Petersfield Ditch and Slaughter Creek. Boating is permitted in tidal waters and Turtle and Fleetwood Ponds in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Several boat launching ramps are available to provide convenient access. These are delineated on maps available at headquarters.



## Wildlife Observation and Photography

Two trails and four State highways which transect the refuge afford the visitor an ideal opportunity to observe and photograph a variety of wildlife and plants. Please remember that the taking of any plant or animal without a permit is prohibited. Many species may be observed relatively undisturbed in their natural habitat.

