

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Tamarac

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



There is a special feeling of wildness about this place, Tamarac, best expressed by the eerie howl of a wolf, mournful wail of a loon or the whispering breeze as it dances through the leaves of the forest.

*Bald Eagle &
Chick at Nest*
©Paul Christianson





Bird's Eye View of Tamarac

©Dominique Braud

A Look Into the Past

Ten thousand years ago, receding glaciers left behind the rolling ridges and deep depressions that became a woodland area complemented by lakes, rivers, bogs and marshes. Lying along the backbone of Minnesota, the Egg and Buffalo Rivers begin here and the Otter Tail starts just upstream. All eventually empty into the Hudson Bay via the Red River of the North.

Native American Indian Tribes, the Chippewa and Dakota before them, knew the value of the lush beds of manomin (wild rice), stands of sugar maple and abundance of wild foods,



*Chippewa
Ricers at
Rice Lake*

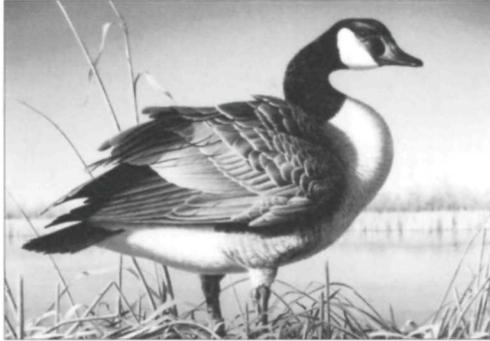
USFWS Photo

fish and game the land provided for their people. Historical sites throughout the refuge chronicle their utilization and numerous battles fought over these precious resources.

More than a hundred years ago, loggers harvested most of the area's giant red and white pines, sending the logs down the Egg, Buffalo and Otter Tail Rivers. Settlers followed the loggers, but attempts to farm met with little success due to marginal soils, many wetlands and dense forests.

Establishment of the Refuge

In 1938 an Executive Order established the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, its perpetual purpose to serve as a breeding ground and sanctuary for migratory birds and other wildlife. Tamarac's nearly 43,000 acres were purchased with funds from the sale of *Federal Duck Stamps*.



1997 Federal
Duck Stamp

Robert Hautman

Early development, such as roads, trails, buildings and water control structures, was accomplished by the *Civilian Conservation Corps* in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1960s a Job Corps Conservation Center assisted with further development. The *Young Adult Conservation Corps* program made a valuable contribution during the 1970s and 1980s also.

Today, Tamarac is one of more than 500 units in the National Wildlife Refuge System; the most diverse and complete collection of wildlife habitats and wildlands managed by any resource agency in the world.

Habitat Management Benefits Wildlife and People!

Tamarac lies in the heart of one of the most diverse vegetative transition zones in North America, where tallgrass prairie, northern hardwood and boreal forests converge. Wilderness Areas are managed by protection to benefit wildlife associated with old growth timber stands. Other habitats are manipulated, using prescribed burning, timber harvesting, water level manipulation, native grass seeding, row crop farming or special plantings.

Marsh Marigolds

©Dominique Braud



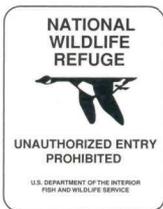
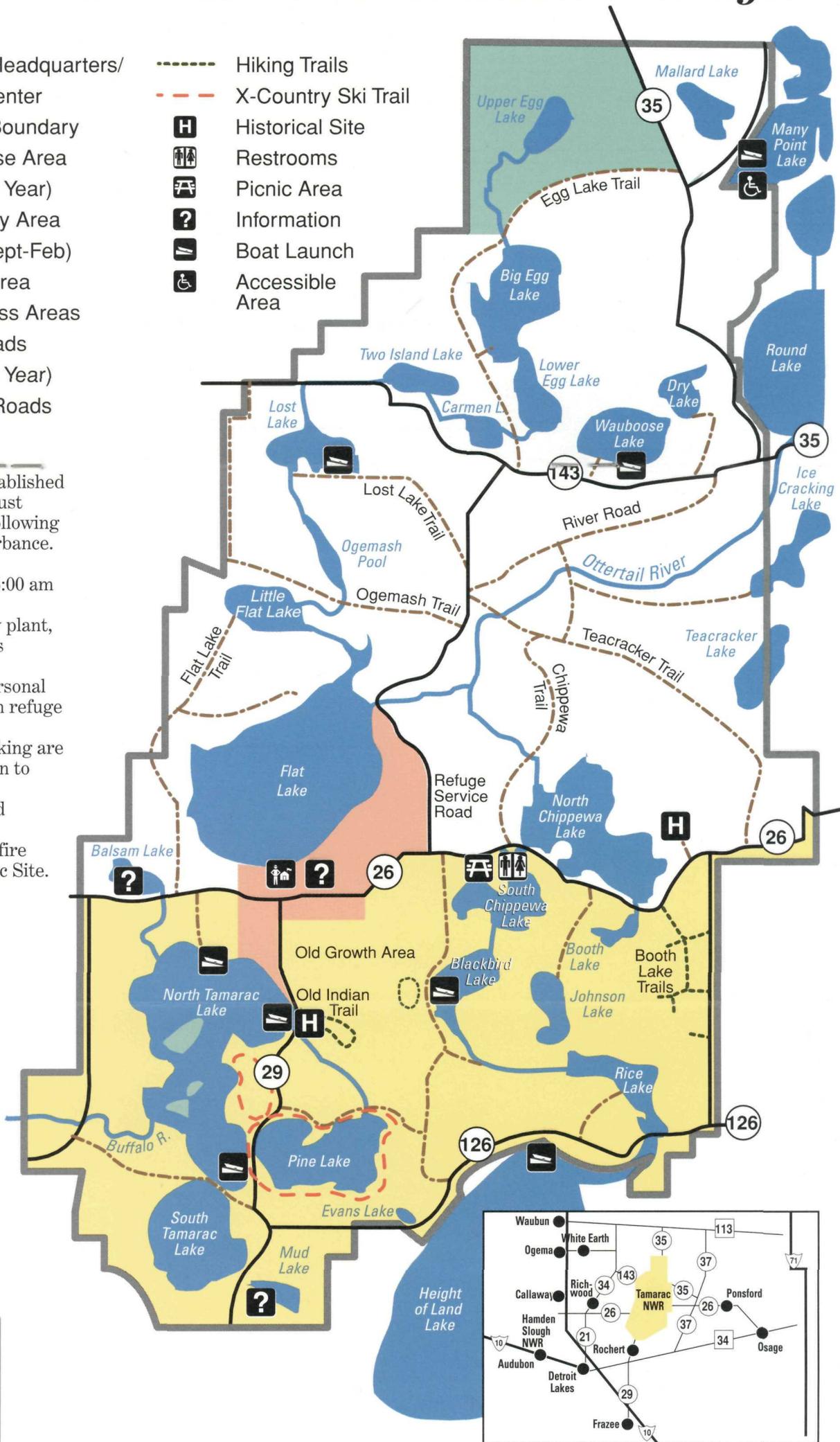
Welcome to Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge!

- Refuge Headquarters/ Visitor Center
- Refuge Boundary
- Visitor Use Area (Open all Year)
- Sanctuary Area (Open Sept-Feb)
- Closed Area
- Wilderness Areas
- Main Roads (Open all Year)
- Service Roads
- Hiking Trails
- X-Country Ski Trail
- Historical Site
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Information
- Boat Launch
- Accessible Area

Regulations

Tamarac is a special place established for wildlife. As visitors, we must understand and respect the following regulations to minimize disturbance.

- Visitor use hours are from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm daily.
- Collecting or disturbing any plant, animal or historical object is prohibited.
- ATV's, snowmobiles and personal watercraft are prohibited on refuge lands and waters.
- Boating, canoeing and kayaking are permitted only on lakes open to summer fishing.
- Swimming, water-skiing and tubing are prohibited.
- Fires are permitted only in fire rings at the Chippewa Picnic Site.
- Camping and overnight parking is prohibited.
- Possession of firearms or weapons is prohibited with the exception of hunting in designated areas.
- Pets must either be kept on a leash or under control at all times.
- Parking in front of, or in any manner blocking gates is prohibited.
- Activities not addressed in this leaflet are not permitted.
- Questions regarding regulations should be directed to the Refuge Manager.



Volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in helping the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service fulfill its mission of conserving, protecting, and enhancing America's fish and wildlife and their habitats.

At Tamarac, a knowledgeable and dedicated staff of volunteers donate many hours of their time each year, helping to make your visit a fond memory. They assist with public use and environmental education programs, wildlife management activities, trail maintenance and clerical work.

If you would like to volunteer, or have questions about our program, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.



White-tailed Buck
©Dominique Braud

Wooded Bog
©Dominique Braud



Refuge Wildlife

Transitional habitats provide a haven for a diversity of wildlife species and some are at the extreme edge of their range in Minnesota. Although native wildlife is important, priority is given to migratory birds and threatened and endangered species.



The forests and waters of Tamarac are home to an expanding bald eagle population and sightings are common during the breeding season. A nesting population of trumpeter swans are now present following a reintroduction program that began in 1987. The numbers of wild turkeys are likewise increasing due to reintroduction efforts. Migration of songbirds, especially neotropical migrants, can be spectacular in mid May. Waterfowl migration is best experienced in late fall, when dabbling ducks and geese are passing through and rafts of diving ducks may be seen on Tamarac's larger lakes.



Visitors look forward to the possibility of sighting white-tailed deer, porcupine, beaver, raccoon and fox. The more fortunate may even catch sight of elusive residents such as black bear, river otter, fisher, moose or timber wolf.

Photos Above:
Common Loon
©Dominique Braud

Trumpeter Swans
Bruce Stordahl

*Monarch on
Liatris*
©Dominique Braud

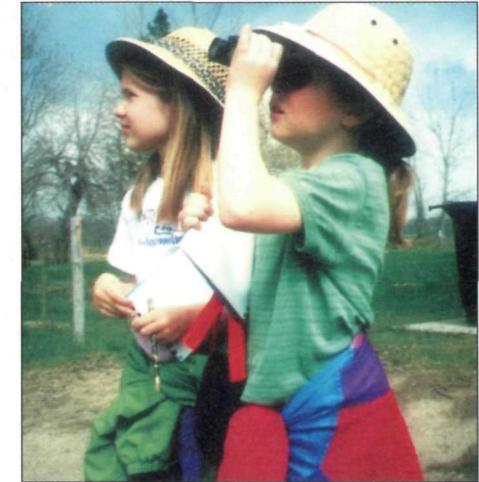
Gray Wolf
USFWS Photo

*Respect
Wildlife!*

Wildlife Viewing Tips

You may have better success viewing wildlife if you follow some of these suggestions. We encourage visitors to share wildlife sightings with others by recording them at the visitor center.

Use of binoculars or a spotting scope will help you get a better view without getting too close and disturbing wildlife.



Young Birders
Nancy Henke

Observe wildlife during their peak activity hours which are around dawn and dusk.

Your vehicle makes a good blind. Drive slowly and watch for movement. Use your ears as well as your eyes.

Wear clothes that blend in with the habitat. Avoid using scented soaps, shampoos or perfumes prior to your visit to the woods. Use of insect repellent is recommended during the summer season.

Hike quietly and into the wind, keeping the sun at your back. Freeze when you spot wildlife and use vegetation as a screen.

Be observant. Look for clues to their presence such as tracks or scat. Pay close attention to where vegetation changes, such as the edge of a field or marsh.

Spring



Seasonal Phenology Notes

Spring is a good time to look for songbirds, as they travel through the area in large numbers. Other wildlife species are moving around and more easily visible before leaves have fully opened.

Summer



Summer is the time to see deer fawns, observe nesting and the movements of family groups. Many wildflowers, such as lady's slippers, begin to bloom in late spring and early summer.

Fall



Fall berries and other foods attract scores of wildlife species. Migrating birds need energy for the long trip ahead. Many mammals gorge themselves in preparation for their upcoming winter sleep.

Winter



Winter tracks and tunnels can tell you much about an animal's daily activities. Birds are less shy now than during the breeding season. Owls begin their courtship and hoots can be heard during evening hours.

Visitor Opportunities

While the needs of wildlife are our first priority, Tamarac also provides many opportunities for visitors to enjoy and learn more about our natural world through wildlife-compatible activities.

Visitor Center

Open since 1981, the center features an exhibit area, observation deck, bookshop and auditorium. Hours are 7:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday year-round and 12:00 to 5:00 pm summer weekends. The center is closed on federal holidays. Consult the summer schedule for programs or special activities which may be offered. Visitor center gates are locked at closing.

Photos Above:

*Frog on
Pine Cone*

©Dominique Braud

*Showy Pink
Lady Slippers*

Betsy Beneke,
USFWS

*Tamarack
Branches*

Don Hultman, USFWS

Winter Frost

©Dominique Braud



*Environmental
Education*



Public Use at Tamarac

Groups are welcome. Interpretive programs may be offered during the summer season. For more information, or to make group arrangements, please contact the refuge office.

*Wildlife
Observation &
Photography*



The refuge abounds with wildlife viewing opportunities and over 250 bird and 40 mammal species have been recorded here since 1938. Lakes, rivers and wetlands provide homes for countless species of fish, reptiles and amphibians. Near woodlands and grasslands you will find butterflies, moths, insects and other creatures. Leaf color during the fall season is spectacular! Hiking trails and the auto tour route allow quick access to scenic areas. A bird checklist is available.

*Blackbird Auto
Tour Route*

This drive is a five mile long self-guided interpretive trail which travels through forested areas and follows the edges of lakes, marshes and bogs. The tour is open May through October, road conditions permitting. Pick up a copy of the guide leaflet at the visitor center or information kiosks.

*Special
Use Areas*

The *Sanctuary Area* includes lands and trails north of County Road 26 which are closed to the public from March 1 through August 31 to give resident wildlife a sanctuary during the breeding season. The *Visitor Use Area* south of County Road 26 is set aside for public use and is open year-round to all permitted activities.

*Hiking
Trails*



The *Old Indian Hiking Trail* on County Road 29 winds through maple-bass-wood and diverse forest for approximately 1.5 miles. All roads and trails in the Visitor Use Area are also open for hiking year round and snowshoeing during winter months. Roads and trails in the Sanctuary Area are open for hiking or snowshoeing from September through February only.

Picnic Area



The *Chippewa Picnic site*, along the banks of the Otter Tail River, offers tables, fire rings and restrooms. Please pack out your trash.

Fishing



Several lakes are open for fishing throughout the year. Two sites along the Otter Tail River are also open for bank fishing. A handicapped accessible pier is located by the boat ramp on Many Point Lake. Consult the refuge's *Fishing Map & Regulations* leaflet and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources *Fishing Regulations* booklet, or White Earth regulations for more detailed information.

Hunting



The refuge offers opportunities for hunters during the fall and winter months. Consult the refuge's *Hunting Map & Regulations* leaflet and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources *Hunting and Trapping Regulations* booklet, or White Earth regulations for more detailed information.

*Bicycling &
Horseback
Riding*

These activities are permitted only on county and township roads, the *Refuge Service Road* and the *Blackbird Auto Tour Route*.

*X-Country
Skiing*



The *Pine Lake Ski Trail* is open seasonally and offers two ungroomed loops of approximately 1.5 miles and 6 miles. A parking lot and trail head map are located on County Road 29. Roads and trails in the *Visitor Use Area* are also open seasonally. Roads and trails in the *Sanctuary Area* are open through the end of February only.

*Mushroom &
Berry Picking*



The *Visitor Use Area* is open for these activities.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge
35704 Co. Hwy 26
Rochert, MN 56578-9638

218/847 2641

TTY users may reach Tamarac through
Minnesota's State Relay Service
at 1 800/657-3775 (V/TTY)

Tamarac's website address:
<http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/tamarac/>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD



Tamarac

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



*Drumming
Ruffed Grouse*
Al Markegard