

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Yazoo

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to "administer a national network of lands for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."



This blue goose, designed by Ding Darling, has become a symbol of the Refuge System.

Introduction

Located in the heart of the Mississippi River Delta region between the Mississippi River and the loessal hills, the Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge Complex provides a haven for migratory waterfowl, neotropical migratory birds and native wildlife as well as outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities for the public.



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The Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge Complex consists of Yazoo, Panther Swamp, Hillside, Morgan Brake and Mathews Brake National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). All but Yazoo NWR lie along

the Yazoo River south of Greenwood, Mississippi. Land acquisition began in 1936 with the purchase of 2,166 acres under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. Yazoo NWR has since grown to a complex of five refuges consisting of over 75,000 acres of bottomland hardwoods, cypress-tupelo brakes, forested uplands, sloughs and agricultural lands.

Wildlife

Located along the Mississippi Flyway these refuges are links in a chain that provide wintering habitat for ducks and geese. Yazoo NWR alone is haven to over 50,000 overwintering geese and 100,000 ducks. Beginning in late fall and ending in early spring the Yazoo Refuge Complex provides resting and feeding areas for such species as blue and green-winged teal, mallards, gadwalls, shovelers, Canada geese, and snow geese. From March through May, wood ducks are

Migratory Birds



USFWS

*cover photo:
Randy Breland
photo at left: USFWS*

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common and use the more than 500 artificial nest boxes provided for nesting.

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Other migratory birds take advantage of the refuges' diverse habitat. Neotropical songbirds such as painted and indigo buntings, prothonotary warblers, robins, marsh wrens and Carolina chickadees are among the numerous species that can be observed during spring. Flocks of magnificent white pelicans also stop over on their spring and fall migrations.

Endangered and Threatened Species

The Yazoo Refuge Complex is home to the endangered Louisiana black bear. Recent sightings and evidence of Louisiana black bears living on or near Yazoo and Panther Swamp NWRs are well documented. Bear tracks and sightings seem to be on the increase. Threatened bald eagles can be seen soaring above refuge waters in search of food, and they have traditionally nested adjacent to refuge lands at Yazoo and Morgan Brake NWRs. Endangered least terns are regular visitors.

Other Wildlife

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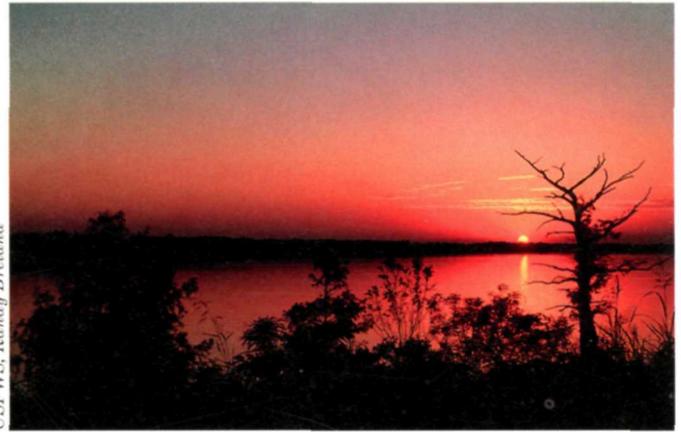
The Yazoo Refuge Complex is home to a myriad of wildlife species. Excellent rookery habitat provides resting and nesting sites for great blue and little blue herons, great and snowy egrets, white ibis and anhingas. Yazoo NWR's Swan Lake abounds with nesting herons and egrets; in fact, seventeen species of marsh and water birds nest on the refuge. Over 20 species of shorebirds found here include yellowlegs, black-necked stilts, dowitchers, plovers and various sandpipers.

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The Yazoo Refuge Complex and especially Yazoo NWR has earned the reputation throughout the Southeast for producing quality white-tailed deer that are known for their large size and exceptional

USFWS, Randy Breland



antler development. Dozens of record book deer have been recorded on the refuge over the years. The area is also home to a variety of smaller mammals including raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, and the ever popular river otter. American alligators reside throughout the area, but are most prevalent at Yazoo NWR with thriving populations at Hillside and Panther Swamp refuges also.

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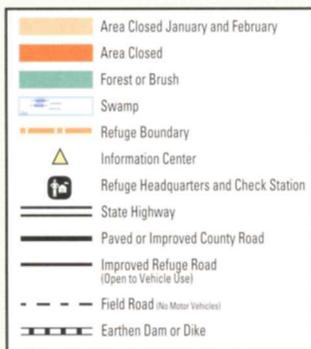
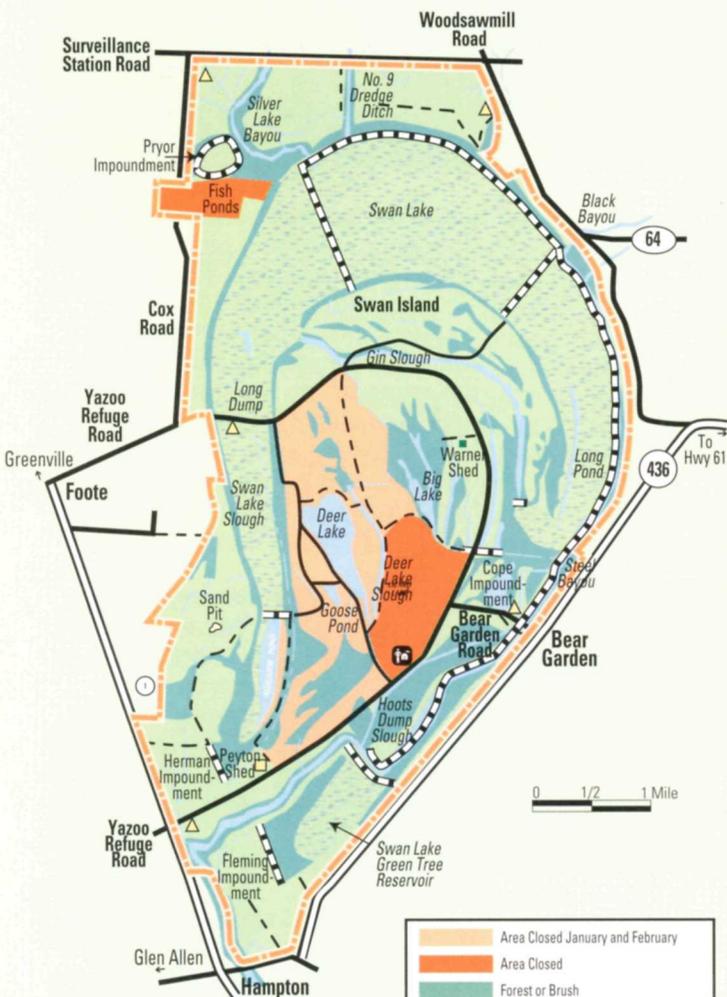


Managing the Habitat
Habitat management throughout the five refuges focuses on three areas: impoundment management, forest

management and agriculture. The impoundments can be managed as permanent water, green-tree reservoirs, and moist-soil units. Green-tree reservoirs can be also be described as seasonal wetlands which are intentionally flooded during the late fall and winter for wintering waterfowl. Moist-soil units are managed to benefit waterfowl and shorebirds by providing natural foods that are excellent sources of

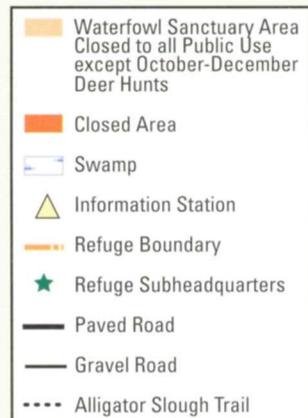
Yazoo

National Wildlife Refuge



Hillside

National Wildlife Refuge



Mathews Brake

National Wildlife Refuge



 Waterfowl Sanctuary Area
Closed to all Public Use
December 1 - March 15

XXXX Waterfowl Sanctuary Boundary

 Swamp

 Information Station

 Public Boat Ramp -
Disabled Accessible

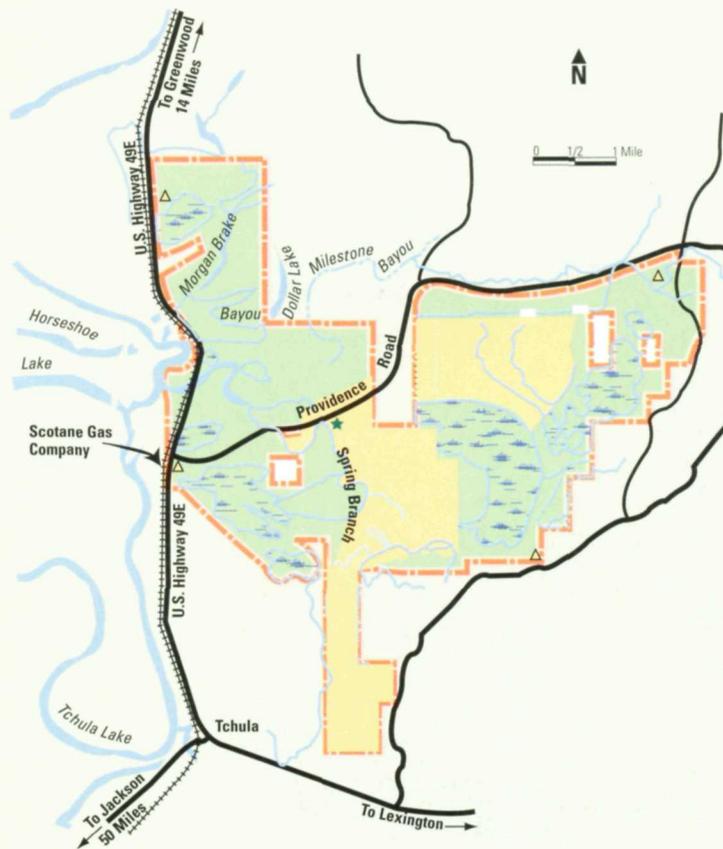
 Refuge Boundary

 Paved Road

 Gravel Road

Morgan Brake

National Wildlife Refuge



 Area Closed

 Swamp

 Information Station

 Refuge Boundary

 Refuge Subheadquarters

 State Highway or Paved County
Paved Road

 Gravel Road

Panther Swamp

National Wildlife Refuge



nutrition. Supplemental grains may be planted at times but the vegetation in our moist soil units is largely natural.

Agriculture



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USFWS, Tim Wilkins

Cooperative farming efforts play an important role in providing food for migrating and wintering waterfowl. Cooperative farming involves local farmers planting crops such as corn, wheat, rice, soybeans and milo on refuge lands, and then as payment for using the land, leaving a portion of the crops as food for wildlife. While ducks and geese are the greatest beneficiary of this practice, a wide variety of other wildlife derive sustenance from the crop residues as well.

Reforestation



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Two centuries ago the Lower Mississippi River Valley contained over 24 million acres of bottomland hardwood and swamp forests. Today, only 4.4 million acres of wetland forests remain, fragmented like islands in a sea of agriculture. In an effort to re-link these remaining forested areas and improve habitat, the refuge conducts an ongoing reforestation program to

reclaim habitat and restore the bottomland hardwood forest community.

Species being replanted include: Nuttall oak, willow oak, water oak, cherrybark oak, overcup oak, sweet pecan, ash, persimmon and bald-cypress. Gradually, agricultural fields throughout the refuge complex that were historically forests are becoming forests once again. The mast produced by these trees are an important food source that enhances wildlife diversity, and the trees themselves retard erosion and serve as filters to improve water quality.

Enjoy Your Visit

The headquarters entrance for the Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge

Complex is located 25 miles south of Greenville, Mississippi on Highway 1. A \$12.00 annual entrance pass is required throughout the complex for public use activities.

Headquarters



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Hunting

All five refuges in the complex are open for hunting small game and deer. Panther Swamp, Hillside, Morgan Brake, and Mathews Brake are open for waterfowl hunting. Before hunting, please contact Yazoo Refuge Headquarters for information on brochures, regulations and required permits.

Fishing

Hillside, Morgan Brake, Mathews Brake and Panther Swamp NWRs are open for fishing. Yazoo NWR is closed to fishing. Mathews Brake is noted for its fishing opportunities and offers handicap fishing access. Contact refuge headquarters for information regarding seasons, regulations and required permits.

*Wildlife
Observation/
Photography*

Except where posted, all refuge roads, dikes and levees are open to foot traffic. The 0.6 mile Alligator Slough Nature Trail at Hillside NWR is fully accessible. This trail winds through a cypress/tupelo swamp and is an excellent place to view wildlife. Visitors are encouraged to view wildlife, bird watch and pursue wildlife photography on all five refuges. The best times of the year for viewing wildlife are late fall through spring.

Vehicles

Vehicles are allowed on designated improved roads. Some roads are for refuge use only. Obey all signs.

ATV Use

ATVs are permitted on designated portions of the complex while hunting during authorized seasons only. See hunt brochure for additional information and regulations.

*Other Refuge
Regulations*

Firearms and archery tackle are prohibited except while legally hunting.

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Disturbing, feeding or collecting wildlife or plants and searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads and pottery shards is prohibited.

Use of artificial light (including vehicle lights) to observe wildlife is prohibited.

Camping and fires are prohibited.

*photos at right: USFWS
center photo: Randy
Breland*



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