

Patuxent Research Refuge
North Tract
230 Bald Eagle Drive
Laurel, MD 20724
301/776 3090
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/patuxent>

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
1 800/877 8339

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

October 2008



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Patuxent

Research Refuge

North Tract Trails



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Buck

Welcome



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

Welcome to Patuxent Research Refuge. This refuge was established in 1936 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Patuxent is America's first and only refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System devoted to support wildlife research.

Patuxent's mission is "to help protect and conserve the Nation's wildlife and habitat through research on critical environmental problems and issues." It serves as a green and blue haven for wildlife and people in the National Capital Region. Its 12,750 acres of extensive forest, meadow, and wetland habitats are managed for biological diversity and for the protection and benefit of native and migratory species. Public uses deemed compatible with these goals are permitted in designated areas throughout the refuge.

The North Tract of Patuxent is 8,100 acres and is located off of Rt. 198 between the Baltimore/Washington Parkway and Rt. 32 in Laurel, Maryland. It offers a variety of wildlife related activities for visitors to enjoy including: hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, photography, fishing, and hunting. More than 20 miles of trails and roads, six fishing areas, and a wildlife viewing area are available for public use at the North Tract. In addition, over 200 species of birds occur on the refuge at different times of the year.

In 1991, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service obtained the North Tract property, formerly a military training area, from Ft. Meade. This property has been swept for unexploded ordnance. However, issues concerning personal safety mandate that all visitors check in at the Visitor Contact Station to receive an access pass upon their arrival at the North Tract.

The following is a list of public use areas on the North Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge. Use the symbols and descriptions provided to help you plan your activities.



Automobile access



Fishing



Cross-country skiing



Hiking



Biking



Horseback riding

Wildlife Loop

Road

(8 mi.):



This scenic roadway is one of two paved roads on the North Tract of the refuge. It winds through unique habitats from upland meadows to flooded forests. A wide variety of plants and animals can be found in these habitats.

The Wildlife Viewing Area:



Located on Wildlife Loop, this 35-acre constructed wetland, with its scenic overlooks, offers excellent opportunities to view wildlife such as basking turtles, purple martins, tree swallows, and a variety of dragonflies. Visitors are encouraged to use the elevated view points, exhibits, and spotting scope to enhance their visit to this special area. Restroom facilities are available.



Raccoon



Multi-Use Trails:



South Road, Wild Turkey Way, Sweetgum Lane, Whip-poor-will Way, and Kingfisher Road. This series of interconnecting trails provides over 9 miles of gravel and dirt roads to hikers, bikers, cross-country skiers, and horseback riders. These trails offer several birding and wildlife viewing opportunities in a variety of habitats.

Little Patuxent River Trail

(.75 mi.):



This trail meanders through a bottomland hardwood forest habitat. The scenic vistas provide views of the Little Patuxent River. It is most spectacular in the spring when beautiful showy wildflowers, including Virginia blue bells, spring beauty, and Jack-in-the-pulpit carpet the forest floor.

Forest Trail

(2.5 mi.):



This trail traverses through second growth hardwood forest providing a glimpse of life beneath the canopy. The careful observer may find forest dwelling butterflies, song birds, and box turtles. In the autumn, the beech trees turn brilliant gold while the maples take on a reddish hue. Any season is a perfect time to take a quiet walk along this secluded trail.

Pine Trail

(.75 mi.):



Located on an abandoned roadway, this trail connects Wildlife Loop Road with the St. Peter's Church Cemetery. This cemetery stands as a reminder of the families of farmers who once called this area home.

Patuxent Research Refuge

North Tract Trails

Pine Trail (0.75 mi)

Little Patuxent River Trail (0.75 mi)

Forest Trail (2.5 mi)

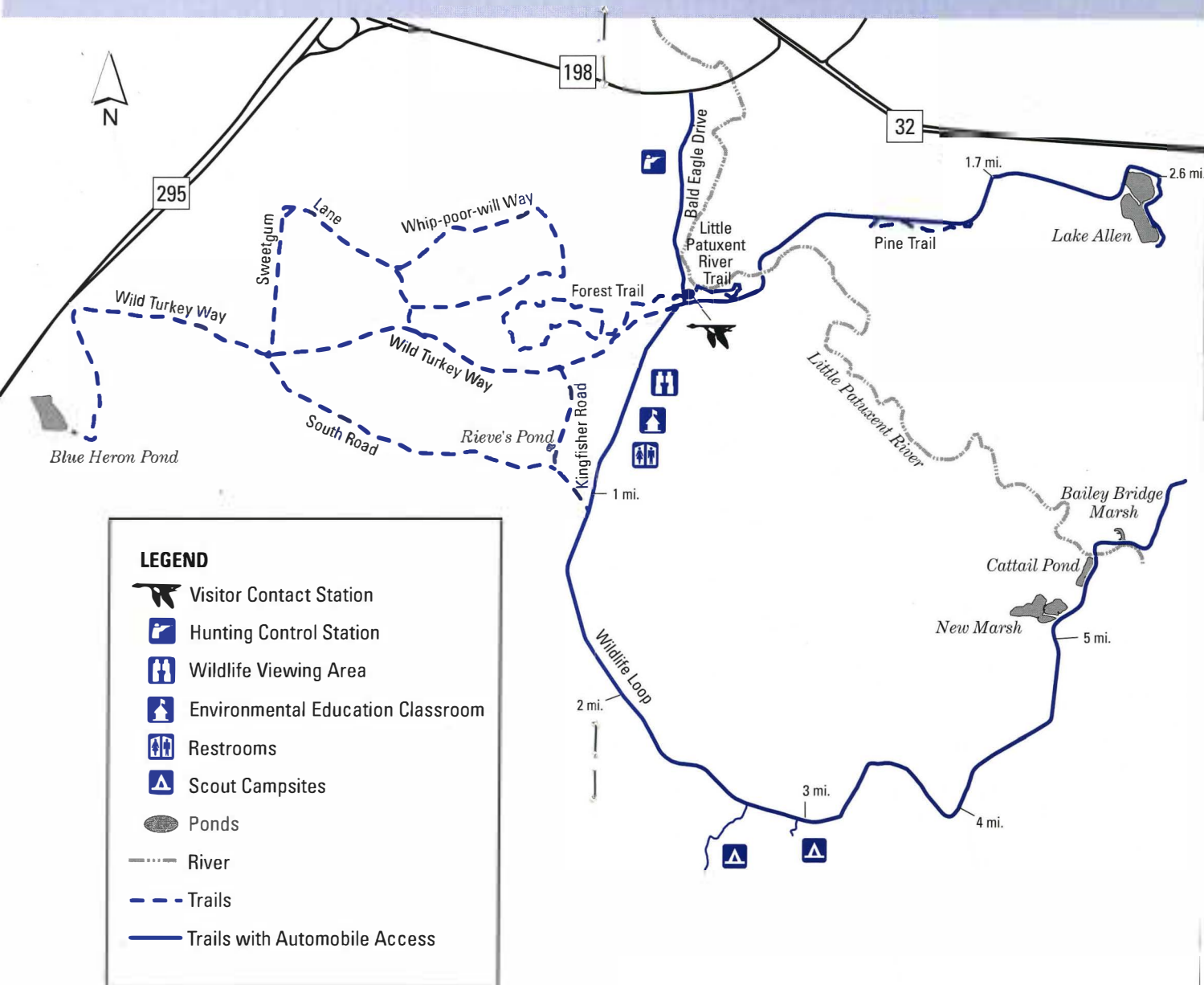
South Road (1.7 mi)

Wild Turkey Way (3.6 mi)

Sweetgum Lane (1.6 mi)

Whip-poor-will Way (1.8 mi)

Kingfisher Road (0.5 mi)



Blue Heron Pond Blind:

At the end of the Wild Turkey Way is an accessible blind which overlooks the Blue Heron Pond and surrounding area. From the blind, glimpses of waterfowl, dragonflies, butterflies, and other wildlife may be seen.

Lake Allen:



This 13-acre lake provides accessible fishing piers and wildlife viewing blinds. Surrounding areas are open to hiking, biking, horseback riding, and cross country skiing. (This area is subject to occasional closure).

Rieve's Pond:



This spring-fed pond is accessible via Kingfisher Road providing a comfortable fishing spot. The trail surrounding the pond can also be used by hikers, horseback riders, and cross country skiers.

New Marsh:



Located on Wildlife Loop, this 5-acre marsh complex consists of three ponds. This area is open to fishing and wildlife viewing. An accessible trail leads to the water's edge, while a hiking trail surrounds the entire area.

Cattail Pond, Bailey Bridge Marsh, Lower Little Patuxent River:



Located near the southeast end of Wildlife Loop, Cattail Pond and Bailey Bridge Marsh provide an excellent opportunity to catch panfish and large mouth bass. The Little Patuxent River, downstream of the Bailey Bridge, gives the angler an opportunity to fish in swiftly moving water which is home to small mouth bass, blue gill, and catfish. Wading is only allowed while fishing in this stretch of the river.

Wildlife Backyard Habitat Demonstration Area:

Habitat areas located at the Visitor Contact Station offer examples and information on how individuals can create their own wildlife backyard habitat. This area is wheelchair accessible.



Turtles

Education:

The North Tract offers a wide variety of educational and interpretive opportunities for all ages. Staff and volunteers lead bird and nature walks as well as environmental education programs throughout the year. A schedule of monthly activities is located at the Visitor Contact Station or on our website.

Hunting:

A wide range of hunting opportunities awaits the sports person who ventures into the woods and fields of the North Tract. A managed hunt is offered by the refuge and the Meade Natural Heritage Association (MNHA), September – January in accordance with the Maryland State hunting seasons. A permit issued by MNHA, a valid Maryland hunting license, verification of hunter safety course, and a Maryland State Shooters Qualification Card are required to hunt on the refuge. For persons interested in hunting, please contact MNHA at 301/317 3825 or 301/317 3819.

Scouting:



Great horned owl

Located on the North Tract are two campsites, each equipped with accessible toilets and a fire ring for use by the Boy and Girl Scouts of America and 4-H groups. These areas are available seasonally and reservations are given on a first come, first serve basis. The refuge also provides merit badge workshops and public service opportunities for the scouts. For information, please call the Visitor Contact Station.

Fishing:

For those 16 and older interested in fishing at the North Tract, a Maryland non-tidal fishing license is required. All Maryland state fishing rules apply. Refuge regulations that must be followed at Patuxent include:

- Fishing is allowed only in authorized fishing areas.
- No use of live bait (except earthworms).
- Boating is prohibited (including all floating apparatus).
- Bow fishing is prohibited.
- Bass are catch-and-release only.
- Wading is permitted in the Little Patuxent River down stream of the Bailey Bridge only.



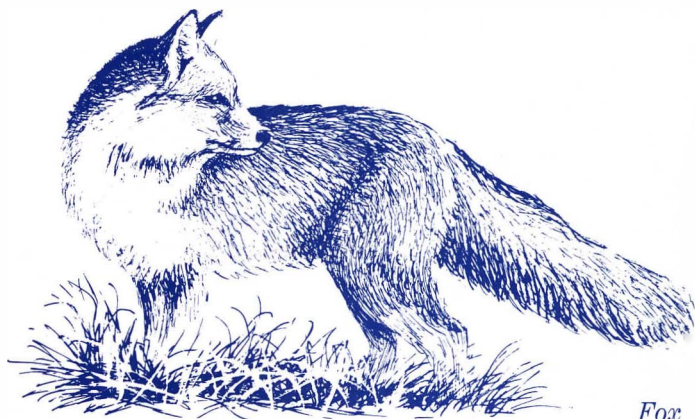
Volunteering:

Volunteers are an integral part of the refuge. They assist with public use programs, wildlife management activities, environmental education programs, trail maintenance, and clerical duties. For more information, contact the Refuge Volunteer Coordinator at 301/497 5565.

Visitor Regulations:

In order to protect wildlife, habitat, and research on the refuge, visitors must follow the following:

- Stay on marked trails and abide by posted signs and regulations.
- Dogs are permitted on the trails, but must be kept on a leash no longer than 10 ft. and under control at all times.
- Removal of wildlife or plants from the refuge or introduction of new species is prohibited.
- Non-wildlife related recreational activities such as picnicking, ball playing, camping, and sunbathing are not permitted.
- Possession of alcohol is prohibited.
- Littering is prohibited.



Public use areas are utilized more and more each day. In order to preserve their natural beauty, we must all take an active part to protect these areas. Enjoy the experience and leave only footprints. If you have any questions, refuge staff and volunteers will be happy to assist you.

North Tract Hours

8:00 am – 4:00 pm daily (unless otherwise posted); Closed Federal holidays.

For more information, please call the Visitor Contact Station at 301/776 3090 or visit us online at <http://patuxent.fws.gov>

We hope you enjoy your visit to Patuxent Research Refuge.

