



Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Berry Picking Information

Harvesting cranberries on Plum Island is a long-standing practice. Early Indigenous inhabitants, and later European colonists, harvested fruit for subsistence, medicine, and dye. This tradition continues today at Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. In season, permit holders may harvest cranberries to use for jams, sauces, and more!

General

Opportunities are exclusively available to pick cranberries. All other plant material, including other fruits, mushrooms, beach plums, flowers, and edible or ornamental vegetation must remain undisturbed. Birds and other wildlife depend on these food sources for critical energy.

Please ensure you are familiar with recognizing cranberries before you forage (pictured below).



Cranberries grow in low, dense patches.



Visitors harvest cranberries in the bog.

Access & Parking

To protect the fragile habitats where cranberries grow, specific areas are designated for berry picking. Access is permitted only during normal refuge hours of operation (sunrise to sunset). Permit holders must pay the entrance fee or present a valid pass. Permit does not allow free entry into the refuge. Permit holders must always park in designated areas. Parking is not allowed on the roadside or the access road to the bog.

Cranberries may only be harvested in the bog located just north of the Lot 2 boardwalk. Permit holders may walk to the bog using the access road just north of Lot 2, which can be reached from either the beach or the refuge road (see map on reverse). Foot access only.

Permits & Fees

A permit is required to harvest cranberries at the refuge. Each year a limited number of permits are awarded via lottery. All entries must be submitted online at RecAccess (parkerrivernwr.recaccess.com). There is no cost to enter the lottery. In-person or mail-in entries will NOT be accepted. The lottery allows for ONE entry per person, per year. If you are drawn for a permit via the lottery, winners must purchase their permit with the link provided in the notification email: \$10 for seniors (62+) / \$20 for adults.

Harvesting Season & Limits

Berry picking permits are valid from October 1 until November 15 unless otherwise specified by the refuge.

Each permit holder may harvest one quart of cranberries per day. Family members and friends are allowed to assist, however, any fruit they collect must be contributed toward the permit holder's quart. The permit holder must be with their group at all times and carry their permit.

Public Programs

During the cranberry season, the refuge regularly holds public programs that cover the biological, cultural, and historical significance of the cranberry in our region. Participants are then provided an opportunity to harvest their own bag of cranberries.

