Regulations

- Only hook, line, and tackle as permitted by Maryland law may be used while fishing.
- Only store-bought worms and lures may be used. Do not gather bait on the refuge.
- Use and possession of lead sinkers is prohibited.
- State harvest limits are enforced. (See back page.)
- Wading is not permitted. Catch-and-release fishing is encouraged. Barbless or circle hooks are also encouraged.

Accessibility

Accessible fishing areas include: the Cash Lake Fishing Pier, Lake, New Marsh and the south side of Bailey Bridge.

Visitors with handicap placards may request to drive to Blue Heron Pond and Reive's Pond. Please make arrangements with staff at the Visitor Contact Station.

Health Notice

There is a State Fish Consumption Advisory due to mercury contamination. https://go.usa.gov/xsm5r

Fresh Water Catch Limits

Species	Minimum Size	Limit
American Eel	9"	Daily- 25 Possession- 25
Bass (catch & release always permitted)	12"	Daily-5 in aggregate Possession- 10 in aggregate ***(Closed April 1st- June 16)**
Chain Pickerel (Pike)	14"	Daily- 5 Possession- 10
Channel Catfish	none	Daily- 5 Possession- 10
Crappie	none	Daily- 15 Possession-30
Suckers	none	Daily- 30 Possession - 60
Sunfish	none	Daily-15 in aggregate Possession- 30 in aggregate

Contact

Phone: 301-497-5772
Weather Line:- 301-497-5763
fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent

Published

03/20/2026

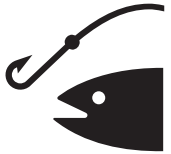
Patuxent Research Refuge
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Patuxent

Research Refuge

Fishing Regulations 2026



Welcome

At the water's edge, potential awaits with every cast. But, the real catch of the day may be the time spent with friends and family.

License & Regulations

All anglers must have a valid Maryland Non-Tidal Fishing License and carry documentation. (Children 15 years of age and younger are exempt). Visitors are required to know and follow state and refuge regulations. Policies regarding non-fishing recreation can be found in the refuge's trail map brochures.

Fishing Areas & Seasons

Fishing is permitted on the shores of Cash Lake and the fishing pier. Fishing from the floating bridges is not permitted. Cash Lake is available April through September, sunrise to sunset.

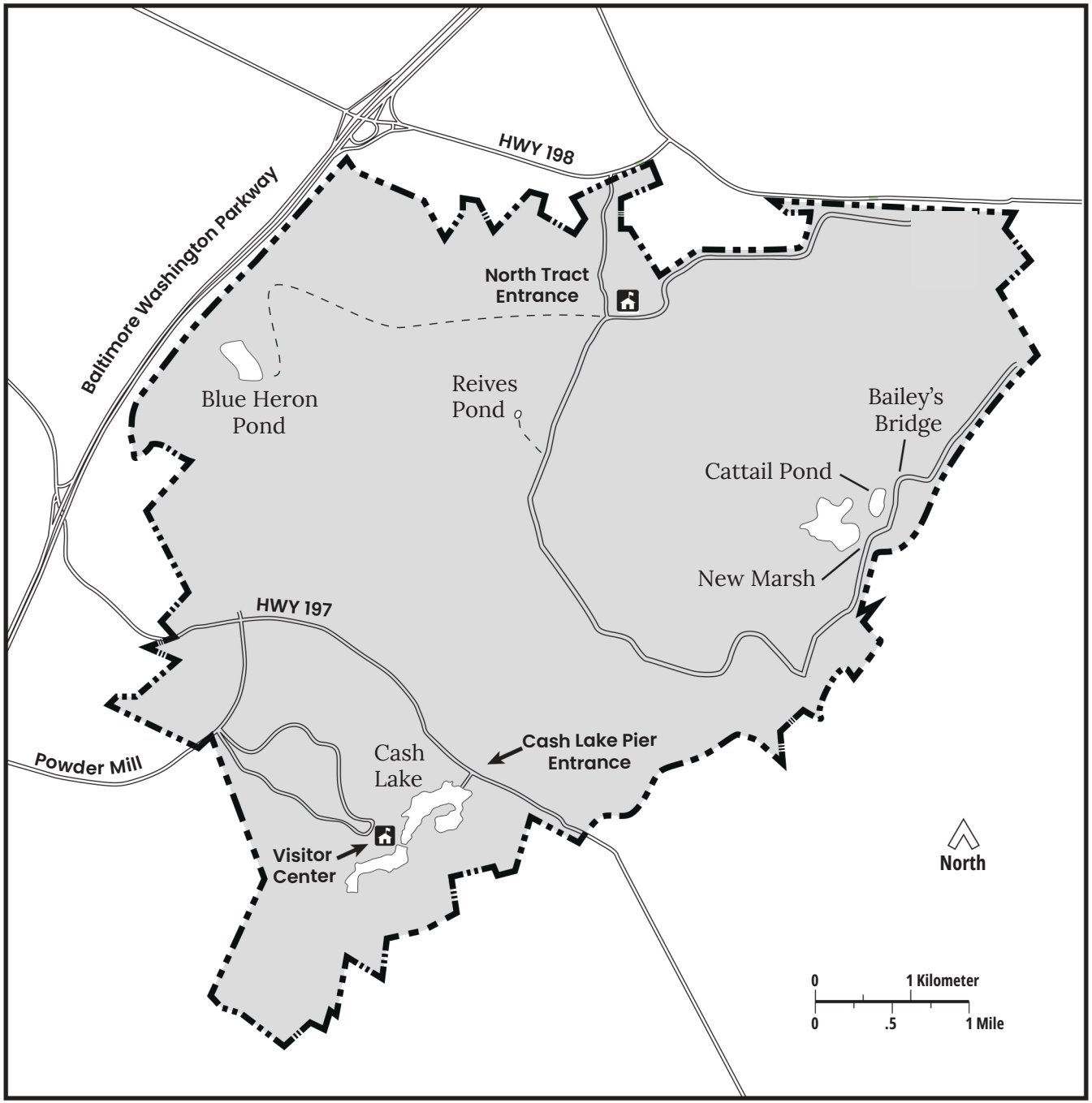
Fishing areas accessed by the North Tract entrance can change daily throughout the year. Please check in at the Visitor Contact Station to determine availability. These areas include: Bailey's Bridge, Blue Heron Pond, Cattail Pond, and Rieve's Pond.

All other bodies of water within the refuge are reserved for wildlife and may not be fished.

Boats

Boats under 14 feet are permitted to be hand-launched on Cash Lake for the purposes of fishing only. Please use the boat launch area near the Cash Lake Pier. Gas powered motors are not permitted, but electric trolling motors may be used.

(Continues on reverse side)



South Tract- Parking for Cash Lake is available at the Cash Lake Entrance on Rt. 197. Parking is also available at the visitor center located on Powder Mill Road.
North Tract- When visiting North Tract, please park in designated spaces or gravel pull outs. Do not block roads or gates.