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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Eastern Neck

National Wildlife Refuge



Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, located at the mouth of the Chester River in Kent County, Maryland, was established in December 1962. This 2,285-acre island refuge is a major feeding and resting place for migratory and wintering waterfowl on Maryland's famed "Eastern Shore."

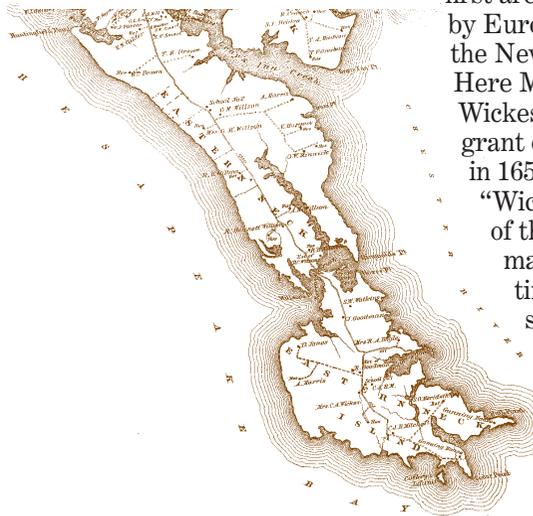
Sunset/USFWS

cover photo: Swans/Heather Davidson

History

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), an island located at the confluence of river and bay, has a long and varied history. Native Americans hunted here for thousands of years and the island was among the first areas settled by Europeans in the New World. Here Major Joseph Wickes obtained a grant of 800 acres in 1650 and built "Wickliffe," one of the finest mansions of the time. Packet ships that carried goods and passengers across the Chesapeake Bay made regular

stops at Bogles Wharf on the east side of the island from colonial days until 1924. Farming and waterfowl hunting were the most important land uses prior to the establishment of the refuge. The island was known as one of the best hunting grounds on the bay and was a favorite with hunting clubs.



Waterfowl in Shipyard Creek



Terry Willis

Wildlife

The varied habitats on Eastern Neck NWR, including brackish tidal marsh, forest, cropland, grassland, and open water impoundments, provide a home for a variety of wildlife species. Over 240 species of birds and a variety of mammals, amphibians and reptiles inhabit the island.



T. Goettel

Diamondback terrapin

Birds

Between October and March, thousands of migratory waterfowl winter in the Chesapeake Bay. Refuge staff and volunteers have documented peaks of more than 20,000 waterfowl of 33 different species on and near the refuge. The most common species include Canada geese, tundra swans, lesser scaup, and mallards. Other waterfowl species often found on the refuge include American black ducks, canvasbacks, buffleheads, northern pintails, green- and blue-winged teal, American wigeons, ruddy ducks, long-tailed ducks and other sea ducks.

The fall and spring months are the best times to view migratory songbirds, as colorful warblers, tanagers, flycatchers and vireos utilize refuge woodlands to fuel their migration.

Bald eagles, our national symbol, are also found on the refuge and have nested and successfully fledged eaglets every year since 1986. Refuge staff and volunteers continue to monitor and protect these majestic



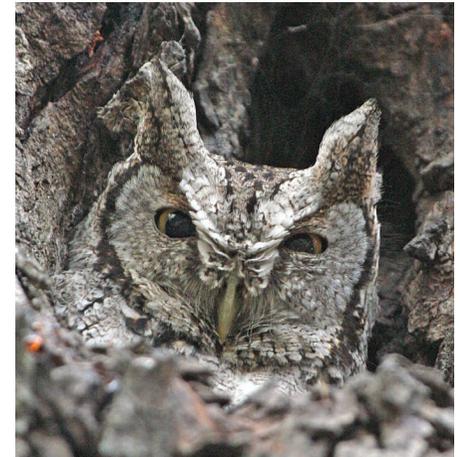
Terry Willis

Canvasback

birds, which were removed from the Endangered Species List in June 2007.

Great blue herons, green herons, and great and snowy egrets are commonly found in the tidal flats and marshes of the refuge. Numerous shorebirds including killdeer, greater and lesser yellowlegs, least, spotted, and semipalmated sandpipers and woodcock can be observed at various times throughout the year.

The refuge woodlands, hedgerows, open fields, and other habitats provide excellent opportunities to observe a variety of bird life, including raptors, woodpeckers, swallows, and wild turkeys. A bird checklist is available at the Visitor Contact Station and on the refuge website.



Matt Buckingham

Eastern screech owl

Mammals

The refuge is home to a diversity of mammals including white-tailed deer, beaver, red fox, raccoon, muskrat, opossum, woodchuck, and eastern gray squirrel. The abundance of wildlife offers high quality wildlife viewing opportunities for the attentive visitor.

Refuge Management *Waterfowl*

Management activities to enhance refuge habitat for wintering and migratory waterfowl include upland and wetland management practices. A cooperative farming program provides a variety of browse and grain crops for wintering waterfowl. Managing water levels in impoundments encourages the production of moist soil plants, which provides valuable food for migratory waterfowl. Manipulating water levels in five green tree reservoirs, or winter-flooded woodlands, allows wood ducks, black ducks and other species to forage for mast and invertebrates in the leaf litter on the forest floor.

Invasive Species

Non-native, invasive species threaten the biological diversity and integrity of all habitats on Eastern Neck NWR. Invasive plants typically grow in dense stands, displacing native plant communities and reducing the value of habitats for wildlife. Phragmites and mile-a-minute are just two examples of invasive plant species found on Eastern Neck NWR. Management activities to control invasive species involve the use of fire, herbicides and mechanical manipulation.

Beaver



USFWS



Terry Willis

Great blue heron

Wetland Restoration

Shoreline erosion and wetland loss threatens critical habitat at Eastern Neck NWR. Management activities to restore tidal marsh habitat include shoreline and shallow water habitat protection. Off-shore breakwaters and the use of clean on-site dredge material have proven beneficial in restoring and protecting tidal marsh wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation.

Red Fox



Jon McRay

Eastern Neck

National Wildlife Refuge

Chesapeake Bay



Ingleside Recreation Area
open April 1-Sept. 30



Legend

- Refuge Office & Visitor Contact Station
- Parking Area
- Restroom
- Wildlife Viewing Area
- Public Fishing Access
- Boat Launch
- Accessible Area
- Marsh
- Refuge Boundary
- Buildings
- Gate
- Refuge Roads (Public)
- Refuge Roads (Restricted)
- Refuge Hiking Trails



Wildlife Calendar
Spring

By the middle of March, most ducks, swans and geese have departed for northern breeding grounds. Ospreys return from southern wintering grounds in mid-March and begin constructing nests. Resident ducks begin incubating eggs in April. Songbird migration peaks in late April and early May. Woodcock chicks and deer fawns are born in May.

Summer

Young eagles and great horned owls are learning to fly in June. Bluebirds fledge in July. In August, ospreys may start their migration south while blue-winged teal, the earliest waterfowl migrants, begin to arrive from northern breeding grounds.

Fall

Songbird southern migration peaks in late September and early October. Great horned owls begin to establish territories in October. Waterfowl populations build up beginning in November and increase through mid-December. Tundra swans typically return to the refuge the second week of November.

Winter

Waterfowl are abundant throughout the winter months. Bald eagles establish territories and start nest building in December and January, laying eggs through February. Great horned owls begin nest building in January, and hatching may begin in late February. Woodcock may be seen performing their courtship displays in February.



Bald eagle

Dr. Thomas G. Barnes/USFWS



Common goldeneye

Heather Davidson

Visitor Opportunities
Hours

Public areas are open daily sunrise to sunset. Some trails and areas may be closed occasionally due to special circumstances or inclement weather. Bogles Wharf is open from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily. Please contact the refuge office for current Visitor Contact Station hours.

Visitor Contact Station

The Visitor Contact Station features refuge information and exhibits depicting the history of Eastern Neck Island, its wildlife, and habitats. The Visitor Contact Station also houses a bookstore managed by the Friends of Eastern Neck and staffed by refuge volunteers.



Sunrise

Richard C. Pagella, Sr.

Wildlife Observation

Nearly nine miles of roads and trails are open to visitors much of the year. Seven hiking trails and boardwalks are available for those wishing to observe the varied habitats and wildlife of the refuge. In order to protect wildlife and their habitats, visitors must stay on designated trails or roads. Please be aware that ticks, chiggers and mosquitoes are abundant, especially during the summer months.

Tundra Swan Boardwalk (0.1 mile)



This accessible boardwalk is an excellent location in which to view tundra swans and other waterfowl in the winter, and a great place to fish and crab in the summer months.

Tubby Cove Boardwalk ($< \frac{1}{4}$ mile)



Great views of Calfpasture Cove, Tubby Cove and the Chesapeake Bay can be seen from the observation platform and viewing blind located at the end of this wooden boardwalk.

Boxes Point Trail (1.2 miles)

This mostly forested trail ends at the Chester River, an excellent location to view wintering waterfowl and bald eagles.



Mark Wiest

Kayaking



USFWS

Zebra swallowtail

Duck Inn Trail (1 mile)

Look for migratory songbirds in spring and fall along the forested stretches of this trail. Waterfowl are often visible in late fall and winter in the Chester River at the trail's end.

Wildlife Trail ($\frac{1}{2}$ mile)

Songbirds are plentiful along this wooded trail, particularly during spring and fall migration.

Bayview Butterfly Trail ($\frac{1}{3}$ mile)



This loop trail meanders through a restored grassland and young forest, offering great views of the Chesapeake Bay. Butterflies are sure to be seen in the summer months. Be sure to investigate the bayscape garden located adjacent to the Cape Chester House.

Tidal Marsh Overlook Trail (260 feet)



This short trail located behind the Visitor Contact Station leads to a viewing blind overlooking the Chester River and Kent Island. Look for waterfowl and other water birds in the pond just beyond the blind.

Paddling Trail

The Eastern Neck Island Water Trail encircles the refuge and connects scenic, historic and wetland restoration sites. Launch at Bogles Wharf or Ingleside Recreation Area.

Boating/Fishing and Crabbing

Kent County operates the Ingleside Recreation Area and Bogles Wharf landing within the refuge. The Ingleside Recreation Area, on the northwest side of the refuge, has facilities for crabbing and car-top boat launching from April 1 to September 30. Picnic tables are available for use during these months.

Bogles Wharf landing is located on the east side of the refuge and offers trailered boat launching facilities (county trailer permit required – not available at the refuge office).

Additionally, fishing opportunities are available at the Tundra Swan Boardwalk, Ingleside Recreation Area, Bogles Wharf, and the bridge spanning the Eastern Neck Narrows.

Hunting

Seasonal hunting opportunities are available for deer and turkey. Deer hunts are conducted on designated days throughout fall and winter to help control the deer population. Turkey hunts take place in April or May for youths 15 years of age and younger. During the hunts, the refuge will be closed. Contact the refuge office or visit the Eastern Neck NWR website to obtain current hunting regulations, permits, and information on refuge closures.



Bogles wharf

Protecting Wildlife

In order to protect wildlife and their habitats, certain restrictions are in effect on the refuge.

Visitors must stay on designated roads and trails.

Pets must be on a hand-held leash.

Camping, off-road vehicles and fires are prohibited. Firearm use is allowed by refuge hunt permit holders during special refuge hunts only.

Collection of plants or animals, or feeding or disturbing wildlife, is prohibited.

Other restrictions may apply; contact the refuge manager for further information.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Eastern Neck NWR is one of more than 560 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat and represents the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world. Units of the system stretch across the United States from Northern Alaska to the Florida Keys and include small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific.