

News Bulletin



Patuxent Research Refuge National Wildlife Visitor Center

10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708-4027
301-497-5565 Fax: 301-497-5765 <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent-research>

For Immediate Release
October 20, 2023

Patuxent Research Refuge announces temporary hours reduction for North Tract unit

Laurel, Md. -- Patuxent Research Refuge is announcing changes to our public access hours for the North Tract effective October 23, 2023.

The Refuge's Visitor Information Station on the North Tract, off Maryland Route 198, will be closed to all general visitation from Monday-Saturday but remain open on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Public access to the unit will be restricted while the Visitor Information Station is closed. Visitors will continue to be welcomed on Sundays to enjoy the unit's 20 miles of trails and wildlife viewing opportunities.

The temporary closure is in response to decreased staff capacity and public safety considerations. The Refuge's North Tract contains both active firing ranges and potential unexploded ordinances as the land was formerly a military training ground. On Sundays, there is no hunting and firing ranges are inactive.

Registered hunters possessing a valid permit issued through Meade Natural Heritage Association will be allowed to access the North Tract via the Hunt Control Station and persons identified in a current Special Use Permit will not be impacted.

The change in hours will help the refuge maintain visitor services and public access opportunities in our more frequently visited units while ensuring the safety of all visitors. It also will allow the refuge to assess budget and long-term staffing needs to inform future management of the area.

We welcome our community and visitors to continue to enjoy our environmental education, nature programs, exhibits, outdoor recreation trails and Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Images bookstore at the National Wildlife Visitor Center on the refuge's South Tract. Descriptions of programs and opportunities are available at <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent-research>.