

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



# Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

*Draft Comprehensive Conservation  
Plan and Environmental  
Assessment*

*May 2014*



*Cover:*  
*Fall on the refuge*  
USFWS



*This blue goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 150-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 560 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long-term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service’s best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

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### **Refuge Vision Statement**

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is a rich natural oasis immersed within the bustling New Jersey-New York metropolitan area. At Great Swamp migrating birds feed and rest amongst whispering trees while butterflies flutter through wildflower-laced meadows. Turtles bask in the warm summer's sun, as the drum of a red-headed woodpecker echoes across an expansive marsh. Barred owls break the evening silence with unmistakable calls from deep within the forest while frogs chorus in excited trills and croaks in the wet meadows. These sights and sounds are the very same ones that were heard by the Lenape Tribes centuries before.

Great Swamp is an ecological treasure that invites people to engage with the natural world in ways that are educational, memorable, and rewarding. Visitors are refreshed by the beauty, peace and solitude of this wild and natural setting, where wildlife comes first. Vital partners continue working together to protect the Great Swamp and its watershed to ensure its myriad of benefits for future generations.





## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

## *Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment*

*May 2014*

### Summary

<b>Type of Action:</b>	Administrative—Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>Location:</b>	Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Basking Ridge, NJ
<b>Administrative Headquarters:</b>	Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Basking Ridge, NJ
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This comprehensive conservation plan for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) is the culmination of a planning effort involving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey State agencies, local partners, refuge neighbors, private landowners, and the local community. This CCP establishes 15-year management goals and objectives for the refuge's wildlife and habitats, public use programs, and administration and facilities.

This plan sets forward the management direction that we think best achieves the refuge's purposes, vision, and goals; addresses issues and concerns identified throughout the planning process; responds to public comments and inquiries; and are feasible to implement in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and guidance.

Under this plan, we will emphasize the management of specific refuge habitats to support species of conservation concern in the Great Swamp region. In particular, we will emphasize forest biodiversity and ecosystem function. This includes the consolidation of managed grasslands and shrublands and restoration of forested areas. We will emphasize the refuge position to reach new urban audiences. In addition, we will strive to promote wildlife-dependent public uses, while allowing for non-wildlife-dependent uses. We will promote higher quality hunting and fishing programs; expand wildlife observation, viewing, and photography opportunities; and initiate new interpretive program and environmental education opportunities.



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