

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge

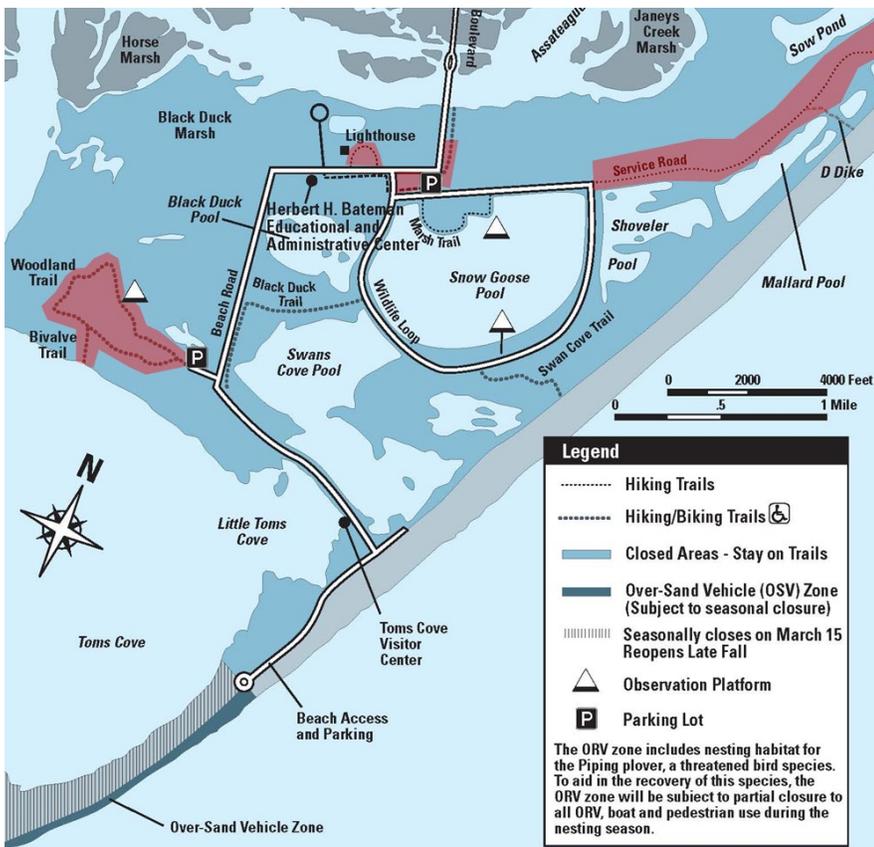
Southern Pine Beetle Weakens Trees

Brief Closures of the Service Road, Woodland Trail, and Lighthouse Trail

May 1, 2016

Potentially hazardous conditions exist in several areas popular with our visitors as a result of a widespread southern pine beetle infestation currently impacting refuge forests. Removal of hazard trees to protect the safety of our visitors is a very high priority.

In December 2015 a USDA Forest Service health evaluation confirmed a heavy infestation of southern pine beetles on the refuge. Various locations along the Service Road, Woodland Trail, and lighthouse trail were dramatically impacted by increased beetle activity in 2015.



Refuge staff will be using heavy equipment to cut and chip affected pine trees. All forestry equipment requires a 500 foot safety radius to prevent injury from flying debris. There will be short-term closures of these highlighted areas while tree removal is underway.

Please proceed with caution in the highlighted areas. Be aware of your surroundings and weather conditions. High winds increase the danger of falling limbs. Periods of low humidity create dry conditions which could lead to forest fires. Maintain a safe distance from heavy equipment and always observe area closures.

You may hear loud noises such as chainsaw cutting throughout the refuge. We apologize for the noise and inconvenience of temporarily closing trails. Please bear with us and enjoy your exploration of the rest of the refuge.