

Erie National Wildlife Refuge
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May 2011



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

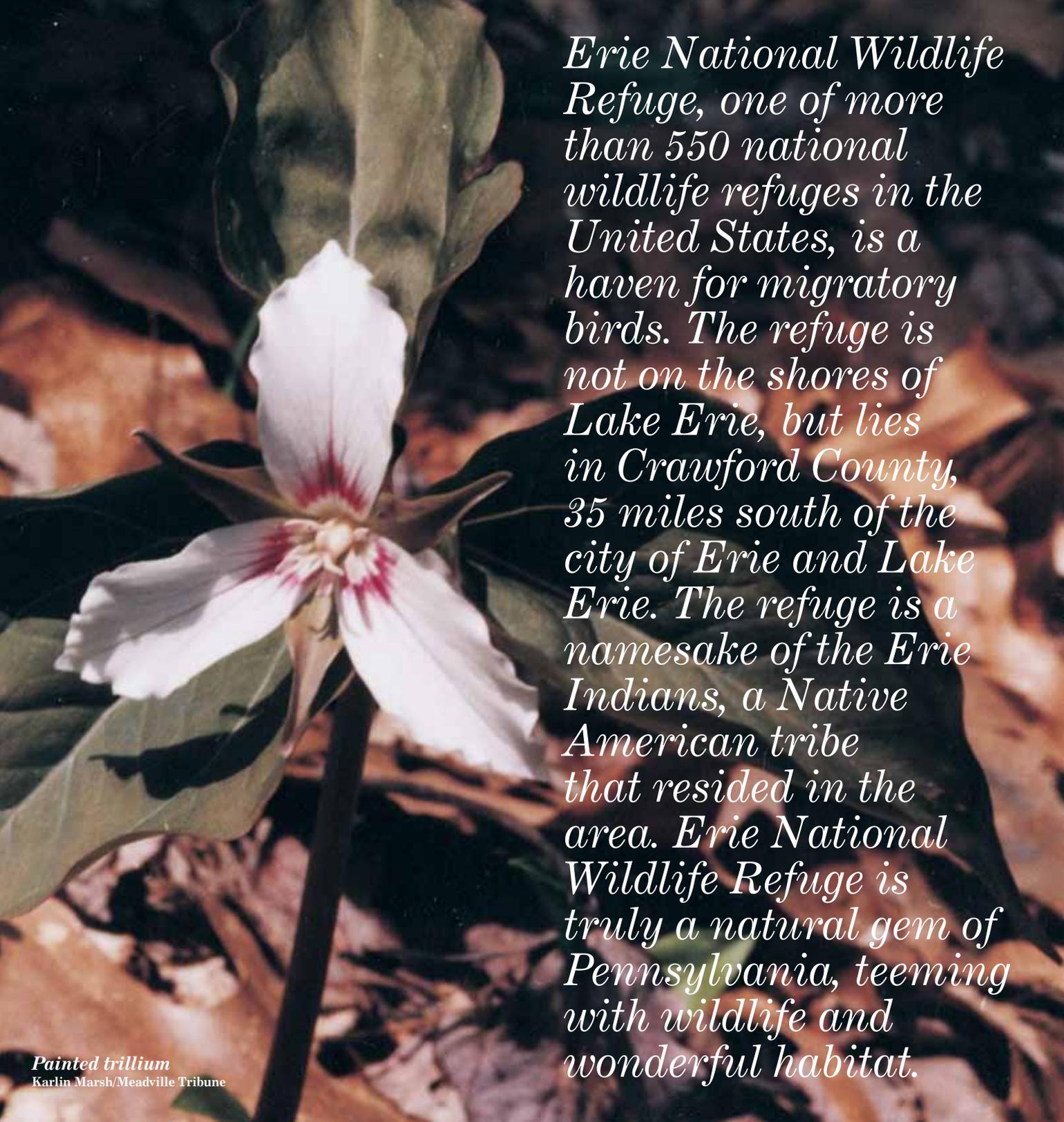
Erie

National Wildlife Refuge



Wood ducks

Bill Marchel/Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Erie National Wildlife Refuge, one of more than 550 national wildlife refuges in the United States, is a haven for migratory birds. The refuge is not on the shores of Lake Erie, but lies in Crawford County, 35 miles south of the city of Erie and Lake Erie. The refuge is a namesake of the Erie Indians, a Native American tribe that resided in the area. Erie National Wildlife Refuge is truly a natural gem of Pennsylvania, teeming with wildlife and wonderful habitat.



Karlín Marsh/Meadville Tribune

Violets

Welcome to Your National Wildlife Refuge

Erie National Wildlife Refuge consists of two separate land divisions. The Sugar Lake Division lies 10 miles east of Meadville on the outskirts of the Guys Mills village. It contains 5,206 acres lying in a narrow valley which includes Woodcock Creek draining to the north and Lake Creek draining to the south. Beaver ponds, pools, and marshland along the creeks are bounded by forested slopes interspersed with croplands, grasslands, marshes and wet meadows.

The Seneca Division is about 10 miles north of Sugar Lake Division or four miles southeast of Cambridge Springs. It consists of 3,594 acres situated in a forested valley where Muddy Creek and Dead Creek provide much of the pristine wetland habitat.

Wildlife and Habitat Management

Erie refuge was established in 1959. The land was purchased with funds provided from the sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, more commonly known as Duck Stamps. A management objective is to provide waterfowl and other migratory birds with nesting, feeding, brooding, and resting habitat. Additional objectives include providing habitat to support a diversity of other wildlife species and enhancing opportunities for wildlife-oriented public recreation and environmental education. Over 2,500 acres of wetlands, including beaver floodings, marshes, swamps, man-made impoundments (shallow ponds), creeks and wet meadows, provide desirable waterfowl habitat.

Adaptive Wildlife and Habitat Management is the process of manipulating habitat, monitoring the consequences, and then determining whether specific habitat and wildlife goals were achieved. Refuge staff use a variety of tools to accomplish this management, including:

- Manipulation of water levels in impoundments to encourage the growth of wetland plants as food, cover, and shelter for waterfowl and other wildlife.
- Prescribed burning to recycle vegetation and nutrients to promote new growth of plants.
- Mowing grasslands to keep those areas in a grassy state.
- Periodically cutting large trees to maintain dry areas as shrubland for certain wildlife species.
- Removing plants that are invasive and can change the natural processes of an ecosystem.
- Restoring degraded habitat by planting new native trees, shrubs, or grasses, or allowing native plants (plants that thrived in this area before Europeans arrived) to regenerate.



- Monitoring and surveying wildlife populations.
- Maintaining processes of naturally occurring habitats (streams, shrub swamps, marshes).

Wildlife on the Refuge

Birds

Waterfowl migrations occur from March to early April and again from September to November. Bird enthusiasts may readily see Canada geese, wood ducks, mallards, blue-winged teal, and hooded mergansers. These birds are common nesters on the refuge. Some less numerous migrants are pintails, green-winged teal, American widgeon, scaup, bufflehead, golden-eye, ring-necked ducks, and black ducks.

Bald eagles nest on the refuge, and osprey visit in search of food. Red-tailed hawks and American kestrels are common raptors that nest here.

During the summer, shorebirds such as sandpipers and yellowlegs appear in small flocks, feeding on the mudflats. The most noticeable marsh birds are great blue herons, which nest in rookeries on the refuge.



Great blue herons in nest

©Mark Wilson



Dave Darney/USFWS

Red fox

The diverse habitat types found on Erie National Wildlife Refuge attracts more than 230 species of birds, with over 100 species nesting on the refuge. A detailed refuge bird list may be obtained from the refuge office.

Mammals

Some 47 species of mammals are present on the refuge. The most commonly seen are white-tailed deer, beaver, muskrat and woodchucks.

Fish

Common warm water fish occurring in refuge waters include black crappie, yellow perch, largemouth bass, bluegills, sunfish and bullheads. Common cold water species include brown trout, rainbow trout, and white suckers, found in Woodcock Creek.

Amphibians/ Reptiles

The refuge is home to 37 species of amphibians and reptiles. Common species include box, mud, and snapping turtles; water, ribbon, and garter snakes; Northern red salamanders, green frogs, spring peepers, and American toads.

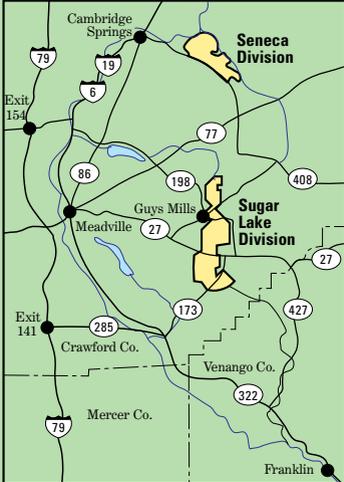


Ryan Hagearty/USFWS

Eastern box turtle

Erie

National Wildlife Refuge



North

Legend

- Refuge Headquarters
- Refuge Boundary
- Wildlife Observation Area
- Refuge Trail
- Accessible
- Accessible Fishing Pier
- Restrooms
- Information Kiosk
- Stream and body of water
- Road
- Marsh



Visitor Opportunities to Enjoy

Wildlife comes first on national wildlife refuges. All activities must be compatible with our mission to support wildlife and habitat. Each activity is reviewed to ensure that it will not significantly impact wildlife habitats or populations in a negative way. At Erie National Wildlife Refuge, hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and photography, cross-country skiing and snow shoeing, environmental education and interpretation are approved activities.

Visitor Contact Station

Visitors can view displays, obtain information brochures and talk with personnel at the refuge headquarters/visitor contact station. Headquarters office hours vary with available staffing levels, but are generally Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It is recommended that visitors call in advance to be certain that refuge staff will be present in the office. The headquarters is located off Route 198, three quarters of a mile east of Guys Mills and 10 miles east of Meadville.



Swans

Joyce Sliker/USFWS

Cassandra Hamilton/USFWS



Deer Run Trail observation deck and spotting scopes

Beaver Run Trail This one-mile trail winds through natural surroundings where visitors can observe a variety of plant and animal life. The trail is located on Hanks Road.

Tsuga Nature Trail This two-loop trail follows a 1.2 or 1.6 mile route through a variety of habitats. Interpretive signs are posted along the trail, highlighting nature themes. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are permitted in season. The trail is located near the headquarters/visitor contact station.

Deer Run Trail This three-mile hiking trail is also open during winter for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. An accessible observation deck fitted with spotting scopes can be found along the trail overlooking Pool 9. The trail head is located on Boland Road.

Muddy Creek Holly Trail Winterberry holly, also called black alder, with bright red berries can be seen along the one-mile boardwalk trail. The trail head is located on Johnstown Road on the Seneca Division of the refuge.

Trolley Line Trail This 1 3/4-mile primitive trail follows an old railroad grade on the Seneca Division. The trail head is located on Swamp Road.



Janet Martin/USFWS

Opening day of trout season

*Observation
Blind*

An ideal spot to observe and photograph wildlife. A short path leads to the blind which overlooks Reitz's Pond. The blind is located on Boland/Ritchie Road.

Wooded Drive

This section of gravel township road is especially scenic and a good spot to observe white-tailed deer and other wildlife.

*Hunting,
Fishing, and
Trapping*

There are opportunities to hunt, fish, and trap on the refuge. In general, the refuge follows similar regulations and seasons as the State of Pennsylvania; however, it is important for your safety, and the protection of our entrusted resources, that you obtain a current copy of the appropriate regulations for each of these activities. Specific regulations and maps are available at the headquarters/visitor contact station, and at each of 4 information kiosks around the refuge.

*Environmental
Education*

Educational ventures on the refuge are designed to be self-guided:

Hands-on activities are available in the Visitor Contact Station for you to experience nature in a personal way. Activities include a touch table, an interactive mural, animal track imprinting, and an interactive wildlife-signs game, and others. Also inside is an observation window, complete with a microphone to hear the sounds of the birds outside.

“Discovery Boxes” are available for educators and group leaders to borrow on the subjects of wetlands, migratory birds, and forests. These boxes are filled with suggested activities, related materials and props. Each box is designed to suit a variety of age groups.

“Family Packs” are available for hikers to borrow while spending the day enjoying the refuge. They include a backpack, binoculars, guide books, and easy-to-play games. Refuge bird and plant lists are available.

Three “Refuge Merit Badges” can be earned by children: “Nature Discovery”, “Let’s Go Birding”, and “Refuge-Caching”. By completing 10 tasks, participants earn an embroidered patch and certificate, and have their photo placed on the Refuge Wall of Fame.



Dave Darnay/USFWS

Northern Saw-whet owl

Your Cooperation is Needed

To protect the refuge's wildlife, habitats, and other visitors, please comply with the following:

- Refuge outdoor facilities are open daily, ½ hour before sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise posted.
- Dogs are welcome on the refuge only when on a leash (except for approved hunting activities).
- During all hunting seasons, it is recommended that trail users wear fluorescent orange. During the firearm seasons, wearing orange is mandatory.
- Leave only footprints while on the refuge; take out everything you bring in.
- Take only pictures on the refuge, don't collect natural objects, damage, or remove them from their place in the environment.
- Smoking is not recommended while on the trails or in other natural areas of the refuge.
- Fires, swimming, sun-bathing, camping, kite-flying, and off-trail use (except for authorized hunting, fishing, and trapping activities) are prohibited.
- Notify the staff in the refuge headquarters if you notice something that is unsafe or poses another problem on the refuge.



Eastern bluebird

USFWS

Public Involvement *Volunteers*

The refuge supports and encourages an active volunteer program. Depending on their skills, interests, and available time, volunteers can assist with the biological, outreach, maintenance, public use, educational or administrative tasks on the refuge. If you have the time and the willingness to make a commitment, we'd love to talk to you about your interests in volunteering on the refuge; please call the refuge headquarters.

Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge

A non-profit group, the *Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge*, has been established to support the refuge and refuge programs. This diverse group of citizens is interested in supporting the refuge through volunteerism, fund-raising, outreach and advocacy. Call or write to the *Friends* at the Refuge headquarters, or visit www.FriendsofENWR.org for more information

Wildlife Viewing Tips

Be prepared for the weather.

Generally, birds are best seen early in the morning. Mammals are more likely seen in early morning or at dusk.

Learn the habits of the animals that you want to see and plan your trip accordingly.

Binoculars and spotting scopes allow you to get a closer look at wildlife without scaring them. Using your car as a blind can also be a good way to observe wildlife.

Move slowly and quietly. Animals that hide upon your arrival may return after a short while if you are quiet and still.

Use wildlife guides to help identify local plants and animals.

Be alert and don't get discouraged. It takes practice and patience to observe animals in the wild. It is well worth the effort!