

News Release



Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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NATURE TRAILS REOPENED AT WERTHEIM NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Early spring efforts to manage a southern pine beetle infestation at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge have been completed. All trails on the refuge will be reopened on April 14th. The White Oak and Black Tupelo Trails were closed at times to ensure public safety and support the management activities. A special thank you goes out to the refuges' neighbors and visitors for respecting the temporary closure.

Trail users can expect to see areas of downed trees, cut pieces of tree trunks, pieces of tree branches, and ground disturbance in the areas where this work was completed. Cutting down the infected trees reduces the spread of beetles by making it difficult for emerging beetles to reach uninfected trees. Southern pine beetle generally emerge in the spring with warming temperatures and the initial flowering of dogwood in early/mid May. All areas will be closely monitored for additional beetle activity. Additional work may be necessary if new outbreaks are located.

The southern pine beetle, a bark beetle native to the southern U.S., has steadily expanded its range to the north, possibly due to climate change. Considered one of the most destructive forest pests in the United States, the beetle attacks all species of pine including pitch pine, the predominant species found in the Pine Barrens.

The Refuge remains committed to future timely management of the infestation, as needed, to maintain forest health. We will continue to work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the U. S. Forest Service and other cooperating agencies on research, monitoring and management of southern pine beetle on Long Island.

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1947, is located along the Carman's River in Suffolk County, New York. The Refuge protects one of the last undeveloped estuaries on Long Island. The founding purpose of the Refuge was to preserve habitat for migratory birds. Since that time, management programs have been expanded to other objectives, such as the protection of federally-listed endangered and threatened species, the conservation of native flora and fauna, and the provision of wildlife-dependent public uses.

For additional information, visit <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Wertheim/> or contact the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex Office at 631-286-0485.

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