

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Newington, NH 03801-2903

For More Information, Please Contact:
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Newburyport, MA 01950
978/465 5753

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
1 800/877 8339

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov/>

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Great Bay

National Wildlife Refuge

Osprey
John & Karen Hollingsworth/USFWS

*“Take care of the earth
and she will take
care of you.”*

—Author Unknown



Greg Thompson/USFWS

History

Hundreds of years ago Native Americans harvested the bounty of the Great Bay region, fished in its waters, hunted deer and turkey in its forests and meadows. When Europeans peacefully moved into the area, they farmed and raised cattle. In the early 1950s, the land was acquired by the U.S. government for the development of Pease Air Force Base. The base, officially active January 1, 1956, was named in honor of Captain Harl Pease, Jr. of Plymouth, New Hampshire, who was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Over the years, Pease Air Force Base hosted two Strategic Air Command operational units. When the base was ordered closed in 1989, citizens from Newington and the surrounding area, along with many environmental groups, threw their support behind the establishment of a wildlife refuge on 1054 acres of the former air base. This was accomplished in 1992 with the establishment of Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Through a variety of environmental activities the land is gradually being reverted to the natural state that the First Americans enjoyed.



Greg Thompson/USFWS

Welcome



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

Welcome to Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge. These 1087 acres in eastern New Hampshire, in the town of Newington, protect valuable wintering bald eagle and waterfowl habitat along the Great Bay estuary. The Great Bay has been designated a National Estuarine Research Reserve based on its relatively undeveloped state and its value for research, education, and recreation. The refuge habitat consists of mudflats, salt and freshwater marshes, swamps, ponds, streams, woodlands, reverting fields and one of the longest stretches of undeveloped shoreline in Great Bay.

The bay supports the largest concentration of wintering black ducks and bald eagles in New Hampshire. Other waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and raptors flock to this safe haven. A growing number of shellfish and finfish benefit from protection of breeding grounds. Many state-listed rare and endangered plants and animal species are also protected.

The refuge's location on the Atlantic Flyway attracts birds and birdwatchers from far and near.



Salt marsh creek

Katherine Whittlemore/USFWS



©Jim Fenton

Greater yellowlegs

Greater and lesser scaup, red-breasted mergansers, Canada geese, goldeneye, brant and long-tailed duck enjoy these protected waters, as well as cormorants, herons, egrets, semi-palmated plovers, sandpipers, dowitchers and greater and lesser yellowlegs, who feed in the flats and salt marsh creeks. State-protected species such as the common loon, pied-billed grebe, osprey, common tern, northern harrier and upland sandpiper frequent the refuge.



USFWS

Kestrel

Raptors using the refuge during breeding season include kestrel, osprey and red-tailed hawk as well as screech and great horned owls. Many white-tailed deer, turkey, and beaver make Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge their home, as well as river otters, red fox, painted turtles, snapping turtles and numerous aquatic species.



Red fox pup
©Gary Prestash

Little Bay

Welsh Cove

To Pease Tradeport
Arboretum Drive

Legend

-  Refuge Boundary
-  Refuge Parking
-  Refuge Headquarters
-  Restroom
-  Bird Watching
-  Photography
-  Trails

North




Ferry Way Trail

Field

Apple Orchard



Beaver Pond

Former Weapons Storage Area



Peverly Pond Trail



Kiosk



Upper Peverly Pond

Main Gate

Thomas Point

GREAT BAY

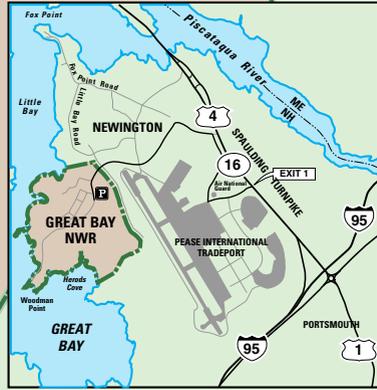
National Wildlife Refuge

Herods Cove

Woodman Point

Great Bay

Fabyan Point



Ferry Way Trail

Round trip: 2 miles
Hiking time: 1 hour
Difficulty: moderate

The trail begins as an asphalt path adjacent to the chain link fence across the road from the visitors parking lot (see map). After following the fence line, the trail crosses a road and veers left onto an abandoned dirt road. Entering the woods, the trail passes by beaver ponds, an old apple orchard and a large field. The trail then loops down to Great Bay, past a marsh and along the lower edge of the field across a boardwalk before backtracking to the parking lot.



Greg Thompson/USFWS



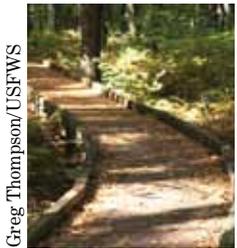
Katherine Whittlemore/USFWS

Upper Peverly Pond

Peverly Pond Trail

Round trip: ½ mile
Hiking time: 20 minutes
Difficulty: easy

The trail begins to the left of the visitor parking lot. After passing through a forested area, the trail borders Upper Peverly Pond. Veering left, the trail heads uphill along a stream and passes by several (seasonally wet) vernal pools before winding back to the parking lot.



Greg Thompson/USFWS

Wildlife and Seasonal Happenings

Spring - Spring peepers announce the return of warmer weather as myriad shades of green begin to color the trees and shrubs. Flocks of migratory ducks, geese and songbirds drop into the protected waters, fields and forests of the refuge, making this an ideal time for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts to take to the trails.

White-tailed yearling



Greg Thompson/USFWS

Summer - White-tailed deer and their speckled fawns might be seen in the meadow along Ferry Way Trail. Turkey families strut boldly along the paths, and occasionally down the road. Birders can enjoy the dazzling array of summer visitors such as the Baltimore oriole, goldfinch, ruby-throated hummingbird and yellow warbler.

Autumn - Nature puts on quite a spectacular fall show for visitors. Various species of trees vie with one another to see which one can create the most stunning colors, a contest which the visitor always wins. The ponds and bay are alive with migratory waterfowl, delighting in a safe resting spot on the trip south for the winter. Beaver and porcupine prepare for the coming winter. A stroll down either trail this time of year dazzles the senses.

Winter - Bald eagles wintering on Great Bay can be seen soaring overhead and black ducks may be observed in patches of open water on Great Bay. Deer and turkey abound and are visible in the undergrowth. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing along the foot trails can bring you close to wildlife in the depths of winter.



John & Karen Hollingsworth/USFWS

Turkey



Monarch butterfly on New England Aster

Enjoy Your Visit

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge's primary purpose is to protect and manage wildlife. Please do not interfere with the wildlife as endangered and threatened species such as the bald eagle and the osprey are adversely affected by humans trespassing in their territory.

Peverly Pond Trail is wheelchair accessible, as are the restroom facilities and headquarters.

Visitor use areas are open daily from dawn to dusk. To enhance your chances of viewing wildlife it is recommended that you visit in the morning or near dusk when wildlife activity is at its height, minimize noise while on the trails and bring binoculars.

Best wildlife viewing occurs in the spring and fall during the bird migrations.

As a visitor of a national wildlife refuge, you are responsible for knowing and following all refuge rules and regulations. Please help protect wildlife and their habitats by observing the following regulations:

- Foot travel is limited to marked trails

Management

- Bicycles and motor vehicles are limited to entrance roads and parking lot
- Pets are prohibited
- Fishing is prohibited
- Do not collect or disturb any wildlife or vegetation

Seasonal deer hunting is permitted in designated areas under federal and state regulations. Please contact refuge headquarters for additional information and regulations.

Please note that biting insects and ticks are common in this area. Please dress with that in mind. Insect repellent is recommended.

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge is managed to protect all indigenous wildlife and plants. As a part of this program, a dedicated team of volunteers work to eradicate invasive plants such as purple loosestrife, autumn olive and Japanese knotweed. Meadows are mowed in late summer, after upland birds have fledged, to maintain the open grasslands and prevent forest encroachment. Occasionally a prescribed burn is warranted. All due caution is exercised in order to ensure safety and maximum effectiveness.

The refuge has an active volunteer program. To become a volunteer or for further refuge information, contact the refuge headquarters.

All areas beyond the parking lot and two trails are closed to the public. No sightseeing, roads or trails beyond this sign are open to the public.

This sign marks the refuge boundary. Public access is limited to designated access routes. Please respect wildlife habitat.

