

salamanders. Wood Frog and Spotted Salamander are two of the more common species known as vernal pool obligates. They will only survive in pools that have no fish present. From mid March to mid April you can listen for the chorus of Wood Frog calls, but they are silent for the rest of the year. Other generalist species, such as Spring Peeper, Green Frog and American Toad may also breed here.



The American Woodcock

The male American Woodcock, or Timberdoodle, performs an elaborate courtship ritual in early spring. It begins just after sunset by ground calling. You will hear a nasally “peent” sound for several minutes. It will then take to the air and circle the potential nesting ground and eventually come tumbling back down with a series of twitters and tweets all to impress the female. These very well disguised birds nest on the ground and use their long bills to probe for worms in the soft soils in the surrounding fields.



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Photos courtesy of: USFWS, Scott Vincent and the Vernal Pool Association

WALLKILL RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Timberdoodle Self-Guided Nature Trail



Welcome to the Timberdoodle Nature Trail. Timberdoodle is one of numerous folklore names for the American Woodcock, which is a common nesting bird in old fields found throughout the Wallkill River valley. This 8/10 of a mile long trail will take you through various habitats and points of interest that are described in this brochure. We ask that you please return this brochure when you are done so others may use it.

Insect repellent is recommended and also be aware of the poison ivy that grows commonly along the edges of the trail.



American Redstart

(1) Woodland Habitat

The over story of this forest is dominated by Red Maples and the understory by Spicebush. The dense nature of this woodland provides nesting habitat for numerous migrant and resident songbirds. Look and listen for American Redstart, Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Veery, Eastern Wood Pewee and other songbirds that arrive in spring. Year round one is likely to see or hear Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal and Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.



Spotted Turtle

(2) Wetland Habitat

This seasonal wetland provides very good habitat for the Spotted Turtle. These 3.5 to 5 inch long turtles are active from March to October.

They will breed in the wetlands but the females then leave to lay their eggs in the drier upland fields surrounding this area. The eggs will hatch in about 3 months. Also listen for Spring Peepers and in midsummer the white snowball-like flowers of the Buttonbush will be in bloom. These flowers are a good nectar source and the seeds provide food for waterfowl in the fall.



(3) Field Habitat

Old fields such as this are no longer being grazed or cut for hay. There is still some grass present but you can see more leafy plants such as goldenrod, milkweed and thistle taking over. There are also very small sapling oaks and Eastern Red Cedars starting to establish here as well. Invasives such as Multiflora Rose can be found and are selectively controlled. The flowering plants are good nectar sources for numerous species of butterflies. Field Sparrow and the American Goldfinch will also thrive here and Red-tailed Hawks may nest in the tree line surrounding the fields.



Prairie Warbler

(4) Successional Habitat

This field is in the early stages of reverting to forest habitat. Pioneer trees such as Gray Birch, larger Eastern Red Cedar and Pin Oak are well established. Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Blue-winged Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Song Sparrow and others will nest here and many species such as White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow and Northern Harrier will use this as foraging grounds in the fall and winter.



(5) Vernal Pools

These are seasonal wetlands that fill with water in the late winter and early spring from snowmelt and rain and often times dry out completely by mid to late summer. These pools are essential to the survival of several species of frogs and