

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Tamarac*

*National Wildlife Refuge*



A vertical photograph of a forest. The background is a soft-focus view of tall, thin trees. In the foreground, a ruffed grouse is partially visible, its head and neck in focus, showing its characteristic ruff. The grouse appears to be on a mossy log or the ground. The overall lighting is soft and natural, typical of a forest interior.

*There is a special  
feeling of wildness  
about this place,  
Tamarac, best  
expressed by the  
eerie howl of a wolf,  
mournful wail of a loon  
or the drumming of a  
ruffed grouse from deep  
within the forest.*

*Drumming ruffed grouse.*  
© Al Markegard





### **A Look Into the Past**

Ten thousand years ago, receding glaciers left behind the rolling ridges and deep depressions that became a woodland are complemented by lakes, rivers, bogs and marshes. Lying along the backbone of Minnesota, the Egg and Buffalo Rivers begin here and the Otter Tail starts just upstream. All eventually empty into the Hudson Bay via the Red River of the North.

For hundreds of years Native American Indian tribes have valued the lush beds of manoomin (wild rice) and stands of sugar maple trees. This land has provided an abundance of wild foods, fish and game for the Ojibwe





*Bird's eye view of Tamarac.*  
© Dominique Braud



*Ojibwe ricers at  
Rice Lake.*  
USFWS

people and the Dakota before them. Historical sites throughout the refuge chronicle their utilization of these precious resources and the numerous battles fought over them.

More than a hundred years ago, loggers harvested most of the area's giant red and white pines, sending the logs down the Egg, Buffalo and Otter Tail Rivers. Settlers followed the loggers. Attempts to farm met with little success due to marginal soils, many wetlands and dense forests. These activities dramatically changed the landscape.



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

## **Establishment of the Refuge**

In 1938 Congress established the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, its perpetual purpose to serve as a breeding ground and sanctuary for migratory birds and other wildlife. Tamarac’s nearly 43,000 acres were purchased with funds from the sale of the Federal Duck Stamps.



*2014-15  
Migratory Bird  
Hunting and  
Conservation  
Stamp.*

In 1934 the first Federal Duck Stamp was designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling. The duck stamp is required for waterfowl hunters, however, it is also a way for conservationists to contribute to protecting habitat. Approximately 98 cents of every duck stamp dollar goes directly to purchase wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Today, Tamarac is one of more than 565 units in the National Wildlife Refuge System; the most diverse and complete collection of wildlife habitats and wildlands managed by any resource agency in the world.

Early refuge development , such as roads, trails, buildings and water control structures, was accomplished by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1960s a Job Corps Conservation Center assisted with further development. The Young Adult Conservation Corps program made a valuable contribution during the 1970s and 1980s.

*Marsh marigolds.*  
© Dominique Braud







*Photos from top:  
Trumpeter Swans, Duck Banding, Golden-winged Warbler; Prescribed Burn.*  
USFWS

## Refuge Wildlife

Tamarac lies in the heart of one of the most diverse vegetative zones in North America, where tallgrass prairie, northern hardwood and boreal forests converge. These transitional habitats provide for a diversity of plant and wildlife species. Some are at the extreme edge of their range in Minnesota. Although all native wildlife is important, priority is given to migratory birds and threatened and endangered species.

The forests and waters of Tamarac are home to a healthy bald eagle population and sightings are common. A nesting population of trumpeter swans are now present following a reintroduction program that began in 1987. Biologists survey the nesting success of these and other species.

Ruffed grouse populations are cyclical, yet stable, and a popular species for hunters. Migration of songbirds, especially neotropical migrants, can be spectacular in mid May. Breeding bird surveys are conducted to monitor regional populations. Prescribed burning, plantings, and occasional timber harvests are designed to enhance habitat for these species and more.

Waterfowl migration is best experienced in late fall, when dabbling ducks and geese are passing through and rafts of diving ducks may be seen on Tamarac's larger lakes. Slow moving water in streams and shallow lakes produce thick stands of wild rice which provide food and shelter for these birds.

## **Refuge Regulations**

Tamarac is a special place established for wildlife. As visitors, we must understand and respect the following regulations to minimize disturbance.

- Visitor use hours are from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily.
- Camping and overnight parking is prohibited.
- Collection or disturbing any plant, animal or object is prohibited.
- ATVs, snowmobiles and personal watercraft are prohibited on refuge lands and waters.
- Boating, canoeing and kayaking are permitted only on lakes open to summer fishing.
- Blackbird Lake is open to non-motorized boats or electric boat motor use only.
- Swimming, waterskiing and tubing are prohibited.
- Fires are permitted only in grills at the Chippewa Picnic Site.
- Possession of firearms or weapons is prohibited in the visitor center and other federal buildings.
- Pets must be kept on a leash or under control at all times.
- Additional information on regulations is available at the visitor center and the refuge website. Questions regarding regulations should be directed to the Refuge Manager.



*Fall leaves.*  
© Dominique Braud

## Spring



## Summer



## Fall



## Winter



### *Photos from top:*

#### *Wood frog.*

© Dominique Braud

#### *Showy pink lady's slippers.*

Betsy Beneke/USFWS

#### *Fall leaves.*

© Dominique Braud

#### *Winter frost.*

© Dominique Braud

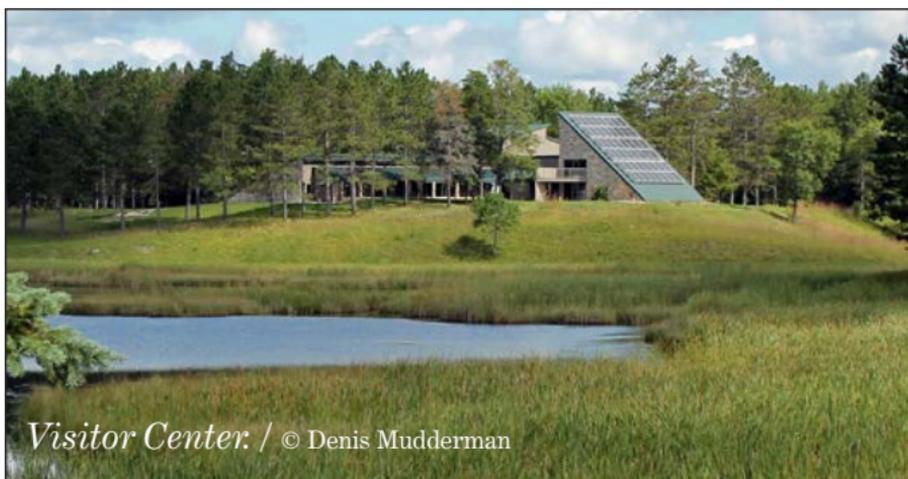
## Nature's Calendar

Spring brings a wave of woodland warblers, look for up to 25 species. Marsh marigolds, wild calla lily, and blue flag iris blooms at the edge of wetlands. The woodland floor is carpeted with hepatica, violets, and wood anemone. Along the roads look for yellow lady's slipper, wild geranium and Indian paintbrush.

Summer is the time to see deer fawns, trumpeter swan cygnets, and bald eagles feeding their young. Early summer you'll find the showy pink lady's slipper, Canada anemone, wild rose and harebell in bloom. In wet areas look for water lilies, Joe Pye weed, wild mint, and jewelweed.

Fall berries such as raspberry, chokecherry, and gooseberry attract an abundance of wildlife. Watch for groups of cedar waxwings or the occasional black bear. The ripening of the wild rice brings scores of migrating waterfowl, including thousands of ring-necked ducks. Beaver and muskrat are busy creating a cache of food for the winter. The tamarack trees turn gold just after the explosion of color in the hardwood forests.

Winter tracks and tunnels can tell you much about an animal's daily activities. Watch for river otter, mink, weasels, porcupine, and red fox. The open view into the woods may also give you a glimpse of a gray wolf. Birds are less shy now than during the breeding season. Owls begin their courtship and hoots can be heard during evening hours.



*Visitor Center.* / © Denis Mudderman



### **Visitor Center**

This energy efficient building features exhibits of local wildlife, history and habitats. A large screen theater showcases a short film on the life and legends of Tamarac. An observation deck and hiking trail offer spectacular views of the habitats typical to the refuge. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday year round and 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. summer and fall weekends. The center is closed on federal holidays. Consult the activity schedule or website for special programs that are offered. Visitor center gates are locked at closing.

### **Visitor Opportunities**

While the needs of wildlife are our first priority, Tamarac also provides many opportunities for visitors to enjoy and learn more about our natural world through wildlife compatible activities.



### **Wildlife Observation & Photography**

The refuge abounds with wildlife viewing opportunities. Over 250 bird and 40 mammal species have been recorded here since 1938. A bird checklist is available. Lakes, rivers and wetlands provide homes for countless species of fish, reptiles and amphibians. Near woodlands and grasslands you will find butterflies, moths, insects and other creatures. Leaf color during the fall season is spectacular! Hiking trails and the wildlife drive allow quick access to scenic areas. Check at the visitor center for recent wildlife sightings.



### **Blackbird Wildlife Drive**

This drive is a self-guided interpretive trail which travels through forested area and follows the edges of lakes, marshes and bogs. An observation platform overlooks Blackbird Lake. This 5-mile drive is open April 15 through December 15, road conditions permitting. Pick up a copy of the guide at the kiosk at the start of the drive on HWY 26.



### **Sanctuary Area**

The Sanctuary Area includes lands and trails north of County Road 26. This area is closed to the public from March 1 through August 31 to give resident wildlife a sanctuary during the breeding season. The Visitor Use Area south of County Road 26 is available for public use year round to all permitted activities.



### **Hiking Trails**

Trail maps are available on the Tamarac Refuge website and at the Visitor Center. The Bear Paw Trail, Bear Cub Loop, Old Indian Hiking Trail and Tamarac Loop Trails provide great hikes through a variety of habitats. A portion of the 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail crosses the refuge. It can be accessed at the Pine Lake parking area, along the Blackbird Wildlife Drive, or at the 400<sup>th</sup> Avenue trailhead. All service roads in the Visitor Use Area are open for hiking year round and snowshoeing during winter months. Service roads in the Sanctuary Area are open for hiking or snowshoeing from September through February only.



### **Picnic Area**

Along the banks of the Otter Tail River, the Chippewa Picnic site offers accessible tables, grills and restrooms. Tables are also located at the Eagle Eye picnic site along the Discovery Center Trail. Please pack out your trash.



### **Fishing**

Several lakes are open for fishing throughout the year. Two sites along the Otter Tail River are also open for bank fishing. Consult the refuge's Fishing Map & Regulations leaflet and Minnesota's Fishing Regulations booklet, or White Earth Reservation regulations for more information.



### **Hunting**

The refuge offers opportunities for hunters during the fall and winter months. Consult the refuge's Hunting Map & Regulations and Minnesota's Hunting and Trapping Regulations booklet, or White Earth Reservation regulations for detailed information.



### **Bicycling**

Bicycling in the refuge is permitted on county and township roads, Bruce Boulevard, and the Blackbird Wildlife Drive.



### **Horseback Riding**

Horses are not permitted on refuge trails or wildlife drive. May only follow county and township roads.



### **Cross-country Skiing**

The Pine Lake Ski Trail is open seasonally and offers two loops of 2 miles and 6 miles. The trails are occasionally groomed by volunteers. A parking lot and trailhead map are located on County Road 29. Roads and trails in the Visitor Use Area are also open to skiing. Roads and trails in the Sanctuary Area are open through the end of February only.



### **Mushroom, Nuts and Berry Picking**

These activities are authorized year round in the Visitor Use Area and in the Sanctuary Area September through February.



### **Environmental Education**

Schools and civic groups are welcome. To make group arrangements please contact the refuge office. Interpretive programs are offered year round. Check the activity schedule.

*Photo at top:  
Cross-country skiing. / © Bill Bergquist*



## **Volunteers**

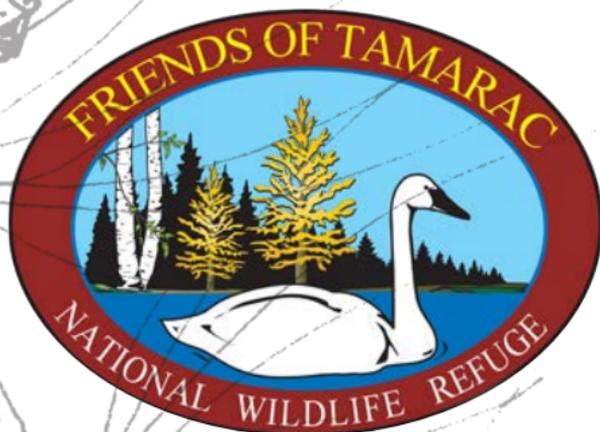
Volunteers play a vital role in helping the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service fulfill its mission of conserving, protecting, and enhancing America's fish and wildlife and their habitats.

At Tamarac a knowledgeable and dedicated team of volunteers donate many hours of their time helping to make your visit a fond memory. They assist with visitor services, environmental education programs, wildlife surveys, habitat management activities, trail maintenance, photography and more.

## **Friends of the Refuge**

The Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge was established to support the refuge. This non-profit organization and its members help by facilitating activities and programs that interpret, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

If you would like to volunteer or want to learn more about the Friends group, please contact the refuge or visit the refuge website.





**Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge**  
**35704 County Hwy 26**  
**Rochert, MN 56578-9638**

**Phone: 218/847 2641**

**People with hearing Impairments may reach  
Tamarac through Minnesota's State Relay Service at  
1 800/657-3775 (V/TTY)**

**tamarac@fws.gov**

**www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac**

**Find us on Facebook @TamaracNWR**

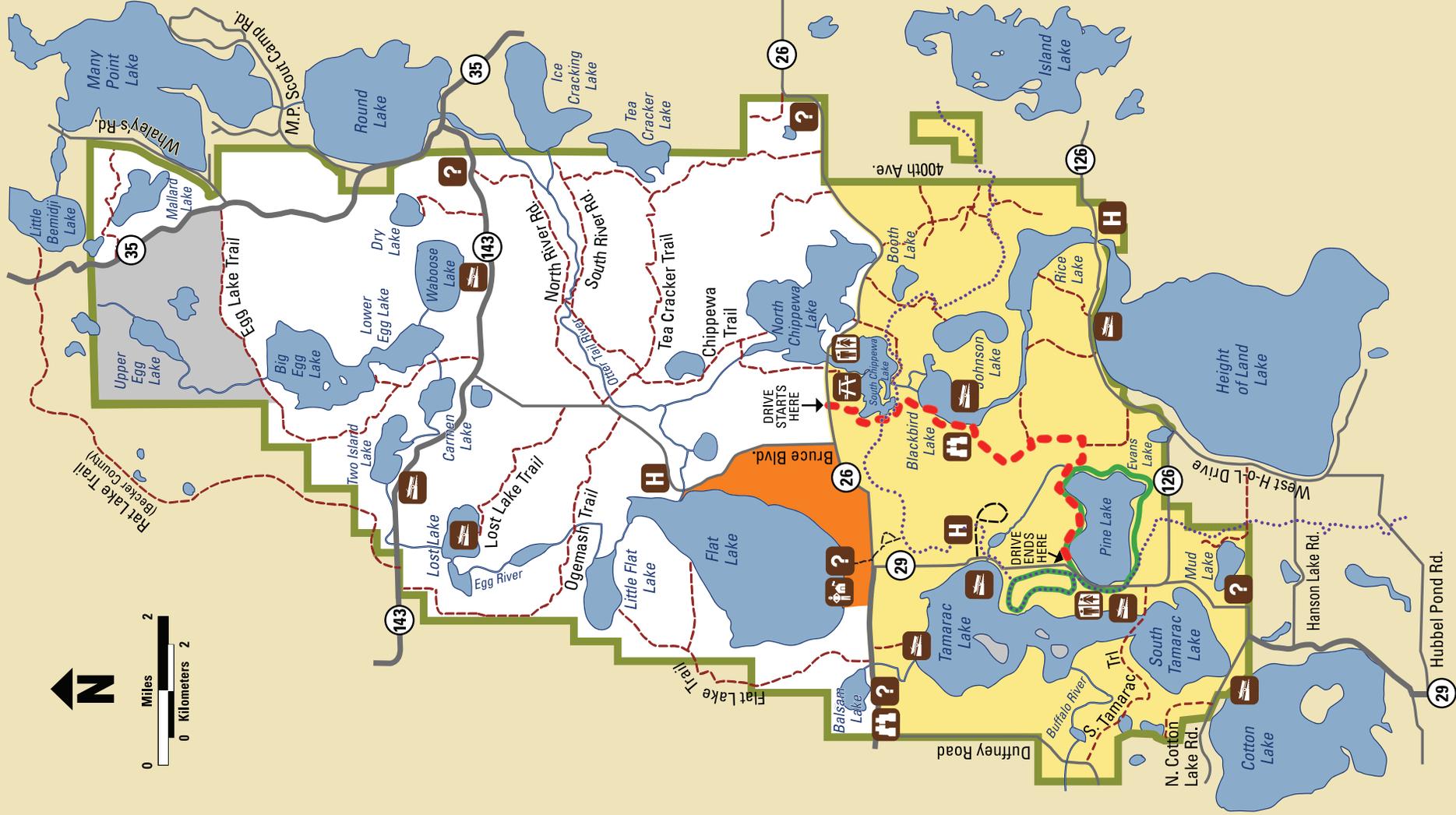
*Bald eagle and chick at nest.*

© Paul Christianson

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
**1 800/344-WILD**

**August 2017**





# Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Boundary
- Visitor Use Area (Open All Year)
- Sanctuary Area (Open Sept-Feb)
- Closed Area
- Wilderness Areas
- Paved Roads
- Gravel Roads (Open All Year)
- Service Roads
- Blackbird Wildlife Drive (5 Miles)
- Hiking Trail
- North Country Hiking Trail
- X-Country Ski Trails (2 and 6 Mile Trails)
- Visitor Center and Discovery Center
- Historical Site
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Information
- Boat Launch
- Observation Platform

Boundaries posted in the field supersede all boundaries shown on map.

