

The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge



Directions To Refuge

BY CAR: From Brooklyn - Belt Parkway (east) to exit 17 (Crossbay Blvd.) go over North Channel Bridge and continue 1½ miles to refuge on right. Look for brown National Park Service sign.

From Rockaway - Take Crossbay Bridge (94 St.) and go through Broad Channel community. Refuge visitor center is about ½ mile on left.

BY TRAIN: Take "A" train going to Rockaways. Exit at Broad Channel Station. Walk west to Crossbay Boulevard then north (right) about one half mile to refuge.

BY BUS: Take Triboro Q53 bus from Roosevelt Ave./Jackson Heights. Exit at wildlife refuge stop.

Take Green Line Q21 from the intersection of Woodhaven and Liberty Avenue. Exit at the entrance to the Wildlife Refuge in Broad Channel.

Hours Of Operation

Refuge trails are open daily from sunrise to sunset. The visitor center and parking lots are open every day (except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's) from 8:30am - 5pm.

For further information write the Chief Ranger, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Gateway NRA, Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234. Or call 718-318-4340 between 9am - 5 pm.



Canada Geese



Gateway National
Recreation Area



Prepared by: Don Riepe
Illustrations and Design by: Robert Villani

Introduction

The Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge is one of the most important urban wildlife refuges in the United States. Encompassing 9,155 acres, it is comprised of diverse habitats including salt marsh, upland field and woods, several fresh and brackish water ponds and an open expanse of bay and islands - all located within the limits of New York City. In addition, the district includes the North Channel Bridge area, Spring Creek, and a small recreational area, Frank Charles Park in Howard Beach.

The wildlife refuge is nationally and internationally renowned as a prime birding spot where thousands of water, land and shorebirds stop during migration. More than 325 species have been recorded here during the last 25 years. People visiting the refuge should stop at the visitor center to obtain a permit and to learn more about the refuge.

History

The refuge was initially "created" and managed by the N.Y.C. Parks Dept. In 1951, Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, after consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, ordered the creation of two large fresh water ponds, today known as the East Pond (100 acres) and the West Pond (45 acres).

In 1953, Park Dept. employee Herbert Johnson was transferred to the site and became the first refuge manager. Under his capable supervision and dedication, the barren landscape was transformed into a haven for birds and other wildlife. Trees, shrubs and grasses were planted to provide year-round food and shelter and a trail system was established.

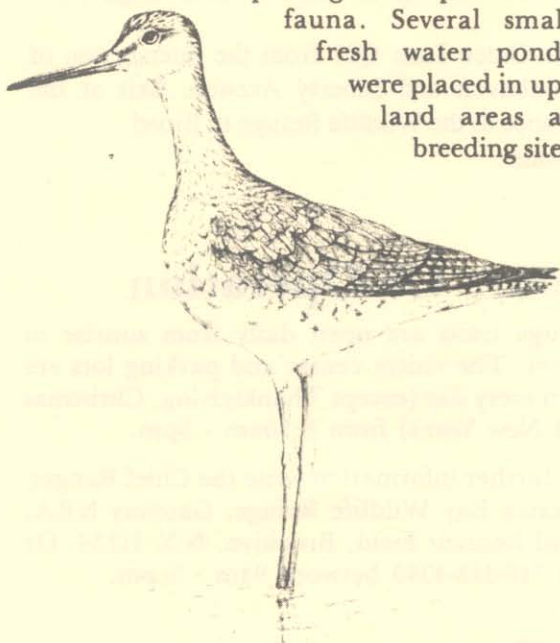
In 1972, the refuge was transferred to the National Park Service as part of Gateway National Recreation Area. Gateway also includes Riis Park, Fort Tilden and the Breezy Point tip in the Rockaways; Great Kills and Miller Field in Staten Island; Floyd Bennett Field, Plumb

Beach, Dead Horse Bay and Canarsie Pier in Brooklyn; and Sandy Hook, New Jersey - a combined total of 26,000 acres.

Management

From its inception, the refuge was managed to provide a variety of habitats to accommodate a diversity of wildlife species. Songbirds and small mammals find food, shelter and nest sites in the upland woods and gardens; egrets, herons, ibis and waterfowl utilize salt marshes and ponds.

In 1980, refuge staff initiated a program to introduce native species of reptiles and amphibians representative of disappearing or extirpated local fauna. Several small fresh water ponds were placed in upland areas as breeding sites



Greater Yellowlegs

for Spring Peepers, Green Frogs, and Painted Turtles to name a few.

Also in 1980, the South Field Butterfly and Wildflower Management Zone was established. Over the past few years, plantings were established to attract butterfly species. Buddleia, But-



Monarch on Milkweed

terflyweed, Lance-leaved Coreopsis and Common Milkweed add fragrance and color as well as provide a nectaring source for these beneficial insects.

An active nest box placement program added much needed cavities for Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Kestrels, Barn Owls and bats. The Barn Owl boxes have been especially productive for this magnificent raptor. Over 50 young were banded in 1986 and 1987.

People are also considered as part of the wild environment. Trails, benches, blinds, gardens and a visitor center provide "habitat" for humans.

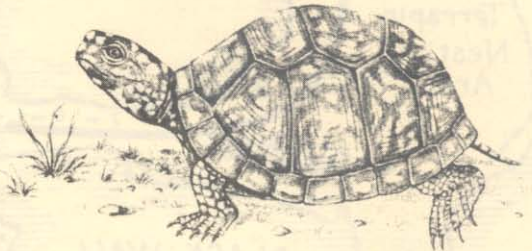
Refuge Programs

The refuge visitor center, located on Crossbay Blvd. in Broad Channel, Queens, provides a variety of services and information for the general public. Maps, guides, trail brochures and a display room are available for your enjoyment. Park Rangers give interpretive talks and lead nature walks on a year-round basis. Evening walks, birding workshops and a host of other programs are offered on a seasonal basis. Write: Gateway NRA, Floyd Bennett Field, Bklyn, N.Y. 11234 for a program guide or call the refuge (718-318-4340) for information about refuge programs.

Refuge Regulations

For a safe and enjoyable trip please observe the following rules:

1. Obtain a permit at the visitor center desk.
2. Please stay on trails, except in garden areas.
3. Collecting plants and/or wildlife is prohibited.
4. Smoking is **not** allowed in Refuge. Fires destroy wildlife!
5. Radios or other sound-producing equipment are not allowed.
6. Picnic only at designated site outside visitor center.
7. Bicycles, motor bikes and cars are not allowed on trails.
8. Feeding of wild animals is prohibited.



Eastern Box Turtle

Safety Concerns

1. Beware of ticks! From late March through September, ticks inhabit grassy areas of refuge. Check your pants legs when leaving gardens, fields, etc. A brochure on ticks and tick diseases is available at the visitor center desk.
2. Poison Ivy is a common refuge plant which can produce an itchy rash in all seasons. Learn to identify it.
3. Dress warmly. Being mostly open area, the refuge is generally cooler than points inland.



Poison Ivy

