

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



Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge Map & Trail Guide

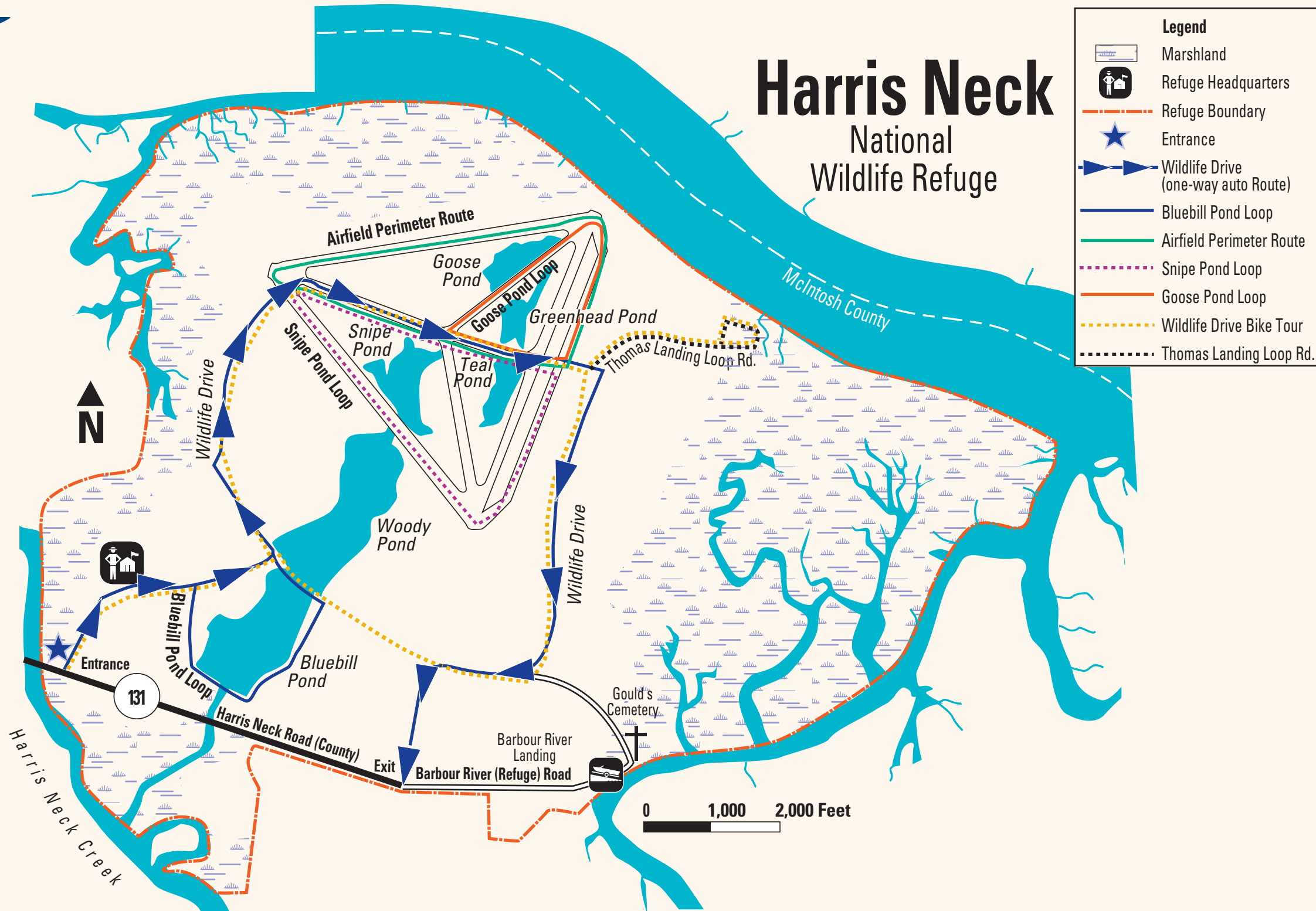
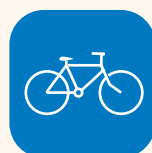


Suggested Hiking/Biking Trips

- Bluebill Pond Loop - 1.1 miles, round trip; 35 minutes
- Woody Pond Overlook - .3 mile, round trip; 15 minutes easy walk; recommended for children; not wheelchair accessible, but suitable for others with minor ambulatory difficulties
- Snipe Pond Loop - 2.0 miles, round trip; 55 minutes
- Airfield Perimeter Route - 2.7 miles, round trip; 1 hour, 45 minutes
- Thomas Landing Loop - 1.1 miles, round trip; 30 minutes
- Goose Pond Loop - 1.3 miles, round trip; 30 minutes
- Goose Pond Levee - wheelchair accessible - park at junction of Goose Pond Road and wildlife drive; .2 mile, round trip to Goose Pond; 20 minutes.



- Wildlife Drive Bicycle Tour - from the Harris Neck Creek entrance, follow the designated auto route to Thomas Landing loop; continue along marked wildlife drive towards exit; cross through Woody Pond levee, and back to main entrance - 6.3 miles, round trip; 1 hour, 30 minutes by bicycle. (Bicycles are permitted on all the suggested trails and tour routes, however this long route is ideally suited for bikers.)



Regulation Reminders

- Some areas may be closed seasonally to protect wildlife from human disturbance. Such areas are posted “Area Beyond This Sign Closed.”
- Saltwater fishing and shellfishing are permitted in refuge tidal waters only. All freshwater ponds are closed to fishing.
- Feeding, capturing, or hunting wildlife is strictly prohibited unless authorized by permit.
- All of the refuge’s archeological and natural resources are protected. Antique and artifact hunting are not allowed. Do not pick or cut vegetation.
- Dogs, cats and other pets are not permitted on the refuge.

For general information, visit the refuge website:
<http://www.harrisneck.fws.gov>

Questions regarding specific refuge activities, such as hunting, should be directed to:

Savannah Coastal Refuges
1000 Business Center Drive, Suite 10
Savannah, GA 31405
Phone: 912/652 4415

Safety Reminders

- Overgrowth on the trail shoulders and pathways off the wildlife drive may conceal snakes, poison ivy, or stinging insects. An occasional alligator may be encountered near any pond. Do not molest this reptile in any way. Hikers are urged to stay on the trails. No off-road or off-trail driving/biking is permitted.
- Drinking water is not available on the refuge
- There are no shelters for visitor protection from the sun or inclement weather, with the exception of the refuge office/visitor contact station. This facility, at the beginning of the wildlife drive, is normally open weekdays, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.
- Bicyclists should be cautious of potholes, puddles, and cactus when leaving the paved wildlife drive.



Eric Horan

A brief refuge history...

Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is one of seven refuges administered as part of the Savannah Coastal Refuges network. The refuge is located in McIntosh County, Georgia, 45 miles south of the port city of Savannah. Harris Neck serves as an important link in the chain of refuges along the eastern seaboard, and is the inland base for two neighboring barrier island refuges, Blackbeard Island, and Wolf Island.

Harris Neck NWR’s 2,824 acres have had a long, and at times controversial, history. As one of the oldest intensively farmed areas along the Georgia coast, Harris Neck was among the first land grants given to English and Scottish settlers in 1750.



Jim Barber

While a variety of crops were produced, it was the high quality Sea Island cotton which brought fame to the local agricultural industry. Poor farming practices soon exhausted the soil, and large scale farming was abandoned in 1860. The Civil War ended the plantation era, and Harris Neck was divided into small farms. The Harris Neck African American community thrived until World War II, when the U. S. Government condemned the land for use as an airfield and pilot training facility.

After WWII, the property was given to McIntosh County for guardianship and use as a municipal airport. Due to county mismanagement, Harris Neck reverted to the federal government. On May 25, 1962, the U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (forerunner of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service) acquired the property for a migratory bird refuge.

The land is now managed primarily for marsh and wading birds, waterfowl, resident wildlife, and wildlife-dependent recreation. Remnants of the airbase, including miles of paved roads and the runways once used by P-39 and P-40 fighter planes, remain. The old roads and runways now provide visitor access and facilitate management of the refuge. The varied habitats include salt marsh (1,297 acres), open fields



John Carrington



Tom J. Ulrich

(905 acres), mixed hardwood/pine forest (663 acres), man-made freshwater ponds (157 acres), and forested wetland (two acres). Management of six man-made freshwater impoundments enhances the refuge’s importance as a wintering area for migratory birds. These ponds also serve as an important rookery site for the endangered wood stork, as well as roosting and feeding areas for many other wading birds and waterfowl.