

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Noxubee

*National Wildlife
Refuge*

Trail Guide







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

General Trail Regulations

All Refuge trails are open during daylight hours only. Some trails may be under water during flooding.

Pets are allowed on the trails as long as they are on a leash or under close control (within 10 yards of the owner). This regulation is for the safety of your pet as well as the wildlife.

Foot traffic and bicycles are allowed on established trails. Horses and ATVs are not allowed. However horses may be ridden on Refuge roads.

Woodpecker Trail

All species of woodpeckers native to the Southeast can be found on this half-mile round trip trail. This trail is one of the shortest found on the Refuge, and if you have only 20 to 30 minutes of time this trail is a good choice. Periodically throughout the trail are informative signs explaining the plants and animals you may find.

At the beginning of the trail, take the right fork. The trail winds through a mature stand of loblolly pine which houses an active cluster of endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers. Notice how open this



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forest is. This openness is the result of prescribed burns conducted by Refuge staff. These burns are used to control undergrowth and to mimic the “natural” fire ecology of the area. This practice also benefits the red-cockaded woodpeckers who prefer open, park-like, stands of older pines. The best time to observe these birds is at sunrise or sunset as they are leaving their cavities to forage or coming in to roost.

The trail also passes other species of trees besides loblolly pine including sweetgum, dogwood, and various oaks. There are several bluebird houses along the trail giving the visitors the opportunity to see these brightly colored birds as well. One wooden bench, overlooking Bluff Lake, is located near the half-way point of the trail.

Beaver Dam Trail

This is a there-and-back type of trail that makes for a round trip of a little more than two miles. The trail entrance is near the spillway on the Bluff Lake levee and is marked with a large sign. It winds through bottomland hardwood forest and offers a good opportunity to view various species of wildlife such as great blue herons, wood ducks, and even white-tailed deer.

Except for the entrance where it leaves the levee, this trail is fairly level. There are a couple of spurs or side trails which lead to views of the adjacent Oktoc Creek. At the beginning of the trail, in a bayou-like area, you can expect to see wood duck nest boxes as well as a stand of large bamboo. A short distance from the trail is a stand of large bald cypress trees. Do not be surprised if you cannot locate a beaver dam, for this trail's namesake disappeared long ago, although beaver are still commonly seen in this area.

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Cheryl Campbell



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Note:

At the trail end, there is a signpost which reads "End of Trail."

Continuing past this point and onto the levee road is not advised. The levee does not intersect with the main road or return to the trail head. Portions of this trail may be flooded when the river is out of its banks.

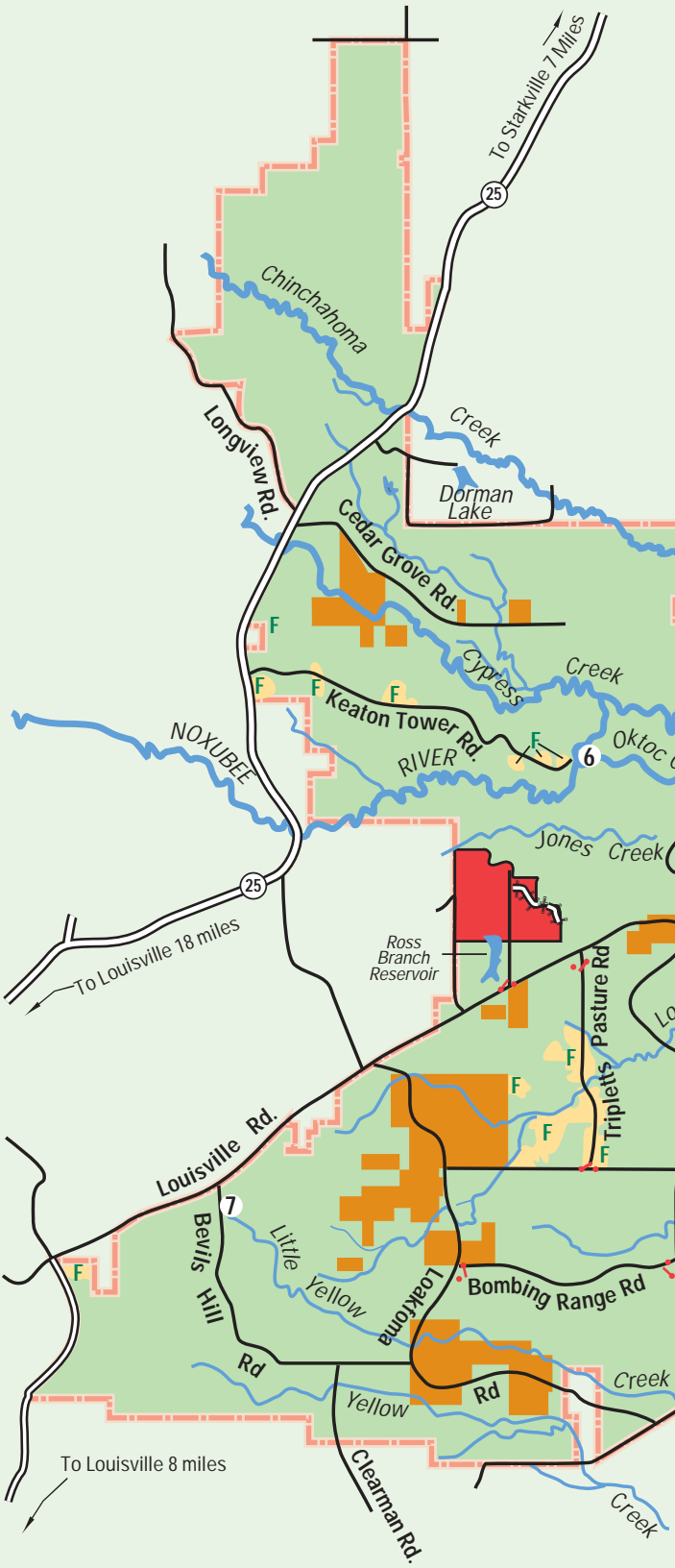
Goose Overlook

This thirty-foot high observation platform overlooks Dickerson Arm of Bluff Lake. Newly reconstructed in 1999, it is a favorite wildlife viewing area for many people. Year-round viewing opportunities exist as sightings have included: bald eagles, screech owls, waterfowl, flocks of turkey, deer, coyote, fox, alligators and many other species of wildlife. During the fall as many as 400 Canada geese and up to 70 white-tailed deer have been seen at one time from this location. The platform is accessed by a level, wheelchair accessible, 150-foot concrete walk and boasts two binocular telescopes. The deck at the end of the platform has four benches and is partially roofed.

Bluff Lake Boardwalk

This trail is located at the north end of the Bluff Lake levee, near the intersection of Bluff Lake Road and River Road. This beautiful boardwalk offers visitors another opportunity to view wildlife in a very different habitat. The boardwalk winds through a cypress island at the edge of Bluff Lake. Just under 1,000 feet long, it wends its way to a roofed overlook on Bluff Lake. The overlook has a binocular telescope for viewing wildlife.



















This site is known as an excellent place to view birds year-round. During the summer the overlook offers the best view of an extensive cattle egret rookery. Spring and fall

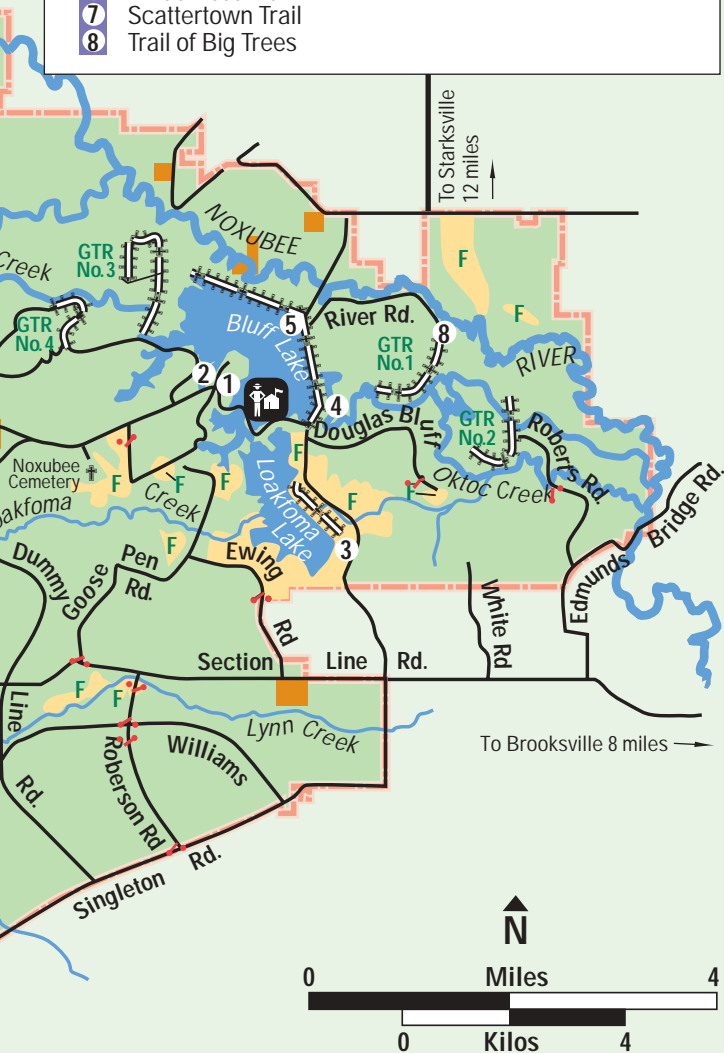


Noxubee

National Wildlife Refuge

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | Refuge Headquarters |  | Refuge Boundary |
|  | Green Timber Reservoir |  | Paved Road |
|  | Field |  | Unimproved Road |
|  | Non-Refuge Lands |  | = Levee |
|  | Closed Area
(All Entry Prohibited) |  | Gate Closed Oct.1–May 1 |
-
- | | |
|---|--|
|  | 1 Woodpecker Trail |
|  | 2 Goose Overlook |
|  | 3 Morgan Hill Overlook and Prairie Trail |
|  | 4 Beaver Dam Trail |
|  | 5 Bluff Lake Boardwalk |
|  | 6 Wilderness Trail |
|  | 7 Scattertown Trail |
|  | 8 Trail of Big Trees |





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bring migrating songbirds to the edge of Bluff Lake, and the boardwalk offers the best access to these elusive birds. Prothonotary warbler nest boxes also can be seen along the boardwalk. There are benches along the way to rest and enjoy the sounds of the area or just to stop and watch the birds.

Morgan Hill Overlook and Prairie Trail

Connecting the parking area to the Morgan Hill Overlook, this trail takes visitors through an Alabama Black Belt Prairie Restoration Area. The trail surface is packed gravel and the overlook has a wheelchair accessible ramp. The Morgan Hill Overlook, equipped with a binocular telescope, provides visitors a panoramic vista of 600-acre Loakfoma Lake.

From this trail visitors may see a variety of plants and animals including Indian grass, white-tailed deer, fox and various species of waterfowl and songbirds. Spring and summer are the best seasons to see several varieties of butterflies. Fall wildflower viewing can be spectacular in this grassland habitat. In winter bald eagles can be seen regularly from this overlook.



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Trail of the Big Trees

This 4-mile round trip trail parallels the Noxubee River and ends at a sign “End of Trail.” It is a there-and-back type of trail (not a loop trail). If you feel up to a good hike, this trail provides a rewarding trip through a bottomland hardwood forest that contains some of the biggest trees on the Refuge.

To get to this trail, turn onto the River Road off of the Bluff Lake Road and continue to the end. There is a parking area, and the trail entrance is marked with a sign.



River Road is open year-round except when flooded by the Noxubee River. Many species of wildlife may be observed from this trail including beaver, squirrel, deer and otter. The trail is marked with blazes, but sections can be difficult to navigate because storms blew down many of the trees. There is a sign at the end of the trail which tells about a fallen National Champion Shumard oak tree.

Wilderness Trail

This 4-mile loop trail is located at the end of Keaton Tower Road. As you enter the trail it skirts the Noxubee River and offers beautiful views of the River. The sandy soil at the beginning of the trail is a great place to see tracks of wild animals such as bobcat, beaver, otter, white-tailed deer and raccoon. The trail loop begins with a metal footbridge crossing the Noxubee River. The trail then leads hikers through beautiful old growth forest and past some spectacular root masses. This area is proposed for official wilderness





designation since it has had no active management for the past 80 years. It is an excellent example of an undisturbed bottomland hardwood forest. This trail is also susceptible to flooding when the Noxubee River leaves its banks.



Scattertown Trail

One of the Refuge's newest trails is the Scattertown Trail. This 1.75-mile loop-trail is located in the Bevils Hill area of the Refuge. It is constructed on the ridges of the Red Hills and is one of the Refuge's most scenic trails. The view from the trail shows an excellent example of the Red Hills vegetative communities. Upland hardwoods, shortleaf pine, mockernut hickory and a thick stand of switch cane are some of the plants hikers will see. The upland hardwood forests and hilly topography make this one of the best places on the Refuge to see fall colors. The views from the top of the ridges into the ravines can be spectacular during both fall and spring. Visitors to this trail should be ready for moderately steep terrain.

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