

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge  
6975 Mower Road  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
989/777 5930

Website address:  
<http://midwest.fws.gov/shiawassee>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov>

Deaf/hard of hearing individuals may reach Shiawassee NWR through the Michigan State Relay System at 1 800/649 3777 (V/TTY).


Available in alternative formats upon request.

# Shiawassee

*National Wildlife  
Refuge*



*Great Egret, Myles Willard*

A photograph of a sunset over a wetland. The sun is a large, bright yellow-orange orb in the upper right, partially obscured by dark silhouettes of trees. The sky is a gradient of orange and red. The foreground is a vast, flat wetland covered in tall, thin grasses. Numerous birds, likely waterfowl, are scattered across the field, some standing and some in flight. The overall scene is serene and natural.

*Over 10,000 years ago  
Shiawassee National  
Wildlife Refuge was  
blanketed by a large  
glacial lake that etched  
out the flat terrain and  
the area's nickname -  
The Flats. Today, it is  
one of the largest and  
most productive wetland  
ecosystems in Michigan.*





*This "Blue Goose," designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 520 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge system, a network of U.S. lands and waters protected and managed for wildlife, habitat and people by the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **A Look Back at the Flats**

Over 10,000 years ago, much of east-central Michigan, including the present-day Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, was covered by a large, glacial lake. You can still see the evidence of this ancient lakebed as you look across the landscape. The terrain is very flat, hence the reason why many people call this area "The Flats."

The first people came here approximately 5,000 years ago. This area was an attractive hunting and gathering area for many early cultures and later Native American tribes, like the Odawa and Ojibwa. Ducks and geese flocked to this vast area of wetlands and rivers. Other animals including otter, fisher, marten, elk, moose, and bear were also found here.

The Flats was thought of as a swampy wilderness area and received little human impact until the late 1800s when the lumber industry expanded into this area. Coal mining began in the early 1900s and lasted until the late 1930s. In 1903 farmers began converting the land for crops and by 1950, a system of pumps, drainage tile, ditches and dikes were in place, making this an extensive agricultural area.

### **Where Waters Meet**

Shiawassee NWR was established in 1953 to restore and enhance this historically significant wetland area for migratory waterfowl. The refuge contains over 9,200 acres of bottomland-hardwood forests, marshes, pools, fields, and croplands. An additional 7,500-acres could be added in the future. Four rivers meet on the refuge - the Tittabawassee, Flint, Cass, and Shiawassee.

### **Environmental Education**



*"What kind is it?"*  
Becky Goche, USFWS

### **Volunteer**

You and your students can explore the refuge on your own or participate in a guided activity. Our Green Point Environmental Learning Center, located at 3010 Maple Street in Saginaw, provides a variety of environmental education programs for children and adults. Hiking trails, interpretive displays inside an accessible building, vegetation demonstration plots, and a wildlife viewing area provide numerous study sites. Visitors are welcome to stop by, but groups need to schedule their visits in advance by contacting the Green Point ELC at (989) 759-1669.

Share your special talents and skills. You could collect biological data, perform light maintenance, or help out with special events. If you are interested, contact the Refuge Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Rules and Regulations**

Enjoy your visit, but remember, protecting wildlife, plants, and their habitats is our priority. Regulations exist for the welfare of wildlife, as well as for your safety. Please read and comply with the following list of regulations. The list is not inclusive.

- Obey posted "Closed Area" and "Refuge Boundary" signs
- Stay on established roads and trails
- The following are prohibited!***
- Firearms and other weapons, unless you have a refuge hunting permit and appropriate State- issued license
- Pets
- Collecting, removing, or damaging artifacts, plants or animals, including insects
- Snowmobiles, ATV's, watercraft, and other motorized vehicles within the Refuge boundaries
- Camping
- Open fires
- Spotlighting wildlife
- Littering

### **Hours**

The refuge headquarters, located on the corners of Curtis and Mower Roads, is open 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday throughout the year. Closed on all federal holidays. Refuge visitors are welcome to stop by if they have questions or need assistance.

***Please remember!***

## The Public Is Welcome!

There are a number of activities the public can participate in throughout the year at Shiawassee NWR.

### Hiking



The refuge maintains three public trails that highlight the unique features of the area. These trails are open year round, seven days a week, during daylight hours. Please note that hours and access to the trails may be limited during hunt periods. The Woodland Trail, at the east end of Stroebel Road, offers 4.5 miles of trails through bottomland hardwoods. You can see a large pile of shale left over from the coal mining period of the early 1900's.

### Ferguson Bayou Trail

The Ferguson Bayou Trail, at the west end of Curtis Road, has over 4.5 miles of trails. This trail follows dikes and provides views of croplands, sloughs, forests, fields, wetlands and pools. There are three observation decks along the trail, two equipped with spotting scopes, to offer you a closer look at ducks, geese, deer, and other wildlife.

### Green Point Environmental Learning Center

The Green Point Environmental Learning Center in Saginaw offers 2.5 miles of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing only. Trail use may be limited due to seasonal flooding and wet conditions.

### Bicycling

Both the Woodland and Ferguson Bayou trails are open to bicycles. Use of the Woodland Trail may be limited due to seasonal wet and flooded conditions.

### Cross-Country Skiing

We do not groom our trails, but most can accommodate skiers.

### Fishing



Fishing is available by boat on navigable waterways flowing through the Refuge. Boat access into the marsh and pool units of the refuge is not allowed. Bank fishing is allowed at designated spots along the Tittabawassee River at Green Point Environmental Learning Center and off of the Woodland Trail.

### Hunting

Photos (from top)  
Bicyclist, T&J Reuther,

Portions of the refuge may be open to goose and deer hunting by special permit. Maps showing open areas and details on refuge hunting programs are available at the headquarters.

"Look what I caught!"  
Doug Spencer, USFWS



Chickadee, Myles Willard

## Important Bird Area

The refuge's diverse habitats and land management practices result in a great variety of wildlife species occurring here. Over 200 species of migratory birds, including raptors, shore and wading birds, and more than 100 songbird species visit the refuge annually. Shiawassee NWR is designated as a United States Important Bird Area (IBA) for its global significance to migratory waterfowl. During peak populations in late October, up to 25,000 Canada geese and 40,000 ducks are present. See the refuge's bird brochure for more information.



Warbler,  
Myles Willard



White-tail Deer  
J. Mattsson, USFWS



Red Fox  
J & K Hollingsworth



Cottontail  
E. Smith

Wildlife enthusiasts may see or hear muskrat, beaver, coyote, snapping and painted turtles, white-tailed deer, garter and fox snakes, leopard frogs, and a variety of insects and spiders. Patience and knowing where to look are key to seeing many of these creatures.

## Wetland and Wildlife Management

The large central portion of the refuge is composed of managed wetlands. Controlling the level of water in these areas is the refuge's most important wildlife management objective. Using dikes, pumps and gravity flow structures, the staff floods or drains these wetlands in order to achieve desirable conditions. A variety of wetland types are maintained including marshes, bottomland forests, wet meadows, and seasonally flooded impoundments. Each of these has its own distinct community of birds, plants and other life that depend upon it throughout the year.



Farming is another wildlife management tool you see used on parts of the refuge. Farmers harvest a portion of the crop, leaving the rest in the field for wildlife to use as a food source.



Muskrat  
J. Mattsson, USFWS



### Partners for Wildlife

Shiawassee NWR administers the "Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program" in central lower Michigan. This program helps private landowners protect and restore wetlands, native grasslands, instream fishery and riparian corridor habitat for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife species. For further information contact the refuge or see the web site at <http://partners.fws.gov>.

### Satellite Refuges



*Lighthouse,*  
Doug Spencer, USFWS

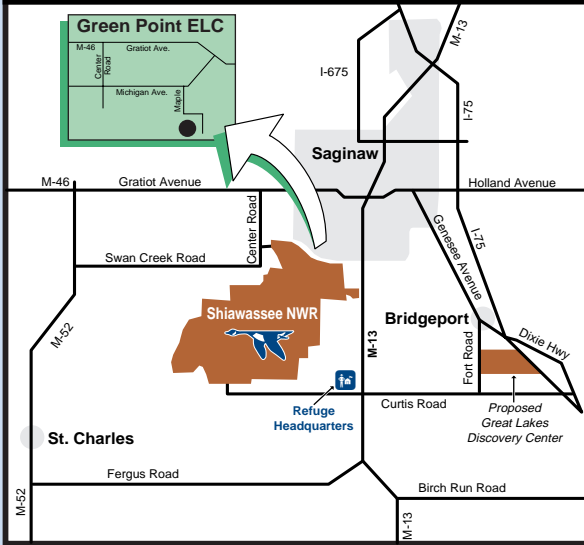
Shiawassee NWR also manages two other wildlife refuges in Michigan. Information about the following refuges can be obtained by contacting the Shiawassee NWR.

- Michigan Islands NWR in Lake Huron, including the Charity Islands in Saginaw Bay.
- Wyandotte NWR in the Detroit River.







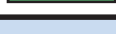


# Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

## Finding the Refuge



## Legend

-  Refuge Boundary
-  Trail
-  Road
-  Wildlife Observation Site
-  Photo Blind
-  Refuge Headquarters
-  Parking
-  Fishing
-  Farmland
-  Forest
-  Wetland

