

# Blackwater

## National Wildlife Refuge

### Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex

#### Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D)  
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D)  
Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-1st)

#### Contact

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Managed as part of the Chesapeake  
Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge  
Complex.

#### Purpose

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge  
was established to protect and  
manage habitat for migratory birds,  
threatened and endangered plants  
and animals and other native species.

#### Public Use Notes

- Visitor center
- Interpretive trails
- Hunting (deer)
- Fishing (April 1 to September 30)
- Boating (April 1 to September 30)

#### Management Activities

- Protecting land through acquisition  
and easements
- Enhancing forest conditions for  
endangered Delmarva fox squirrels  
and forest-interior dwelling birds
- Controlling invasive exotic species  
to protect native species
- Administering prescribed burns on  
13,000 acres to improve refuge  
marsh and woodland habitats

- Managing 650 acres of croplands to  
diversify wildlife habitat
- Managing 27 freshwater  
impoundments covering 850 acres  
to provide feeding and resting areas  
for migrating birds
- Administering trapping programs  
to manage furbearer populations
- Conducting scientific research to  
improve management decisions



*Delmarva fox squirrel*

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#### Highlights

The refuge is recognized as an  
internationally important birding  
area, attracting wetland birds such  
as geese, ducks, herons, egrets and  
osprey.

More than 200 bald eagles winter  
on the refuge, which supports the  
largest nesting population on the  
Atlantic coast north of Florida.

The refuge has the largest protected  
population of endangered Delmarva  
fox squirrels in the species' range.

More than 500,000 people visit the  
refuge complex each year, adding  
\$15 million to the local economy.

The refuge and the Chesapeake Bay  
Foundation cooperatively manage  
the Karen Noonan Environmental  
Center.

The refuge is a designated Gateway  
to the Chesapeake and a Wetland of  
International Importance (Ramsar  
site).

#### Issues

Thousands of acres of marshland  
have been lost since the 1940s due to  
saltwater intrusion and herbivores.

The spread of nutria, gypsy moth,  
mute swan, *Phragmites* and other  
invasive species threaten native and  
endangered species.

Wildfires impact nearby residents  
and sensitive refuge resources.

Increasing numbers of resident  
Canada geese are damaging the  
fragile wetlands.

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

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