

# Fisherman Island

## National Wildlife Refuge

### Represented by Members of Congress:

Senator John W. Warner (R)  
Senator George F. Allen (R)  
Rep. Thelma Drake (R-2nd)

### Contact

Susan Rice, Refuge Manager  
Eastern Shore of Virginia  
National Wildlife Refuge  
5003 Hallett Circle  
Cape Charles, VA 23310-9725  
Phone: 757/331 2760  
Fax: 757/331 3424  
TDD: 800/828 1140  
E-mail: [susan\\_rice@fws.gov](mailto:susan_rice@fws.gov)  
<http://easternshore.fws.gov>

Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuge is managed as part of the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge.

### Purpose

Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuge was established to provide habitat for migrating, breeding and wintering birds.

### Public Use Notes

- The refuge is closed to the public; however, guided tours are offered from October to May.

### Management Activities

- Manage refuge as a natural barrier island subject to forces of nature
- Study migratory species through bird and butterfly research programs
- Study population dynamics of colonial and beach-nesting birds
- Remove past military structures and associated items
- Patrol island to protect wildlife and their habitats

### Highlights

The refuge provides nesting habitat for a variety of shorebirds, terns, brown pelicans, herons, egrets and ibis. The island harbors the largest nesting population of brown pelicans in Virginia.

Fisherman Island functions as a critical staging area for large concentrations of waterfowl and other migratory birds including, blue-winged teal, mallards, American wigeon, mergansers, sea ducks and a large variety of neotropical migrants during fall migration.

Done in conjunction with universities and non-government organizations, research continues on determining causes of poor fledgling success in American oystercatchers, black ducks, herons and other nesting waterbirds.

The Virginia barrier islands are designated as a United Nations Biosphere Reserve.

The waters within and surrounding the refuge support large populations of finfish and shellfish. Additionally, the unditched marshes of the refuge serve as a nursery for many



*Mallard with brood*

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commercially important fisheries species.

Both the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuges have recently been designated as globally Important Bird Areas by the American Bird Conservancy.

### Issues

Access to the refuge is controlled due to sensitive breeding and nursery areas.

Avian and mammalian predation of terns and brown pelicans is a potential problem.

There is potential for oil spills from tankers and other contamination from boats.

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

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