

# Rappahannock River Valley

## National Wildlife Refuge

### Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex

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

Senator John W. Warner (R)  
Senator George F. Allen (R)  
Rep. Jo Ann S. Davis (R-1st)

#### Contact

Joe McCauley, Refuge Manager  
Eastern Virginia Rivers National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex  
P. O. Box 1030  
Warsaw, VA 22572  
Phone: 804/333 1470  
Fax: 804/333 3396  
TDD: 800/877 8339  
E-mail: fw5rw\_evrnwr@fws.gov

Managed as the Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes James River, Rappahannock River Valley, Plum Tree Island and Presquile NWRs.

#### Purpose

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established to protect and enhance important habitat for migratory birds along the Rappahannock River and its tributaries.

#### Public Use Notes

- Access to most refuge trails is under development. Visitors should contact the refuge manager prior to their visit
- Deer hunting began in fall 2002
- Environmental education program is under development
- Public fishing began in 2004
- The Wilna Pond site is now open daily, sunrise to sunset

#### Management Activities

- Planting native warm season grasses to control nutrient runoff and to provide habitat for ground-nesting birds and other wildlife
- Restoring upland and wetland habitats in cooperation with several partner organizations
- Controlling *Phragmites* and other invasive species
- Pursuing land acquisition to protect wildlife and habitats within the refuge boundary
- Conducting prescribed burning to maintain and enhance grasslands and improve bald eagle roosting sites



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#### Highlights

Annually for the past ten years, more than 32,000 ducks, geese and swans were counted on the Rappahannock River during mid-winter waterfowl surveys.

The refuge's upland areas provide breeding, wintering and migration habitat for nearly 200 species of migratory non-game birds.

The river is a major spawning and nursery area for anadromous fish species, including striped bass, American shad, blueback herring and alewife. It is also an important nursery area for American eel.

The refuge provides critical roosting and nesting habitat for the federally listed threatened bald eagle. In February 2005, 395 eagles were counted in a single day.

Of the 7,711 acres purchased for the refuge, nearly 1,400 acres are protected through conservation easements.

#### Issues

Coordinating efforts with state and county organizations and private landowners to control invasive plants

Opening refuge lands to priority public uses, pending completion of compatibility studies

Requiring additional staff and equipment to establish native habitats from managed cropland

Purchasing conservation easements from willing land owners

Completing the comprehensive conservation plan initiated in 2005

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

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