

Patuxent Research Refuge  
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop  
Laurel, MD 20708-4027  
301/497 5580  
301/497 5763  
<http://patuxent.fws.gov>

Federal Relay Service  
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing  
800/877 8339  
301/497 5763 through Relay Service

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

September 2007



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Patuxent

## *Research Refuge*



*Established in 1936 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Patuxent Research Refuge is the nation's only National Wildlife Refuge established to support wildlife research. With land surrounding the Patuxent and Little Patuxent Rivers between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, MD, the Refuge has grown from the original 2,670 acres to its present size of over 12,800 acres and encompasses land formerly managed by the Departments*

*of Agriculture and Defense. Throughout decades of change, Patuxent's mission of conserving and protecting the nation's wildlife and habitat through research and wildlife management techniques has remained virtually unchanged.*

## Introduction



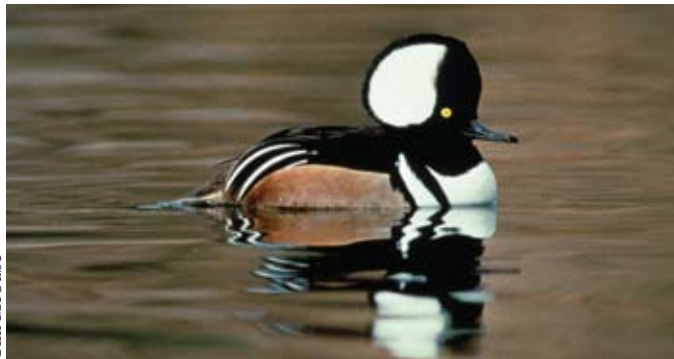
This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Patuxent Research Refuge supports a wide diversity of wildlife in forest, meadow and wetland habitats. The land is managed to maintain biological diversity for the protection and benefit of native and migratory species. During the fall and spring migrations, many waterfowl species stop to rest and feed. Approximately 270 species of birds have been documented on the Refuge.

Increasing forest fragmentation in the area due to urban development has damaged many populations of neotropical migratory birds. The Refuge is one of the largest forested areas in the mid-Atlantic region and provides critical breeding habitat and an important nesting area for these species.

Patuxent Research Refuge consists of three areas: 1) North Tract, formerly a military training area; 2) Central Tract, where administrative offices and the study sites of many research biologists are located; and 3) South Tract, where the National Wildlife Visitor Center is located. The National Wildlife Visitor Center and North Tract are the only areas open for visitor activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography and educational programs.

### *Hooded Merganser Drake*



Tim McCabe



N. Baldachino/USFWS

### *Researchers*

## North Tract

The North Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge (east of Laurel) includes 8,100 acres that were formerly a military training area. The North Tract entrance is located off MD Route 198, just 1.4 miles east of the Baltimore/Washington Parkway (Route 295). The land was transferred from the Department of Defense to the Refuge in 1991, and it is open for visitor activities that are compatible with research and wildlife management objectives.

The Visitor Contact Station located on Bald Eagle Drive, one mile south of its intersection with MD Route 198. All visitors must check in and receive an access pass. The North Tract is open daily (except federal holidays) from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. Call 301/776 3090 to confirm operating hours and for more information.

## Central Tract

The Central Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge is the location of the headquarters offices of both the Patuxent Research Refuge and its

research partner, the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. It is also home to offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management. The Central Tract of the Refuge is closed to public visitation due to the sensitive nature of much of the scientific work.

### **South Tract National Wildlife Visitor Center**

The National Wildlife Visitor Center (Visitor Center) is located on the South Tract of the Refuge off of Powder Mill Road between MD Route 197 and the Baltimore/Washington Parkway (Route 295), south of Laurel. It is one of the largest science and environmental education centers operated by the Department of the Interior. This unique facility seeks to impart to young and old alike an increased knowledge of and appreciation for the earth's vital resources. It highlights the work of those who strive to improve the condition of wildlife and their habitats.

The Visitor Center features interactive exhibits which focus on global environmental issues, migratory bird studies, habitats, endangered species, the tools and techniques used by scientists and the role of the National Wildlife Refuge System in

### *Environmental Education*



USFWS

### *Hunting*



N. Baldachino/USFWS

wildlife conservation. The Visitor Center also offers wildlife observation trails, seasonal tram tours, a seasonal fishing program, wildlife management demonstration areas and outdoor education sites for school classes. A large auditorium and meeting rooms can accommodate scientific conferences and meetings, teacher workshops, lectures and traveling displays. A bookstore, *Wildlife Images*, operated by the Friends of Patuxent (a non-profit cooperating association) offers a variety of conservation books and other educational materials. The Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 am until 4:30 pm. Wildlife observation trails are open daily from sunrise to 4:30 pm. Both Visitor Center and grounds are closed on federal holidays. You may call 301/497 5763 or visit the Refuge web site to confirm operating hours and for more information.

### **Hunting**

The Refuge hunting program is administered by the Refuge in conjunction with Meade Natural

# Patuxent Research Refuge

**LEGEND**

-  National Wildlife Visitor Center
-  Visitor Contact Station
-  Refuge Boundary
-  Wildlife Viewing Area
-  Hunter Control Station



## *Fishing*



N. Baldacchino/USFWS

Heritage Association (a cooperating association). Hunting is typically permitted only during established Maryland hunting seasons (usually September–January). Carrying or possessing a weapon out of season is prohibited. A valid Maryland Hunting License, verification of completion of a hunter safety course and other applicable documents are required. You may listen to a hunting information announcement by calling 301/317 3825. More information is available by calling 301/317 3819 during the hunting season. You may also visit the Refuge web site (<http://patuxent.fws.gov>) or [www.mnha.net](http://www.mnha.net).

## **Fishing**

Anglers may fish seasonally mid-June to mid-October (hours are posted on

the required Refuge Fishing Permit) at Cash Lake located off of MD Route 197 on the South Tract of the Refuge. Anglers may fish year-round (with some exceptions) during operating hours at the Refuge North Tract. A Maryland State Fishing License and Refuge Fishing Permit are required. Fishing regulations, permits and maps are available at both the North Tract Visitor Contact Station and at the National Wildlife Visitor Center. Common species include bluegill, largemouth bass, catfish, black crappie, pickerel, eel, suckers, warmouth and pumpkinseed.

## **Wildlife Observation and Photography**

The Refuge offers many opportunities to observe and photograph wildlife. At the North Tract, approximately 20 miles of roads and trails exist for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. The Baltimore Gas and Electric Company has contributed to the creation of a wetland and wildlife viewing area where visitors may see waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and songbirds in an area that was formerly an artillery firing range. At the South

## *Birding*



N. Baldacchino/USFWS



*The National Wildlife  
Visitor Center*  
N. Baldacchino/USFWS

Tract, approximately 5 miles of trails exist for hiking only (no bicycles are allowed). Trails and the seasonal tram tours highlight wildlife habitat and management practices.

### **Educational Programs and Special Events**

Staff and volunteers offer guided bird and nature walks as well as environmental education programs throughout the year at both the North and South Tracts. Announcements of upcoming programs and special events are posted at Refuge contact facilities, in local newspapers and on the Refuge web site. The web site also features special information for teachers, scout leaders and other group leaders interested in visiting the Refuge.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are an important part of the Refuge. They assist with public use programs, wildlife management activities, environmental education programs, trails maintenance and clerical assistance. See the Refuge

web site or visit the Refuge for more information.

### **Visitor Regulations**

The Staff at Patuxent Research Refuge strive to maintain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission to conserve, protect and enhance wildlife and their habitats. It is the visitor's responsibility to ensure that wildlife has a place to grow and survive for future generations by respecting and obeying Refuge regulations. In all cases, public access, use, or recreational activities not specifically permitted are prohibited. Please inquire at the North Tract Visitor Contact Station or National Wildlife Visitor Center to ensure your activity is permitted. All visitors to Patuxent Research Refuge are expected to comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations, as well as with the following conditions:

Traveling off roads, off trails and in closed areas is prohibited. The Refuge speed limit is 25 mph unless posted otherwise.

Pets must be kept on a leash (no longer than 10 feet) and under control

*Volunteer*  
L. Garrett



at all times. Pets are not allowed in Refuge ponds or waterways.

Plants and animals (living or dead) may not be disturbed, introduced or removed — with the exception of legally harvested game and fish.

Activities such as swimming, tubing, rafting, picnicking and sunbathing are not allowed on the Refuge. The use of boats for fishing is permitted only at Cash Lake with a valid Refuge Fishing Permit.

Possession of firearms or weapons is prohibited except when engaged in legal hunting activities in accordance with Refuge Hunting Regulations.

Please do not litter. Take trash with you and dispose of it properly.

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.



*Great blue heron*  
H. Stein