

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cross Creeks

*National Wildlife
Refuge*







This blue goose, designed by Ding Darling, has become a symbol of the Refuge System.

Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge

Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 refuges within the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's refuge system and was established in 1962. Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge is located four miles east of Dover, in Stewart County, Tennessee, and is approximately seventy-five miles northwest of Nashville, Tennessee. Named Cross Creeks due to the convergence of North Cross Creek and South Cross Creek at its midpoint, the 8,862 acre refuge provides feeding and resting habitat for migrating waterfowl in the Tennessee-Kentucky portion of the Mississippi flyway.

The refuge's twelve mile long rich bottomlands along the Cumberland River are surrounded by rolling hills and high rocky bluffs. Hardwood forests make up one-third of its acreage. With the remaining acres of impounded water, marsh, brush and farmland, this area provides an ideal setting for migrating waterfowl. The refuge supports over 650 species of plants and 480 species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians.

Migratory Birds

Cross Creeks provides wintering habitat and protection for large numbers of waterfowl including puddle ducks such as mallard, gadwall, wigeon, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, wood duck, black duck, shoveler, and pintail. Diving ducks are found in the deeper bodies of water such as South Cross Creek and Elk Reservoirs. Some of the diving duck species include canvasback, ringneck, scaup, ruddy, common merganser, hooded merganser, redhead, bufflehead, goldeneye, and redbreasted merganser.

USFWS



The beautiful wood duck is a summer resident of the refuge. Opposite: deciduous woodlands make up about 30% of refuge acreage.

*cover photo:
immature black-crowned night heron.
Sarah M. Welker*

In January duck populations may exceed 60,000 birds, with mallards comprising the highest percentage, followed by black ducks. Banding information shows that the majority of the ducks wintering here come from the upper prairie states and Canada.

Chip Grafe



A familiar and always beautiful sight is a flock of Canada geese.

After Cross Creeks Refuge was established, Canada goose numbers were low; however, through increased effort, the refuge has become a major wintering area. These birds make up a portion of the Southern James Bay Population whose range extends from the southern coast of James Bay southward through the eastern portion of the Mississippi Flyway.

In addition to the thousands of migrating and wintering ducks and geese that visit each year, the refuge also serves as a nesting area for wood ducks and a small number of mallards.

During spring, summer, and fall Cross Creeks is alive with a host of other migrant birds. A myriad of songbirds and shorebirds stop briefly in the fall and spring to replenish energy reserves for the long journey



One of the many eaglets hatched in the area.



The majestic bald eagle graces refuge skies throughout the year.



Butterfly and wildflowers are perfect "Watchable Wildlife" subjects.

to and from wintering areas in Central and South America, while others, such as prothonotary warbler, summer tanager, common yellow throat and indigo bunting use the refuge for nesting.

Endangered/Threatened Wildlife

The bald eagle, no longer on the endangered list but now threatened, has made a remarkable recovery in the area. Wintering populations have increased and at least two pair have become permanent residents. In 1983 the first documented successful bald eagle nesting in 22 years occurred in the area. Since the first successful nest, other nests have been built and continue to fledge young. Other endangered species which are occasionally sighted include the peregrine falcon and least tern.

Other Wildlife

The diversity of habitats including upland deciduous woodlands, river bottoms, creeks, fields, and shrub enables a host of wildlife species to make Cross Creeks their home. A variety of wading birds, shorebirds, raptors, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and insects may be seen throughout the year. Wild turkeys, great blue herons, and mourning doves are common. White-tailed deer, rabbits, raccoons, opossums, gray and fox squirrels, mink, beaver, muskrat, skunk, groundhogs, and coyote live in these wilds. The illusive bobcat as well as gray and red fox can be seen on occasion. Numerous species of frogs, turtles, and snakes make the refuge their home.

Water and Crop Management

Water levels in the refuge reservoirs and impoundments are controlled to stimulate the growth of natural plant species and an abundance of insects, crustaceans, and mollusks, all of which are highly favored food of



Top: cooperative farmers leave part of their crop in the fields to benefit wildlife.

Below: large groups of eastern wild turkeys may be encountered on the refuge.

migratory waterfowl. “Moist soil management,” as this technique is called, has proven to be a highly successful method of producing nutritious food that is beneficial to waterfowl and other wildlife. Under cooperative agreements, farmers plant the majority of the refuge’s 1,200 acres of cultivated land on a share basis, leaving a portion of the crop in the fields for wildlife consumption. Crops include corn, soybeans, milo (grain sorghum), and millet. Since Canada geese depend on green browse for a substantial part of their diet, an ample amount of winter wheat is planted each fall.

A Look into the Past

The area surrounding and within Cross Creeks Refuge is rich in history. Archaeological investigations indicate that the earliest use by man may have occurred about 8,000 years ago during the Paleoindian/Early Archaic period. Early inhabitants were hunters and gatherers along the waterways and forests of the area as evidenced by artifacts recovered by research archaeologists.

Chip Grafte

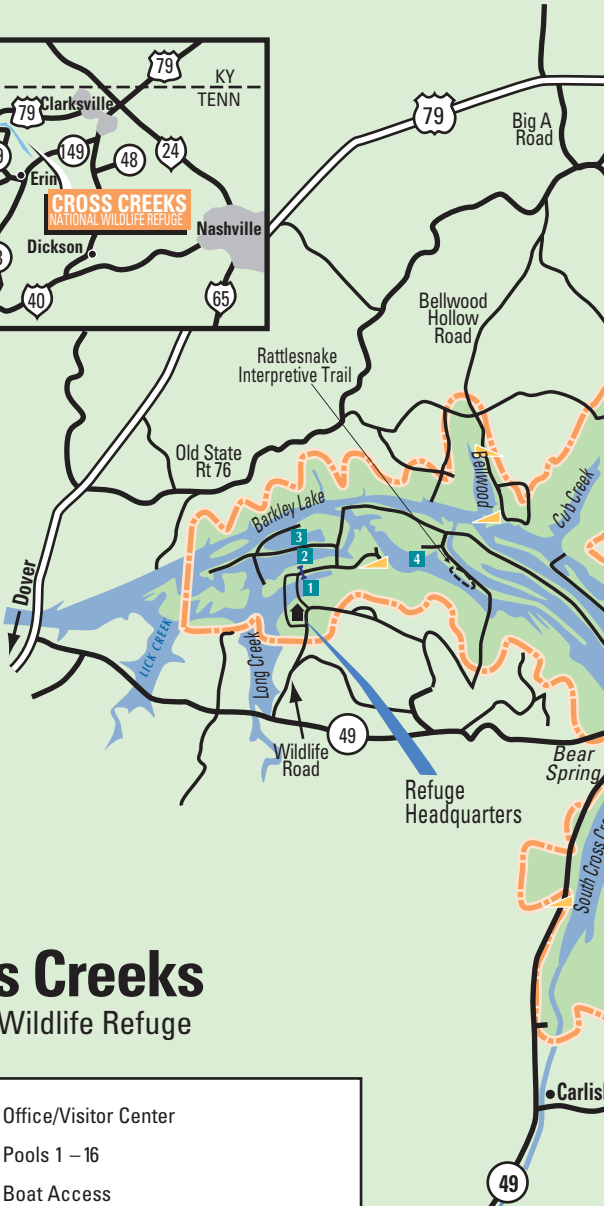


A state archaeologist uncovers evidence of the earliest inhabitants of the area.

During the 1850's, the iron industry was at its peak in the Stewart County area. Limestone and timber were abundant

as were numerous deposits of iron ore for mining. Plentiful streams provided power and river systems provided transportation to markets. The remains of one of the many iron furnace stacks is located on refuge property. Bellwood Furnace is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The area is rich in Civil War history. A visit to Fort Donelson National Battlefield can give perspective on the role Stewart County played in this historical event.



Cross Creeks

National Wildlife Refuge

		Office/Visitor Center
		Pools 1 – 16
		Boat Access (Improved and Unimproved)
		Refuge Boundary
		Rattlesnake Trail (1 mile) open March 16–November 14
		State Highway
		Paved Road
		Gravel Road







Above: volunteers young and old assist refuge staff in a variety of tasks.

Below: some volunteers literally "go out on a limb" for the refuge.



projects, research studies, conducting tours and environmental education programs. The volunteer program is a way for people to become involved with the refuge as well as provide a worthwhile

contribution to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Enjoy Your Visit

Headquarters/
Visitor Center -

The visitor center is located four miles east of Dover, Tennessee off Highway 49.

The center is open 7:00 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

The entire refuge is open to the public for daylight use from March 16 through November 14.

Best viewing

times are spring and fall from November 15 through March 15, refuge roads are closed to the public to minimize disturbance to wintering



Bald Eagle

waterfowl and nesting bald eagles. During that time the visitor center offers wildlife exhibits and audio-visual programs.

Wildlife Observation/Photography

A 10 mile long gravel road following the Cumberland river on the south side of the refuge provides vehicle access for viewing of wildlife from March 16 through November 14. The one mile long hiking trail,

Sarah M. Welker



Rattlesnake Trail, is open for wildlife observation during this time. A refuge bird list is available at the office or visitor center. The refuge is listed in the Tennessee Wildlife Viewing Guide and is one of several officially designated wildlife observation areas in the state.

Happy Earth Campers gather for a group photo.

*Environmental Education/
Group Tours*

Environmental education programs are conducted for various school and other organized groups. Arrangements for group tours or programs may be made by calling the refuge office.



Ring-billed gulls are regular visitors to the Cumberland River and refuge pools.

Fishing
Fishing opportunities are numerous. Contact the refuge headquarters for regulations.

Hunting
Deer, turkey, Canada goose, and squirrel may

be hunted on the refuge during specific hunting seasons. See refuge hunting brochures for specific information.

Boating

Boating is allowed year round in Lake Barkley/Cumberland River waters and areas accessible directly from Lake Barkley. Boating is allowed from March 16 - November 14 in the refuge pools and reservoirs.

Additional information can be found in the refuge fishing regulations brochure available at the refuge office.

Refuge moist soil units provide excellent food for waterfowl and other wildlife.







Vehicles

Automobiles are allowed only on designated roads.

Other Refuge Regulations

Refuge boundary signs delineate refuge property which is behind the sign. "Area Closed" signs are erected to minimize disturbance to waterfowl or other wildlife or for public safety.

Firearms and archery equipment are prohibited except during designated hunts.

Disturbing, feeding or collecting wildlife or plants is strictly prohibited.

Pets on a leash are permitted.

Camping is prohibited.

Open fires are prohibited.

Surface collecting or digging for archaeological historical and/or Native American artifacts is prohibited.

ATV's are not allowed.

Bicycling is permitted on established roads during open periods.

Organized group horseback riding is allowed on occasions by special use permit only.

Facilities accessible to the physically challenged are available.



Top: the eastern bluebird is now a common sight around fields and open country. Below: occasionally, rarities such as this immature white ibis take advantage of refuge wetlands. Left: fall foliage on hillside overlooking one of the refuge reservoirs.

Great egrets search refuge pools for fish and other edibles during the summer.



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May 2005

