# Tennessee

## National Wildlife Refuge









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Habitat management for waterfowl has been ongoing at Tennessee Refuge since its establishment in 1945. Today the refuge's 51,380 acres include moist soil management, cooperative farming for agricultural grains, natural wetlands and seasonal mudflats, and upland forest. Each winter the refuge's flooded agricultural fields sustain around 200,000 ducks and 10,000 geese. Nearly 100 bald eagles feed and roost along the shoreline. Seasonal mudflats nourish thousands of migrant shorebirds in fall and spring, and with each new year, nesting songbirds fill the woods and fields.

The Big Sandy peninsula's 7,000 acres of mature upland forest lures 300 species and thousands of colorful songbirds each year. Pace Point on the north side is listed as one of the top ten birding sites in Tennessee. Selected areas of the forest have been carefully thinned to produce more natural forest conditions and to allow forest floor vegetation to flourish.

This type of management improves habitat for songbirds and other species of wildlife. Each year approximately 300,000 visitors come to Tennessee Refuge to bird-watch, observe wildlife or participate in wildlife dependent recreation.

The Visitor Center, located on Britton Ford Peninsula, approximately six miles off highway 79 near Paris, Tennessee will be opening the fall of 2013. Featuring a state of the art exhibit hall, visitors will be treated to fun and interactive exhibits including flying in a virtual plane ride with a biologist, exploring the wall of wildlife, experiencing the night sounds theater, and playing the refuge manager's game. Entry is FREE. The visitor center will also include an environmental education classroom to maximize field trip opportunties.

Environmental education is one of our top priorities, and the primary mean's of delivering the refuge's message on conservation to our youth. The refuge's forests, wetlands, and other natural wildlife habitats are used as outdoor classrooms by refuge staff to conduct field trips and programs for school-age children. Many classroom presentations are also delivered at local schools. Thirteen environmental education trunks called "Critter Crates" are provided free-of-charge to educators, home school parents, Girl and Boy Scout leaders, and area camp directors. Refuge staff also trains local teachers to deliver environmental education to their students.

In recent years, Tennessee Refuge was designated by Tennessee Sportsman Magazine as one of Tennessee's top three public areas to hunt deer. Hunting at Tennessee Refuge draws about 1,800 hunters each year. The hunters help support the local economy with their motel room rentals, food and fuel purchases, and tax revenue for hunt licenses. Hunting is permitted on the refuge for white tail deer, squirrel, raccoon, resident Canada geese and wild turkey. Along with regular hunting seasons, quota hunts are offered for deer via a draw/permit program.

#### Calendar

January: Bald Eagle/Waterfowl

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February: Bird Watching

**March-October:** Fishing in Interior Waters

March-May: Spring turkey hunting

March: Junior Duck Stamp

Competition

**April:** Kids Fishing Derby

May: International Migratory Bird Day

August-November: Squirrel hunting

September-November: Raccoon

hunting

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week

### **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

October-November: Deer hunting

November-January: Waterfowl and

Bald eagle viewing

### **Questions and Answers**

Does the refuge have hiking trails? Yes, the 2.5 mile interpretive Britton Ford Hiking Trail is located on the Britton Ford/ Sulphur Wells area 12 minutes from Paris off Highway 79 North. This trail is complete with an outdoor classroom. Chickasaw National Recreation trail offers 1.1 miles of trail at the Big Sandy Peninsula.

Where can I go birding on the refuge? The birds on the refuge change with the season and habitat type. Big Sandy Peninsula is a favorite place to see loons, bald eagles and sea gulls in the winter and songbirds in the spring and summer. Duck River Bottoms is the place to go for shorebirds during the fall and spring migrations. Waterfowl can be viewed at all refuge units during the winter season, but favorite places for viewing are at the V.L. Childs Observation Deck near Britton Ford and at Duck River Bottoms.

Do I need a refuge permit to hunt or fish on the refuge? You do not need a permit to fish on the refuge. Hunting requires an Annual Hunting Permit at a one-time cost of \$15.