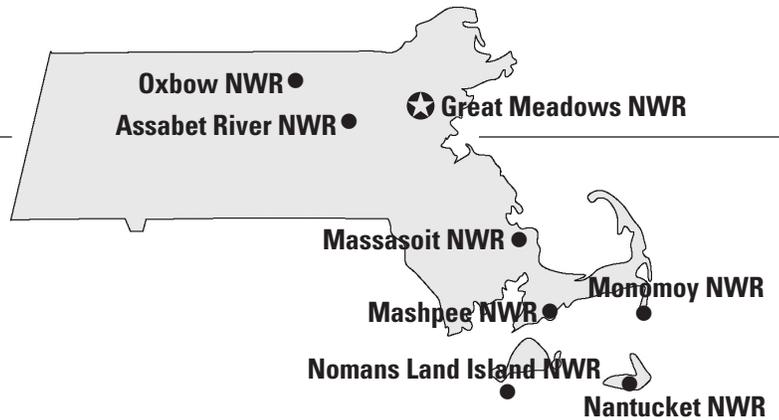


# Massasoit

## National Wildlife Refuge

### Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex

#### Fact Sheet



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

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D)  
Senator John F. Kerry (D)  
Rep. William D. Delahunt (D-10th)

#### Contact

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#### Purpose

Massasoit National Wildlife Refuge was established to conserve fish and wildlife that are listed as endangered or threatened species.

#### Public Use Notes

- The refuge is closed to the public to protect the northern red-bellied cooter.

#### Management Activities

- Support research, provide a head-start program, and maintain undisturbed habitat for the endangered northern red-bellied cooter
- Work cooperatively with partners to protect northern red-bellied cooters through land acquisition, cooperative management, research and education

#### Highlights

Refuge habitat includes one coastal pond (Crooked Pond) and pitch pine/scrub oak forest. The refuge also protects sandy, shrubby beach front along two other coastal ponds.

Researchers have released head-started turtles (hatchlings gathered from the wild in late summer and raised in captivity for 9 months) in suitable ponds since 1985.

Because northern red-bellied cooters do not reach sexual maturity for 13 to 15 years, the head-start program's success is unverified.

#### Issues

Since the refuge is located in a fast growing area, development and disturbance are constant threats to the turtle and its habitat.

Trespassing by hikers, bikers, horseback riders and ATV operators is increasing.

The need for habitat management, including the creation of nesting areas and possible use of fire, should be examined.

Regional and refuge staff have proposed an 8,015-acre expansion of the refuge to protect all the populations sites of the northern red-bellied cooter. The proposed expansion has not yet been approved.

A 4-acre parcel that is critical to the recovery of the cooter is under option but has not yet been acquired due to lack of funding.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

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