

Chesapeake Island Refuges

Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex Fact Sheet

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD)
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD)
Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-MD-1st)

Senator John Warner (R-VA)
Senator George F. Allen (R-VA)
Rep. JoAnn S. Davis (R-VA-1st)

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Purpose

The Chesapeake Island Refuges were established to provide sanctuary and for other management purposes for migratory birds. They represent a unique ecosystem component of the Chesapeake Bay. Isolation, fewer predators and less human disturbance provide critical nesting and wintering habitat that does not exist on the mainland. A host of waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, terrapins and endangered species rely on the island chain.

Public Use Notes

- Seasonal visitor contact station at Martin NWR in the town of Ewell
- Except Bishopshead Division, access to island units is only by boat

Management Activities

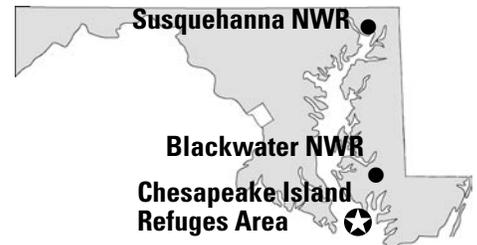
- Restoring wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation beds, controlling erosion, and monitoring
- Working to recover populations of threatened and endangered species such as bald eagle and tiger beetle
- Protecting and managing habitat for migratory birds
- Preserving natural diversity and plant and animal abundance
- Providing nesting habitats and structures for a variety of wildlife species
- Controlling exotic invasive species
- Enforcing federal wildlife laws and refuge regulations

Highlights

Refuge lands are home to the second largest heron rookery in Maryland and the largest rookery in Virginia.

Refuge protects 16 percent of the remaining SAV in Chesapeake Bay.

Three active peregrine falcon nesting towers on Martin NWR and one active tower on Spring Island Division, which also supports the largest colony of brown pelicans in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay.



Bald eagles and large concentrations of ospreys nest and feed throughout the refuge's islands. Martin NWR hosts the area's largest concentration of nesting osprey, with 850 fledglings.

Refuge islands are important breeding areas for black duck, and support large numbers of spring and fall migrating songbirds, raptors and monarch butterflies. These Service lands are a focal point for wetland birds such as ducks, herons, swans, egrets, American oystercatcher and ibis.

Issues

Coastal erosion and shoreline/wetland loss

Submerged aquatic vegetation decline

Black duck nest decline

Injurious species (mute swan, certain gull species, red fox and phragmites)

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