



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

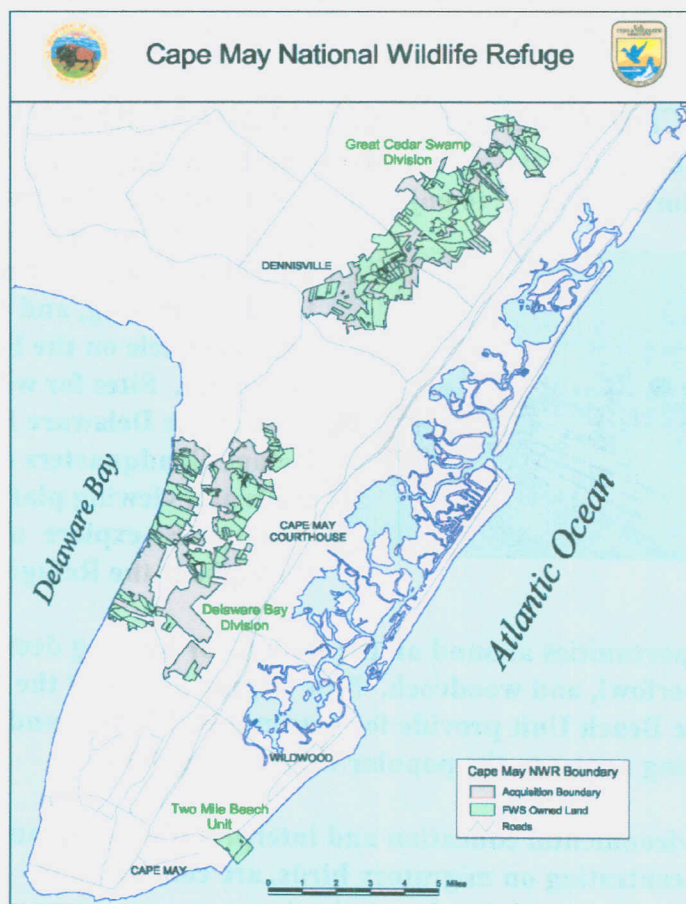


Cape May

National Wildlife Refuge
24 Kimbles Beach Road
Cape May Court House, New Jersey

The Cape May National Wildlife Refuge is strategically located to conserve habitat for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds which pass through the area each year. As the New Jersey Coast and the Cape May Peninsula witness the loss of natural habitat, the Refuge, in concert with various partners, is working to ensure that future generations of Americans will be able to enjoy the large concentrations of shorebirds, songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, and woodcock which have made the Cape May area famous for birdwatching.

Since being established in 1989, the Refuge has protected 11,000 acres of upland forest, forested wetland, salt marsh, ocean-front beach, maritime forest, and grassland/old field habitats. The goal is to eventually acquire 21,000 acres. These areas are considered so important that Refuge lands are included in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a "Ramsar" Wetland of International Importance, part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, the Pinelands National Reserve, an Important Bird Area, and a destination on the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route. With a landbase established, the Refuge is now entering a phase where management programs will be further developed and implemented.



Fish and Wildlife Resources

Each spring the Delaware Bay hosts the second largest concentration of migrating shorebirds in North America. The Delaware Bay Division remains an extremely important feeding area for horseshoe crab spawning and consequently, shorebirds. Shorebird species, including the red knot (*Calidris canutus*), need to feed on these horseshoe crab eggs to gain sufficient weight to continue their migration to their summer breeding grounds.

Stands of Atlantic white cedar trees (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) remain in the Great Cedar Swamp Division. This area has the largest contiguous forest on the Refuge and supports many migratory songbirds and other wildlife. A variety of warblers and other songbirds are common here during the breeding season and migration.

The federally threatened piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and state endangered least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) nest at the Two Mile Beach Unit. While partnering with the adjacent U.S. Coast Guard - Loran Support Unit, efforts are being made to protect these beach nesting birds through monitoring, symbolic fencing, and educating the public. To provide a feeding, resting, and nesting area, the Refuge's beachfront is closed to all access from April 1-September 30. From 2000-2002, the least tern colony more than doubled in size each year to reach 100 pairs in 2002.



Recreation and Education Opportunities

In addition to the spectacular wildlife, the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge hosts many visitors who come to enjoy the fish, wildlife, and natural environment. Birdwatchers frequent the Refuge, especially in spring and fall. The new Two Mile Beach Unit is an increasingly popular destination for birdwatching, and the spring shorebird and horseshoe crab spectacle on the Delaware Bay is always a featured attraction. Sites for wildlife viewing include the Woodcock Trail in the Delaware Bay Division, an accessible trail at the Refuge Headquarters on Kimbles Beach Road, and various trails and viewing platforms at the Two Mile Beach Unit. Visitors also explore many unimproved trails located throughout the Refuge.



Opportunities abound on the Refuge for hunting deer, waterfowl, and woodcock. New improvements at the Two Mile Beach Unit provide for seasonal surf fishing and also fishing access to the popular Cold Spring Jetty.

Environmental education and interpretation programs, concentrating on migratory birds, are conducted in cooperation with local organizations.

