



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

February 2003 - Planning Update



Photo by Ed Sambolin

Flicker and young at Wertheim NWR

Greetings from the Refuge Manager

On behalf of the staff at the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, I would like to thank everyone who has shared their time and ideas with us.

Comments received so far from the public have helped us to refine a Vision Statement and Goals, and have also generated a list of issues we will embark on during Phase II of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan — the development of alternatives. With your continued participation, Phase II will be just as successful (and enjoyable!) as Phase I! While we can't implement every comment, it is critical to hear from all of you in order to develop the best management program for the Complex and its visitors.

Remember, these lands belong to all Americans — present and future — so I sincerely hope we hear from you; you don't have to have a degree in wildlife management to have great ideas and solutions to problems. As Margaret Mead said, *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that has."* Together, we will do a dynamite job!

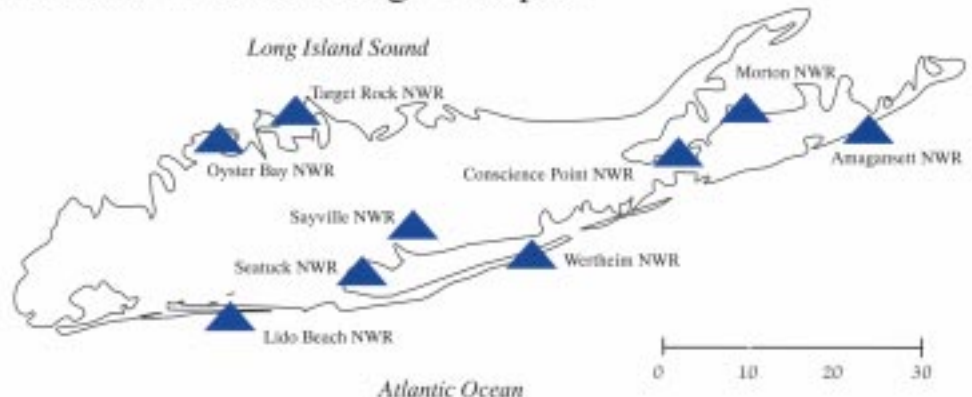
Working for Wildlife and You,

Patricia Martinkovic
Refuge Manager

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

"To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

The Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex



More about planning



Photo by Bill Kolodnicki

A home for birds... A least tern (above) and a great egret (below) provide wonderful opportunities for photographers, birders and students at the Refuge Complex.



Photo by Sheldon Pollack

What's next?

Our planning schedule has been revised since we last notified you. The proposed schedule for CCP/EIS preparation is as follows:

- Review additional comments related to information included in this update
- Draft CCP/EIS available for public review by December 2003
- Public Review and Open Houses will follow release of the Draft CCP/EIS.

Why are we planning?

We are still in the process of developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the nine units of the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex. This 15-year plan will outline management direction and strategies aimed at preserving wildlife habitat, protecting rare, threatened and endangered species, and providing priority public uses on refuge lands. The Draft EIS, due later this year, will present several alternatives for management, and evaluate their potential consequences.

How do we work with other agencies and groups?

Personnel from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation have been involved in the planning process from the beginning. State biologists provide input early in the process, and other representatives from local, state and federal agencies have participated in our planning workshops. We plan to work with these agencies even more in the future, and we will continue to work with our many conservation partners.

What kind of comments are most helpful?

All of your ideas and comments are very helpful. As you review the information presented in this update, please remember our long-range plan must conform with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and with the purposes of the refuges. With the refuges of the Complex, management for migratory birds is primarily the authorized purpose.

In our planning process, key issues often have multiple ways of being handled. Each refuge will include at least two "alternatives". We will then evaluate the environmental impacts of each alternative, and compare and contrast the possible consequences of implementing each action.

Submit your comments, suggestions, and ideas on any of the information presented in this update to:

Thomas Bonetti
 USFWS, Region 5, Division of Planning
 300 Westgate Center Drive
 Hadley, Massachusetts 01035-9589
 or, email to tom_bonetti@fws.gov

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Draft Vision and Goals

A Vision for the Future

The Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex will preserve, manage, and restore some of the last significant natural areas for wildlife on Long Island, New York. The Refuge Complex will comprise varied and important wildlife habitat, ranging from coastal systems to native grasslands to mature forests. These habitats, spread over nine distinct units, will support threatened and endangered species in addition to hundreds of species of migratory wildlife within the Atlantic Flyway.

Located adjacent to the nation's major media center, the Complex will use its proximity to New York City and urban communities to increase public awareness, understanding and support of the National Wildlife Refuge System. We will accomplish this by providing wide-ranging opportunities to learn about wildlife and its associated habitats, and by offering a variety of wildlife-dependent recreation activities. We will work together with partners to further protect this network of lands and its wildlife from increasing pressures and threats brought on by continued urban development. Through the use of up-to-date scientific information and active habitat management, we will contribute to fulfilling the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System for future generations.

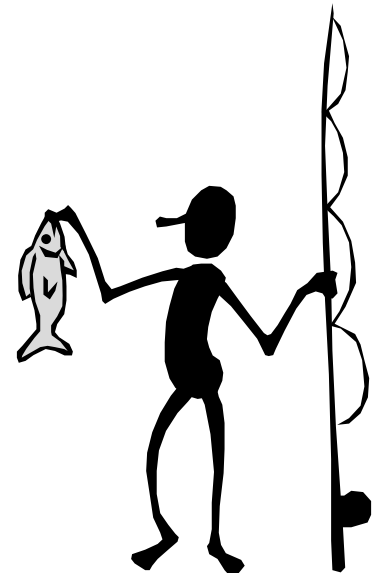


Photo by D. Sias/TNC

... and a home for plants too. *Sandplain gerardia* is one species of plant that needs extra special care.

Goals for the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

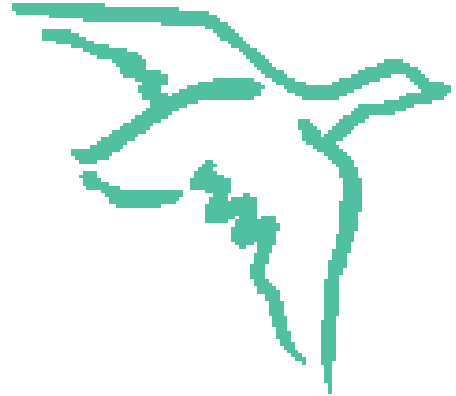
- Provide protection and achieve viable population levels for endangered species and migratory birds.
- Maintain and restore native habitats to maximize use by endangered species and migratory birds.
- Establish new, and strengthen existing, partnerships in the areas of resource and public use management on and off refuge lands.
- Increase public and partner awareness and understanding of the Refuge Complex and its conservation efforts.
- Increase and enhance visitor opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, interpretation and environmental education) that do not conflict with resource protection or management programs.



Refuge Happenings



USWFS Photo



Junior Duck Stamp Competition

Along with Ducks Unlimited and other partners, we are proud to be the coordinating site for New York State's Federal Junior Duck Stamp Competition. We are hoping to expand the program this year to all parts of the state, but do not want you to miss the opportunity to get involved in such an innovative, exciting program! An informational brochure and guidelines for the program along with the accompanying curriculum guide can be found at <http://duckstamps.fws.gov>, or by calling (703) 358-2000.

Although this program culminates in an art competition, it is actually an "integrated art and science curriculum developed to teach environmental science and habitat conservation. It has been designed to fit in with existing programs in these areas and conform to state and national curricular standards. Concentrating on waterfowl and wetlands, [the Jr. Duck Stamp Program] gives students an opportunity to experience the beauty and diversity of wildlife at the same time they discover the interdependence found in nature."

One Hundred Years is Upon Us!

Many of you already know that the National Wildlife Refuge System's Centennial Anniversary is quickly approaching. March 14, 2003 marks the 100 year birthday of the Refuge System, started in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt. This system of lands encompass more than 95 million acres and 540 national wildlife refuges, where at least one can be found in every state and U.S. Territory. And, you are invited to help us celebrate a century of conservation!

Mamie Parker, the Northeast Regional Director, will make a stop at Oyster Bay and Wertheim National Wildlife Refuges on Friday, March 14. At that time we will load a time capsule, which is meant to be opened in another 100 years. Each staffed refuge across the nation will be doing the same as we preserve our history of a century of conservation, hoping to tell our stories to our successors as they open these monuments in 2103. Specifics of our event are still being worked out. Watch the local newspapers, the Fish & Wildlife Service web site Events Calendar, (www.fws.gov) or call Andrea Stewart at 631/286-0485.