

National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative Connecting Birds and Birders



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System

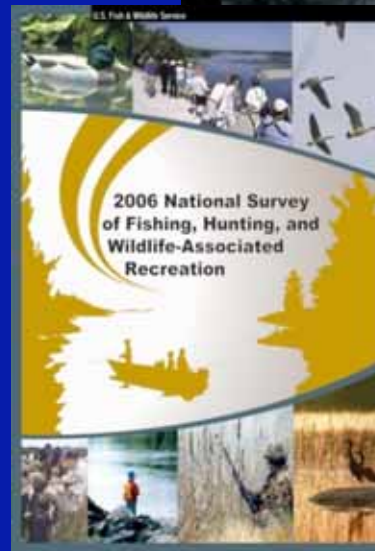
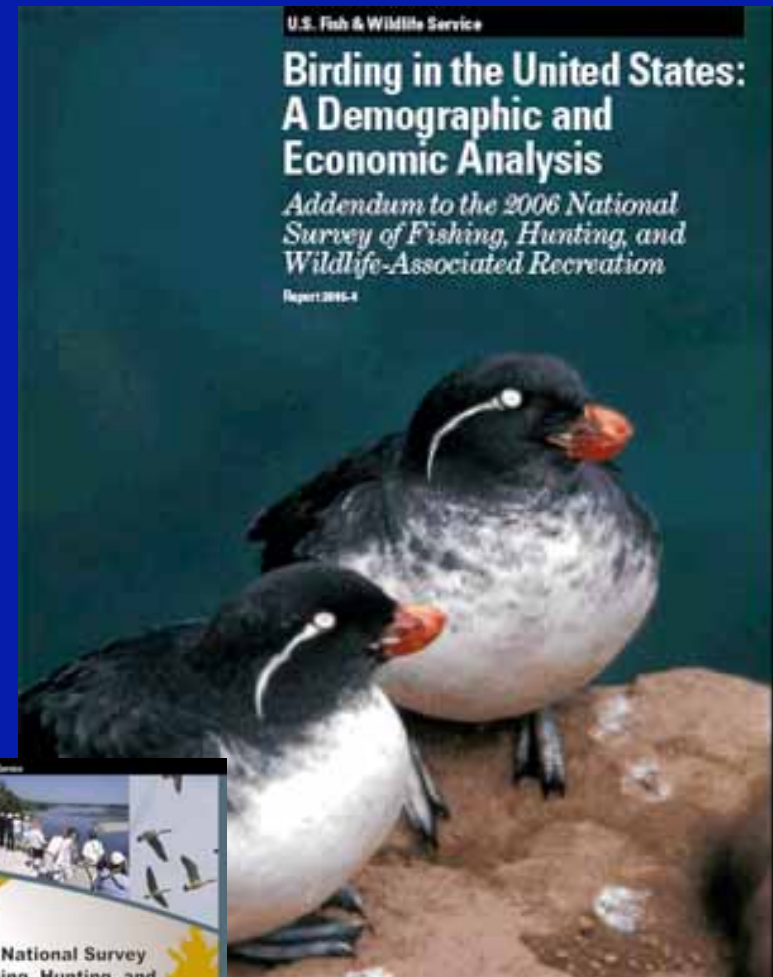


- 150 million acres
- 550 Refuges
- 40 million visitors

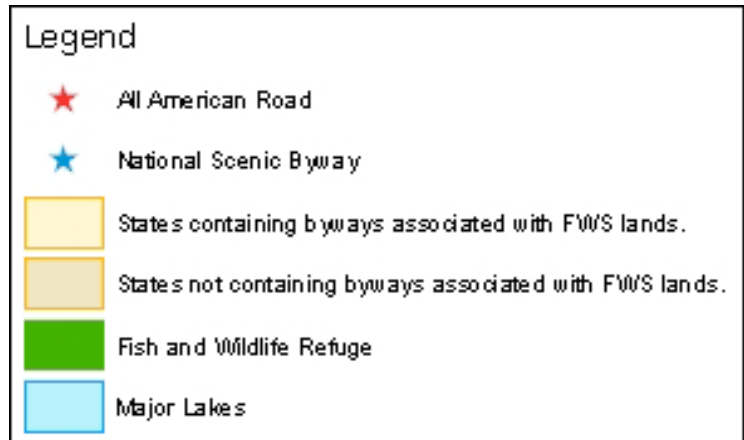
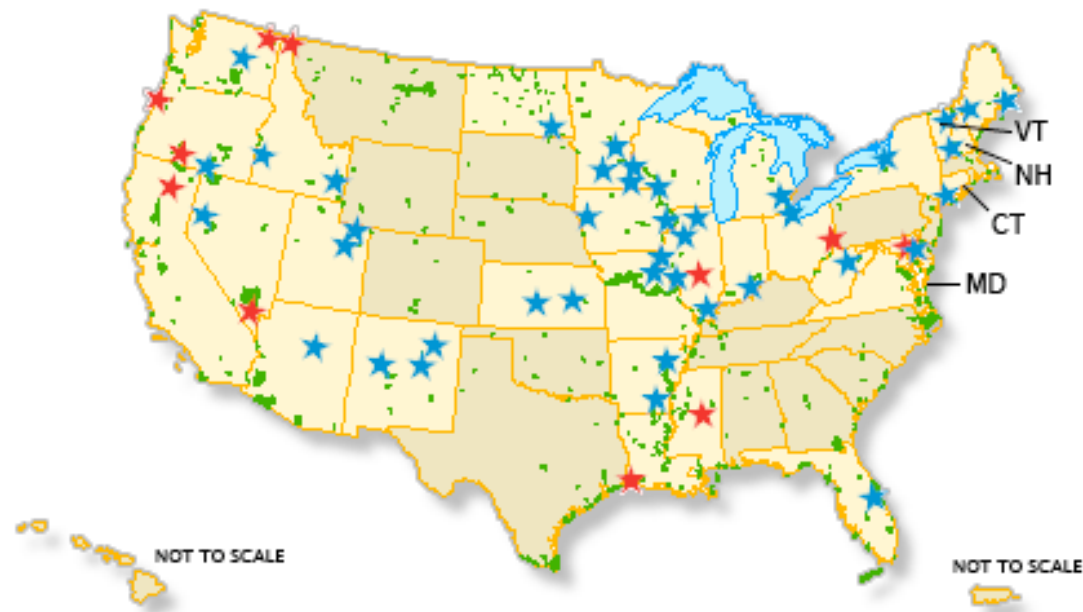
75% of visitors participate in wildlife observation

July 2009 Report

- 48 million - 1 in 5 - Americans watch birds
- 20 million away-from-home birders
- Birders contributed \$36 billion to 2006 economy



America's Byways, Birding and National Wildlife Refuges



What's the relationship?

- 61 NWRs and National Fish Hatcheries along 40 of the 126 America's Byways® in 26 states
- Even more along designated State Byways
- Some Byways and Birding Trails overlap.
- the most successful Byways and NWRs have strong non-profit group support

National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative



Photo by Jerry Goffe©

NWRS Birding Initiative Goals

1. Refuges will understand the value of birders as advocates, volunteers, and their positive economic impact in local communities.



NWRS Birding Initiative Goals

2. Birders will understand the value of refuges to bird and habitat conservation, as valued public lands, and as birding destinations.



National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative Goals

- Birders enjoying a quality experience are likely to become committed to the FWS and the Refuge System.
- Birder Friendly Refuges
- Refuge Friendly Birders



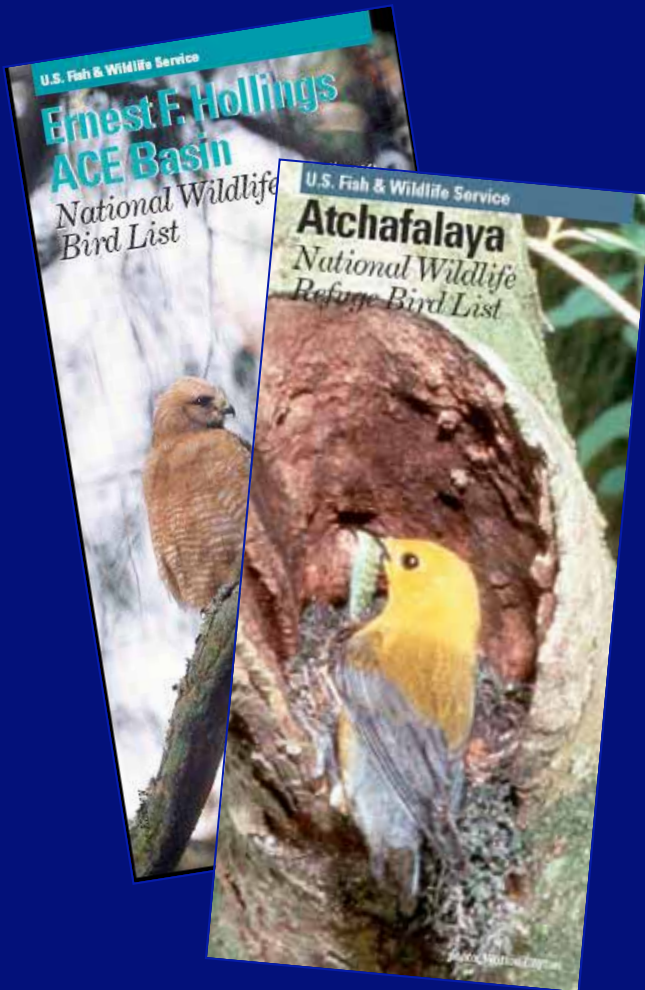
The “Birder Friendly” Refuge

- **Twenty standards, three main elements:**
 - Welcome and Orient Birders
 - On-site Programs and Activities
 - Outreach
- Elements were identified and prioritized by the NWRS Birding Team.
- Supported by the Visitor Services Standards and Handbook



Welcome and Orient Birders

Bird Checklists



- Avid birders (bar-graph format)
- Casual birders (specialty and/or common birds with images)
- Available online and on-site after hours

Welcome and Orient Birders

Visitor Enhancements

- Safe, well-maintained towers, boardwalks, blinds, etc.
- Sheltered from the elements
- Consider birder input in design stage



On-site Programs and Activities

Bird Walks



- Can be led by staff, volunteers, Friends or local bird clubs.
- Programs for families, children, school, or youth groups

On-site Programs and Activities

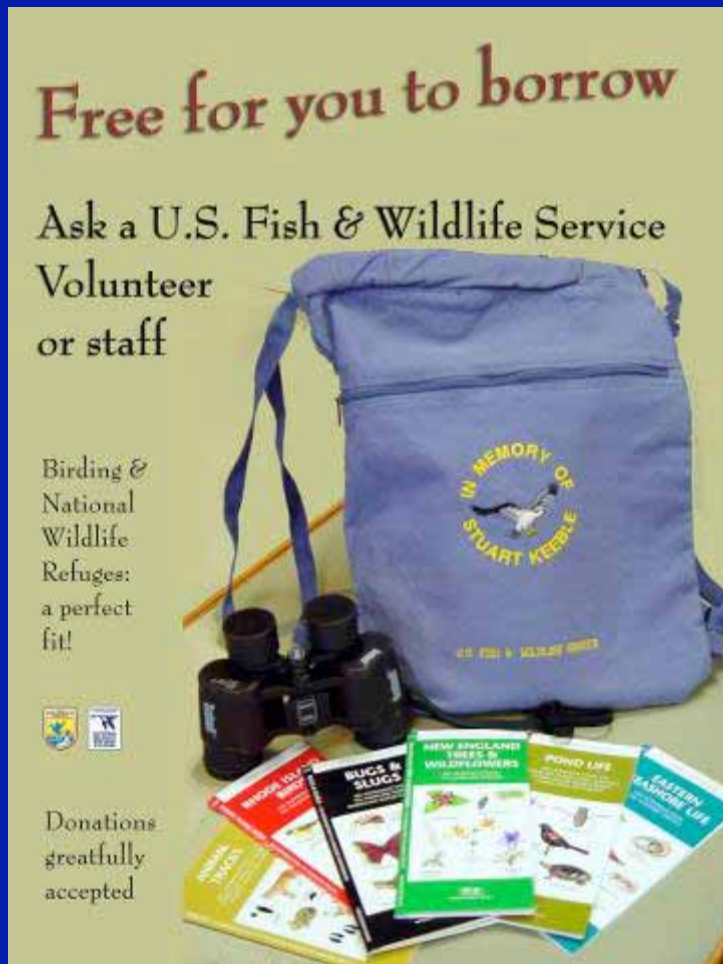
Bird Feeding Stations

- Opportunity for up-close viewing by avid and casual birders.
- Demonstrate good feeder maintenance.
- Provide take-home information.



On-site Programs and Activities

Optics and Field Guide Loans



- For beginning or casual birders
- Include quality field guide loans
- Package into “Discovery Packs” for families

Outreach



Current, accurate website

- Current, accurate information is integral, including:
 - Downloadable checklist
 - Refuge map
 - Seasonal highlights
 - Welcoming information
 - Migration information
 - Bird counts
 - Birding facilities
 - Links to local bird clubs, rare birds alerts, etc.



Bird Watching Page

Sign In Your Profile Search Go



HOME EXPLORE BYWAYS SHARE EXPERIENCES ABOUT BYWAYS PRESS ROOM **come CLOSER.**
AMERICA'S BYWAYS


► Bird Watching

- Stories
- Road Trips
- Events
- Byways

[Home](#) : [Explore Byways](#) : [Activities](#) :

Bird Watching


Bird watching has become one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in America. Many of America's Byways® will take you through lush forests, swampy wetlands, tall prairie grass, and coastal shores that are home to some of the hundreds of species of birds that can be found in the United States. There are even many Byway locations that are considered among the top "hotspots" for birding in the US.



[Birds in the South and Across the Plains](#)

Mark off a variety of birds from your life list as you travel the America's Byways in the South. From common woodpeckers to the more endangered piping plover, there are many species for you to discover. [Read more!](#)

[More Stories](#) ►



2-Day Trip: [Birding The Byway Itinerary](#)
Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway - (Maryland)

Chesapeake Country lies along the migratory corridor known as the Atlantic Flyway. It is well known for its migratory long-legged waders, geese, and ducks, as well as numerous resident bird species. This region of the Delmarva Peninsula is home to the largest concentration... [more!](#)

[More Road Trips](#) ►

Events

Oct 6 2007 [Annual White River Wildlife Festival](#)

Children's activities include birdhouse building, bird feeder making, T-shirt printing, button making and temporary tattoos. Free boat tours are offered on the hour until 1 p.m. Wildlife programs and guided walks are scheduled throughout the day.

Done Internet

Outreach

Birdfinding Guide

- A step beyond a bird checklist
- Describes where and when to find birds on the refuge
- Can be a great volunteer project.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

A Birdfinding Guide to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Background

Unquestionably Delaware's single best-known birding site, Bombay Hook justifies its fame with exceptional bird and wildlife viewing throughout the year. Centered around an Auto Tour loop road that traverses a cornucopia of habitats, including fresh & salt marshes, ponds, mudflats, woodlands, and fields, Bombay Hook also features 3 observation towers and several short walking trails.

You should plan an absolute minimum of two hours for a visit here; four is much better, and you could easily make multiple trips over several days before really getting a feel for the varying diurnal and tidal rhythms.

Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge was created in 1937 as a refuge and breeding ground for migrating birds and other wildlife. It currently comprises nearly 16,000 acres of land, with about 80% being tidal salt marsh. The Refuge is open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset.

There is an entry fee of \$4.00 per car or motorcycle or \$2.00 per bicycle or hiker. Holders of a valid Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (often called the "Duck Stamp") enter for free. Purchasing these stamps is an easy way for birders and other wildlife watchers to contribute to habitat acquisition. For complete information on user fees, please visit the web site or call the visitor center.

Visitor Center

Open fields and plantings attractive to native wildlife surround the Visitor Center. Inside, you'll find useful birding information, a nature-oriented book shop, and helpful staff and volunteers. A visitor-maintained bird sighting log, found

Outreach Refuge Friends Group

Hummingbird Banding
with Bill Talbot
Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge



June 7, 2008
8am-4pm
575-835-1828

Hear The beat of the tiny and powerful hearts of one of New Mexico's most enchanted creatures! Join Bill at the Bosque del Apache NWR for a unique experience capturing, banding and learning about the hummingbirds who call the refuge home during the spring and summer months.



Friends of the Bosque del Apache
National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 340, San Antonio, NM 87832
www.FriendsoftheBosque.org

- Engage in bird-related activities, conservation, projects.
- Provide funding, volunteers and partnership support.
- Recruit birders for board positions.

Outreach

Promote refuges good for beginners



- Identify opportunities for easy birding
 - Large concentrations
 - Large waterbirds, out in the open
 - Seasonal spectacles
 - Good facilities

The Birding Community

- Birders are an untapped support base for the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Scenic Byways effort.





www.fws.gov/refuges/birding

