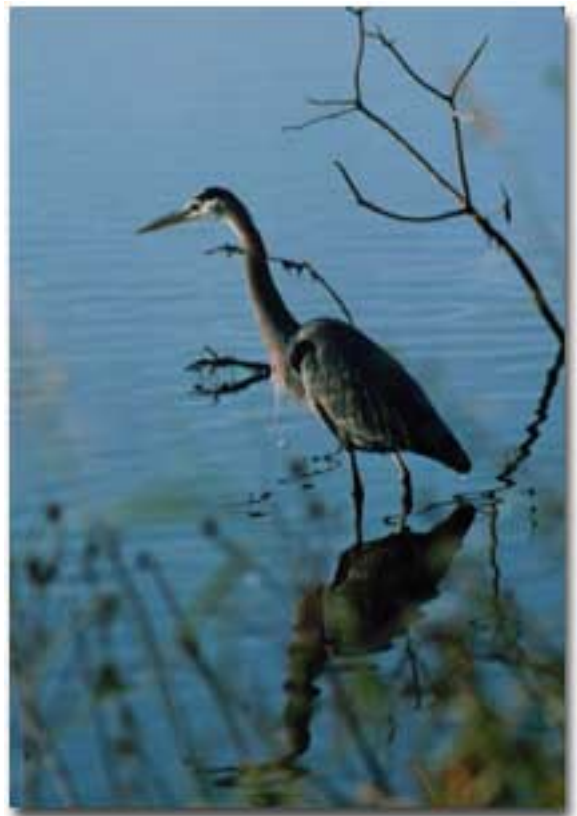


Wye Island NRMA Trail Guide

Hiking * Biking * Paddling * Horseback Riding

Wye Island Natural Resources Management Area (NRMA) is located in Queen Anne's County between the Wye and Wye East Rivers in the tidal recesses of the Chesapeake Bay. The island consists of 2,450 acres of land managed for recreation, agriculture and natural resource protection. Over 12 miles of trails provide a variety of recreational opportunities and a chance to discover an old growth forest and a magnificent holly tree, more than 250 years old. Many visitors have discovered that the best way to view Wye Island is from the water. Paddling the 30 miles of shoreline can provide endless opportunities for wildlife viewing.



The Island's History

For over 300 years, Wye Island was privately owned and managed for agricultural use, such as tobacco and wheat farming. Two noteworthy owners were William Paca, Governor of Maryland (1782-1784) and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and farmer and judge Charles Beale Bordley, brother-in-law of William Paca. Under Bordley's ownership, the island prospered with vineyards, orchards, textile production, a brickyard and a brewery.

The State purchased the island in 1976 to ensure its preservation. Wye Island's agricultural heritage continues under management by the Maryland

Department of Natural Resources. Crops such as wheat, corn and soybeans are harvested on leased fields throughout the property.

Wildlife

The island's tidal wetlands and 30 miles of shoreline provide a diverse habitat for an abundance of wildlife. Beginning in late August, Wye Island serves as a migratory stopover and winter resting area for many waterfowl species. A Canada Goose Management Area is located on the island to provide sanctuary for waterfowl to feed and rest undisturbed. Other species nest on the island, such as warblers, bluebirds and vireos, and are seen in the spring and early summer months. In its coves and along shorelines, mallards, black ducks and wood ducks can often be spotted.

Also inhabiting the island are white-tailed deer and the endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel. Considerably larger than the gray squirrel, the Delmarva Fox Squirrel once ranged from Southeastern Pennsylvania throughout the Delmarva Peninsula. Due to the loss of suitable habitat, the squirrel's population only remains in four counties of its historic range, all of which are on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Wye Island is an important habitat conservation area for preserving remaining populations of this endangered squirrel.

Habitat Restoration

Natural resource restoration plays a major role in the management of Wye Island. Along the island's 30 miles of shoreline are ongoing projects designed to use recognized natural resource practices to reduce soil loss from tidal and storm erosion. These shoreline stabilization projects are led by volunteer groups and supported by local partnerships. Under the direction of the Wye Island staff, volunteers plant native grasses, trees and shrubs along the shoreline. Riparian buffers under the federally funded Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) are maintained and established with trees and native warm season grasses for wildlife food and habitat.

Trails

Please Play Safe!

Wye Island's multi-access trails are unpaved, generally level and easy paths. These trails can become very wet and slippery after rain and may have obstacles blocking them such as roots, ruts and branches. Unless otherwise posted, trails are open to hikers, cyclists and equestrians. Remember, you

are responsible for having the necessary skills, knowledge and equipment for a safe and environmentally sensitive visit.

- **Wye Island Road** 4.2 miles - easy
Wye Island Road is a multi-use trail utilizing the county road and the gravel road from Wye Island Bridge to the Ferry Point parking area. This trail gives visitors the overall picture of Wye Island, from agricultural fields to the old growth forest at Schoolhouse Woods. This trail does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Access Guidelines, but may be useable by some persons with disabilities. See DNR's website: www.dnr.state.md.us/accessforall for additional information on accessible amenities in Maryland state forests and parks.
- **Holly Tree Trail** 1.5 miles - easy
Visit the old Holly Tree, more than 250 years old, a short distance (520 feet) from the trailhead. For a longer hike, continue along the field edge to join with the Schoolhouse Woods Trail and end on Wye Island Road. Enjoy viewing a variety of wildflowers among the field's planted warm season grasses.
- **Osage Trail** .6 mile - easy
Named for the abundant population of Osage trees on the island, this loop trail provides a view of waterfowl in Big Woods Cove. Osage trees are distinguished by their large seedpods, which are nearly the size of softballs. Osage trees originated in a small region of Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, which was home to the Osage Indians, who used its wood for bows. Osage trees have been planted as hedge fences all over the midwestern and eastern United States.
- **West Corner Trail** .5 mile - easy
Agriculture has historically played a large role on Wye Island. Follow this trail on the ends of an agricultural field and discover two scenic views of Bennett's Point on the far side of the Wye River. Ferry Landing Trail can be accessed from this trail.
- **Ferry Landing Trail** 1.1 miles - easy
Enjoy the natural cover provided by the Osage trees as you make your way down to Drum Point. This wide trail was once an access road to an old hand-drawn ferry that ran from Wye Island to Bennett's Point. For another scenic route, take the **Jack-in-the-Pulpit Trail** (0.5 mile - moderate), which forms a circular route between Ferry Landing Trail and the sandy beach at Drum Point. This is an ideal spot for a picnic lunch overlooking the water. This trail does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Access Guidelines, but may be useable

by some persons with disabilities. See DNR's website: www.dnr.state.md.us/accessforall for additional information on accessible amenities in Maryland state forests and parks.

- ***Dividing Creek Trail*** 2.5 mile - easy
Beginning at the Equestrian Parking area, this long trails follows the edge of an agricultural field where a wide variety of songbirds and whitetail deer are seen. This trail gives you an opportunity to view the open sky often filled with soaring crows, as well as turkey and black vultures. This is also a great area to watch for Delmarva Fox Squirrels.
- ***Schoolhouse Woods Nature Trail*** 1.2 miles - easy
At the end of this nature trail catch a glimpse of Grapevine Cove, a great place to look for waterfowl. Notice the large trees that comprise one of the largest existing old growth forest remnants on Maryland's Eastern Shore. As you pass the small, swampy area to the right of the trail, look for jack-in-the-pulpit but beware of poison ivy. To make a complete circuit, join the segment of the Holly Tree Trail, which runs along the forest edge. Because of the environmental sensitivity of the old growth forest, the trail is open to hikers only.

The Wye River

Paddlers on the Wye River can view the magnificent sites of Wye Island from the water. Three soft landing sites on the island offer opportunities for visitors to stop and explore the land trails. Paddlers need to be aware of weather and wind conditions, as well as boat traffic. Staying close to the shoreline helps to avoid hazardous conditions and allows easy access to protected coves. Information regarding launch sites and permit fees on the Wye and Wye East Rivers can be obtained by contacting: Queen Anne's County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-758-0835 (www.qac.org) or Talbot County Parks and Recreation Department, 410-770-8050 (www.talbgov.org)

Paddlers are also encouraged to visit the water trail at Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot County. Call 410-822-4903 for details.

The American Canoe Association advocates for paddler safety, clean water, the preservation of natural resources and paddler access to our waterways. For information on paddling trip preparation and safety tips visit www.acanet.org or call 703-451-0141.

Pets without a leash are permitted in all areas of the forest but must be

under control at all times.

Hunting

Managed bow hunts by permit only are held each year from mid-October to late November to help maintain the ecological balance between the white-tail deer and their habitat. There is limited Canada Goose and raccoon hunting also by permit. For more information on hunting, contact the land manager to visit DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Division on the web at: www.dnr.state.md.us/huntersguide

A check-in station located near the entrance to Wye Island provides self-registration for hunters. Hunting locations are available on a map provided by the land manager.

Camping, Picnic and Lodge Accommodations

Wye Island has a rustic lodge, called the Duck House, which is situated on a wooded knoll with a scenic view of Granary Creek. The lodge and adjacent picnic pavilion are available for rental by reservation only, and can be made 10 months in advance by contacting the Wye Island Office at 410-827-7577.

Camping on Wye Island is restricted to education and youth groups. Family camping is available at Tuckahoe State Park and Martinak State Park located in Queen Anne's and Caroline counties. Both parks contain loops with electric hook-up and camper cabins.

Pets on a leash are permitted. To make pavilion and camping reservations spring through fall at Maryland State Parks, call Park Reservations year-round at 1-888-432-2267. Or, make your reservations on the Internet: reservations.dnr.state.md.us

Guides and Outfitters

To obtain information about guides and outfitters in your area, contact the NRMA office at 410-827-7577. For self-guided hiking and paddling itineraries on Wye Island, visit DNR's Nature Tourism website at: www.dnr.state.md.us/outdooradventures

Leave No Trace

While you are enjoying Wye Island, please help us protect its natural and historic resources by following these *Leave No Trace* ethics.

- Keep wildlife wild by not feeding them and keeping your distance.
- Choose the right path by walking single file on designated trails. Shortcutting trails causes erosion, degrades natural beauty, replaces native plants with weeds and affects wildlife.
- Choose the right site by using designated launch sites to get on and off the river. This will avoid creating unwanted access to the river.
- Leave No Trace, Inc. is a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. Leave No Trace builds awareness, appreciation and respect for our wildlands. For more information visit: www.lnt.org



Directions

From the Bay Bridge/Western Shore of Maryland: Travel 12.5 miles eastbound on U.S. Route 50. Turn right onto Carmichael Road. Travel 5.1 miles and cross the Wye Island Bridge. Once on the island, follow signs to the NRMA office or parking areas.

From Route 50 Westbound: Travel westbound on U.S. Route 50 to the Maryland Route 213 traffic light. Continue west on Route 50 for three miles and look for sign (Wye Island NRMA) and turn left onto Carmichael Road. Travel 5.1 miles and cross the Wye Island Bridge. Once on the island, follow signs to the NRMA office or parking areas.

Wye Island Natural Resources Management Area
632 Wye Island Road
Queenstown MD 21658
410-827-7577
TTY users call via the MD Relay

This trail guide, complete with a topographical map of the multi-use trails, is available for sale from Wye Island headquarters by calling 410-827-7577.

[Back to the Wye Island NRMA page](#)