

Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Several refuges protect critical wildlife habitats on Long Island—6,500 acres

A premier watchable wildlife site



Jim Clayton

Five of nine wonderful places that make up this complex of refuges are open to the public: Amagansett, Elizabeth A. Morton, Oyster Bay, Target Rock and Wertheim. All contain a variety of habitats, and are prime stopovers for migrating raptors, shorebirds and songbirds.

Amagansett and Elizabeth A. Morton National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) are located on Long Island's south fork. Amagansett is 36 acres of beach, swales, fens, cranberry bogs and oak scrub. Most of Morton's 187-acre site is a peninsula jutting into Noyack and Little Peconic bays. Habitats include beach, pond, bog, tidal flat, salt and freshwater marsh, shrub, grassland and maritime forest.

Oyster Bay NWR is located on the north shore of eastern Nassau County and is only accessible by boat. This 3,209-acre



piping plover

Jeff Nadler



black ducks

Genry Lemmo



great blue heron

Bill Baraszewski

area includes bay, salt marsh and freshwater wetlands, and is especially important for wintering waterfowl and a variety of waterbirds. Target Rock NWR is 80 acres on the Lloyd Neck Peninsula of Long Island's north shore. Mature oak-hickory forest and rocky beach are found here. Oak-pine woodlands, grasslands and fresh, brackish and saltwater wetlands characterize 2,550-acre Wertheim NWR on Long Island's south shore.

Wildlife to Watch

At Amagansett, visitors can see merlins, Cooper's hawks, kestrels, sharp-shinned hawks, and peregrine falcons during spring and fall migrations. In late spring and summer, the beach hosts threatened piping plovers, willet and sandpipers, as well as roseate, common and least terns. Eastern hognose snakes, a species of special concern, also occur here. Long-tailed ducks, white-winged scoters, common loons, horned grebes, Ipswich sparrows, rough-legged hawks, and short-eared owls overwinter.

At Elizabeth A. Morton, white-tailed deer, eastern chipmunk, painted turtles, green frogs, songbirds and ospreys are seen in warmer months, while long-tailed ducks, common goldeneyes, white-winged scoters, and black ducks are common in winter. The ocean surrounding the refuge is

critical habitat for Kemp's ridley sea turtles and, occasionally, loggerhead turtles. The beach attracts endangered piping plovers, as well as roseate and least terns.

At Oyster Bay, abundant fish and shellfish support a complex food web linking waterfowl, fish-eating birds, and marine mammals. Harbor seals, sea turtles and diamondback terrapins are commonly seen. Wintering waterfowl include black ducks, greater scaup, bufflehead, canvasback and long-tailed ducks. Osprey, egrets, herons, terns and cormorants are also found here.

Target Rock hosts a variety of warblers, shorebirds and waterfowl during spring and fall migrations. The refuge provides nesting habitat for bank swallows and shorebirds like the piping plover. During colder months, diving ducks are common offshore, while harbor seals occasionally rest on the beach and nearby rocks.

Wertheim was established to protect the Carmans River Estuary for migratory birds. Ospreys, hawks, owls, pine warblers, wood and black ducks, mergansers, bufflehead, great egrets, green and great blue herons, and kingfishers are a few of the approximately 300 species of birds spotted here. Visitors also encounter white-tailed deer, muskrats, fox, weasels, frogs, painted turtles and butterflies.



Site Features

Site Notes: Headquarters/visitors center located at Wertheim. From April through August, some beaches are closed to protect breeding birds. Shore fishing is allowed at Target Rock, and at Wertheim by boat only. Hunting is allowed at Wertheim in season; special rules apply. Entrance fees apply at some locations.

Trails: Amagansett: Walk along the beach (dunes closed year-round). Elizabeth A. Morton: A nature trail passes through upland areas and onto the beach where you can follow the peninsula for almost two miles. Oyster Bay: Use a canoe or kayak at this refuge of mostly ponds and marshes. Target Rock: A nature trail winds through hardwood forest, past seasonal ponds and along the shore of Huntington Bay to an overlook. Wertheim: There are trails through the refuge's different habitats, and visitors can use a boat on the Carmans River and estuary.

Accessibility: Portions of trails at Wertheim and Morton are accessible to people with disabilities.

Directions: For directions and other information pertaining to the complex, call 631-286-0485, or visit www.fws.gov/northeast/longislandrefuges.

