

Service Road Rules and FAQ - 2024

Rules:

- To access the special drive along the Service Road, visitors must enter the Wildlife Loop between 12:00pm and 2:00pm. **2:30pm is the latest that a car is allowed to enter the Service Road.**
- On the Wildlife Loop, visitors must observe the normal **one-way** traffic pattern.
- All vehicles are expected to be completely off of the Service Road by 4:00pm.
- Bicycles are permitted on the Service Road to D-Dike **only**.
- For safety reasons, visitors must remain in their vehicles at all times and cannot park their vehicles on the road. They are allowed to stop momentarily (for instance to take a photo).
- Absolutely no feeding or touching of wildlife (including the ponies!).
- Visitors must drive all the way to the turn circle to turn around; this is a safety issue since the road very narrow even for two-way traffic.
- The Wildlife Loop itself will be open to vehicles from 9:00am to dusk (~5:00pm) each day on November 28 – December 01, 2024.

FAQ:

Refuge hours: 6:00am - 6:00pm

Wildlife Loop Hours (November 28 – December 1, 2024): Open 9:00am to dusk

Herbert H. Bateman Educational and Administrative Center Hours: 10:00am – 4:00pm
(Friday-Sunday)

What happened to the forest?

A limited amount of money was made available to the refuge from the Department of Interior's Hurricane Sandy coastal resiliency fund. While actual construction of the road and associated parking for the new beach is not funded at this time, the resiliency fund provided enough money to remove trees along the potential road corridor. Tree removal allowed the design engineers to continue testing the route and planning a path for the new road. This management action had the added benefit of grinding up many of the fallen trees on the refuge and removing dead snags that pose a safety hazard (particularly along the Service Road) due to southern pine beetle infestation.

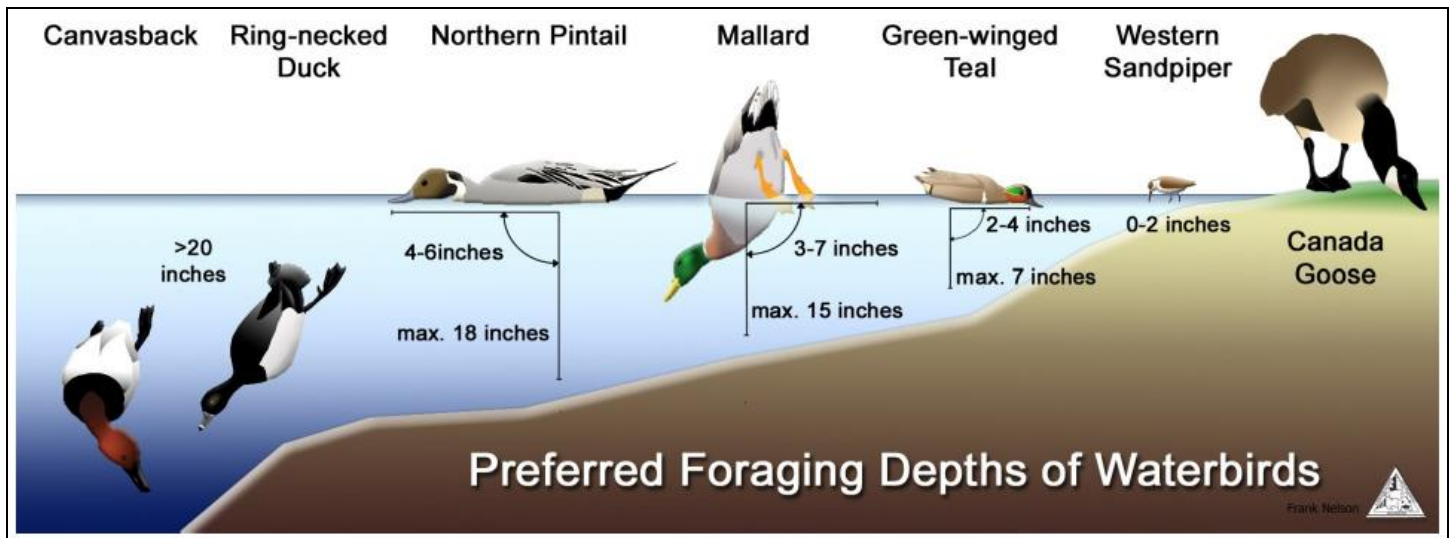


Where are the snow geese?

Typically, snow geese begin to arrive the first week of November. Migration for all waterfowl is influenced by many factors including the temperature and food availability in their summer/breeding grounds, as well as those same factors along their flight path. In recent years, many species of migratory birds have been observed overwintering in areas farther north than in the past.

(A copy of the recent waterbird survey is included as a reference for birding questions).

Freshwater Impoundments (moist-soil management units): There are 14 impoundments on Assateague Island, covering 2,600 acres. Biology staff monitor the water level and try to keep different depths each season to help migratory birds. In the spring, water is allowed to drain from the pools. Shallow water and mudflats provide the best feeding areas for migrating shorebirds and wading birds. Water is kept from draining in the fall in order to trap rainwater. Autumn rains are the only water source used to fill the impoundments. The goal is to have pools 7-18 inches deep to accommodate our migrating waterfowl. This ensures everyone a place at the table.



What are those bands around some of the trees?

The bands around some of the trees mark the boundaries of hunt areas. To maintain a healthy population of sika and whitetail deer, the Refuge holds an annual big game hunt. Our hunt closely follows Virginia State regulations and timeframes. Archery season is in October and November, while the Firearms season occurs November – December. During Waterfowl Weekend, there is no hunting on the refuge. Details about the hunt are available on our website or in the Herbert H. Bateman Educational and Administrative Center.

Eagles: We have one nesting pair of bald eagles on the island in a nest that measured about 6.5 feet in diameter last year. They usually begin to repair their nest in December, lay eggs in January and the eggs will likely hatch in early March. Last year the nest likely fledged one chick according to observations by volunteers and visitors (as video evidence was unavailable).