

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Eastern Massachusetts

*National Wildlife
Refuge Complex*



The Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex contains eight of more than 530 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat and represents the most comprehensive wildlife resource management program in the world. Units of the system stretch across the United States from northern Alaska to the Florida Keys, and include small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific. The character of the refuges is as diverse as the nation itself.

Welcome to the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Situated along the Atlantic Flyway in Massachusetts, the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex is comprised of eight ecologically diverse refuges. The eight separate refuges include inland and coastal wetlands, forests, grasslands, and barrier beaches that provide important habitat for migratory birds, mammals, plants, reptiles, and amphibians. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages these areas to maintain a vital and diverse environment for the area's inhabitants. Refuges are managed to conserve and protect a diversity of native wildlife habitats and species. The refuge complex encompasses several endangered and threatened species, the only federally designated Wilderness Area in Southern New England, one structure on the National Register of Historic Places, and a National Wild and Scenic River.

Canoeing on the Concord River.



What is a National Wildlife Refuge?

Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex consists of eight of the more than 530 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is charged with maintaining approximately 93 million acres of habitat for



Piping plover at Monomey NWR.

Mark Wilson

endangered species, over 700 avian species, 220 mammalian species, 250 reptilian and amphibian species, anadromous fish and much, much more. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat, and represents the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world. Units of the



Life in a sea of green.

Bruce Flaig

system stretch across the United States from northern Alaska to the Florida Keys and include small islands in the Caribbean and South Pacific. The character of the refuges are as diverse as the nation itself.

Aquatic weed harvester at work.



USFWS

What We Do

Wildlife management within the complex focuses on creating and maintaining productive habitat for a healthy diversity of species. Management tools include exotic plant control, barrier beach management, avian diversity control, farming, and water level manipulation. Management can be as simple as providing bird boxes, which replace homes for species whose natural habitat has been destroyed or lost, or as involved as carefully timed draw-downs of refuge pools. Exotic plant control helps maintain the natural diversity found in wetland and upland communities. Water level manipulation can change the habitat and provide food and cover for fish and wildlife.

Sunset on Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.



Paul Olsen

Great blue heron in a sea of water chestnut.



Sandy Selesky

Exotic Plant Management

Exotic, non-native plants are a major threat to wetlands at Great Meadows NWR. Two such plants are purple loosestrife and water chestnut. These exotic plants have practically taken over many refuge wetlands and waterways because natural predators are not present in the United States to keep the plants in balance.

Many people agree that purple loosestrife is an attractive plant with its purple flowering stalk. But loosestrife has little to no value to wildlife and dominates wetlands where cattails once flourished. After a decade of research, scientists have found that beetles native to the plant's European habitat are one of the most successful control methods for loosestrife. The release of weevils and beetles seems to be the best management solution. These beetles feed only on purple loosestrife.

Controlling water chestnut is also difficult. This plant forms a thick green mat atop open water in the summer. Currently, Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex is managing water chestnut by lowering water levels in refuge pools when possible. This practice is expected to minimize the water chestnut population while encouraging the growth of plants such as millet and smartweed, which are beneficial to wildlife.

Endangered Species Management

Several barrier beaches are found in the Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex. These areas are used by a number of threatened and endangered species and are major stopover spots for migratory birds.

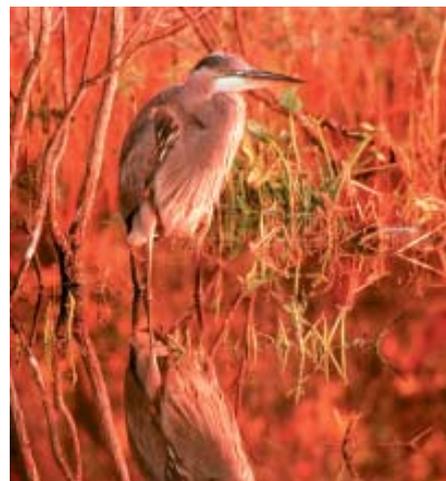


Stephanie Koch

Monomoy NWR Beach.

Intensive management efforts have been underway at Monomoy NWR for many years to increase piping plover and roseate tern nesting success. A restoration project that began in 1996 has increased the availability of nesting habitat for birds protected by the Endangered Species Act on a portion of the refuge. This management has encouraged gulls to nest in other parts of the refuge so they would not compete with less abundant birds for nesting space. Almost immediately after the project began, an increase was seen in the number and diversity of nesting species in the management area.

Reflections of great blue heron.



Don Crasco

**Eastern
Massachusetts
NWR Complex**

*Assabet River
National Wildlife
Refuge*



Bruce Flaig

Eastern Phoebe

*Great Meadows
National Wildlife
Refuge*

Transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the U.S. Army in 2000, the 2,205-acre Assabet River NWR is located in the towns of Maynard, Stow, Sudbury, and Hudson. The Refuge provides wildlife with a diversity of upland and wetland habitats. The potential to restore large tracts of native grasslands, one of the most endangered habitats in the world, is tremendous. Once the Refuge is cleared of human safety hazards (such as old storage bunkers and deteriorating buildings), it will be opened to a variety of public uses.

Directions: There will be several areas to enter once it is open to the public. Please contact the Refuge Manager for more information.

The first refuge in the complex, Great Meadows NWR consists of two main units along 12 miles of the Sudbury and Concord Rivers. The original 250 acres were donated by local resident Samuel Hoar for the conservation of migratory waterfowl. Today this 3,600-acre refuge is composed of freshwater wetlands and upland areas that noted ornithologists have called some of the best inland birding sites in all of Massachusetts. Trails are available at both units.

The complex's main office and visitor center are located at Great Meadows' Sudbury Unit.

Directions to Sudbury Unit: To reach the headquarters at Weir Hill Road, follow Route 27 (1.7 miles) from Wayland, turn right onto Water Row Road. Follow Water Row Road (1.2 Miles) to the end, and turn right onto Lincoln Road. Travel 1-mile, then turn left onto Weir Hill Road.



*Lily pads with
water chestnut.*



Sandy Selesky

Directions to the Concord Unit: Travel to this area by following Route 62 east from Concord Center toward Bedford. After approximately one mile, turn left onto Monsen Road. Continue on Monsen Road until you see the refuge entrance on your left. Restroom facilities are available seasonally.

*Mashpee
National Wildlife
Refuge*

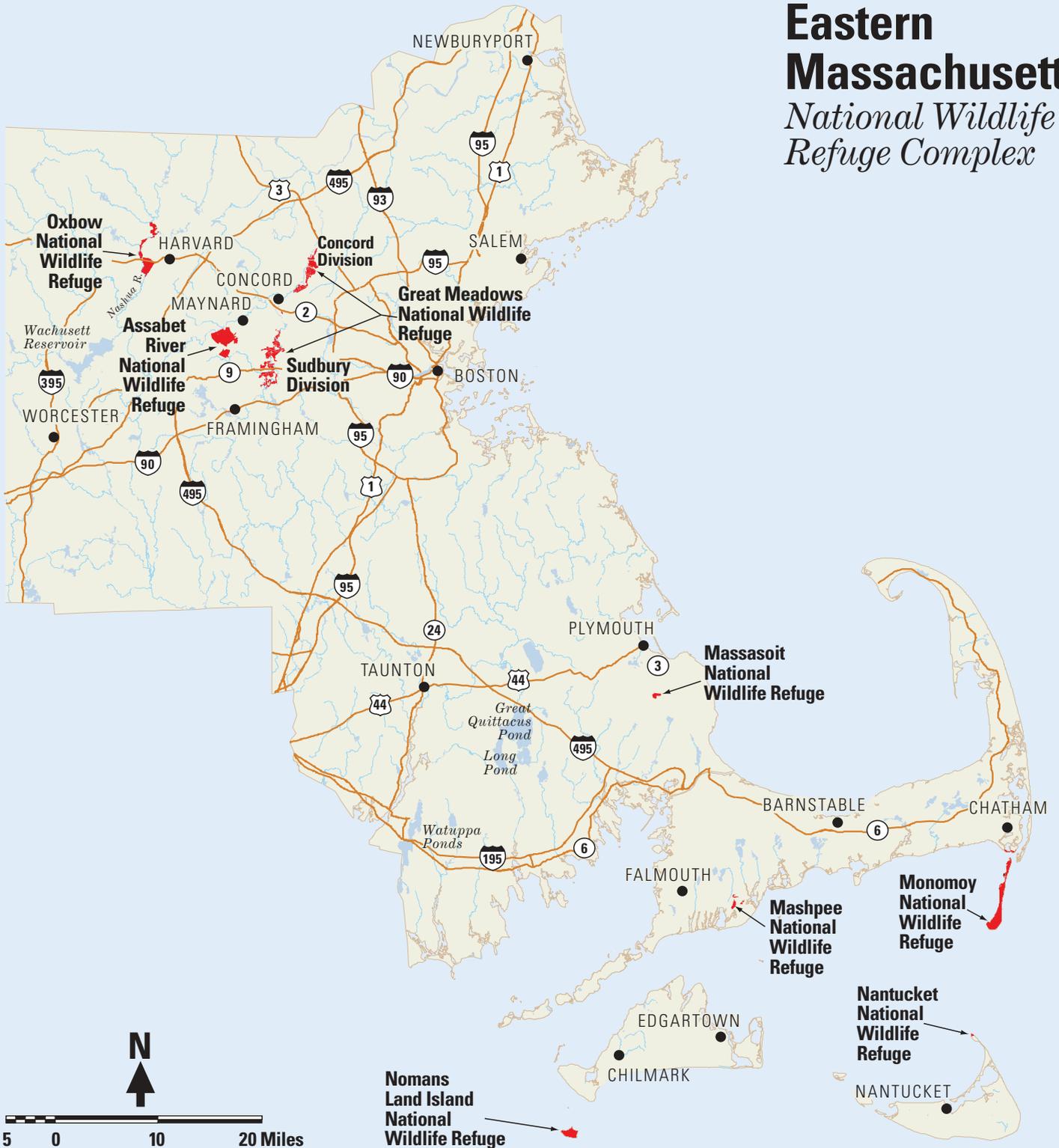
Located in the towns of Mashpee and Falmouth, this refuge will total 5,871 acres when complete, only a small percentage of which will be owned by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, less than 300 acres are in FWS ownership. Managed through a unique partnership among nine federal, state and private conservation groups, this Cape Cod refuge preserves thousands of acres of magnificent salt marshes, cranberry bogs, Atlantic white cedar swamps, freshwater marshes, and a vernal pool. It provides habitat for migratory waterfowl, songbirds,

*Osprey nesting at
Mashpee NWR.*



Cynthia Cronig

Eastern Massachusetts *National Wildlife Refuge Complex*





Bruce Flaig

Snapping turtle.

shorebirds, raptors, red fox, and white-tailed deer. Both educational and recreational activities are offered by several partnership groups including the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge.

Directions: Take Route 28 east to Route 151 east to Mashpee Commons. At the rotary take Great Neck Road south to Jehu Pond Conservation Area parking lot. Please contact Friends of Mashpee NWR for a complete map. There are public use areas on several of the partner's properties.

Friends of Mashpee NWR
P.O. Box 1283,
Mashpee, Massachusetts 02649

Silhouette at sunset.



Paul Olsen

*Massasoit
National Wildlife
Refuge*

Located in Plymouth and managed cooperatively with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, this 184-acre refuge is home to the Plymouth red belly turtle, a federally endangered species. Research, monitoring, and recovery efforts for the Plymouth red belly turtle takes place at the refuge. To protect this endangered turtle, the refuge is closed to public access.



Stephanie Koch

Least Tern at Monomoy NWR.

*Monomoy
National Wildlife
Refuge*

Located on the elbow of Cape Cod in Chatham, this refuge is made up of 7,244 acres of barrier beach, sand dunes, freshwater ponds, and saltwater marshes. Monomoy NWR encompasses the only federally designated Wilderness Area in southern New England. Parts of the refuge are seasonally closed to the public to protect habitat for nesting and feeding birds. The trails provide visitors an opportunity to see a large diversity of plants and animals. Monomoy NWR is renowned for its ability to support a wide variety of bird species. Its barrier beaches serve as a major stopover during the migration along the Atlantic Flyway.

Directions: To reach the headquarters on Morris Island, take U.S. Route 6 east to State Road 137, follow SR137 south, to State Route 28 east, follow Rt 28 through Chatham to Chatham Lighthouse and Coast Guard station. Take the first left after the lighthouse, then the first right. Follow Morris Island Road to signs for the Refuge on the left.

*Nantucket
National Wildlife
Refuge*

Located at the tip of Great Point on Nantucket Island, this 40-acre refuge provides surf fishing, wildlife observation, and summer interpretive programs. The refuge is managed cooperatively with The Trustees of Reservations. The barrier beach habitat at Nantucket NWR provides habitat for piping plovers, migratory waterfowl, and shorebirds. Parts of the refuge are seasonally closed to the public to protect habitat for nesting, feeding, and resting birds. The refuge also provides access to some of the best saltwater fishing in the northeast.

Directions: The refuge is located at the northern tip of Great Point on Nantucket.

Nantucket Great Point Lighthouse.



Janet Kennedy

*Nomans Land
Island National
Wildlife Refuge*

Just off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, these 628 acres of upland and wetland habitat support many migratory bird species including the peregrine falcon during its fall migration. Due to its prior use as a bombing range and the possibility of unexploded ordnance, the island is closed to the public.



Bruce Flaig

Blandings Turtle

*Oxbow National
Wildlife Refuge*

Situated along the Nashua River in Harvard, Ayer, Shirley, and Lancaster, this 1547-acre refuge is made up of freshwater wetlands and uplands. A network of over 7 miles of walking trails takes visitors along the river bank, across two oxbow ponds, and through beaver habitat. Small game and upland gamebird hunting are allowed here in accordance with state laws.

Dragonfly



Bruce Flaig

Directions: The refuge can be reached by taking Route 110 south from Harvard Center for 1.8 miles and turning right onto Still River Depot Road. The refuge entrance and parking lot are across the railroad tracks and adjacent to the river.

Opportunities for People

At many of our refuges, opportunities for public enjoyment of wildlife and wildlife habitat through environmental education and interpretation are provided.

Public support and involvement are essential elements for a successful refuge. Volunteer and friends groups at individual refuges play a vital role in their success. To get involved, call or visit your local national wildlife refuge and tell them you want to help preserve your national treasures.

A Few Simple Rules

All persons using the refuges are asked to comply with local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and ordinances, as well as with any refuge-specific regulations. For more information, contact the headquarters.

Use of designated trails within the refuge for nature study, hiking and photography is permitted from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Dogs must be on a short hand-held leash during the entire visit. With the exception of Morris Island, Monomoy NWR is closed to all pets. All the other refuges are closed to all other domestic pets. *No horses are permitted.*

Bicycles and motorized vehicles are restricted to the entrance roads and parking areas.

Shooting, camping, building campfires, swimming, and ATVs/ORVs are not permitted.

Hunting is available at Oxbow NWR. Please contact refuge headquarters for specific regulations.



Boating and fishing are allowed in the Concord, Sudbury, and Nashua Rivers, but not in refuge pools.



The disturbance, destruction, or removal of wildlife, vegetation, and facilities are prohibited.

This is your refuge, but not only yours. Enjoy it, but please do nothing to harm it.

For Further Information, Please Contact:

Eastern Massachusetts
National Wildlife Refuge Complex
73 Weir Hill Road
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776
978/443 4661
978/443 2898 Fax

Office Hours

Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Hearing impaired may call the Massachusetts Relay Service at: 1 800/439 2370.

A large-print version of this brochure is available on request.

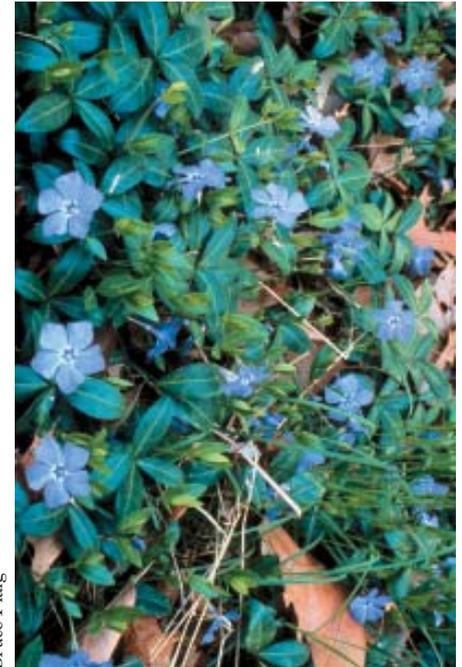


Student field trip and outdoor classroom with USFWS volunteer Bob Reed.



Bruce Flaig

*Above: Yellow iris in bloom.
Right: Periwinkles*



Bruce Flaig

Wildlife Watching Tips

Dawn and dusk are the best times to see wildlife.

In warmer climates, little is moving on hot summer afternoons or on windy days.

Observe from the sidelines. Leave “abandoned” young animals alone. A parent is probably close by waiting for you to leave. Don’t offer snacks; your lunch could disrupt wild digestive systems.

Cars make good observation blinds. Drive slowly, stopping to scan places wildlife might hide. Use binoculars or a long lens for a closer look.

Try sitting quietly in one good location. Let wildlife get used to your presence. Many animals that have hidden will reappear once they think you are gone. Walk quietly in designated areas, being aware of sounds and smells. Often you will hear more than you will see.

Teach children quiet observation. Other wildlife watchers will appreciate your consideration.

Look for animal signs. Tracks, scat, feathers, and nests left behind often tell interesting stories.

LEGEND



Rivers/Stream



Cranberry bog



Trails



Lake or Pond



Marsh, Wetland, Swamp or Bog



Primary Route



Road or Street



Sudbury Unit



Concord Unit



Refuge Boundary



Refuge Headquarters



Parking Lots



Heated Comfort Station

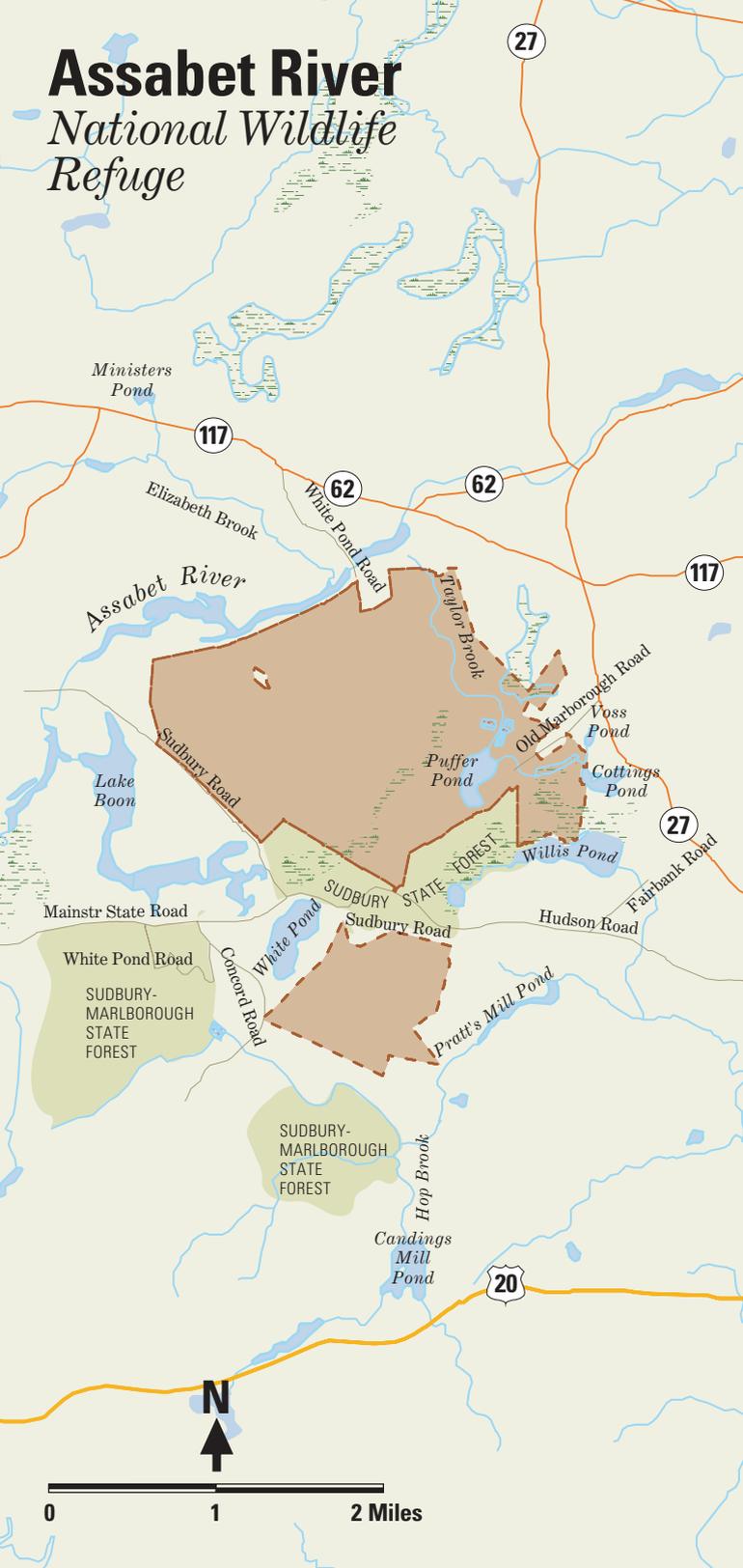


Observation/Photo Blind

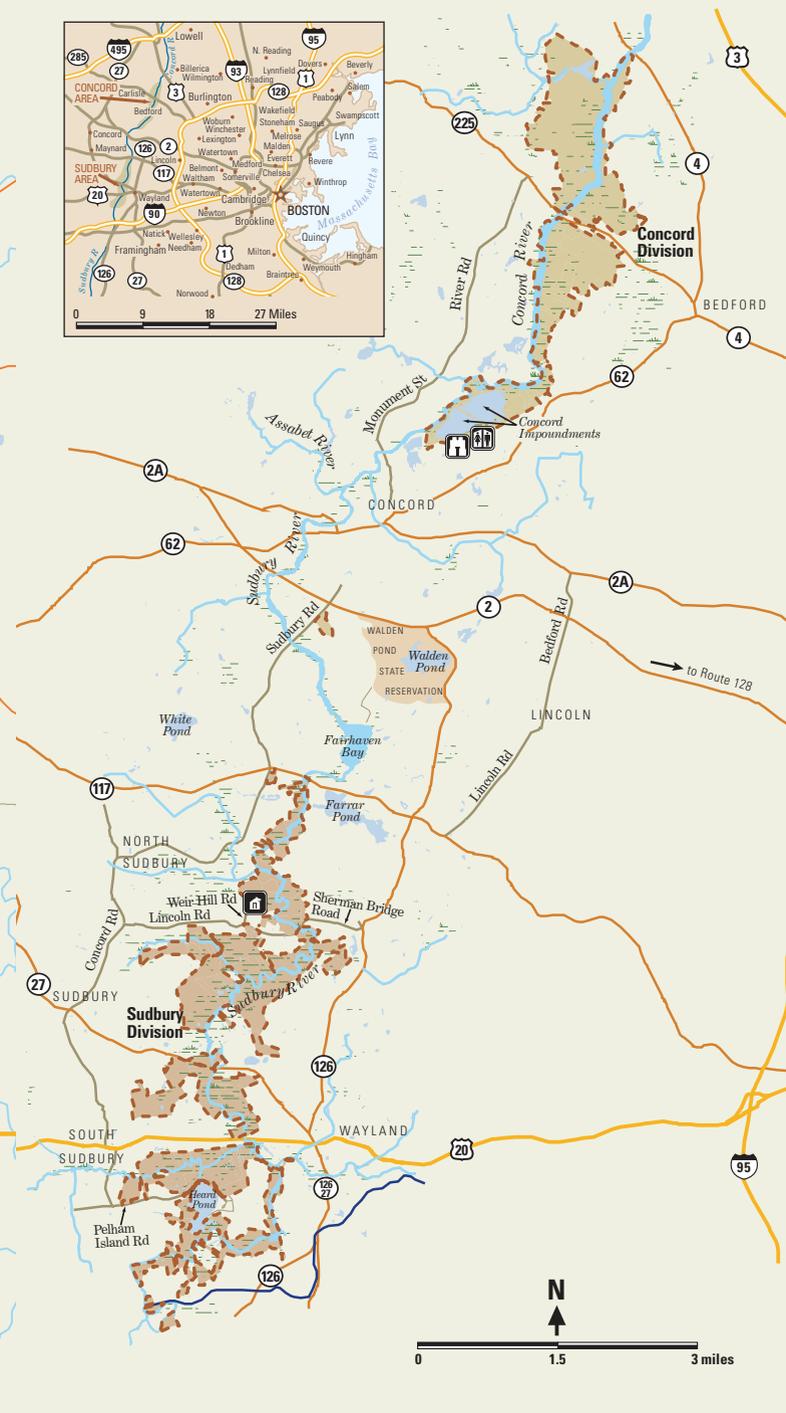
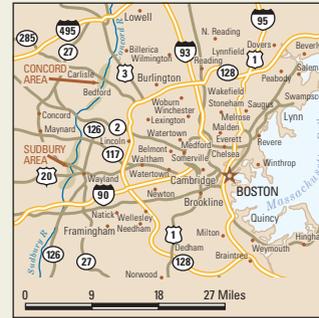


Canoe/Boat Launch

Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge

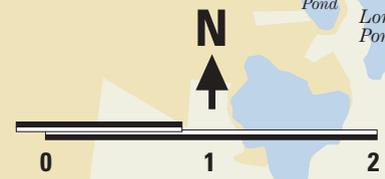
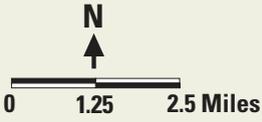
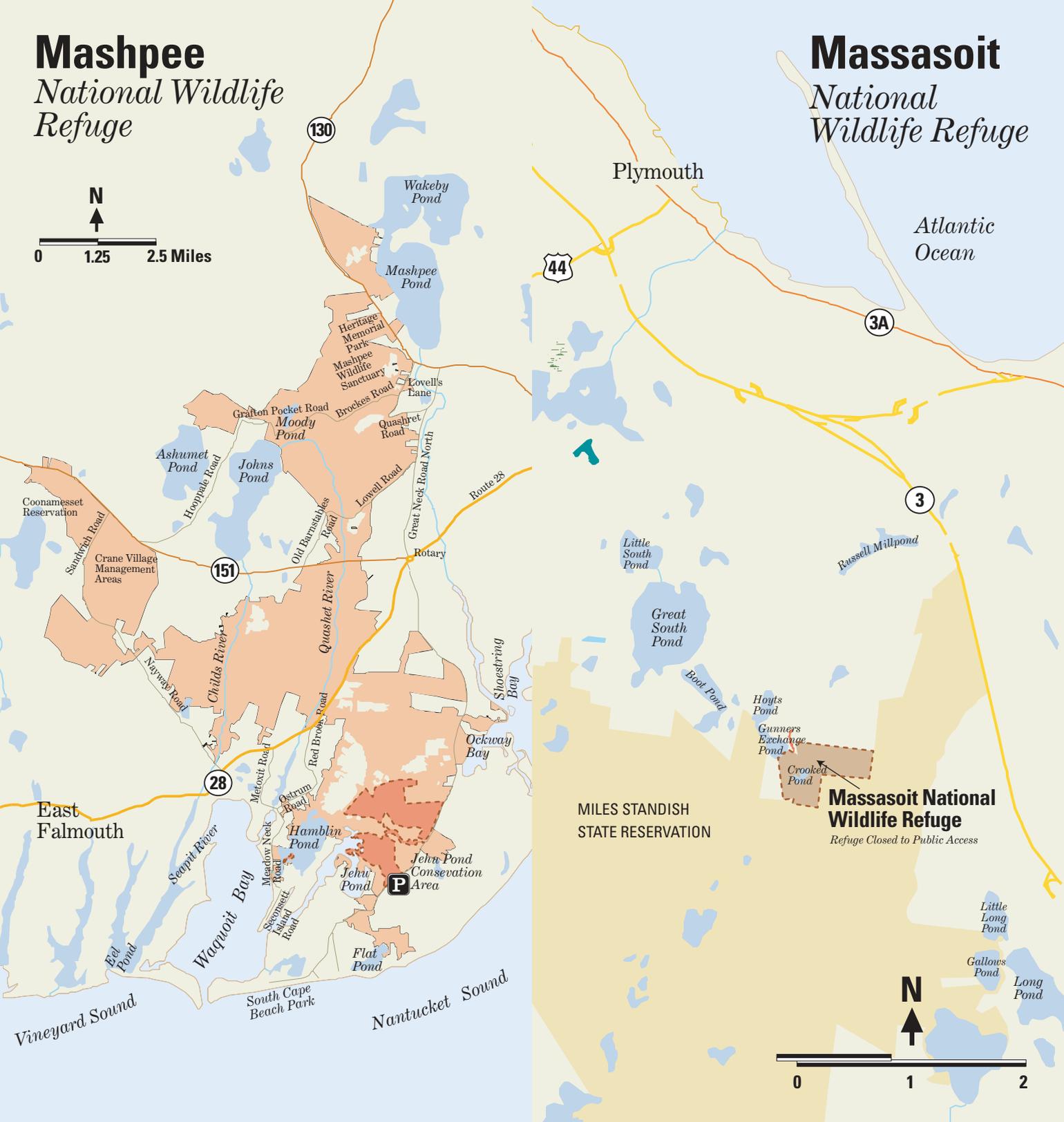


Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Concord/Sudbury Units



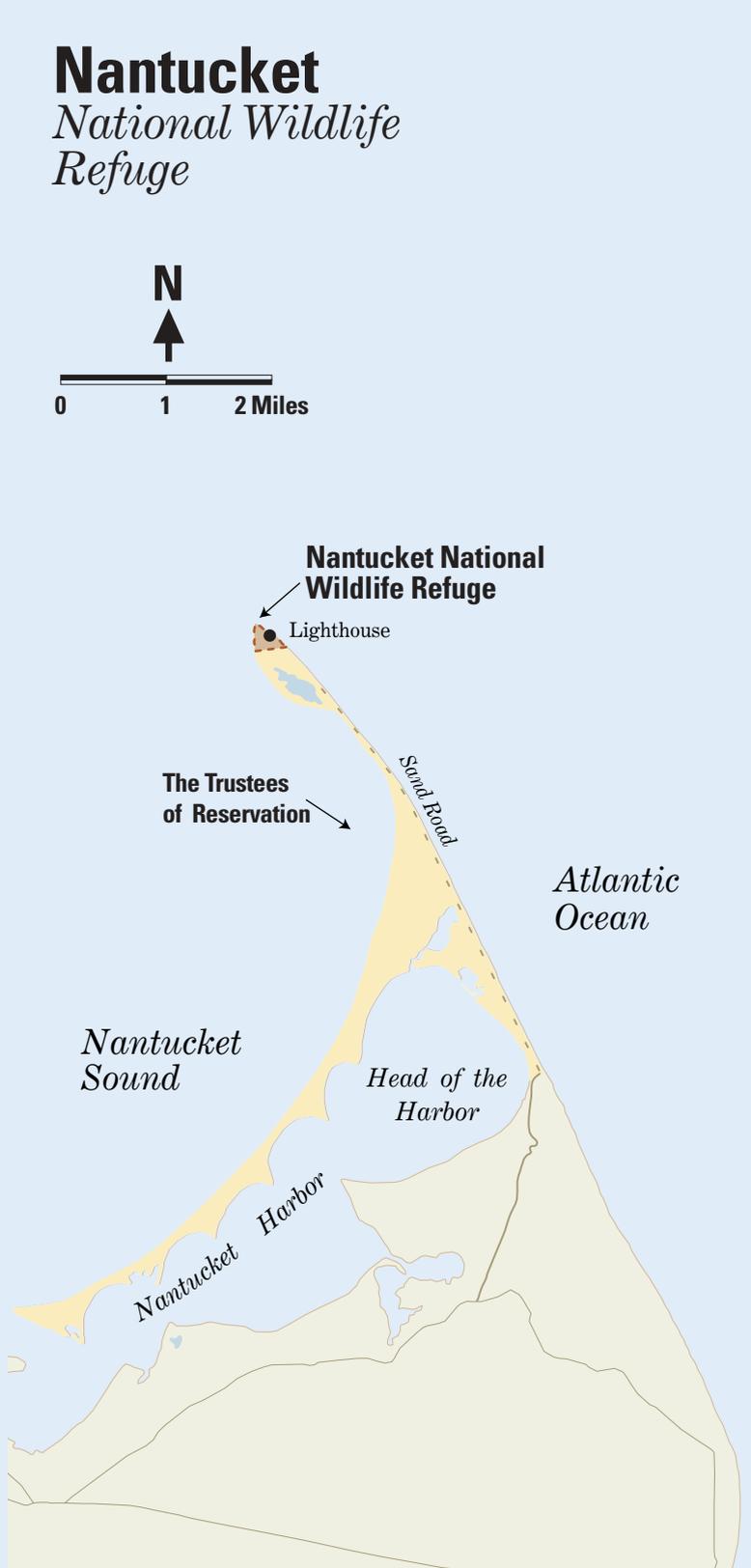
Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge

Massasoit National Wildlife Refuge



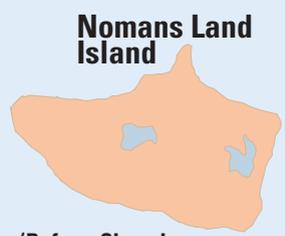
MILES STANDISH
STATE RESERVATION

Massasoit National Wildlife Refuge
Refuge Closed to Public Access



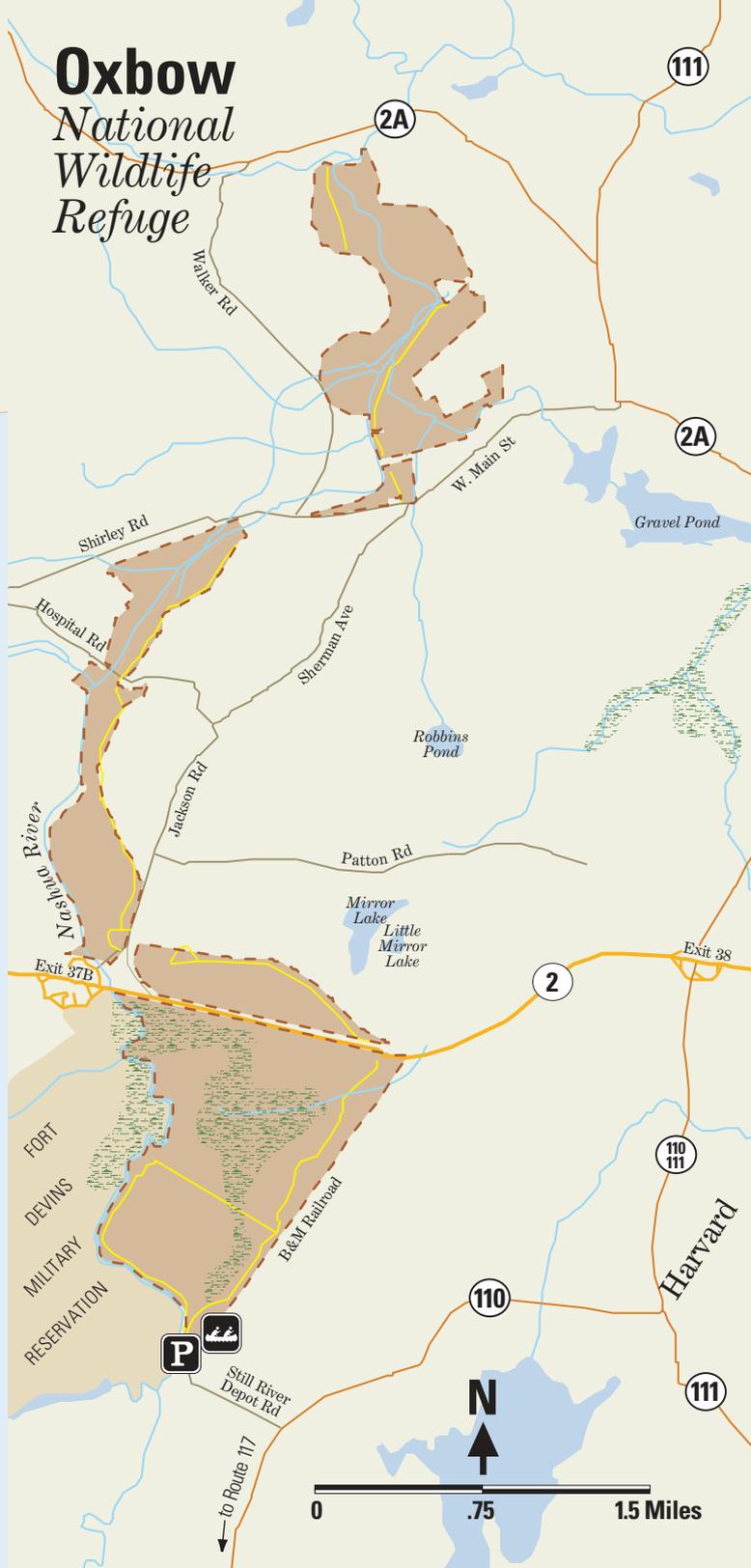


Atlantic Ocean



(Refuge Closed to Public Use)

Nomans Land Island
National Wildlife Refuge Complex



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National Wildlife Refuge Complex
73 Weir Hill Road
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776
978/443 4661
978/443 2898 Fax
r5rw_gmnwr@fws.gov
<http://easternmanwrcomplex.fws.gov>**

**Massachusetts Relay Service
1 800/439-2370**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>**

**For Refuge Information
1 800/344 WILD**

June 2001



**Cover photograph of a dragonfly on Great Meadows
National Wildlife Refuge by Bruce Flaig**