

Rachel Carson
National Wildlife Refuge
321 Port Road
Wells, ME 04090



Rachel Carson
National Wildlife
Refuge



Oct. 1999

X Cypress Wildlife

Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson was a world-renowned marine biologist, author and environmentalist. She served as an aquatic biologist and Editor-in-Chief for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. During her tenure, she composed a series of articles on Atlantic Coast wildlife refuges.

Ms. Carson was born in Pennsylvania in 1907. Though the mystery of the sea and its creatures captivated her at an early age, the Maine coast particularly inspired her: Beginning in 1952, she summured on Southport Island, where she studied its beach and tide pools to research *The Edge of the Sea* (1955).

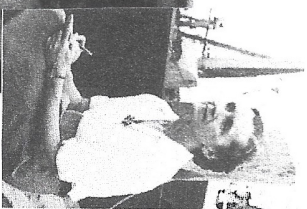
Through tireless investigation for her greatest work, *Silent Spring* (1962), she linked the unrestrained use of post-World War II chemical pesticides with fearsome, biological consequences. Overcoming industry and government pressure to abandon her research, she persevered. Carson simply and convincingly explained the connections between humans and all creatures of the Earth. She alerted generations to use chemicals with utmost caution, warning that their improper use has dreadful effects on public health and the environment.

Rachel Carson died in 1964, a victim of cancer. As fitting recognition of her tireless work, this refuge, first known as the Coastal Maine National Wildlife Refuge, was renamed in her honor on October 28, 1969 and formally dedicated June 27, 1970.

The National Wildlife Refuge System

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat. It represents the most comprehensive wildlife 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 each refuge is as diverse as the nation itself.

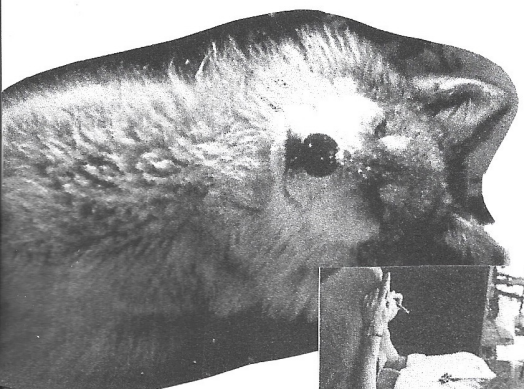
The Service also manages National Fish Hatcheries, and provides federal leadership in habitat protection, fish and wildlife research, technical assistance, and the conservation and protection of migratory birds, certain marine mammals, and threatened and endangered species.



Benefits of Natural Diversity

How many species of plants and animals are there? Although scientists have classified approximately 1.7 million organisms, they recognize that the overwhelming majority have not yet been catalogued. Between 10 and 50 million species may inhabit our planet.

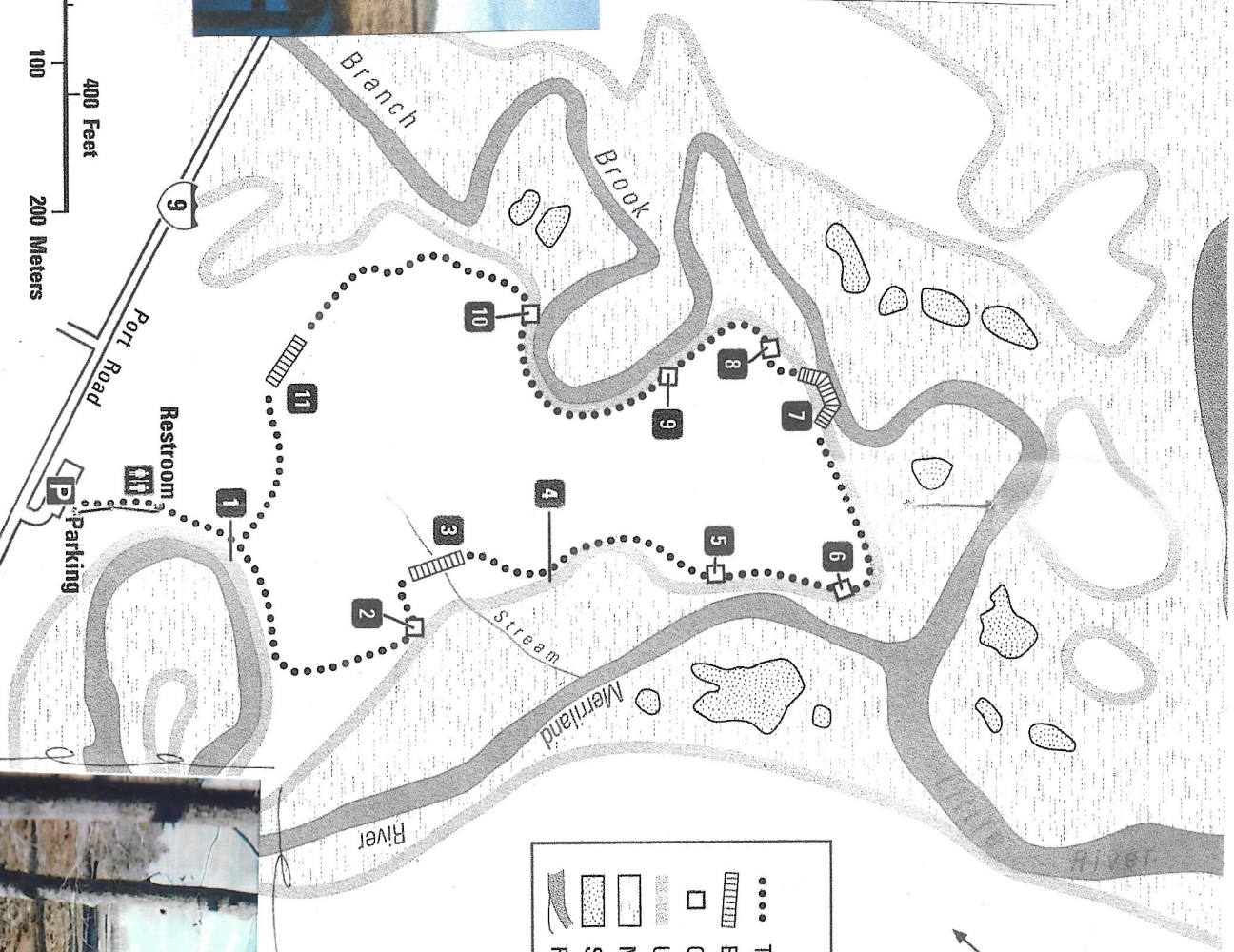
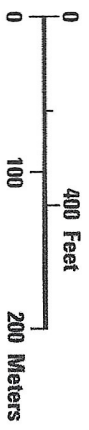
None of these creatures exists in a vacuum. All living things are part of a complex, often delicately balanced network called the biosphere. The earth's biosphere, in turn, is composed of countless ecosystems, which include plants and animals and their physical environments. No one knows how the extinction of organisms will affect the other members of its ecosystem, but the removal of a single species can set off a chain reaction affecting many others. This is especially true for "keystone" species, whose loss can transform or undermine the ecological processes or fundamentally change the species composition of the wildlife community.



Wildlife Safety
 Always observe wildlife from a safe distance. Animals have various defense mechanisms that they'll use if they sense danger. Marine mammals, particularly seals, can be very dangerous and should not be approached. Young animals should be left alone; parents are usually not far off and can take better care of their offspring than we can. If you think an animal may be sick or injured, contact refuge staff.



Carson Trail
Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

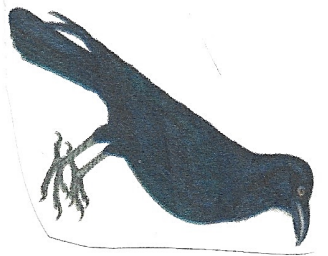


Legend

- Trail
- ▤ Boardwalk
- Observation Deck
- ▨ Upland Edge
- ▧ Marsh
- ▩ Salt Pannes
- ▬ Rivers and Streams

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★ ★ Wildlife Calendar ★ ★

Wildlife keep their own marvelous schedules; their movements and activities depend upon the season and weather conditions. The following is a general guide to what you may see during your visit:

January



Common eiders, red-breasted mergansers, common loons, and common goldeneyes feeding in the mouths of rivers. Snow buntings flocking on beaches. Bald eagles hunting along the coast. On warm days, millions of tiny, harmless snow fleas appear on snow at the base of trees.

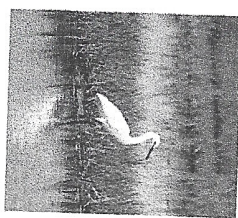
February

Wintering waterfowl beginning to exhibit courting behavior. Owls sitting on nests; listen for great horned owls calling at night. Mating season for striped skunks; look for them in fields and open woods.

March

Wood duck, ring-necked duck, green-winged teal beginning to move into the area. Late in the month some songbirds return. American toads, spring peepers, and leopard frogs heard on warm evenings.

April



Shorebirds return on their northern migration. Piping plovers setting up territories on beaches and beginning to nest. Waterfowl and geese nesting. Swallows and flycatchers can be seen feeding on insects over fields, marshes and rivers. Great blue herons and snowy egrets return. Ruffed grouse may be heard "drumming."

May

Waterfowl broods feeding in marshes and rivers. Look for the occasional glossy ibis on mudflats. Terns arrive early in the month; warbler migration peaks; raptors migrating north.

June

White-tailed deer seen at dawn and dusk. At low tides, watch for seals resting on rocks. Tanagers and grosbeaks return. Baby birds appear in fields and marshes.

July

Shorebirds begin their journey to wintering grounds in South America. Sandpipers feeding on mudflats and beaches. Tern chicks begin fledging from nests.

August

Terns leave nesting colonies and begin southern migration. Blue-winged teal and seabirds migrating south along the coast.

September

Broad-winged hawks start south. Merlins and sharp-shinned hawks hunting over marshes. Songbird migration underway in earnest.

October

Common eider, buffleheads and red-breasted mergansers increasing. Ospreys, northern harriers, American kestrels, merlins and peregrine falcons migrating through. Monarch butterflies migrating along the coast.

November

Waterfowl move closer to shores and rivers. Snow buntings and other winter songbirds returning to the refuge from the Arctic.

December

Black ducks frequent refuge marshes until they ice over. Coastal birdwatching yields common eiders, black scoters, buffleheads, red breasted mergansers, and common loons. Listen for barred owls calling in the woods.

