

TARGET ROCK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Huntington, New York

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ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
Calendar Year 1979

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM
Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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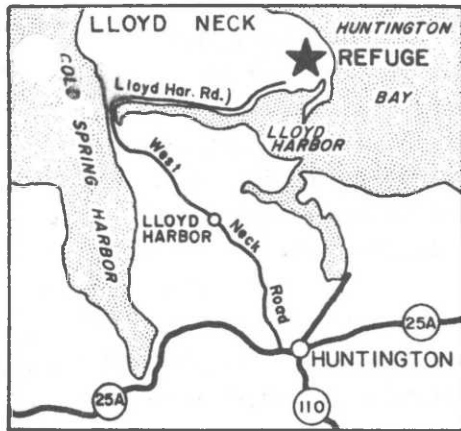
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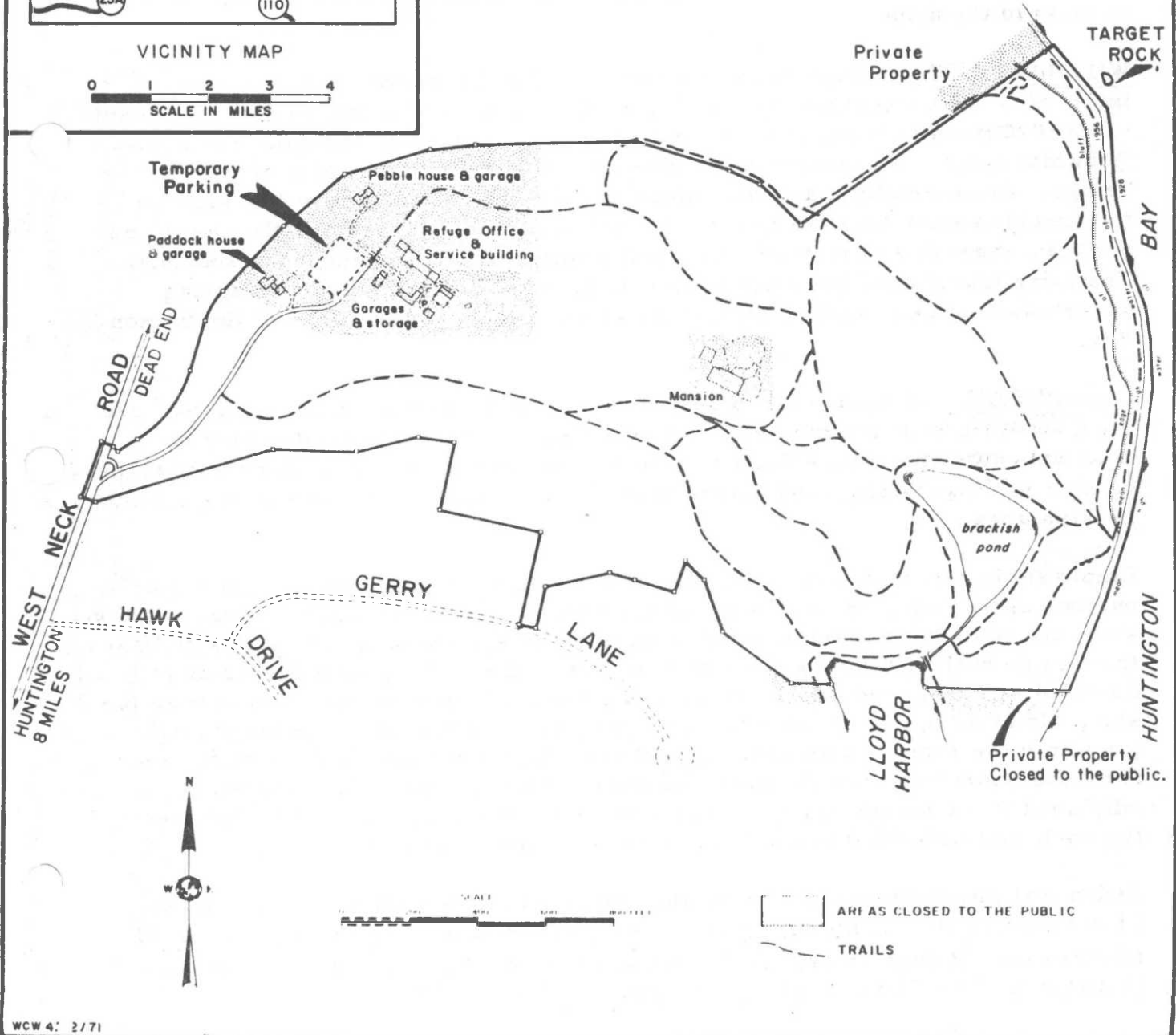
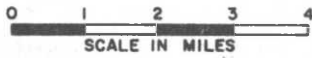
SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE



VICINITY MAP



WCW 4: 2/71

TARGET ROCK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Target Rock Refuge was established on December 15, 1967, when Mr. and Mrs. Ferdinand Eberstadt donated their 80-acre estate to the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. This area will serve as administrative headquarters for the Long Island national wildlife refuges which include Conscience Point N. W. Refuge near North Sea, Morton N. W. Refuge near Sag Harbor, Oyster Bay N. W. Refuge, and Wertheim N. W. Refuge on Bellport Bay. Its use also as an environmental education center is in the planning stage.

MANAGEMENT. Target Rock Refuge is a natural home for many types of wildlife. Rhododendron and azalea gardens make a spring visit an exceptional treat. An existing system of hiking trails will be maintained to permit access to most of the area.

WILDLIFE. The refuge has a variety of bird and mammal life. Of special interest is the concentration of warblers during their May migration. Resident species of mammals include cottontail rabbits, raccoons, and gray squirrels. Bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasants, and mourning doves also reside on the refuge. Occasionally mallards, black ducks, and Canada geese are seen on the brackish pond near the beach. Silently approach the pond or the beach and you may observe a variety of shore and wading birds throughout the seasons. The Long Island area provides habitat to large concentrations of wintering waterfowl and these rafts of ducks are often seen from the shore of Huntington Bay.

PUBLIC USE. Target Rock Refuge does not lend itself to unlimited public use because of its restricted access and small size. It may be visited only by appointment. The refuge is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, for the purpose of hiking, photography, and nature study. Pets must remain in the designated parking area.

Emphasis is directed toward the use of the area by educational groups for an outdoor classroom. It will be an area where students and teachers may readily study the interrelationships found in nature. A system of nature trails and a trail guide will be developed for this purpose. Some strenuous hiking up and down hills is required. Individuals using the trails should use caution near the steep bluffs along the bayshore. A major point of interest is the large rock for which the refuge is named. The 14-foot-high rock stands a short distance from the shoreline near the north boundary of the refuge. The British reportedly used it for target practice during the Revolutionary War. At that time the rock was imbedded in the bluff, long since eroded away.

Additional information concerning the refuge and reservations for a visit may be obtained at the refuge office on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mail address is: Refuge Manager, Target Rock N. W. Refuge, Target Rock Road, Huntington, New York 11743. Telephone (516) 271-2409.

May 1974

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I. GENERAL

A. Introduction

Target Rock National Wildlife Refuge is located on Lloyd Neck eight miles north of Huntington, Long Island, New York; and lies approximately 30 miles from downtown New York City, near the Nassau/Suffolk County line.

The refuge was established in 1968 for the preservation of waterfowl and passerine bird habitat, and as a site for environmental education. Formerly a private estate, the 80-acre refuge also serves as administrative headquarters for seven satellite refuges on Long Island.



Target Rock consists of one quarter mile of beach on Huntington Bay, a small adjacent salt marsh and brackish pond, and an upland oak-hickory forest.

The area adjacent to the refuge is a suburban community made up of affluent business executives and professionals who commute to jobs in New York City or elsewhere on Long Island. However, most visitors to the refuge come by car or school bus from areas beyond the immediate vicinity and within an hour's drive. This broader area comprises a much more diverse population with both lower and middle income families represented.

B. Climatic and Habitat Conditions

Temperatures and precipitation were generally moderate for the year; however, weather during the months of November and December was exceptionally mild for the area.

Daily tide fluctuations averaged 7' - 8' on Long Island. This year there was minimal winter damage due to storms and tides.

C. Land Acquisition

Messrs. French and Smith from the regional office met with Mr. Peter Salm concerning a possible land swap at Conscience Point NWR. Mr. Salm proposed to exchange 100 acres of marsh property on Cow Neck, with an additional conveyance of 400 acres to be included in his will, for approximately 20 acres of upland woods and fields at Conscience Point Refuge.

D. Systems Status

Refuge objectives are being met in view of the additional funding provided in FY-79.

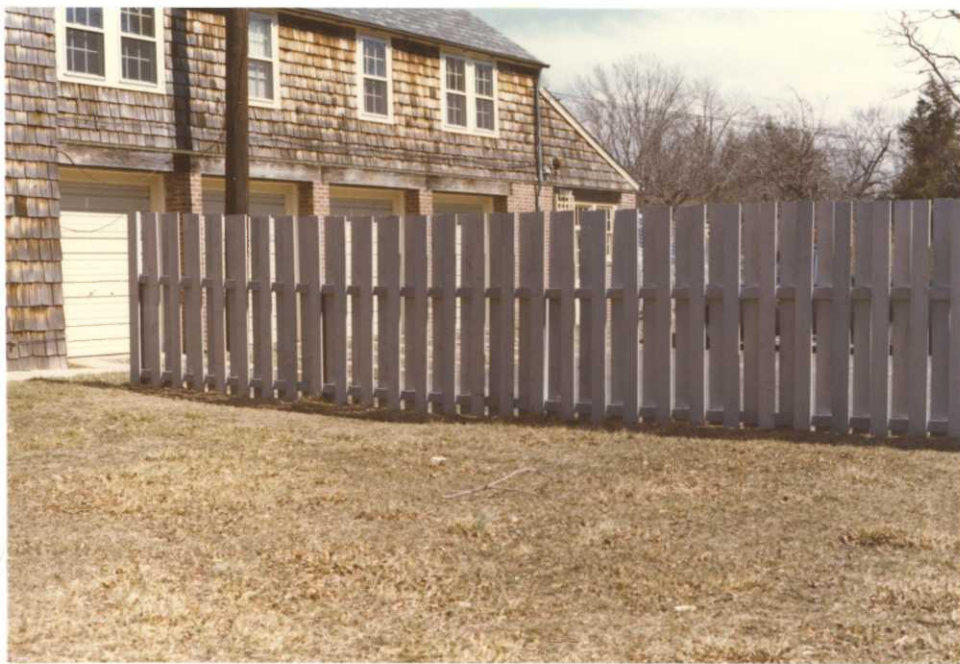
II. CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

A. Construction

In July, a portion of eroding embankment adjoining a private residence at Oyster Bay Refuge was stabilized with large timbers and metal pipe, and a fence erected.



A new visitor information booth and walkway were completed in June.



A fence separating the visitor area from the shop complex was also constructed to provide both a physical and visual barrier. Landscaping of the area will be completed next year.



A section of fence was erected at the overlook on the northeast corner of the refuge. The new fence was set into concrete footings and backed by wire mesh. It replaces a deteriorated split rail fence which had been constantly subjected to vandalism.

BLHP projects completed this year were as follows: renovation of a breezeway, kitchen, and bathroom floor at the Q-7 residence; and resurfacing of a driveway at Q-6.

B. Maintenance

Ice and tide action this winter pulled out a number of large pilings which previously had supported a boat dock at Target Rock. The pilings were removed and transported to Wertheim Refuge where they were used to repair a bulkhead adjacent to the office complex on the Carman's River.



Parts of the visitor contact center at Morton and two rooms of the mansion at Target Rock were repainted.

Electric blow dryers were installed in the public restrooms at Target Rock.



YACC corpsmembers helped move an interpretive trail away from eroding bluffs overlooking Huntington Bay. Vegetation was cleared and old stumps and roots were removed.

Large potholes in the Target Rock entrance road, a result of the winter's freezing and thawing, were patched.

A new snow plow attachment was installed on the jeep at Target Rock.

C. Wildfire

Nothing to report.

III. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Not applicable.

IV. WILDLIFE

A. Endangered and/or Threatened Species

A pair of osprey nested at Morton Refuge this year and fledged two young. Assistant Refuge Manager Schreiner installed a predator guard on the natural nest and regularly patrolled the area.

An osprey was sighted at Target Rock Refuge in April.



In January a great gray owl wandered from the west into our area. It was the first time in 150 years that this species had been sighted on Long Island. Its arrival caused a tremendous influx of visitors and was the subject of numerous newspaper articles. The owl remained in the area for more than a month before it was found dead on Eaton's Neck, approximately five miles from the refuge.

B. Migratory Birds

Increased numbers of black duck and scaup were sighted off shore from Target Rock Refuge this year. There were no nesting waterfowl on the refuge, however. Also commonly sighted were mallards, Canada geese, buffleheads, white-winged scoters, old squaws, cormorants, and warbler migrations.

Substantial numbers of black ducks, mallards, Canada geese, white-winged scoters, surf scoters and red-breasted mergansers were reported from Morton Refuge. Nesting by mallards, Canada geese, black duck and least tern occurred on the refuge.

Field Response Coordinator (FRC) Steelman responded to two oil spill emergencies and stood by on an additional eight oil spills this year. None of the cases produced any direct adverse effects on wildlife.

In February, a meeting of oil spill recovery volunteers was held at Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Target Rock NWR. Attending were representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard, New York State and Town of Huntington Departments of Environmental Conservation, and interested volunteers. Members from the New York City ASPCA were also in attendance for the purpose of forming a bird recovery team which would service the New York City area.

Two oil spill drills were conducted at Target Rock and Wertheim Refuges. Participating were Target Rock Refuge staff, and alternate FRC Frank DeLuise and Sue Dougherty of Ecological Services in Stony Brook.

On June 12, FRC Steelman, Tosetti (I&R), Marto (Maintenance), together with Allen Jackson (RO-ECE), Frank DeLuise (ES) and Sue Dougherty (ES), attended a U.S. Coast Guard Oil Spill Simulation held at Governor's Island, New York. The following day Jackson and Steelman attended an evaluation and meeting of the Regional Response Team.



A local buoy maker, Mr. Charles Corey devised a float to be used with the experimental Av-Alarm system for oil spill emergencies. Mr. Corey very kindly volunteered both his services and materials.

I&R Specialist Tosetti and the Huntington Audubon Society conducted two bird de-oiling workshops at Target Rock.

Assistant Refuge Manager Schreiner cleared three acres at Morton Refuge, which he planted with forage grass. He plans to maintain the field at first stage succession.

Again this year, I&R Specialist Tosetti and YACC corpsmembers helped the Huntington Audubon Society and the Town of Huntington's Department of Conservation clear vegetation from a beach near the refuge where American and least tern nesting occurs.

C. Mammals, Non-migratory Birds and Others

1. Game Mammals

White-tail deer populations have risen substantially this year at Morton Refuge. Evidence seems to indicate that the refuge is increasingly being used as a bedding and fawning area for deer from adjacent areas.

2. Other Mammals

Eastern cottontail rabbit and eastern red fox populations increased at both Target Rock and Morton Refuges this year.

Two fox kits were produced from a new den at Target Rock. The woodchuck population at Target Rock has also grown this year.

3. Resident Birds

Resident bird species which continue to be most abundant at Target Rock are: crows, mocking birds, starlings, mourning doves, ring-necked pheasant, bobwhite quail, herring gulls, great black-back gulls, house sparrows, cardinals, blue jays and house finches. Great horned owls and red-tailed hawks are among the less common species.

4. Other Animal Life

American dog tick populations are thriving at Target Rock and two instances of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever were reported in the area this year.

Peak populations of gypsy moth caterpillars completely defoliated most of the hardwood trees on the refuge during the summer.

V. INTERPRETATION AND RECREATION

A. Information and Interpretation

1. On-Refuge

Visitation totaled 6,224 at Target Rock and 5,360 at Horton this year. Visits by school groups declined slightly due to reductions in funding for school transportation in Suffolk County.

A three day teacher workshop was held at Target Rock by the New York Board of Cooperative Education System (BOCES). In addition, I&R Specialist Tosetti held two bird de-oiling workshops in cooperation with the Huntington Audubon Society.

Tosetti presented a week long summer environmental education program for the Harbor Day Care Center in Glen Cove. The program included activities both at the day care center and at the refuge.

A puppet show geared to grades 3-6 was initiated in April and was shown at various times throughout the spring and summer. The show's main theme was what a wildlife refuge means and what its role in environmental conservation is. The show was used as part of a pre-activities orientation of the refuge.

BOCES and the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory conducted a week-long environmental education program at Target Rock. In addition, the Huntington Audubon Society held five nighttime environmental education programs at the refuge.

Plans have begun this year for the widening of Target Rock Road. The right-of-way, which is owned by the Fish and Wildlife Service, provides the sole access to the refuge. It currently presents a considerable safety problem as it is extremely narrow and winding. Refuge Manager Steelman held a public meeting on the proposed road improvements on February 11.

A portion of a building near the parking lot at Target Rock has been converted into a visitor contact station. A new information booth, walkway and bench have been erected outside the center, and planting plans have been made which will be accomplished next year.

The self-guided nature trail has been reopened at Morton Refuge. Also, plans have begun for the renovation of an indoor environmental study area and the construction of a new information booth.



A new diorama depicting a Long Island marsh scene was installed in the entrance of the main office at Target Rock.

Maintenance worker Marto attended a public meeting at the Lloyd Harbor Village Hall concerning a new residential development to be constructed adjacent to the refuge.

Recreational boaters at Morton create a serious threat to the refuge by entering the refuge after hours and starting campfires on the beach areas.

Illegal vehicular traffic continues to be the principal law enforcement problem at Target Rock. Also, a major problem at both Target Rock and Morton is the presence of a number of domestic dogs and cats who wander on to the refuge from neighboring properties.

At Target Rock, the main entrance sign was stolen and a fence at the overlook vandalized. Several interpretive signs were also stolen from Morton Refuge.

Throughout the year routine patrols of Oyster Bay Refuge were made by Maintenance Worker Harto.

Our law enforcement division at JFK continues to offer us valuable back-up support, and in cases where we need immediate assistance the Lloyd Harbor Police Department has been most helpful.

Most law enforcement at Target Rock is directed at controlling trespassers at all hours of the day and night. Both Manager Steelman and Maintenance Worker Harto have law enforcement authority, and since both reside on the refuge, most after-hour law enforcement is handled on an informal respond-as-needed basis.

C. Law Enforcement

Not applicable.

2. Non-Wildlife Oriented

Refuge Manager Steelman, Assistant Manager Schreiner, Interpretive Specialist Tosetti, Maintenance Worker Harto and Administrative Clerk Hatters assisted at the Great Swamp deer hunt in December.

1. Wildlife Oriented

B. Recreation

I&R Specialist Tosetti gave a slide presentation to 300 pupils at the Terryville Elementary School.

2. Off-Refuge

Assistant Refuge Manager Schreiner conducted a day-long interpretive tour of Morton Refuge for the Remsenberg Garden Club.

VI. OTHER ITEMS

A. Field Investigations

Not applicable.

B. Cooperative Programs

In September, meetings were held with representatives of the Audubon Society, Charles Webster (donor of Seatuck NWR), and representatives of the Peters Estate, concerning a \$40,000 grant to be used for a cooperative research program at Seatuck Refuge.

C. Safety

A Defensive Driving Course was given at Target Rock by the Long Island Safety Council for 15 employees from Long Island Refuges, Law Enforcement and Ecological Services.

Safety Officer Marto attended the National Safety Council Supervisor's Development Program in June. Marto conducted regular safety meetings, and instituted a number of safety awareness measures throughout the year.

D. Items of Interest

Field Response Coordinator Steelman attended the Pollution Response Workshop held in St. Petersburg, Florida May 7-11.

Assistant Refuge Manager Secatore and Maintenance Worker Marto completed law enforcement training at Glynco, Georgia.

Assistant Refuge Manager Schreiner attended Refuge Academy at Beckley, West Virginia.

Interpretive Specialist Tosetti attended the I&R workshop held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and an EE workshop held at Montezuma NWR.

Refuge Manager Steelman, Interpretive Specialist Tosetti and Clerk Matters attended the Area II conference at Allenberry, Pennsylvania in March.

Administrative Clerk Matters attended an administrative workshop held at the regional office in June.

AMAGANSETT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Amagansett National Wildlife Refuge is located four miles east of East Hampton, New York. It consists of 36 acres of beach and dune habitat.

This refuge is protected by spot patrols conducted by the manager of Morton National Wildlife Refuge. No programs are conducted here and public access is permitted by Special Use Permit only.

CONSCIENCE POINT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Conscience Point National Wildlife Refuge is located near North Sea, New York, approximately five miles west of Morton National Wildlife Refuge. This 60-acre refuge consists of old fields, woodlands and a 15-acre salt marsh.

Conscience Point is protected by spot patrols conducted by the manager of Morton National Wildlife Refuge.

MORTON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The northern two-thirds of this 187-acre refuge is located on a peninsula known as Jessups Neck. This is an area of graveley, rocky beaches and wooded bluffs. There are also woodlands, old fields and a small brackish pond.

One or two pair of osprey usually attempt nesting on the refuge. This year two young were produced.

OYSTER BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge consists of various parcels of land in and near the Town of Oyster Bay, New York. The major portion of the 3,117-acre refuge lies beneath Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor, and is of negligible value from a wildlife standpoint.

Although of low value, this refuge consumes considerable man-hours in investigating possible violations of the area below mean high tide. Usually these violations consist of dock and boat ramp encroachments or destruction of vegetation by residents attempting to improve their bathing areas. The enforcement associated with these violations is important since there is a reversionary clause in the deed of gift which results in these lands being returned to the Town of Oyster Bay if the Service permits encroachment on the refuge.

SEATUCK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Seatuck National Wildlife Refuge is located in Islip, New York. Two hundred acres of the 210-acre refuge is presently in the hands of the donor, who retained a lifetime use of the area, and is not under active management by the Service at this time.