

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Crab Orchard

National Wildlife Refuge Recreation



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the National Wildlife Refuge System to help protect America's fish

and wildlife heritage. Established in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt, the National Wildlife Refuge System

now consists of more than 540 refuges encompassing nearly 100 million acres of lands and waters in all 50

states and most United States territories. The Refuge System also includes thousands of waterfowl production areas, many scattered throughout the upper Midwest and

all vital breeding grounds for migratory birds.

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Welcome to Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge! Crab Orchard NWR is host to a multitude of wonderful recreational opportunities including hiking, picnicking, photography, boating, hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife observation and environmental education.

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Crab Orchard NWR was established in 1947 and contains 44,000 acres. For management purposes, the lands within the refuge have been divided into an Open Area and a Restricted Area. The Open Area contains 23,000 acres of land and water open for recreational uses. The Restricted Area contains 21,000 acres which has limited recreational opportunities as it has been set aside for wildlife.

Crab Orchard provides habitat for native wildlife, and an atmosphere for people to observe and appreciate wildlife and the outdoor environment.

Hunting

Hunting is a popular activity that is offered both for recreational opportunities and as a tool for managing wildlife populations. Deer and turkey hunters have an excellent success rate, and the refuge is one of the few remaining areas available for goose and duck hunting on a daily basis. For more hunting information see the refuge's hunting brochure.

Fishing

Fishing is one of the more popular visitor pastimes. The refuge has developed several areas around the water's edge including accessible fishing piers that provide excellent opportunities for bank fishing. Crab Orchard Lake is famous for its largemouth bass.

Little Grassy Lake has produced record sized crappie and Devils Kitchen Lake anglers catch bluegill and rainbow trout.

Photography

With all of the wildlife and beautiful scenery at the refuge there is always an opportunity to take some spectacular photographs. Every fall, the refuge is host to an amateur photography contest where photographs are displayed at the refuge visitor center. Please contact the visitor center for further details.

A variety of trails offer visitors numerous opportunities to experience the year round beauty of Crab Orchard NWR. Hiking trails meander through pine plantations, hardwood forests, wetlands, waterfalls and sandstone cliffs.

Picnicking

Visitors may enjoy picnicking at one of several developed sites on Crab Orchard NWR. One area is limited to group use and may be reserved at the refuge visitor center.

Wildlife Observation

The refuge is an excellent place for wildlife observation.

Points of interest, trails and an auto tour have been developed where wildlife viewing is possible. White-tailed deer and turkey, common year round, can be seen in many areas. Canada geese entertain visitors from November through January and more than 245 species of birds frequent the refuge. Watch for majestic bald eagles that can be seen on the refuge. A wildlife list is available at the visitor center.

Lakes

Crab Orchard Lake is the largest of the three lakes on the refuge totaling 7,000 acres with 127 miles of shoreline.

Camping

Campers can find an outdoor experience at Crab Orchard NWR for the entire family. A wide variety of camping experiences are available at campgrounds located on the shores of Crab Orchard, Little Grassy and Devils Kitchen Lakes.

Devils Kitchen Lake features a wooded shoreline and some of the most crystal clear water in the area. The lake has a maximum depth of 90 feet, and on a clear day it's not uncommon to be able to see to a depth of 20 feet.

Swimming is prohibited at Devils Kitchen Lake.

the refuge campgrounds.

Planning to visit the wilderness area may camp at Giant City State Park, the Shawnee National Forest or one of the refuge campgrounds. Birdwatchers, anglers and hunters alike. Backpackers area provides a pristine environment for hikers, vehicles and equipment are prohibited. The wilderness and is managed by special regulations to minimize human impact. Campfires, camping, motorized and mechanical activities are prohibited. The wilderness area provides a kids fishing derby, wildflower walks, bird counts, and campground programs as well as a butterfly roundup and monthly interpretive programs. Contact the visitor center for a current schedule.

Special Events

The refuge offers special events throughout the year including a kids fishing derby, wildflower walks, bird counts, and campground programs as well as a butterfly roundup and monthly interpretive programs. Contact the visitor center for a current schedule.

Wilderness Area

The 4,050 acre Crab Orchard wilderness area is located just south of Devils Kitchen and Little Grassy Lakes.

For more information about environmental education programs and resources available to educators.

Environmental Education

Environmental education is perhaps the most important activity conducted on the refuge for the future of wildlands and wildlife. A greater appreciation of nature is gained by the many students who come to the refuge and reinforce indoor instruction through outdoor experiences. Thousands of children receive their first exposure to nature at the refuge's youth camps located on the shores of Little Grassy Lake. Contact the visitor center for more information about environmental education programs and resources available to educators.

Public Use Regulations

To protect the natural resources of the refuge and to provide all visitors with a safe, enjoyable recreation experience, please follow these guidelines:

Alcoholic Beverages

Entering or remaining on the refuge when under the influence of alcohol is prohibited. The possession or use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

Contributing alcoholic beverages to a person by persons under the age of 21 is prohibited.

Cycling is permitted only on roads open to motorized vehicles and trails established specifically for bicycle and foot traffic.

Bicycling

Cycling is permitted only on roads open to motorized vehicles and trails established specifically for bicycle and foot traffic.

Camping

Camping is permitted only in designated campgrounds.

Campfire

Campfires are allowed only in designated areas where controlled structures are provided.

Collecting

Disturbing, injuring, or collecting plants, animals, or objects of antiquity without a special use permit is prohibited. The use of metal detectors is prohibited on all national wildlife refuges.

Collecting Wild Foods

Fruits, nuts, berries, and fruiting bodies of mushrooms may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption. Commercial use of the products is prohibited.

Domestic Animals

Unconfined domestic animals are prohibited on the refuge, except controlled hunting and retrieving dogs during the hunting season.

Group Events

A special use permit is required to hold a group event on the refuge to which the public is invited, whether or not an use fee is charged.

Fireworks

Possession or use of fireworks or explosives is not allowed on the refuge.

Private Structures

Private structures of any kind are not allowed on the refuge without a special use permit, except for temporary blinds and stands which must be dismantled at the end of each day.

Rock Climbing

Rappelling, free-style and technical rock climbing in prohibited.

Swimming

Swimming is prohibited at Devils Kitchen Lake, the restricted area of Crab Orchard Lake, marina areas, and within 100 feet of boat ramps, spillways, causeways, and dams. Public nudity is prohibited.

Vegetation

Cutting, removing, or damaging any tree or other vegetation, standing or down, live or dead, is prohibited, without a written permit.

Vehicles

Motorized vehicles are prohibited on refuge lands except on designated public roads and routes of travel. Parking beyond vehicle control barriers, or on grass or other vegetation is prohibited.

Recreation Use Fees

Entrance and User fees are required for all vehicles and boats using the refuge. Passes are available at the refuge visitor center and campgrounds.

Entrance Fees		
Vehicle (1 day)	\$2.00 per vehicle (covers all passengers)	
Vehicle (7 days)	\$5.00 per vehicle (covers all passengers)	
Vehicle (annual pass July-June)	\$15.00 first vehicle (covers all passengers)	
Federal Duck Stamp	\$15.00 first vehicle (annual pass July-June) (covers all passengers)	
Interagency Senior Pass	\$10.00 US residents age 62 or older lifetime pass	
Interagency Annual Pass	\$65.00 valid for one year from month purchased.	
Interagency Access Pass	Free - medically determined to be permanently disabled lifetime pass.	

For a family purchasing an annual entrance pass (excluding the Interagency Passes) additional annual passes for immediate family members at the same address, will be \$ 5.00.

Lake Use Fees

All vessels/boats using the refuge will be assessed a lake use fee charge. This includes vessels that are in dry storage and/or maintained in slips at the marinas.

Vessel (1 day)	\$2.00 per vessel
Vessel (7-days)	\$5.00 per vessel
Vessel (annual pass July-June)	\$10.00 first vessel \$5.00 each additional vessel

Holders of Interagency Senior and Access Pass are authorized a 50% discount of the full value price for Lake Use Fees. Additional annual vessel passes are already discounted, therefore all additional passes are \$ 5.00.

In order for the pass to be valid it must be affixed directly to the vessel on the port (left) bow next to, but not overlapping the state registration.

Special Recreation Permit Fees

For specialized uses such as group activities, recreational events and rental fees.

Fish-off Permit \$35.00 per organization (permit allows the organization to host 1 fish-off at each of the three lakes per season)



Crab Orchard NWR Nature Trails

1 Harmony Trail
Trail Head Pigeon Creek Road, .25 miles west of State Route 148.
Description This trail is marked by an A-frame structure near its entrance and will take you through a variety of habitats from pine plantations to wetlands to hardwood forests. On the trail there is a photo blind overlooking a wetland area. Excellent opportunities for photography of wildlife including birds, reptiles, and amphibians exist.
Length An easy 1 mile loop.

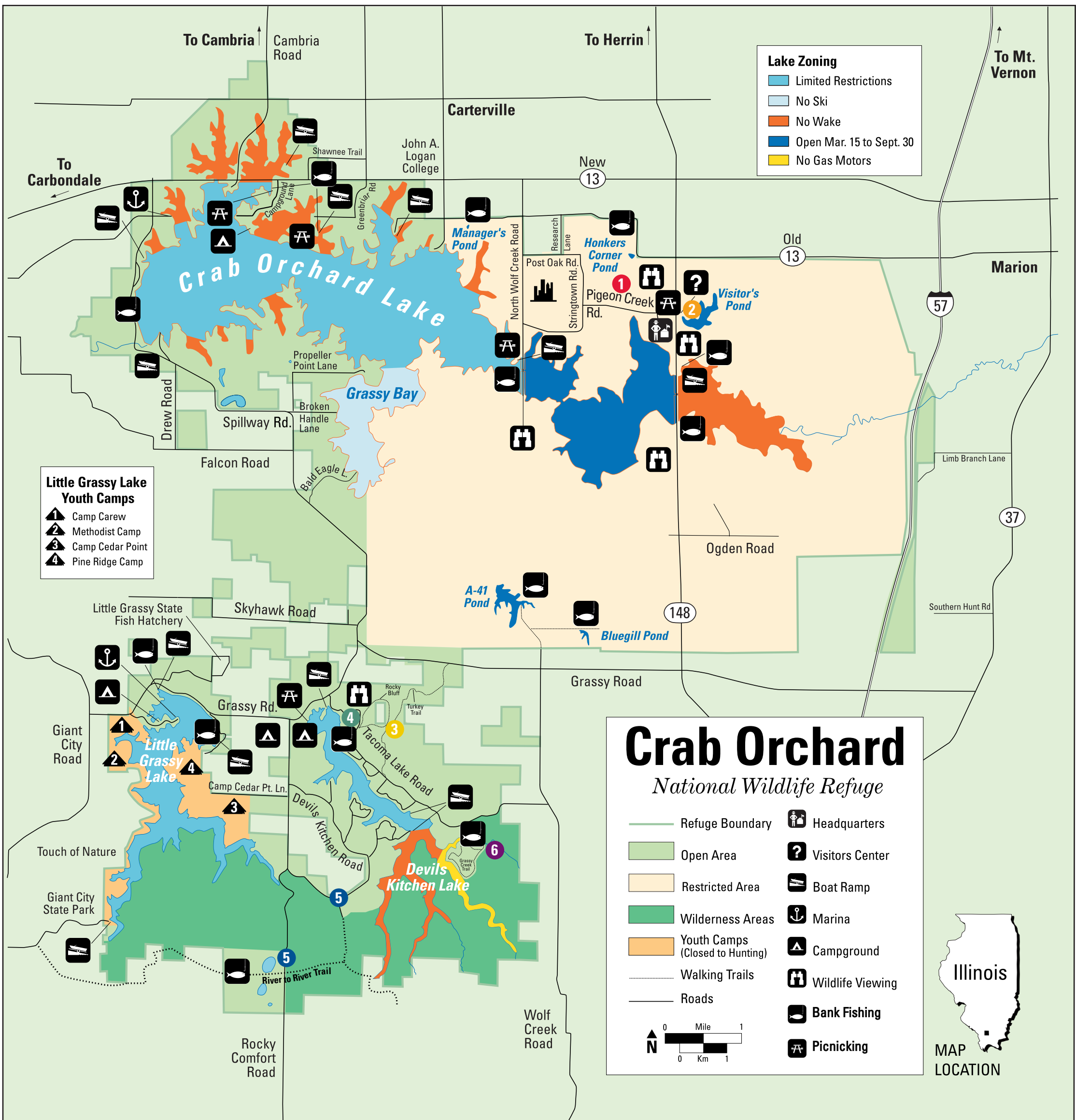
2 Woodland Trail
Trail Head Visitor center on State Route 148, east side of parking lot.
Description This is an easy partially paved trail that is used periodically for educational programs. This trail includes two fishing piers on the Visitor's Pond that is open seasonally for fishing from March 15 to September 30. When not being utilized for fishing, these piers provide an excellent opportunity for waterfowl viewing. This walk also offers a pleasant atmosphere for morning bird walks.
Length An easy .9 mile loop.

3 Wild Turkey Trail
Trail Head The north entrance is located on Grassy Road, .6 miles west of South Wolf Creek Road. The south entrance is on Tacoma Lake Road, 1.5 miles south of Grassy Road.
Description This young forest trail will take you through a variety of habitats from pine plantations to hardwood forests and is generally mowed during the summer months. The trail is located along several ridgetops which makes it excellent for wildlife viewing.
Length A moderate 1.7 mile walk one way.

4 Rocky Bluff Trail
Trail Head Tacoma Lake Road, .5 miles south of Grassy Road.
Description The trail winds through a wide variety of habitats and some of the most spectacular scenery on the refuge. There are intermittent waterfalls, sandstone cliffs, and some steep, rocky sections of trail may make hiking difficult at times, but very worthwhile. This beautiful trail is very popular with hikers and is host to our annual Spring Wildflower Walk held on Saturdays in April. This trail is graced with over 60 varieties of wildflowers such as bluebells, Dutchman's breeches and celandine poppy.
Length A moderately difficult 1.8 mile loop.

5 River to River Trail
Trail Head On Rocky Comfort Road 3.4 miles south of Grassy Road and also at Pleasant Hill Spur Trail on Devils Kitchen Road.
Description The beautiful River to River trail spans over 160 miles of Southern Illinois with a five mile section through the refuge. This is the only trail located on the refuge that is open seasonally to horseback riding. Sections of the River to River Trail located on the refuge run through the scenic wilderness area.
Length A moderately difficult walk. Three miles of the trail runs through the refuge.

6 Grassy Creek Trail
Trail Head .5 miles south of Tacoma Lake Road at the Grassy Creek bridge.
Description This trail was once an old road with a wide paved surface that is perfect for the novice hiker wanting to do some wildlife viewing. It is in a hardwood forest and provides scenic views of the beautiful Devils Kitchen Lake. The eastern part of the trail is bordered by Crab Orchard National Wilderness Area.
Length A moderately difficult 1.4 mile loop.



We hope you enjoy the nature trails of Crab Orchard NWR. There are six trails that offer visitors numerous opportunities to experience the year round beauty of the refuge. Every season offers something special in the outdoors and you need no special equipment - just a good pair of shoes and the desire to be outside. If you walk quietly and use your senses to observe, you will increase your chances of seeing some of the more secretive wildlife. The following trails are open to foot travel only. Remember to tread lightly and respect other trail users.

