

Choptank Wetlands, Talbot and Caroline Counties



Choptank Wetlands has extraordinary ecological value for wintering and nesting waterfowl, spawning fish, sediment control, and nutrient production. The Smithsonian Institution survey ranked this marsh system as one of the most important Chesapeake Bay natural areas.

After the retreat of the last glaciers 4,000 to 5,000 years ago, the Chesapeake Bay marshes have gradually filled in with sediment as sea level rose. The sediments in some marshes exceed 40 feet today.

Mark Godfrey/TNC



An artist paints the beautiful scenery of Choptank Wetlands. Visitors can take a boat to this pristine area.

There are two main marshes in the Choptank Wetlands preserve, King's Creek marsh and Hog Island marsh. King's Creek boasts 250 acres in Talbot County. It is an undisturbed, brackish marsh with unusually rich plant species and bird life. The marsh vegetation there is dominated by arrow arum, switchgrass, cattails and phragmites.

Visiting

- Free admission year-round
- Only accessible by boat
- Hog Island closed to the public

Hog Island covers 406 acres in Caroline County. It is a stop-over for many species of water birds during migration seasons. In winter northern harrier, wood duck and snipe make their home here, while in spring for red-winged blackbirds, osprey, least bittern, and red-tailed hawks are in abundance. Summer boasts a great variety of flowers, too.

David Dadurka/TNC



A view of the wetland. Reeds and grasses line the banks, providing great habitat for wintering and nesting waterfowl.

There have been 656 acres purchased, donated or placed under easement since 1976 by the Nature Conservancy at this preserve. The Nature Conservancy is currently transferring the preserve to Talbot County Parks and Recreation as a conservation easement that will prohibit any development on the land.

King’s Creek Preserve is a joint project of The Nature Conservancy and the Waterfowl Festival, Inc., which shared the cost of land acquisition and construction of the boardwalk and observation platform. Current stewardship work includes ecological monitoring, invasives mapping/recon, and meeting with neighbors of the preserve. A study of native phragmites is underway to understand their effect on marsh ecology.



David Dadurka/TNC

Many types of marsh vegetation exist at Choptank.

Key Elements

- Sediment fills
- Arrow arum
- Phragmites
- Northern harrier
- Wood duck
- Red-winged blackbirds

Directions (GPS Coordinates: 38°46'31.4"N 75°58'33.9"W)

Take Route 50 east across the Bay Bridge to Easton. Turn left (east) onto Route 331/Dover Road towards Preston. Continue 2.1 miles and turn left onto Black Dog Alley Road and then immediately turn right onto Kingston Road. Continue until the road ends at a T-intersection (3.7 miles). Turn right, and drive 0.7 miles to Kingston Landing where you can put in your boat. Go downriver (southwest) to the first creek on your right (King’s Creek). Follow the creek upstream (northwest) to the boat dock on your left (there is no boat ramp). Please note that our boardwalk is closed.

Contact

The Nature Conservancy of Maryland/DC
5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 100
Bethesda, MD 20814
P: 301-897-8570
For more information:
www.nature.org/Maryland

Watch Out For!

- Mosquitoes
- Ticks and chiggers
- Only accessible by boat