

**Frank M. Ewing/Robinson Neck Preserve, Dorchester County**



Dave Spier



The Delmarva fox squirrel found on this preserve is federally endangered.

This Eastern Shore preserve is a delight for birders. It is an undisturbed waterfowl and upland wildlife habitat. It also affords a sanctuary for the bald eagle and is an exceptional black duck nesting location. In addition to its plentiful birdlife, this preserve is an ideal habitat for the Delmarva fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger cinereus*), listed as federally endangered in

1973. An endemic subspecies, the fox squirrel is larger and has a bushier tail than the common gray squirrel. The preserve is about half pine forest and half brackish tidal

marsh, with a small area of freshwater marsh. The woods are predominantly loblolly pine, with an understory of American holly and waxmyrtle. The tidal marsh, which produces nutrients that are essential to the Chesapeake ecosystem, features common or Olney threesquare bulrush, narrowleaf cattail, needlerush, and saltmarsh cordgrass.

**Key Elements**

- Bald eagle sanctuary
- Delmarva fox squirrel habitat
- Loblolly pine
- Many migratory bird species
- American holly

Greg Dimijian



The bark of the Loblolly pine is quite distinguishable with its thick segments and deep cracks.

In the winter one may observe muskrat activities, sika deer, and wintering waterfowl, while May is best for birdwatching. Summer brings a proliferation of flowering plants and marsh grasses, as well as biting insects. Warblers and puddle ducks are abundant in the fall, along with other migratory birds. November and December bring diving ducks to the creeks, geese to the nearby fields, and fewer biting insects.

Robinson Neck was identified as a significant wetland in the 1974 Smithsonian Institution survey of Chesapeake Bay natural areas. It is one of The Nature Conservancy's largest preserves. The Conservancy

chose this site for its protection of waterfowl and bald eagle habitat, as well as its brackish tidal marsh habitat.

**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](http://www.nature.org/Maryland)

Since 1977, 920 acres have been protected. Management focuses on maintaining the trails and boardwalk sections, reducing deer and nutria populations to maintain ecosystem balance, and working with neighbors and local authorities to prevent the establishment of wild dogs and pigs. Continued maintenance of the trail will need to accommodate rising water levels.

**Directions** (GPS Coordinates: 38°25'59.8"N  
76°17'04.2"W)

### From Baltimore/Washington:

Take Route 50 east across the Bay Bridge. Just south of Cambridge, turn right onto Route 16. Continue for 16 miles to the Taylor's Island Bridge, just beyond Taylor's Island marina. After crossing the bridge, take the first left (south) on Robinson Neck Road. Go 2.7 miles to a grassy road on the left blocked by a cable gate. There is limited parking along the shoulder of the road to the left of the gate.

Kent Mason



**This preserve provides a sanctuary for bald eagles, making it an essential place to protect.**

### Visiting

- Accessibility to dry habitats within the preserve is best during January through March when poison ivy is without foliage
- Nature trail starts at an old logging road, veers off into the pine woods, crosses through marsh and woods, and ends at the tidal marsh of Slaughter Creek
- Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge is nearby

### Watch Out For!

- Poison Ivy (very severe)
- Biting insects