

Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge
19031 East County Road 2110 North
Havana, IL 62644
309/535 2990

TTY users may reach Meredosia through the
Federal Information Relay System at
1-800-877 8339

www.fws.gov/midwest/IllinoisRiver
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Meredosia

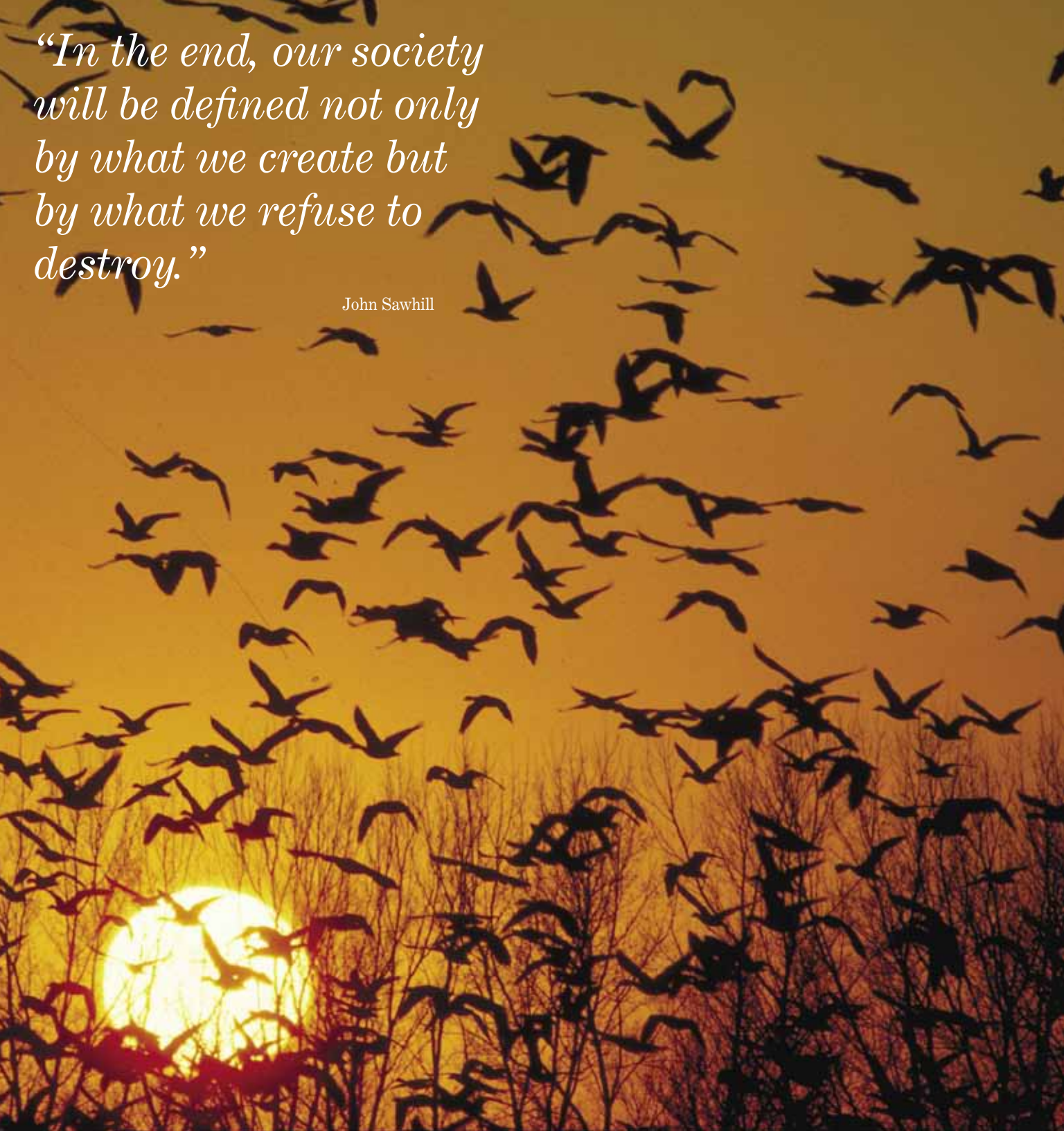
National Wildlife Refuge



Greater yellowlegs,
Donna Dewhurst, USFWS

*“In the end, our society
will be defined not only
by what we create but
by what we refuse to
destroy.”*

John Sawhill





This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling in the 1930s, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Welcome to Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge

Meredosa National Wildlife Refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This system is one of America's greatest conservation success stories. It is the only national system of lands dedicated to conserving our wildlife heritage for people today and for generations to come. Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge is part of this network of more than 540 refuges located throughout the United States and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Primarily managed as a migratory bird refuge, this 3,800 acre refuge, located just north of the village of Meredosia contains a diverse array of habitats including open water, shallow wetlands, wooded wetlands, woodlands, and restored prairie. Forested areas on Meredosia Island have some of the few remaining native pin oak and pecan woodlands within the Illinois River floodplain.

Part of the Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge Complex

Meredosa National Wildlife Refuge is managed as part of the Illinois River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge Complex. This complex stretches along 124 miles of the Illinois River in west central Illinois. The complex includes three refuges totaling 12,163 acres of backwater lakes, bottomland forests, floodplain wetlands and upland habitats. Meredosia NWR is the southern most refuge in this vital link of habitats.



A Floodplain in Decline

For thousands of years millions of waterfowl and other migratory birds rested and fed in the wetlands along the Illinois River during their annual migration. Extensive changes in land use which began in the mid-1800s have degraded wildlife habitats within the Illinois River floodplain. Forests were cleared, prairies were plowed and wetlands were drained. Further habitat alterations occurred when a series of locks and dams were constructed on the Illinois River. The locks and dams flooded many remaining wetland habitats in the valley and altered the natural wet/dry cycle within the floodplain. Because of alterations in the wet/dry cycle, remaining floodplain habitats declined in value, unable to renew or restore themselves through the natural river processes historically present.

Today

In an effort to conserve wildlife within the Illinois River floodplain, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages public lands for the benefit of wildlife and people. Management and restoration within the floodplain can take many forms. In some cases nature does most of the work without much help, but in other instances, nature needs a helping hand. Refuge staff and volunteers manipulate water levels, plant trees, burn grasslands, and battle noxious weeds in an effort to improve habitat for a variety of wildlife.



Tree Swallow
Don Wright

Aerial view of Meredosia NWR,
Illinois Natural History Survey





*Pelicans on
Meredosia Lake,*
Illinois Natural
History Survey

Refuge Beginnings

Much of what is now Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge was previously owned and managed by the Chicago Meredosia Gun Club. The area was later purchased by club member Mr. James Anderson. Mr. Anderson stipulated in his will that, upon his death, the club and its belongings would be donated to a conservation agency for management.

In May 1972, the Anderson estate donated 1,780 acres to The Nature Conservancy. On May 9, 1973, the Conservancy deeded the property to the Service. Since that time, the Service has purchased an additional 2,072 acres for a total of 3,852 acres.

Diverse Habitats = More Wildlife!

From grasslands to open water areas, the variety of habitats at Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge creates wonderful conditions for wildlife and wildlife observation. Changing seasons and habitat conditions throughout the year attract a variety of birds. Whether it is woodland warblers or grassland sparrows, Meredosia has something to offer for the wildlife watcher.



*Eastern
Bluebird,*
Don Wright

Ducks and Geese

Over 20 species of waterfowl are known to use the refuge. Best viewing times for waterfowl are from March through April when spring migrants utilize the refuge as a stopover enroute to northern breeding grounds.



Blue-wing Teal,
J. Mattsson, USFWS



*Immature
Bald Eagle,*
Don Wright

Soaring Eagles

Migrating eagles arrive on the refuge around late October, and by mid-November they can be found feeding and resting in areas around the Illinois River and Meredosia Lake. There have also been nesting eagles on the refuge, so an opportunity to see an eagle is not just during fall and winter.



*Adult Bald
Eagle,* Don Wright

Shorebirds

As temperatures increase during late summer, water levels on Meredosia Lake generally fall. The resulting mudflats attract many species of shorebirds from the small, semipalmated sandpiper to the greater yellowlegs, the refuge can be a great place to view shorebirds from late July into September.



*Lesser
Yellowlegs,*
Don Wright



Snowy Egret,
Don Wright



Little Blue Heron, Courtesy of State Journal Register, Chris Young

Marsh and Water Birds

Meredosia Lake provides spawning habitat for a number of fish species. With abundant supplies of small fish, birds such as great blue herons, great egrets, white pelicans, and double crested cormorants are commonly seen on the refuge.



American White Pelican, Don Wright



Public Use Activities

There are many opportunities for you to explore and enjoy Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge. Whether fishing, bird watching, canoeing or gathering berries and mushrooms, there are many ways to learn about and enjoy your public lands.

Refuge Hours



All land and water areas on the refuge are open daily from sunrise to sunset from February 1 to October 15. From October 16 through January 31 refuge lands west of Meredosia Lake are closed to provide a safe resting place for migratory birds. Foot access is permitted on refuge land along the east side of Meredosia Lake in Morgan County during the closure period.



Refuge Activities

- Take a scenic drive along Beach Road on the east side of Meredosia Lake.
- Walk the wheelchair accessible trail located north of the maintenance building.
- Pick mushrooms and berries; collect nuts.
- Watch waterfowl and other birds from refuge trails, levees and other access points. Peak waterfowl migrations occur in March and early November.
- Access Meredosia Lake from the boat launch located on the east side of Meredosia Lake.
- ATV use, fires, fireworks, and camping are prohibited.
- Pets are welcome, but must be leashed.
- The possession or consumption of alcohol is prohibited on the refuge.
- Please contact the refuge for additional details regarding activities permitted on Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge.

Fishing and hunting on Meredosia Lake is administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Please contact the Illinois DNR at 217/782-6302 regarding special regulations.

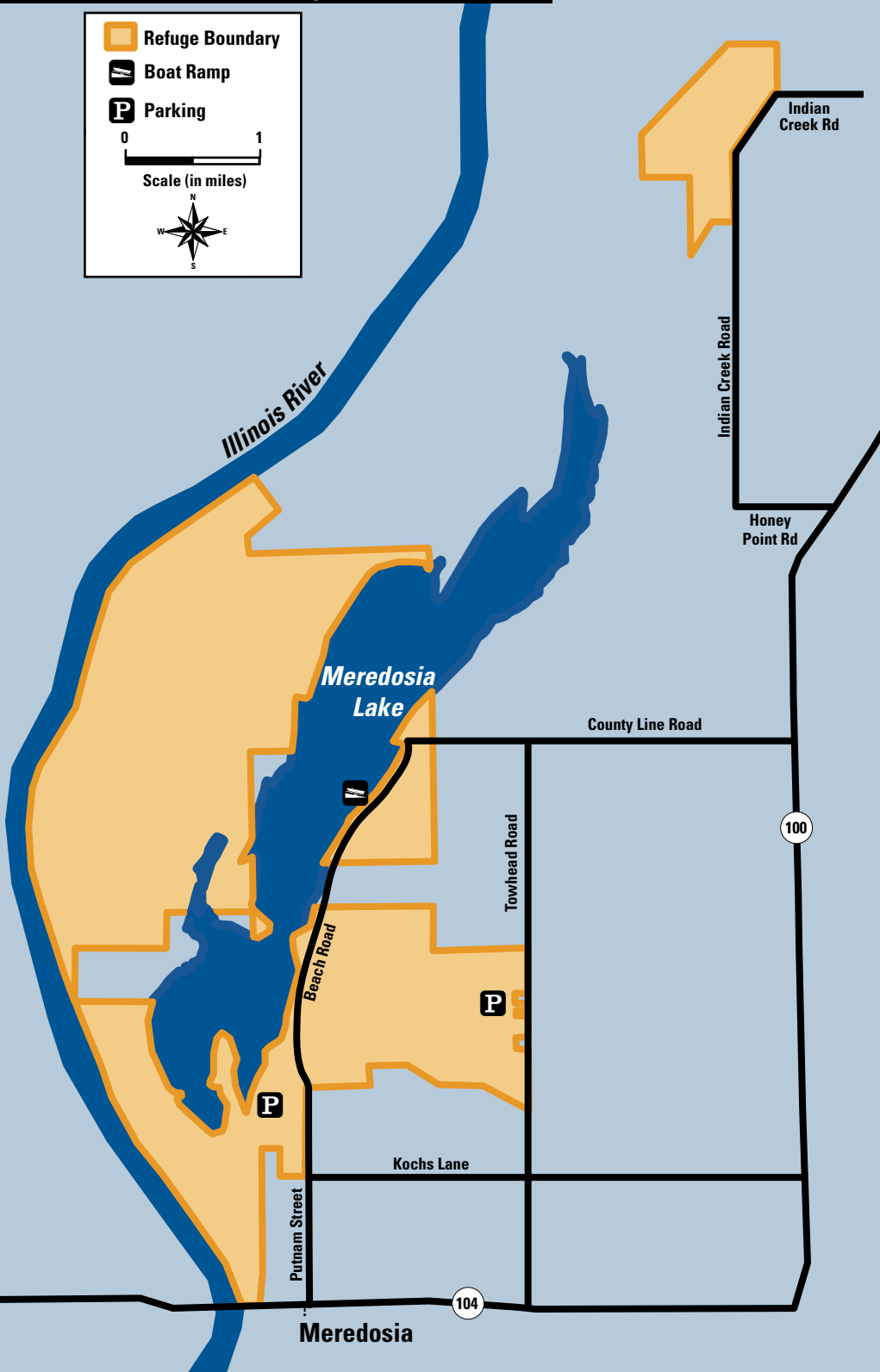
Getting There

Meredosia refuge is located immediately north of the village of Meredosia, Illinois, along the Illinois River in Cass and Morgan counties. From IL 104W, follow Putman Street north through Meredosia to Beach Road. From IL 67S, take Kochs Lane to Beach Road.

Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Boundary
- Boat Ramp
- Parking

0 1
Scale (in miles)



Illinois River National Wildlife Refuge Complex



Enjoy Your
National
Wildlife
Refuges!