

Patuxent Research Refuge North Tract/Tipton Airport Y2828

Fort Meade, Maryland

10k and 5k Walks

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In Case of Emergency: Dial 911
For Event Assistance: Kathy Berry 240-281-0670

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Patuxent Research Refuge North Tract/Tipton Airport Y2828

YRE Description

Established in 1936 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Patuxent Research Refuge is the nation's only national wildlife refuge established to support wildlife research. Today most of the research on the refuge is conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) through the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

With land surrounding the Patuxent and Little Patuxent rivers between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, MD, the refuge has grown from the original 2,670 acres to its present size of 12,841 acres and encompasses land formerly managed by the Departments of Agriculture and Defense. Throughout decades of change, Patuxent's mission of conserving and protecting the nation's wildlife and habitat through research and wildlife management techniques has remained virtually unchanged.

Patuxent Research Refuge is divided into three areas: 1) North Tract, which offers hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, trails, and many interpretive programs; 2) Central Tract, where the offices and study sites of the many research biologists are located at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center; and 3) South Tract, where the National Wildlife Visitor Center and its trails are located. The National Wildlife Visitor Center and North Tract are the only areas open for visitor activities.

There are two trails; a 10k and a 5k.

AVA Special Programs

Trail	Special Program(s)
Patuxent Refuge North Tract 11k and 6k	None

Registering for the walk

The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch club charges all participants over 12 a \$4 fee. When you register for your walk event, please DO NOT check the "No Credit" checkbox for any participant over 12 years of age. When you register for the walk you can download the PDF file with walk information. The PDF includes directions to the walk start and walk instructions. The fee for the download is \$2. You will be credited for this fee if you complete the walk and pay the walk participant fee within 60 days.

After you have completed the walk

Please remember to log back into the OSB's "Finish Table" after completing the walk. Completion information includes the date the event was walked, the distance walked and applicable special programs.



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Patuxent Refuge - North Tract Hours

The Patuxent Refuge - North Tract Visitor Contact Station and Grounds are currently open daily, 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. They are closed on Federal Holidays. **Trails are sometimes closed for hunting. Please use [this link for current information](#). Vehicles must exit before the closing time or they will be locked in until the next day!**

Driving Directions to the trail start

Address: Visitor Contact Station parking area, 230 Bald Eagle Dr, Laurel, MD 20724

GPS Coordinates of the Contact Station are **39.0777407,-76.7739137**

Plus code is **36HH+38 Laurel, Maryland**

Plus codes are based on latitude and longitude. By using a simpler code system, they are intended to be shorter and easier to use than traditional global coordinates.

Directions from I-95:

Take exit 38A onto MD-32 E toward Fort Meade

Take exit 8 for MD-198 toward Laurel/Ft. Meade

Take the first exit from the traffic circle onto MD-198 West.

LEFT onto Bald Eagle Dr.

In 0.3 mi the Visitor Contact Station and parking area will be on the right.



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Patuxent Refuge North Tract Trail

10k (6.2 miles), 5k (3.1 miles) - AVA rating 1B

Restrooms available inside the Visitor Contact Station and at another location on the 11k trail.

After exiting the Visitor's Center, walk to Bald Eagle Drive..

1. **LEFT** onto the Bald Eagle Dr.
 - a. Go down 2 sets of steps. Little Patuxent River will be on your left.
 - b. Cross 2 boardwalks (be careful of the damaged areas on the boardwalks).
2. **LEFT at the stop sign** onto Switchboard/Wildlife Loop Rd (no sign).
 - a. Cross bridge over Little Patuxent River.
 - b. Pass signboard on the right "From Tanks to Dragonflies".
 - c. Pass the sign for 'Area E' on the right. A chain linked fence is on the left.

Note: At the next gate in the fence on the left, you can start to see Tipton airport. You will have to look carefully through the trees and foliage. There are additional views later.

- d. Pass a maintenance building and driveway/road on the right.
3. At the next 'Area D' sign (on the right), **RIGHT** onto the Pine Trail (marked with a brown sign).

Note: Ahead is the St. Peter's Episcopal cemetery. You can find more information in the "St. Peter's Cemetery" link below.

4. **LEFT** at the top of a very small hill to continue on the Pine Trail.
 - a. Follow the Pine Trail until its end. You will see the paved road to the left while on Pine Trail but continue on the trail.
 - b. Pass an old truck/transport on the left.
5. **LEFT** onto the paved road (Wildlife Loop).
 - a. Follow the road all the way back to the start point and Contact Station.

Note: you will get additional views of Tipton airport to the right through the trees and foliage.

6. At the start-point parking lot,

******* Decision Point *******

5k Walkers: You are done!

10k Walkers: Continue with the next instruction below.

7. From front of the Contact Station and facing Bald Eagle Rd, **Veer LEFT** toward the yellow pedestrian crossing sign to a boardwalk.
8. **RIGHT** on the boardwalk (Forest Trail) to the sign for Forest Habitat Nature Trail.

Note: The boardwalk passes a butterfly garden and a pollinator habitat.

9. **Enter** the woods on the Forest Trail.
10. **STRAIGHT** at the trail marker for Forest Trail, Contact Station, and Wild Turkey Way to continue on Forest Trail.
 - a. Cross a bridge.
11. **LEFT** at the 'LOOP' sign to continue on the Forest Trail.
12. **STRAIGHT** at the 2nd bench (don't turn right) to continue on the Forest Trail.
 - a. Cross bridge.
 - b. Go up a slight upgrade to a gravel road (Wild Turkey Way).
13. **RIGHT** onto Wild Turkey Way (Contact Station sign points to the left).
14. **LEFT** onto Kingfisher Rd (sign for 'Area P').
 - a. Pass Rieve's Pond (on the right).
15. **Veer LEFT** at next gravel road intersection onto South Road.
16. **LEFT** at next paved road (Wildlife Loop).
 - a. Pass the brown 'Vernal Pools Trail' sign (on the right).



Patuxent Refuge North Tract - 10k, 5k

17. **RIGHT** at the brown sign for 'Environmental Education Classroom' and continue on the road past the parking lot.

Note: restrooms are available in the brown building to the right. Notice the wildlife observation tower on the left.

18. **RIGHT** at sign for 'Merganser Pond Trail'.

19. **LEFT** at second 'Merganser Pond Trail' sign onto the natural surface trail.

Note: The trail will pass a couple of bat roosts in trees on the left.

- a. Pass a bench on the right.
- b. Cross a foot bridge.
- c. Just after exiting the woods, pass 2 benches on the left.

Note: There is a great view of Merganser Pond from the benches.

- d. Follow the trail to the gravel driveway.

20. **RIGHT** onto the driveway.

21. **RIGHT** onto paved road (Wildlife Loop).

22. Return to the parking lot of the start point (Contact Station).

Thank you for walking our Sugarloafer year-round today!

We hope you enjoyed this trail.



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Patuxent Refuge North Tract - 10k, 5k



Tipton Airport 5k and first part of the 10k - Map by Plotaroute.com



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Patuxent Refuge North Tract - 10k, 5k



Patuxent Refuge North Tract second part of the 10k



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Internet Resources

Patuxent Research Refuge: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent/>

Patuxent Research Refuge Trail Map: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent/visit/trails.html>

Tipton Airport: <https://tiptonairport.org/>

Large Maryland Trees: [Maryland Big Trees: American Sycamore](#)

American Sycamore Tree: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platanus_occidentalis

St. Peter's Cemetery: [Rediscovering the North Tract: St. Peter's Church Cemetery](#)

Geographic region: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_coastal_plain

Club Information: [Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch Club](#)



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