



Audubon MARYLAND-DC

Important Bird Area

Nanjemoy IBA

Date of site account: May 2016

County: Charles

Status: Recognized

Area: 51,662 acres (20,907 ha)

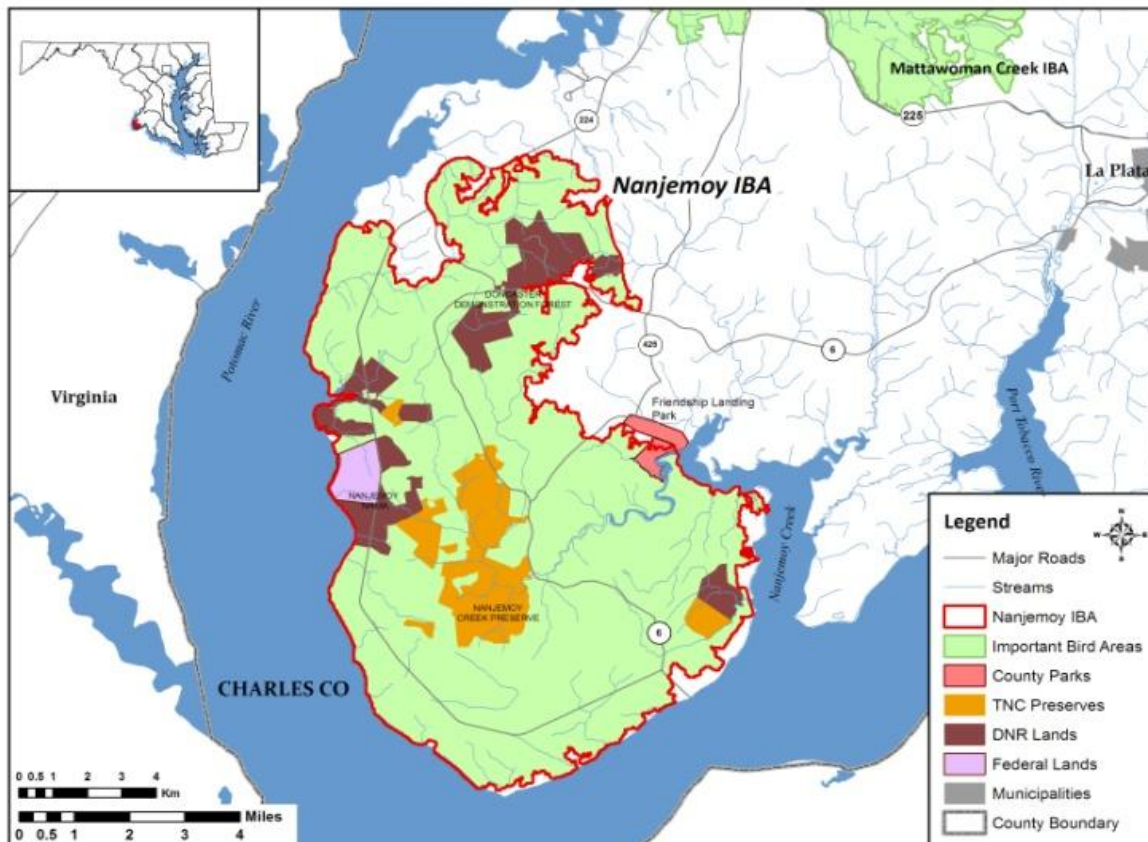
Priority: State



Bald Eagle

Site Description

Nanjemoy IBA is part of the “green thumb” of southwest Charles County and contains an enormous block of contiguous forest. A 3,839-acre portion of the area is managed by Maryland DNR and the U.S. Department of the Interior. An additional 3,058 acres of the IBA are protected by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Forests cover nearly 80% of the entire IBA. Agriculture uses account for about 12% of the total area while woody and herbaceous wetlands make up about 4% of the IBA. Forested habitats include deciduous, conifer, and mixed woods with the majority of this representing the oak-hickory association and the remainder consisting of loblolly pine, maple-beech-birch, and oak-pine. The majority of the forest is mature; however, there are scattered pockets of young pine and oak-pine forests. Other habitat features include tidal wetlands along Nanjemoy Creek and Thorne Gut, and pockets of flooded forested wetlands along various streams throughout. The entire area is rich in biodiversity and supports a number of rare plant species.



Birds

Nanjemoy IBA is a site of statewide importance for bird conservation. Bird Blitz surveys indicated that three at-risk species, Bald Eagle, Worm-eating-Warbler, and Whip-poor-will, exceed state IBA thresholds based on their observed totals. Bird blitz surveys also indicated that five additional at-risk species-- Red-headed Woodpecker, Wood Thrush, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler population estimates exceeded thresholds for the site. In the Nanjemoy IBA, 20 species of Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) breed regularly out of 24 species expected on Maryland's Coastal Plain.

Table 1. Qualifying IBA criteria¹: Category MD-DC 1 (D1), Category MD-DC (D3)

IBA Criterion	Species	Data	Season
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Bald Eagle	13 pairs estimated ² ; 10 of 13 atlas blocks ³	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Worm-eating-Warbler	136 pairs estimated ² ; 7 of 13 atlas blocks ³	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Whip-poor-will	102 pairs estimated ² ; 6 of 13 atlas blocks	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Red-headed Woodpecker	10 pairs estimated ² ; 4 of 13 atlas blocks	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Wood Thrush	417 pairs estimated ² ; 13 of 13 atlas blocks ³	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Prairie Warbler	139 pairs estimated ² ; 10 of 13 atlas blocks ³	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Prothonotary Warbler	59 pairs estimated ² ; 7 of 13 atlas blocks ³	Breeding
Category 1: <i>At-risk species</i>	Kentucky Warbler	30 pairs estimated ² ; 7 of 13 atlas blocks ³	Breeding
Category 2: <i>Species assemblages</i>	Forest interior dwelling species (FIDS): Red-Shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, Whip-poor-will, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red- eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Northern Parula, Black-and-white warbler, American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Water Thrush, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Summer Tanager.	20 FIDS breed Regularly out of 24 potential regular in Coastal plain; mean FIDS per Atlas block= 15.8. ³	Breeding

1. Audubon Maryland-DC. 2011. Important Bird Areas Program criteria for site selection. Available online: <http://md.audubon.org/important-bird-areas-2>.
2. Audubon Maryland-DC. 2009. Bird Blitz survey data and population estimates. Unpublished data.
3. Ellison, W.G., editor. 2010. Second atlas of the breeding birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia. China: Johns Hopkins University Press. 494

Conservation Status and Management

The portion managed by the Maryland DNR and the U.S. Department of the Interior consists of the Doncaster Demonstration Forest, the Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA) and the Douglas Point Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The Nature Conservancy-owned portion is known as the Nanjemoy Preserve. Of the 51,662 acres of Nanjemoy IBA, 27% are protected by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Maryland DNR, and The Nature Conservancy. Canopy species here include various oaks and hickories, tulip poplar, American beech, red maple, sweet gum, black gum, loblolly pine, and Virginia pine. Some understory species include American holly, mountain laurel, and flowering dogwood.



Threats and Conservation

The main threats to the Nanjemoy IBA are the conversion of woodland to residential housing and the subsequent forest fragmentation and changes in hydrology. Clearing of timber on state land for parking lots, camp sites, and other visitor facilities might fragment the potential matrix forest block. Large sand and gravel mining operations adjacent to existing protected lands embedded in core forest blocks constitutes another threat. Additional lands may also be susceptible to sand & gravel mining lease or acquisition. Timber harvesting of hardwoods by private landowners might fragment the forest, and overabundance of deer is a potential problem. The Nanjemoy IBA is also threatened by the invasive species; Japanese honeysuckle and Tree-of-heaven. Destructive ATV use has also been a problem in the area and is thought to have contributed to the decline of Great Blue Heron, whose numbers have been diminishing drastically.

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County has been working on easing development pressure in the Nanjemoy IBA and volunteer groups have organized invasive plant removal and tree plantings on protected lands. The Southern Maryland Audubon Society and other groups contribute substantially through bird monitoring efforts and eBird reports.

For more information about this and other Important Bird Areas, visit Audubon Maryland-DC online at: <http://md.audubon.org/conservation/important-bird-areas>.

This IBA site account was produced with a generous grant from Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust.

