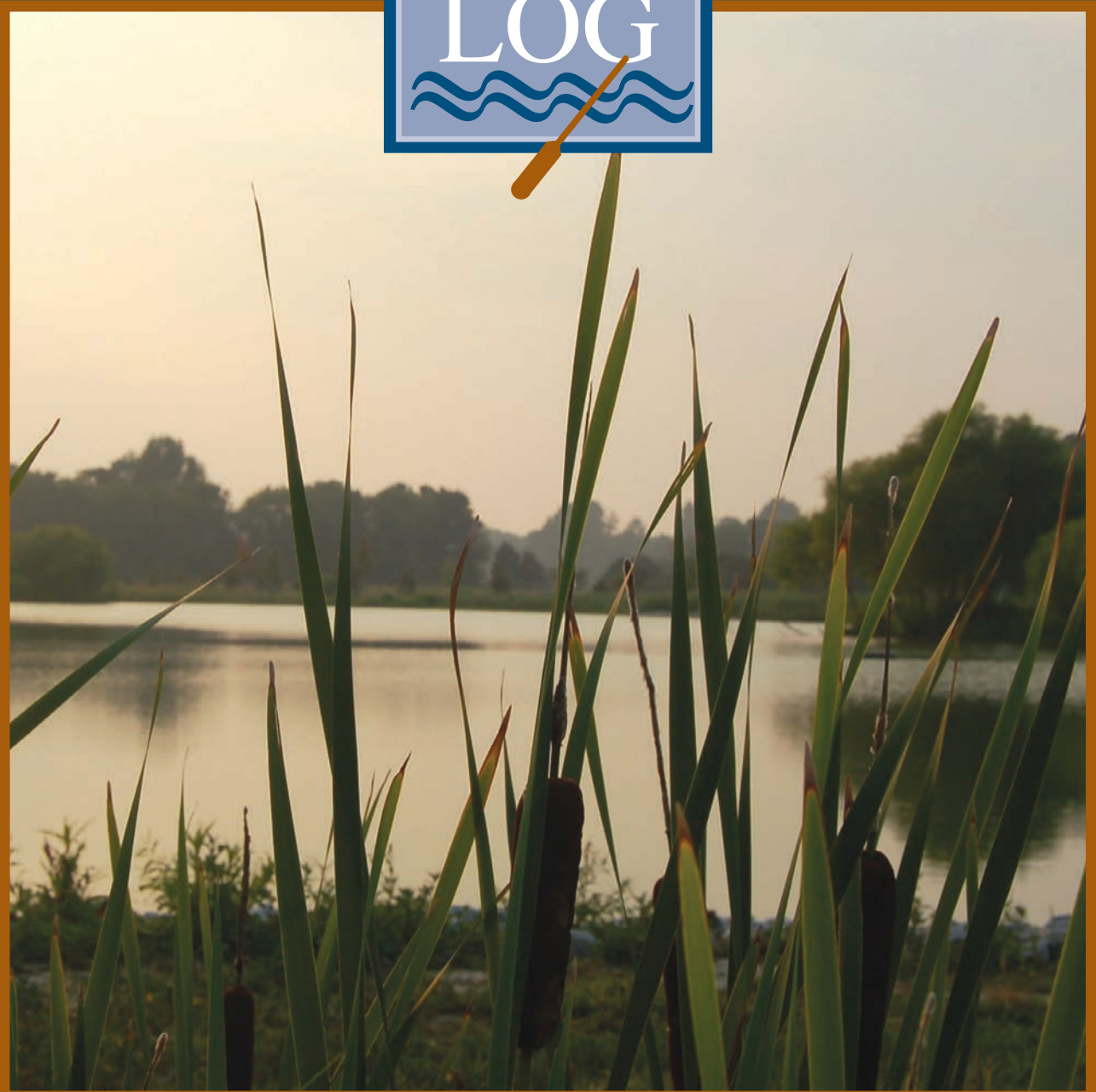


ST. MICHAELS WATER TRAIL



A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE
TALBOT COUNTY OFFICES OF TOURISM,
PUBLIC WORKS AND PARKS & RECREATION



For More Information

Directions

From the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, follow Route 50 East (toward Easton and Ocean City) for 26 miles. Turn right onto Route 322 South. Travel 2 miles, turn right onto Route 33 West. Travel on Route 33 for 10 miles to St. Michaels.

Talbot County Office of Tourism

11 South Harrison Street
Easton, MD 21601
E-mail: ddodson@talbgov.org
Tel. (410) 770-8000
Or visit: www.tourtalbot.org

Talbot County Parks and Recreation

Hog Neck Community Center
10028 Ocean Gateway
Easton, MD 21601
Tel. (410) 770-8050

Remember: It is your responsibility to have the necessary skills, knowledge, and equipment for a safe and environmentally sensitive visit.

This map was funded by a Recreational Trails Grant from the Maryland Department of Transportation to the Talbot County Office of Tourism. The St. Michaels Water Trail map is a collaborative effort between the Talbot County Offices of Tourism, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

Mapping Design by Mark Cohoon Talbot County Public Works
Watertrails Map Design by Laura Ambler, The Ambler Co., Inc.
Bird Information and Photos Courtesy Dr. Wayne Bell
Copy Courtesy Dr. Laura Murray
Photos Courtesy Tracey Richardson



Neavitt Landing to Leadenham Creek

1

Directions to launch site:

From St. Michaels take Route 33 toward Tilghman Island for about 2 miles. Turn left on Neavitt Road toward Bozman. Continue on Neavitt Road for about 6 miles through the villages of Bozman and Neavitt, to the launch site on Neavitt Road. Put-in is the boat ramp. Hard put-in.

Paddling Directions:

Paddle time: 4-6 hours

Paddle distance: 8 miles

Skill level: Intermediate to difficult, open waters with SW exposure.

Cautions: Be aware of tidal currents. Waves 1-2 feet or higher in strong winds. Return trip can be against SW winds, especially in summer. Check local weather for wind direction and speed.

From boat ramp head east across creek to northern shore (left). Follow shoreline keeping it on your left. There is one cove before Leadenham Creek you may want to explore. The entire shoreline is part of the Jean Ellen DuPont Shehan Audubon Sanctuary. Follow shoreline into Leadenham Creek to left at green channel marker #1. Paddle west (left) up Leadenham Creek about 2 miles. Turn around and retrace your path back to Neavitt boat ramp, keeping the shoreline on your right.



Attractions:

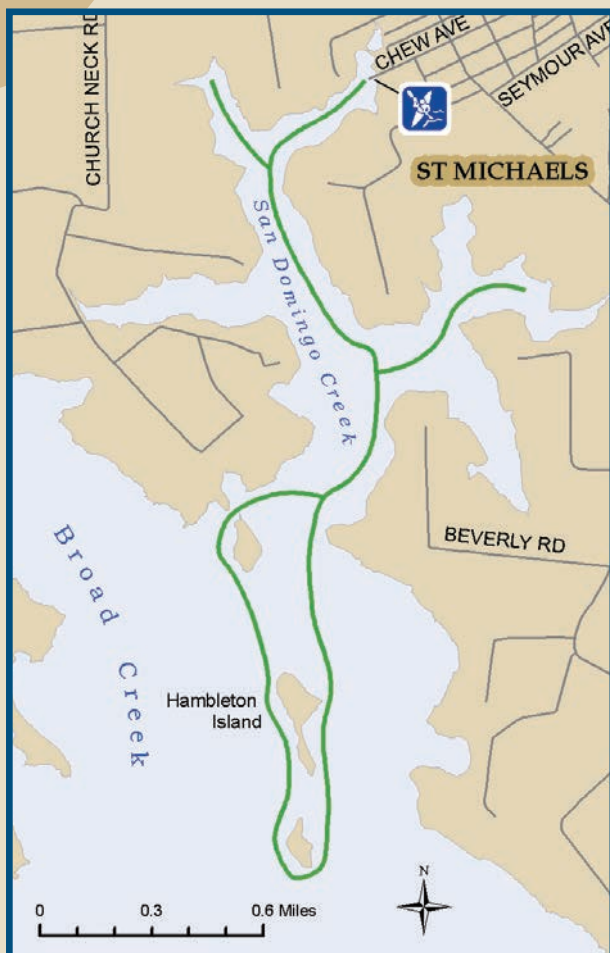
If the water clarity allows, you will see an abundance of submerged grasses along the natural shoreline. The Sanctuary is a 950 acre estate donated in 1997 by Jean Ellen Dupont Shehan to the Audubon Society. It remains largely undeveloped and provides the paddler with a glimpse of native Chesapeake Bay vegetation. Nearly 200 bird species frequent the Sanctuary during the year.

San Domingo Creek to Hambleton Island

2

Directions to launch site:

From Route 33 in St. Michaels take W. Chew Avenue and proceed 2 blocks to harbor on left. Put-in is to the right of the boat launch and dock in the park. Soft put-in.



Paddling Directions:

Paddle time: 2-3 hours

Paddle distance: 3 miles

Skill level: Beginner to

Intermediate, some open waters with SW exposure.

Cautions: Be aware of tidal currents. Waves 1 foot or higher in strong SW winds around Hambleton Island. Check local weather for wind direction and speed.

From boat ramp head west out of harbor and then head south (left). There are several coves to explore along the way, but the main channel is marked with red and green channel markers. Follow these to the mouth of San Domingo Creek. At the red channel marker #4, look to your right to locate Hambleton Island. Paddle around Hambleton Island and retrace your path to the put-in.

Attractions:

Note the several colonial homes along the shoreline of San Domingo Creek. At the #4 channel marker, explore the left shoreline (east) to see submerged grasses if the water clarity allows. These underwater grasses provide habitat and food for many aquatic organisms. Some of the grasses have been restored to the area through a University of Maryland research project. Make your way back across San Domingo Creek to Hambleton Island. These islands were once one island, but are now eroding and have split. Again look for underwater grasses in the shallows around the islands and visit the small sandy beach on the west side at low tide.



St. Michaels Harbor and Miles River

3

Directions to launch site:

From Route 33 in St. Michaels take E. Chew Avenue and proceed 2 blocks to harbor on left. There are two boat ramps in the harbor. Hard put-in.

Paddling Directions:

Paddle time: 2 + hours

Paddle distance: 3 miles

Skill level: Intermediate to difficult, open waters with NW to SW exposure.

Cautions: Be aware of tidal currents. Waves 1-2 feet or higher in strong winds. Return trip can be against SW winds, especially in summer. Check local weather for wind direction and speed. Motorized boat traffic can be high during the summer.

From boat ramp head west (right). Before exiting the harbor, you may want to tour around to view the various businesses, restaurants and inns from the water. From the harbor head north (right) into the Miles River. Turn east (right) and follow developed southern shoreline for 1.25 miles to Spencer Creek to the SE (right). Explore the creek and retrace your path to the harbor and boat ramp.



Attractions:

St. Michaels harbor has many attractions to be viewed from the water. Once out in the Miles River, watch watermen fish for crabs and clams. The embayment's eastern shoreline hosts farm fields buffered by small red cedars and other trees and grasses. Birdlife you are likely to encounter include Osprey, Great Blue Heron, Eagles, and Swans. You may also encounter turtles and muskrats.

(A)Oak Creek (B)Newcomb Creek

Directions to launch sites for A & B:

From St. Michaels take Route 33 toward Easton to the Oak Creek Bridge. Just before the bridge, turn right on Station Road and turn left into the

parking lot. Boat ramp launch is at the end of parking lot.

Hard put-in.

4



A. Oak Creek

Paddling Directions:

Paddle time: 1 hour

Paddle distance: 2 miles

Skill level: Beginner to intermediate, easy paddle, protected waters.

Cautions: Be aware of tidal currents.

From boat ramp head south (right and away from bridge on your left) and stay to the right at fork in creek. The Oaks, a long-time Eastern Shore Inn, is located 0.7 miles from boat ramp up the right fork of Oak Creek. Paddle back along the right fork and head SE along the left fork. Return via the eastern shoreline to boat ramp.



Attractions:

The shoreline of Oak Creek is lined by many older Talbot County homes and estates. Shoreline is a mix of rip-rap (stone breakwater) and wooded edges. The calm waters provide excellent viewing of Osprey fishing for their dinner. You can see resident Canada Geese nests and Great Blue Herons wading in the shallows. Blue Crab fishing boats and clamming boats operate from the moor.

B. Miles River & Newcomb Creek

Paddling Directions:

Paddle time: 1.5-2 hours

Paddle distance: 2.5 miles

Skill level: Intermediate to difficult, open waters with NW to SW exposure.

Cautions: Be aware of tidal currents. Waves 1-2 feet or higher in strong winds. Return trip can be against SW winds, especially in summer. Check local weather for wind direction and speed. From boat ramp head north (left) and pass under Oak Creek Bridge. Stay on the eastern shoreline (right) for about 0.5 miles and enter Newcomb Creek. There is an island at the mouth of the creek and a shallow area on the N side of the opening. Follow creek to right along the developed shoreline. The creek ends in a pond area with a fringing marsh dominated by salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) and marsh elder (*Iva frutescens*). Retrace your path to boat ramp.

Attractions:

Watermen work on the Miles River, fishing for clams and crabs. During colder months, Sea Ducks (Bufflehead, Old Squaw, Canvasbacks) float in the open waters of the Miles. During the summer you may see log canoes, skipjacks, sailboats, and other vessels in the river.



ST. MICHAELS WATER TRAIL

There are four suggested paddling routes around and near St. Michaels; San Domingo Creek, Oak Creek, Miles River and Leadenham Creek. The trails are not marked and demand a certain level of skill and caution. Paddlers should be aware of the weather forecast, wind direction, wind speed, tides, and water temperature before undertaking any of the trails. The sights you see and experiences you may enjoy vary depending on the season.

Neavitt Landing to Leadenham Creek

Date: _____

Name: _____

Boated With: _____

Put In: _____

Take Out: _____

Distance Traveled: _____

Total Time: _____

Temperature: _____

Weather: _____

Wind: _____

Water Temp: _____

Items of Note: _____

Next Time I'll... _____

San Domingo Creek to Hambleton Island

Date: _____

Name: _____

Boated With: _____

Put In: _____

Take Out: _____

Distance Traveled: _____

Total Time: _____

Temperature: _____

Weather: _____

Wind: _____

Water Temp: _____

Items of Note: _____

Next Time I'll... _____

(A) Oak Creek (B) Newcomb Creek

Date: _____

Name: _____

Boated With: _____

Put In: _____

Take Out: _____

Distance Traveled: _____

Total Time: _____

Temperature: _____

Weather: _____

Wind: _____

Water Temp: _____

Items of Note: _____

Next Time I'll... _____

St. Michaels Harbor & Miles River

Date: _____

Name: _____

Boated With: _____

Put In: _____

Take Out: _____

Distance Traveled: _____

Total Time: _____

Temperature: _____

Weather: _____

Wind: _____

Water Temp: _____

Items of Note: _____

Next Time I'll... _____

Paddling and Boating Safety

- Always wear your life jacket when on the water and leave your paddling plans with a friend or loved one.
- Keep your weight centered and as low as possible at all times, especially entering and exiting a boat. When paddling in wind, stay close to shoreline and paddle on the lee-side.
- Be aware of obstacles you may encounter along the trails such as trees or sandbars. Wear protective footwear if you plan to wade.
- Boating safety increases with numbers. Boat with others and carry a spare paddle.
- Beware of stinging sea nettles and jellyfish in the water throughout the summer.
- If your boat flips over, remain calm. Hold onto your paddles and the boat if possible. Try to reach a calm, shallow spot or the shoreline, then empty the boat and re-enter.
- Make sure you are prepared for inclement weather and have the gear that you need. Be alert to possible weather changes. Squalls and thunderstorms are common during the warm months, usually accompanied by temperature drops, increased winds and dark clouds. Get off the water immediately and seek shelter.
- Windy and rainy weather, even in summer, can lead to hypothermia if you are improperly dressed. When it is hot, wear light clothing, sunglasses and a hat. Apply sunblock and drink plenty of fluids.

PFD Regulations

- Boats propelled by oars or paddles (canoes & kayaks) are required to carry one PFD of either Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board regardless of length (MD State Law).
- All motorized craft 16 feet to 65 feet must carry a Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board plus one extra Type IV (MD State Law).
- Children under the age of 7 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD at all times in any boat under 21 feet long.

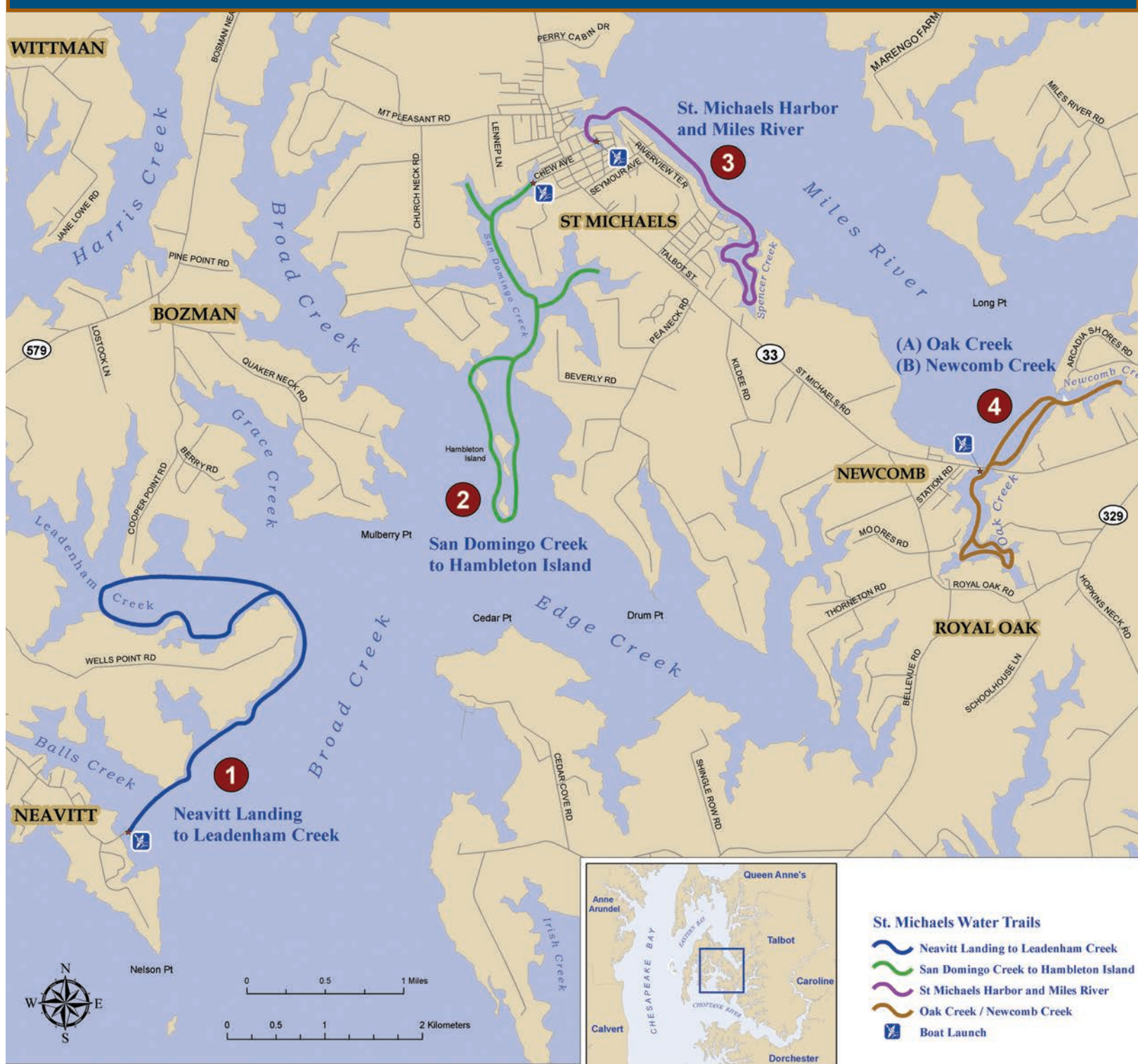
In Case of Emergency

- In case of emergency contact the Park Watch 24-hour Hotline at 1-800-825-PARK (7275) or Talbot County Emergency 911.

County Landing Regulations

Any person using a Talbot County public landing/ramp for launching or removing their vessel from the water shall display a valid Talbot County permit. Parking a boat trailer at a county landing also requires a valid permit. For more information see the Talbot County Parks & Recreation landings information at www.talbotcountymd.gov.

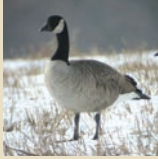
THE ST. MICHAELS WATER TRAIL



Birds of the Water Trail

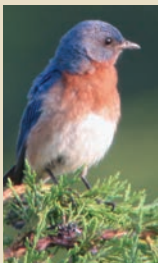
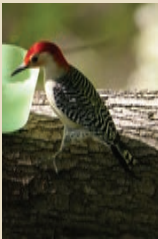
Land, water, sky – all three provide opportunities for viewing Chesapeake bird life. Windy weather should not detract from Water Trail birding because even a relaxing paddle along a sheltered shoreline can bring you close to many beautiful species. This bird list should help you home in on the species you are most likely to see whatever the season and wherever you chose to go on the St. Michaels Water Trail. How many did you see on *your* trip?

Water's edge and sky above:



- ☐ Canada Goose (migratory populations in winter, non-migratory in summer)
- ☐ Mute Swan (graceful arched back, orange bill; can be aggressive; not a native species)
- ☐ Mallard (most common duck; males have green head and white neck ring; quacks)
- ☐ Great Blue Heron (long-legged sovereign of the Chesapeake)
- ☐ Turkey Vulture (tilting glide with wings curved up above horizontal)
- ☐ Black Vulture (smaller and flaps more than Turkey Vulture, white patch near wing tip)
- ☐ Bald Eagle (birds older than 5 years have white head and tail; wings horizontal in flight)
- ☐ Red-tailed Hawk (call a wild descending scream; unbanded tail is red above)
- ☐ Killdeer (common shorebird whose raucous call says its name)
- ☐ Herring Gull (breeds on Poplar Island, frequents shores and harbors all year)
- ☐ Great Black-backed Gull (larger than Herring Gull; often on buoys in open water)
- ☐ Forster's Tern (black cap, forked tail, wings frosty white above; often dives in shallows)

Landlubbers:



- ☐ Mourning Dove (brown, with pointed tail and wings that whistle on takeoff)
- ☐ Red-bellied Woodpecker (extensive red on head, black-and-white "ladder back")
- ☐ Downy Woodpecker (small with bark-sticker of a bill; males with red topknot)
- ☐ Northern Flicker (larger than a Robin; often seen on ground; black "V" on chest)
- ☐ Blue Jay (our raucous blue bird with a crest and face edged in black)
- ☐ American Crow (familiar "caw" call; Fish Crow sounds like it has a bad cold)
- ☐ Carolina Chickadee (small, with black bib and crown; "dee-dee" call)
- ☐ Tufted Titmouse (noisy but friendly little crested gray bird; associated with chickadees)
- ☐ White-breasted Nuthatch ("toy horn" call; goes down tree trunks head-first)
- ☐ Carolina Wren (brown with white eye stripe, cocked tail; "tea-kettle" call)
- ☐ Eastern Bluebird (blue in good light; reddish upper breast; smaller than Robin)
- ☐ American Robin (the familiar red-breast of lawn and garden)
- ☐ Northern Mockingbird (gray, wings flash white; superb mimic, repeats phrases 3 times)
- ☐ European Starling (familiar introduced species; winter birds have small spots)
- ☐ Common Grackle (iridescent squawking blackbird; flies with long tail in a "V")
- ☐ Song Sparrow (streaks and a central "stickpin" spot on breast; cheerful song)
- ☐ Swamp Sparrow (fat dark sparrow of wetlands; throat whitish, brown cap)
- ☐ Northern Cardinal (crested; males red with black face, females duller)
- ☐ House Finch (rosy-looking finch of homes and feeders; introduced from the West)
- ☐ American Goldfinch ("wild canary" yellow spring, summer; "per-chick-oree" call)
- ☐ House Sparrow (common in villages; males have black bib; European origin)

Wildlife Viewing Ethics

- View wild animals from an appropriate distance. If animals change their behavior when you approach, you are too close.
- Stay clear of nests, dens and rookeries.
- Do not touch or feed wild animals.
- Do not use calls or whistles, or try to rouse animals in any way.
- Limit your stay to minimize stress on the animals.
- Do not allow pets to interfere with wild animals.

Practice Leave No Trace Ethics

Please practice the following stewardship principles of Leave No Trace:

1) Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know your route and the limitations of yourself and your group.
- Carry the proper equipment and clothing.
- Notify someone of the time you intend to return.

2) Recreate Only in Designated Areas

- Use designated launch areas and boat ramps.
- Leave areas and sites cleaner than you found them.
- Keep groups small and avoid trampling on plants and sensitive shoreline areas.
- Protect wildlife and secure all food by storing rations securely.

3) Properly Dispose of All Waste

- Dispose of trash in proper recepticals.
- Do not let trash or other materials blow into the water.
- Keep launch and parking areas free of waste and other debris.

3) Leave What You Find and Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect our natural and cultural heritage - leave rocks, plants, artifacts and trees as you found them.
- Keep noise to a minimum - enjoy the music of nature.
- Respect private property and the privacy of others.

For more information visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website: www.lnt.org or contact them at 1-800-332-4100.

Outfitters

Eastern Shore Adventure Co.
28290 St. Michaels, Rd.
Easton, MD 21601
(410)820-8881
Esadventure.com

Easton Cycle and Sport
723 Goldsborough St.
Easton, MD 21601
(410)822-7433
eastoncycleandsport.com

Lowes Wharf
21651 Loews Wharf Rd.
Sherwood, MD 21665
(410)745-6684
loweswharf.com

Peake Paddle Tours LLC
(410)924-5290
paddletours.com

Tilghman Island Marina
& Rentals
6140 Mariners Ct.
Tilghman Island, MD 21671
(410)886-2500
TilghmanMarina.com