

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Seney

National Wildlife Refuge

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Pileated Woodpecker
© Laura Wong

Visitors may encounter the cry of the loons, statuesque sandhill cranes, nesting bald eagles, playful otters and industrious beaver living on over 95,000 acres of diverse habitats which provide a home to a wide variety of plant and wildlife species.



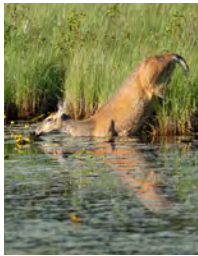
Common Loon,
© Amy Widenhofer

Seney is for Wildlife

Today, the refuge is managed in a gradient from conservation in the eastern portion, restoration in the center and preservation in the western portion, where the Seney Wilderness Area is found.

Conservation

The eastern portion of the refuge contains a system of man-made pools managed using a system of spillways, water control structures and dikes. These pools impound nearly 5,000 acres of open water. This portion of the refuge is the most familiar to refuge guests. Visitors delight at the sight of trumpeter swans nesting and raising their young. The open water provides an ideal place for osprey to fish. The lack of boat traffic and deliberate water management make the pool system one of the most productive breeding grounds for common loons in the Midwest.



White-tailed Deer,
© Laura Wong

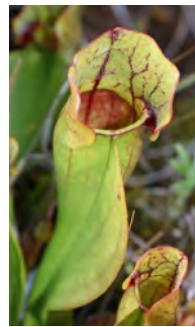
Restoration

Restoration efforts are concentrated in the central portion of the refuge. The scars of logging operations and failed attempts at farming over a century ago can still be seen on the landscape. In an attempt to restore historic land cover, a flurry of management activities is taking place. Removing dikes and plugging ditches, meant to drain wetlands for farming or to produce additional pools, restores overland water flow to drained wetlands.



Black-backed Woodpecker,
© John Hysell

Old farm fields are left alone to return to deciduous forest. Forest management is used in conjunction with prescribed fires to produce historical conditions in mixed-pine forests. This management will hopefully equate to improved habitat for birds such as black-backed woodpecker, spruce grouse and whip-poor-will.



Purple Pitcher Plant,
D. Gardner/USFWS

General Management Activities

Watching Wildlife



Lighthouse Island,
Huron National Wildlife Refuge
Sara Giles/USFWS



Leopard Frog,
Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge
Sara Giles/USFWS

Preservation

The western portion of the refuge boasts the Seney Wilderness Area and the Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark. This unique ecosystem complex of patterned peatland punctuated with pine islands has been minimally altered and will be preserved in this condition. Carnivorous plants, such as the purple pitcher plant and sundew, and animals such as bobcat, fisher, and many other species can be found living on these lands.

Throughout the refuge, fire, river and wetland restoration, mowing, invasive species management and forest management are used, where appropriate, to maintain diverse wildlife habitats.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge continues to be a place of excitement and wonder where wildlife comes first. It is a place where management decisions are made in the best interest of wildlife and their habitats and people are encouraged to explore and learn about the natural world.

Satellite Lands

Seney National Wildlife Refuge also manages lands far from the main office. Information about the following refuges can be obtained from the Seney Headquarters or on their respective web sites:

- Huron National Wildlife Refuge– Lake Superior, established in 1905;
- Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge – Lake Michigan, established in 1947;
- Kirtland’s Warbler Wildlife Management Area, established in 1980;
- Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge – Lake Huron, established in 1983.

Visitor Center

Seney is for People, Too!

The Visitor Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, Tuesday thru Saturday, from May 15 to October 20 (closed federal holidays). Exhibits include touch table, track pit, and a friendly staff will help you plan your visit.

Marshland Wildlife Drive

A seven-mile, one-way, auto tour route takes visitors through wetlands and forests. Three observation decks and numerous pools make this drive a great wildlife watching opportunity. The tour route does not accommodate large recreational vehicles.

Nature Trails



American Bittern
© Teressa McGill

Northern Hardwoods Trails

The Pine Ridge Nature Trail starts at the Visitor Center. This 1.4-mile loop takes visitors through a variety of habitats where sightings of songbirds and beavers are common. Near the midpoint of the trail you may walk the 0.5-mile Wigwam Connector Trail which links to the 0.5-mile South Show Pool Loop. The Civilian Conservation Corps built the Wigwams in the late 1930s as a fishing access point and rest area for visitors. A primitive restroom is available seasonally.

Ten miles of trails are open to hiking spring, summer and fall. Winter months find the trails groomed and ready to welcome cross-country skiers.

Winter Activities

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed nearly anywhere on the refuge. Ice fishing is available from January 1 to February 28 on all refuge pools. See the fishing brochure for more information.

Backcountry



© James McCommons

Many miles of unpaved roads are available for hiking and biking through the backcountry. For those who seek wildlife and solitude, these roads are for you. Certain roads may be closed for management or emergency purposes. Watch for signs concerning closed areas.

Paddling



© Jan Barrett

Nature Programs & School Groups

Enjoy a day of paddling along the Manistique River, which flows through the southern part of the refuge. Outfitters are located in Germfask. Use is limited to daylight hours with no overnight camping allowed. No boats are permitted on refuge pools or marshes.

Programs and special events are offered throughout the year. Check the refuge website for a calendar of events. Call to schedule a field trip.

Wilderness Area

The 25,150-acre Seney Wilderness Area is found in the western portion of the refuge. Open to day use only, this truly wild place is primarily wetland and challenging to access.

Fishing



A girl with fish,
© Jan Barrett

Anglers are welcome to fish along the 3.5 mile Fishing Loop, Show Pools, C-3 Pool and various rivers and streams. Please consult the fishing brochure for specific details. Fish species found on the refuge include northern pike, yellow perch, brown bullhead, bluegill, pumpkinseed, brown and brook trout, walleye and smallmouth bass. To protect the trumpeter swan and common loon, lead sinkers may not be used on the refuge. A state fishing license is required.

Hunting

Ruffed grouse, American woodcock, snipe, snowshoe hare, white-tailed deer and black bear may be hunted during some state seasons. Please see the hunting brochure for current regulations.

Whitefish Point Unit

Located 11 miles north of Paradise on the shore of Lake Superior, this unit is over 50 acres in size and a stop-over for birds migrating to and from Canada. Its primary natural features are an accessible boardwalk, gravel beaches, sandy beach dunes and stunted jack pine dominated forest.



Piping Plover,
© Sierra Utych

Gathering Opportunities and Special

Rules Visitors may gather wild edibles, pine boughs, white-tailed deer antlers and seeds with the following stipulations.

- Plant products and shed antlers are for personal use only and cannot be sold or traded.
- Harvesting of threatened, endangered or invasive species is prohibited.
- Digging up plants is prohibited.
- Damaging other vegetation while harvesting is prohibited.
- Planting or cultivating plants for harvest is prohibited.
- Use of trained animals, other than leashed dogs, to assist in shed or mushroom hunting is not permitted.
- Evergreen boughs must be harvested within 50 feet of a road. Trees must be 15 feet tall and harvested within 6 feet of the ground. Hand saws or loppers permitted. Powered cutting tools are prohibited. Cut boughs at trunk.
- Antlers must be natural sheds, the removal of antlers that have been sawed or still attached to a skull is prohibited.
- The collection of evergreen boughs and antler sheds on the Whitefish Point Unit are prohibited.
- Other than pine boughs, cutting live plants for decorative purposes is prohibited.

Harvest Limits

- Seeds and leaves - 1 cup (8oz) combined total per day per person.
- Pine cones - 1 gallon per day per person.
- Mushrooms and wild berries - 5 pounds per day per person. Only 50% of an individual chaga, that can be reached from the ground, can be harvested.
- Evergreen boughs - 2 – 50 gallon bags (the boughs may stick out of the bag) per person per day from September to April.
- Antlers - 2 antlers per person per day.



Why We Offer Gathering?

The harvest of wild edibles, pine boughs, and deer antlers are traditional outdoor activities that foster a connection to the refuge and nature. In addition, over time the harvest of pine boughs may help with the refuge's fire management goals. Refuge roads are used as fire breaks. By focusing on the low branches we reduce ladder fuels. These are branches near the ground that may ignite allowing fire to climb into the treetops. This makes fires harder to manage.

We encourage local people to harvest small quantities of seeds to plant within their yards. Seeds from Seney will do best near the refuge and expand habitat for local wildlife, particularly our native insects.

Monarch Caterpillar
© Laura Wong

Male Buffelhead
© Laura Wong



Please Obey These Special Rules

- Daylight use only.
- Dogs allowed on a leash*.
- No camping or overnight parking*.
- Off-road vehicles are prohibited.
- Open fires are prohibited*.
- Boats, canoes or other flotation devices are not permitted on refuge pools.
- Swimming or wading is not permitted in pools.
- Drones are prohibited.
- Do not feed the wildlife.

*Hunting exceptions apply