

Ownership

The majority of the WCWA is owned by Wood County and leased to the Department of Natural Resources. In addition to these leased lands, 4,000 acres of County Forest Lands are located within the WCWA property boundary. Management responsibilities for these lands are retained by the county.



Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)

Location

Located west of Babcock, WCWA is about two hours driving time north from Madison. It is 25 miles southwest of Wisconsin Rapids, and 35 miles north of Mauston.

Wood County Wildlife Area Property Headquarters

Located one mile west of Babcock on Highway X. For further information write or call:

Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit
1715 County Hwy. X, P.O. Box 156
Babcock, WI 54413
715-884-2437



American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)

Website

dnr.wi.gov

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Wood County Wildlife Area



- Wood County Wildlife Area is one of three adjoining State Wildlife Areas which comprise the Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit. These

properties represent the largest block of state-managed wildlife lands in Wisconsin, totaling nearly 90,000 acres.

- Wood County Wildlife Area spans 19,200 acres and is located in southwest Wood County.
- Wood County is managed to sustain wildlife populations and natural communities, and to provide a range of outdoor recreational uses.



American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)

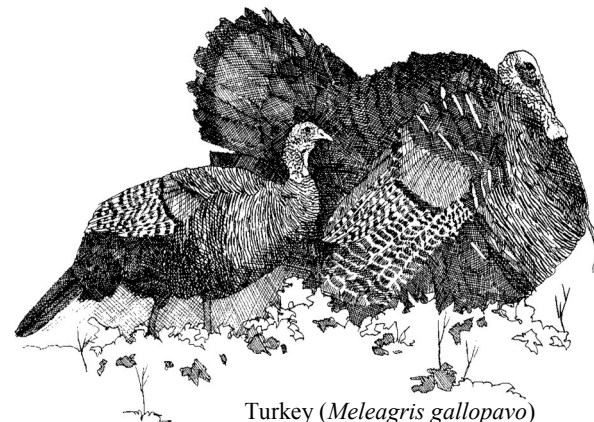
Yesterday

Wood County Wildlife Area (WCWA) lies within the bed of old Glacial Lake Wisconsin, an area characterized by large expanses of wetlands interspersed with forested uplands, in central Wisconsin.

Native societies existed in the region for thousands of years before European settlers arrived in the mid-1800s. In the late 1800s, settlers logged the large white and red pine that dominated the uplands and burned to create openings for farming. By the early 1900s, about 60 miles of ditches were constructed in Remington Township to make farming in the area possible. However, unpredictable growing seasons accompanied by poor soils, and high water tables made farming nearly impossible. During the late 1930s and early 1940s much of the land in this area had been deserted, and after becoming tax delinquent, reverted to county ownership. Repeated wildfires maintained fields and openings as grasslands. Prairie chickens flourished and Wood County became famous for superb prairie chicken hunting.

In 1939, the State Conservation Department negotiated a long-term lease with Wood County. The lease transferred management responsibility to the Department for which the county received an annual lease payment.

By the early 1940s advancing forest and shrub growth displaced prairie openings and prairie chicken, but created excellent habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. Numerous ditch plugs were installed and several upland areas were reforested with the help of The Civilian Conservation Corps. Sharp-tails prospered until the 1960s when forest growth displaced them in favor of the more traditional woodland species, the ruffed grouse. Flowages, which remain important for wildlife habitat and water level control, were constructed during the 1950s and 60s.



Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

Today

The eastern two-thirds of the property is largely forested upland mixed with small marshes. Aspen, oak, lowland brush and sedges are the predominant vegetation types here. Red, white, and jack pine are also found on the area. In contrast, the western one-third of the property is open and almost treeless as it is dominated by wetlands. Flowages provide habitat for waterfowl, aquatic mammals, and other wildlife. Most flowages are shallow (less than three feet deep) and therefore unsuitable for game or pan fish. The habitat diversity on WCWA is conducive to a variety of wildlife. Principal game species include white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, woodcock, squirrels, rabbits, ducks and geese. Muskrats, beaver, mink, otters and coyotes are the primary fur-bearers. Numerous other protected species attracted to the area include whooping cranes, sandhill cranes, great blue herons, trumpeter swans, eagles, hawks, and owls.

Current management focuses on:

Forests: Aspen, oak, pine, and mixed forest are the primary forest types on WCWA. Maintaining a good mix of forest types and age classes across the landscape is an important forest management objective. This is achieved primarily by commercial timber sales and non-commercial timber harvests. Special emphasis is placed on maintaining a high proportion of young forest to benefit species such as ruffed grouse, woodcock, deer, and many non-game species (see the Ruffed Grouse Management Areas on the map).

Another important forest management activity is maintaining openings. Forest openings are maintained primarily with mechanical methods and provide habitat for species such as woodcock, turkeys, and ruffed grouse.

Wetlands: Flowages are managed to provide critical habitat for migrating and resident wildlife populations. They are managed using water level manipulation, burning, and mechanical disturbance to maintain productivity. Flowages are drawn down periodically to encourage wetland plants which benefit waterfowl and other species. Species which benefit from this management include mallards, wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, blue-winged teal, Canada geese, and many non-game species. A 250-acre closed area is associated with the easternmost pool of the Ball Road Flowages. The pool is closed to entry from Sept 1 through Dec 31 except during regular gun and muzzle-loader deer seasons to provide a resting area for migratory birds. Trapping is allowed after Dec 31 through the end of the trapping season.



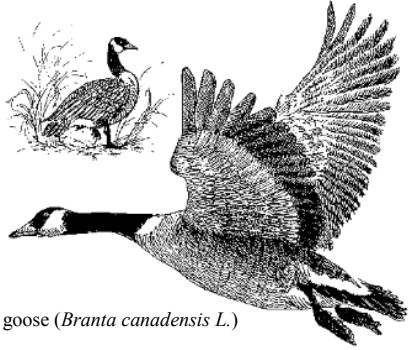
Wisconsin Department
of Natural Resources
PUB-WM-89 2014

Public Use

WCWA is attractive to hunters and trappers because of its remote landscape and abundant wildlife populations. In addition to hunting, the size and diversity of the property provides opportunities for hiking, berry picking, bird-watching and observing wildlife in a natural setting. Other public uses include photography and snowshoeing. Canoes and boats without motors are allowed.

Primitive camping is permitted at two designated sites, free of charge during the spring turkey seasons and Sept 1 through Dec 31. Campers are required to self-register. Both WCWA camp sites have pit toilets. Campers must bring their own water and **all garbage must be removed from the campgrounds.**

All vehicular travel on interior access roads and dikes is prohibited. ATVs are not allowed on the WCWA.



Canada goose (*Branta canadensis L.*)

Funding

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is able to protect the outstanding natural communities and wildlife habitat at Wood County while providing hunting and recreation opportunities, largely

because of hunting license sales and Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds. The PR funds are generated from the federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition. It is important to recognize that over three-fourths of the operating budget on Wood County comes from these two sources, and ultimately from those who purchase hunting licenses and hunting equipment.



Federal Aid Project
funded by your purchase of
hunting equipment

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