

The importance of wetlands

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. Wetlands capture and store large amounts of the sun's energy which is used to maintain animal and plant life.

Flood control

Wetlands serve as temporary storage during floods, reducing the potential for destruction and erosion.

Animal habitat

When you think of wetlands, you usually think of ducks, muskrats, and beaver. These animals, along with many other kinds of wildlife, are absolutely dependent on this habitat. Many fish species require shallow water for breeding and feeding.

Recreation and Education

Wetlands are living museums filled with aquatic plants and wildlife you can observe, study, and enjoy. A short trail leads from the parking area to the waterfowl observation deck.

Enjoy your visit!

Directions to Dyar Pasture

From Greensboro, take Highway 278 west for eight miles. Turn right onto Greshamville Road and go one mile to Greshamville. Turn right onto Copeland Road and go two miles. Cross Greenbriar Creek concrete bridge and go 1/8 mile and turn right on a dirt road through a pasture to the Dyar Pasture Waterfowl Conservation Area.

For more information:

Oconee Ranger District
1199 Madison Road
Eatonton, GA 31024
(706) 485-7110

Forest Supervisor's Office
1755 Cleveland Highway
Gainesville, GA 30501
(770) 297-3000

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Dyar Pasture

a special place for wildlife



Oconee National Forest

Forest
Service



Southern
Region

United States Department of Agriculture
in cooperation with
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
and Ducks Unlimited M.A.R.S.H. Program

Welcome to

Dyar Pasture ... *a special place for wildlife*

This 60-acre freshwater wetland is a waterfowl conservation project made possible through cooperative efforts of the USDA Forest Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Power Company, and Ducks Unlimited's MARSH Program.

The area was once a bottomland hardwood forest along the Oconee River. Flooding of Lake Oconee killed the trees and the rising and falling lake level created a large mud flat. A dike and water control structure were installed so valuable marsh habitat could be created.

Variety -- the spice of life

These lands and wetlands are home to an amazing variety of birds, plants, and animals. During your visit watch for great blue herons and osprey, muskrat and beaver. Many of the birds and animals you see depend entirely on wetlands for survival.

Sorting it out

Ducks and geese can be sorted by their feeding habits. Some dabble, some dive, and some graze.

Dabblers, such as mallards, tip tail-up in the water to feed on aquatic plants and animals on or near the bottom. Their flattened bills strain water so food can be eaten.

Divers, like mergansers, are built for their underwater maneuvers. They are aided by having short legs placed farther back on their bodies than those of dabbling ducks. Divers' long, narrow bills and toothed plates make it easy to grasp slippery fish.

Geese and swans are grazers. Geese eat tender grass and sprouts of grain found on land. Their sharp bills can shear off tough vegetation.

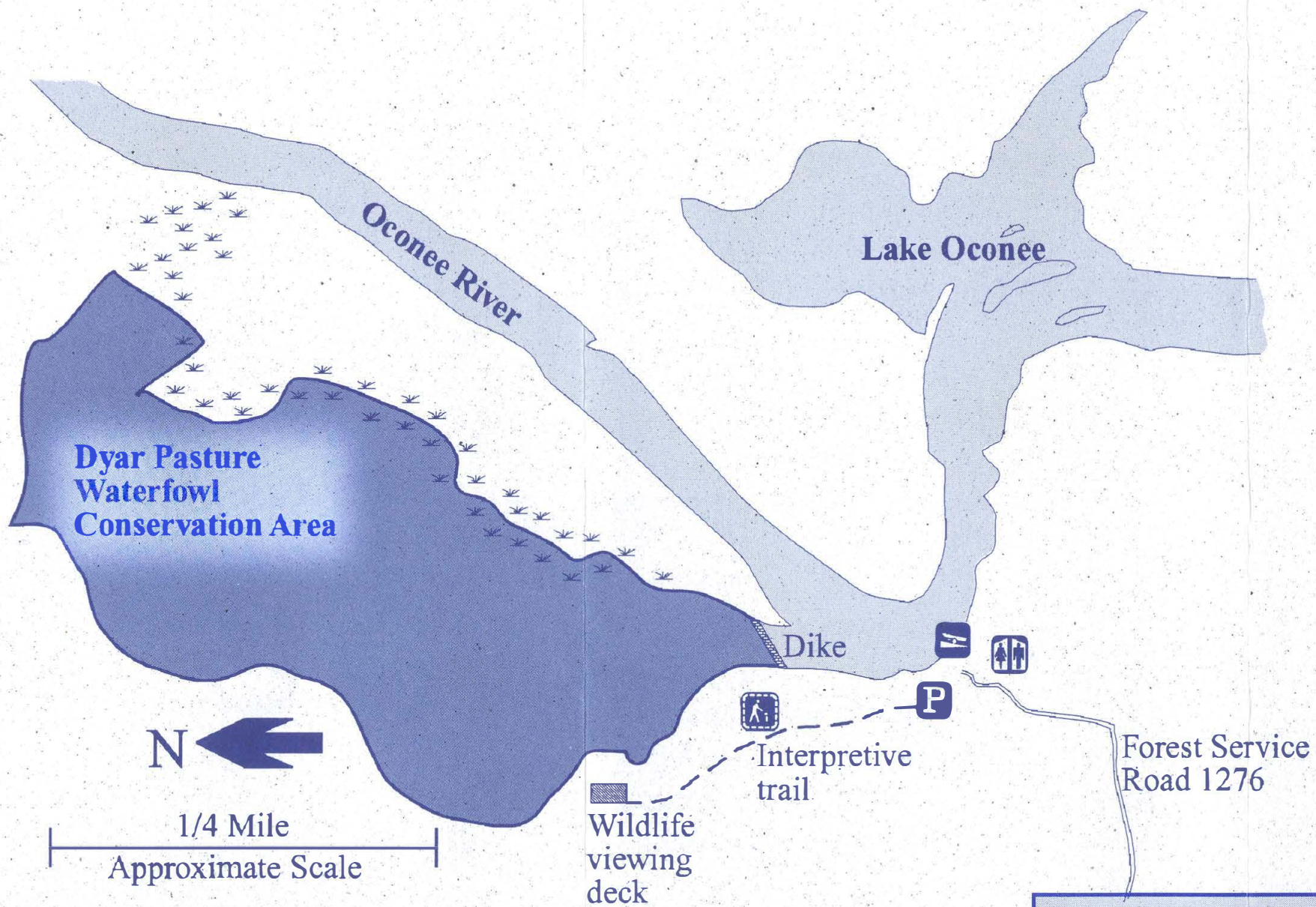
Wading birds use different methods to catch prey. The great blue heron stands motionless in the water until its dinner of fish, frog, or snake comes by. Some spread their wings to lure prey into the shade before grabbing them with their spear-like bills.

Why do ducks waddle?

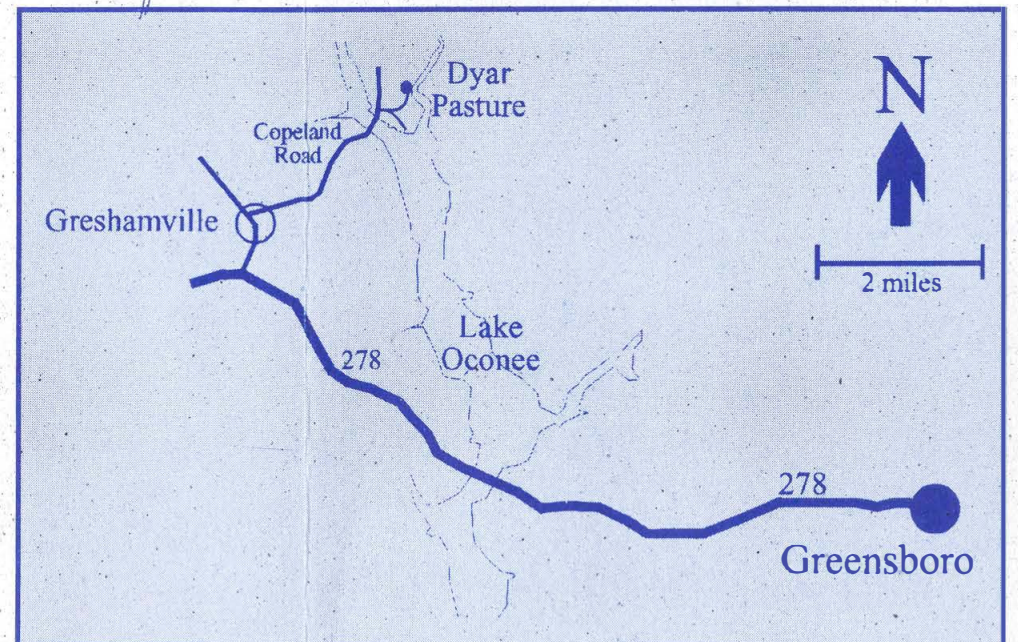
The position of a duck's legs varies according to species. Divers' legs are placed well to the rear which impedes walking on land. Some ducks are so handicapped in walking they seldom leave the water.

Grazers, such as geese and swans, have legs centered under their body, making it easier to travel by land.





Dyar Pasture Waterfowl Area



Freshwater Wetlands

Wetlands are areas where water is a major habitat component--a combination of shallow water and soggy soil. Wetlands are transitional zones between terrestrial and aquatic environments. They have characteristics of both and the richest biological diversity of any ecosystem.

Functions of a Wetland

Groundwater recharge
Nutrient retention and removal
Flood storage
Erosion control
Sediment trapping
Water quality
Wildlife habitat
Food chain support
Recreation

Dyar Pasture's diverse habitat is home to many different animals and plants. How many can you identify?

Waterfowl

- Wood Duck
- Mallard
- Green Winged Teal
- Ring Necked Duck
- Canada Goose
- Black Duck
- Pintail
- Gadwall

Wading Birds

- Great Blue Heron
- Green Backed Heron
- Great Egret
- Yellow Crowned Night Heron
- White Ibis
- Little Blue Heron
- Louisiana Heron

Other Birds

- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Red-shoulded Hawk
- Marsh Hawk
- Bald Eagle
- Osprey
- Carolina Wren
- Kingfisher
- Killdeer
- Red-winged Blackbird

Wildlife

- Turtles
- Beaver
- Coyote
- Rabbit
- Muskrat
- Raccoon
- Opossum
- Gray Squirrel
- Fox Squirrel
- White-tailed Deer

Plants

- Sweetgum
- Wild Grape
- Poison Ivy
- Smilax
- Cut-Grass
- Virginia Creeper
- Sedges
- Rushes
- Red Maple
- Winged Elm
- Cattails
- Smart Weed
- Sumac
- Button Bush
- Common Persimmon
- Wild Rice
- Loblolly Pine