

Enjoy a Walk at Nisqually Wildlife Refuge!

<http://www.fws.gov/Nisqually/>

NISQUALLY National Wildlife Refuge, on the Nisqually River Delta in southern Puget Sound, was established in 1974 for the protection of migratory birds. Three thousand acres of salt and freshwater marshes, grasslands, riparian, and mixed forest habitats provide resting and nesting areas for migratory waterfowl, songbirds, raptors, and wading birds.

The Refuge has approximately 5.5 miles of walking trails currently open. The one-mile Twin Barns Loop Trail is a fully accessible boardwalk trail with access to the observation platform. Please stay on the trails.

The Refuge presents many wonderful opportunities for photographers. Observation platforms along the trail provide countless possibilities to capture that perfect moment.

Trail Distances and Times

Distances and approximate hiking times are from the visitor parking lot. The times indicated are for steady walking. Add time to account for wildlife and habitat observations.

Trail	Distance	Time
Twin Barns Loop Trail	1 mile loop	30 minutes
To Riparian Forest Overlook	¼ mile one way	10 minutes
To Nisqually Overlook	1 mile round trip	30 minutes
To Twin Barns	½ mile one way	15 minutes
Nisqually Estuary Trail	1 ½ miles round trip	45 minutes
<i>New</i> Estuary Boardwalk Trail	4 miles round trip	2 hours

Hiking Trail Descriptions

Twin Barns Loop Trail

This level, mile-long boardwalk passes through woodlands, grasslands, and freshwater marshes, past the Twin Barns and an observation platform, ending back where it starts at the Visitor Center. There are three spur trails off the main trail: the Riparian Forest Overlook, the Nisqually River Overlook, and the Twin Barns Observation Platform.

To Riparian Forest Overlook

A short trail to an observation deck branches off the east side of the Twin Barns Loop Trail. It curves through a surge plain, where tidal changes cause the Nisqually River to spill into a wooded habitat.

To Nisqually River Overlook

A little under half of a mile around the east side of the Twin Barns Loop Trail, the boardwalk extends for another 150 yards to the river. Here there is an observation deck with a mounted spotting scope for wildlife viewing along the Nisqually River.

The Twin Barns Observation Platform

About half of a mile around the west side of the Twin Barns Loop Trail, a boardwalk spur to the left goes to the Twin Barns Observation Platform. This elevated platform provides excellent views of the freshwater wetlands and the tidal estuary outside the dike. Mounted spotting scopes can assist with viewing wildlife.

Nisqually Estuary Trail

This trail starts just prior to the Nisqually River Overlook and is on top of an earthen dike. The salt water tidal estuary is to the north of the trail and freshwater wetlands are to the south. The trail is flat and easy walking.

New Nisqually Estuary Boardwalk Trail

Wheelchair accessible. Just opened Feb 1st 2011.

Wildlife Observation Tips



When

Early morning, late afternoon, and when the weather clears after a storm are good times to observe wildlife. Spring bird migration usually goes from mid-March through mid-May, and fall migration from September through December. The Refuge is open daily during daylight hours.

Where

Be sure to look in a variety of habitats, along the "edges" between habitats, and remember to look high and low as well as at eye level.

How

You will see more animals if you are QUIET. Be sure to listen for animal calls or songs, or try sitting down along the trail and waiting.

What to Bring

Binoculars or spotting scopes are helpful for observing wildlife, and a good field guide will help you identify what you see. Discovery Packs, which include activities for children in grade levels 3 through 6, and binoculars are available for check-out from the Visitor Center with a valid photo ID. You are always welcome to bring your camera and a lunch to eat along the trail. Don't forget your raincoat.

Plan Your Visit

Hours: Daily Daylight to Dusk

Visitor Center Open Daily 8 am to 4 pm

For more information, contact:

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

100 Brown Farm Road

Olympia, WA 98516

Phone: (360) 753-9467

Fees: \$3 per family

Directions

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge is located 8 miles northeast of Olympia, Washington.

From Interstate 5 northbound, take exit 114. Make a left at the stop sign, go under the highway and make a right into the Refuge. Follow the entrance road to the two public parking lots.