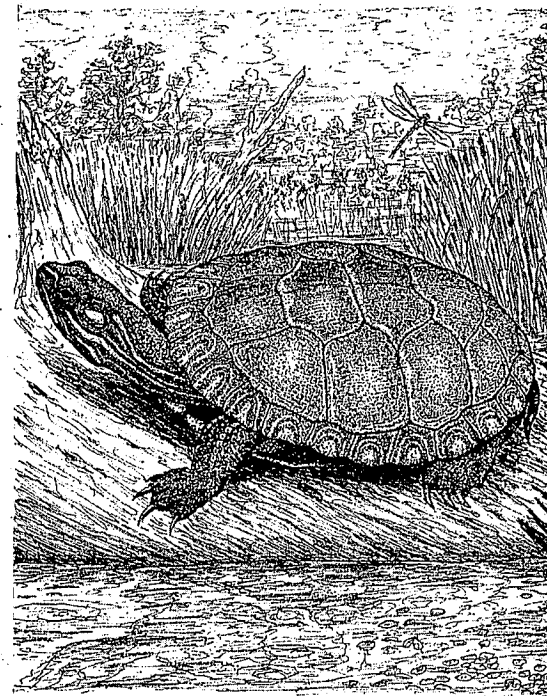


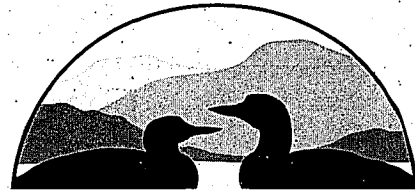
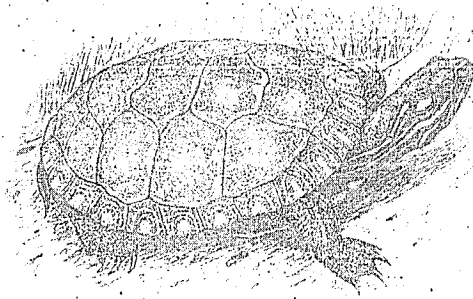
Trail Guide

Abe Emerson Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary

Candia, New Hampshire



New Hampshire Audubon



New Hampshire Audubon is an independent statewide membership organization whose mission is to protect New Hampshire's natural environment for wildlife and for people. It operates nature centers throughout the state that provide educational programs for children and adults. It is also involved in research projects, from developing a plan to preserve the biodiversity of a rapidly growing state to monitoring many of New Hampshire's endangered species. It also protects thousands of acres of wildlife habitat through its sanctuaries program and advocates for sound public policy on environmental issues. For information on New Hampshire Audubon, including membership, volunteering, programs, and publications, contact:

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If you do not want to keep this guide, please return it to the mailbox at the trailhead.

Printed on  recycled paper.

Text, map, and art by Mike Milligan.

About the Sanctuary

Abe Emerson Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary consists of 103 acres that is primarily a wetland complex of red maple swamp and open marsh. This area drains into the Lamprey River, which flows into coastal Great Bay.

The Sanctuary's gentle terrain does not deviate much from its average elevation of 425 feet. The upland areas (which comprise less than 20% of the Sanctuary) are wooded with closed-canopy forest dominated by red maple, oak (mostly northern red oak and white oak) and white pine. The wetland areas range from slow-moving open water to cattail-dominated open marsh to shrub wetlands to red maple-dominated swamp. This diversity of habitat supports a wide variety of aquatic and wetland-associated plants and animals including dragonflies, frogs, salamanders, turtles, ducks, herons, beaver, mink, and muskrat.

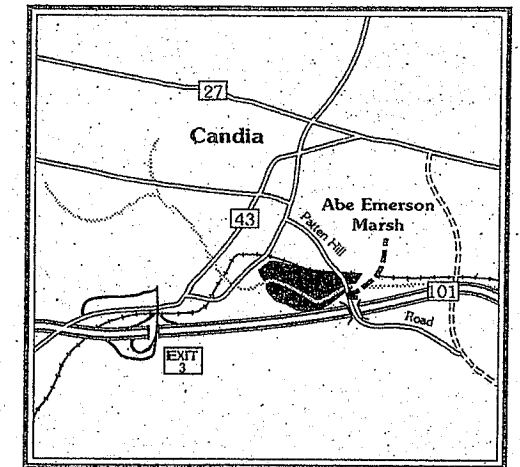
During the early twentieth century, Abraham F. Emerson (1865-1947?), a banker, churchman, and farm manager, utilized much of what is now the Sanctuary to produce hay crops. The stone walls that remain are evidence of the agricultural use of the land in former times. The Emerson family donated the Sanctuary land to New Hampshire Audubon in 1974 and continued to donate additional acreage to the Sanctuary until 1984.



Visitor Information

Abe Emerson Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary is open throughout the year during daylight hours. Although there are trails for your enjoyment, this sanctuary's primary purpose is to provide habitat for wildlife. In order to minimize disturbance to the plants and animals here, we ask that you observe the following rules:

1. Only foot travel is permitted.
2. Smoking, swimming, camping, fires, hunting, and trapping are prohibited.
3. Please keep to the marked trails and do not collect or in any way disturb any plants or animals.
4. Pets must be kept on leash.
5. Please carry out all trash and litter.
6. Be prepared for country walking.



How to get to the Sanctuary

From Manchester, drive east on Route 101 to Exit 3. Turn right on Route 43N for 0.3 mile, then right again at the fork onto Main Street. After 0.7 mile, turn right onto Patten Hill Road. There is a summer parking area on the right after 0.8 mile.

Trail Information

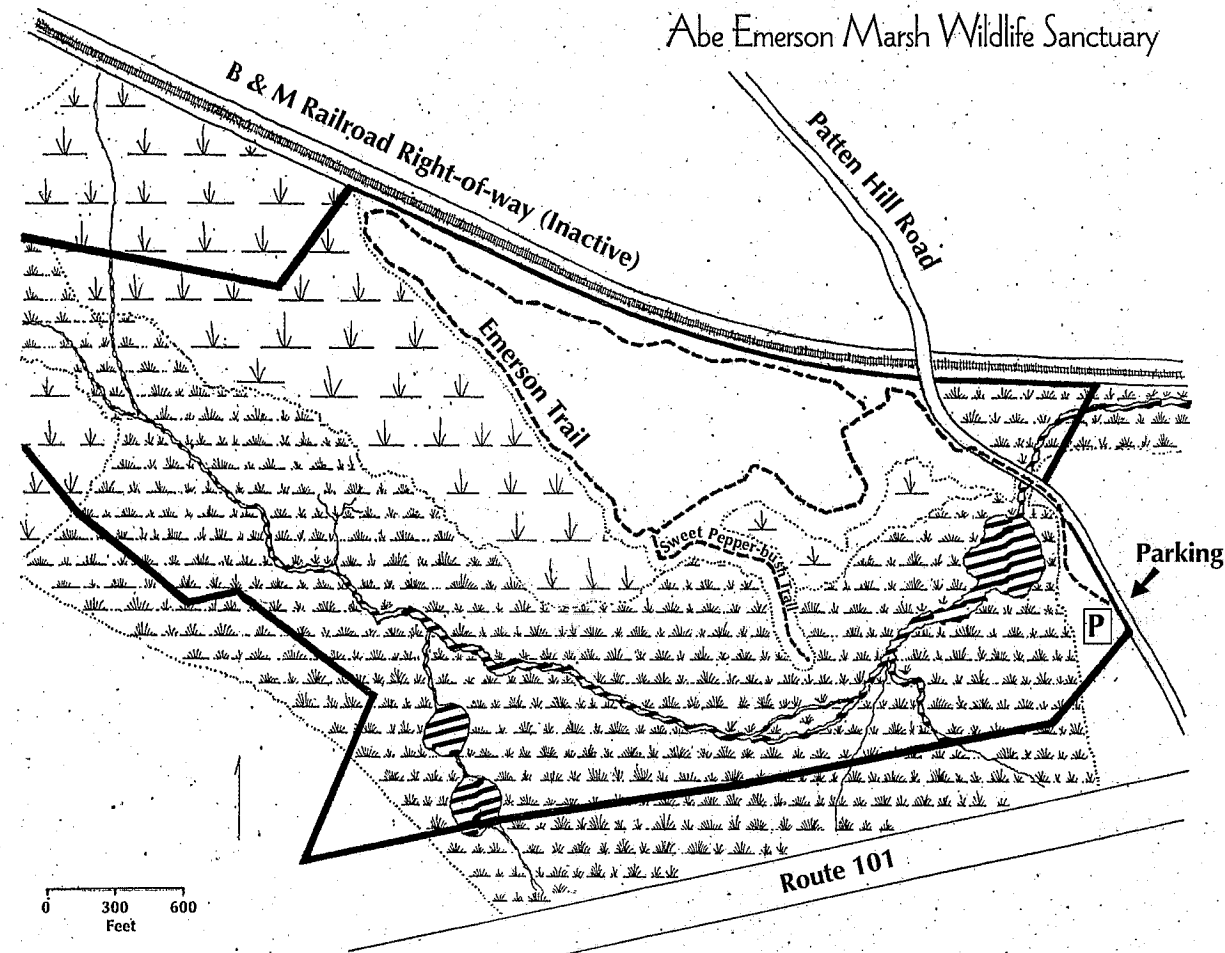
There is approximately one mile of trails in the Sanctuary. The terrain is fairly flat and easy to walk.

The yellow-blazed **Emerson Trail** begins at the parking area and heads northeast between the marsh and Patten Hill Road through a strip of woods that are dominated by white pine, northern red oak, and red maple. These three species constitute the dominant forest type of the upland areas of the Sanctuary. Other tree species include white oak, yellow birch, black birch, white ash, beech, black cherry, and an understory of hemlock saplings and an occasional balsam fir seedling.

After approximately 370 feet, the Emerson Trail joins Patten Hill Road. Please use caution and watch for traffic. Walk northeast up Patten Hill Road to cross the sluggish creek that drains from Abe Emerson Marsh. Look for basking turtles, most likely painted turtles, from the bridge.

After walking up Patten Hill Road for a short distance, turn left (west) into the woods to return to the Emerson Trail. Continue up the trail to a junction, where the trail splits to form a loop. Turning left (west) brings you to one of the Sanctuary's stone walls, which roughly follows the edge of the uplands that border Abe Emerson Marsh. Understory plants to observe include partridgeberry, goldthread, tree club-moss, wintergreen, trailing arbutus, sheep laurel, and dwarf ginseng.

Continue west a short distance from the Emerson Trail junction to the **Sweet Pepper-bush Trail**, a red-blazed spur trail on the left. The Sweet Pepper-bush Trail follows a fairly narrow peninsula, dominated by red maple



and white pine, that juts southward into the marsh. Along this peninsula, shrub swamp habitat merges with the forest, with the sweet pepper-bush, *Clethra alnifolia*, dominant along much of it. Though common further south, sweet pepper-bush is very near the northern edge of its natural range at this location. Other wetland shrubs one may observe at the Sanctuary include maleberry, mountain holly, winterberry holly, alder, wild raisin, and high-bush blueberry. At the peninsula edge, at the

end of the Sweet Pepper-bush Trail, there is a view of the cattail and sedge-dominated Abe Emerson Marsh.

Returning to the Emerson Trail and veering left (west), the trail continues to follow the stone wall that roughly borders the edge of the forest/marsh interface. Very shortly, the Trail and the stone wall turn right to head north. At this point the dominant forest type becomes hemlock, with yellow birch and maple, for a fairly brief section of the trail.

After continuing north, the Emerson Trail turns right to head southeast, following another stone wall that constitutes the Sanctuary's boundary with the inactive B&M railroad right-of-way. Approximately 0.3 mile after the Emerson Trail turns right (southeast), you will reach the Emerson Trail junction. Turn left at the junction (continuing to head generally southeast) to return to Patten Hill Road. Upon reaching the road, turn right (southwest) to retrace your steps and return to the parking area.