

The Audubon Society of New Hampshire is an independent statewide membership organization. It operates nature centers throughout the state that provide educational programs for children and adults. It also protects thousands of acres of wildlife habitat through its sanctuaries program and monitors many of the state's endangered species. For information on the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, membership, programs, and publications, contact:

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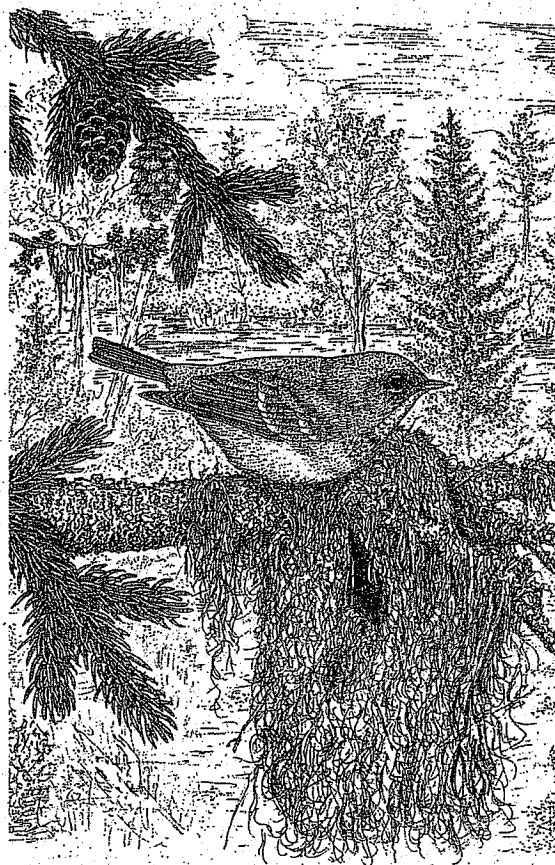
If you do not want to keep this guide, please return it to the mailbox at the trailhead.

Printed on recycled paper.

Text, map, and cover art (of a Northern Parula) by Mike Milligan

Trail Guide

Charles Henry & Mabel Lamborn Watts
 Wildlife Sanctuary
 Effingham, New Hampshire



Audubon Society of New Hampshire

About the Sanctuary

The 380-acre Watts Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on the great Ossipee River within five miles of its source, Ossipee Lake. Though the vast majority of the Sanctuary consists of extensive wetland complexes of the swamp, marsh, and heath fen that is characteristic of the Ossipee drainage, the sandy bank of the river offers "high ground" suitable for a trail. From this trail, one can view and explore the river for approximately one third of a mile.

The original 250 acres of the Sanctuary came to Audubon in 1989 as a gift from Patricia and Charles Watts II, in memory of Charles's parents. Caring for this land for over six decades, the Watts family chose to protect it as wildlife habitat. Charles's father kept records of his bird sightings alongside the river, which included occurrences of Bald Eagle.

In 1996, Audubon obtained an additional 130 acres on the east side of Huntress Road (formerly Swamp Road). From this road, one can take in the panoramic view of the Sanctuary's large heath shrub wetland.

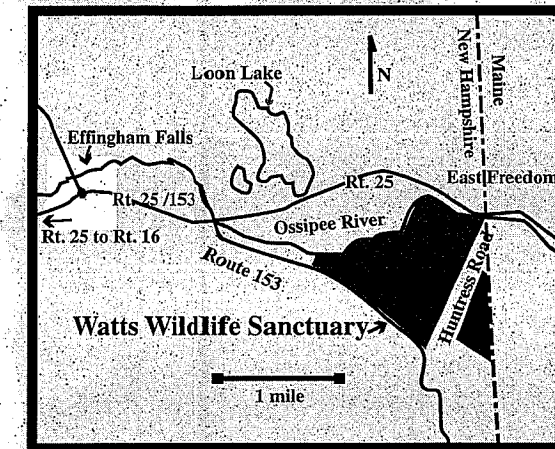
Spring bird highlights at Watts

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Black-billed Cuckoo | Warblers: |
| Eastern Wood-Pewee | Nashville |
| Least Flycatcher | Northern Parula |
| Blue-headed Vireo | Chestnut-sided |
| Warbling Vireo | Magnolia |
| Red-eyed Vireo | Black-throated Blue |
| Purple Martin | Black-throated Green |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | Blackburnian |
| Hermit Thrush | Pine |
| Swamp Sparrow | American Redstart |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak | Ovenbird |
| Baltimore Oriole | Northern Waterthrush |
| | Common Yellowthroat |

Visitor Information

Watts Wildlife Sanctuary is open throughout the year during daylight hours.

1. Only foot travel is permitted in the Sanctuary.
2. Smoking, swimming, camping, fires, hunting, and trapping are prohibited.
3. Please keep to the marked trail and do not collect or in any way disturb any plants or animals in the Sanctuary.
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 Watts Sanctuary

From Center Ossipee:

From the junction of Routes 16 and 25 in Center Ossipee, drive east on Route 25. Continue one mile past where Route 25 joins Route 153, then bear right at the fork onto Route 153 South. Drive just over a mile to the parking area and trailhead, which are on the left just past the fields.

Trail Information

Watts Trail

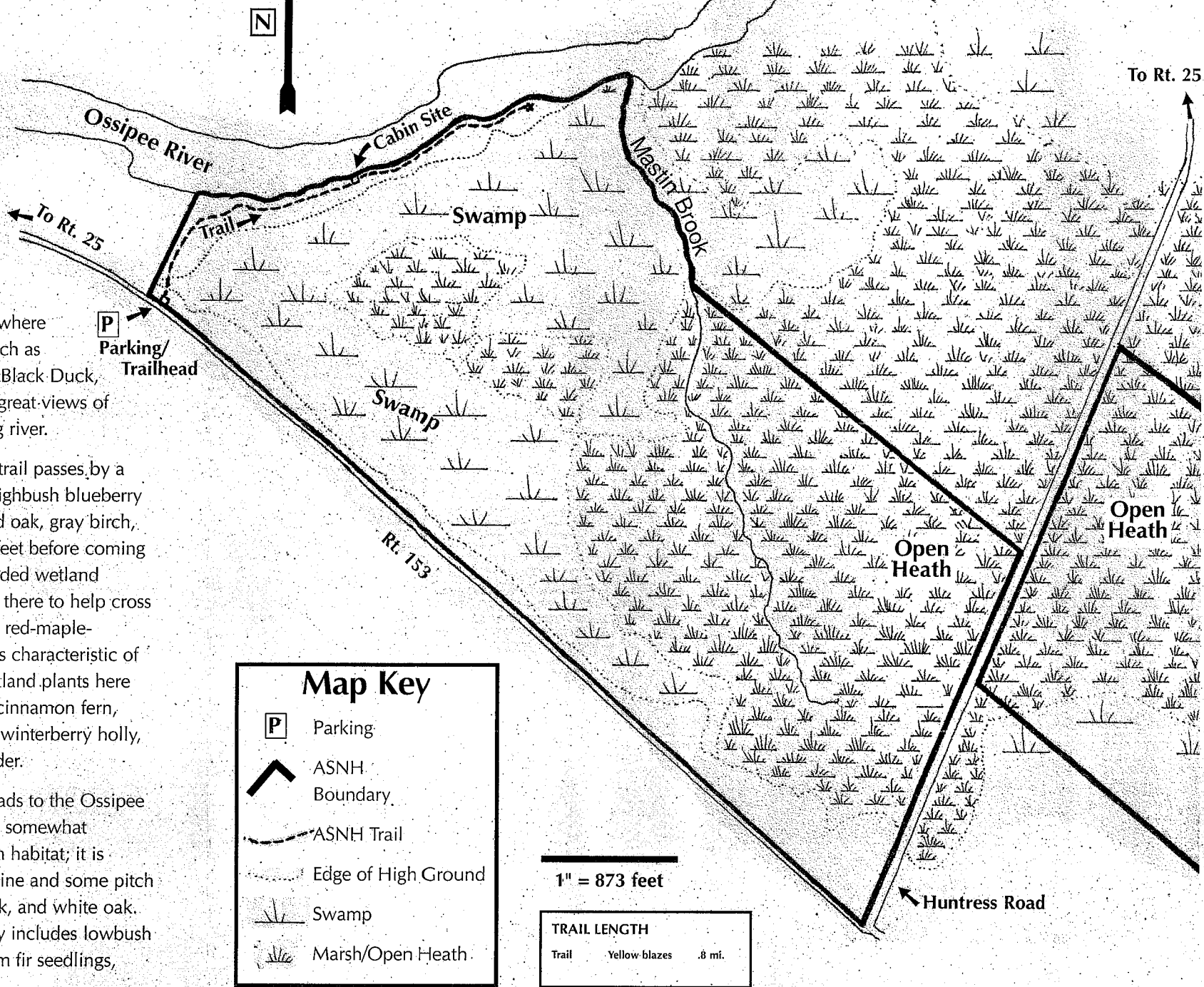
Yellow markers, .8 miles round-trip, approximately 1 hour

Because of the swampy nature of the Sanctuary, there is but one trail, yellow-blazed and approximately 2,332 feet (0.44 mile) in length. Approximately a quarter mile of it follows the sandy bank of the Ossipee River, where one may see water birds such as Osprey, Great Blue Heron, Black Duck, and mergansers within the great views of this impressive, meandering river.

From the parking area, the trail passes by a white pine forest through highbush blueberry and regenerating beech, red oak, gray birch, and hemlock for about 50 feet before coming to a low finger of often flooded wetland habitat. Log footbridges are there to help cross this 80-foot-wide section of red-maple-dominated swamp, which is characteristic of much of the Sanctuary. Wetland plants here include sedges, royal fern, cinnamon fern, marsh fern, meadowsweet, winterberry holly, maleberry, and speckled alder.

The next 610 feet of trail leads to the Ossipee River through sandy habitat somewhat reminiscent of a pine barren habitat; it is dominated by large white pine and some pitch pine and includes red, black, and white oak. The rather sparse understory includes lowbush blueberry, beech and balsam fir seedlings,

Charles Henry & Mabel Lamborn Watts Wildlife Sanctuary



bracken fern, ground cedar, tree clubmoss, wintergreen, goldthread, blackberry, and partridgeberry.

Veer right (east) to stay on the trail when it reaches the river; the to the left (west) leads to private property. The remaining quarter mile of trail follows the bank of the river and provides excellent views of it throughout. The width of this meandering river, as viewed from the trail, varies from about 200 feet to about 450 feet and it often appears much wider because of the open, swampy nature of much of its banks' riparian forest habitat. Besides birds, many other forms of wildlife may be viewed here, such as river otter, beaver, mink, and interesting aquatic insect adults.

The trail along the river is on the "high ground" of sandy riverbank between the river and the red-maple-dominated swamp habitat. The forest along the trail is dominated by hemlock, but also includes red, black, and white oak, white pine, red spruce, balsam fir, and white birch. Understory plants include trailing arbutus, blueberry, and sheep laurel. After about 440 feet along the riverbank section of trail, the remains of an old cabin site are evident. At this place, the bank includes a bank-stabilizing stone wall.

The remaining trail is narrower and more of a path than the preceding section, and it very closely follows the edge of the river's bank. The trail ends in a hemlock grove, the end of the "high ground" before the terrain becomes swampy as it nears Mastin Brook. The brook is a drainage from the Sanctuary's large heath shrub wetland, which is best viewed from Huntress Road.

The trail ends here. To return to the parking area, backtrack on the trail.