

# FISHING BAY WATER TRAIL

## A Wildlife Adventure

### Water Trail Descriptions

Two water trails have been designated within Fishing Bay for experienced paddlers who would like to view wildlife. These trails are not marked or patrolled on a regular basis. This is a wilderness area and you can become lost. Remember, it is your responsibility to have the necessary skills, knowledge and equipment for a safe and environmentally sensitive visit. Make sure you have a map.

Remember as you visit and explore the lands and waterways of Fishing Bay Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a majority of the adjacent properties are privately owned. Please respect the rights of these landowners and do not enter their lands without prior permission.

### Transquaking River Loop Trail

(Length: 5-mile loop; Total approximate paddle time: 3 hours)

Enjoy the scenery but be aware that this trail is subject to high winds and strong currents at times.

The name *Transquaking* is the modern English rendering of a Native American word or phrase. The original meaning is unclear because early colonists spelled it so many different ways. One possible translation is "place of white cedar swamp."

Begin at the Bestpitch boat launch and head south on the Transquaking River (away from the wooden bridge). When you reach the canal, paddle to the right. At the end of the canal, paddle to the left. Going right will take you to open waters on Fishing Bay. This loop trail will bring you to two of the largest wooded islands within Fishing Bay WMA, Guinea and Chance islands. Here is an opportunity to get out of your boat and stretch. With banks rising on average approximately six feet above the water, these islands provide a rare vista across the marsh.

Historically, Guinea and Chance islands were sites of early Native American settlement by the Nause-Waiwash tribe, whose members still visit their ancestral home today. Exposed beach areas along the Transquaking River reveal the remains of oyster middens, where these native peoples discarded shells over hundreds of years.

Experienced paddlers may also want to explore some of the loop trail's side guts, a local term for a creek that intersects a tidal marsh. During a high tide, it may be possible to travel through the marsh to meet the Transquaking River on the other side of the loop (see map). Be sure to study your map and watch out for confusing intersections. Continue on the main waterway and it will carry you back to the boat launch where you began your adventure.

**Directions to Bestpitch boat launch:**  
From the Bay Bridge, take U.S. Route 50 East to Cambridge. Continue east through Cambridge to the Bucktown Road exit (also airport exit), on the right. Follow Bucktown Road south, approximately six miles to Bestpitch Ferry Road. Turn left onto Bestpitch Ferry Road and continue for approximately four miles to Bestpitch. Just before crossing the bridge at the Transquaking River turn right onto the Fishing Bay WMA boat launch entrance road and follow it to the launch area.

### Island Creek Trail

(Length: variable; Total approximate paddle time: variable)

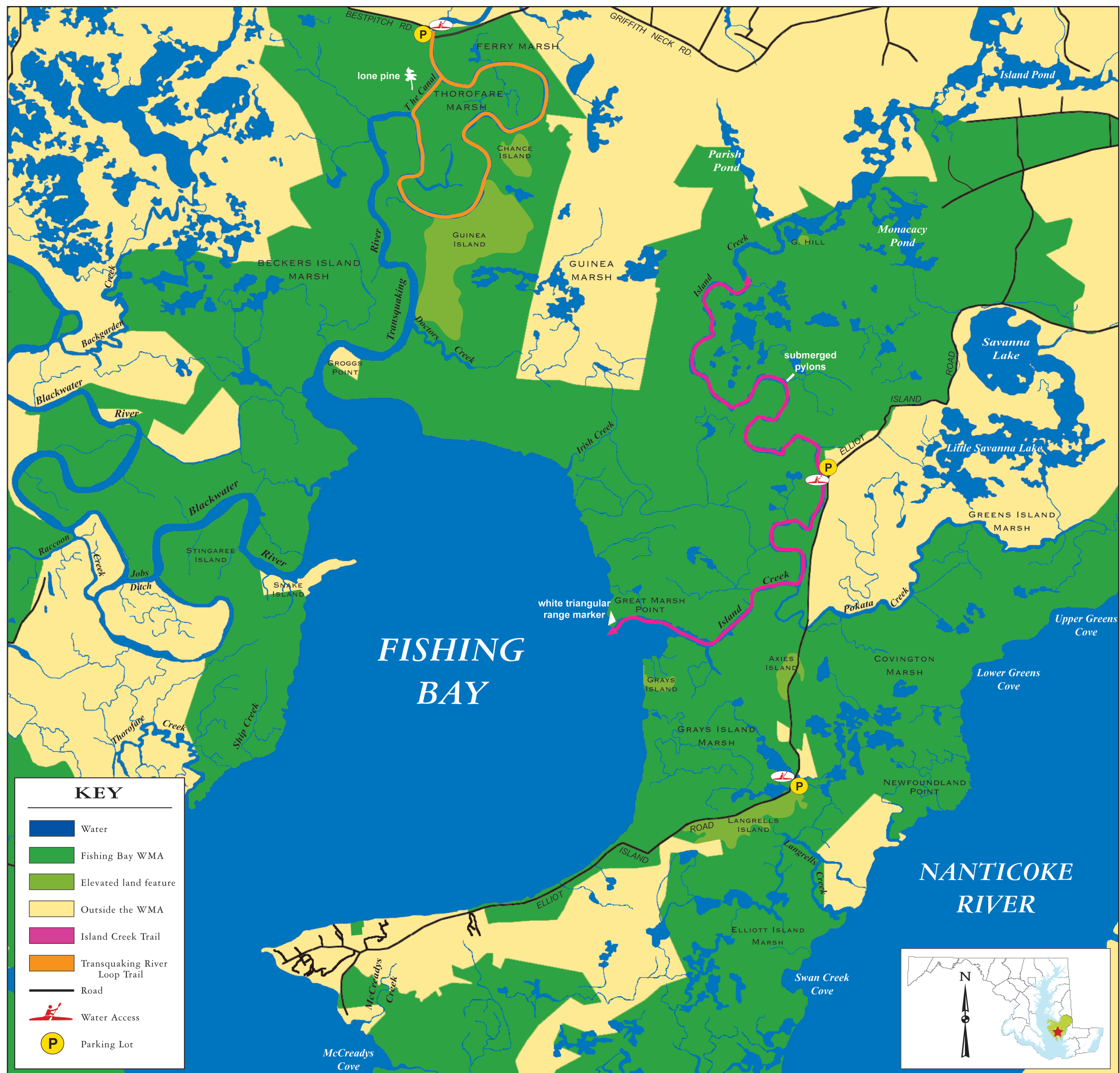
This is an out and back trail. Spend as much time as you like paddling. Enjoy the scenery but be aware that this trail is subject to high winds and strong currents at times. Check the tide charts when planning your paddle trip.

Leave the Island Creek primitive boat launch (improvements planned in the future) and head south (to the left) down Island Creek. As you paddle down the creek you will be parallel to Elliott Island Road. As you paddle through the first horseshoe bend in the creek you will pass an abandoned yellow clubhouse on the left. After you pass the house, the creek turns to the right and leads out into Fishing Bay. Once you get to the mouth of Island Creek you can stop at Great Marsh Point to stretch and enjoy the view. At this point you can paddle back up the creek and continue the trip upstream past the boat ramp, or pull out until another day.

Heading north on Island Creek (to the right), the main creek has many side guts on the right leading to numerous secluded ponds, where waterfowl and other birds are often sighted. Drift quietly into these ponds and observe wildlife feeding in the shallow, warm pockets of mud and water. Staying on the main creek channel, and to the left, will take you on a three-mile paddle, which may be shortened by backtracking at any time.

### Directions to Island Creek boat launch:

From U.S. Route 50 take the Route 331 exit to Vienna, Maryland. At the stop sign, go straight across old Route 50 to the next stop sign. Turn left onto Race Street and go to the first intersection. Turn right onto Market Street. Proceed to the stop sign, go straight across, and continue on Market Street which will become Elliott Island Road. Go approximately 12 miles and the boat launch will be on your right.



## Fishing Bay Wildlife Management Area

### Paddling and Boating Safety

Please Play Safe! Be familiar with the unique hazards and challenges of paddling Fishing Bay, such as these:

- Although the tidal elevation is only one to two feet in Fishing Bay, paddling against an incoming tide can be difficult and will slow your progress. Please check the tide schedule when planning your trip. Tide table charts are available at the Visitor Center at Sailwinds Park or on MD DNR's website on the Fisheries page.
- Fishing Bay is a wilderness area. Water trails are not marked. These trails are also not patrolled on a regular basis. It is easy to get confused and lost within the maze of creeks that divide the tidal marsh. Be sure that you have the navigational skills necessary to use a map and compass. Bring extra clothing and gear in case of emergencies.
- Fishing Bay WMA is a popular public hunting area. Use courtesy and common sense when encountering a hunting group.
- Certain types of mud and marsh appear as though they may be safely crossed on foot, but they can be very deceiving. Use extreme caution in these areas as you may become entrapped. If you do, lay on your back, using your elbows and hands to work your way backward to solid ground.
- A host of biting flies and mosquitoes inhabit the marsh. In warmer months, wear insect repellent and light colored clothing.
- Beware of stinging sea nettle and jellyfish in the water throughout the summer months.

For more information on preparing for and planning a paddling trip, visit the American Canoe Association's website at [www.acanet.org](http://www.acanet.org)

or contact them at 7432 Alban Station Blvd., Suite B-226, Springfield, VA 22150, phone: (703) 451-0141.