

Woodcock require 5 key habitat elements in order to attract mates and produce young:

- 1) **Singing-grounds** for the male to perform his courtship display
- 2) **Roosting fields** where birds can rest when they are not feeding or raising young
- 3) **Feeding areas** where the woodcock can find earth-worms and other invertebrates to eat
- 4) **Nesting cover** where the female places her nest
- 5) **Brood-rearing cover** where the female can take her chicks to feed. You will see examples of each habitat element on your hike.



For more information about woodcock, habitat management, and conservation actions, visit www.timberdoodle.org. To participate in a woodcock program, contact the Navarino Nature Center office at (715) 758-6999.



Navarino Nature Center
W5646 Lindsten Rd
Shiocton, WI 54170

Creation date: Fall 2011

1st edition

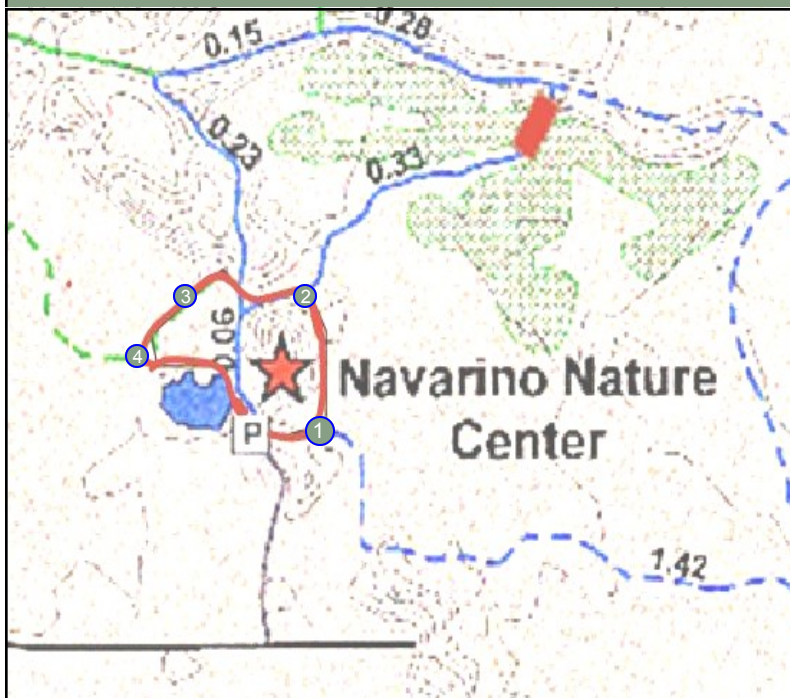
Navarino Nature Center's Woodcock Walk



TRAIL MAP

Woodcock in Decline

The American Woodcock (*Scolopax Minor*), Also known as the Timberdoodle, is a migratory shorebird that has been declining for the past 50 years throughout its range in North America. Scientists believe that loss of breeding habitat is a major contributing factor for this decline. While on this interpretive hike described, you will learn about woodcock ecology and habitat needs. Perhaps you have the property where you can make a home for the woodcock.



Trail length = .4 mile or about 20 minutes

Stop #1:

Prairie restoration, an example of a singing-ground and roosting field

Sometimes one habitat can serve more than one purpose, such as this restored prairie. In the spring (end of March through May), this is a good place to watch the male perform his courtship display, or “sky dance,” just after sunset. This ground and aerial display attracts females, or hens. Later in the summer, this will be a good spot for these birds to roost at night, when they are not feeding. This prairie is maintained through periodic burning to reduce woody plants and unwanted “weedy” species.

Other birds that live in the prairie include Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark.



Stop #2:

Dense shrubs following clear-cutting, an example of nesting and feeding cover

Woodcock spend most of their time with their feet on the ground. They feed by probing in the soil for earthworms and other invertebrates with their long bills. The hen nests on the ground, pulling together a few leaves and twigs around a depression, called a scrape. It is not much of a nest, but it is adequate to keep her four eggs together and it blends in well with the forest floor. This young forest is dominated by aspen or poplar, a sun-loving species that grows back vigorously when it is logged or disturbed in large enough areas to open the forest canopy. Clear-cutting is a common forestry practice that produces the conditions that aspen needs to re-grow and thrive.

Other birds that live in dense shrubs include Veery, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Eastern Towhee, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Stop #3:

Young aspen forest, an example of brood-rearing cover

Within 24 hours of hatching, the chicks follow the woodcock hen away from the nest to good feeding areas. She will use the nesting cover while the chicks are small but will take them into young forest as they grow larger. Aspen forest that is older than 25-30 years is rarely used by woodcock; therefore it is important to periodically create new young forest habitat so that Timberdoodles always have a place to live. Other birds that live in young aspen forest include Red-eyed Vireo, Black-and-White Warbler, American Redstart, and Ovenbird.



Stop # 4:

Alder wetland, an example of feeding cover

When upland areas are dry, especially in late summer and fall, alder wetlands become critical feeding areas for Timberdoodles. The soil in the wetland is moist so earthworms, “a favorite food,” remain close to the surface where woodcock can reach them. Alder that is too mature has many horizontal stems and dense grasses that impede feeding by woodcock. Periodically cutting strips through the alder is one way to encourage vigorous new growth that woodcock prefer.

Other birds that live in alder wetlands include Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, and Yellow Warbler.

