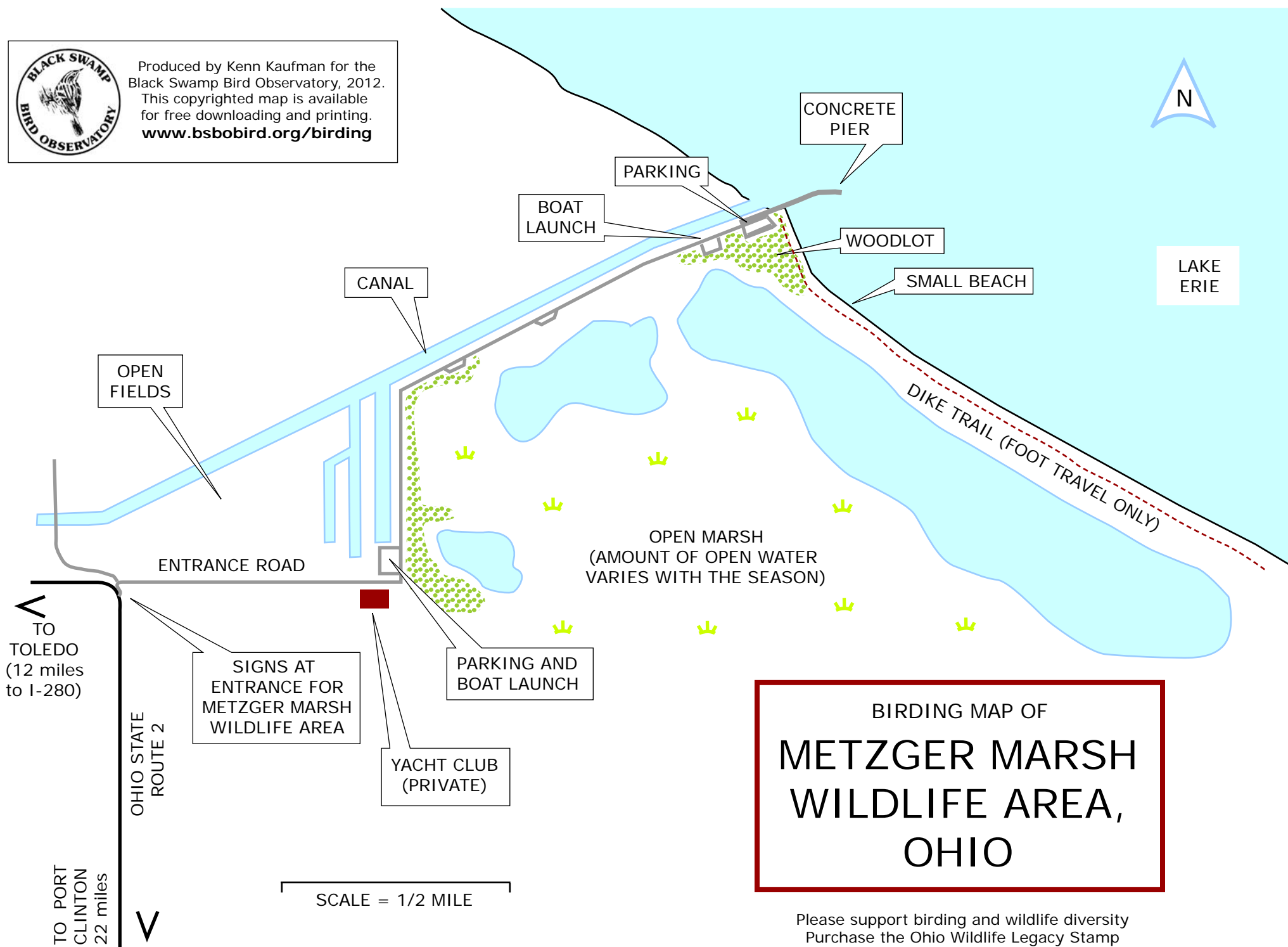




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BIRDING MAP OF METZGER MARSH WILDLIFE AREA, OHIO

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Birding at Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area, Ohio

Notes to accompany the birding map provided by Black Swamp Bird Observatory

Notes by Kenn Kaufman, updated March 2012

This is one of the most consistently productive birding areas in northwestern Ohio. A wide variety of species can be found here throughout the migration seasons in spring and fall, and many rarities have been found. The site also furnishes valuable nesting habitat for various marsh birds.

The areas accessible by road, shown on this map, are under the jurisdiction of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Wildlife. The southeastern part of the marsh lies within the boundaries of the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Directions to Metzger Marsh: The entrance from Ohio State Route 2 is located about 12 miles east of Toledo and 22 miles west of Port Clinton, at the major curve in Route 2 situated just east of the small town of Bono. The entrance road goes north but then immediately turns east.

Notes on specific sites: These notes start at the entrance from Route 2 and proceed east and north to the end of the road.

Fields along entrance road: These open farm fields sometimes hold flocks of Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings in winter, and American Pipits during migration.

North-south section of road: Just past the private Cooley Canal Yacht Club on the right, the road turns and runs straight north. Just beyond the turn, there is a parking lot where one can park to bird the trees and scrub along the east side of the road, which may hold concentrations of sparrows and other migrants. The canal along the west side of the road may have ducks, gulls, or herons if they haven't been scared away by traffic.

Pulloffs along main section of open marsh: After the road turns right again it runs toward the east-northeast, with open marsh to the right and the canal to the left. There are several paved pullouts along this section, and extensive unpaved pulloffs

toward the latter part of the road. All of these may be good vantage points for scanning the marsh.

The marsh may be frozen for much of the winter, but as long as it has open water in late fall, winter, or early spring, tremendous numbers of ducks may gather here. These will be mostly dabblers, but often with a generous mix of diving ducks as well. Early spring concentrations often include impressive numbers of Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Redhead, and Eurasian Wigeon has been found here several times at that season. Pied-billed Grebe and American Coot can be very common. When water levels are low, many shorebirds may gather along the edges. In the warmer months, these marshes are good for Common Gallinule, Least Bittern, Marsh Wren, and others. Metzger is one of the best places in Ohio to find Black Tern and Yellow-headed Blackbird, and King Rail has been found here as well. Bald Eagles are common in the area all year.

Woodlot at end of road: The small woodlot next to the parking area at the end of the road can be swarming with migrant songbirds on good days in spring or fall. All of the warblers, thrushes, vireos, flycatchers, and other migrants known from nearby Magee Marsh are possible at Metzger as well (although in smaller numbers, since the area of habitat is smaller).

Concrete pier: At the end of the canal, a pier juts out into Lake Erie. This pier is often a resting spot for gulls and terns; it also provides a vantage point for scoping the waters of the lake.

Dike trail and small beach: From the woodlot at the end of the road, it's possible to walk east-southeast along the dike that separates the main marsh from Lake Erie. A small beach along this dike may hold shorebirds such as Sanderling and Ruddy Turnstone in late spring or early fall. This dike trail is a good place to use a spotting scope for additional views of the main marsh and to look for birds far out on the lake. In addition, songbird migrants may be found in the brush along the dike.