



Common Buckeye Butterfly (*Junonia coenia*) -- Wingspan 1 5/8 to 2 3/4 inches; has prominent eyespots on both wings, two orange bars on forewings; often rests on the ground.

Animals



Northern Brownsnake (*Storeria dekayi dekayi*) -- 9 to 13 inches; grayish-brown with paired black spots on the back; belly light.



White-tail Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) -- Reddish-brown in summer, grayer in winter, with white belly patches and white tail; males' antlers fall off as winter approaches. Mating starts in October. Most active at night.

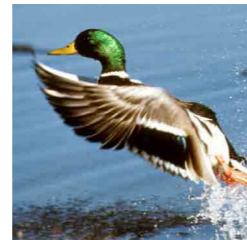


Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) -- A large semi-aquatic rodent with brown fur; similar to a beaver but smaller and with a thin round tail instead of the beaver's flat paddle.



Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) -- Aquatic rodent with 29 to 35-inch body and 8 to 14-inch tail that builds dams and lodges. Gnawed trees are signs of beavers.

Birds



Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) -- A dabbling duck; male has green iridescent head and bright, purplish-blue wing speculum; female is mottled brown.



American Coot (*Fulica americana*) -- Dark gray, chicken-like, 15-inch, aquatic bird with distinctive white face and white, short, sloping beak; eats aquatic plants.



Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) -- A diving duck with a puffy head shape; males have black and white body; females gray-brown with white cheek patch.



Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) -- A 30 to 37-inch raptor with chocolate-brown body, white head, white tail when mature; yellow beak and feet; soars, flaps and perches in trees.



Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) -- 9 to 10 inches tall, striking black and white barred back, red cap; chuckling, rolling call; faint red splash on belly often not visible; searches for insects on tree trunks.



Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) -- Almost 5 inches in length; black cap, black bib, white cheeks, gray wings and black and white belly; often in flocks with other birds; sometimes hangs upside down to forage.



Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) -- 33-inch, dark black, diving bird with a snaky neck and hooked bill; on the water, raises its orange-yellow bill; often perches near water to dry out-stretched wings.



Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) -- 30-inch, bulky body; black wings or "back," white body and head, yellow bill; patrols looking for morsels, feeds with other gull species.

Photographs are by Ed Eder; Paula Sullivan; Ned Stone; Glenda Booth; Julie Makin, Marilyn Kircus, and R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; Amanda Boyd, Erwin and Peggy Bauer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Digital Library.

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National Park Service
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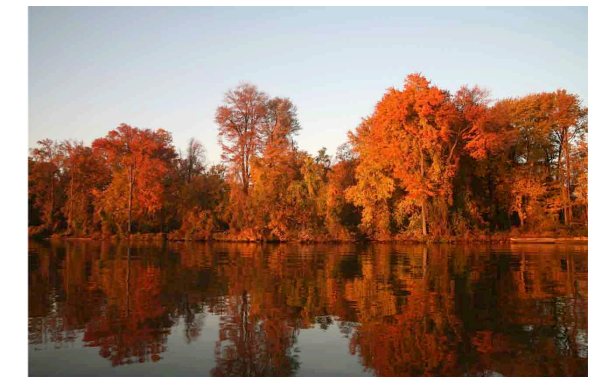


Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
George Washington Memorial Parkway



Friends of Dyke Marsh

**Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
What Can I See in the Fall?
A Few Examples**



In the fall, the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve exudes color, from the garnet red of Virginia creeper to the bright yellow of tulip poplar leaves and every color in between. Some birds depart and others arrive. Some critters burrow into the mud for the winter and many wetland plants start to go dormant.

Plants



Narrow-leaf Cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) -- 3 to 4 feet tall with velvety brown "hotdog" flowers; grows in thick clumps and dominates the wetland. In the fall, the brown seedheads have thousands of small fuzzy seeds.



Smooth Beggartick (*Bidens laevis*) -- 2 to 6 feet tall; bright yellow flowers start blooming in September. Seeds stick to passers-by, hence the common name. The flowers turn much of the marsh yellow in fall.



American Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) -- Can grow up to 8 feet; fleshy stems turn magenta and bear shiny, purplish-black clusters of berries that birds love but are toxic to humans.



Wild Rice (*Zizania aquatica*) -- Grass-like plant with lance-shaped leaves that grows in shallow water; can grow to 10 feet; flowering, broom-like, multi-branched head rises above the water; fruit (rice) in husks.



Asters (*Symphyotrichum sp.*) -- Fall-blooming white, blue or purple flowers with yellow centers; flower head has many tiny flowers or florets. Many species make identification difficult. This may be the white panicle aster (*Symphyotrichum lanceolatum*). Asters are used as food plants by the caterpillars of many butterfly species.



Goldenrod (*Solidago sp.*) -- Many species, sometimes hard to tell apart. Golden flowers bear heavy yellow pollen that is a boon to late-season pollinating insects. There are no wetland species of *Solidago* in Dyke Marsh, but goldenrods bloom along the Haul Road in fall. This image is of *Solidago rugosa*, wrinkle-leaved goldenrod.

Trees



Smooth Sumac (*Rhus glabra*) -- Up to 20 feet tall; deciduous; erect pyramidal clusters of yellow-green flowers in summer mature into dark red fruit that were used by Native Americans to make a lemonade-like beverage. Leaves turn red and orange.



American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) -- One of the largest trees here, up to 100 feet tall. Fruits are smooth brown "buttonballs." Leaves, 4 to 10 inches wide with 3 to 5 lobes, turn yellow-red. Outer bark exfoliates in patches, exposing inner bark, creating a camouflage-like pattern of brown, gray and light green against a white background.



Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) -- Star-shaped leaves change from yellow to maroon in the fall. Spiky, ball-like seedheads or fruits start out green and turn brown.



Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) -- 80 to 100 feet tall deciduous tree; leaves turn bright yellow.

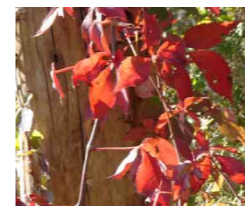


Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) -- A large shrub or small tree with orange autumn leaves; has three distinct leaf patterns: oval, mitten-shaped and three-pronged.



Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) -- An evergreen, the female tree bears small, silvery blue fruits (seed cones). American Persimmon Tree (*Diospyros virginiana*) -- Bears orange fruits enjoyed by wildlife.

Vines



Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) -- Vines festoon many trees with their garnet red, five-pronged leaves.



Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) -- Climbing vine with leaves in groups of three that are brilliant yellow, orange or red in the fall. Leaf is oval, pointed and slightly toothed; small, green flowers. All parts are toxic to humans all year, but wildlife enjoy eating the fruits.

Insects



Eastern Milkweed Bug (*Lygaeus kalmii*) -- Black and orange-red, black antennas; feeds on milkweed leaves and seed pods.



Common Whitetail (*Plathemis lydia*) -- A conspicuous, common dragonfly, 1 3/4 inches long; males have single black patch on each wing and chalky white abdomen; often rests on hard surfaces.



Slender Meadow Katydid (*Conocephalus fasciatus*) -- Around 1 to 2 inches, has long narrow wings that extend beyond its posterior; large hind legs; can be brown or green and intermediate-colored adult morphs; makes a clicking sound, followed by a purr or trill.