

Description: Middle Island is one of 22 islands that make up the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, which stretches 362 miles along the Ohio River from Pennsylvania to Kentucky. Two of the islands are in Pennsylvania, 18 are in West Virginia, and two are in Kentucky. One of the most accessible, as well as one of the most beautiful, is Middle Island. A short bridge connects Middle Island with the mainland at St. Marys.

Viewing Information: Middle Island offers beautiful river vistas and wonderful opportunities for wildlife viewing. Throughout the year, wood ducks may be seen in the back channel, and Canada geese nest on the island year-round. Great horned owls are permanent residents; look for them in the mature forest at the head of the island.

An active great blue heron rookery on a nearby island increases the chance of seeing one of these stately birds on Middle Island between March and November. Green herons are present in the spring and summer as are belted kingfishers.

In May look for bobolinks in the fields and adjacent reforested areas.

Bald eagles are seen occasionally in fall, winter and spring. Ospreys nest on the river and sometimes fish the waters around the island. Search for red-necked grebes in February and March on the main channel.

The most common mammals on the island are beavers, cottontail rabbits, muskrats, white-tailed deer, raccoons, woodchucks and red foxes. Look



An aerial view of Middle Island showing St. Marys on right.

Janet Butler/USF&WS



Green heron

Gary Kramer/USF&WS

for the foxes in spring before the vegetation gets too high and thick. *This is a public hunting area. Please check with the manager for seasons and affected areas.*

Directions: In St. Marys, turn off West Virginia State Route 2 onto George Street and proceed 0.1 mile to the end of street where the bridge connects to Middle Island.

Ownership: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (304) 422-0752

Size: 235 acres

Closest Town: St. Marys

Excerpt from West Virginia Wildlife Viewing Guide by Mark Damain Duda. Call 304-637-0245 for a free copy.