

# Planning your visit to the DuPont Nature Center (DNC)

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **Is the DuPont Nature Center open year-round?**

- The nature center's deck is open year round, however, the center itself is only open April through September each year. The nature center is closed October through March.

### **Can I sit on the deck at the DuPont Nature Center after hours?**

- You may utilize the deck and grounds from dawn to dusk.

### **Are food and beverages permitted on the grounds and deck area?**

- Yes. But we are a carry in, carry out area; you must clean up and remove your trash. No alcoholic beverages are permitted. Food is not permitted inside of the Center.

### **What about my pets visiting with me?**

- Except for guide dogs accompanying blind and/or deaf persons, dogs and other domesticated animals are not allowed inside the DuPont Nature Center. They are allowed on the grounds. Dogs must be on a leash and restrained at all times. Do not leave pets unattended and you must clean up after your pet.

### **What is the best time of the year to see Red Knots?**

- The best time to see Red Knots is around the second week of May until the first week of June, however weather conditions may cause earlier or later arrival and departure times. The low tide provides best viewing opportunities; exposed shorelines and mudflats enable the birds to forage. We have spotted Knots as early as May 1<sup>st</sup>!

### **When is the best time to see Horseshoe crabs?**

- When the water temp in the Bay reaches 59°F (15°C) horseshoe crabs become active. We've seen them on the shorelines here as early as April 11<sup>th</sup>. The best time to see Horseshoe crabs is on the beginning of the high tides in May and June. You will see a higher number of crabs during the new and full moons.

### **How close can I get to the Red Knots and/or Horseshoe crabs when I visit?**

- Wildlife is unpredictable and there may or may not be an abundance of shorebirds and/or horseshoe crabs on the shoreline during your visit. The Center sits on a point which is surrounded by water. The exposed shoreline provide great viewing opportunities during the low tide cycle. The bridge on Lighthouse Road coming into Mispillion Harbor allows visitors an awesome view of fish and wildlife up close.

### **When is low tide/high tide at the Mispillion Harbor?**

- The road leading in to the Center is prone to flooding during high tides, new and/or full moon phases, and when the wind direction is from the east. There are times when the road is completely covered by water. Do NOT drive through the water if you cannot see the road or bridge.
- We recommend checking a [Tide Table](#) before you visit.

### **Will mosquitoes, flies, or gnats “bug” me while viewing wildlife?**

- At times. A sea breeze tends to diminish the numbers of biting insects. Insect repellent is recommended.

### **Can I access the shorelines and marsh surrounding the Nature Center?**

- No. Walking along shorelines and marshes disturbs the wildlife! The marshes remain saturated and there is a strong possibility you could sink. There is a public access area about one-mile from the DNC at Slaughter Beach. Another mile further is the Slaughter Beach Fire Hall which has a pavilion and public restrooms. To get to Slaughter Beach from the DNC, travel south to the end of Lighthouse Road and turn left on to Route 36. Parking for the beach access will be about two miles down the road on the right side, across the street from the fire hall.

### **Can I crab and/or fish from the shorelines around the center?**

- No. The broken up concrete edging the parking lot around the Mispillion is not stable, therefore it is not recommended.

### **Are there fishing areas nearby?**

- Slaughter Beach does have a public beach access area where you can surf fish. Delaware has public launch and fishing areas statewide; please refer to the Delaware fishing Guide for the areas.

Visit: [www.fw.delaware.gov](http://www.fw.delaware.gov)

- Surf fishing: The Division of Parks and Recreation surf fishing beaches are Beach Plum Island, Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware Seashore State Park and Fenwick Island State Park.
- For Special restrictions and regulations visit: [www.destateparks.com](http://www.destateparks.com)

### **Can my group visit? What about schools and youth groups?**

- Yes! Field Trip opportunities are offered year-round. Interpreters facilitate guided tours for groups and numerous educational programs are offered throughout the year. For more information, call the Center at 302-422-1329.

### **Are there any special events that I can bring my family to?**

- In May we hold an annual event, the Peace, Love, and Horseshoe Crab Festival. There's educational fun, and lots of wildlife to see!
- Throughout the spring and summer, we host a variety of family-friendly educational programs. Visit our [Educational Programs](#) webpage to view scheduled programs, or call 302-422-1329.



*Thanks for checking our FAQ's – we hope you enjoy your visit!*