

Bubblers have been added to oxygenate the water, and they also help to keep some areas of the pond open when many other ponds and lakes freeze over. Ring-necked Duck and Hooded Merganser are expected.

An occasional Pied-billed Grebe or Bufflehead sometimes frequents the pond while scaup, teal, and other waterfowl are considered rare finds. Canada Geese occasionally use this location from late fall to early spring; Cackling Geese are rare visitors. In colder weather, the primary interest lies in finding unusual waterfowl that may drop in.

Cedar Waxwings and other songbirds can sometimes be found eating fruit in the trees near the tennis courts during late fall and early winter. The sun is rarely a problem because there are numerous viewing points. During any season, take time to check the spring and seepage area adjacent to the boardwalk at the northeast corner of the pond. During dry years various species might be found bathing in the shallow pools.

Highlights: In addition to the birds that the pond may produce, this is also an excellent location for pond dragonflies in mid to late summer. There are nice stands of Hyssop Skullcap in the field east of the dam from mid to late June.

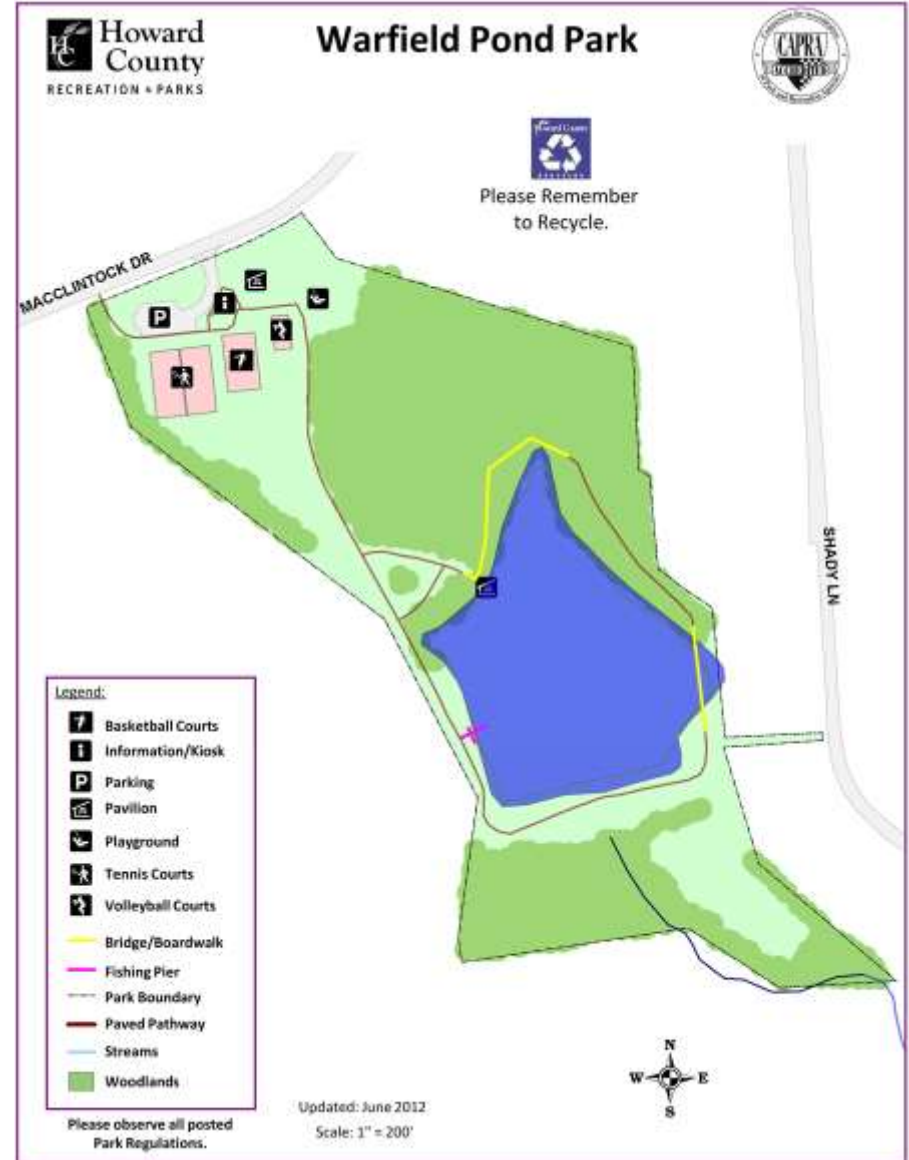
Common butterflies can be observed while walking the paved paths. Appalachian Browns are an uncommon species that can be found here occasionally. They are in the wet area where the spring goes under the boardwalk and in the marshy area below the dam.

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This material is a digest. Further information, including complete species lists, photographs, and additional information can be found at <https://howardbirds.website/birding/birding-howard-county-md/site-guides/warfields-pond-park/>

The Howard County Bird Club

A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
Warfields Pond Park Site Guide



Warfields Pond Park opened in 1992 making it one of Howard County's oldest western neighborhood parks. Although a relatively small park, it has sufficiently diverse habitats to be worth regular visits.

Size: 19.85 acres including a 3.8 acre pond.

Trails/Paths: Wide paved path around the pond. Total path system 1.3 miles including .07 miles of boardwalk; loop around pond is 0.65 miles.

Habitat: The pond has both emergent vegetation and shrubby edge; between the tot lot and the dam are seepage areas as well as scrub and maturing deciduous trees. The area near the dam has both mown grass and annual vegetation. Below the dam is another seepage area with trees; beyond it lies a fallow field edged with hedgerows. In years with adequate rainfall, the field contains some wet areas.

Best Time to Visit: During spring through fall, early morning produces the most birds. Bubblers keep portions of the pond ice-free. In winter, any time provides looks at waterfowl, but the best time is early morning when the nearby ponds are still frozen. The heaviest park usage is on warm weekends and weekdays from late afternoon to sunset.

Coverage Time: Less than one-half hour to one hour.

Notable Birds: Cackling Goose, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Redhead, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Horned Grebe, American Bittern, Little Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Common Gallinule, American Woodcock, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, American Pipit, Common Redpoll, American Tree Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Blue-winged Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and Canada Warbler.

Amenities: Tot lot; picnic pavilion; fishing pier and gazebo; tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts.

Handicapped Access: The wide, paved path with gentle grades is easy to negotiate. The wooden boardwalks can be slippery in wet weather.

Operation and Hours: Howard County park; dawn to dusk (or as posted).

Layout: Active recreational facilities are clustered around the parking lot near the entrance at MacClintock Drive. Walking to the pond takes less than five minutes along a paved path. A path, with two boardwalks, encircles the pond. On the north side, a wooden gazebo with benches overlooks the pond. A fishing pier on the west side provides another fine vantage point. Most of the path provides a good view of the sky. A small wooded wetland area on the east side below the picnic pavilion contains a fluctuating amount of water depending on the season and the amount of rainfall. A short distance west of the tot lot there is access to this area by a dirt path into the scrub. South of the dam is a line of trees in a spongy area and beyond that a fallow field without paths.

Birding: This small park has a respectable list of more than 150 species. Several noteworthy species have appeared here during spring migration. They include rarely seen species such as American Woodcock, American Bittern, Common Gallinule, Caspian Tern, and a Long-tailed Duck that stayed for several days one year. Other noteworthy migrants include Lincoln's Sparrow and various warblers, including Cape May, Blackburnian, and Canada. The park is quite small so the number of warblers seen on any given day is limited. The trees along the east side of the pond are one of the more reliable places to find them. Checking the sky in spring is always useful as Triadelphia Reservoir is just a few miles south of the park.

The breeding season brings a variety of birds. Nesting Baltimore and Orchard Orioles are usually found in the trees near the pond, Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats reside in the tall weeds and wet area south of the dam, and some years Willow Flycatchers sing along the west fenceline. Waterfowl might use the pond in late fall, winter, and spring. Unfortunately, efforts to minimize algae appear to have altered the water quality of the pond and it has now become uncommon to see any type of diving duck feeding here or any waterfowl using this pond for an extended period. In its current condition, waterfowl may not arrive until the nearby farm ponds have frozen.