

# Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area

Last edited: 9/30/22



## General Description

Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is an approximate 9,040-acre parcel of land owned and managed by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The WMA is located 8 miles north of Island Pond on VT Route 114 and ranges from Norton Pond, northwest to the Canadian Border just north of Holland Pond. The management goals of this property are to protect and enhance the many different habitat types present.

## History

In 1983 the WMA name was changed from the Hurricane Brook WMA to the Bill Sladyk WMA in memory of State Wildlife Forester William F. Sladyk. The present day landholdings of the WMA were acquired from 1959 to 1998 using several different funding mechanisms. The Department purchased the largest tracts in 1959 using monies from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. It was not until 1970 however that the Department finally purchased the timber rights to the property from the Fillemore Lumber Company of Stanstead, Quebec.

The latest addition to the WMA came in 1998 when the Department purchased 115 acres surrounding the southern end of Holland Pond. This purchase was made using funds from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, known as the Pittman-Robertson Program. This program is funded by a manufacturer's excise tax on rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. This addition allows for the protection of 10,000 feet of undeveloped shoreline around Holland Pond.

## Habitat Features

Elevations on the WMA range from 1400 feet along Hurricane Brook to 2000 feet on an un-named summit east of Beechnut Ridge. The terrain varies from flat cedar swamps to rolling hardwood hills. The property is nearly 100% forested, being comprised of red maple, sugar maple, American beech, yellow birch, paper birch, black cherry, red and black spruce, balsam fir, and white cedar. The Department has undertaken many different projects to enhance the value of the land for wildlife. Several old log landings have been disked, re-seeded, and periodically brushhogged to provide openings in the heavily forested landscape. An 85-acre grouse unit located in the vicinity of the Ben Cole Clearing has been managed with the primary goal of creating optimum grouse habitat. The Department has also been actively restoring historical deer wintering habitat along the Coaticook and Hurricane brooks.

An excellent diversity of wetland habitats can be found throughout the WMA. Of high ecological significance are Cranberry Bog and Halfway Pond. Cranberry Bog is a 26-acre peatland bog with stunted tamaracks, black spruce, and the carnivorous pitcher plant. Halfway Pond is one of the most pristine spruce-lined ponds in Essex County. The WMA

also contains many scattered beaver impoundments, many small brooks, and numerous other ponds.

## Common Fish and Wildlife

**Mammals** Black bears are present throughout the year. Suitable winter denning sites are available in the softwood thicket. Abundant wetlands provide succulent vegetation in the early spring, soft mast during the summer, and the stands of beech trees provide hard mast during the fall. Moose densities are fairly high in this part of Essex and Orleans County. Due to the large size of the WMA, the many wetland complexes, and the abundant browse available after timber harvesting operations, the WMA hosts many resident moose. The numerous wetlands scattered across the WMA provide the best opportunity to view moose during the spring and summer months.

Timber harvests have created ideal habitat for snowshoe hare and white-tailed deer. Patches of young softwood interspersed with hardwoods provide cover and browse for both species. Signs of fisher, coyote, fox, bobcat, and porcupine are commonly seen on the WMA. Beavers inhabit many of the streams and are responsible for maintaining habitat for many other species such as mink, muskrat, weasel, raccoon, and river otter.

**Birds** The many ponds, streams, and beaver impoundments provide habitat for nesting and migrating waterfowl. The most commonly seen species include Mallards, Black ducks, Goldeneyes, Ring-neck ducks, Wood ducks, and both Common and Hooded Mergansers. Favorable ruffed grouse habitat exists in the vicinity of the Ben Cole Clearing, where the Department has created grouse habitat units. The units consist of a checkerboard pattern of small clearcuts of various age classes that provide the habitat required for breeding, nesting, brooding, and winter roosting.

The great variety of forest and wetland habitats provides excellent bird-watching prospects. Opportunities exist to view boreal chickadees in the expansive areas of spruce and fir. A pair of State Endangered common loons can be found during the summer months nesting on Holland Pond.

**Reptiles and Amphibians** Chorus frogs such as the spring peeper can be heard in early spring singing from vernal pools in the woodlands. Woodland salamanders such as the redback salamander can easily be found hiding under damp logs and rocks during the summer months. Painted turtles and snapping turtles may be found in the larger ponds and older beaver flowages across the WMA.

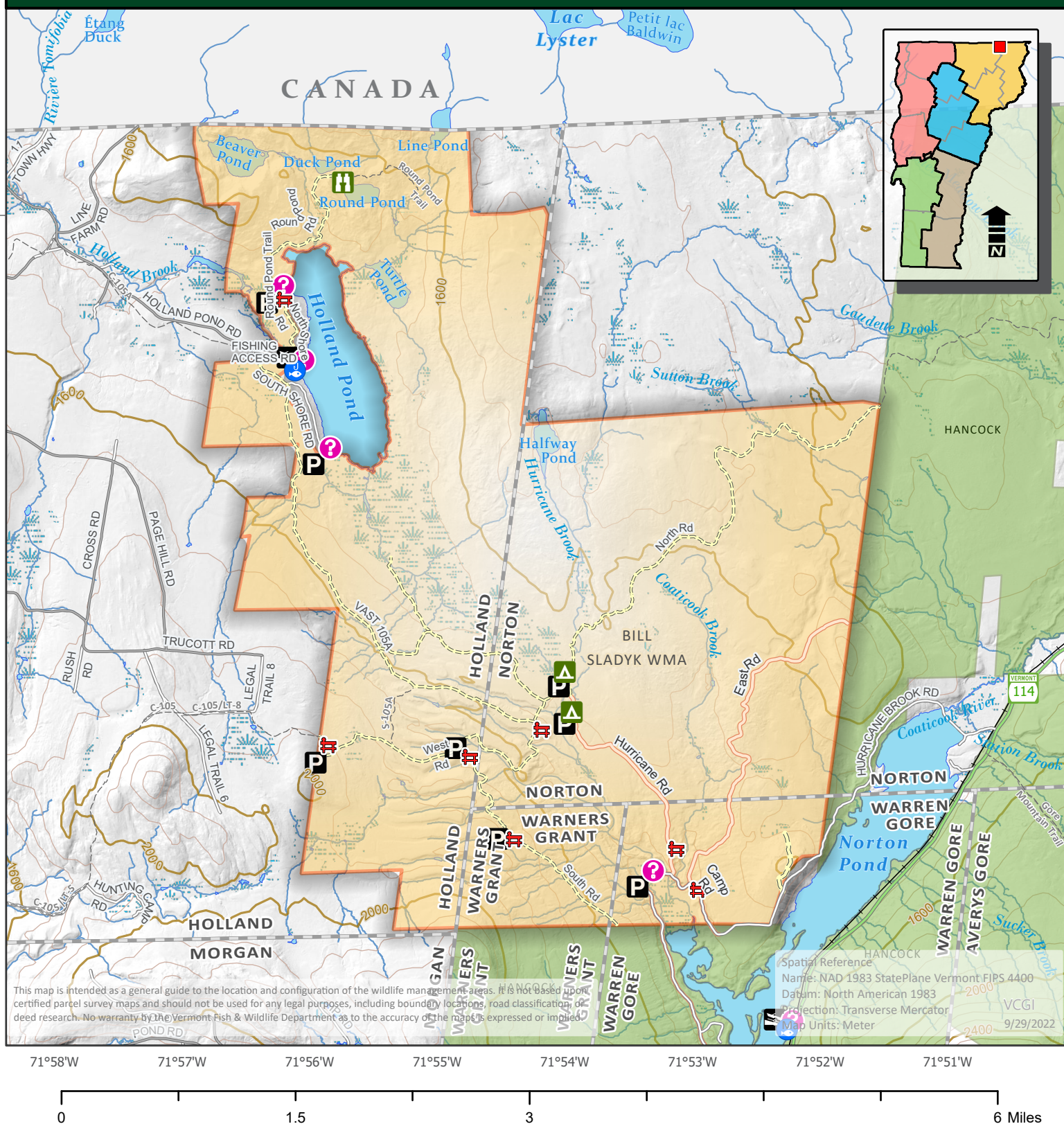
**Fish** Bill Sladyk WMA contains seven major ponds. Holland Pond is the largest of the ponds and contains good populations of brook trout and rainbow trout. The smaller ponds are all undeveloped, walk-in ponds. Beaver and Round Ponds contain brook trout, while Halfway, Duck, Turtle, and Line Pond contain warm-water species such as the chain pickerel.

Bill Sladyk WMA is open to regulated hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.



# Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

## Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area



### Bill Sladyk WMA

|               |                       |                     |                          |                                       |              |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Parking       | Shooting Range        | Fishing Access      | Trails                   | Refuge (no public access)             | Federal Land |
| Boat Ramp     | Wildlife Viewing Area | Visitor Information | Town Boundary            | Special hunting/trapping restrictions | State Land   |
| Cartop Access | Campground            | Gate                | Wildlife Management Area | Streambank Management Area            | Town Land    |
| Park Office   | Vista                 | Rail Lines          | WMA Hunting Rights Only  | Controlled Hunting Area               |              |

### Map Number: 17