














Amenities Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Restrooms |  Boat Ramp |
|  Parking |  No Launch/
Landing Only |
|  Trail |  Lake Erie
Birding Trail |
|  Camping |  Drinking Water |
|  Food |  Beach |
|  Picnic Area | |



From the Marblehead Lighthouse to beaches, birds, and butterflies, there is so much to see and enjoy around Lake Erie, and exploring the shores and islands by water trail provides an opportunity to experience them in a whole new way. We hope you use this guide, which is made possible through a partnership of many organizations, to stay safe and have fun while enjoying Lake Erie.

Governor Mike DeWine
and First Lady Fran DeWine

The Lake Erie Islands Water Trails project is a partnership of many organizations that own access points, provide support, and promote recreation and nature around the islands. The guide and signage for the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails project are funded by a grant from the Ohio Environmental Education Fund of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Partners include: Lake Erie Islands Conservancy, Lake Erie Islands Nature and Wildlife Center, Ohio History Connection, The Nature Conservancy, Village of Put-in-Bay, Village of Kelleys Island, Village of Marblehead, Catawba Island Township Trustees, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Put-in-Bay Township Port Authority, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife, Division of Parks and Watercraft, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and Office of Coastal Management

Photos courtesy of Susan Byrnes, Chloe Nostrant, Matt Kovach, Dale Berlin, Virginia Hill and soozums@flickr

Maps prepared by Brian George, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Management

Let us know about your adventures on the Lake Erie Islands Water Trail by sharing on social media with #OhioFindItHere.



North Bass Island



North Bass Island Trail

- 1 North Bass Island State Park (south)
- 2 Fox's Marsh Wildlife Area
- 3 North Bass Island State Park (north)
- 4 North Bass Island State Park (east)
- 5 Honey Point Wildlife Area

Middle Bass Island Trail

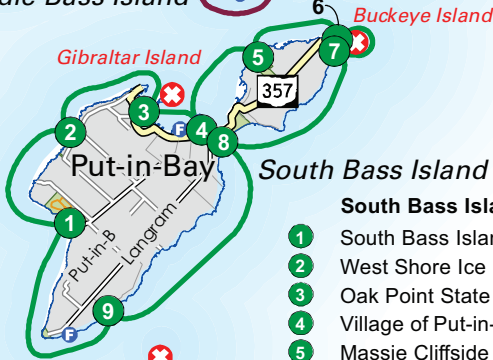
- 1 Middle Bass Island State Park Marina (Dock Fee)
- 2 Middle Bass Island State Park (west)
- 3 Petersen Woods/Kuehnle Wildlife Area
- 4 Middle Bass Island East Point Preserve

Lake Erie Islands Water Trails

Middle Bass Island



Gibraltar Island



South Bass Island

South Bass Island Trail

- 1 South Bass Island State Park
- 2 West Shore Ice Ramp
- 3 Oak Point State Park
- 4 Village of Put-in-Bay Public Boat Launch (Dock Fee)
- 5 Massie Cliffside Preserve
- 6 Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve (north)
- 7 Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve (east)
- 8 Village of Put-in-Bay Beach
- 9 Put-in-Bay Port Authority Access

Kelleys Island Trail

- 1 Kelleys Island State Park
- 2 North Pond State Nature Preserve
- 3 Scheele Preserve
- 4 Woodford Road Access
- 5 Inscription Rock Petroglyphs



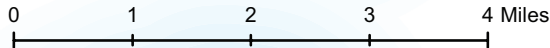
Mainland Trail

- 1 Catawba Island State Park
- 2 West Harbor Public Boat Launching Ramp
- 3 Great Egret Marsh Preserve
- 4 Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge - West Harbor Landing
- 5 East Harbor State Park Marina (Launch Fee)
- 6 East Harbor State Park (Lake Erie)
- 7 East Harbor State Park (East Harbor)
- 8 Mazurik Access Area
- 9 Lucien M. Clemons Park
- 10 Marblehead Lifesaving Station

Mouse Island



Marblehead



- ✗ NO ACCESS
- F Ferry Port
- Lake Erie Public Access

CANADA
U.S.A.

ERIE CO.
OTTAWA CO.

Paddling the Islands

Sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, warm waves, gulls, monarch butterflies – all elements that make you want to put a paddle in the water and explore the Lake Erie Islands. Paddling is quickly becoming one of the more popular outdoor pursuits and is an exciting recreational opportunity that provides a new perspective and a deeper appreciation for these unique islands. This guide will provide the information needed to have great experiences paddling around the Lake Erie Islands.

Each island has its own personality. The heritage and beauty of the islands' natural resources can be explored on the Lake Erie Islands Water Trails (LEIWT), five separate paddling trails around each island (North Bass, Middle Bass, South Bass and Kelleys) and along the nearshore mainland (Catawba to Marblehead). The rich natural, historical and cultural diversity of the coastlines and islands in Lake Erie are experienced through access points identified on maps and on land by a welcoming sign with the logo of the LEIWT. These designated access points are located on public property, so please respect

private property along the rest of the water trail. This guide also includes safety, environmental and location information to make your trip more enjoyable.



Ferry services run from several locations on the mainland to Kelleys, South Bass and Middle Bass Islands and will take your kayak for a fee, or you can rent a kayak at one of the island State Parks or private concessions. There may be a fee to dock or camp overnight at some locations.

There is much to learn about the nature, history and opportunities to be found in the island region. For more information visit:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
ohiostateparks.org or ohiodnr.gov

NOAA Great Lakes Coastal Forecasting System
www.glerl.noaa.gov/res/glcf

Explore the Lake Erie Islands
go.osu.edu/islandguide

Area attractions, dining, shopping and events
shoresandislands.com

The Lake Erie Birding Trail
lakeeriebirding.ohiodnr.gov

Interactive Mapviewers
coastal.ohiodnr.gov/mapviewers

**Enjoy the Lake Erie Islands
Water Trails!**



Staying Safe

SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

PLAN AHEAD! BE PREPARED!

Check everything twice!

Visit watercraft.ohiodnr.gov for equipment,

Be visible – wear bright clothing, paddle as a group, use a bicycle flag.

Dial 911 in an emergency.

File a float plan with a reliable person who can notify the Coast Guard if necessary.

Pay close attention to the safety information provided and don't overestimate your skill level.

WEATHER

ALWAYS check the forecast and lake condition warnings with NOAA (www.glerl.noaa.gov/res/glcfs).

Weather, wind and water conditions on Lake Erie can change quickly.

Dress and prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.

Strong winds and fast boats can create large, steep waves. Paddle directly into waves or at an angle.

Know the water temperature, beware of hypothermia in water below 70 degrees F.

Be prepared to swim. If the water looks too hazardous to swim, then don't boat on it!

If you capsize or swamp the boat and it remains afloat, try to reboard. If you can't get back in, stay with the boat until help arrives.



AROUND THE ISLANDS

Do not attempt to cross Lake Erie from the mainland to the islands or between islands, especially if you are a novice or unsure of your skills.

Stay close to shore as much as possible, but watch for hazards, rocky cliffs and backwash.

Most areas surrounding the islands have unlimited speed and power restrictions so pay attention to motor boat traffic, boat wakes, ferry routes and docks (marked with a blue F) near the shore.

Use caution near busy boat traffic areas:

- Put-in-Bay (PIB) Harbor
- Channel between PIB Harbor and Middle Bass Island
- The anchorage at Kelleys Island State Park
- The Harbor at Kelleys Island
- West Harbor and East Harbor channels

Be aware of *Microcystis* (blue-green algae) blooms. Do not swim or make contact with lake water when advisories are in effect. Check out Ohio Beach Guard System for advisories.

odh.ohio.gov/BeachGuardPublic/Default.aspx



SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Life jacket
- Visual distress signal (*marine flares, flag, mirror*)
- Radio and/or cell phone
- Compass and a map
- Waterproof bags (*for cell phone and change of clothes*)
- Proper footwear
- Drinking water
- Food
- Paddle float
- Spray skirt
- Bilge pump
- Whistle or air horn
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and hat
- First aid kit
- Throwbag
- Tow lines
- Trash bag
- **Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon or Personal Locating Beacon**

Protecting the Lake

The 312 miles of Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline provide recreational, economic and environmental benefits to Ohio and beyond. With its shallow warm waters, Lake Erie has historically been the most productive Great Lake. It is also the source of drinking water for over 11 million people in its watershed! Ohio's recreational boaters play a critical role by adopting environmental boating practices to protect our Lake Erie.



Today, one of Lake Erie's greatest problems is nonpoint source pollution, caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over the ground and carrying natural and human-made pollutants to our waterways. Too many nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, can cause an increase in both nuisance and harmful algal blooms (HABs).

We must all work together to find a solution to these problems in the Lake Erie basin — reducing the use and run-off of lawn and agricultural fertilizers, improving our municipal and residential waste and storm water systems, and controlling and minimizing introduction of invasive species.



The Lake Erie Islands are a resting place for migratory birds and home to many rare plants and animals including the state-threatened Lake Erie Watersnake, often referred to as LEWS. It is found only on the Lake Erie Islands, where it can commonly



be seen basking along rocky shores or searching for fish. Although they are nonvenomous, LEWS are both curious and aggressive and should not be handled if they approach your vessel.

Some easy tips to help protect the lake:

- Dispose of trash properly — Pack it out.
- Appreciate artifacts and natural objects but leave them undisturbed.
- Avoid introducing non-native species, including live bait, by following the “Clean, Drain, Dry” method: **CLEAN** all equipment by removing visible plant and animal species. **DRAIN** all water. Allow all equipment to **DRY** completely before moving to a new body of water.
- Observe from a distance; don't feed, follow or approach wildlife. Keep pets leashed or leave them at home.
- Please consider taking the Ohio Clean Boater Pledge to ensure a thriving Lake Erie for generations to come at ohioseagrant.osu.edu/clean, or contact the program team directly at ohiocleanmarinas@osu.edu.

Mainland Trail

The mainland shoreline offers access points with a variety of paddling experiences and offers views of Lake Erie, Sandusky Bay, Kelleys Island and South Bass Island. Leaving Catawba Island State Park on the west shore, paddle the rocky shoreline, but use caution near the Ferry Dock at the north tip of Catawba and around private Mouse Island. Find

the West Harbor Boat launch among the marinas in busy West Harbor. Great Egret Marsh Preserve boasts classic Lake Erie marshes, ongoing habitat restoration and a haven for birds. View water lotus in summer and waterfowl in fall as you paddle your way to the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge West Harbor Landing. East Harbor State Park offers outdoor recreation and



wetland viewing on the shore of Lake Erie. Mazurik Access Area on the north shore of the Marblehead Peninsula provides direct access to Lake Erie. Lucien M. Clemons Park is being developed by the Village of Marblehead and features

a protected inlet access point. Use caution on the rocky shore near the Marblehead Lighthouse, the oldest continuing operating lighthouse on the Great Lakes. Paddle just south to the Lifesaving station for easier access.



Kelleys Island Trail

Kelleys Island, with a rich history of viticulture and quarrying, is Ohio's largest island in Lake Erie at 2,800 acres. Kelleys Island State Park has camping, trails, and a 430-foot section of glacial grooves. Begin your paddle from the beautiful sand beach and head east to North Pond State Nature Preserve, a lake embayment pond, which is a wetland separated by a barrier dune from the

lake. Round the northeast point to Scheele Preserve where you can follow the land trail to the state-threatened rock elms savanna. Back on the water, take a break at the end of Woodford Road and then paddle around the southeast corner – watch for ferry traffic – landing at Inscription Rock, identified by a shelter. On the rock are nearly 100 images from Native American tribes of



pipe-smoking figures, large animals, fish and weapons – the largest collection of pictographs in the state. From Inscription Rock you can venture into the village for more services. Victorian-style homes line the south shore as you make the long paddle on

the west side of Kelleys Island. On the North shore, note the unique ecosystem created as soil is scraped from limestone by ice, wind and water at North Shore Alvar State Nature Preserve. Note: Cell phone service is limited, especially on the east side.



South Bass Island Trail

South Bass Island is the most visited of all the Lake Erie Islands and offers a wide variety of activities for everyone to enjoy. Start your paddle along the cliffs at the South Bass Island State Park, once the site of the Hotel Victory. Caution: the West Shore Ice Ramp South is steep, rocky and slippery. As you round Peach Point, you'll find Oak Point State Park. Visit the Aquatic Visitors

Center, or look across to Gibraltar Island and Stone Lab, part of The Ohio State University. The island is closed to visitors except for tours, but you can paddle around the shoreline. On the north side is a beautiful rock arch. The Village of Put-in-Bay Public Boat Launch is close to food and shopping. There is heavy boat and ferry traffic in the harbor during the summer.

The Massie Cliffside Preserve offers eleven acres of cliffs, woodlands, trail system and a dock. Scheeff East Point Nature Preserves North and East have eight acres of lakefront preserve with a trail. Watch for shallow conditions as you round private Buckeye Island. The Village Bathing Beach offers a sandy place to stop and visit. The 352-foot granite column is Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial which commemorates the 1813 Battle of Lake Erie as well as the lasting peace between Canada and the



United States. Further south there is a small access site on the SE side of the Island near the airport. Use caution when paddling past the Miller Ferry Dock as you round the SW end of the island to view the South Bass Island Lighthouse built in 1897.

- 1 South Bass Island State Park**
41°38'32.0"N 82°50'14.2"W (cobble & paved)
[Icons: Parking, Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

- 2 West Shore Ice Ramp**
41°39'13.5"N 82°50'13.9"W (rocky)
[Icon: Parking]

- 3 Oak Point State Park**
41°39'22.8"N 82°49'33.0"W (dock fee)
[Icons: Parking, Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

- 4 Village of Put-in-Bay Public Boat Launch**
41°39'15.0"N 82°48'58.2"W (paved, dock fee)
[Icons: Parking, Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

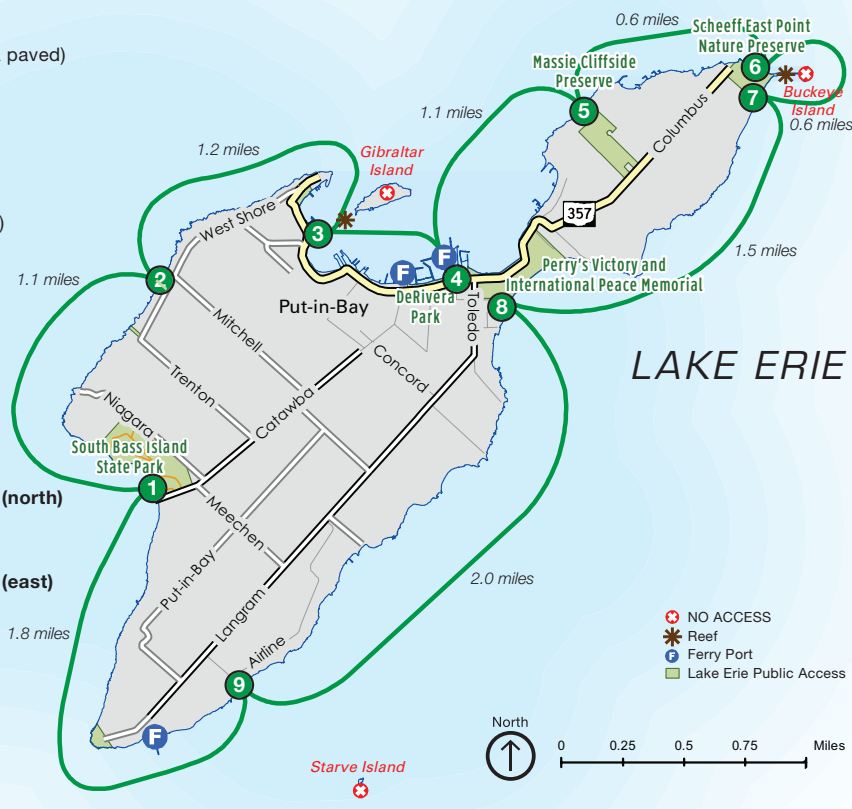
- 5 Massie Cliffside Preserve**
41°39'47.3"N 82°48'25.7"W (dock)
[Icons: Parking, Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

- 6 Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve (north)**
41°39'56.0"N 82°47'46.4"W (stone)
[Icons: Parking, Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

- 7 Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve (east)**
41°39'49.8"N 82°47'39.9"W (sandy)
[Icons: Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

- 8 Village of Put-in-Bay Beach**
41°39'10.2"N 82°48'46.2"W (sandy)
[Icons: Parking, Restroom, Drinking Water, Picnic Table, Fire, Fishing, Kayaking, Canoeing]

- 9 Put-in-Bay Port Authority Access**
41°37'56.8"N 82°49'50.3"W (sandy)
[Icon: No Access]



Middle Bass Island Trail

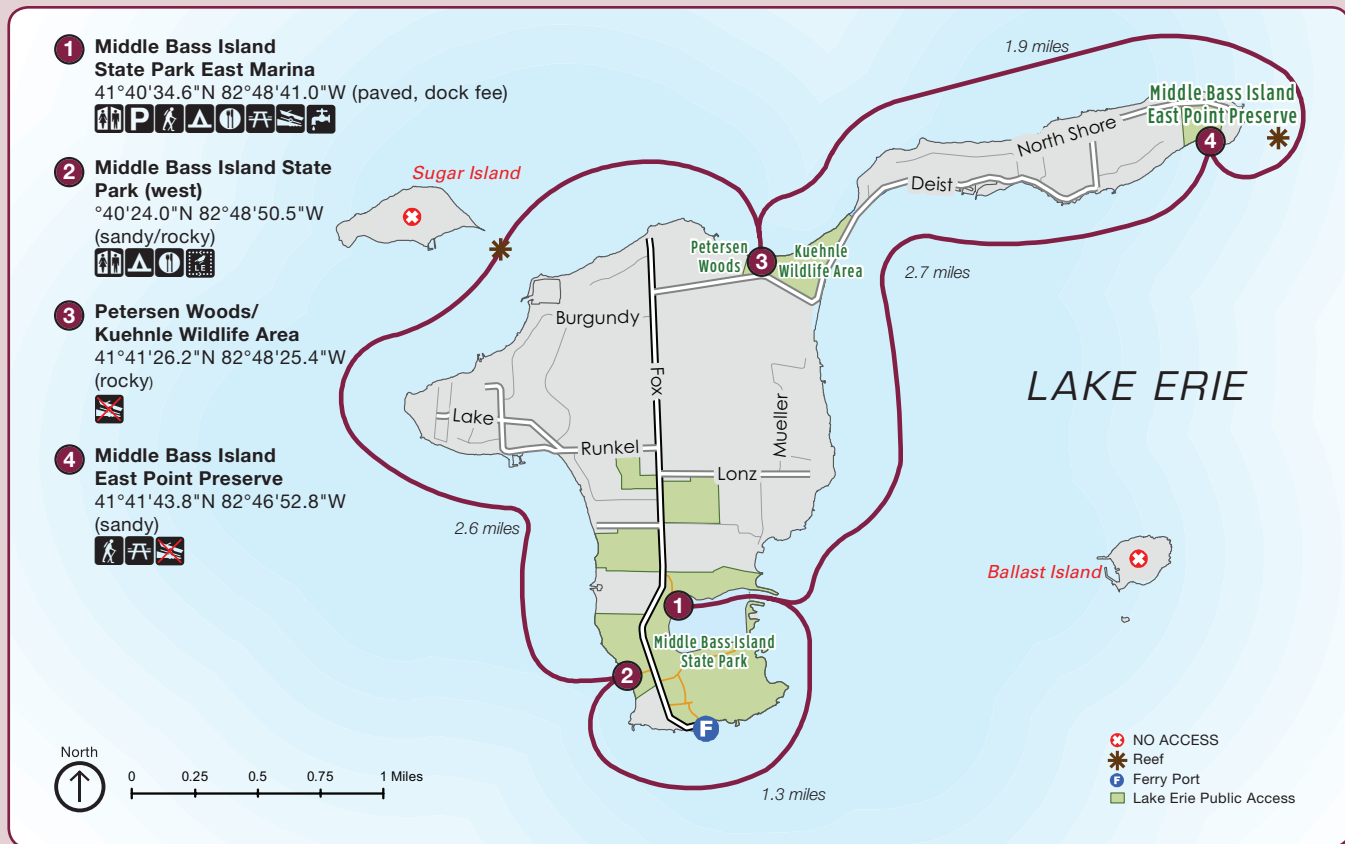
Middle Bass Island (MBI), named “Isle des Fleurs” by French explorers, has a rich history of grape growing and winemaking. Peter Lonz established his winery on the island in 1884 and managed to survive Prohibition by selling bottles of grape juice including instructions on how not to turn it into wine. The winery structure and 141 acres are now owned by the State of

Ohio. Launch from the MBI State Park Marina. Rounding the southeast point of the island, look for columbines and harebells on the rocky cliffs and view the boathouse built by son George Lonz. Use caution when passing the ferry dock. The west shore of the State Park’s primitive campground has a lovely landing beach. Paddling north, view the private Middle Bass Club’s



Victorian homes. Beyond the reef between Sugar Island and Middle Bass lies Petersen Woods’ 1.5-acre wet woodland with a Bald Eagle nest nearby. The cove’s beach is the north shore of the Kuehnle State Wildlife Area protecting several threatened and

endangered plants and amphibians. Paddle around the East Point Reef to the kayak-only accessible MBI East Point Preserve, a popular pathway for migrating birds. A pleasant paddle across Schoolhouse Bay will bring you back to your start.



North Bass Island Trail

North Bass Island, or Isle St. George, is less than 2 miles from the Canadian border. This makes North Bass Island an important American stop for countless migrating birds island-hopping across the lake. Most of the island is owned by the State of Ohio and remains agricultural or undeveloped. The trail starts with a paddle west from the North Bass Island State Park main dock, the

only area on the island with facilities. Fox's Marsh State Wildlife Area is one of few natural coastal wetlands remaining on the islands. The marsh comes within a few feet of Lake Erie at Manila Bay, open to the lake during high-water years. As you paddle to the north along the low rocky shoreline, you will see evidence of viticulture and commercial fishing which once dominated. North



Bass Island State Park offers two access points to the north and east. Miles of undeveloped shoreline are important habitat for the state-threatened Lake Erie Watersnake. Honey Point Wildlife Area offers a sand beach and a small wetland area for wildlife watching. There is no

ferry to North Bass Island, only airplane, personal or chartered boats. There is also no protection from wind and waves on the 1-mile trip from adjacent Middle Bass Island, so the crossing is suitable only for experienced Lake Erie paddlers.

1 North Bass Island State Park (south)

41°42'25.3"N 82°48'56.5"W (sandy)



2 Fox's Marsh Wildlife Area

41°42'43.6"N 82°49'54.0"W (sandy)



3 North Bass Island State Park (north)

41°43'25.1"N 82°49'21.1"W (rocky)



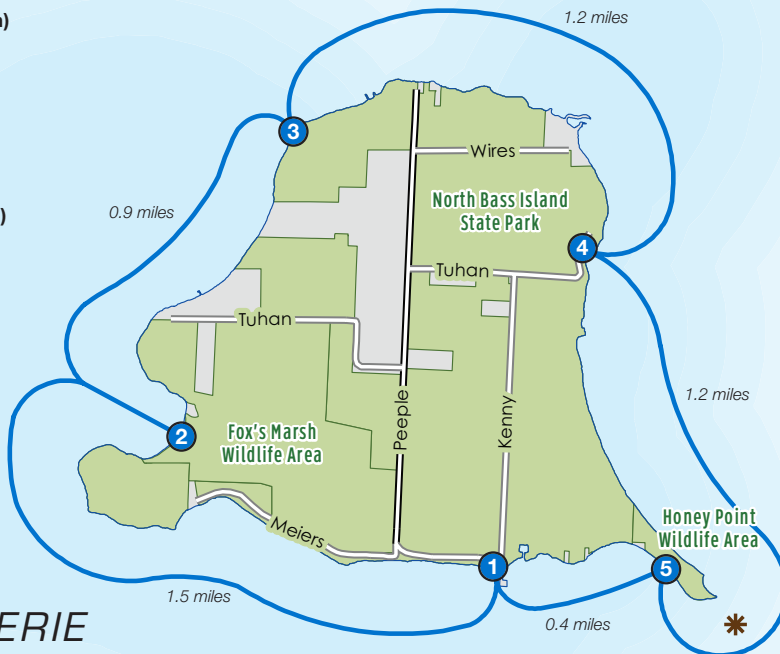
4 North Bass Island State Park (east)

41°43'06.0"N 82°48'41.7"W (rocky)

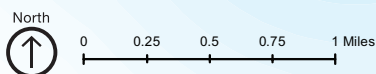


5 Honey Point Wildlife Area

41°42'23.2"N 82°48'25.8"W (sandy)



LAKE ERIE



* Reef
 Lake Erie Public Access