Elizabeth Alexandra Morton National Wildlife Refuge is on the north shore of Long Island, Suffolk County, New York, approximately 30 miles from the eastern tip, about 8 miles from Southampton, and 100 miles east of New York City. Entrance to the refuge lies on the north side of Noyack Road.

The refuge consists primarily of a narrow, sandy peninsula, jutting more than a mile into shallow Atlantic waters and separating Noyack and Little Peconic Bays. Habitat consists of upland brush, salt marsh, a brackish pond, and sandy beaches. Approximately 70 acres of upland facing the peninsula are composed of woodlands, brush, and open fields.

This is one in the chain of national wildlife refuges strategically distributed along the Atlantic flyway from the northern breeding grounds in New England and Canada, to the southern wintering habitat along the Gulf Coast. With the increasing loss of natural wildlife habitat on Long Island...
to the march of civilization, the Elizabeth Alexandra Morton Refuge plays an important part in providing not only resting and feeding areas for waterfowl, but also a wilderness area for the public to enjoy. In addition to the sanctuary afforded waterfowl and other birds and animals, the surrounding bays are filled with scaup, goldeneyes, buffleheads, oldsquaws, and scoters during the fall and winter months.

History. Jessup Neck, as the elongated peninsula is known, has long been famous for its waterfowl hunting. There are few residents in eastern Long Island who have not heard, or practiced "coot" stringing from this peninsula. Coot stringing, as it is defined locally, is pass shooting at fast-moving waterfowl from open small boats or sand pits.

The earliest historical records refer to the peninsula as Farrington's Point, Farrington being one of the original founders of the Southampton Colony. In 1679 the peninsula and surrounding land was granted to John Jessup as his share of a division of patent lands. The property remained in the Jessup family until 1800 when it was acquired by the Osborn family. Isaac Osborn utilized the area for experimenting in agricultural practices and was the first man to introduce Durham and Shorthorn cattle and Morino sheep on Long Island. Mr. Osborn established a nursery on the area and was responsible for the introduction of Bartlett pears and several species of apples; he also conceived the idea of raising silkworms on mulberry trees in this locality. Some of the pear and mulberry trees are still to be seen.

The property was purchased by two other families over the years, and was donated to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1954 by Mrs. Elizabeth Alexandra Morton Tilton. It is one of the few remaining natural areas located on the interior bays, and as such is unique.

Management. The primary objective of the refuge is to retain its natural condition for wildlife in the midst of expanding recreational and residential development. Additional winter feeding grounds for waterfowl, as well as native upland game birds and mammals, have been created. Approximately 25 acres of lands have been cleared and developed for the production of supplemental food crops. Winter wheat, buckwheat and millet are grown and left in the field for feeding by ducks, pheasants, and other wildlife during the various seasons.

Birds. The largest concentration of waterfowl occurs during the late fall and winter months. The song bird migrations in spring and fall are notable. While few waterfowl breed on the refuge, nesting of song birds is common. To date, 167 species of birds have been recorded on the refuge. Waterfowl common to the area are the black duck, mallard, scaup, oldsquaw, bufflehead, goldeneye, and red-breasted merganser.
Water and marsh birds to be found are the common and red-throated loon, horned grebe, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, common egret, green heron, and black-crowned night heron. There are a few Cooper's hawk, while the marsh hawk and osprey are fairly numerous.

Other Wildlife. Deer are plentiful and visitors are often rewarded with a view of these animals. Gray squirrels and cottontail rabbits are common, and opossum, raccoon, fox, and weasel are present.

Fish. The waters surrounding the refuge are widely known for the varied fish and shellfish life. In the fall of the year bluefish are plentiful and the weakfish provide excellent fishing earlier in the summer. Oysters, clams, and scallops are abundant.

Recreation. Sportfishing is heavily pursued throughout the bay waters on both sides of the refuge. Numerous boat liveries and bait stores are present in the vicinity. Shellfishing is permitted in the shallow waters along the shores.

No facilities for picnicking are provided, and no fires are allowed on the refuge grounds. Picnicking, without the use of fires, however, is allowed upon the extensive beach of the refuge. Swimming in the waters of Noyack and Peconic Bays from the refuge is enjoyed by many visitors. The refuge offers attractive conditions for nature study, photography, painting, ornithology, hiking, or scientific study.

A permit is required for entry on the refuge for any purpose; these may be obtained without cost at the refuge office at the headquarters. Inquiries regarding permits or other matters should be directed to the Refuge Manager, Elizabeth Alexandra Morton National Wildlife Refuge, Box 771, Southampton, Long Island, New York.
Morton National Wildlife Refuge

Location - Eastern Long Island, New York, ten miles northeast of the town of Southampton, Southampton Township, Suffolk County.

Description - Established in 1954. 187 acres divided into two distinct tracts. The upland portion consists of brushland and fallow fields. The remaining area is composed of a narrow peninsula extending into Little Peconic and Noyac Bays. One half of this is a lagoon bordered to the west by a sandy beach and on the east by a pebbly shingle. A narrow salt marsh borders much of the inner side of the lagoon. The bluffs at the north end contain some remnant of exposed hardwood forest found on Long Island.

Personnel - Resident Manager

Objective - The primary objective is to maintain the area in as natural condition as possible. Plant control is reduced to a minimum to make the refuge an outdoor study area in the educational program.

Public Use - The greatest use is in July and August through the Labor Day weekend. About 75% come solely for picnicking and bathing. The remainder are school groups and nature students. The greatest use by school groups is at the opening and close of the school year.

Annual O&M - $14,000

Problems - Complete control of the peninsula is virtually impossible due to Southampton Township's jurisdiction of waters up to the mean high tide.

February 1969
Visitors comfort rooms are provided at the rear of the office building.
P-38, E-2
Morton
Fresh pond fed by a large spring and lesser ones affords a good contrast to the salt marsh beyond the trees for an information program.
May brings the glory of the beach plum blow to the delight of the nature photographer.
Most of the maintenance equipment is stored in this barn at headquarters.
Unique in death the weathered red cedars are coveted by driftwood pickers and must be protected from such vandalism.
This view looking south along refuge beach on the west side of the peninsula shows the effect of tidal erosion on Jessup's Neck.
The woodcock is one of Morton's regular breeders, but hard to find in the summer.
A high school science major teaches the rudiments of marine biology to a group of third grade students. Victoria Dominy from Bellport High School. Summer '68.
Commercial fishermen commonly set their nets from the refuge beach, out into Little Peconic Bay.
During the "off-season" months only a few visitors, such as this hardy scalloper frequent the refuge area.
Visitors show much interest in this historic grave site on Jessup's Neck which has been fenced off by refuge personnel.
A birding group from famous Gurney's Inn record the spring arrivals at Morton.
Girl scouts from nearby Camp Tekakwitha complete a carry across Jessups.
Recreationists flock to this refuge beach during the summer months.
An exhibiting artist from North Haven paints a view from Jessup's Neck
The Jessup headstone, a fine example of the carving of the period. A small footstone lies beyond with Abigail Jessup inscribed thereon.
On the right edge of the stone on
the upper third of the stelarical leave
rows have been scratches made by straightness
persons in the early summer of 68

FREDERICK C. SCHMID

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SAG HARBOR, L. I., NEW YORK