



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**John Heinz
Refuge Trail**
Pennsylvania



John Heinz Refuge Trail

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The John Heinz Refuge Trail and various footpaths at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum stand in stark contrast to the urban setting that surrounds this refuge. At different points on this flat and hard-packed trail, you have views of the Philadelphia skyline, while your immediate surroundings encompass 1,000 acres of water, marsh grasses, and trees.

Expect to see lots of migratory birds here as this freshwater tidal marsh—the largest in Pennsylvania—is a resting and feeding spot for some 300 species of birds, as well as 80 nesting species. Deer, coyotes, raccoons, beavers, and otters are among the mammals that also make their home here, along with many fish and reptiles.

The marshland at the southwest corner of Philadelphia

became the first urban refuge in 1972 after local citizens protested the proposed routing of I-95 through the area. Later, the refuge was named after late U.S. Senator John Heinz to honor his commitment to preserving the refuge. The refuge trail is part of the Circuit Trails, a developing 800-mile urban network of trails in Greater Philadelphia, of which about 350 miles are currently complete. It's also on the East Coast Greenway that will eventually extend 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida.

The refuge is open sunrise–sunset; check the exact times for the season at the entrance gates. Bicycles are allowed only on designated service roads in the refuge. All visitors must remain on the trails, which comprise service roads and footpaths. While the refuge has an estimated 10 miles of trails and footpaths, about 9.4 miles are multiuse or maintained for hikers. Pets are allowed, but must be on a leash and must stay out of the water. Fishing is allowed with a Pennsylvania fishing license.

You can reach the refuge by bicycle on the [Circuit Trails](#); by public transportation on bus line 37, 108, or 115; or by car. Starting at the main parking lot off Lindbergh Boulevard in southwestern Philadelphia, you'll find the Cusano Environmental Education Center, where you can learn more about the refuge or take hikes led by volunteer naturalists. You'll also find maps displaying the trails and footpaths, as well as wildlife observation areas and fishing platforms.

The main trail forms a figure eight along the shoreline of the impoundment lake and along Darby Creek, which flows into the Delaware River. Footpaths intersect along the way. Taking the right fork after leaving the parking lot (counterclockwise around the lake), you'll encounter a boardwalk at 0.2 mile that crosses the lake. In 0.5 mile past the boardwalk, you'll come to a two-story wildlife observation platform on the shoreline.

The southern side of the figure eight's lower lobe passes alongside I-95 in the vicinity of the Philadelphia International



John Heinz Refuge Trail

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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Delaware, Philadelphia

Length: 7.7 miles

Trail end points: Lindbergh Blvd. and S. 86th St. (Philadelphia) to SR 420/Wanamaker Ave. near I-95 Exit 9A (Tinicum Township)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone, Gravel

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

Trail activities: Bike, Fishing, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the eastern trailhead at the main entrance of John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum from I-95 N, take Exit 10 toward SR 291 E/ Bartram Ave. Merge onto SR 291 E/ Gov. Printz Blvd., go 0.6 mile, and turn left to stay on SR 291/ Bartram Ave. Go 2.2 miles, and turn left onto S. 84th St. Go 0.7 mile, and turn left onto Lindbergh Blvd. Go 0.2 mile, and turn right into the refuge. The parking lot is 0.2 mile ahead.

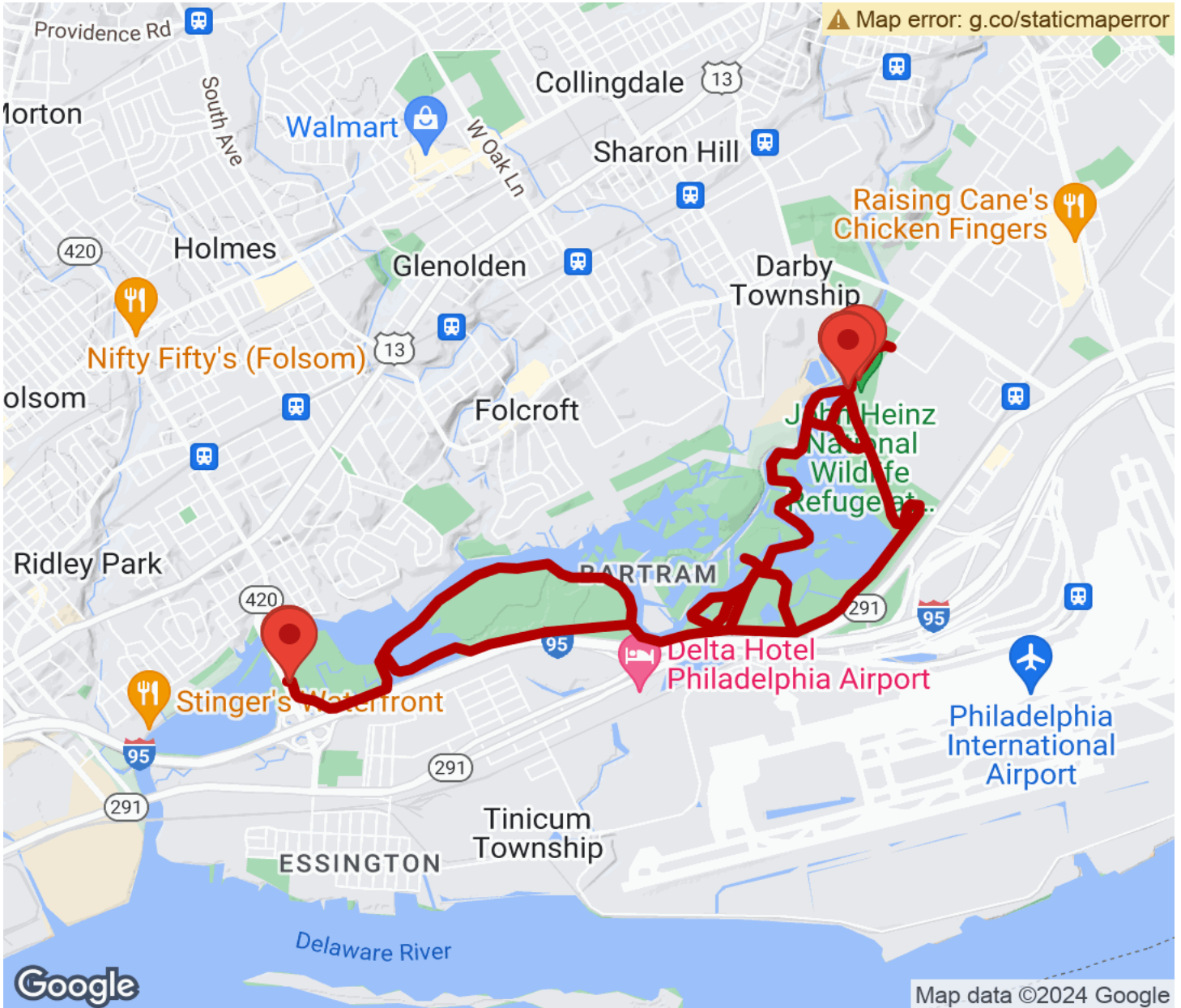
To reach the eastern trailhead at the main entrance of John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum from I-95 S, take Exit 14 toward Bartram Ave./SR 291. Merge onto Bartram Ave., go 1.1 miles, and turn right onto S. 84th St. Go 0.7 mile, and turn left onto Lindbergh Blvd. Go 0.2 mile, and turn right into the refuge. The parking lot is 0.2 mile ahead.

To reach the western trailhead from I-95, take Exit 9B toward SR 420 N. Go about 0.1 mile north on SR 420 N/Wanamaker Ave., and look for parking on either side of Wanamaker Ave.



John Heinz Refuge Trail

Pennsylvania



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
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