



Leading the way down Tall Poplar Trail at Patapsco.



Playing fetch on the sand at Point Lookout.



This rockin' pair heads for Patapsco's Hollofield Area.



Adventure awaits at the Hollofield Area of Patapsco.

Photos by Stephen Badger

The Call of the Wild

Pet-friendly State Parks

By Stephen Badger

It calls to us. It beckons us. The allure of natural beauty begs us to leave behind the hustle and bustle of modern life, reminds us to go out and play. Many of us are enticed by the visual splendor — endless horizons of grasslands, pastures, trees, mountains and coastlines. For some it's simply a chance to fill the lungs with fresh air. Still others crave the pleasant refrains of nature's wild chorus. Whatever the reason, millions satisfy their passions each year by visiting Maryland's beautiful State Parks.

Such cravings are not, however, the domain of humans alone. We need only

look to our furry domesticated friends to find willing companions for just about any activity we can dream up. After all, our pets too long for outdoor adventure, the exercise it affords, and the chance to bond with friends and family.

A place for pets

Parks across Maryland are increasingly welcoming domesticated animals alongside their human companions. Each year, more and more patrons find new ways and new places to experience outdoor recreation with their pets. And what better state could backdrop these

Year-Round Access

The following locations allow pets all year in day-use and picnic areas.

Big Run	Gathland	Rocks
Calvert Cliffs	Gunpowder Falls	Rocky Gap
Casselman River	Janes Island	Rosaryville
Cedarville	Martinak	Seneca Creek
Cunningham Falls	New Germany	Smallwood
Dans Mountain	Patapsco	St. Clement's Island
Fort Frederick	Pocomoke	Tuckahoe
Gambrill		Washington Monument

Accessibility and amenities vary from park to park. Additional seasonal and conditional pet-friendly areas are listed online.

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Splashing around Patapsco's Daniels Area.



Exploring the McKeldin Area of Patapsco.

pursuits than ours? Keenly nicknamed *America in Miniature*, the diverse topography provides opportunity for just about any manner of excursion.

Will its connection to the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean, Maryland's epic coastlines team with fascinations that will delight any animal's senses. In fact, the mighty Chesapeake gave rise to the first recognized breed of retrievers. But any breed — locally bred and titled or not — can enjoy a romp on a beach, a splash in the water or a boat ride.

The perfect example

Nestled on a peninsula framed by the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay, Point Lookout State Park in St. Mary's County has long been a destination for pet owners. Several areas — including a section of campground — are pet-friendly and well-visited. Park management recently set aside a new section of beach that caters specifically to guests with animal companions, replacing an older section that was lost to erosion.

In response to public demand, Park Manager Christy Bright and her staff have designated a safe and wonderful stretch along the Chesapeake as a year-round, animal accessible beach. It runs just south of the causeway, extending as far as the

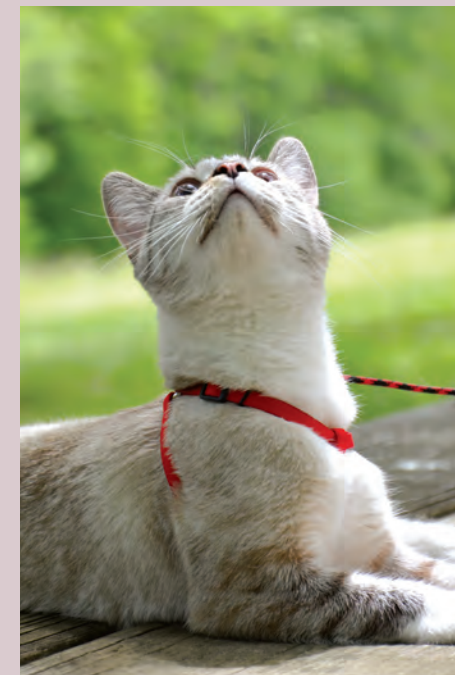
Guidelines

The Maryland Park Service offers many excellent pet-friendly opportunities and asks only that visitors adhere to fairly simple guidelines. In general, the policy can be summed up as responsible ownership. Dogs and cats are to be licensed and all necessary vaccinations — including rabies — need to be up-to-date. Guests should keep their pets leashed — except while swimming — and under control at all times. Such control minimizes stress for

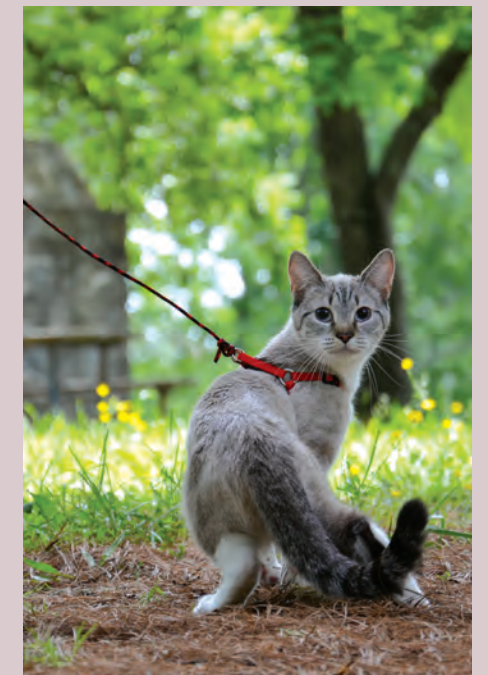
native wildlife, is appreciated by non pet-owning visitors, and ensures the safety of visiting pets.

All waste should be treated as trash, either disposed of in proper receptacles or taken home for disposal. Non-service animals are prohibited in public buildings and playgrounds.

We all share the responsibility of keeping wild places wild. Pets, like we humans, can have significant impacts on our natural world, so it's important to minimize that impact.



State Parks aren't just for the dogs...



This cat enjoys the McKeldin Area too!

Rock Jetty, which serves not only as a boundary but also as a helpful buffer for would-be problematic hooks and lines from the nearby fishing pier.

Other opportunities

Maryland has no shortage of water access elsewhere — countless rivers and streams crisscross our fair State. Several are followed by spectacular trails that wind their way alongside the water, offering not only beautiful scenery but also many spots where pets can seek a cool respite on a hot summer day.

With over 2.7 million forested acres spanning the State, there are nearly endless options for trail users to spend days in the shade. Hikers can opt to

wrestle with challenging elevations in the mountains and foothills of Western Maryland, or enjoy a more leisurely stroll through the flatter Loblolly Pine forests on our eastern shore. Some parks even offer paved, handicapped accessible trails.

Nearly all of these trails are pet-friendly. Whether you're walking, jogging, running or biking — miles and miles of Maryland's best natural offerings are out there, ready to be seen and enjoyed at a moment's notice. ■

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