

Ducktail and Partridge Pond Trails, Amherst

Both of these remote ponds are wonderful, with wide flat ledges sloping gently into the water. You can't find more ideal swimming spots. On the hot June day we visited, we had both ponds all to ourselves.

The ponds are part of the 4,794-acre Amherst Mountains Community Forest, which doesn't have too many trails, just enough. You can reach Partridge Pond via a 1.3-mile trail, or you can swing by Ducktail Pond first. This route is just a hair shorter, at 1.2 miles.

We walked in via the Ducktail Pond trail, which was easy to follow until we arrived at Ducktail Pond. Then the blazes were harder to find where a couple of little footpaths intersect. To keep on the path, it's helpful to remember that the trail takes a hard left at the very tip of the pond, right where you first emerge on the water. You cross a little stream, and continue straight. Or you can walk along the ledge on the side of the pond, and then dip left into the campsite. At the campsite, look for cairns for a trail that heads away from the pond. It will intersect with the trail to Partridge Pond in about 0.3 miles, and Partridge Pond is another 0.5 miles from this point.

When you emerge onto Partridge Pond, you'll cross a ledge between the pond and stream, and will walk onto the pond's campsite. Look for a little path to your left that will take you to a big, broad ledge – a great place for swimming and soaking in the sun.

Directions: From Route 9, turn onto Ducktail Pond Road, which is marked with an Amherst Community Forest sign. The first parking area and trailhead for Partridge Pond Trail is on the

left, in about two miles. The parking area and trailhead for Ducktail Pond is another 0.7 miles farther down the road.





