

Cape Romain

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



photo: Mark Dahl



photo: Ricky Wrenn



photo: Tricia Lynch

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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1932.
- Acres: 66,287 — 29,000 of which are preserved with the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- Located in northeast Charleston County.
- Other management: two conservation easements in Charleston County totaling 25 acres.
- Refuge headquarters located on seven acres of permitted lands within the Francis Marion National Forest.
- Refuge is part of the Carolinian-South Atlantic Biosphere Reserve.
- Location: Refuge Office and Sewee Visitor Center are located 20 miles north of Charleston, SC on U.S. Highway 17. Refuge lands are located 20 miles north of Charleston and are accessible by boat only.
- Noted as one of 500 Important Bird Areas by the American Bird Conservancy. Designated as one of only 20 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Sites of International Importance.

Natural History

- Refuge is a barrier island/salt marsh habitat extending for 22 miles along the Atlantic Coast.
- Concentrations of waterfowl, shore birds, wading birds, and raptors with over 293 species of birds found on the refuge.
- Largest wintering population of American oystercatchers on the East Coast.
- Largest nesting population of loggerhead sea turtles outside the State of Florida.
- Refuge consists of 35,287 acres of beach and sand dunes, salt marsh, maritime forests, tidal creeks, fresh and brackish water managed wetlands, and 31,000 acres of open water.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Staff: six permanent, two complex.
- 289,000 visitors annually.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory birds and resident species.
- Provide habitat and management of endangered and threatened species.
- Provide protection of Class I Wilderness Area.
- Provide protection of maritime forest.
- Provide environmental education and recreation for the public.

Management Tools

- Managed wetlands for waterfowl, wading birds and shore birds.
- Nest relocation for loggerhead sea turtles.
- Mechanical/chemical control of noxious plants.
- Deer management with public hunting.
- Environmental education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.
- Protection of wilderness area.

Public Use Opportunities

- Visitor and Environmental Education Center.
- Red wolf viewing area.
- Trails.
- Wildlife observation.
- Shelling and beach combing opportunities.
- Fishing.
- Hunting.
- Photography.

Public Use Opportunities - continued

- Boating.
- Concession boat to refuge islands.
- Environmental education and interpretation.

Calendar of Events

February: Southeastern Wildlife Expo.

April: Earth Day.

May: Bulls Bay Nature Festival, International Migratory Bird Day.

June: National Trails Day.

September-November: rail hunting.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

November-December: archery deer hunting.

Questions and Answers

How do you get to the refuge and/or Bulls Island?

Except for the Refuge Headquarters and Sewee Visitor Center, the refuge, including Bulls Island, is accessible by boat only. Access can be by personal boat or through Coastal Expeditions at 843/881 4582 which provides a ferry service for the refuge.

How do I volunteer for the loggerhead sea turtle program?

Contact Patricia Midgett at Refuge Headquarters at 843/928 3264. The best time is from March through June.

How can I view the Cape Romain Lighthouses?

If you have personal watercraft, you can travel to Lighthouse Island during daylight hours. The island is located seven miles from the mainland. The refuge offers four public tours annually to the island. Contact the refuge concession Coastal Expeditions at 843/881 4582 to schedule your tour.