

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# Cape Romain

*National Wildlife  
Refuge*



*Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. This system, encompassing over 90 million acres, is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for wildlife. The refuge system is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior. In addition to the refuge system, the Service is responsible for the endangered species program, certain marine mammals and migratory birds, among other wildlife programs.*



*This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

## **A Haven for Wildlife**

Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1932. Since that time, in support of wildlife's battle for survival and the fight against constantly disappearing habitat, wildlife managers and biologists have employed a number of wildlife management techniques. Techniques now used to help wildlife, in addition to preserving the naturally occurring habitat, include:



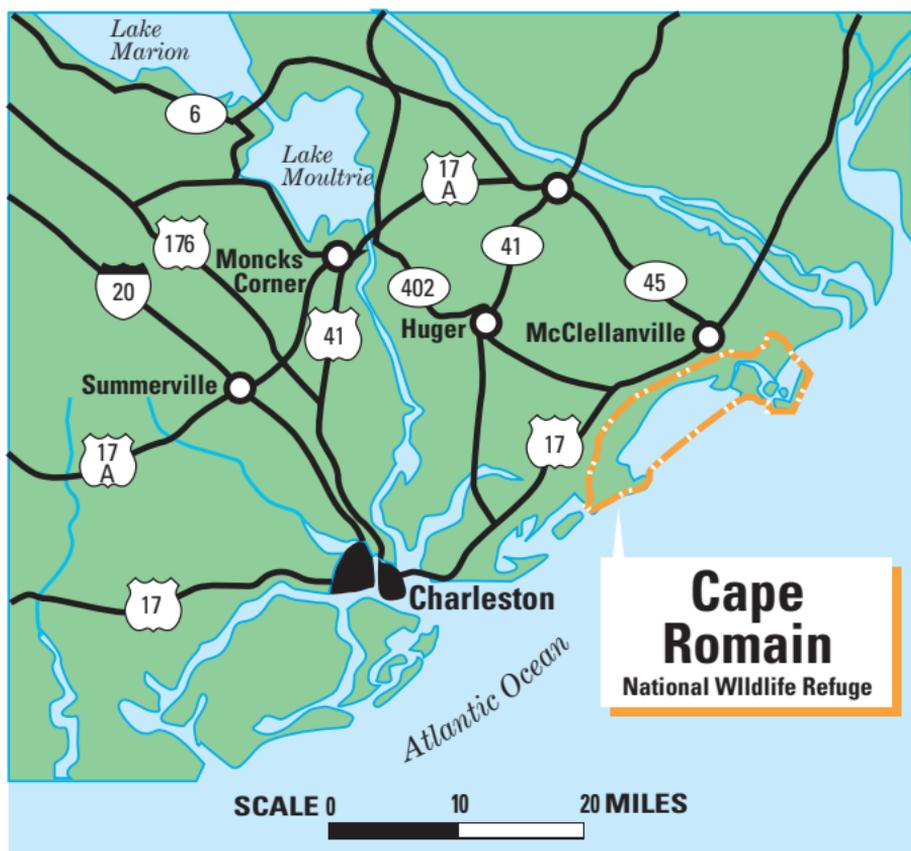
- Relocation of threatened loggerhead sea turtle eggs, laid on refuge beaches, to special enclosures to protect them from predatory raccoons and eroding beaches.



- A red wolf breeding program in which young pups born on Bull Island are relocated to eastern North Carolina for release back into the wild.
- Management of artificial ponds. A few years ago prolific cattails began to cover freshwater ponds. Thus wintering wigeon, canvasbacks and ring-necked ducks were unable to find food and a place to rest. Because of wildlife management, today you will see open ponds, some covered with banana waterlilies, that will entice these ducks to winter safely on the refuge.

*Red wolf being checked over prior to move to North Carolina.*





### **Preserving a Rich Natural Heritage**

Stretching for 22 miles along the coast of South Carolina, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge is a rich natural resource. In the shallow bays of the refuge, the incoming tide combines the life-giving nourishment of the ocean with the nutrient-laden fresh waters of several small rivers to make one of the most productive environments on earth. Plants and animals from the land, rivers and ocean are all present at Cape Romain — and all are dependent on the delicate balance of the marshlands.

### **Enjoying the Refuge**

If your destination is Bulls Island, take drinking water and food, and wear comfortable walking shoes. Always remember to bring your cameras and binoculars. Any visit to the refuge during warm spring, summer, and fall months requires insect repellent.

Ponds on Bulls Island host most of the wintering waterfowl. The pier at Garriss Landing is used for saltwater fishing and crabbing. During periods

of low tide, this pier is a good location to observe wading and shore birds.

### **The Seasons of Cape Romain**

Spring is the best time of the year to visit the refuge. You have opportunities to see painted buntings, other songbirds and warblers, as their migration peaks in March and April. Shorebirds also return at this time. Alligators can be viewed as they sun along the banks of Jacks Creek and Upper Summerhouse Pond.



Summer is a hot and humid period. Temperatures sometimes reach above 100 degrees but visitors are rewarded with the possibility of seeing endangered woodstorks, brown pelicans, young wood ducks, fledgling royal terns and other young birds.

Fall temperatures begin to cool and fall colors appear in the maritime forest. Endangered peregrine falcons move through and in September ducks begin to arrive in preparation for their winter stay. In October yellow warblers and other songbirds again pass through the refuge.

Winter is the season for hunting and fishing. Channel bass runs peak in November and deer hunts occur in November and December. Birders can observe peak waterfowl numbers in late November or early December. At this same time most of the Atlantic Coast's American oyster-catcher population is on the refuge. January and February are prime times to gather clams and oysters.



## **Refuge Access**

The refuge is open sunrise to sunset, seven days a week, year-round. The only facilities accessible by automobile are the refuge office, Sewee Visitor Center, and Garris Landing. Bulls Island lies nearly three miles off the mainland and is reached by boat from Garris Landing. A private ferry service takes visitors to Bulls Island on regularly scheduled days. Visitors desiring to visit Bulls Island should contact the refuge regarding the availability of the boat trip or call 843/881 4582.

## **Sewee Visitor Center**

The Sewee Visitor Center showcases the unique heritage and natural history of the South Carolina Lowcountry. Jointly operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service, the 9,000 square foot facility exhibits hands-on displays on the unique and valuable ecosystems of the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and Francis Marion National Forest. The Center features tourist information on recreational opportunities on the Refuge and Forest. In addition, there are education classrooms for groups; live red wolf display; book sales store; and hiking trails. The Center is located one-quarter mile north of the refuge office. Hours are Tuesdays-Sunday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Phone 843/928 3368.



## Refuge Activities

### *Sports Fishing*

Saltwater fishing and surf fishing opportunities are available year-round.

### *Clamming, Oystering, and Crabbing*

Allowed in accordance with State regulations.

### *Hunting*

A refuge hunting leaflet is available to inform you about the deer and rail hunting opportunities.

### *Hiking*

A two-mile national recreation trail is located on Bulls Island. This six-mile long, two-mile wide island also has 16 miles of roads open for hiking.

### *Photography and Wildlife Observation*

A small information station is available on Bulls Island. During a visit you may view some of the 277 bird species, 12 types of amphibians, 24 reptile species and 36 varieties of mammals that have been recorded on this refuge.

Note: Closed areas are noted on map. Other areas of the refuge may be closed seasonally due to nesting activities.



## **Prohibited Refuge Activities**

### *Camping*

Camping facilities are located nearby on the Francis Marion National Forest. Call 843/928 3368.

### *Fires*

Prohibited due to potential fire hazards.

### *Weapons*

Prohibited on refuge lands except during open hunting seasons and in open hunt areas.

### *Pets*

Not allowed on refuge islands or the pier at Garris Landing.

### *Collection*

Taking of any items, including items of antiquity is prohibited. One small bag of dead shells may be taken. **Commercial shelling is prohibited.**

### *Littering*

Please take your litter home and dispose of properly.

## **Refuge Office**

The refuge office is located approximately 20 miles north of Charleston, SC on Highway 17. The office is open Monday through Friday (except holidays), 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.

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