



SAVANNAH COASTAL REFUGES COMPLEX

Visitor Information

The chain of refuges comprising the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex extends from Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) near Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, to Wolf Island NWR near Darien, Georgia. Between these lie Savannah, Wassaw, Tybee, Harris Neck, and Blackbeard Island refuges. Questions regarding the satellite refuges should be directed to the Complex headquarters office located at the Savannah NWR Visitor Center (694 Beech Hill Lane, Hardeeville, SC 29927) or call (843) 784-2468. Information concerning the refuges can also be accessed online at <http://www.fws.gov/savannah>. Savannah NWR Visitor Center hours are Monday thru Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Two of the island refuges – Tybee and Wolf Island – are closed to all public use except saltwater activities (e.g. fishing, crabbing, shrimping). The limited upland areas found on these refuges are closed to the public since they are used by a variety of migratory birds for nesting, feeding, or resting purposes.

The Fish and Wildlife Service does not provide transportation to any of the Savannah Coastal Refuges. Several marinas on the mainland provide charter service to the barrier island refuges for a fee. A partial listing of marinas offering transportation can be provided by the headquarters office or accessed on our website. Those interested in using their private boats to reach the barrier islands may wish to purchase a “Guide to Coastal Fishing in Georgia” (specify the coastal county for which the guide is needed) from the University of Georgia, Marine Advisory Services, 715 Bay Street, Brunswick, Georgia 31520 (phone: 912-264-7268). These maps/guides include sites of private marinas, public boat ramps, and fishing camps within the coastal counties of Georgia. Much of this information is also available at their website - <http://www.marex.uga.edu/advisory/>. Visitors are reminded that there are no public docking facilities on Blackbeard Island or Wassaw NWRs. Private boats may be moored to the refuge docks only for loading and unloading purposes.

There are no lodging or eating establishments on the Savannah Coastal Refuges. Restrooms are available only at Savannah and Harris Neck NWRs. Recreational camping is not permitted on any of the refuges. The public is permitted within designated areas of Blackbeard Island, Harris Neck, Pinckney Island, Savannah, and Wassaw refuges daily from sunrise to sunset. From December 1 through February 28, parts of Savannah NWR’s impoundments (#1 - #9) north of SC 170 are closed to the public. This restriction is enforced to create a sanctuary within the refuge where waterfowl will be free from all human disturbance. Harris Neck’s Barbour River Landing (located 1-1/2 miles east of the refuge entrance on Georgia Route 131/Harris Neck Road) is open to boat launching/loading daily from 4:00 a.m. to midnight. Dogs, cats, and other pets are not permitted on any of the Savannah Coastal Refuges.

Three of the Savannah Coastal Refuges are accessible by automobile: Pinckney Island, Savannah, and Harris Neck. Visitors to Pinckney Island must enter the refuge at the U.S. 278 gate, then park in the designated area one-half mile north of the entrance (only foot and bicycle travel are permitted north of the parking area). This entrance is located one-quarter mile west of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, between the Mackay and Skull Creek Bridges, directly across the highway from the public boat ramp.

A four-mile wildlife drive on Savannah NWR is open to the public seven days a week from sunrise to sunset. The drive can be reached by driving east from Port Wentworth, Georgia on GA 25 for two miles, south from Hardeeville, South Carolina on U.S. 17 / SC 170 for approximately 7 miles, or north from Savannah, GA on U.S. 17 for approximately 7 miles. Most other roadways within the Savannah NWR are open to foot and bicycle travel, unless otherwise posted. The only road on Savannah NWR closed to public use at all times is located opposite the entrance to the Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive; this road is clearly marked “closed.”

Motorized vehicles are permitted on a four-mile access route through Harris Neck NWR daily from sunrise to sunset. Use of the Harris Neck Creek fishing area, which includes a boat ramp and fishing piers, is also permitted from sunrise to sunset throughout the week. The entrance gate to Harris Neck NWR and the Harris Neck Creek fishing area is located on Harris Neck Road (take the South Newport Exit #67 off of I-95 to U.S. 17; travel south one mile on U.S. 17 to Harris Neck Road, then east on Harris Neck Road for seven miles).