

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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News Release

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National Wildlife Refuges in NC Contribute \$740,000 to County Budgets

MANTEO - Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Manager Mike Bryant announced today the contribution of Refuge Revenue Sharing funds in the amount of \$225,538 to Dare County. The total Revenue Sharing funds contributed to North Carolina counties by 10 national wildlife refuges and one hatchery this year was just under \$740,000. Each year, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service presents funds to counties in which there are refuge and hatchery properties; these funds have been presented annually since the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act was enacted in 1978. As a federal land manager the US Fish and Wildlife Service delivers these moneys to counties in lieu of taxes.

Amounts of the contributions vary annually and are based upon a computation method which takes into account the fair market value of the acreage owned by the Service within the county, or the total amount of funds the Service collects from activities on that land, whichever is greater. Such funding is generated at the national level from offshore and land oil and gas leases, timber and gravel sales and grazing rights. "The amount generated frequently does not meet the amount due under the criteria procedure", Bryant explains, "but Congress often authorizes and appropriates additional funds to help fill the gap." This year's contribution, which represents fiscal year 2006, enables the Service to contribute approximately 43.1 percent of the total entitlement.

Bryant also pointed out that all 5,823 acres of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, and most of the 152,000 acres which comprise the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, are situated within Dare County. Over two million visitors from every state in the Union and numerous other countries on every continent have visited one or both of the refuges, taking advantage of the wildlife areas to enjoy birding, fishing and other natural setting activities. North Carolina is fortunate to have 8 additional refuges, including Cedar Island, Currituck, Mackay Island, Mattamuskeet, Pee Dee, Pocosin Lakes, Roanoke River, and Swanquarter, and Edenton National Fish Hatchery.

Many of the visitors also participate in the environmental education and wildlife interpretation programs offered at the Pea Island Visitor Center, or wildlife observation, freshwater fishing and seasonal hunting activities at the Alligator River Refuge. Both refuges offer unique natural settings, ranging from swampy woodlands and blackwater creeks to well-developed walking trails and ocean-front sand dunes. All North Carolina national wildlife refuges and the hatchery offer wildlife-dependent recreational activities to the public.

"We are always pleased when we can make contributions to our local areas," Bryant said, "the refuges are beautiful and serene places within their counties that present large areas of conservation, management, and restoration for the native plant and animals communities, as well as, for the soil and water they depend on. We can maintain these lands for wildlife while, at the same time, provide a special place for local residents and visitors to spend time. We invite all residents and visitors who have seen the refuges to come back again and again. National Wildlife Refuges have moved into their second hundred years, so it's a prime time to get to know refuges. To those who have not yet taken the opportunity, we extend a warm invitation to come for a visit. You'll be glad you did," Bryant concluded.

FY 06 Revenue Sharing Fund Contributions to North Carolina counties are shown below, by refuge or hatchery, amount, and county:

ALLIGATOR RIVER NWR	112,451.00	DARE COUNTY, NC
ALLIGATOR RIVER NWR	8,882.00	HYDE COUNTY, NC
CEDAR ISLAND NWR	4,685.00	CARTERET COUNTY, NC
CURRITUCK NWR	192,741.00	CURRITUCK COUNTY, NC
EDENTON NFH	1,460.00	CHOWAN COUNTY, NC
MACKAY ISLAND NWR	52,000.00	CURRITUCK COUNTY, NC
MATTAMUSKEET NWR	38,980.00	HYDE COUNTY, NC
PEA ISLAND NWR	113,087.00	DARE COUNTY, NC
PEE DEE NWR	72,101.00	ANSON COUNTY NC
PEE DEE NWR	11,099.00	RICHMOND COUNTY, NC
POCOSIN LAKES NWR	27,867.00	HYDE COUNTY, NC
POCOSIN LAKES NWR	34,626.00	TYRRELL COUNTY, NC
POCOSIN LAKES NWR	13,051.00	WASHINGTON COUNTY, NC
POCOSIN LAKES NWR-FSA	695.00	HYDE COUNTY, NC
ROANOKE RIVER NWR	43,093.00	BERTIE COUNTY NC
ROANOKE RIVER NWR-FSA	76.00	NASH COUNTY, NC
ROANOKE RIVER NWR-FSA	517.00	SAMPSON COUNTY, NC
SWANQUARTER NWR	7,519.00	HYDE COUNTY, NC

In the past one hundred years, America's National Wildlife Refuge System has protected hundreds of wild species, including our national symbol, the bald eagle. As the National Wildlife Refuge System enters its second century, it comprises nearly 100 million acres, protected within more than 540 refuges and thousands of small prairie wetlands. Wildlife refuges provide unparalleled outdoor activities, including fishing, hunting, environmental education, wildlife observation, and photography, making them special places for all Americans to connect with nature. Many refuges also offer opportunities for nature hikes, bird tours, wildlife drives and other activities. There are wildlife refuges in every state, and at least one within an hour's drive of most major cities.

For more information about National Wildlife Refuges in North Carolina, visit:
<http://northcarolina.fws.gov>