

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge
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News Release

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Eastern North Carolina National Wildlife Refuges Reopen

Except for Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, all refuges in eastern North Carolina will be open to the public as of Friday, September 2, 2011.

Mattamuskeet, Swanquarter, and Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuges are open today. The Mattamuskeet Goose hunt, a permit hunt, will occur as scheduled during the entire month of September. However, the Rose Bay access road will be closed due to storm damage to a bridge. This road may also remain closed during the deer hunt. At Swanquarter, the Bell Island Road and Bell Island Pier are closed due to damage to Bell Island Pier, pending safety inspections. On Cedar Island, the Lola Road boat ramp dock is closed; however, the ramp may still be used.

Pocosin Lakes will reopen to the public tomorrow. Incident Management Team crews have completed removing trees from the main roads, but there is a lot of equipment being moved around out there today. Visitors should drive with caution. In particular, they should watch out for eroded areas on the edge of the roads adjacent to canals. Please report any damage seen to Refuge Headquarters at 252-796-3004.

The Incident Management Team has been staging equipment and operating out of the Pungo Maintenance Compound on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Visitors may expect more traffic in and around the Pungo Unit than normal for the next few days.

The Pocosin Lakes Visitor Center reopened today. The Scuppernong River Interpretive Boardwalk will remain closed until further notice due to hurricane damage on the back side of the loop. Manager Howard Phillips described the damage as, "A root mass from uprooted trees along the canal has lifted the boardwalk in several places. It looks a little like a roller coaster. It's not safe to be on that part of the boardwalk."

Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge is open as usual, with the exception of Mackay Island Road. The short loop is open for hiking, biking, etc.; however, the long loop is closed due to severe erosion from the storm.

Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge was not closed in association with Hurricane Irene.

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge reopened yesterday. Refuge Interpretive Programs will resume on Tuesday, September 6.

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge remains closed while the NC Department of Transportation assesses damages and formulates plans to restore access to Hatteras Island.

When visiting any national wildlife refuge, damages or unsafe conditions should be reported to the refuge office. And, in all cases, there may be areas posted as closed for public safety or wildlife management purposes. For more information about national wildlife refuges in North Carolina and for links to individual refuges web sites, visit <http://www.fws.gov/northcarolina>.