

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Cedar Island

*National Wildlife Refuge*



*Unmatched anywhere in the world, the National Wildlife Refuge System is an extensive network of lands and waters protected and managed especially for wildlife and its habitat. Refuges stretch across the U.S. from above the Arctic Circle in Alaska to the subtropical waters of the Florida Keys and beyond to the Caribbean and South Pacific. The National Wildlife Refuge System is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which protects and manages over 500 refuges for wildlife and for people to enjoy.*



*This blue goose, designed by "Ding Darling," has become a symbol of the Refuge System.*

Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 National Wildlife Refuges throughout the United States. Cedar Island is located on the south shores of the Pamlico Sound in Carteret County, North Carolina.

Traditionally, the Cedar Island area has provided wintering habitat for thousands of migratory waterfowl. To ensure the perpetuation and enhancement of that resource, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased 7,830 acres of the island in 1964.

Additional acres were acquired through 1967. In 1970 an abandoned U.S. Navy radar station was procured and converted into the refuge field office. A 1,955 acre tract was donated to the refuge in 1990. The refuge now totals 14,480 acres.

The establishing legislation for Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge lays out the purposes for the refuge: "...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds," and "...for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources...". Within these guidelines the main mission of the refuge is to provide habitat for migratory birds.



photo: Larry Ditto

*American black ducks*

*cover photo: red head ducks by A. A. Allen*

## Habitat Types

The 14,480 acre refuge consists of approximately 11,000 acres of irregularly flooded brackish marsh and 3,480 acres of pocosin and woodland habitat. The dominant marsh plants include black needlerush, saltmarsh cordgrass, saltmeadow hay, and saltgrass.



photo: USFWS

*A forested wetland*

The marsh is extremely valuable for fisheries, providing nursery habitat for a variety of fishes and shellfish.

The woodland areas are dominated by loblolly, longleaf, and pond pine. Live oak is also present on some upland sites. Shrubs include

waxmyrtle, gallberry, red bay, yaupon, and fetterbush.



photo: A. A. Allen

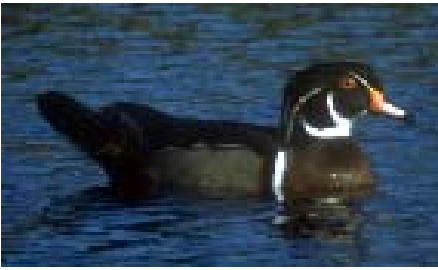
*Feeding ducks*

## Wildlife

Open water areas in the marsh are used by migratory waterfowl in the fall and winter. In certain years, large rafts of redhead ducks use the open bays. Other common diving duck species using the area include

surf scoter, bufflehead, mergansers, scaup, ruddy duck, and canvasback. The marsh areas provide nesting habitat for black ducks and gadwalls. Wood ducks also nest in tree cavities or nest boxes on the refuge.

photo: R.K. Burnard



*wood duck*

photo: Jon R. Nickles



*great blue heron*

photo: USFWS



*royal tern*

photo: USFWS



In addition to waterfowl, the vast brackish marshes also support black rails, marsh wrens, seaside sparrows, clapper rails, northern harriers, and osprey. Throughout the refuge other common birds include American kestrels, barred owls, great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, great blue herons, snowy and great egrets, and red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers. In all, over 270 species of birds have been observed on the refuge!

Pocosin and woodland habitats support large mammals such as white-tailed deer and black bear. Smaller mammals including racoons, river otter, mink, gray squirrels, and marsh rabbits live year round on the refuge.

*barred owl*

Pamlico  
Sound

# Cedar Island

National Wildlife Refuge

Tump Island

West Bay

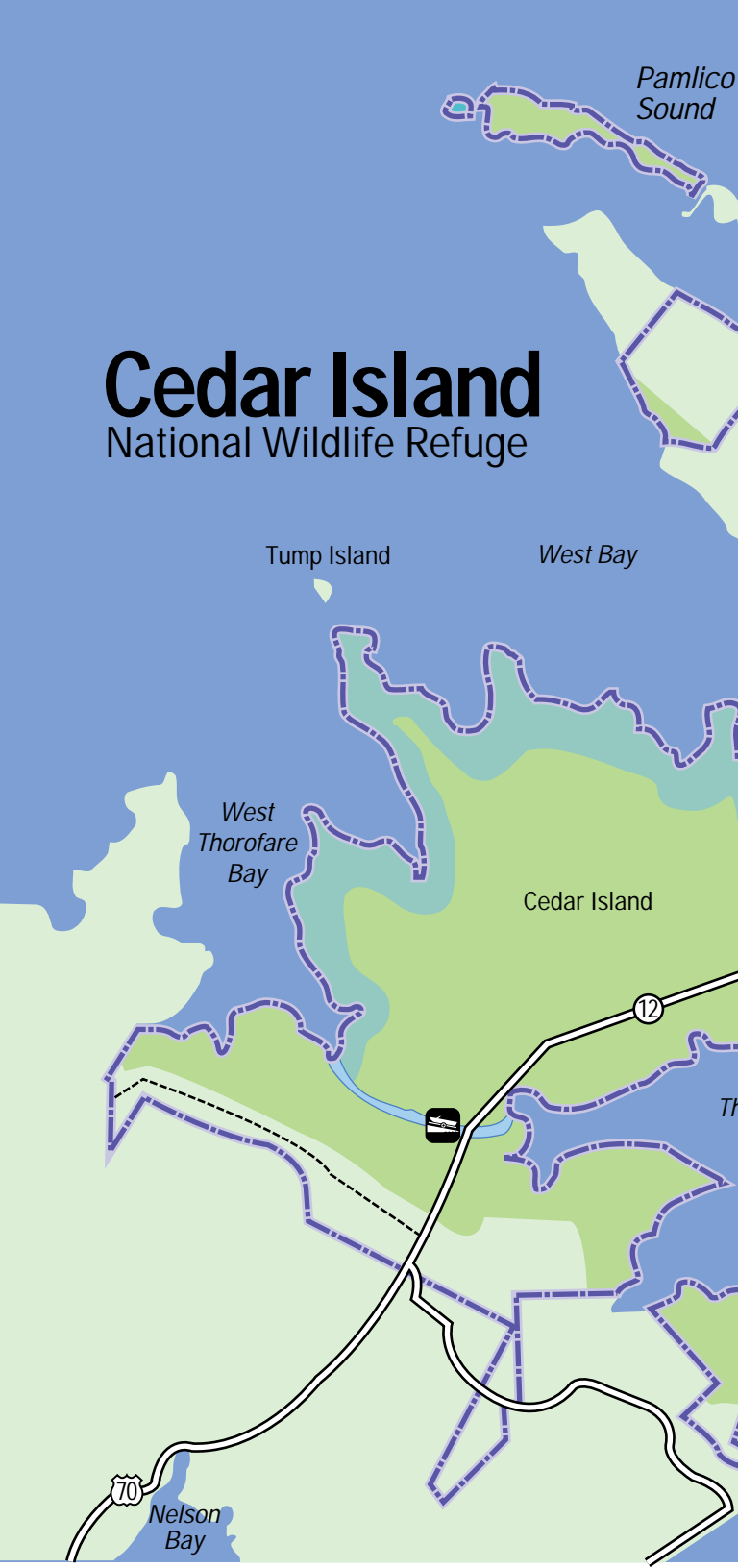
West  
Thorofare  
Bay

Cedar Island

12

70

Nelson  
Bay



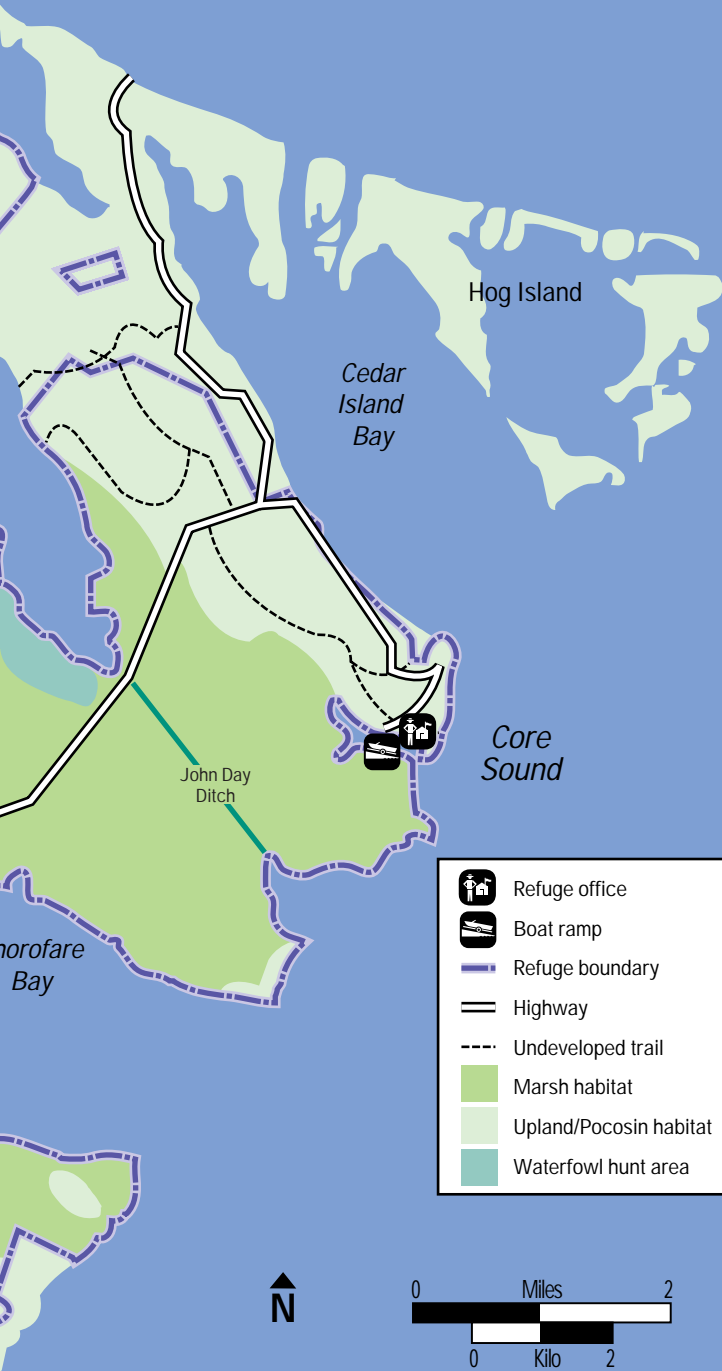


photo: USFWS



*Prescribed burn adjacent to Highway 12*

The brackish marsh also provides habitat for a variety of reptiles, amphibians, and small fish, many of which are important food sources for marsh birds and mammals. Cedar Island has an outstanding reputation for insects. A variety of hardy mosquitos abound almost year round. The insects also serve as a valuable food source for wildlife.

photo: USFWS



*Terns*

Tump Island and isolated sand beaches on the estuarine shoreline serve as important nesting sites for



colonial nesting birds such as black skimmer, Forester's tern, glossy ibis, great egret, gull-billed tern, herring gull, laughing gull, little blue heron, snowy egret, common tern, and tricolored heron.

### **Management**

Prescribed burning is done periodically in woodlands and marshes. Fire enhances wildlife habitat by promoting new growth and plant diversity, creating open areas, and reducing hazardous fuel accumulations that may result in destructive wildfires.

### **Recreational Opportunities**

Facilities for visitors are limited on Cedar Island Refuge. However,

*Cardinal flower*





visitors enjoy such recreational opportunities as wildlife observation, fishing, and waterfowl hunting. Visitors are welcome to hike, bike, or ride horses, through the undeveloped refuge trails during daylight hours.



### **Wildlife Observation**

Wildlife observation is a popular visitor activity on the refuge. The upland and marsh areas of the refuge provide a home for many songbirds, raptors, and mammals. Photography enthusiasts are welcome to try their hand and patience at wildlife photography.



### **Fishing**

Visitors also enjoy crabbing and fishing. Common fish include spotted seatrout, Atlantic flounder, spot, and Atlantic croaker. Because opportunities for bank or surf fishing are limited, fishing by boat is preferable. Public boat landings are located at the end of Lola Road beyond the refuge field office and next to the Thorofare Bridge on Highway 12.



### **Hunting**

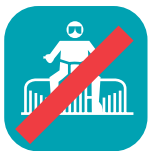
Waterfowl hunting is permitted in accordance with applicable Federal and State regulations. Hunting is restricted to an area of 400 acres of marsh shown on the map and as posted by "Public Hunting Area" signs.



In addition to the regular regulations, hunters are reminded that only temporary blinds that are removed daily are permitted.



Youth hunters under the age of 16 must have proof of passing a state approved Hunter Education Course to participate in any refuge hunt.



For reasons of hunter safety and courtesy, hunters shall not hunt closer than 150 yards apart.



*Bald eagle*

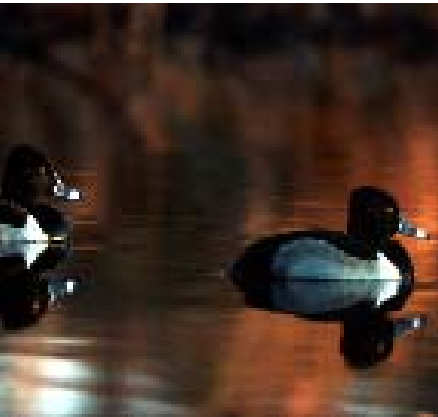
### **Regulations**

Prohibited activities include camping, littering, air boating, jet skiing, swimming, use of all-terrain vehicles, disturbing wildlife, and collecting plants. Unless specifically authorized, all firearms are prohibited.

### **How to Reach the Refuge**

The refuge lies about 5 miles northeast of Atlantic and about 40 miles northeast of Beaufort, North

Carolina. Access to the refuge is via US 70 and NC Highway 12 from Morehead City. Cedar Island can also be accessed by ferry from Ocracoke Island. Cedar Island is administered by Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge.



*Ring-necked ducks*

For more information on Cedar Island Refuge, write Route 1, Box N-2, Swan Quarter, NC 27885 or call 919/926 4021 between 7:30 am and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

Cedar Island  
National Wildlife Refuge  
Route 1, Box N-2  
Swan Quarter, NC 27885

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov/~r4eao>

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