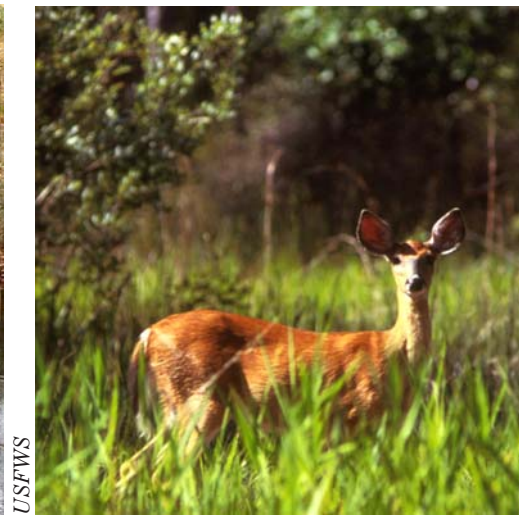


## Santee National Wildlife Refuge

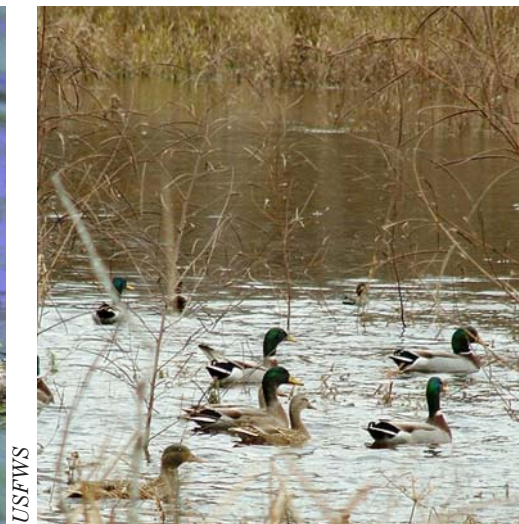
was established in 1941 to provide habitat and sanctuary for wildlife displaced by the Santee Cooper hydro-electric project that brought electricity to many rural areas of South Carolina.

The four units of the refuge (Bluff, Dingle Pond, Pine Island, and Cuddo) lie within the Atlantic Coastal Plain and include 15,095 acres of mixed hardwoods and pines, freshwater marsh, croplands, old fields and open water.

Hailed as one of the best birding areas in South Carolina, this refuge is home to 296 birds as well as 45 mammals, 54 reptiles, 35 amphibians and more than 100 fish species. The brilliantly colored painted bunting nests here as do many other neotropical migrants.



Dr. Bill Alexander



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Exhibits are available in the Visitor Center and environmental education programs focusing on refuge wildlife, habitat, and management programs are available on a limited basis for school groups and other organizations. Group leaders should contact the refuge office at 803/478 2217 well in advance of anticipated activities.

*The refuge Visitor Center is open from 8 am-4 pm, Tuesday through Saturday.*

Within the refuge, water levels are manipulated to create optimum conditions for water birds, wintering waterfowl, and many resident species and nest structures are provided for wood ducks and other species in areas lacking available natural cavities. Planting of supplemental crops along with periodic flooding of forested wetlands insures that adequate wildlife foods are available.

Prescribed burning is conducted in suitable areas to stimulate vegetative growth, create openings and maintain low fuel loads. Managed hunts are also

conducted to maintain optimum population levels for designated species.

### Visitor Use Opportunities

Both **hunting and fishing** are permitted, subject to state, federal, and refuge regulations. Hunting opportunities exist for white-tailed deer and small game. Sport fishing is available year-round except that Cantey Bay, Black Bottom, and Savannah Branch and waters within all land units are closed from November 1 until March 1. Fishing and hunting regulation brochures are updated annually and are available at the refuge office.

For the protection of all refuge visitors, when refuge units are open for public hunting, they are closed to general public access.

### Wildlife Observation, Photography, and Hiking

Walking trails are available on all four units and visitors are allowed to use bicycles on designated routes within the Cuddo and Pine Island Units. A 7-1/2 mile auto tour route provides access to



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good wildlife observation areas on the Cuddo Unit. An automatic gate on the wildlife drive controls hours of access. Additional access limits are in effect during managed hunts and winter months to minimize disturbance to wildlife during critical periods.

*To reach the Cuddo Unit, take exit 108 on I-95. Go South on Road 102 (away from Summerton). At the T-intersection, turn left and follow "Santee NWR - Cuddo Unit" signs. From the visitor center, take U.S. Highway 15/301 North towards Summerton and follow signs to the Cuddo Unit.*

### Prohibited Activities

- Weapons except during designated refuge hunts on open hunt areas.
- Collection-searching for or taking of any items including items of antiquity. The use of metal detecting devices is not allowed.
- The use or possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
- Camping
- Pets on hiking trails
- Open fires
- ATV's, dirt bikes
- Swimming or wading
- Do not enter closed areas

### Tips for Watching Wildlife

Wildlife are most active at dawn and dusk. Cars make good observation blinds. Drive slowly and quietly; stop frequently to scan places wildlife may hide.

Try sitting or standing quietly in one good location. Let wildlife get used to your presence. Most animals that have hidden will reappear once they think you are gone. Look for animal signs. Tracks, scat, feathers, and nests left behind often tell interesting stories.

Help keep the wildlife healthy and safe by not feeding or harassing them. Feeding animals causes them to lose their fear of humans and they may become aggressive.

### Hours of Operation

Seasonal hours of operation as listed below apply to all refuge units:

April 1 - September 30: 7 am - 7 pm

October 1 - March 31: 8 am - 5 pm

All land areas North of the Wrights Bluff Hiking Trail, on the West side of the Cuddo Unit, and on the Pine Island Unit are closed to visitor access from November 1 until March 1 to provide sanctuary for wintering waterfowl.





The Bluff Unit, located near the Visitor Center is home to the Santee Indian Mound that dates back more than 3,500 years. The Mound was used as both a ceremonial and burial mound. British troops erected Fort Watson atop the Mound during the Revolutionary War only to have it taken by General Francis Marion's troops in April of 1781.

A walk along the one-mile Wrights Bluff Nature Trail affords visitors the chance to observe songbirds, wood ducks, and small mammals. The east side of this trail, alongside Cantey Bay, is a great place to see wading birds, Canada geese, and other waterfowl species. Two observation decks are located on the trail. This area, along with both the Pine Island and Cuddo Units provide great opportunities for seeing the spectacular painted bunting.

Dingle Pond is home to a Carolina Bay and provides unique habitat for several wetland species including alligators, wood ducks, mallards, numerous songbirds, great blue herons and other wading birds. A one-mile unimproved dirt road provides walking access to this area.

The Pine Island and Cuddo Units provide the greatest diversity of habitats of the four units. Both units provide protection and habitat for American alligators, numerous species of wading birds, nesting bald eagles, several grassland bird species, and is home to thousands of wintering ducks, geese and swans. Visitor access on Pine Island is limited to foot and bicycle traffic only on approximately four miles of unimproved roads.

Right: Bluff Trail Cantey Bay



SMS/JSZ

A 7-1/2 mile wildlife drive and three miles of hiking trails on the Cuddo Unit give visitors great opportunities for wildlife observation. An automatic gate on the wildlife drive controls hours of access to minimize disturbance to wildlife during critical periods. Current visitor use hours are posted at the entrance gate or may be obtained by contacting the refuge office.

Visitor access on all refuge units may be limited to provide total sanctuary for wintering ducks and geese. Visitors should check with the refuge office for details.

**Trail Lengths**

- Wrights Bluff..... 0.9 mile
- Dingle Pond ..... 0.8 mile (one way)
- Pine Island..... 3.8 mile (main roads)

**Cuddo Trails**  
 North Loop ..... 1.9 mile  
 South Loop ..... 1.4 mile

**Bicycle Trails**  
 West Side ..... 7.6 mile

**Santee National Wildlife Refuge**  
 2125 Fort Watson Road  
 Summerton, SC 29148  
 Phone 803/478 2217  
<http://santee.fws.gov>

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
 1/800/344 WILD  
<http://fws.gov>

