

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Santee

National Wildlife Refuge



Santee National Wildlife Refuge established in 1941, is located in Clarendon County, South Carolina. The 15,000 acre refuge lies within the Atlantic Coastal Plain and consists of mixed hardwoods, mixed pine-hardwoods, pine plantations, marsh, croplands, old fields, ponds, impoundments and open water. This tremendous diversity of habitat supports many kinds of wildlife. The four management units of the refuge stretch over 18 miles along the northern side of Santee Cooper's Lake Marion. The office/visitor center offers many interesting displays for public viewing and is located off U.S. Highway 301/15, seven miles south of Summerton and four miles north of Santee.



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

We Need This Refuge

To provide food, water and shelter for migrating ducks, geese and swans during the months of November through February.

To provide food, water, and shelter for many other migratory and residents birds.

To provide habitat and protection for endangered and threatened species including the bald eagle and American alligator.

To provide opportunities for environmental education, interpretation and wildlife-oriented recreation for refuge visitors.



USFWS

Wildlife

A myriad of wildlife species inhabit the varied landscape of Santee.

During the winter months, the threatened bald eagle and occasionally the

endangered peregrine falcon can be seen. From November through February migrating waterfowl such as mallards, pintails, teal and wood ducks along with Canada geese are a major attraction. Throughout the year, red-tailed and red-



USFWS

Top: American alligator; below: white-tailed deer; cover: northern pintail.

shouldered hawks can be viewed soaring overhead, and a variety of songbirds and wild turkey may be readily observed.

Birds are not the only residents of Santee. Forested areas provide homes for white-tailed deer and other woodland creatures such as raccoons, squirrels and bobcats. The ponds and marshes provide a home for alligators as well as a number of other reptiles and amphibians.

Habitat Management

To support a large variety of wildlife species, intensive habitat management is a must. The habitat management programs at Santee range from the very basic to complex.

One of the basic programs is the wood duck nest box program, where nesting boxes are provided in areas that are lacking in available tree cavities, thus “adding to” the natural habitat.

The water and freshwater marsh management program is more complex. Water levels are adjusted to provide maximum benefits for wildlife. In the impoundments and marshes different levels are used to help some types of vegetation to grow while controlling unwanted “pest plants.”

Periodically flooded woodlands containing mast producing hardwoods are food-rich and very beneficial to waterfowl.

Management of forests and croplands is also critical. Corn, wheat, millet and soybeans are planted to supplement available natural foods and attract many species of wildlife.

Habitat management is a complicated process but well worth the effort since it provides an abundant amount of food, cover and shelter for a wide range of animals.

Wildlife Observation

Santee National Wildlife Refuge includes four units, each offering a variety of outdoor recreation activities for the refuge visitor.

The Bluff Unit, located near the Visitor Center is home to the Santee Indian Mound that dates back more than 3,500 years. The British erected Ft. Watson atop the mound during the Revolutionary War only to have it taken by General Francis Marion’s troops in 1781. A walk along the one-



*Top to bottom:
female wood
duck on nest box;
common
moorhen;
unknown fern.*

USFWS

USFWS

USFWS

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.



USFWS

Dingle Pond is home to a Carolina Bay and provides unique habitat for several wetland species

including alligators, wood ducks, mallards, great blue herons and other wading birds. The area also boasts a great diversity of songbirds as well as numerous reptile and amphibian species. Visitors may utilize a one-mile trail to get a closer look at wildlife on this unit.



USFWS

The Pine Island and Cuddo Units provide the greatest diversity of habitats of the four units. Pine Island provides 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.

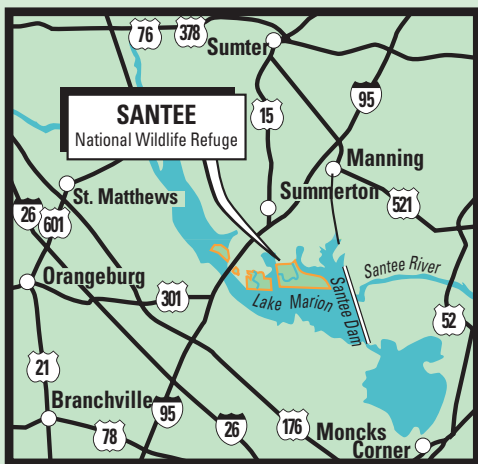


USFWS

*Top to bottom:
great egret;
prothonotary
warbler; fragrant
water lily.*

An auto tour route on the Cuddo Unit provides numerous wildlife observation opportunities. Bird life on the Cuddo Unit is abundant as are alligators and many other native species.

An automatic gate on the Cuddo Unit 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.











Santee

National Wildlife Refuge



LEGEND	
	Refuge Boundary
	Roads
	Vehicle Entry Point
	Vehicle Parking Area
	Check Station
	Boat Ramp

Refuge trails are open for wildlife observation, photography and hiking.

Boating

Lake Marion is open year-round to boating, except Cantey Bay, Savannah Branch and Black Bottom which are closed from November 1 through February 29.

Fishing

All areas open to boating are also open to fishing, as well as the Scott's Lake Public Fishing Beach. These areas produce largemouth bass, catfish and bream. All Federal and State regulations are in effect.

Hunting

Permitted on the refuge during designated seasons. Deer, small game and dove seasons are scheduled yearly. A refuge permit is required for hunting. Consult the hunt brochure for additional details.

We Recommend

Visitors are encouraged to stop by the Visitor Center for current information on access and seasonally closed areas. Visitor access on all refuge units may be limited to provide total sanctuary for wintering ducks and geese.



Pair of green-winged teal.

Layered clothing during cool months and the use of insect repellent during warm months are recommended.

Binoculars, spotting scopes, and field guides are also highly recommended.

Prohibited Activities

All government property including natural historic and archaeological features is protected by Federal Law. Searching for or removal of objects of antiquity or other value is strictly prohibited.

Please do not pick flowers or remove other vegetation.

Fires, camping, swimming and ATV's are prohibited.

Firearms are prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Refuge Manager. Firearms transported in vehicles during hunts must be unloaded and encased or dismantled.

Wildlife Calendar

This calendar is meant to provide visitors with a general guide to seasonal wildlife events.

Weather may cause slight variations. The best times to

observe wildlife are generally early morning and late afternoon.

January

Waterfowl concentrations peak with Canada geese abundant on wheat fields and ducks and coots in the impoundments and bays. Wintering grassland bird species (sparrows, juncos and flycatchers) are here in good numbers. Striped bass are schooling.

February

Waterfowl can be observed foraging to build energy reserves before beginning their long migrations north. Crappie begin to move into the

creeks. Wood ducks, purple martins and bluebirds are beginning to look over the nesting boxes.

March

Raptors are plentiful.



USFWS



USFWS

*Top to bottom:
black-throated
blue warbler;
barred owl;
dwarf iris.*



USFWS

Alligators may be seen sunning on canal and pond edges. Largemouth bass begin to move into the shallows.

April

Butterflies and dragonflies are everywhere. Both painted and indigo buntings as well as orioles, tanagers, vireos and blue grosbeaks have returned and warblers are migrating. Fishing is productive for most species.

May

Spring migration continues. Nesting activities are evident. Fishing is excellent for all species.

June

Fish begin to seek out cooler waters. White bass begin schooling.

July

Shorebirds begin to return from their nesting grounds and can be seen on pond and lake edges. Young of the year are out practicing their skills and learning to survive. Bass, crappie and catfish have moved to deep water.

August

Summer warblers begin to migrate south. Redbugs, biting flies and mosquitoes are voracious. Fishing is generally poor.

September

Fall songbird migration peaks. White-tailed deer rutting-activity commences as bucks begin to rub the velvet off their antlers.

October

Raptors, cormorants, white-throated and song sparrows, and waterfowl are arriving in numbers. Ruby-crowned kinglets and yellow-rumped warblers are prevalent. Catfishing is excellent.



USFWS

Above: indigo bunting; below: pair of wood ducks.



USFWS



Above: bald eagle; below: Canada geese in flight.

November

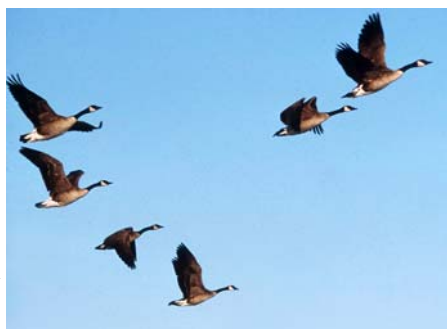
Bald eagles are frequently sighted around concentrations of waterfowl. Striped bass are schooling.

December

Large concentrations of waterfowl. Tundra swans may be observed on Bluff Unit. Excellent fishing for largemouth bass, striped bass and catfish.

Visitor Center

The Santee Visitor Center is currently open Tuesday through Saturday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. It contains a number of displays describing refuge wildlife and habitats. The Center provides an excellent opportunity for the visitor to become acquainted with the refuge before venturing out and is highly recommended, especially for the first time visitor.



The National Wildlife Refuge System

Santee National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The mission of the system is to

preserve a national network of lands and waters for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources of the United States for the benefit of present and future generations. The Refuge System encompasses over 95 million acres administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior.

In addition to the Refuge System, the Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for the endangered species program, National Fish Hatcheries, certain marine mammals and migratory birds as well as other wildlife programs.

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

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

February 2005

