

# Pocosin Lakes

## *National Wildlife Refuge*



photo: USFWS



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**Howard Phillips, Refuge Manager**  
Pocosin Lakes NWR  
P.O. Box 329  
205 South Ludington Drive  
Columbia, NC 27925  
Phone: 252/796 3004  
Fax: 252/796 3010  
E-mail: pocosinlakes@fws.gov

### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1990 (Pungo Unit established as Pungo NWR 1963).
- Acres: 110,106.
- Located in Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington Co. NC.
- Location: the refuge is located six miles south of Columbia, NC off Highway 94 on the east and 18 miles south of Plymouth, NC on Highway 45 on the west.

### Natural History

- Refuge lands were once the southern extremity of the Great Dismal Swamp.
- Concentrations of ducks, geese, tundra swans, raptors and black bears.
- Re-introduction site of red wolf.
- Open water 6,291 acres; riverine swamp 25,427 acres; pocosin wetlands 50,319; agriculture 1,200; grass fields 25,828; pine hardwood forest 1,486; other 3,123.
- Organic soils.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- 7-person staff.
- 34,000 visitors annually.
- Current operating budget (FY 04) \$744,000.

### Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other birds.
- To protect and enhance a unique type of wetlands (pocosin).
- To protect and enhance habitat for those species which are classified as endangered, threatened or of special concern.
- Provide opportunities for wildlife-oriented interpretation, outdoor recreation and environmental education.

### Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl.
- Water management for pocosin restoration.
- Cooperative farming.
- Mechanical/chemical control of noxious plants.
- Reforestation of wetland tree species.
- Protection from wildfires.
- Law enforcement.
- Deer management with public hunting.
- Education/interpretation.
- Partnerships.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Wildlife observation.
- Observation tower.
- Photography.
- Hunting.
- Fishing.
- Visitor center and interpretive boardwalk.

### Calendar of Events

- **May:** International Migratory Bird Day.
- **September-December:** deer hunting.
- **October:** National Wildlife Refuge Week, Scuppernong River Festival.
- **October-February:** small game hunting.
- **November:** Wings Over Water.
- **November-February:** waterfowl observation.
- **December:** Swan Days.

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## Questions & Answers

*What is a Pocosin?*

Pocosin is an Indian word meaning “swamp on a hill.”

*What is unique about pocosin?*

The pocosin habitat is a fire tolerant shrub/scrub complex with a pond pine overstory growing on organic soils with depths up to 12 feet.

*What is the aim of refuge management?*

The management is aimed at wetland (pocosin) restoration, enhancement and protection through hydrologic and plant restoration. The Pungo Unit is managed primarily for waterfowl.

*What wildlife can be observed?*

Seasonally large concentrations of waterfowl, black bears, a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. The red wolf is elusive and will probably not be seen.

*Are any research projects occurring on the refuge?*

Research is being conducted on wetland restoration and reforestation of wetland tree species primarily Atlantic white cedar, bald cypress and pond pine and monitoring the wildlife use on the research area. Waterfowl banding is being conducted for research on tundra swans and wood ducks.

*What are the hunting opportunities?*

Excellent hunting for deer, very good hunting for quail and rabbits, and opportunities for raccoons, ducks, opossums, woodcocks, squirrels, rails, snipes and fox. No black bear hunting on the refuge.