

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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Pee Dee

National Wildlife Refuge



Pee Dee is one of over 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System which is the world's most outstanding network of lands dedicated to wildlife. Refuges provide habitat for over 200 endangered and threatened species as well as hundreds of other birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and plants.



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

Welcome to your National Wildlife Refuge

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge is located in both Anson and Richmond Counties in south-central North Carolina just six miles north of Wadesboro. Situated in the Triassic Basin of the lower piedmont, the refuge’s 8,443 acres of rolling hills covered with pines and hardwoods gently slope to the broad flood plain of the Pee Dee River. This area is surrounded by development with over six million people from Charlotte to Raleigh. The refuge is an active partner in efforts to maintain the natural heritage of this area.



Garry Stolz

Canada goose

Part of a Network of Lands — Born of Necessity, Managed with Care

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The National Refuge System, first started in 1903 by President “Teddy” Roosevelt, is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and encompasses over 92 million acres across the nation.

History

The Pee Dee refuge is close to the once famous “Lockhart Gaddy’s Wild Goose Refuge,” located in Ansonville, North Carolina. Lockhart Gaddy, a one time avid goose hunter, turned friend of the geese in the fall of 1934. Using his four live decoys to attract

the wild geese to his one acre pond, Mr. Gaddy was both surprised and delighted to see his decoys attract nine wild Canada geese. This was the beginning of the “Gaddy’s Goose Pond”, as it is known today.

By the early 1950’s the flock had grown to an estimated 10,000 Canada geese and 1,000 wild ducks spending the winter at the worlds most unusual goose refuge. Visitors from 47 states and 11 foreign countries signed the guest book in 1952. The tradition continued each year from 1934, with the first birds arriving each October flying with the full moon, and departing in mid-March. The Gaddy Goose Pond was closed to the public in 1975 after the deaths of both Mr. and Mrs. Gaddy. The pond currently remains closed to the public.

In the 1960’s numbers of both geese and ducks began to decline in south-central North Carolina. Fortunately, lands adjacent to the Pee Dee River and Brown Creek offered excellent potential for waterfowl habitat development. With local and State support, the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge was established in October, 1963, to provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl.

The original purpose for which the refuge was established was “...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose for migratory birds”. Through new laws and executive orders, the mission of the refuge continues to expand. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 Act states the “big six” public use objectives. Through this executive order the refuge offers the following opportunities to develop appreciation for fish and wildlife; hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation.



Dogwood blooms

along Brown Creek. This area forms the core of the largest bottomland hardwood tract left in the Piedmont of North Carolina. A 2,000 acre tract along Brown Creek and Thoroughfare Creek bottoms has been deemed a Significant Natural Heritage Area and is listed in the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

The refuge also contains about 1,200 acres of upland pine forest and an approximate 4,300 acre mosaic of croplands, old fields, moist-soil units, and mixed pine-hardwood forest that intermingled with creeks, ponds, lakes and the Pee Dee River.

Reforestation efforts in the old fields have provided habitats essential for many species of wildlife.

Wildlife on the Refuge

Peak populations of waterfowl in the fall and winter can exceed 10,000 birds, with the majority being mallards, green-wing teal and wood ducks. Other ducks often seen are wigeon, pintail, gadwall, ring-necked and black ducks. Unfortunately, the

large flocks of Southern James Bay Canada geese, have dwindled significantly. However, several hundred of these migrants still use the refuge, as well as a growing flock of resident

Waterfowl

Mallards



Canada geese. Both color phases of snow geese, scaup, Northern shoveler, redheads, canvasbacks and tundra swans are seen occasionally.

Other Migratory Birds

Other than ducks and geese, the refuge is a stopping point or destination each year for snipe, woodcock, hawks, owls, herons and egrets. Due to the decline of suitable habitat the refuge is considered a very important area for neo-tropical migratory songbirds, especially along the Brown Creek bottomlands. The colorful blue grosbeak, goldfinch and indigo bunting are often seen along the roadsides and field borders. The refuge bird list contains 188 species found with varying regularity, including 92 breeding/probable breeding species.

Resident Wildlife

The refuge is home to many mammal species including the white-tailed deer, red and gray fox, bobcat, beaver, gray and fox squirrel, and

Eastern cottontail rabbit.

Many species of amphibians and reptiles live on the refuge and include spotted salamander, American toad, pickerel frog, river cooter, Eastern box turtle, green anole, and

copperhead. The refuge waters are also full of fish such as catfish, largemouth bass, and redear sunfish.



Ryan Hagerty

Eastern box turtle

Endangered and Threatened Species

The Peregrine falcon is an occasional visitor to the refuge. The Southern bald eagle is commonly seen near the refuge building nests along the Pee Dee River. Eagles can be seen during the winter months on the refuge near the flooded waterfowl impoundments.

*Providing for
a Diversity
of Plants and
Animals*

A variety of management programs enhance wildlife habitat. Local cooperative farmers assist with the refuge croplands on a share basis, leaving part of their crops in the field for wildlife. Only crops that are beneficial to wildlife, such as corn, soybeans, and winter wheat are grown.

Wide field borders are left around the edge of the refuge farm fields. Refuge personnel plant these areas in beneficial crops such as sunflowers, buckwheat, millet and chufa. These crops are both food and cover for a variety of wildlife including quail, dove, turkey, rabbits and a wide variety of birds. Native warm season grass fields replicate open areas that occurred historically through natural disturbances. Few people realize there were once open prairies located in the Piedmont section of North Carolina.

These natural grasses are more beneficial to wildlife as opposed to exotic grasses that are more often planted. The “biological” farm program, with its low chemical use, no-till planting method, wide field borders, and other wildlife-friendly practices, serves as a model farm and study site for farmers, educators, and agricultural extension specialists.

Moist soil impoundments are managed by lowering and raising water levels, disking, mowing, or burning every few years to maintain plants in an early successional stage. These areas are shallowly flooded starting in mid-October to achieve the proper water level desirable for migrating waterfowl, and are drained over a period of weeks beginning in late March to create the proper germination conditions for favorable moist soil plants, such as smartweed and wild millet. During the draining period, mudflats are produced, which are used by migrating shorebirds in



1627

Beaver Ponds

Gaddy Covered Bridge

Silo

Grassy Island Road

1634

Pinkston River Road

Pipeline

52

1636

Ross Rd.

1627

Ross Pond

Sullivan Pond

Pleasant Grove Church Road

Obs

Refug

Refug

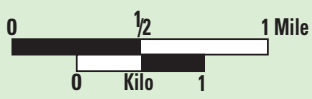
Parki

Highw

Paver

Refug

Foot





Conservation
 Headquarters
 Boundary
 Management Area
 Roads
 State Roads
 Local Roads
 Traffic Only



early Spring. Selected impoundments are drained, disked, and shallowly flooded in mid-July to create mudflats again for the early fall migration of shorebirds.



Ginger Corbin

Prescribed burning is conducted in upland pine stands to mimic the natural fires that historically burned through these areas every two to four years. These fires suppress

Prescribed burn

hardwood trees, such as sweet gum, leaving an open stand of pines that are preferred by certain plants and animals.

Artificial nesting boxes with predator shields are placed in open areas for bluebirds, and near water for wood ducks. These boxes help duplicate natural cavities that are scarce because trees are often cut down before they reach an age where natural cavities develop. Refuge staff and volunteers monitor these boxes on a regular basis.



Dave Menke

Eastern bluebird

Wood ducks are trapped and banded as a means of monitoring the population of these year round residents. Waterfowl surveys are conducted every two weeks during the winter months to monitor waterfowl populations on the refuge.

Wildlife Calendar

This calendar is a general guide to seasonal wildlife events and habitat management practices. Weather may cause slight variations. The best times to observe wildlife are generally early morning and just before sunset.

January - The Annual Christmas Bird Count is conducted in the first few days of the month. Waterfowl are

concentrated on refuge ponds, lakes and impoundments, with an abundance of mallards, wood ducks and other puddle ducks. Canada geese may be seen in refuge fields and impoundments, and bald eagles may be sighted soaring over the Pee Dee River and near refuge flooded fields. Prescribed burns may be conducted in upland pine stands to suppress hardwood encroachment and stimulate plant growth.

February - Most waterfowl are beginning to migrate north near the end of the month. White-tailed deer bucks begin shedding antlers. Wood ducks are searching for and establishing nests in tree cavities or artificial nesting boxes.

March - Most migratory waterfowl are gone, and slow release of water stimulates growth of natural aquatic plant foods. Wood duck and bluebird nesting activity is monitored.

April - Songbird migration has begun and wild turkeys may be seen in open areas. Shorebirds may be observed in shallow waters and mud flats. Impounded water release continues while clogged culverts and water control structures dammed by beavers become a constant problem. The majority of corn planting is completed while wheat is turning a golden brown. Field borders are being prepared and planting has started. Spring fishing starts in refuge ponds and lakes. Adult and youth turkey hunts are held.

May - International Migratory Bird Day is observed with a migratory bird count. Spring wild flowers are at their peak. Prescribed burns are conducted in upland pine stands. Young wood ducks are seen in the vegetated perimeters of water bodies.

June - National Boating and Fishing Week are observed with a fishing rodeo for children during one of the



Dave Menke

Indigo bunting



White tailed deer

first weekends of the month. Most wildlife activity has slowed due to warmer weather. Deer are giving birth as are many other wildlife species. Songbirds are tending to young. Wheat is harvested and soybeans are planted. Field

border planting is completed. Wood duck trapping and banding begins. Some areas may be closed for this banding activity for a couple of months. Deer gun hunt application process starts this month.

July - Extremely hot weather slows wildlife and human activity greatly. Wading birds are seen in shallow water poised over a potential catch. Deer observation is best with fawns observed grazing with their mothers in open field edges. Refuge staff begin mowing trails, roads and right of ways. The annual butterfly count is held.

August - Shorebird migration has started. Wood duck banding and trapping ends this month. New water control structures will be installed if needed, and road and levee maintenance projects are initiated due to dry weather.

September - Teal migration is in progress. Corn planted in fields is either harvested or knocked down and left in fields to be flooded in preparation for winter waterfowl migration. Wildlife in general are more easily observed toward the end of the month as temperatures begin to cool. Fall archery hunting for deer begins this month. Dove hunts are held this month.

October - The fall waterfowl migration begins. Winter wheat is planted. The rut (mating season) starts and bucks begin to stake their claim to a territory. Refuge quota hunts for deer begin this month. Trees, especially dogwood, maple, oaks, and elms begin to turn the autumn colors of red, yellow and orange.

November - Ducks and geese continue to arrive in large numbers. Deer and other wildlife are often observed in open areas. Many small mammals are active. Refuge quota hunts for deer end this month.

December - Bald eagles are sighted in the areas along the Pee Dee River and flooded areas. Wintering waterfowl continue to congregate in flooded areas.

Public Use Opportunities

Three hiking trails are available for daily use. The Tall Pines Nature Trail (1/2 mile) and Brown Creek Nature Trail (1/4 mile) are accessible from the Wildlife Drive. The Gaddy Covered Bridge Nature Trail includes two 1/4 mile segments accessible from One Way road.

The portion of the Pee Dee River that runs through the refuge is part of a larger canoe trail down the Yadkin/Pee Dee River system. A popular section to canoe runs from Tillery Dam north of the refuge to the 109 bridge just south of the refuge and can be accessed from the refuge.

Fishing is open from March 15 to October 15 on several ponds, Brown Creek and the Pee Dee River. Sullivan Pond and Little Pond are open for fishing year round. Boat ramps are provided at Andrews Pond, Beaver Pond, and Arrowhead Lake. All other fishing areas are open to boats, but boats must be loaded and unloaded by hand. No gasoline motors are allowed. Fishing is allowed seven days a week from

Birding and general wildlife observation are the fastest growing activities on the refuge.

one hour before sunset until one hour after sunset. Consult refuge fishing regulations for more details.

Hunting season generally runs from early September to late February for a variety of species. A free refuge permit is required for all hunts. A special quota hunt permit is required for all deer gun hunts and turkey hunts. Consult the refuge hunting regulations for season dates, application procedures and other hunting information.

Volunteer Information

A growing number of volunteers assist the refuge with a variety of biological and maintenance projects, including wildlife surveys, checking nesting boxes, building trails and conducting education programs.

In 1997, a group of people from all walks of life and varying distances from the refuge came together and organized Friends of the Pee Dee NWR. This non-profit group is responsible for the building of Gaddy's Covered Bridge. The Friends have partnered with the refuge to sponsor annual events including Christmas Bird Count, Night Prowl, and annual membership drive dinner. For volunteer opportunities and information on the friends group, call the refuge office.

Enjoying the Refuge

The public is welcome to visit the refuge any time of the year from one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset. Some areas may be closed by the refuge manager for specific refuge activities. There are several motels and numerous restaurants within a 15 minute drive. For more information, contact the Anson County Chamber of Commerce at P.O. Box 305, Wadesboro, NC 28170 or by phone at 704/694 4181.

Layered clothing is recommended during cooler months and using insect



repellant during the warmer months is recommended. Ticks, chiggers and mosquitoes are common from April to September. Binoculars, spotting scopes and field guides are also highly recommended as you travel through the refuge on foot or by vehicle.

Prohibited Activities

All government property including natural, historic, and archaeological features are protected by Federal Law. Searching for and removal of these objects is strictly prohibited. Please do not pick flowers or vegetation.

Pets - Pets must be on a leash or under control of owner at all times.

Littering - Littering is prohibited. Please take your litter with you.

Vehicle Access - The use of motor vehicles is permitted only on designated roads. ATV's are prohibited.

Weapons - Weapons are prohibited on the refuge except as authorized during scheduled hunts. Firearms transported in vehicles must be unloaded and encased or dismantled.

Camping and Open Fires - Camping and open fires are prohibited on the refuge. Camping facilities are located near the refuge. Consult the refuge office for details.

Alcohol - The use or possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

The refuge office is located on Highway 52 North, six miles north of Wadesboro. Refuge office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am until 4:30 pm.