

Wolf Island

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



photo: Jonas Jordan



photo: Debra Barnard-Kemath

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Wolf Island National Wildlife Refuge is a barrier island located off the Georgia Coast. The island is part of the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex which is headquartered in Savannah, Georgia. The complex includes seven national wildlife refuges, totaling 56,949 acres, found along a 100-mile stretch of coastline in Georgia and South Carolina. The seven refuges are Pinckney Island and Tybee NWRs in South Carolina; Savannah (located in both states along the Savannah River), Wassaw, Harris Neck, Blackbeard Island, and Wolf Island NWRs in Georgia.

Refuge Facts

- Established: 1930 as a migratory bird sanctuary and National Wilderness Area.
- Acres: 5,126 (4,519-acre Wolf Island is 4,219 acres saltmarsh and 300 acres scrub/shrub; 593-acre Egg Island is 393 acres saltwater marsh and 200 acres scrub/shrub; 14-acre Little Egg Island is entirely saltwater marsh).
- Location: McIntosh County, GA, 12 miles east of Darien, GA.

Natural History

- 1769: Christopher DeBrake was granted title to Wolf Island by the King of England.
- 1828: 538 acres of Wolf Island were conveyed to the U.S. Government for ocean navigational purposes.
- 1972: 4,071 acres were purchased to expand the refuge. The balance of the refuge (517 acres) was added in 1972 by a Declaration of Taking.
- 1975: Wolf Island NWR was designated a National Wilderness Area.
- Notable concentrations of waterfowl, wading/marsh birds and shorebirds.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Public use figures are not compiled as only navigable waters are open to public use.
- Wolf Island NWR is part of a seven-refuge complex that has an annual budget of \$3,434,000 and a combined staff of 29, none of which are specifically assigned to this refuge.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide protection and habitat for migratory birds.
- Provide protection for endangered/threatened species (loggerhead sea turtle, piping plover).
- Maintain as an undisturbed National Wilderness Area.

Management Tools

- Environmental education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.

Public Use Opportunities

- All uplands closed to public use.
- Wildlife observation from boats only.
- Wildlife photography from boat only.
- Saltwater fishing/shellfishing.

Calendar of Events

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Questions and Answers

How do I get to the refuge?
Wolf Island NWR is only accessible by boat. The refuge is closed to the public and is managed as a bird sanctuary and wilderness area. The creeks and surrounding water are open to the public and offer saltwater fishing and wildlife observation/photography if conducted from the waterways. Information on commercial boat charters to the refuge can be obtained by calling the Savannah Coastal Refuges office at 912/652 4415 or downloaded from the web at www.fws.gov/wolfisland.

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Why is the refuge closed to the public?

The upland habitat consists of plant species associated with elevations only slightly above sea level. The majority of the island habitat consists of mud flats and early successional plants indicative of a dynamic dune/marsh system. The island is closed to the public because of the fragility of these plant species, the island's National Wilderness significance, and the shorebird resting/nesting associated with the limited suitable upland habitat.

Is hunting permitted on the island?

No, the refuge is closed to the public.

Are the smaller sand islands adjacent to Wolf Island open to the public?

No, the small sand islands immediately adjacent to Wolf Island (Egg Island and Little Egg Island) are also part of the refuge and are closed for reasons listed in the previous question.

Are the creeks that transverse through the marshlands of Wolf Island open to the public?

Yes, the waterways through and around Wolf Island NWR are open to boat traffic and any associated wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, including fishing.