Wilderness.net's Swanquarter Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Swanquarter Wilderness in 1976 and it now has a total of 8,785 acres. All of the wilderness is in North Carolina and is managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Description

Established in 1932, Swanquarter National Wildlife Refuge, a satellite of Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, encompasses 16,411 acres of islands and coastal marshland on the north side of Pamlico Sound. Another 27,082 acres of nearby open water protects migratory birds under Presidential Proclamation.

Access to most of Swanquarter Refuge requires a boat. One road, outside the Wilderness, leads to the refuge's 1,000-foot-long Bell Island fishing pier in the northerwest portion of the Refuge, off U.S. 264. More than one-half of the refuge has been designated Wilderness: Judith Island, Swanquarter Island, Great Island, Marsh Island, and portions of the mainland along Juniper Bay. Judith, Swanquarter, and Great Islands are entirely estuarine, dominated by black needlerush, intermittently under water usually due to wind tides. Marsh Island is almost entirely estuarine, with a small upland forest section on the extreme northern boundary. Along the mainland of Juniper Bay, the Wilderness is approximately half estuarine and half upland forest.

In uplands forested in loblolly pine you may catch a glimpse of white-tailed deer, opossums, raccoons, and squirrels. Yellow-bellied turtles and water snakes inhabit the needlerush and saw grass that blankets most of the refuge, and a few of the northernmost American alligators live here in brackish water. Most visitors come to fish from May through November for croaker, spot, speckled trout, flounder, puppydrum(young redfish), and bluefish. Crabbing is a popular sport in the warmer months. Portions of the refuge are open seasonally for waterfowl hunting.

Leave No Trace

Camping and fires are prohibited

Location

The Swanquarter Wilderness is along the northern coast of Pamlico Sound and near the community of Swan Quarter.

Area Management

The Swanquarter Wilderness is part of the 110 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Swanquarter Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

No fees. No regulations specific to the wilderness.

Contacts

General Contact: Jerry Fringeli
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Links on Wilderness.net

National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations (NGOs)
A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

Career and Volunteer Opportunities
A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 94-557	**October 19, 1976**	**9,000**

(No official title, designates Fish and Wildlife Service wildernesses) - Public law 94-557 (10/19/1976) To designate certain lands as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System and to provide designation for certain lands as Wilderness Study Areas

download 94-557

General Trip Planning Information

Wilderness area is only accessibly by boat.

Recreational Opportunities

Most of the wilderness is difficult to traverse by foot. Narrow creeks may be traveled by canoe or kayak and beaches on the islands may by traveled by foot.

Climate and Special Equipment Needs

Winds can quickly create large waves and make travel dangerous in small boats, especially when traveling to the outer islands in the Sound.

Safety and Current Conditions

Always be aware of weather conditions which could create strong winds and high waves.