

2019 WETLAND TREASURES OF THE CAROLINAS



CROATAN NAT'L FOREST WETLAND TYPES:

Photo by David Blevins

Pocosins (raised swamps), Carolina bays, riverine and non-riverine forests, wet pine flatwoods, pond pine woodlands, wet pine savannahs, limesinks, salt- to freshwater marshes

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

The Croatan National Forest is located in the Outer Coastal Plains ecoregion and is bordered by the Neuse, Trent, and White Oak Rivers and Bogue Sound. It was established in 1936 during the Great Depression through the New Deal Program to create a timber source for future generations. Approximately 75% of the Croatan may be considered wetlands with pocosins comprising the majority of the wetland acreage. Pocosins are a unique type of raised evergreen shrub bog associated with nutrient poor soils which occur only in the southeastern Coastal Plain. Though their dense vegetation make pocosins virtually impenetrable for humans, they are important refugia for many plant and animal species. Historically, large fires frequently swept through the area now occupied by the Croatan. Many of the plants, animals, and habitats are fire-dependent.

black bear, turkey, bald eagle, osprey, red cockaded woodpecker, Bachman's sparrow, and American alligators.

THREATS

Threats to the ecological integrity of these diverse wetlands include salt water intrusion due to climate change, agricultural runoff and land development. Residential and commercial land development coupled with the construction of utility right-of-ways and roadway improvements can lead to soil erosion in adjacent wetlands. Agricultural and silvicultural practices associated with heavy equipment can cause ground disturbance and soil compaction. Additionally, the increasing range of the Wildland-Urban Interface limits the US Forest Service's ability to conduct prescribed burns to maintain the health of these fire-dependent ecosystems.

FLORA & FAUNA

The diverse habitats in the Croatan are home to a wide diversity flora. The highest diversity occurs in the wet pine savannahs where one may find many species of carnivorous plants, native orchids, bunch grasses, and other showy wildflowers unique to the Coastal Plain.

The Croatan also supports a great diversity of wildlife, both important game and non-game species including

ACCESS

The Croatan National Forest offers water access at numerous locations and trails. There are multiple access points for wetlands in the Croatan National Forest. Please see this [website](#) for more details.

SOURCES

United State Forest Service



The carnivorous wetland plant, Water Sundew.
Photo by David Blevins.

CROATAN NATIONAL FOREST

Property Owner: United States Forest Service
Recognitions & Designations: North Carolina Natural Heritage Area(s)
(NC Natural Heritage Program)

carolinawetlands.org

