



SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF NATURALISTS

SCAN

PO Box 24911
Columbia, SC 29224
www.scnaturalists.org

OCTOBER 2025

Hi, SCAN Folks!

Wow, the temperatures are starting to creep down! This is sure to change the fauna and flora of our species list!

First a bit of reminders: it's getting towards 2026 trip decision time AND annual meeting time. So, if you have any need-to-go-here or need-to-hear-this-awesome-speaker ideas, now is the time to get them in. Submit them through the survey. Look out for an email about the organizing meeting for trips very soon.

Kim McManus sent out a link to the [SURVEY](#) that we would love for you to complete. Completing this short survey will help us direct the next year or so of activities. PLEASE take a couple of minutes to fill it out!

Last month's trip to Draper WMA was fantastic! Early fall is always good with birds, bugs, and wildflowers. While Draper is known for its sunflower fields, only the dead and drooping sunflower plants were left over, although the seeds were providing food for a variety of birds and some insects. Draper has more than just those fields; my group completed less than half the large trail circuit as there were so many things to see. At one of the fish ponds we found several spiders and caterpillars, including a hot pink Banded Sphinx caterpillar (*Eumorpha fasciatus*) and a wasp-cocoon parasitized Carolina Sphinx caterpillar (*Manduca sexta* parasitized with the *Cotesia* wasp). Two Six-spotted Fishing Spiders (*Dolomedes triton*) were spotted on lily pads. Several species of grasshoppers and katydids made things fun by springing away from our approach. Gorgeous Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) spruced up the greenery.

Draper's trail continues past the sunflower fields through forested and fielded areas. Again, spiders were plentiful, including the beautiful Marbled Orbweaver (*Araneus marmoreus*) with its striking yellow and black abdomen. The fields were filled with wildflowers and butterflies, of note, a white-form Clouded Sulphur butterfly (*Colias philodice*). A Honey Locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) was located, and with encouragement from Dave Schuetrum, some green goo (resembling bug guts) was squeezed from a seed pod and tentatively sampled. It was reminiscent of different types of tropical fruits! Tom Austin sampled multiple specimens and is the go-to person to clarify honey locust taste profiles!

The trip was topped off with some interesting birds (including a female Scarlet Tanager – *Piranga olivacea*) and three SCANners doing community service – rescuing a child's remote-controlled airplane from a very high spot in a tree. Tom Austin again to the rescue with a long branch and a tied-on branch extension. This dangerous undertaking took at least half an hour and ended with a happy child.

This month's trip is to Santee National Wildlife Refuge – Cuddo Unit. Santee is known for wildlife, and this will be an excellent time of year to visit – lots of plants and critters still out and about but without the high temps of the summer. If we are lucky, we may pick up fall bird migration stragglers. With a wildlife drive and several trails, we should easily find something exciting! Remember to use the facilities before you get to the meetup spot, and I hope to see you there!

Lee Morris, President

The flora fauna list for Draper WMA will be included in the November newsletter. – Kim McManus



Attendees: Dave Schuetrum, Nancy Adamson, Scot Wietecha, Lee Morris, Jim Boylston, Sharon Yomtob, Tom Austin, Caroline Eastmann, Carol Gist, Todd Johnston, Breanna Blue

Photos from Draper WMA



Chipping Sparrows (*Spizella passerina*)
Ron Ahle



Six-spotted Fishing Spider (*Dolomedes triton*)
Ron Ahle



Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)
Ron Ahle



Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)
Lee Morris



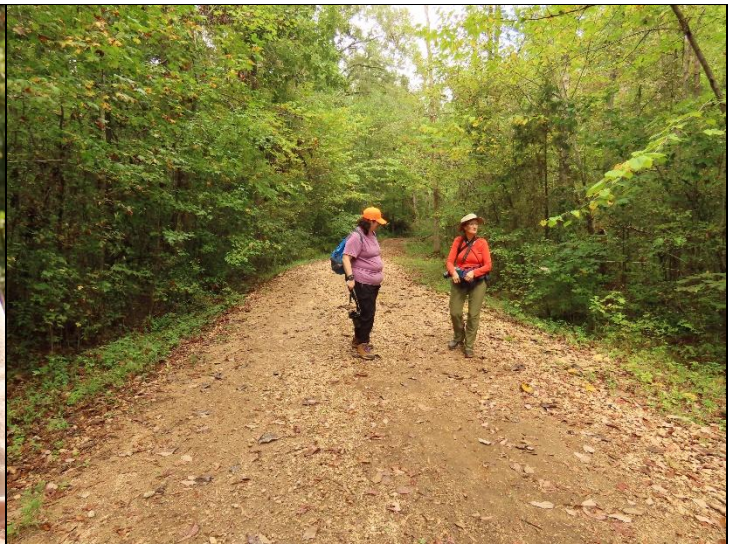
Tom Austin – inventor and hero
Lee Morris



Rescued airplane
Lee Morris



Sampling Honey Locust goo
Lee Morris



Soodling
Lee Morris



Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*)
Lee Morris



Genus Apantesis
Lee Morris



Hornworm Parasitoid Wasp (*Cotesia congregata*)
Lee Morris



Cucumber Beetle
Lee Morris

Santee National Wildlife Refuge - Cuddo Unit

Clarendon County, SC
2903 Greenall Road, Summerton, SC 29148
Information Kiosk (meeting location) GPS Coordinates: 33.52638, -80.28574
Saturday, October 25, 2025, 10:30 AM to ~4:30 PM

Our October outing will be held at the Santee National Wildlife Refuge where we will meet at the Cuddo Unit information kiosk. Santee NWR is superimposed on the lands and waters of the 110,600-acre Lake Marion reservoir and protects over 15,000 acres of public lands in four units: Bluff, Dingle Pond, Pine Island and Cuddo. The refuge benefits an abundance of wildlife species in this rich ecosystem of forests, wetlands, fields and open water. **We will visit the Cuddo Unit. There are no facilities inside this unit of the NWR.**

The Cuddo Unit includes a 7.5 mile wildlife drive and over 10 miles of hiking trails, accessible from the wildlife drive. The South Loop Trail is 1.5 miles long and winds through trees along the lake with views and marsh habitat. The North Loop is 2 miles long and also goes through trees and along the lake. The West Loop, which is also a biking trail, is 7.1 miles long on the western side of the Cuddo Unit and includes several ponds. There are also canoe/kayak trails on the southeastern side of the Cuddo Unit that wind through and around small islands in Lake Marion.

All areas have good opportunities for wildlife viewing. White-tailed deer and wild turkey are common. Chances are also good to see migratory birds. Endangered/threatened species that have been seen in the Cuddo Unit include the American alligator and the wood stork. It is also home to numerous bird species, including bald eagles, wood ducks, and various migratory birds. Throughout the year red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks can be viewed soaring overhead, as can a variety of songbirds in the trees. The forest also provides a home for woodland creatures such as raccoons, squirrels and bobcats. The ponds and marshes provide a home for alligators plus a number of other reptiles and amphibians. Alligators and bald eagles were observed during our brief scouting trip.

Link to Full Santee NWR Website:

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/santee>

Link to Cuddo Unit Wildlife Drive Interpretive Guide Brochure:

<https://www.fws.gov/media/santee-national-wildlife-refuge-wildlife-drive-interpretive-guide>

Directions: 2903 Greenall Road, Summerton, SC 29148

Information Kiosk (meeting location) GPS Coordinates: 33.52638, -80.28574

- From I-95, take exit 108 and turn south on Buff Boulevard / State Rd S-14-102.
- Within a short distance, Buff Blvd becomes M G Hemingway Rd.
- After 1.6 miles, turn left (east) onto Bill Davis Road / State Rd S-14-127.
- After 2.0 miles, turn right (south) onto William Brunson Road / State Rd S-14-559.
- After 3.5 miles, turn right (south) onto Rogers Road / (State Rd S-14-715?).
- After 0.5 miles, turn right (west) onto Greenall Road.
- After 0.1 miles, turn left (south) onto Wildlife Drive.
- After about 150 feet, the information kiosk (and parking area beyond it) will be on the right.

Trip Leaders:

*Dave and Marty Kastner
Central Regional Directors*

Santee National Wildlife Refuge Cuddo Unit

Wildlife Drive Interpretive Guide

Santee National Wildlife Refuge
2125 Fort Watson Road
Summerton, South Carolina 29146
803/478-2217
<http://fws.gov/refuge/santee>
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1-800-344-WILD
February 2024



Starting at the Cuddo Unit parking area, located off of Greenall Road, the 7.5 mile Wildlife Drive provides many stops along the way to view wildlife, hike or bicycle a trail, and learn about local South Carolina wildlife. Along the drive, look for numbered posts that correspond to numbers in the brochure for directional and interpretive information.



1. Santee National Wildlife Refuge

The Santee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1941 as a migratory bird sanctuary. The refuge boasts nearly 300 bird species recorded on the refuge. Mammal species found on the refuge include white-tailed deer, beaver, river otter, eastern fox squirrel, gray squirrel, and gray fox. Reptiles include the American alligator, snapping turtle, and over 30 species of snakes. You can find species lists at the Visitor Center or on the refuge website.



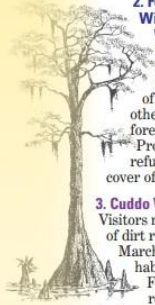
7. Bluebird Boxes

Wooden boxes mounted on posts along the edge of the road are nesting boxes for eastern bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*), which nest on the refuge along field and forest edge habitats. Bluebirds are secondary cavity nesters, using cavities that are made by other bird species. Eastern bluebird numbers dwindled in the early-mid 1900's, with the introduction of non-native species and habitat loss, but have rebounded with the establishment of bluebird box trails and various other bluebird box programs.

2. Forested Wetlands

Wildlife Drive – straight ahead Woods Road—ONE WAY DO NOT ENTER

Forested wetlands provide habitat for numerous bird species. Seasonally flooded hardwoods along the Wildlife Drive may provide glimpses of wood ducks, Great Blue Herons, Egrets, and other wading birds and waterfowl. In addition, forested wetlands provide nesting habitat for the Prothonotary warbler, an abundant nester on the refuge during the summer months (featured on the cover of the refuge bird list).



3. Cuddo West Bike Trails/Habitat Management

Visitors may walk or bicycle the approximately 7.6 miles of dirt roads on the West Side of the Cuddo Unit from March 1 - Nov 1 where you may observe different habitat management techniques used by the refuge. Farming provides habitat and a food source for resident and migratory animals. Prescribed burning is used to minimize fuel loads, maintain habitat types, and manage for specific species of plants and animals that may be fire dependant (long-leaf pine, red-cockaded woodpecker, etc).

4. Interior Canoe Trail

Please note the Interior Canoe Trail is no longer accessible; see marker 11 for information on the Plantation Islands Canoe Trail.

5. Otter Trail

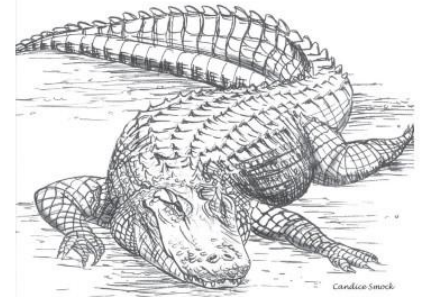
Turn left on Otter trail to get to hiking trails OR continue straight ahead to Alligator Alley

6. Red Bank Field Parking Area

Park here and take a short walk down the trail in front of you to find a nice cove with wetland areas on each side. This is a great place to photograph wetland plants and wildlife. The field behind the parking area is known as Red Bank because of the red clay soils found there. The refuge is located on the edge of the coastal plain and midland region of SC and has a variety of soil types from sandy to clay soils.

8. American Alligator (Alligator mississippiensis)

Alligators are observed here basking in the sun or swimming in the water. The American Alligator is ectothermic (ecto = outside; thermic = temperature), meaning it gets its body temperature from the outside surroundings. Alligators, now common throughout their range, are found as far north as to North Carolina. Please remember to never feed wild animals, including alligators! Feeding alligators makes them dangerous to humans.



9. Greentree Reservoirs

A short hike down this trail brings visitors to a dike with small ponds on each side. Look for wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, mallards, and green-winged teal in winter; great blue herons, anhingas, prothonotary warblers and other migratory songbirds in spring, summer, and fall. Moist (hydric) soils are found in wetlands and managed areas known as greentree reservoirs (GTR). GTRs, first developed in the 1930s, are areas of impounded bottomland hardwoods that are flooded during the fall and winter months, providing nuts, acorns and vegetation for waterfowl. An example of a GTR can be viewed on the left side (inside) of the north loop hiking trail.

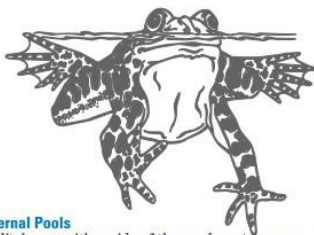
10. North Loop Trail

at Stop sign, take first right turn to access the North Loop trail or after Stop sign, take next right to continue on the Wildlife Drive.



11. Plantation Islands Canoe Launch

Parking & launch site for the Plantation Islands Canoe Trail. Potato Creek Hiking Trail begins on the right side of the road across from the parking area.



12. Vernal Pools

The ditches on either side of the road are temporary vernal pools that provide breeding habitat and sanctuary for a number of reptiles and amphibians. Since the pools go dry during the year, they are devoid of fish that might feed on amphibian and reptile hatchlings.

13. Invasive Species

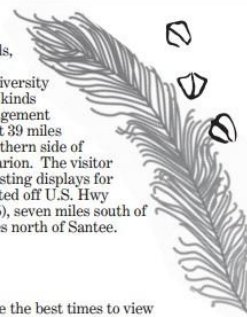
Crested floating heart (*Nymphoides cristata*), water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), alligatorweed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), water primrose (*Ludwigia uruguayensis*) and giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) are aquatic invasive plants the refuge is currently managing, with the hopes of slowing down the spread of these species.

National Wildlife Refuge System

The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Santee National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1941, is located in Clarendon County, SC. The approximately 13,000 acre refuge lies within the Atlantic Coastal Plain and consists of mixed hardwoods, mixed pine, bottomland hardwoods,

flooded cypress, marsh, croplands, old fields, ponds, impoundments, and open water. This tremendous diversity of habitat supports many kinds of wildlife. The four management units of the refuge protect 39 miles of shoreline along the northern side of Santee Cooper's Lake Marion. The visitor center offers many interesting displays for public viewing and is located off U.S. Hwy 301/15 (exit 102 off of I-95), seven miles south of Summerton and four miles north of Santee.



Wildlife Watching Tips

- Dawn and dusk are the best times to view wildlife.
- Vehicles make good observation blinds. Drive slowly, stopping often to scan places where wildlife might be hiding.
- Drive with your windows down. Often you will hear more than you see.
- Look for signs of animals. Tracks, scat, feathers, and nests often tell interesting stories.

Hours of Operation

Access to the Cuddo Unit is limited to the following times:

October 1 – February 28: 7 am to 5 pm
March 1 – September 30: 6 am to 8 pm

Please note the Cuddo Unit is closed on Mondays.



Santee National Wildlife Refuge
Cuddo Unit
2903 Greenall Road
Summerton, SC 29148
Phone 803/478 2217
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/santee>