

North Carolina

Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Lower Neuse

1

Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education Center

Owner: Weyerhaeuser Company

945 Cool Springs Road, Askin, NC 28527
252-633-7017

Craven County

www.coolsprings.org

Site Description: Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education Center is actively managed as a working forest to demonstrate forestry practices, while maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitat, air quality, water quality, as well as aesthetic, recreational and historical values. The site is a great birding spot due to a wide variety of available habitat types. A boardwalk across a swamp forest allows for opportunities to see Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula and wading birds. Birders can also expect to see Red-headed Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Indigo Bunting. Visitation for groups is by appointment only. Birding walks of any length can be arranged with the site manager, who will lead visitors through pine stands, upland hardwood forest, wetland forest and early successional habitats. Red-shouldered Hawk, Osprey, Great Crested Flycatcher, Swainson's Warbler, and Blue Grosbeak are other possibilities on-site.

Species of Interest: Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager

Habitats: pine/hardwood forest, floodplain forest, longleaf pine forest, early successional

Special Concerns: Mosquitos, ticks and deer flies can be pesky in warm months. This site allows hunting during late fall and early winter. Birders should be aware of current hunting regulations and seasons and take adequate safety precautions during those times. For more on hunting season safety precautions, see the hunting season information at the beginning of this guide.

Access & Parking: Cool Springs is open year-round, but is available by appointment only. Please call ahead to schedule your visit. Guided tours are available for large groups. Parking is available near the building on-site. The site trails and boardwalk can be accessed from this location. The longleaf pine forest is a short drive from the parking area, and can be explored with the site manager.

Directions: From New Bern, take US 17 north, crossing the Neuse River. Continue on US 17 for approximately 8 miles. Turn left on Askin Brick Road, then another left onto Cool Springs Road. Stay on this road for 2.6 miles to the Cool Springs entrance, marked with a sign. Drive down the entrance road for about 0.5 miles to the picnic shelters and red house. The site manager will meet you there.

Coordinates: N 35°11'21" W 77°05'10" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 66





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Croatan National Forest – Island Creek Forest Walk

Owner: USDA Forest Service

Island Creek Road, east of Pollocksville, NC
252-638-5628

Jones County

www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/croatan.pdf

Site Description: This is a short hike within mature hardwood and pine habitats along Island Creek, on the outskirts of the Croatan National Forest. The loop trail is less than 1 mile in length, but the bird species diversity is high due to the old growth characteristics on site. Typical breeding songbirds include Yellow-throated Vireo, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, and Summer Tanager along the uplands, and Acadian Flycatcher, Northern Parula and Louisiana Waterthrush along the creek. Hooded Warbler and Kentucky Warbler are also possible. Migration brings Black-throated Blue Warbler and Scarlet Tanager. In winter look for Brown Creeper and Winter Wren. Occasionally, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin can also be seen in winter. The area supports many plant species that are more typical of the piedmont and mountains of North Carolina. Along the creek are outcrops of coquina limestone, which make this a very rich site and adds to the plant and bird diversity.

Species of Interest: Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Prothonotary Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager

Habitats: pine/hardwood forest, floodplain forest

Special Concern: The trail is not particularly well marked, but it is well worn, so stay on the well worn portion of the trail to avoid getting lost. Poison ivy is plentiful, and mosquitos can be very bad after wet periods. Hunting is allowed within Croatan National Forest during certain times of the year. Birders should be aware of current hunting regulations and seasons and take adequate safety precautions during those times. For more on hunting season safety precautions, see the hunting season information at the beginning of this guide.

Access & Parking: The access area has parking for approximately 10 cars. The trail is open during daylight hours, year-round. Self-guided brochures can be picked up at the Croatan National Forest District Office, located on US 70, approximately 8 miles south of New Bern.

Directions: From New Bern, travel south/east on US 70. Just beyond the Trent or Neuse River bridge, turn right at the first traffic light onto Williams Road (look for the Burger King on the corner) and reset the odometer. At 1.4 miles, Williams Road ends at Madam Moores Lane. Turn left on Madam Moores Lane, which changes names to Brice Creek Road, then to Island Creek Road. The Island Creek Forest Walk access area is on the right at 8.4 miles. From Pollocksville, the access area is 5.6 miles east of NC 17 on Island Creek Road.

Coordinates: N 35°01'37" W 77°08'10" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 77





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Croatan National Forest – Neusiok Trail

Owner: USDA Forest Service

Northern terminus of trail on Forest Service Road 132
(Pine Cliff Recreation Area), off NC 306, east of Havelock, NC
252-638-5628

Craven and Carteret County

www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/croatan.pdf

Site Description: The Neusiok Trail is a 26 mile long trail that extends from the Neuse River south to the Newport River estuary. Habitats along the way vary from salt marsh, to longleaf pine savanna, to upland hardwood stands, to dense shrublands. The trail crosses several paved and unpaved roads. The best birding is typically during the early breeding season, from April-June, and winter. In winter, watch for rafts of diving ducks along the Neuse River as it parallels the northern section of the trail, including Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Canvasback and Surf Scoter. The Newport River estuary, adjacent to the southern end of the trail, hosts a variety of salt marsh birds; low tide presents the best viewing opportunities. Two recommended sections of the trail for a variety of migrating and breeding songbirds are the section that extends from the NC 306 crossing north to the Neuse River, and the section that extends from NC 101 south to Forest Service Road 147. Listen for Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Yellow-throated and Pine Warbler, and Summer Tanager in the upland and slope areas. In wetter areas, Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula and Acadian Flycatcher are possibilities.

Species of Interest: Brown-headed Nuthatch, Prothonotary Warbler, Summer Tanager, shorebirds, wading birds, winter waterfowl

Habitats: pine/hardwood forest, longleaf pine forest, floodplain forest, salt marsh

Special Concerns: Some sections of the trail can be very wet. Plan to get your feet wet. During warmer months, plan for heat, insects, and snakes. Hunting is allowed within the Croatan National Forest during certain times of the year. Birders should be aware of current hunting regulations and seasons and take adequate safety precautions during those times. For more on hunting season safety precautions, see the hunting season information at the beginning of this guide.

Access & Parking: Overnight parking is available at both ends of the trail and at the NC 306 crossing, 1.9 miles north of the NC 101/NC 306 intersection. Another crossing, approximately 1 mile east of NC 306 on NC 101, is a good short-term pick-up/drop-off area. There are 3 primitive camping shelters along the trail, where overnight camping is permitted. Information and maps can be picked up at the Croatan National Forest District Office, located on US 70, approximately 8 miles south of New Bern.

Directions: To northern terminus: from NC 101 east of Havelock, turn north on NC 306 (watch for signs to the Cherry Branch-Minnesott Ferry). Go 3.25 miles and turn left on Forest Service Road 132 to reach the Pine Cliff Recreation Area, where the trail begins.

To the southern terminus: From the NC 101/NC 306 intersection, continue east on NC 101, past the small community of Harlowe. Turn right on Old Winberry Road (SR 1155) and travel for 3.75 miles. At the intersection of Mill Creek Road (SR 1154) turn right, then make a quick left onto Forest Service Road 181 to reach the Oyster Point campground, the southern terminus of the trail.

Coordinates: N 34°56'19" W 76°49'18" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 78





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Cherry Branch – Minnesott Ferry

Owner: NC Department of Transportation

NC 306 at Neuse River crossing, east of Havelock, NC Craven and Pamlico County www.ncdot.org/transit/ferry
252-447-1055

Site Description: This 20 minute ferry crossing of the Neuse River offers waterfowl and wading bird viewing opportunities. Winter is perhaps the best season for a visit. Regardless of season, the ferry is also a convenient way to simply travel from Pamlico County to Craven or Carteret counties (or visa versa). During winter, watch for Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and a variety of gulls and other wintering waterfowl. In warmer months, be on the lookout for Brown Pelican and terns. The loading areas at either end of the ferry also afford some land-based birding opportunities, though mostly for commonly seen species.

Species of Interest: Canvasback, Horned Grebe, winter waterfowl, wading birds

Habitats: riverine

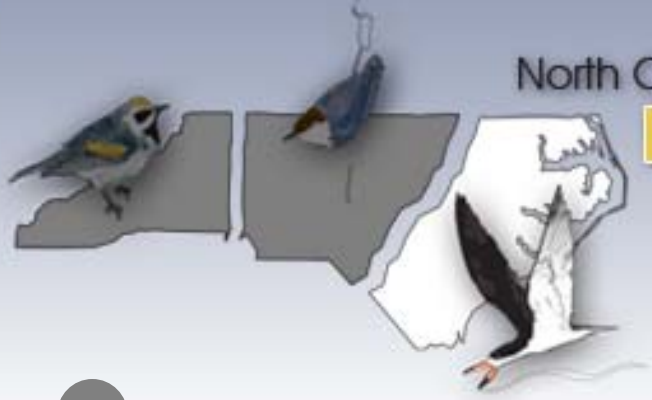
Access & Parking: The Cherry Branch - Minnesott ferry operates daily from 5:45am to midnight, at 30 minute intervals. Review a current North Carolina Ferry System Schedule to confirm the schedule. This ferry ride is free for passengers and their vehicles.

Directions: In Craven County: from the intersection of US 70 and NC 101 in Havelock, take NC 101 east for 5.2 miles. Turn north on NC 306 and travel 4.4 miles to the ferry dock.

In Pamlico County: from the intersection of NC 306 and NC 55, north of Arapahoe, take NC 306 south for 12 miles to the ferry dock in Minnesott Beach.

Coordinates: N 34°56'06" W 76°48'40" (Craven County side) DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 78





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Goose Creek Game Land – Spring Creek Impoundment

Owner: NC Wildlife Resources Commission

NC 33, east of Aurora, NC
252-514-4737

Beaufort/Pamlico County line

www.ncwildlife.org

Site Description: Walk the short trail that leaves from the north side of the parking area. Listen and look for a variety of bird species in the marshes on both sides of the trail, including Osprey, Common Yellowthroat, Red-winged Blackbird and other wetland-associated species. Watch for Bald Eagle overhead. Clapper Rail and other wading birds are probable here; the Black Rail is a rare possibility. Listen for Chuck-will's-widow at dawn or dusk. American Black Duck may be found nesting in the marsh. During the winter, rafts of wintering waterfowl can be spotted on the impoundment. During migration, look for a variety of shorebirds.

Species of Interest: Bald Eagle, Chuck-will's-widow, Red-headed Woodpecker, rails, winter waterfowl, wading birds

Habitats: isolated wetlands, wetland forest, managed waterfowl impoundment

Special Concern: Hunting is allowed on Game Lands during certain times of year. Birders should be aware of current hunting regulations and seasons and take adequate safety precautions during those times. For more on hunting season safety precautions, see the hunting season information at the beginning of this guide.

Access & Parking: A short trail leaves from the parking area and heads north for less than 0.25 miles, to the southwest corner of Spring Creek Impoundment.

Directions: From the intersection of NC 33 and NC 306 in Aurora, head east on NC 33 for 10 miles. After passing the NC Wildlife Resources Commission's Smith Creek Boat Access area, travel 0.8 miles farther and watch for a parking area on the left, signed with a brown and white binoculars sign, indicating a wildlife viewing area.

Coordinates: N 35°16'02" W 76°37'02" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 67

