



# North Carolina Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

## Southeast

### 1 Ev-Henwood Nature Preserve

**Owner:** University of North Carolina at Wilmington

6132 Rock Creek Road, Leland, NC 28451  
910 253 6066

Brunswick County

[www.uncw.edu/arboretum/evhen.html](http://www.uncw.edu/arboretum/evhen.html)

**Site Description:** Ev Henwood Nature Preserve is a 174 acre preserve in northeastern Brunswick County, donated to UNC Wilmington in perpetuity for the purpose of nature observation and nature education. The preserve presents birders with opportunities to explore both a traditional southeastern floodplain forest and a climax hardwood community. Breeding species and migrants may be heard and located in the vicinity of the two creeks crossed by the entrance road, near the parking area, and on upland trails. Check the floodplain forest on the Black Gum and Stewartia Trails for Swainson s Warbler and listen for Barred Owl. Also, walk the trail along Town Creek (the southern boundary of the preserve) to look for waterthrush and other migrating songbirds, plus breeding Northern Parula and Prothonotary Warbler. Indigo Bunting and Blue Grosbeak may be found in the fields surrounding the ponds.

**Species of Interest:** Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson s Warbler, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting

**Habitats:** pine/hardwood forest, floodplain forest, isolated wetlands, early successional

**Access & Parking:** The site is open daily during daylight hours. Numerous trails depart from the parking area. Trail maps are available on site.

**Directions:** From Wilmington, take US 17 South. At mile marker 39, set trip to zero and turn right on Zion Church Road in 0.6 miles. At 1.3 miles, turn right on Town Creek Road and then left on Rock Creek Road at 2.3 miles. A sign marks the preserve s entrance on Rock Creek Road, at 2.9 miles. Take a left onto the gravel road and follow it to the parking/kiosk area at 3.4 miles. Should the gate not be open, there is parking near the gate, trail maps, and walk in access to the preserve via the Tulip Tree Trail.

Because Zion Church Road is a loop, if approaching from the south on US 17, set trip to zero at mile marker 37 and turn left on Zion Church Road in 0.2 miles and then left on Town Creek Road at 0.8 miles and proceed to Rock Creek Road as above.

Coordinates: N 34°10'09" W 78°06'56" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 83





North Carolina

# Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

2

## Brunswick Town – Fort Anderson State Historic Site

**Owner:** NC Department of Cultural Resources

8884 Phillips Road SE, Winnabow, NC 28479  
910 371 6613

Brunswick County

[www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs](http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs)

**Site Description:** Brunswick Town Fort Anderson is a state historic site preserving the remains of a colonial port town and a Civil War era earthen fort on the banks of the Cape Fear River. From the visitor center, walk the trails around Brunswick Pond. This area is reliable for Rusty Blackbird and mixed flocks of songbirds in winter, Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula, and Yellow throated Warbler in summer, and Red headed Woodpecker all year. Walk along the edge of the Cape Fear River to search for Seaside Sparrow and, in summer, Painted Bunting. Use the wooden stairs at the north end of Battery B and bird the wet areas and tree line near the river. The tree edge from the picnic area to Battery A may produce Painted Bunting, Summer Tanager, and other breeding and migrating songbirds. As you exit Brunswick Town, take a right turn just before the gate. This hard surface road leads to the Russellborough House foundation site. Circle the area looking for sparrows and foraging blackbirds in winter, and songbirds during migration.

**Species of Interest:** Bald Eagle, Prothonotary Warbler, Nelson's Sharp tailed Sparrow, Saltmarsh Sharp tailed Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, Painted Bunting

**Habitats:** pine/hardwood forest, wetland forest, salt marsh, maritime forest and shrub

**Special Feature:** Eastern fox squirrels are also present on site.

**Access & Parking:** The trails begin directly behind the visitor center, where site maps are available. Hours of operation are 10am to 4pm, Tuesday – Saturday. The main gate is locked at closing time.

**Directions:** From Wilmington and points north, turn south on NC 133 from US 17/74/76 at the first Leland exit. Travel NC 133 for 12.5 miles and turn left on Plantation Road. After approximately 2 miles, turn left on Phillips Road, which ends at the entrance to Brunswick Town Fort Anderson.

Coordinates: N 34°02'24" W 77°56'49" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 87





# North Carolina Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

3

## Orton Plantation Gardens

**Owner:** David Sprunt

9149 Orton Road SE, Winnabow, NC 28479  
910 371 6851

Brunswick County

[www.ortongardens.com](http://www.ortongardens.com)

**Site Description:** Orton Plantation is a historical rice plantation, with a plantation house, colonial cemetery and formal gardens directly on the Cape Fear River. The gardens are best birded during the spring migration and early breeding seasons. Be sure to pay the entry fee before stopping along the entryway causeway. Walk through the various gardens on site, where beginning birders will have good opportunities to look at the birds that reside there. During the breeding season watch for Red headed and Red bellied Woodpeckers, Great Crested Flycatcher, Northern Parula, Yellow throated Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Painted Bunting, and Orchard Oriole. White Ibis frequent the ponds. Watch for the occasional Purple Gallinule or Sora and be on the lookout overhead for Osprey and Anhinga. In the colder months, look for wintering waterfowl on the river.

**Species of Interest:** Anhinga, White Ibis, Great Crested Flycatcher, Prothonotary Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Painted Bunting

**Habitats:** wetland forest, maritime forest and shrub, salt marsh, river

**Special Feature:** Be on the lookout for American alligators, another resident species at Orton Plantation.

**Access & Parking:** There is a \$9 admission fee per adult. Hours of operation are 8am to 6pm, March August; 10am to 5pm, September November; closed December February. Concessions are available in the visitor center.

**Directions:** From Wilmington and points north, turn south on NC 133 from US 17/74/76 at the first Leland exit. Travel NC 133 for 12.5 miles and turn left on Plantation Road. After 0.4 miles, turn left on Orton Road and follow the signs to the entrance.

Coordinates: N 34°02'43    W 77°56'56    DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 87





North Carolina

## Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

4

### Boiling Spring Lakes Preserve

**Owner:** The Nature Conservancy

Leeds Road, Boiling Spring Lakes, NC 28461  
910 395 5000

Brunswick County

[www.nature.org/northcarolina](http://www.nature.org/northcarolina)

**Site Description:** The Boiling Spring Lakes Preserve encompasses half of the incorporated area of the town of Boiling Spring Lakes. The Boiling Spring Lakes Nature Trail allows visitors to walk through a 2 mile portion of the more than 6,000 acres that make up the preserve. Several stops are described in a self guided trail brochure to highlight the variety of habitats that are present along the trail. The trail passes through dry longleaf pine before entering a pond pine woodland with three bridge crossings over wet areas and ending at another dry pine savanna. As the trail passes through stands of longleaf pine, look for active Red cockaded Woodpecker cavity trees. Brown headed Nuthatch, Pine Warbler and other woodpeckers may also be present. In the wetter areas, listen for White eyed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat and Summer Tanager. Near the lake, look for waterfowl, grebes and wading birds. Upland shrub areas may present opportunities to see Fox, Savannah, Song and Chipping Sparrow, Indigo Buntings, Blue Grosbeak and Yellow breasted Chat.

**Species of Interest:** Red cockaded Woodpecker, Brown headed Nuthatch, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, winter sparrows

**Habitats:** Longleaf pine savanna, moist shrubland, lake

**Special Concern:** Venus flytrap, sundew, and pitcher plants are located near and may be observed from the nature trail. Please stay on the designated trail so as not to impact the fragile ecosystems through which it passes.

**Access & Parking:** The trail begins behind the Community Center. There is a self guided interpretive trail brochure available at the trail head kiosk. The site is open to visitation daily during daylight hours.

**Directions:** Enter Boiling Spring Lakes from the south on NC 87. At the light for the high school (Cougar Road) set your odometer to zero. At 1.2 miles, turn left on West South Shore Drive, just before the road crosses Boiling Spring Lake. Make an immediate left on Leeds Road and park at the Community Center. The trail begins at the back of the parking lot.

Coordinates: N 34°01 22 W 78°03 50 DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 87





North Carolina

## Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

5

### Southport Riverwalk

**Owner:** City of Southport

Bay Street, Southport, NC 28461  
910 457 7935

Brunswick County

**Site Description:** The Southport Riverwalk Trail begins near the city pier and heads west along Bay Street and rounds the small bay of the yacht basin before winding back to a boardwalk on a small peninsula. Wooden signs mark the trail along the way. The pier provides an overlook for the Cape Fear River and Battery Island, which is a prime nesting site for terns and ibis. At the city pier, watch for Sandwich, Least, and Royal Terns in breeding season and Bonaparte's Gull and waterfowl in winter. Proceed west on the trail. At the corner of Bay and Lord Streets, there is boardwalk access to the small beach area. American Oystercatchers and shorebirds may be found here. Continue west around the yacht basin, watching for herons and other wading birds. At the trail's end, walk out on the boardwalk through the salt marsh to the gazebo. You may find Clapper Rail, Seaside Sparrow, and Painted Bunting in the marsh and the cedars and bushes that line the boardwalk. At the gazebo, scan the spoils island across the Intracoastal Waterway for wading birds, Painted Buntings, and raptors. Rarities may include American White Pelican in winter and Swallow tailed or Mississippi Kite in late spring.

**Species of Interest:** White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Seaside Sparrow, Painted Bunting, raptors, terns

**Habitats:** salt marsh, maritime forest and shrub, beach

**Access & Parking:** Parking is available at Waterfront Park and along Bay Street. Maps of the Riverwalk Trail may be picked up at the Visitor Center, at 113 West Moore Street. The Visitor Center is open from 10am to 5pm, Monday - Saturday. The Riverwalk may be accessed any time of day. Strictly honor No Parking signs, especially near the Southport Marina, and do not use private piers.

**Directions:** If arriving from NC 211 South (Southport Supply Road SE), Waterfront Park is 1.5 miles beyond the intersection of NC 211 (Howe Street) and NC 87. When NC 211 turns to the left in downtown Southport, stay straight toward the water. The parking lot for Waterfront Park is directly ahead, at the intersection of Howe and Bay Streets. The guided portion of the trail begins just west of the parking lot.

If arriving by the NC Ferry, enter Southport from NC 211, which becomes East Moore Street. Turn left on Howe Street, which ends at Bay Street. The parking lot at Waterfront Park is across from the intersection of Howe and Bay Streets.

Coordinates: N 33°55'02" W 78°01'04" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 87





North Carolina

# Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

6

## Bald Head Island

**Contact:** Bald Head Island Conservancy

Conservancy Office: 7000 Federal Road, Bald Head Island, NC 28461  
910 457 0089

Brunswick County

[www.bhic.org](http://www.bhic.org)

**Site Description:** A little over 3 miles long and less than 1 mile wide in most areas, Bald Head Island boasts 14 miles of pristine beach, including Cape Fear Point, the southernmost cape in North Carolina. There are 10,000 acres of salt marsh and approximately 180 acres of protected maritime forest. A variety of shorebirds are visible year round. Depending on the season you can expect to see American Oystercatcher, Royal, Least, Sandwich, Caspian and Common Tern, Wilson's Plover, Piping Plover, Black bellied Plover, Red Knot, Dunlin, Short billed Dowitcher, Whimbrel, Willet and Sanderling. Gannets and scoters are commonly seen flying by the Point from late fall through early spring. A walk up East Beach can be rewarding, especially during migration, as large flocks of shorebirds are present and development becomes non existent after a short distance. A walk along the Kent Mitchell Nature Trail and nearby Federal Road are great spots to see Painted Bunting, especially from May July. The golf course lagoons provide opportunities every season. Wintering duck species include the Ring necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, and Blue and Green winged Teal; Glossy Ibis are an uncommon visitor to the lagoons every spring. The large oak trees near the Old Baldy Lighthouse are typically warbler hot spots during migration. A variety of raptors can be seen in fall and winter.

**Species of Interest:** Wilson s Plover, Piping Plover, Sandwich Tern, Least Tern, Painted Bunting, wintering waterfowl

**Habitats:** salt marsh, maritime forest and shrub, beach and dune, golf course lagoons

**Special Features & Concerns:** The Bald Head Island Conservancy offers year round environmental education programs; guided birding tours may also be arranged with advanced notice. Nesting sea turtles and shorebirds are present in the summer time. Please respect the posted areas for nesting birds and turtles. Sea beach amaranth, an endangered plant, also grows in the dunes on the island. Please avoid disruption of any dune plants.

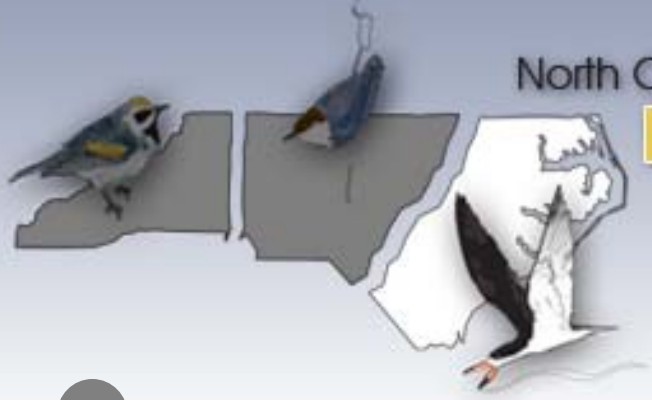
**Access & Parking:** Access to the island is via passenger ferry (\$15 fee) from Southport, NC. The first ferry departs the mainland at 6am; the last ferry off island is at 10:30pm. Once on the island, the best way to get around is either by renting a golf cart or a bike from a local vendor.

**Directions:** Bald Head Island is accessed via passenger ferry from Indigo Plantation in Southport, NC. Coming into Southport on NC 211 (Howe Street), turn right on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Follow West 9<sup>th</sup> Street into Indigo Plantation to the ferry landing and parking lots.

Coordinates: N 33°52'35 W 78°00'04 DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 87







North Carolina

## Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

8

### Green Swamp Preserve

**Owner:** The Nature Conservancy

NC 211, 5.7 miles north of Supply, NC  
910 395 5000

Brunswick County

[www.nature.org/northcarolina](http://www.nature.org/northcarolina)

**Site Description:** The Green Swamp contains some of the country's finest examples of longleaf pine savannas. Much of the preserve, however, is dense, evergreen shrubland. A one mile long trail provides the only formal access into the preserve. This trail leaves from the parking area next to the borrow pit and bears right just beyond the pond, passing through a pine plantation until it reaches a wet area where a short boardwalk (which may be difficult to find in the dense shrub) begins. The trail continues across two more drains and three savannas before tapering off to nothing. The first savanna, Shoestring Savanna, is the best area for birding. Look for active Red cockaded Woodpecker cavity trees and listen for Northern Bobwhite, Pine Warbler, Henslow's and Bachman's Sparrows, among others. In the wetter areas during the breeding season, Worm-eating Swainson's, Prothonotary, Hooded and Prairie Warblers may also be present. Access to the preserve is otherwise limited due to the fragile ecosystems present.

**Species of Interest:** Chuck-will's-widow, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Swainson's Warbler, Bachman's Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow

**Habitats:** longleaf pine savanna and forest, moist shrubland

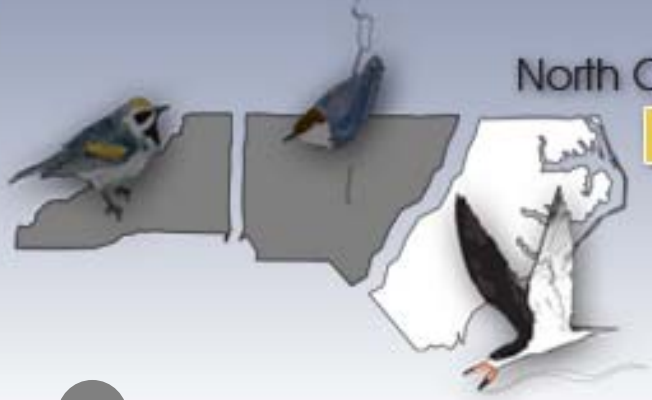
**Special Concerns:** Hunting is allowed on the preserve during certain times of year. Birders should be aware of current hunting regulations and seasons and take adequate safety precautions during those times. For more on hunting season safety precautions, see the hunting season information at the beginning of this guide. Venomous snakes are present on site. Please note that the trails into the Green Swamp are very primitive. At times, the trails in the longleaf pine savannas have been overrun with foot traffic, damaging the fragile ecosystem. Please minimize disturbance along the trails.

**Access & Parking:** Park in the designated parking area on the east side of NC 211, next to a borrow pit pond. The site is open to visitation daily during daylight hours.

**Directions:** From the intersection of NC 211 and US 17 in Supply, take NC 211 5.7 miles north to reach the Green Swamp Preserve. A small green sign designates the parking area on the right.

Coordinates: N 34°05'34" W 78°17'57" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 86





# North Carolina Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

## Southeast

9

### Lake Waccamaw State Park

**Owner:** NC State Parks

1866 State Park Road, Lake Waccamaw, NC 28450  
910 646 4748

Columbus County

[www.ncsparks.net](http://www.ncsparks.net)

**Site Description:** Lake Waccamaw State Park is home to the largest Carolina Bay lake in the state and houses a diversity of unique plant and animal species. The best way to experience the park is by walking the Lake Trail, which extends for 5 miles along Lake Waccamaw's natural shoreline from the park's visitor center to the lake dam, where the Waccamaw River begins. Boardwalks, sun shelters and a pier are accessible from this trail. Watch and listen along the trail for Brown headed Nuthatch, Northern Parula, Prothonotary Warbler, White eyed Vireo, and other breeding and migrating species. During the winter, waterfowl can be seen on the lake, along with Osprey and the occasional Bald Eagle. Other trails in the park include the Pine Woods Trail (2.5 miles in length), and the Loblolly Trail (a 1 mile loop), both of which depart near the visitor center, and the Sand Ridge Nature Trail (0.75 mile loop), which begins near the day use area beyond the visitor center. Bring a canoe and explore the shallow lake from the water side. There is no boat access in the park, but two free public boat launch areas are available nearby.

**Species of Interest:** Bald Eagle, Brown headed Nuthatch, Prothonotary Warbler, wintering waterfowl

**Habitats:** longleaf pine forest, isolated wetlands, Carolina bay, moist shrubland

**Special Feature:** All Carolina bays are unusual, yet Lake Waccamaw is probably the most unique. While many bays are small, averaging about 500 feet in length, Lake Waccamaw covers nearly 9,000 acres and has 14 miles of shoreline. Many bays are also totally dependent on rainfall, but Lake Waccamaw gets its water supply from the Friar Swamp drainage. Most Carolina bays also have naturally high levels of acid, making the water unable to sustain a large diversity of aquatic life. Limestone bluffs along Lake Waccamaw's north shore neutralize the lake's water, making it suitable for many species of plants and animals. Several fish, freshwater mussel, and snail species are endemic to the lake, meaning they are not found anywhere else on Earth.

**Access & Parking:** Parking is available at the visitor center lot or at the day use area, located 1.8 miles south of the visitor center on State Park Drive. The park is open from 8am to 6pm, November - February; 8am to 7pm, March and October; 8am to 8pm, April, May, and September; 8am to 9pm, June - August.

**Directions:** From the town of Lake Waccamaw, travel east on NC 214 (Sam Potts Highway) to the intersection of Jefferson Road. Turn right on Jefferson Road and travel south toward the lake. Turn left on Bella Coola Road (SR 1947) and the park entrance will be approximately 3 miles on the left.

Coordinates: N 34°16'41" W 78°27'56" DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 82





# North Carolina Birding Trail

mountains • piedmont • coast

Southeast

10

## Sunset Beach Island

**Contact:** Town of Sunset Beach

Island of Sunset Beach, NC  
910 579 3808

Brunswick County

**Site Description:** After crossing onto the causeway, stop just beyond the boat launch on the right to watch for Wood Stork from late spring to mid fall, and Seaside, Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sharp tailed Sparrows in the marsh grass in fall and winter. On the flats, watch for shorebirds, wading birds and American Oystercatcher. The causeway ends at a T junction. In the winter, go straight ahead into the town's free parking lot and walk to the beach to look for scoters, loons, Horned Grebe, Northern Gannet and other wintering waterfowl. Explore the east end of Sunset Beach by turning east on Main Street from the T junction. Main Street forms a U with Canal Drive. Return on Canal Drive for 0.5 miles, then turn right on Cobia Street and then right on North Shore Drive East. Listen and watch for Painted Bunting and Loggerhead Shrike in the shrubby open areas. Parking in right of ways along the street will afford views of the surrounding saltmarsh. A spotting scope is useful. Returning to Main Street, head to the west end of the island, where a small parking lot on the right affords views of the saltmarsh directly ahead. Scan for wading birds and rails. Use the beach access to cross the dunes and explore farther west toward Bird Island, scanning for Wilson's Plover and Least Tern.

**Species of Interest:** Horned Grebe, Wood Stork, American Oystercatcher, Black Skimmer, Painted Bunting, winter sparrows

**Habitats:** salt marsh, maritime shrub, beach and dune

**Special Concern:** Do not climb on any sand dunes. Observe roadside parking designations closely.

**Access & Parking:** Public parking is available in the lot at the T junction, and as designated on streets throughout the island. Roadside parking is also available in many places. During the high season, the traffic waiting at the single land swing bridge can be quite heavy in both directions; take advantage of early morning arrival. Public restrooms are available at the public beach access at the T junction of Sunset Boulevard and Main Street.

**Directions:** From the intersection of US 17 and NC 904, go east on NC 904. Travel for 3.5 miles to the second stoplight. Turn right on Sunset Boulevard. At 5.3 miles, stay straight where NC 179 Business turns right. There is a light before a single lane bridge that leads onto the island of Sunset Beach. After passing along a causeway, Sunset Boulevard ends at a T junction with Main Street on the island.

Coordinates: N 33°52'06 W 78°30'25 DeLorme (NC Gazetteer) Page: 86

