

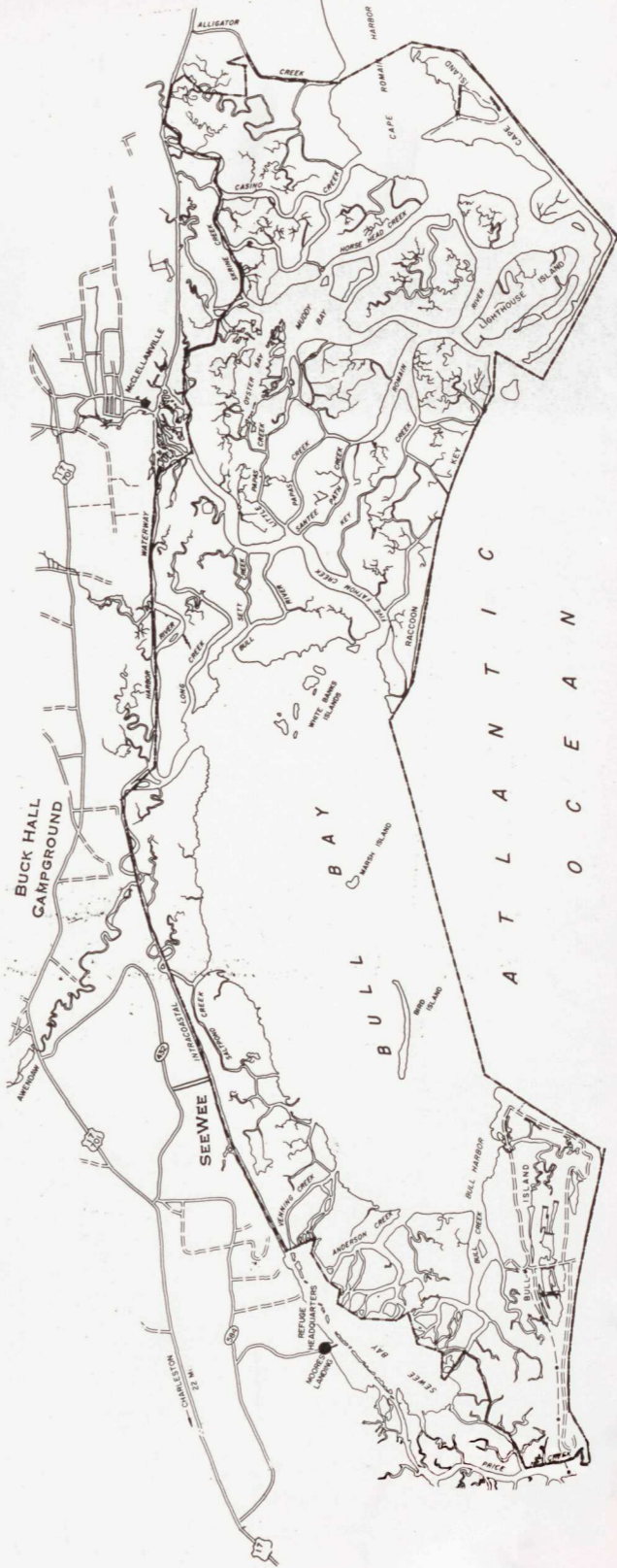
REFUGE HEADQUARTERS

To reach Bulls Island and refuge headquarters, turn off U. S. Highway 17 about 20 miles northeast of Charleston onto SeeWee Road for 5 miles to Moore's Landing. Boat access to Bulls Island is generally available from this point. Restrooms, drinking water and 20 miles of trails are available for visitors. One photo blind is also available.

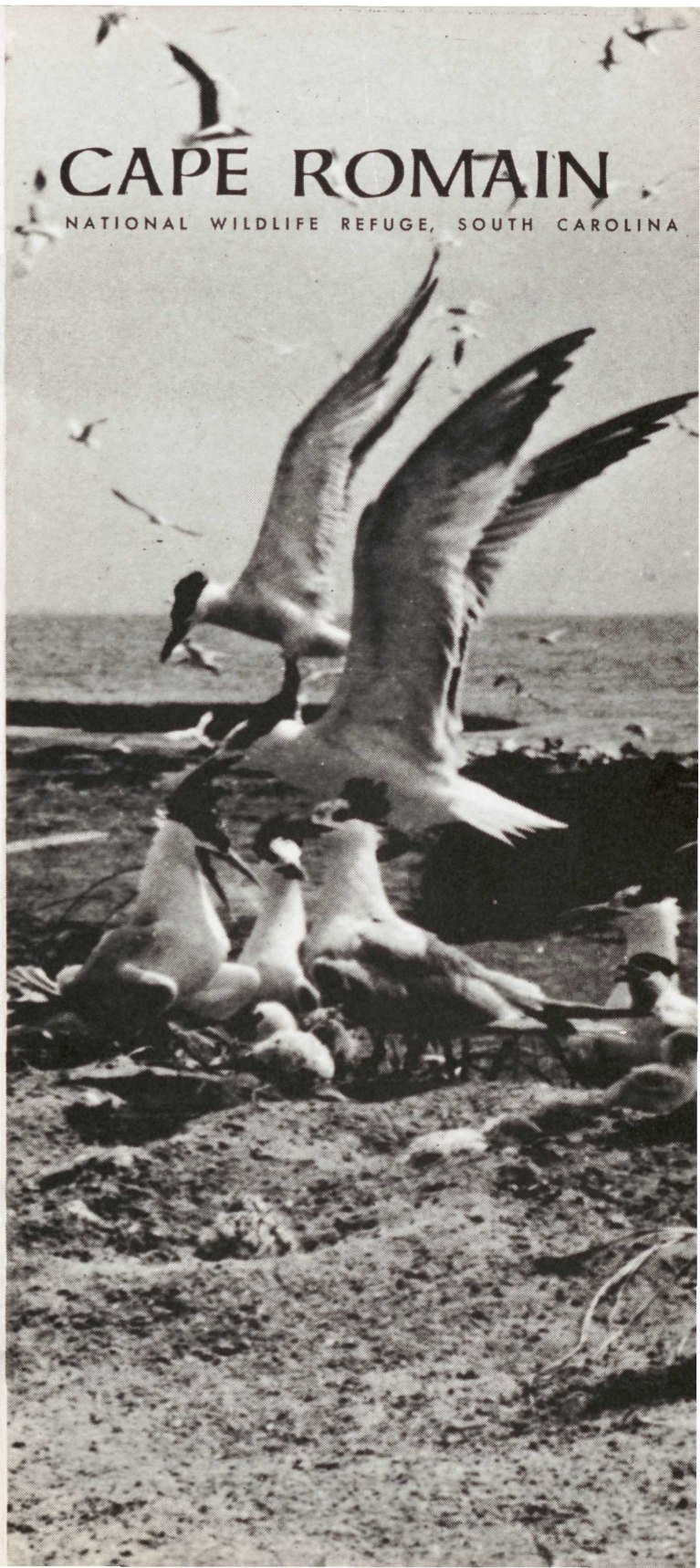
FISHING

You can fish in accordance with State regulations from March 15 to September 30. Boats restricted to electric motors may be used on Jack's Creek Pond and Pools 1, 2 and 3, where there is fresh-water fishing for largemouth bass, bluegill, and other minor species. There is surf fishing on the Atlantic side of the island.

Refuge Headquarters are located at Moore's Landing. The refuge manager may be addressed at Route 1, Box 191, Awendaw, South Carolina, Telephone 803-928-3368.

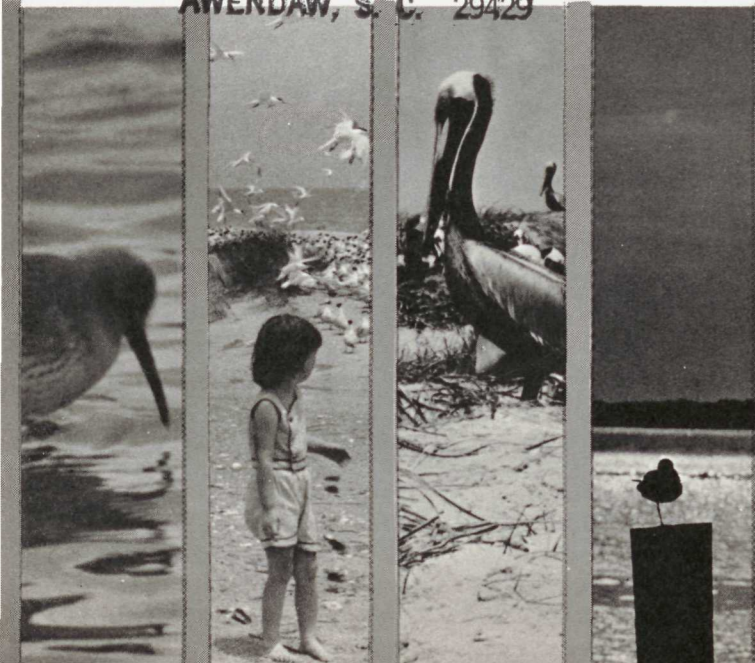


CAPE ROMAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



CAPE ROMAIN
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, SOUTH CAROLINA

CAPE ROMAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
390 BULLS ISLAND ROAD
AWENDAW, S. C. 29429



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
RF-42510 - July 1983



CAPE ROMAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE is about 20 miles northeast of Charleston, S. C., and lies east of U. S. Highway 17 and south of the Santee River. This 60,000-acre tract, one of the outstanding wildlife refuges in the East, occupies a 20 mile segment of the Atlantic coast and embraces a fascinating expanse of sea islands, salt marshes, intricate coastal waterways, and long sandy beaches.

The salt marshes of Cape Romain are interlaced by waterways that create a score of islands, some so low that high tides cover them. Others like Cape Island, Raccoon Keys, and Bulls Island are higher and never flooded. The first of these islands is nearly treeless, but Bulls Island has live oaks, magnolias, pines, and palmettos, and Cape Island has pines and myrtles.

Bulls Island, an ancient barrier reef, is the most popular part of the refuge. Low and rolling, about 6 miles long and 2 miles wide, it lies nearly 3 miles off the mainland and is reached by boat from Moore's Landing. The broad, open beach is shell-strewn and seems to stretch endlessly north and south. Over the centuries, the ocean has washed away a lighthouse, a cape, and many acres of forest. Inland are woods and large ponds. In winter, thousands of waterfowl use these ponds; in spring, wood duck families nest in surrounding trees.

The western side of Bulls Island tapers off into great tidal marshes through which channels wind and where diamondback terrapins are at home. Close to the mainland, beyond these marshes, is the Intracoastal Waterway, the dredged channel for small coastwise craft wishing to sail in protected waters.

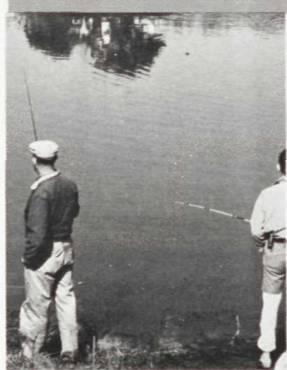
Bulls Island was the first land to be seen by many of

the settlers coming to the South Carolina coast. The island was named after Stephen Bull who was one of the leaders aboard the Ship "Carolina". The remains of an old tabby wall reported to be an "Old Fort" or "Look-out" still stands on the island and has been interpreted and partially excavated. The tabby structure was commanded by an Englishman and two SeeWee Indians to watch for pirate ships in Bulls Bay.

The forest cover is composed mainly of loblolly pines, laurel and live oaks, and magnolias. Beneath these trees are cabbage palmetto, red bay, yaupon, wax myrtle, holly, and other lesser growths characteristic of the area. In poorly drained sections of the woods, virgin pines are joined to aged oaks and tall palmettos by the loops of such vines as muscadine, greenbriar, yellow jessamine, supplejack, peppervine, Virginia creeper, and poison ivy. Less easily seen in this tangle is the mistletoe and barely discernible are the delicate fronds of the tree fern.

With normal water conditions, aquatics like banana waterlily, sago pondweed, and widgeongrass grow in the deeper water areas. Excellent stands of giant foxtail, wild millet, smartweed, bulrush, spikerush, and other food plants good for waterfowl grow on the exposed marsh flats.

For the bird-watcher, Bulls Island is perhaps the most rewarding place of easy accessi-



bility along the Atlantic coast. It has a large wintering population of shorebirds and waterfowl. Many land birds may be found there and on the nearby mainland at all seasons. Bald eagles are rarely seen; woodpeckers, especially the pileated, are heard more often than seen.

Gulls, comorants, and horned grebes winter along the ocean beaches, while brown pelicans, black skimmers, and peregrine falcons are occasional winter residents.

There are flocks of black ducks, pintails, mallards, gadwalls, and blue- and green-winged teals. Canada geese, ring-necked ducks, and scaups are found in varying numbers. Buffleheads and shovelers are regular winter visitors, and ruddy ducks are generally around. Coots and common gallinules feed along the margins of ponds. And along the water's edge are the runways of the river otter, a rare sight, and of the alligator, a common sight.

At the northeast end of the island is a long sand spit in a shallow bay. It is liked by such shorebirds as turnstones, sanderlings, knots, dowitchers, yellowlegs, and black-bellied and semipalmated plovers. On the mud flats and oyster banks are willets and quantities of dunlins. The long-billed curlew and the marbled godwit winter regularly. Most of the Atlantic coast population of American oyster-catchers congregate on the refuge during the winter. Clapper rails are abundant in the salt marshes all year round.

After the waterfowl and shorebirds and seabirds have migrated north in the spring, they are replaced by the birds that summer on the island. Flocks of wood ibises, and common and snowy egrets whiten the marshes as they feed. Herons of all kinds are plentiful.

A large bird population breeds in the woods of the island. Recent studies on 100 acres disclosed 169 breeding pairs of birds late in May, with the parula warbler

the most numerous. Others in a descending numerical order were the pine warbler, the cardinal, the Carolina wren, the great crested flycatcher, the white-eyed and red-eyed vireos, the yellow-throated warbler, the chuck-will's-widow, and the painted bunting.

Whitetail deer are plentiful and, with patience, may be seen in the early morning and late afternoon feeding in the mowed firebreaks. Wild turkeys, though found on Bulls Island, are seldom seen. Raccoons are common all over the island. The shiny black fox squirrel is always a center of attention.

While Bulls Island is the most accessible and attractive to refuge visitors, it is not necessarily the most important biological area. Cape Romain is the nesting area for the Eastern Brown Pelican, an endangered species. The brown pelican in the company of a large colony of royal terns and lesser numbers of laughing gulls and sandwich terns nest on small treeless islands in Bulls Bay.

Cape Romain Refuge may be the last stronghold for a rapidly dwindling population of pelicans and, as research may reveal, for several species of shorebirds. Other small islands on the refuge are important nesting sites for herons, egrets, black skimmers, least terns, oyster catchers, Wilson's plovers, willets and other shorebirds. The nesting islands may be reached only by boat and must not be disturbed during the nesting season.

The warm sands of the beaches on the outer islands like Cape Island and Bulls Island are the spots where the giant loggerhead sea turtles deposit their eggs. Man's disruption of natural beaches by development and harassment has seriously depleted nesting areas for this amazing reptile. Areas such as Cape Romain may be the only undisturbed nesting areas for the loggerhead in the future. To prevent human interference, night use on the nesting islands is prohibited.

