

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Great Dismal Swamp

*National Wildlife  
Refuge*

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge  
3100 Desert Road  
Suffolk, VA 23434  
757/986 3705

[www.fws.gov/refuge/Great\\_Dismal\\_Swamp](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Dismal_Swamp)  
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Federal Relay Service  
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
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**Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge** *a place of natural beauty, mystery, and legend.*

The refuge, established in 1974, includes more than 175 square miles of forested wetlands. Lake Drummond, a 3,100-acre natural lake, is located in the heart of the swamp.

Colonial settlers looked to the swamp as a store house of natural resources. For 2 ½ centuries logging, ditching, and road construction disrupted the swamp's ecological balance, eventually leading to a decrease in plant and animal diversity. The refuge's resource management program strives to restore and maintain the natural biological diversity that existed prior to these alterations.

Archeological research provides evidence of communities of maroon slaves establishing their own secret world under cover of the dense forest. Their vast numbers support reason for designating the refuge a significant site on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Today this globally important bird area host large numbers of neotropical migrants each spring. Recently, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker was re-introduced to the forest after a fifty year absence. The swamp is home to a large black bear population, as well as to many of the other mammals associated with southern wetlands.

The refuge provides excellent hiking, biking and wildlife observation opportunities. The Wildlife Drive provides vehicle access to Lake Drummond through the Railroad Ditch entrance.

Trailheads are located at these entrance points:

**Jericho Ditch:** 1330 White Marsh Road, Suffolk, VA

**Washington Ditch:** 3076 White Marsh Road, Suffolk, VA

**Railroad Ditch (Wildlife Drive):** 3120 Desert Road, Suffolk, VA

**Portsmouth Ditch:** 3457 Martin Johnson Road, Chesapeake, VA

**Feeder Ditch (by water only):** Connecting the Dismal Swamp Canal to Lake Drummond

Trails are open daily, sunrise to sunset, for hiking and biking. The Wildlife Drive requires use of a self-serve permit. It is open to vehicles on a seasonally adjusted schedule. Visit our website for more details; [www.fws.gov/refuge/Great\\_Dismal\\_Swamp](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Dismal_Swamp)



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**Cover:** Bald cypress trees,  
Lake Drummond  
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