

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Swanquarter

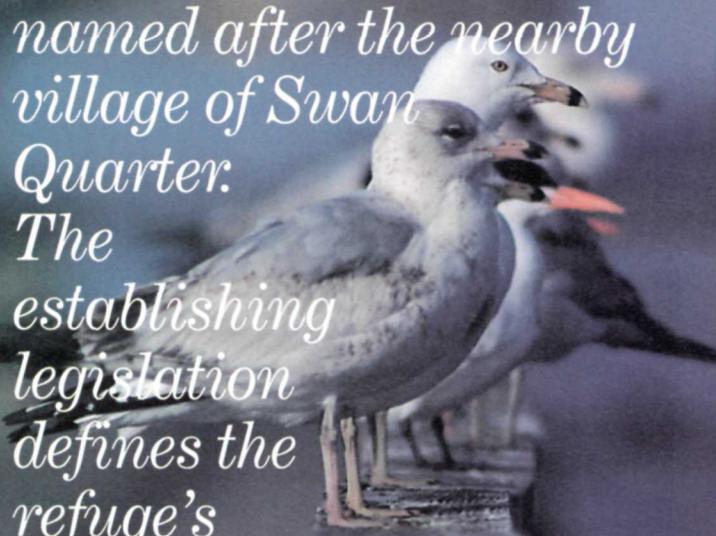
*National Wildlife Refuge*



*Swanquarter National Wildlife Refuge, located on the Pamlico Sound in Hyde County, North Carolina, was established by presidential order on June 23, 1932. It was named after the nearby village of Swan Quarter.*

*The establishing legislation defines the refuge's purpose:*

*"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."*



*This blue goose, designed by "Ding Darling," has become a symbol of the Refuge System.*

*tri-colored heron*



*photo: Larry Ditto*

Unmatched anywhere in the world, the National Wildlife Refuge System is an extensive network of lands and waters protected and managed



*photo: Larry Ditto*

*laughing gull*

especially for wildlife and its habitat. Refuges stretch across the U.S. from above the

Arctic Circle in Alaska to the subtropical waters of the Florida Keys and beyond to the Caribbean and South Pacific. The National Wildlife Refuge System is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which protects and manages over 500 refuges for wildlife and for people to enjoy.

### **Habitat Types**

Swanquarter Refuge is 16,411 acres of saltmarsh islands and forested wetlands interspersed with potholes, creeks, and drains. Marsh vegetation is dominated by black needlerush and sawgrass. The mainland is forested by loblolly pine, pond pine, and baldcypress.

*cover photo: white-tailed deer by Larry Ditto*

*photo at left: gulls and terns by Larry Ditto*



photo: National Wildlife Federation ©  
*bald eagle*



photo: Larry Ditto  
*osprey*



photo: USFWS  
*copperhead snake*



photo: USFWS  
*snapping turtle*

## Wilderness

Approximately 8,800 acres of Swanquarter Refuge are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This designation was made in 1974. As a Wilderness Area, this land is protected from all construction, drainage, and managed timber practices; a guarantee which insures the integrity of these invaluable wildlands for years to come.

## Wildlife

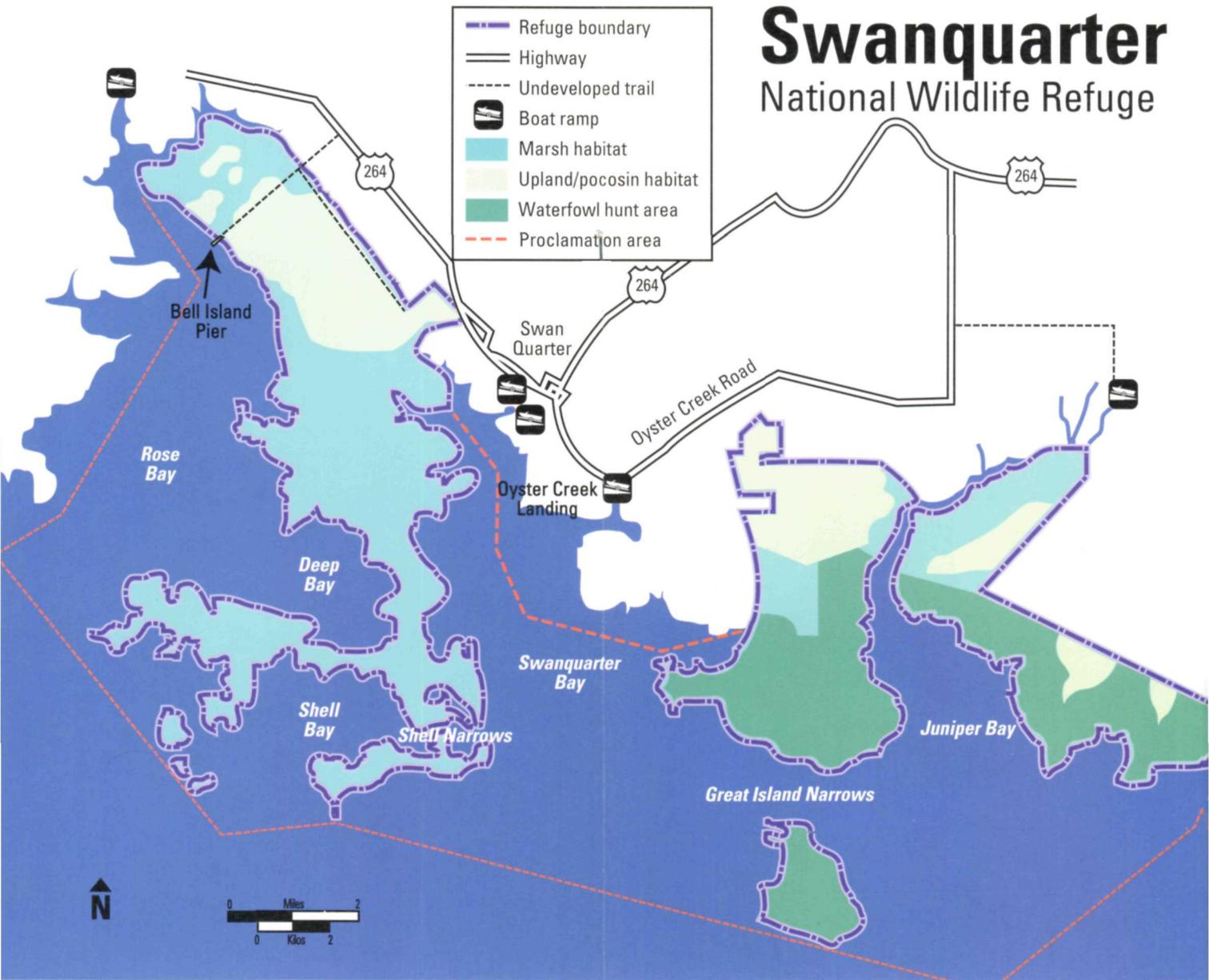
The refuge and the surrounding proclamation waters provide wintering habitat for hundreds of black ducks, mergansers, bufflehead, ruddy ducks and thousands of canvasbacks, redheads, surf scoters, and scaup. Additionally, it provides nesting habitat for osprey, black ducks, and colonial waterbirds, and supports one of the northernmost populations of the American alligator. Bald eagles use the area in the winter and may find nesting habitat on the refuge.

Mammals such as white-tailed deer, raccoons, swamp rabbits, and river otter find refuge throughout Swanquarter. Occasionally black bear use the refuge too.

*photo opposite: black bear*



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Swanquarter Refuge and its associated waters are a primary fisheries nursery and extremely important to the economic base for the local coastal communities.

### Management

A prescribed burning program is used to bring back fire to this area

which has historically adapted to natural fires. The primary objectives of the annual prescribed burning program are to enhance foraging habitat for wildlife that require early successional vegetation; to enhance fire-adapted plant species and plant diversity; and to improve habitat for resident and migratory wildlife species.

## Recreational Opportunities

Facilities are limited on Swanquarter Refuge. However, visitors enjoy such recreational opportunities as wildlife observation, fishing, and waterfowl hunting. Visitors are welcome to hike or bike through the two undeveloped trails on the refuge during daylight hours.



photo: USFWS

## Fishing

Available for the public on Swanquarter Refuge is a 1,000 foot long pier known as the Bell Island fishing pier. It may be reached by a two-mile road off U.S. 264 just west of Swan Quarter, NC. The remainder of the refuge is inaccessible except by boat. Fishing is popular from May through November. Commonly caught fish species include Atlantic croaker, spot, weakfish, and spotted seatrout, Atlantic flounder, red drum, and bluefish. Crabbing is also popular during the warmer months.



photo: Mike Hopiak

canvasback

Fishing is also popular around the marsh edges by boat. While the refuge does not have a boat ramp, boats may be launched from private or state operated launches at Swan Quarter, Rose Bay, and Juniper Bay.

## Hunting

A 6,120 acre area of marsh is open to duck and coot hunting in accordance with applicable State and Federal regulations. The hunt area includes Great Island and portions of the marshes just north of Great Island bordering Juniper Bay. Hunting is not permitted on the remainder of the refuge or within the 27,000 acres of adjacent waters within the Presidential Proclamation area. Hunting is restricted to the designated areas on the map and as posted by "Public Hunting Area" signs.

*Opposite: successful angler with Atlantic flounder*

*American alligator*



photo: USFWS

In addition to the regular regulations, hunters are reminded that only temporary blinds that are removed daily are permitted. Youth hunters under the age of 16 must have proof of passing a state approved Hunter Education Course to participate in any refuge hunt. For reasons of hunter safety and courtesy, hunters shall not hunt closer than 150 yards apart.

### Regulations

Prohibited activities include camping, littering, air boating, jet skiing, swimming, all-terrain vehicles, disturbing wildlife, and collecting plants. Unless specifically authorized, all firearms are prohibited.

### How to Reach the Refuge

The refuge lies about 60 miles east of Washington, NC, south of the village of Swan Quarter. The refuge marsh is not easily accessible. A two-mile long graveled road south of Highway 264 leads into the upland portions of the refuge and to the Bell Island fishing pier.

Swanquarter Refuge is administered by Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. For more information on Swanquarter Refuge, write:  
Swanquarter Refuge  
Route 1, Box N-2  
Swan Quarter, NC 27885  
or call 919/926 4021 between 7:30 am and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

*Bell Island fishing pier*

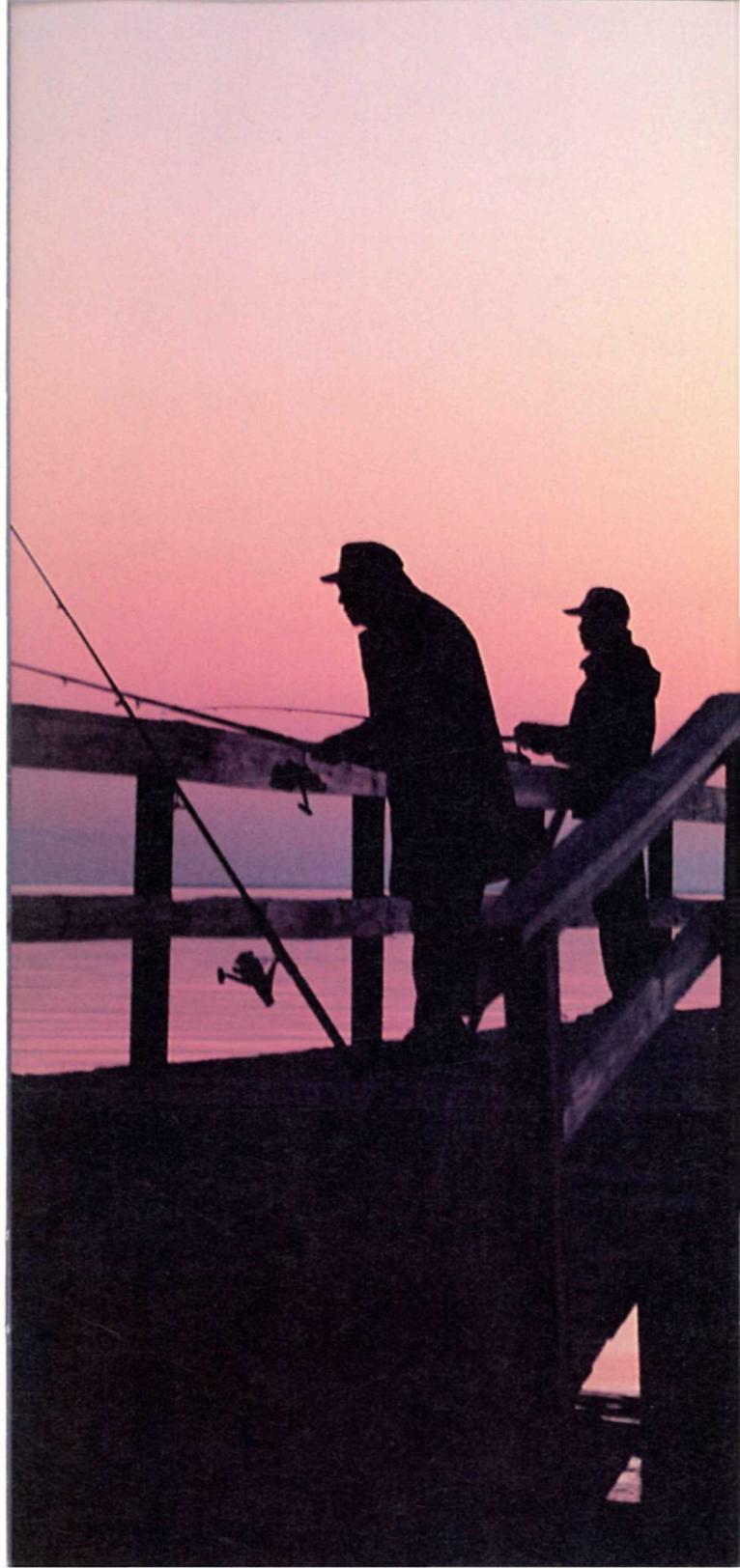


photo: USFWS

Swanquarter National Wildlife Refuge  
Route 1, Box N-2  
Swan Quarter, NC 27885  
919/926 4021

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov/~r4eao>

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