

# 2018 WETLAND TREASURES OF THE CAROLINAS



LEWIS OCEAN BAY WETLAND TYPES:

Carolina bay complex, bay forest, pine flatwoods, pond pine woodland, longleaf pine savannah

*Photos by James Luken*

## ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

Minutes away from humming highways of Myrtle Beach and surrounded by the bustling urban development of Horry County, a natural wonderland and oasis flourish at SCDNR's Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve. The 10,427 acre preserve was purchased by SCDNR to protect a Carolina bay/longleaf pine ecosystem complex that contains South Carolina's best assemblage of Carolina bays. Many Carolina bays in the surrounding area are not currently protected and many have been altered. These isolated wetlands provide essential food, water, cover, and space for many species, not to mention providing ecosystem services to the surrounding urban interface including flood mitigation, clean air, and recreation. This preserve not only provides wildlife viewing; it also provides hunting opportunities for the public.

## FLORA & FAUNA

This is a fire-adapted ecosystem and prescribed burning continues to play a major role in shaping the ecosystem today. Fire spares fire-tolerant trees, such as the longleaf and pond pine. Fire also favors herbaceous plants such as fly traps, pitcher plants and native orchids. The preserve is home to several rare species, including Venus fly trap, savannah milkweed,

pitcher plants and the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Dense thickets of plants, such as blueberries, huckleberries, fetterbush and zenobia, cover the bays and mingle with sweet bay, catbriar, gallberry and titi. A thin canopy of pond pine and loblolly bay trees surround the bays. Sugar-white sand rims may occur along portions of a bay or encircle an entire bay. The preserve is linked via several swamp corridors to the Waccamaw River, allowing for larger species such as the black bear to inhabit the preserve and also carry out their natural processes within other landscapes nearby.

## THREATS

Fire suppression in certain areas of the preserve due to urban development pose concerns for fire dependent species. Smoke management has also become a challenge with highways and communities now encircling the preserve. Without fire, many flora and fauna would be lost from this landscape.

## ACCESS

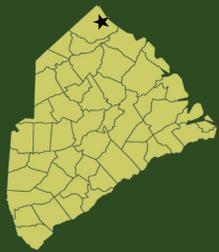
The preserve is open to the public from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Hunting is allowed with the proper permit and licensing. Please visit [www.dnr.sc.gov](http://www.dnr.sc.gov) for directions and additional information.

## SOURCES

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources



*Use of prescribed fire to manage the habitat—photo courtesy of SCDNR*



## LEWIS OCEAN BAY

Property Owner: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Recognitions & Designations: Heritage Trust Property and Wildlife Management Area  
(SC Department of Natural Resources)

[carolinawetlands.org](http://carolinawetlands.org)

