

# Area wetlands 'cradle of life'

Wetlands are the link between water and land. They are areas that, whether or not they are covered by surface water, have water-logged soil at least periodically.

The amount of water present and the timing of its presence determine the functions of a wetland and its role in the environment. They are among the most biologically productive and diverse ecosystems in the world, supporting the growth of water-loving plants and providing home to thousands of fish and wildlife communities.

Scientists recognize five major wetland systems: Marine, estuarine, lacustrine, riverine and palustrine.

Marine and estuarine systems include coastal habitats such as bays and sounds, the coastline, salt marshes and coastal brackish waters.

The other three systems represent inland freshwater habitats, which account for 90 percent of the nation's wetlands. Lacustrine systems are found along the low-lying areas and margins surrounding lakes, reservoirs and ponds. Riverine wetlands are comprised of flood plains along freshwater rivers and streams. Palustrine wetlands include marshes, bogs and swamps.

Ranging from the small prairie potholes of the northern plain states to the vast swamplands of the Florida Everglades, wetlands occur in every region and climate of the United States. North Carolina has more than five and a half million million acres of wetlands; 95 percent are located in the coastal plain.

Several kinds of wetlands can be found in the state -- lush bottomland hardwood forests that grow in the flood plains of our rivers and streams; densely vegetated pocosins (from the Indian word for "swamps on a hill") that are found nowhere else in the world except North

Carolina and South Carolina; Carolina bays, unique, egg-shaped depressions found mostly in the southeastern portion of the state; and rich, fertile salt marshes of the coast where the land meets the sea.

Wetlands play many important roles in protecting our health, safety, property and economy. They aid in flood control, acting as sponges to absorb excess rainfall and snowmelt and then releasing them slowly. They improve our water quality by filtering-out organic wastes and other pollutants. Coastal wetlands prevent erosion and property damage by functioning as natural buffers against damaging storm waves. And, they are critical to the success of the commercial fishing industry, serving as safe spawning grounds and nurseries for fish and shellfish.

Wetlands are also vital to thousands of plant and animal species that depend on this rich habitat for survival. These "biological supermarkets" provide great volumes of food that attract and sustain many animal species. Many other animals, such as migratory waterfowl, use wetlands for breeding grounds, resting sites and shelter from weather and predators. Although wetlands occupy less than five percent of the land in the lower 48 states, more than one-third of all federally listed threatened and endangered species live only in wetlands, and nearly half use wetlands at some point in their life.

In the past 200 years, more than half the wetlands in the lower 48 states have been drained, paved, filled or destroyed. Wetlands loss has slowed over recent years thanks to federal and state protective regulations and efforts by conservation and environmental groups. However, continued efforts are vital to ensure the protection and preservation of these fragile cradles of life.

## BALD HEAD ISLAND PROPERTIES



**807 KILLEGRAY RIDGE** - "Wynd Song" is the perfect name for this beachfront cottage with wrap-around porch on lower level and deck off master suite. 3 bedrooms, 3-1/2 baths plus 1 bedroom and bath in crotcher cottage. Furnished. \$675,000. Call Patricia Wingfield.



**30 TANBARK COURT** - Enjoy views of marsh, river, marina and Southport from this Harbour Village home. 2 Bedrooms plus den/sleeping porch, 2-1/2 baths, screened porch, deck and fireplace. Shared access to boat dock. Unfurnished. \$475,000. Call Bill Bondurant.



**5 SNOWY EGRET TRAIL** - This lovely 3-bedroom, 3-1/2-bath oceanview home is convenient to golf course, clubhouse and beautiful South Beach. Ground-level storage and play areas. Furnished. \$349,000. Call Patricia Wingfield.



**331 SOUTH BALD HEAD WYND** - A unique contemporary design gives this 4-bedroom, 3-bath beach house two separate sleeping wings, a large living area, wide decks and extraordinary views of the ocean. Furnished. \$525,000. Call Polly Fish.



**3A SCOTCH BONNET LANE** - Ocean views and beach boardwalk make this oceanfront home with screened porch and deck a top value. 3 bedrooms, 2-1/2 baths in main house, plus a bedroom and bath in detached guest cottage. Furnished. \$439,000. Call Jim Brown.



**12 WINDWARD COURT** - Views of marsh, marina and Cape Fear River make this 2-bedroom, 2-1/2-bath Harbour Village home ideal for vacation or year-round living. Reversed floor plan with screened and open porches. Furnished. \$379,000. Call Jim Brown.



**7 MOURNING WARBLER TRAIL** - Ocean and fairway views plus a rooftop observation deck distinguish this 2-story island home. 4 bedrooms, 2 baths. Furnished. \$369,000. Call Jim Brown.



**10 PALM COURT** - Located behind the dune line but within minutes of South Beach, this home has 3 bedrooms and 3 baths, plus a Florida room and open and screened porches. Good rental potential. Unfurnished. \$370,000. Call Patricia Wingfield.

### HOMESITES

**337 FORT HOLMES TRAIL** - Lovely wooded lot near 3rd fairway, only minutes from marina, beach and marsh. Call Patricia Wingfield.

**107 TURK'S HEAD COURT** - Conveniently situated in much sought-after Harbour Village, this homesite offers wonderful water views. Call Patricia Wingfield.

**2521 SOUTH BALD HEAD WYND** - Large homesite with wonderful ocean breezes and views plus convenient nearby beach access. Call Bill Bondurant.

**628 HORSEMINT TRAIL** - Great views across 9th fairway to river and ocean and short distance to all club amenities. Call Patricia Wingfield.

The Island Agency specializes in real estate brokerage for this unique island community. Just a short passenger ferry ride from Southport, N.C., this premier coastal property offers homes, homesites and condominiums along the



oceanfront, in the maritime forest, beside salt marshes and tidal creeks, bordering golf course fairways, or rimming the docks of a ten-acre marina that offers convenient access to the Atlantic Ocean, Intracoastal Waterway and Cape Fear River.

## THE ISLAND AGENCY

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The Island Agency is an affiliate brokerage company endorsed by Bald Head Island Management, Inc., the island's developer.



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