

Battery Island

Location: Brunswick County

Total Size: 42.0 ha (103.7 acres)



Site Description: Battery Island is a 100-acre natural island guarding the mouth of the Cape Fear. Many years ago, Battery Island received deposits of dredged sand, which formed the southern upland area of the island, commonly referred to as the "South Colony." This is where the majority of wading birds gather to nest in the red cedars, yaupon and other shrubs. During late spring and summer, visitors to the nearby Southport waterfront can witness the early-morning departure of thousands of white ibises as they leave for inland foraging grounds. The sky over Southport is again filled with ibises during the last two hours of daylight as flocks from 20 to 200 ibises return to Battery Island for the evening. Battery Island supports North Carolina's largest colony of wading birds, which include approximately 10% of North America's white ibises. The riverside beachfront is prime nesting habitat for American Oystercatchers and the grassy uplands support nesting willets.

Habitats: coastal shrub thicket dominated by red cedar, yaupon; saltmarsh; upland sand beach

Land Use: wildlife conservation

Primary Threats: disturbance to birds, erosion, invasive plants



Protection Status: The site is protected and managed by the National Audubon Society—NC

Conservation Issues: The island is posted, patrolled and is entirely off-limits to visitors. Disturbance to nesting birds is a primary concern. Audubon Wardens post and patrol the island throughout the nesting season and regularly during other times of the year. The island is also patrolled by NC Wildlife Enforcement Officers.

Birds: Battery Island the site of North Carolina's largest colony of nesting wading birds, supporting 10-15,000+ nesting pairs of 9 wading bird species annually. The site is globally significant for white ibises, which is the most abundant wading bird nesting on the island. The number of nesting ibises varies between 9-15,000 breeding pairs annually. At least 10 pairs of oystercatchers nest on the island annually, along with willets, numerous clapper rails, seaside sparrows, and marsh wrens. Research and monitoring projects have been ongoing since 1982 and have contributed significantly to the knowledge of wading birds and their habitats (Criteria NC5).

Key Birds

Criteria		Season	Numbers	Year	% '01	'97-'01	% '97-'01
2b	White Ibis	B	15,493 prs.	2001	90.0 %	10,695 prs.	91.2 %
3a	Great Egret	B	231 prs.	2001	6.0 %	180 prs.	7.0 %
2a	Snowy Egret	B	20 prs.	2001	5.7 %	65 prs.	15.2 %
2a	Tricolored Heron	B	251 prs.	2001	20.6 %	180 prs.	17.1 %
2a	Little Blue Heron	B	217 prs.	2001	16.1 %	145 prs.	14.6 %
2b	Black-crowned Night heron	B	38 prs.	2001	14.5 %	19 prs.	8.3 %
2a	American Oystercatcher	B	10 prs	2003	--	10 prs.	--
3ei	Waterbirds	B	16,000 prs.	2001	--		--

B=Breeding FM=Fall Migration SM=Spring Migration W=Winter