

NATURE

GEORGIA

Summer 2020 • nature.org/georgia



Exploring the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge © Alan Cressler

In Uncertain Times, Turn To Nature

Editorial Note: *The parks mentioned in this story were open and accessible at the time of writing. Given the evolving nature of the coronavirus, please confirm park status before planning a visit, and follow CDC guidelines.*

Georgia's natural places are among the most beautiful in the nation. With your help, The Nature Conservancy has played a role in protecting many of these incredible places. This summer, visit some of the best locations that nature has to offer.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Few areas can match the variety and abundance of wildlife in the Okefenokee Swamp—the largest swamp in North America. It features wet and dry prairies, winding waterways, and forested uplands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the 700-square-mile oasis, including 14,849 acres donated by TNC. Plan your visit at fws.gov/refuge/Okefenokee.

Panola Mountain State Park

This 1,653-acre park in Stockbridge, Georgia, is the crown jewel of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. Visitors enjoy hiking, picnicking, birding, exploring forested fitness trails and more at this haven for outdoor recreation. TNC facilitated the initial purchase of the mountain and protection by the state in 1969. Plan your visit at gastateparks.org/PanolaMountain.

Sweetwater Creek State Park

Located minutes from downtown Atlanta, this bucolic park offers water activities, guided hikes through fields and forest, and the historic ruins of the New Manchester Manufacturing Company, a Civil War-era textile mill. Consider renting a fishing boat, canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard on a sweltering summer day. Visit gastateparks.org/SweetwaterCreek.



Bees and flowers make a perfect photo subject.
© W.K. Pang/TNC Photo Contest 2019

Photos Wanted

Are you a shutterbug with a library of amazing images of your outdoor adventures and encounters with iconic Georgia species? We'd like to see them and share them! Email our communications team at tncgeorgia@tnc.org to learn how you can donate your favorite high-resolution images for TNC's use.



A mixed forest and tree farm in southwestern Georgia © Mark Godfrey

Conserving Forests To Combat Climate Change

The climate crisis is not coming—it's here. Scientists have been sounding the alarm for decades, and we continue seeing more extreme weather, flooding, wildfires and drought. The majority of Georgians support climate action, and youth from around the world are pleading for it. We know that it is within our power to fix this. Using science, smart policy and nature's carbon-storing potential, we can make a difference before it's too late.

To avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis, we must transition to renewable energy without delay and invest in the power of nature to capture and store greenhouse gas emissions. In Georgia, that means investing in the protection and restoration of our forests, rivers and working lands. A recent report from Project Drawdown indicates that restoring forests and biodiversity can help reach net-negative carbon emissions by 2040.

Two-thirds of Georgia's lands are forest, and much of this land is privately owned. These landowners hold the key to reducing emissions, and TNC is gearing up to partner with them. Our team is working with landowners and forestry industry representatives to explore the feasibility of a forest conservation program that would offer landowners financial incentives and support for their long-term sustainable forestry management practices.

With the support of our donors and members, we are acting on sound ecological and economic science to create a climate in which nature and people can thrive.

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Enhance Your Nature Experience with Tech

Technology offers nature lovers new ways to enhance, document and share their experiences. Try one of these apps on your next outdoor adventure!

Take pictures of the plants and animals around you and submit them using the **iNaturalist** app, a citizen science joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society.



GPS can be a valuable outdoor tool.
© Devan King/TNC

The **iBird** family of apps may be the ultimate bird identification technology available today. From colorful images and illustrations to audio files of hundreds of bird calls, there's something for everyone, from beginner to advanced birders.

Explore the night sky through your screen with **Star Walk 2**. Simply point your device at the sky to journey through constellations, stars and more.

Don't see your favorite app listed here? Share it on social media! Tag us on Twitter or Instagram @Nature_GA.