

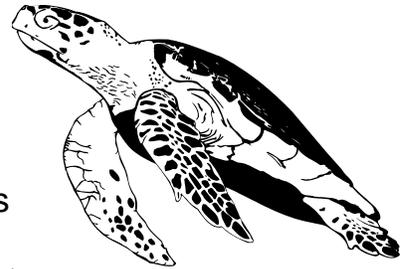
Creatures of Cumberland Island

Cumberland Island National Seashore

Cumberland Island is Georgia's largest and southernmost barrier island. There are many different ecosystems on the island including marshes, beaches, and forests. People can only get to Cumberland Island National Seashore by boat, so visitors take the ferry from St. Marys, Georgia to the park.

Cumberland Island is home to many different plants and animals. Bird watching is popular at the park, because wading birds like the Snowy Egret (the bird on the coin!) often build nests on the Island. But the island is home to all kinds of creatures. Two unique animals on Cumberland Island are sea turtles and feral horses.

Sea turtles are air-breathing reptiles with streamlined bodies and large flippers. Although they spend most of their lives in the ocean, adult females must return to beaches on land to lay their eggs. Cumberland Island is an important sea turtle nesting site, with miles of beach nesting ground for these animals. Each year, from May to October, interns at the park watch the sea turtle nests to help keep them safe from the ocean's tides and from predators. Once the eggs hatch, the sea turtles return to the ocean.



Feral horses are also a unique part of Cumberland Island's wildlife. A feral animal is an animal that has descended from a domesticated species (a dog, cat, or other pet is a domesticated animal) but has returned to the wild. Horses were first brought to the island by people who lived there, but after those people moved away and before the Island became a park, the horses became feral and the number of horses at the park grew. They now roam freely on the island, eating grasses and sea oats and drinking from springs and ponds.

Cumberland Island National Seashore is a special place where nature is free to grow. There are 9,800 acres of wilderness and 18 miles of beaches, and there's always something to see!

