

SMITH CREEK TO GALE CREEK VIA ICW

(Trail #1)

Time: 2 – 3 Hours

Distance: 8-1/2 miles

Caution: Practice caution in the narrow, canal portion of the ICW. Wakes from barge-tows, sailboats and motor yachts can be large and confined. The end of Goose Creek Island is exposed to northerly winds. This is an active duck and deer hunting area in seasons but no hunting on Sunday.

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

Paddle north out of the Wildlife Ramp to Campbell Creek (1 mile). Heading eastward you'll pass Huskie Point and Cow Gallus and Hunting Creeks in the next mile as you reach the ICW and turn towards the south in Upper Spring Creek. Paddling towards the Hobucken Bridge here is a sandy beach t 2 ½ miles down on your right. There is plenty room at this hunting campground for a multitude of boats as you take a break. Continuing on towards the take out at Gales Creek you'll pass the Hobucken Coast Guard Station, fishing docks at Hobucken Bridge (on your right) with the entrance to Jones Bay across from the docks. At the Channel Light at the confluence of Gale Creek, the ICW and Bay River, paddle westward about 1-1/3 miles to the bridge on NC-304. Follow the bridge about 300 yards to the take-out at Meekins Loop Rd.

Note: You can extend this paddle trail another 3 miles by combining this trail with the Ditch Canal portion of Trail #5.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Smith Creek NCWRC Boat Ramp: Located about 9-1/2 miles east of Aurora on NC-33 or 2-1/2 miles west of the Hobucken Coast Guard Station on NC-33. From Bayboro, follow NC-304 to where it intersects with NC-33 at the Hobucken Bridge. Take NC-33 West about 3 miles to the Smith Creek NCWRC Boat Ramp.

Gales Creek: From the Courthouse in Bayboro, take NC-304 about 11-1/2 miles to Meekins Loops Road. The access runs parallel to the road. **Note:** This is a LOOP ROAD. Access is at the second Meekins Loop Road.

ICW AT HOBUCKEN BRIDGE TO OYSTER CREEK

(Trail #2)

Time: 4 – 5 hours

Distance: 10 miles

Caution: The first two miles of this paddle are in the narrow, canal portion of the ICW. Wakes from barge-tows, sailboats and motor yachts can be large and confined. The end of Goose Creek Island is exposed to northerly winds. This is an active duck and deer hunting area in seasons but no hunting on Sunday.

PADDLE DESCRIPTON

Paddle north from the access up the ICW towards the Pamlico River. Along the way you'll intersect with Upper Spring Creek and Eastham Creek – the latter is the home to an interesting trawler graveyard and a launch-ramp just past the fish plant. Continue northward, paddle past Store Point and to the mouth of the Pamlico at Fulford Point. Paddle right into the Pamlico and past Long Point to River Ditch. Turn right into River Ditch then follow the north shore of Oyster Creek until you're abreast the fish plant at the end of Oyster Creek Road. Paddle across and up the small channel to the access.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

ICW at Hobucken Bridge: Near the Courthouse in Bayboro turn left on NC-304 and go about 13-1/2 miles to Hobucken. Turn south on NC-33 just at the ICW Bridge. Turn right on SR-1240 (Mayo Rd) and drive past the fish plant to the ramp. There is ample parking and a FEE BOX at this ramp.

Oyster Creek: On NC-33/NC-304 cross over the ICW Hobucken Bridge, go about 1-mile and turn left on Lowland Rd (SR-1230). Follow this road about 4-1/4 miles to Horn Rd (SR-1234). Take Horn Rd ¾-mile to Oyster Creek Rd (SR-1235) and follow it to conclusion at the fish plant (¾-mile). There is ample parking.

OYSTER CREEK TO MIDDLE BAY

(Trail #3)

Time: 5 - 6 hours

Distance: 14 miles

Caution: This is an active duck-hunting area in season but there is no Sunday hunting. This is exposed paddling, especially to northerly or easterly winds. Waves can be high.

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

Paddle northeast out of Oyster Creek to Thorofare Point. From here you have two route options.

Option 1: Shorten the exposed route by paddling southeast to the rear of Clark Creek to and thru Mouse Harbor Ditch into Mouse Harbor.

Option 2: Cross the mouth of Clark Creek to Beard Island Point then follow the outside route east around Pamlico Point to Persimmon Tree Point where there is a nice, protected beach for lunch. **Note:** If weather turns for the worse, you can return to the put-in by paddling to the rear of Mouse Harbor and using Mouse Harbor Ditch as the safest route.

Cross the mouth of Mouse Harbor to Sound Point and Little Porpoise Point. Cross Little Porpoise Bay as you continue past Big Porpoise Point, across Big Porpoise Bay and past Middle Bay Point. Here you paddle south-southwest past Deep Point and Oyster Creek Points, past Little Oyster Creek and over to Rocky Point. At this juncture you cross Middle Bay, round Ragged Point and follow the main channel to the left and the muddy ramp access.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Oyster Creek: On NC-33/NC-304 cross over the ICW Bridge, go about 1-mile and turn left on Lowland Rd (SR-1230). Follow this road about 4-¼ miles to Horn Road (SR-1234). Take Horn Rd ¾-mile to Oyster Creek Rd (SR-1235) and follow it to conclusion at the fish plant (¾-mile). There is ample parking.

Middle Bay: Cross the ICW Bridge at Jones Bay and follow NC-33/304 through Hobucken to where it joins SR-1228 (2-½ miles). Follow the gravel SR-1228 (Middle Bay Rd) about 1-2/10ths mile to the access. There is a FEE BOX at this access. Ensure when you park that you do not block access to the boat ramp.

MIDDLE BAY TO THE ICW AT HOBUCKEN BRIDGE

(Trail #4)

Time: 4 – 5 hours

Distance: 10 miles

Caution: Moderately exposed paddled, especially to easterly winds. This is an active duck-hunting area but no hunting on Sundays. The shoreline is mostly marsh grass, dotted with small trees, with no beaches to speak of.

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

Paddle to the head of Middle Bay, keeping to the western shore, and around Ragged Point and three small bays as you point for Big Fishing Point. Cross Big Fishing Bay and round Little Fishing Point. Head more to the south and Sow Point (with Sow Island to your left) and round the peninsula as you head west up Jones Bay. As you head for the access at the ICW notable sights include Drum Creek (abandoned tramway at the rear of this beautiful creek) and the remains of a 19th century grist mill just past the entrance to Doll Creek. Continue west to the head of Jones Bay, watching for boat traffic when crossing the ICW. The access is a little to the right along the long dock.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Middle Bay: Cross the ICW Bridge at Jones Bay and follow NC-33/304 through Hobucken to where it joins SR-1228 (2-½ miles). Follow the gravel SR-1228 (Middle Bay Rd) about 1-2/10 mile to the access. There is a FEE BOX at this access. Ensure when you park that you do not block access to the boat ramp

ICW at Hobucken Bridge: Near the Courthouse in Bayboro turn left on NC-304 and go about 13-½ miles to Hobucken. Turn south on NC-33 just at the ICW Bridge. Turn right on SR-1240 (Mayo Rd) and drive past the fish plant to the ramp. There is ample parking and a FEE BOX at this ramp.

JONES BAY LOOP FROM ICW AT HOBUCKEN BRIDGE

(Trail #5)

Time: 3 – 5 hours

Distance: 7 – 14 miles

Caution: Most of this trail is exposed to wind and waves and should not be attempted in winds over 10 to 15 knots. If large waves are encountered the first few miles the paddle can be shortened as described below. As is always the case in this area be aware of hunters in duck and deer seasons.

PADDLE DESCRIPTION

Paddle south from the access, and across the ICW watching for boat traffic, as you cross to the south shore of Jones Bay. Follow the shoreline past Lambert Creek and Gibb Point to Ditch Creek Point. (Here you may elect to paddle to the rear of Ditch Creek, into Ditch Creek Canal, and out into Gale Creek. A westward paddle will take you to the ICW which you will

follow back to the starting point. Total distance is about 7 miles.) If you opt to take the longer, more exposed route then cross the mouth of Ditch Creek and past Maiden Point and Little Eve and Little Drum Creeks, enroute to Boar Point. At Boar Point point your craft southward and cross Sound Bay to Bay Point. **Note:** Just past Bay Point is a tiny beach where you can lunch and also enjoy a spectacular view of Pamlico Sound and the mouth of the Bay River.

Round the peninsula and paddle past the Rockhole Islands and the mouth of Rockhole Bay to Sage Point. The continuation of this paddle includes crossing the mouth of Dump Creek and past the Ball Islands as you head toward Gale Creek and Ditch Creek. A westward paddle will take you to the ICW canal which you will follow back to the starting point

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

ICW at Hobucken Bridge: Near the Courthouse in Bayboro turn left on NC-304 and go about 13-½ miles to Hobucken. Turn south on NC-33 just at the ICW Bridge. Turn right on SR-1240 (Mayo Rd) and drive past the fish plant to the ramp. There is ample parking and a FEE BOX at this ramp.