



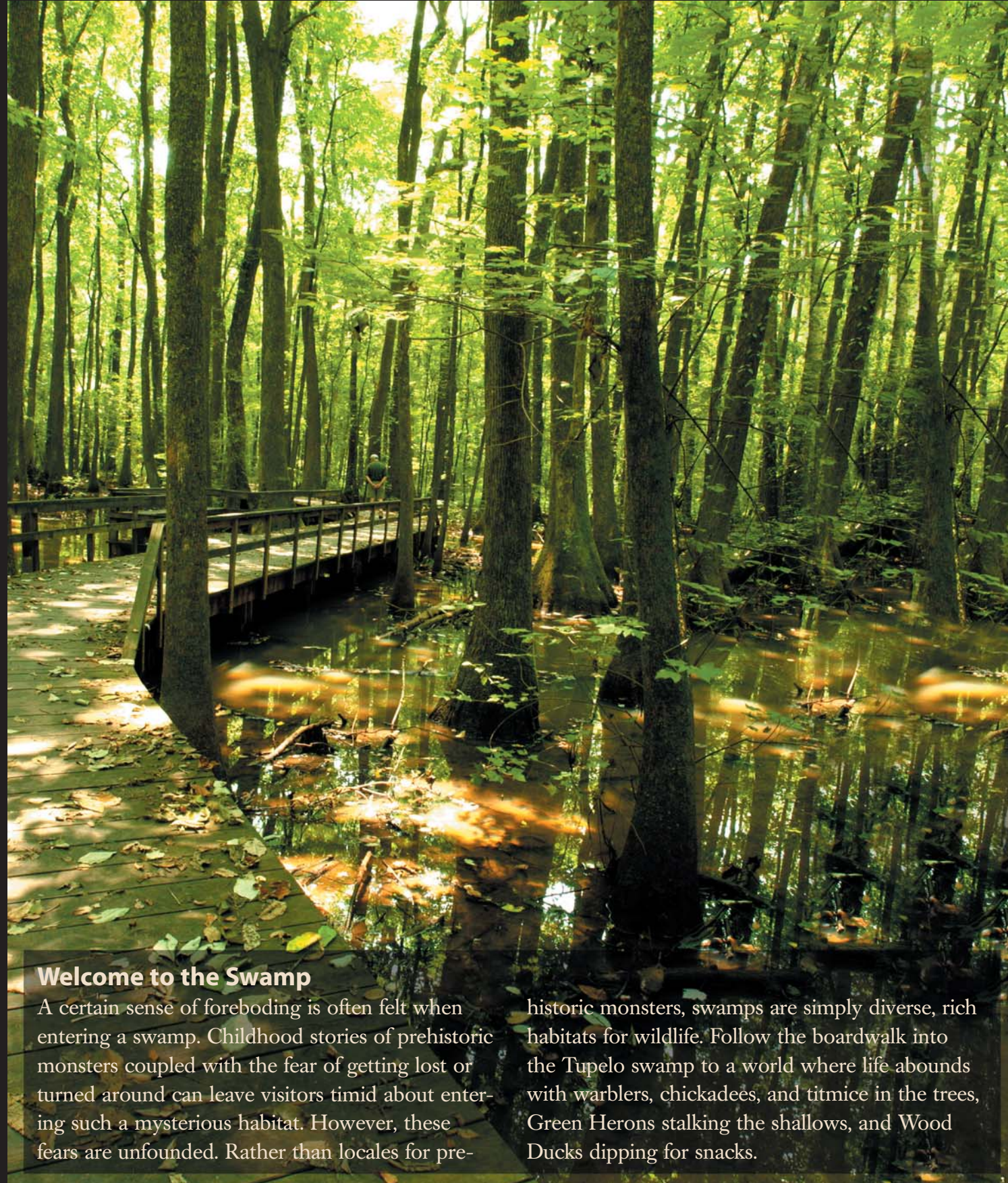
# Sweet as Tupelo Honey



The Water Tupelo, or Swamp Tupelo as some call it, is one of the few trees in North America specially adapted to grow in a constantly flooded environment. These flooded conditions create one of the most distinctive habitats in northern Alabama, the Tupelo Swamp. The constant flow of water brings a steady stream of nutrients directly to the roots of the tupelo. Leaves and fruit falling from the trees release tannins that color the water brown and also release nutrients that continue to feed the trees.

The small dark blue fruits are a favorite of Wood Ducks and Wild Turkey and make an energy-rich contribution to their diet. Check the tall crowns of the trees for Northern Parulas, which nest nearby.

The dank and dense nature of the swamp makes some people uneasy conjuring visions of needlessly feared snakes and alligators that could be lurking nearby. These creatures are not to be feared. In fact, sighting one of the few American Alligators on Wheeler NWR or a water-snake could be a highlight of your trip.



## Welcome to the Swamp

A certain sense of foreboding is often felt when entering a swamp. Childhood stories of prehistoric monsters coupled with the fear of getting lost or turned around can leave visitors timid about entering such a mysterious habitat. However, these fears are unfounded. Rather than locales for pre-

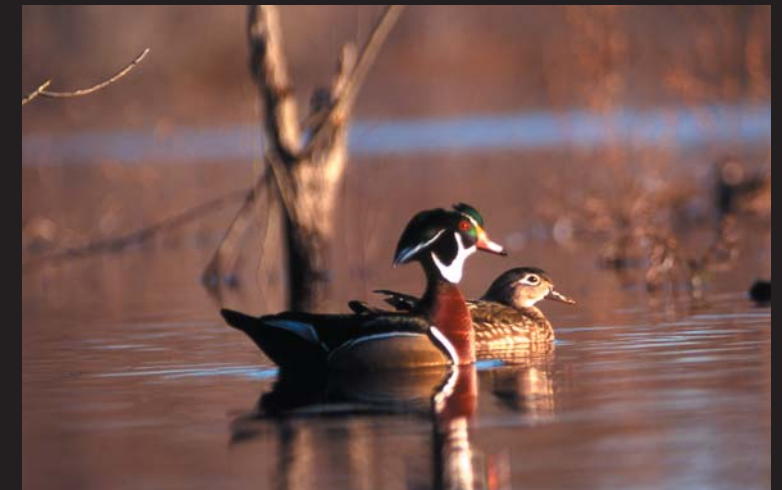
historic monsters, swamps are simply diverse, rich habitats for wildlife. Follow the boardwalk into the Tupelo swamp to a world where life abounds with warblers, chickadees, and titmice in the trees, Green Herons stalking the shallows, and Wood Ducks dipping for snacks.



Barred Owl/Quincey Banks

## Who Cooks For You?

Few sounds are as distinctive as the booming voice of the Barred Owl. Each day at dusk, this owl utters its favorite question for all to hear: *Who Cooks for You?* In spring and early summer, listen for a pair calling back and forth, repeatedly asking each other the same question. The Barred Owl is one of four owls that nests in Alabama.



Wood Ducks/Quincey Banks

## Unmatched Beauty

The stunning beauty of the Wood Duck is virtually unparalleled by any other creature in North America. These dazzling birds with their thick crest and iridescent plumes are sure to draw a crowd. The swamp's dead trees provide cavities for their nests and support a new set of ducklings each spring.