

RALEIGH, N.C. — Surprise twists await travelers searching for “Where the Crawdads Sing.” Instead of Barkley Cove, the fictional [North Carolina](#) setting for the Delia Owens novel and its film adaptation, they’ll find Swansboro, New Bern and other towns within reach of wetlands. They’ll want to check the map before making a quick trip to Asheville, which lies a good 300 miles from the nearest marsh. And if they head to Greenville, they’ll need to book a room somewhere besides the imaginary Three Mountains Motel.

But literal connections are beside the point when it comes to the power that Owens’ heroine draws from the marshes that lie between the North Carolina mainland and its barrier islands, said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit North Carolina.

“When travelers think of the North Carolina coast, their minds go first to the Atlantic shoreline, to our national seashores and oceanfront beaches,” Tuttell said. “We’re thrilled that ‘Where the Crawdads Sing’ whets the appetite for an immersion in the wondrous wetlands that stretch the imagination.”

To help readers and movie fans connect with a real-life marsh experience, Visit NC has posted [“Kya’s Marshes: Take an NC Trip Inspired by ‘Where the Crawdads Sing,’”](#) a trip plan that zeroes in on New Bern and Croatan National Forest followed by a Wilmington-area stay. And dozens more possibilities await, from the [Pine Island Audubon Center](#) on the northern Outer Banks to the [Brunswick Island marshes](#) at the state’s southernmost point. Even without a “Welcome to Barkley Cove” sign, scenery evoked by Owen’s 2018 best seller emerges at every turn.

The quest to experience heroine Kya Clarke’s world preceded the movie’s July 15 release, according to Onslow County Tourism Manager Salem Clarke. She’s ready with recommendations of tours out of Swansboro: [Marsh Cruises](#) for excursions to Hammocks Beach State Park; [Pogie’s](#) with eco-tours on the White Oak River at Croatan National Forest; and [Lady Swan Boat Tours](#), which cruises along the tidal marshes and Bogue Sound. Swansboro, by the way, might make you do a double take, either because you think it might be Barkley Cove or because you recognize it as the setting for Nicholas Sparks’ “The Guardian.”

Guided tour options in other destinations include [Tiki Tours](#) on Topsail Island, whose history and nature tours cover fire towers; Beaufort’s [Seavisions Charters](#), with Rachel Carson Reserve and Shackleford Banks among the choices; the River Rover operated by the [North Carolina Estuarium](#) in Washington; New Bern’s [Cruise the Neuse](#); and [Wrightsville Beach Scenic Tours](#)’ cruises to Masonboro Island Reserve. Crossing the marsh is a highlight of the [Vineyard Voyage](#) from Duck to Sanctuary Vineyards, and in downtown Southport, travelers can simply stroll along the 650-foot Marsh Walk.

Kayak and stand-up paddle board rentals and tours are widely available for exploring the Kitty Hawk Woods, Buxton Woods, Rachel Carson, Masonboro Island and other [reserves](#). The [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#) calendar features ranger-led kayaking on the Pamlico Sound. Tours along the [N.C. Oyster Trail](#) offer another take on the marshes.

North Carolina state parks add to the menu with the marshes at [Jockey’s Ridge State Park](#) at Nags Head, [Fort Macon State Park](#) at Atlantic Beach, [Hammocks Beach State Park](#) at Swansboro, [Carolina Beach State Park](#) at Carolina Beach and [Fort Fisher State Recreation Area](#) at Kure Beach. Consider the difference between marsh and swamp as they meet at [Goose Creek State Park](#) in Washington. Discover more at the [National Wildlife Refuges](#) along the central and northern coast.

“Kya’s story opens a window on the enriching experiences to be found in North Carolina’s natural worlds,” Tuttell said. “We’re thrilled that travelers are eager to immerse themselves in all of this beauty and wisdom.”

For a look at ways to heighten the pleasures and minimize impact from a “Crawdads”-inspired trip, stop by OutdoorNC.com.

About Visit North Carolina:

Visit North Carolina is part of the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#). Established in 2014, the EDPNC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that oversees the state's efforts in business and job recruitment and retention, international trade, and tourism, film and sports development. The mission of Visit North Carolina is to unify and lead the state in developing North Carolina as a major destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings and conventions, sports events and film production. For more information on North Carolina’s destinations and travel assets, go to VisitNC.com.

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