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jocassee gorges

9

an intense concentration of waterfalls

Thanks to the second highest rainfall in the continental United States, the Jocassee Gorges area of North and South Carolina supports rare plants and one of the highest concentration of waterfalls in the eastern United States. The area was given added protection by the purchase of 40,000 acres (16,187 ha) by both states and several nongovernmental organizations, which connected some 200,000 acres (80,937 ha) and guaranteed that plant and animal species would not be isolated. Living here are black bears, bobcats, wild turkeys, and the highest number of salamanders found anywhere in the world. Included among some 60 species of rare plants are 90 percent of the world's Oconee bells, whose nearest relatives are in China and Japan.

A waterfall pours off the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Jocassee Gorges of North and South Carolina, where high rainfall and steep terrain have carved a concentration of impressive cascades.

temperate

jocassee gorges

Location

In North and South Carolina; 43,500 acres (17,604 ha)

Fact

The Native American name Jocassee means "Place of the Lost One," because steep-sided gorges cut by extensive waterways made it once hard to access.

How to get there

Gorges State Park in North Carolina near Sapphire and Rosman has made it accessible to tourists. Several trails lead into the park.

Not to be missed

Views of spectacular waterfalls and large concentrations of rare plants such as the Oconee bells, which bloom in March and April

Rare blossoms: Oconee bells bloom in early spring in the Jocassee Gorges. Ninety percent of the flowers are found where gorges are carved by high rainfall pouring off the Blue Ridge Mountains.

