

TIPS for preparing to HUNT on St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge

General information:

- Bring your drivers licenses or some form of photo identification to the hunt.
- Purchase a resident or nonresident Florida hunting license, with Archery and/or muzzleloader permit – (1-888-486-8356 or www.floridaconservation.org) and bring with you.
- A hunt orientation meeting will be held at 5 PM ET at each check station on the Wednesday before each hunt (the meeting for the Sambar hunt will be at West Pass check station only).
- During the hunt, only permitted hunters are allowed, **hunting ends at noon on the last day** of each hunt.
- The sambar hunt ends at 3 pm on Thursday and Friday and noon on Saturday.
- No motorized equipment, generators, or vehicles (except bicycles) allowed on island.
- Violation of any regulation may result in you being asked to leave the island.

Transportation to and from the island:

- West Pass campground and Indian Pass campground are open for White-tailed hunts; only the West Pass campground is open for the Sambar hunt.
- For a charter trip contact Apalachicola Chamber of Commerce for guides and prices – (1-850-653-9419).
- Personal boats – we recommend a seagoing, deep-sided boat with two anchors for anchoring in swift, rough water.
- Check long range weather forecast when preparing for trip.
- Vehicles can be parked at Apalachicola Battery Park or Indian Pass county boat ramp. It is your responsibility to secure your vehicles before leaving them.
- If using your personal boat, make sure you have maps to run the bay or gulf - water can be shallow and contain oyster bars.
- Boat ride is approximately 10 miles from Apalachicola or Indian Pass by gulf (13 miles by bay) to West Pass. Boat ride from mainland at Indian Pass to Indian Pass end of the island is approximately ¼ mile.

Campsites:

- Check in starts at 8:00am ET the day before each hunt. You must check in before setting up camp.
- Check out with Refuge staff is required.
- Bring your own drinking water and camping gear.
- No nails, spikes, tree stands or other objects may be driven into trees to hold camping gear.
- Campfires permitted with appropriate weather conditions.
- No green wood can be cut on the island only **dead and downed** wood can be used. No standing dead trees or dead limbs on live trees may be used. Recommend bringing your own firewood.
- Pack out your trash and leave clean campsites.
- Quiet time is from 9:00pm to 4:00 am.
- **Alcohol is not allowed.**

Hunting:

- After you check in you can set up your tree stand.
- Scouting is allowed before hunt dates during day light hours, but no equipment may be left on island before hunt.
- Stay out of closed areas. Otherwise it's your decision on hunt site location.

- Use only Bow or Muzzleloader approved by Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- No flagging, bright eyes or other markers allowed except on personal property (i.e., your tree stand).
- Legal hunting is from ½ hour before sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset. Non-movement stand hours from ½ hour before sunrise until 9:00 am.
- Prepare for bugs and snakes.
- Wear 500 square inches of unbroken daylight fluorescent hunter orange.
- Climbing stands are acceptable as long as no nails, spikes or other objects are driven into trees.
- Under 16 years old must be accompanied (in sight and within normal hearing range) by an adult at least 21 years old. Adults may only supervise one youth.

Caring for Game:

- Field dress game in the woods.
- Take your game to nearest pickup route. Game pickups will be conducted each day about 10 am ET and 7:30pm ET for the archery hunt; 10 am ET and 6:30 pm ET for the primitive weapons hunt and 10 am ET and 3:30 pm ET for the sambar deer hunt.
- Bring lots of ice, cooler, and skinning equipment. (no cold storage facilities nearby).

Island Habitat:

- Roads – mixture of grassy to sandy substrate. Sand may be deep in many places!
- Vegetation - Mixture of palmettos, slash pine, oaks, gallberry etc.
- Island topography – Series of dunes and swales (water likely in some swales).