



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

McFaddin

National Wildlife Refuge

Introduction

Established in 1980, McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) encompasses 58,800 acres of coastal marsh bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, McFaddin NWR is just one of over 545 national wildlife refuges whose primary mission is to conserve fish and wildlife resources.

The coastal marshes of McFaddin NWR supply important feeding and resting areas for wintering and migrating waterfowl of the Central and Mississippi Flyways and other wildlife. In addition to providing important habitat for wildlife, these marshes improve water quality, buffer storms, and provide recreational opportunities for many. Of critical importance is the role these coastal wetlands play in retaining and slowly releasing the flow of water from storm events, thereby reducing impacts of flooding on inland communities.

Prescribed burning, controlled cattle grazing, water and salinity management, and invasive species control are just a few of the many tools used by refuge management to mimic historic processes and enhance marsh productivity. Shoreline erosion along the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) is causing coastal land loss at significant rates. Between 12 and 20 feet are lost annually along the upper Texas coast. The restoration of barrier beaches and dunes along the Gulf of Mexico is critical in the protection of interior marshes and their plant communities from excessive inundation with saltwater during high tidal events.

Things To Do

For those interested in fishing, wildlife watching, nature photography, or hunting, McFaddin NWR offers something for everyone. Whether observing refuge habitats and wildlife from roads, or exploring the inner recesses by boat, visitors will discover a landscape full of life.

Wildlife Watching

More than 100,000 ducks may find a winter home at the refuge. Green-winged and blue-winged teal, gadwall, ring-



Snow Geese

Photograph by Steve Feldman

necked ducks and lesser scaup are just some of the 27 species found in refuge lakes and marshes. Between October and March, a distinctive call is often heard overhead as thousands of snow geese head to refuge marshes to feed and rest. While the majority of waterfowl depart in spring for northern breeding grounds, the mottled duck is a resident species that remains and nests in these important coastal marshes.

Graceful wading birds and secretive marsh birds inhabit the refuge year-round. Watch for great and snowy egrets and white-faced ibis feeding along waterways and mudflats. Marsh birds like bitterns and clapper rails are often well camouflaged in the vegetation. Be sure to look closely.

Once on the brink of extinction, American alligators now may be seen sunning on banks, floating in bayous, or crossing refuge roads. Alligators are most easily seen during the spring and fall.

Mammals found on the refuge include muskrat, river otter, raccoon, striped skunk, bobcat, mink, and coyote. Most of the mammals on the refuge are nocturnal

and are not commonly seen by visitors during the day. Red wolves once roamed throughout the southeastern United States, including the coastal marshes of McFaddin NWR. Declared extinct in the wild in 1980, red wolves captured in southeast Texas founded a captive breeding program that today supports a small wild population of approximately 100 wolves in North Carolina.

Eight miles of refuge roads, 19 miles of beach bordering the Gulf of Mexico, and a number of meandering waterways offer visitors an opportunity to view refuge habitats and wildlife. Observation platforms provide extraordinary views of the refuge's vast coastal marshes. Traveling off the beaten path, visitors will find foot trails open seasonally between March 15th and August 31st. Rookery Reservoir is a good location to view wading birds and other marsh wildlife. Perkins Levee, running nearly four miles between the Gulf of Mexico and the GIWW, bisects intermediate marsh and salty prairie habitats. This primitive foot path can be reached from the north by Star Lake or from the south by the Gulf of Mexico.

Fishing

The coastal marshes of McFaddin NWR serve as important nurseries for many of the fish and shellfish species found in the Gulf of Mexico. Two fishing piers on Ten-Mile Cut and five bank piers along Clam Lake provide excellent opportunities for anglers to catch blue crab, alligator gar, flounder, red drum or speckled trout. Surf fishing along the Gulf of Mexico can turn up black drum, red drum, speckled trout, mackerel, stingray, whiting, sand trout, and shark.

Fishing and crabbing on the refuge is conducted in accordance with State regulations and subject to the following conditions: Fishing and crabbing is allowed year-round in Ten-Mile Cut, Clam Lake, Mud Bayou, Mud Lake, the Gulf beach, and designated areas along the shoreline of the GIWW and along roadside ditches open to the public. Seasonal fishing opportunities are available in Star Lake and Five-Mile Cut between March 15th and August 31st.

Fishing is allowed using pole and line, rod and reel, or hand-held line only. Cast-netting for bait for personal use along waterways in areas open to fishing is permitted. Fishing from or mooring to water control structures or bridges is prohibited, as well as harvesting fish or crabs for commercial purposes. The harvest of frogs and turtles is prohibited.

Boating

Five boat ramps are available for launching small, shallow-draft boats only. Boat ramps are located at Clam Lake (2), Ten-Mile Cut, Five-Mile Cut and Star Lake.

Outboard motor boats, airboats, and non-motorized boats may be used to access Mud Bayou, Mud Lake, Ten-Mile Cut, and Clam Lake year-round, and seasonally between March 15th and August 31st in Star Lake. Airboats may not exceed 10 HP with direct drive with a propeller length of 48 inches or less, and engines may not exceed 2 cylinders and 484 cc. Non-motorized boats may be used to access Five-Mile Cut between March 15th and August 31st. Personal watercrafts are prohibited on the Refuge.

The operation of motorized boats is restricted to lakes, ponds, ditches, and other waterways. Motorized boats may not operate on or through emergent wetland vegetation. In addition, the use of boats powered by air-cooled or radiator-cooled engines is restricted

to those powered by a single engine of 25 hp or less and utilizing a propeller 9 inches in diameter or less.

Hunting

Waterfowl hunting is permitted in designated areas on the refuge. Hunters must contact refuge headquarters before waterfowl season to obtain current hunting regulations and permits.



Least Bittern

Photograph by Matt Buckingham

For Your Safety and Comfort

Restrooms are located at the main entrance on Clam Lake Road. Portable restrooms are located at the Ten-Mile Cut bridge and the Star Lake boat launch.

Please be aware that snakes, fire ants, alligators and mosquitoes all make their home here on the Refuge.

Do not feed or approach alligators or other wildlife. Feeding wildlife causes animals to lose their fear of humans and become a potential threat. Always keep a safe distance from wildlife.

Active oil and gas exploration infrastructure (well pads, flow lines, separators, tank batteries, etc.) occur on the refuge. Do not enter any areas marked by Area Closed signs.

Currently there is no dependable route of vehicle access through the refuge between Clam Lake Road and High Island. Highway 87 has been washed out by coastal erosion and is currently closed to through travel. Visitors should plan on driving through Sabine Pass to reach Clam Lake Road.

General Refuge Regulations

To protect refuge habitats and keep McFaddin NWR a safe place for wildlife and people, please observe the following regulations:

Designated areas on McFaddin NWR inland of the Gulf beach are open daily from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset.

Visitors must stay on designated roads, trails or waterways.

Vehicular traffic is permitted on designated public roads (Clam Lake Road) and beaches only. All-terrain vehicles, golf carts, personal watercraft,

and non-registered motorized vehicles are prohibited on interior sections of the refuge. Vehicular traffic on the beach must stay off vegetation and follow State laws.

Driving off road or on roads closed by signs or barriers is prohibited. Parking in front of gates or on bridges is prohibited.

For the protection of our natural resources and for your safety, all State and Federal laws apply on the beach and will be enforced. These include the prohibition of glass bottles, indecency, and littering.

Bicycles are allowed on public roads and designated levees only.

Observe speed limits and watch for wildlife crossing roadways.

Collection of plants or animals, or feeding or disturbing wildlife, is prohibited.

Fireworks and recordings to attract wildlife are prohibited.

Pets must be leashed at all times.

For additional information, please contact the Refuge Manager.

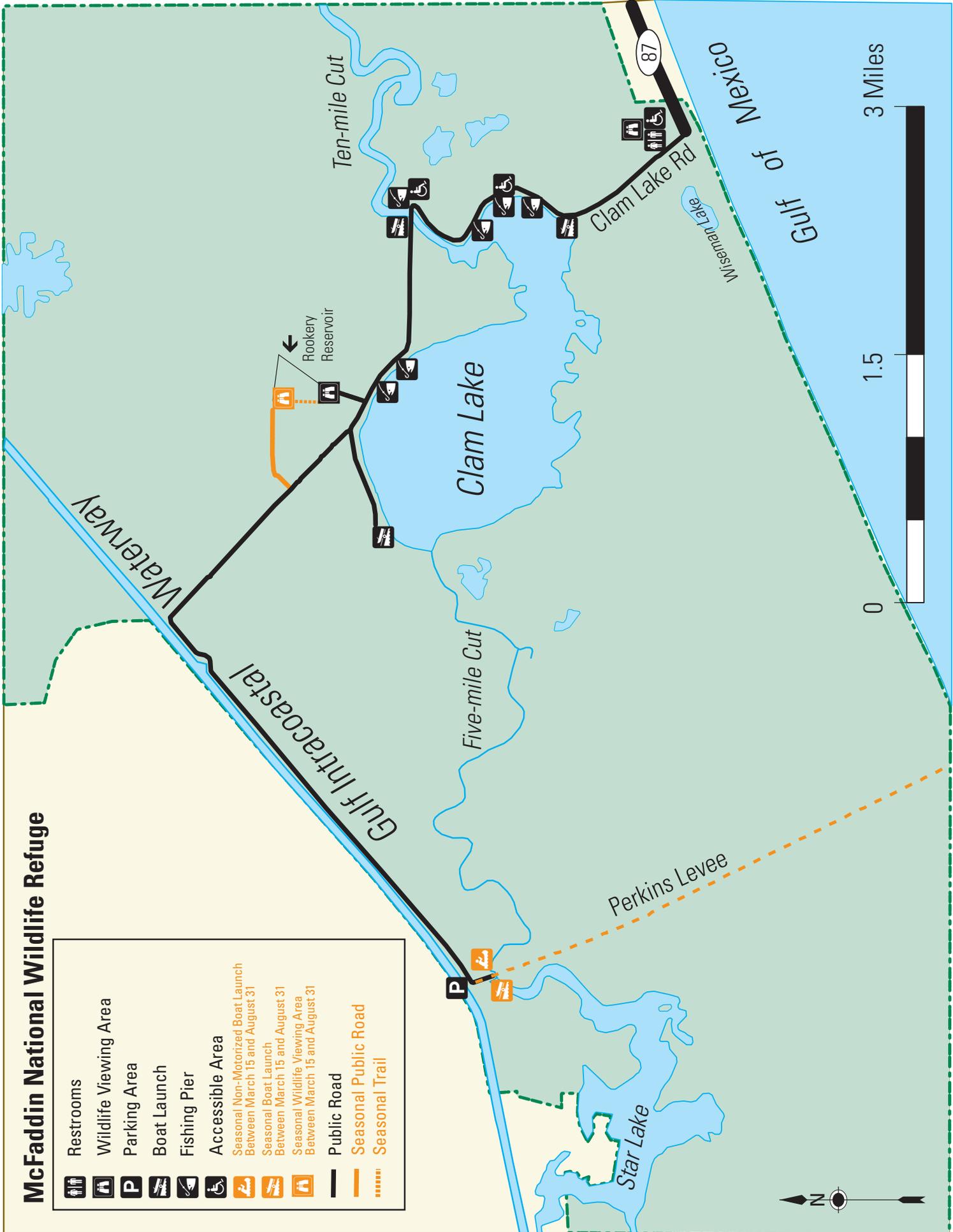
For More Information

McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 358
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409/736-2371
409/736-2438 FAX
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/mcfaddin>

January 2009

McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge

-  Restrooms
-  Wildlife Viewing Area
-  Parking Area
-  Boat Launch
-  Fishing Pier
-  Accessible Area
-  Seasonal Non-Motorized Boat Launch
Between March 15 and August 31
-  Seasonal Boat Launch
Between March 15 and August 31
-  Seasonal Wildlife Viewing Area
Between March 15 and August 31
-  Public Road
-  Seasonal Public Road
-  Seasonal Trail



McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge

Jefferson, Chambers and Galveston Counties, Texas

