

News Release

Department of the Interior / U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge
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Sabine National Wildlife Refuge Re-Opening 4 of 6 Recreation Areas Along Creole Nature Trail September 1, 2007

Sabine National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), located south of Hackberry, Louisiana will re-open four of its six recreation areas along the Creole Nature Trail on Saturday, September 1, 2007, announced Don Voros, Project Leader of the Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex. These areas, damaged by Hurricane Rita, have remained closed for clean-up and facility repairs for almost two years. Refuge staff and contractors are finalizing the repairs to parking areas, boat launches and fishing piers necessary to re-open Hog Island Gully, the Blue Goose Trail, 1A/1B, and West Cove Recreation Areas on September 1. The Blue Goose Trail, however, will be closed intermittently throughout the next year as additional repair contracts take place.

Northline Recreation Area and the Wetland Walkway will **not** be re-opened September 1, however, they will be re-opened as soon as is practicable when facility repair contracts are complete later this fall.

All permitted activities will resume when these areas re-open on September 1, including hiking, birding, fishing, crabbing, cast netting, and boat launching. During the Louisiana inshore shrimp season cast netting for shrimp is permitted at Hog Island Gully and 1A/1B Recreation Areas. West Cove Recreation Area is closed to cast netting.

Current regulations and boat access routes are provided in the Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex Fishing Regulations brochure. Brochures may be obtained at the Complex headquarters at Cameron Prairie NWR, at Lacassine NWR, on our website at <http://www.fws.gov/swlarefugecomplex> under the **fishing regulations** link, or by calling the refuge complex headquarters at 337-598-2216 to have a copy sent by mail. Additionally, regulation brochures will be available at each recreation area on September 1.

Sabine's hours have changed this year to permit boat access from one hour before legal sunrise to one hour after legal sunset, however, all permitted activities such as fishing and crabbing may only occur from sunrise to sunset. Possession of all applicable fishing

licenses is required. Fish species may be taken in accordance with Louisiana Recreational Fishing Regulations.

Visitors are encouraged to practice good boating and safety habits, observe and obey all signs, refrain from littering, and respect the rights of other visitors.

Safety Warning - Motorboat travel on the refuges may be hazardous due changed geography, underwater or floating debris, narrow boat runs, rough water, limited visibility, fog, vegetation, blind crossings, and swells or wakes from other watercraft.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System that encompasses more than 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. The agency also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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