

D'Arbonne

National Wildlife Refuge Public Use Regulations 2025-2026

Introduction

D'Arbonne National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 570 national wildlife refuges. The primary objective of a national wildlife refuge is to provide habitat for the conservation and protection of all species of wildlife. The harvest of animals is one tool used to manage fish and wildlife populations. Carefully managed hunting and fishing help maintain these populations at a level compatible with the environment, provide wholesome recreational opportunities, and permit the use of valuable renewable resources.

The regulations in this pamphlet supplement the general regulations governing hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable state regulations except as noted below.

As you use the refuge, take pride in America and the refuge resources. Report violations promptly. Respect the rights of others using the refuge.

Warning

Use caution when operating boats or wading in flooded areas of the refuge. Obstructions/obstacles may be submerged and unmarked.

All boats must comply with state law and display proper navigation lights from sunset to sunrise.

General Hunting Regulations

By hunting or fishing on the refuge, you can be subjected to fish and game inspections.

Permits

A signed refuge hunting permit (front of this brochure) must be carried by all hunters.

A Self-clearing Permit is required for hunting on the Refuge. Self-clearing Permits can be obtained at entry points of the Refuge and at Headquarters on D'Arbonne NWR.

Self-clearing permits consist of three portions: Check-In, Check-Out, and a Vehicle tag. The Check-In Portion must be completed and put in the permit box prior to

each day's hunt. The middle portion is the Daily Hunting Harvest Permit that must be carried by each hunter while on the refuge.

At the end of the day's hunt, the Daily Hunting Harvest Permit should be completed including hours spent hunting, species hunted, and number harvested (must indicate zero if no game harvested) and put into permit box before exiting the Refuge. Each person parking an automobile on the Refuge must leave the Vehicle tag on the dashboard of the vehicle face up so it can be read from outside of the vehicle. Each person riding in the vehicle should display their Vehicle tag on the dashboard.

Restricted Areas

Hunting is restricted in certain areas as shown on the hunting map.

Refuge hunting seasons apply to all navigable waterways that are wholly within the refuge boundary.

Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than 4 am and must exit no later than two hours after legal shooting hours unless otherwise specified.

Youth

Youths are defined the same as State regulations. Supervising adult may supervise only one youth on a big game hunt and no more than two youth on a small game or waterfowl hunt.

Firearms and Ammunition

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).

Firearm ammunition, used for hunting, larger than a .22 caliber rim-fire or shotgun slug, are allowed only during refuge gun deer season. Lead shotgun ammunition is prohibited for all hunting.

Refuge Hunting/Fishing Permit 2025-2026 D'Arbonne National Wildlife Refuge

I have read and understand these regulations.

Signature of hunter/angler

**This permit is valid only when signed and
must be carried on hunter's or angler's person.**

(Cut out permit if desired)

Safety

For public safety reasons, hunters are prohibited from discharging a firearm within 100 feet of the centerline of public roads, maintained refuge roads, maintained rights-of-way (pipelines), including electric transmission lines. No hunting on or within 50 feet of an oil or gas well tower. Maintained road and maintained right-of-way is defined as one that has been mowed, disked, or bulldozed and is free of trees. Target practice is prohibited on the refuge.

All hunters must wear hunter orange including orange hat during the refuge gun deer hunt as per state deer hunting regulations on WMAs. Waterfowl hunters during Refuge deer gun hunts must wear hunter orange to and from hunting location. Hunters participating in special dog season for rabbit hunting must wear an orange hat. Although highly recommended, the International Bowhunters Education certification is no longer required to archery deer hunt on the refuge.

Bicycles

Bicycles including electric bicycles (e-bikes) are permitted on public roads, maintained refuge roads, and maintained rights-of-way. Maintained road and maintained right-of-way is defined as one that has been mowed, disked, or bulldozed and is free of trees. Electric bicycles must be no larger than 750 watts.

Summary of Recent Regulation Changes

1. Antlerless deer gun hunt Oct. 25 only. Self-clearing permit cards are required to be filled whether hunter is successful or not. No manned check station
2. Either sex deer gun hunting season is November 1-2, Nov 28-30, and Dec 6-7, 2025.
3. All deer harvested during either sex gun hunts must be checked out at staffed check station to be weighed and aged. (See map for locations.)
4. Motorized boats not permitted in No Gun Hunting Area from November 1 - January 31 (see map).
5. No surface drive motors allowed on Refuge after 1:30 pm between November 1 - January 31.

6. Operation of a boat with any muffler that is not original equipment to the engine's power unit or use of an altered exhaust system is prohibited.

Warning

On February 17, 2022, the state of Louisiana issued the following fish consumption advisory for the Ouachita River and its floodplain: Women of childbearing age and children less than seven years of age should not consume bowfin (choupique, grinnel), crappie (sac-à-lait), flathead catfish, fresh water drum (gaspergou), largemouth bass, spotted or white bass; AND should limit all other species to no more than one meal per month. Other adults and children seven years of age and older should consume no more than two meals per month of bass, bowfin, catfish, crappie and freshwater drum combined.

Prohibited Activities

- Camping
- Cutting of vegetation, including limbs
- Open fires
- Littering
- Possession of deer decoys
- Overnight parking
- Overnight mooring of houseboats
- Drones
- Target practice
- Taking of wildlife and plants other than specified in refuge regulations
- Using motorized vehicles off the designated public access roads. This includes motorcycles, ATVs, jeeps, cars, trucks, etc. Parking is restricted to parking areas and along public access roads which are shown on map.
- ATVs
- Use of personal watercraft (jet skis)

- Operation of a boat with any muffler that is not original equipment to the engine's power unit or use of an altered exhaust system
- Taking or possession of waterfowl, big or small game, fish, or plants by use of a guide or outfitter.
- Driving or screwing a nail, spike, or other metal object into a tree or hunting from any tree in which a nail, spike, or other metal object has been driven or screwed.
- Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait, including any grain, salt, mineral, or any non-naturally occurring food attractant on the refuge.
- Participating in deer drives
- Use of night vision equipment
- Possessing or using alcoholic beverages while hunting
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity, including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts
- Use of metal detector
- Using horses and mules except by special permit
- Leaving personal property overnight (includes boats, deer stands, blinds, decoys, cameras)
- Leaving flagging or other trail markers
- Using a metal detector.

North Louisiana Refuges Complex

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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June 2025



2025-2026 Hunting Seasons/Regulations

Type	Season Dates	Specific Regulations
Ducks, Goose, Coot	State season, including Special Teal Season, Youth and Veteran Waterfowl Season	Hunting until noon. See map for areas closed to waterfowl hunting. Retrievers may be used for hunting. Construction of and/or hunting from permanent blinds is prohibited. Boats, blinds, and decoys may not be left unattended overnight. Waterfowl hunters must be off the Refuge by 1:30 pm. No surface drive motors allowed on Refuge after 1:30 pm from Nov. 1-Jan 31.
Woodcock	State season	Bird dogs may be used for hunting.
Squirrel, Rabbit	State season, except closed in spring season and refuge deer gun hunts.	Dogs may be used for hunting after the last refuge deer gun hunt.
Raccoon, Opossum	Dec. 1, 2025-Jan. 31, 2026 for night hunting. May be taken during daylight hours of rabbit and squirrel season.	Elevated levels of mercury contamination have been found in refuge raccoons. It is recommended that they not be eaten. Raccoons taken on the refuge may not be sold for human consumption.
Deer Archery	State season	See map for area closed during gun deer season. Possession or use of pods is prohibited. Limit of one antlerless and one antlered deer per day. Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait is prohibited, including any grain, salt, mineral, or any non-naturally occurring food attractant on the refuge.
Antlerless Deer Gun	Oct. 25, 2025 Only	Limit of one antlerless deer. See map for area closed during gun deer season. Hunters must report deer harvest on self-clearing permit card. All other deer gun regulations apply.
Deer Gun (either sex)	Nov. 1-2, 28-30, and Dec. 6-7, 2025	Still hunting only. Limit of one antlerless and one antlered deer per day. Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait is prohibited, including any grain, salt, mineral, or any non-naturally occurring food attractant on the refuge. All deer harvested during gun hunts must be checked out at staffed check station to be aged and weighed. Deer must be brought in whole or just internal organs removed (gutted).
No deer stands allowed on pine trees with painted white bands/rings. Deer stands, cameras, and blinds may not be left unattended. Muzzleloading firearms may be used during refuge deer gun hunts but refuge does not have a special muzzle loading season. No deer hunting within 150 feet of the centerline of public roads, maintained refuge roads, electric transmission lines or within 50 feet of gas well towers or other production facilities. A leashed dog may be used to retrieve wounded or unrecovered deer during legal hunting hours. A dog may be used to trail and retrieve unrecovered deer 2 hours after legal hunting hours, however, no person accompanying a dog after legal hunting hours may be in possession of a firearm, bow, crossbow or any other means of take while in the field.		
Frogging	State season	See state regulations.
Crawfishing	State season	Collapsible twine nets only. Daylight hours only. Nets cannot be left overnight.
Turkey	Closed	
Fishing and Boating	Year round	Year round except no motorized boats permitted in No Gun Hunting Area from Nov. 1-Jan. 31 (see map). No surface drive motors allowed on Refuge after 1:30 pm Nov. 1-Jan. 31. Operation of a boat with any muffler that is not original equipment to the engine's power unit or use of an altered exhaust system is prohibited. See state regulations. Commercial fishing is prohibited. Ends of trot lines must be attached by a length of cotton line which extends into the water. Trotlines and yoyos must be tended daily.

Signs and Boundaries

Signs are useful tools in regulating the use of a public area. The wording applies to the areas behind the signs. Pay attention to the signs, watch for boundary corners, and check your location with the maps.



This sign marks the refuge boundary. Public entry by foot is generally authorized at all times on the refuge.



This sign means that the area is closed to all entry. Do not trespass behind this sign for any reason other than an emergency.



This sign means no motorized vehicles beyond this point. This applies to all cars, trucks, jeeps, all-terrain vehicles, and motorcycles. Non-motorized and electric bicycles are allowed.



D'Arbonne

National Wildlife Refuge



New Map for Your Mobile Device!

Use the QR code to download a geo-referenced map of the refuge with boundaries that is compatible with apps such as Avenza.

