



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cache River

National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Regulations 2023-2024

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

26320 Highway 33 South

Augusta, AR 72006

501/203 7253

<http://www.fws.gov/cacheriver>

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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General Introduction

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1986, is one of 568 national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary objective of the Refuge is to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and protect the remaining tracts of bottomland hardwoods in the Cache River Basin. The refuge is comprised of numerous tracts of land along the Cache and White Rivers and Bayou DeView in the Arkansas counties of Jackson, Woodruff, Prairie, and Monroe.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation are priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These wildlife-dependent uses are carefully managed on Cache River National Wildlife Refuge to ensure they are compatible with refuge purposes and provide safe, high-quality, low-impact, recreational opportunities.

Users of the refuge must obey all signs pertaining to visitation, access, and public use regulations. All public uses, including hunting and fishing, must be conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations.

Access and Vehicle Use

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge is in the acquisition phase and the attached map shows the current ownership at the time of printing this brochure. Isolated land tracts that have been purchased are scattered throughout the acquisition zone and have been posted with refuge boundary signs or marked with yellow boundary paint. **NOTE:** Access to many of these refuge lands is currently through private lands and all refuge visitors must obtain permission from adjacent landowners prior to crossing private land to reach refuge lands.

The refuge is closed to ALL other entry and public use Nov. 11-19 during the Quota Gun Deer Hunt. Only Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit holders are allowed to enter or use the Refuge during this hunt and only for the purpose of deer hunting and incidental take of beaver, muskrat, nutria, coyote, striped skunk, fox, bobcat, river otter, mink, and feral hogs. Exception: If a Flood Prone Region is closed to deer hunting due to flooding during the refuge's Quota Gun Deer Hunt, then the refuge, in that Flood Prone Region only, will be open to other public entry and use.

Waterfowl sanctuaries, indicated on the refuge map, are closed to ALL public entry and use, including hunting and fishing, from Nov. 15 through Feb. 28 annually.

Roads may be closed at any time road conditions or other administrative needs warrant. A locked gate or other barrier, road closed sign, or no vehicle sign means the road is closed to ALL vehicle travel, including bicycles and ebikes, but not to foot travel unless signed otherwise.

All conventional vehicles must stay on maintained roads or established parking areas and meet all applicable federal and state requirements regulating the use of a licensed motor vehicle. Vehicles equipped with oversize tractor lug type tires are prohibited. Motor vehicle (including ATV/UTVs, ebikes, etc.) speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted.



This is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.

2023-2024 General Hunting Permit – Cache River NWR

This permit must be signed to be valid. It must be carried by the hunter at all times while on the refuge and in possession of hunting gear. An electronic signed copy of the permit may also be produced on a person's own cellular phone or other type of portable electronic device that clearly displays and accurately reproduces all of the information. **This permit expires 06/30/2024.**

NOTE: Quota Permit is also required for Quota Gun Deer Hunt. I have read and understand the refuge hunting regulations and agree to obey them and agree to allow USFWS and AGFC Officers to inspect or search all equipment used during my hunt.

Signature (Permit not transferable)

Prohibited Activities Include:

- Open alcohol containers on refuge roads, ATV trails, parking areas, boat ramps, fishing piers, or observation decks.
- Commercial guiding/hunting.
- Camping, including mooring houseboats to refuge property.
- Littering (including, but not limited to, shotgun shell hulls and cigarette butts).
- Building fires.
- Cutting or defacing trees, shrubs, or other plants.
- Searching for or removal of artifacts.
- Use of horses or mules.
- Possession or use of fireworks.
- Taking or possessing turtles or mollusks.
- Possession, use, or manufacturing of illegal drugs.
- Use of artificial light to locate wildlife, except as authorized for fishing, frogging, and raccoon/ opossum hunting.
- Use of firearms, and possession or use of archery equipment and crossbows, except during refuge hunts that allow their use.
- Loaded hunting firearms or muzzleloaders in or on a vehicle, ATV, or boat under power. "Loaded" is defined as having shells on/in the firearm or ignition device on the muzzleloader.
- Target practice or non-hunting discharge of firearms.
- Failure to remove all marking materials from the refuge following the hunt.
- Use of audio devices, electronic callers, recordings or similar artificial devices for simulating the call of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker or any other bird (except for goose hunting under State Conservation Order and crow).
- Use of drones
- Tournament fishing

Recreational use of ATV/UTVs is not allowed. ATV/UTVs may ONLY be used Sep. 1 to Mar. 31 and ONLY to provide access for hunting. ATV/UTVs may ONLY be used on roads, trails, or established parking areas designated (marked) for ATV use. An ATV/UTV is defined as a vehicle with a maximum tire pressure of 15 psi, with tires having a maximum centerline lug depth of one inch. Only those vehicles originally designed by their manufacturer to be ATV/UTVs are allowed; mini-trucks or other modified off-road vehicles are prohibited.

Bicycles and ebikes may only be operated on roads or trails designated for conventional vehicles and/or ATV/UTVs.

ATV/UTVs, motor vehicles, bicycles, and ebikes may not be left unattended overnight on the refuge.

Horses/mules, personal watercraft (e.g., jet-ski, etc.), hover craft, and airboats are prohibited.

General Refuge Regulations

Public use of the Refuge is permitted throughout the year. Permitted activities are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

The refuge is open for public entry and use from 4 a.m. to one hour after legal sunset, except for those engaged in fishing, frogging, or raccoon/opossum hunting at night and possessing the appropriate equipment and required licenses. Hunters trailing or retrieving deer after hours should call the refuge office at 501/203 7253 and leave a message stating their name, phone number and the general area in which they are searching for or retrieving deer.

During the regular waterfowl season, no boats allowed on the Refuge for any activity from 12 am - 4 am.

Only non-motorized boats are allowed on the Dixie Farm Unit.

Commercial Activities

Commercial guiding for waterfowl hunting or any other hunting activity is prohibited. For the purpose of this regulation, any fee paid or services rendered to a person for lodging, meals, club membership or similar services will be considered compensation.

Anyone planning to pursue any other commercial activity (e.g., fishing, filming, collecting acorns, firewood cutting, etc.) on refuge land, lakes, streams or waters, or on adjacent waters where riparian rights may be vested with the refuge is required to first obtain a refuge Special Use Permit.

Sport Fishing

Sport fishing, frogging, and crawfishing, for personal use only, are permitted year-round in accordance with state seasons and state and refuge-specific regulations. The owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number must be permanently affixed to each crawfish trap.

Boats with a valid registration may be left on the refuge from Mar. 1 through Oct. 31.

Commercial fishing requires a refuge Special Use Permit.

Prohibited hunting activities include:

- Leaving any tree stand, ground blind or game camera on the refuge without the owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number clearly written in a conspicuous location.
- The use of dogs for deer hunting.
- Commercial guiding/hunting
- Driving or screwing any metal object into a tree or hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been driven or screwed to support a hunter.
- Building or hunting from permanent blinds or stands.
- Hunting from a vehicle or use of a vehicle as a deer stand.
- Possession or distribution of bait or hunting over bait, salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for wildlife.
- Hunting from mowed or maintained roads (except for waterfowl hunting while roads are flooded).
- Possession or use of lead shot (exception: Spring turkey hunt or buckshot while hunting.)
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Hunting, taking, possessing, or attempting to take wildlife using a guide, guide service, outfitter, club, or organization providing assistance, service, or equipment.
- Use of natural scents or lures that contain natural deer and elk urine or other biofluids.

General Hunting Regulations

A signed refuge hunting permit from the front of this brochure is required for all hunting activities. Permits are non-transferable and must be signed by the hunter and carried at all times while on the refuge in possession of hunting gear. A permit can be downloaded and printed from the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/cacheriver>. An electronic signed copy of the permit may also be produced on a person's own cellular phone or other type of portable electronic device that clearly displays and accurately reproduces all of the information. An additional permit is required for the Quota Gun Deer Hunt.

All boating traffic on the refuge must maintain a minimum distance of 100 feet (approximately 6-boat lengths) between boats proceeding in the same direction of travel.

Hunter Orange or Chartreuse must be worn in accordance with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission regulations during Quota Gun and Muzzleloader Deer hunts.

Portable, pop-up blinds must have 144 square inches of blaze orange or chartreuse visible from all sides of the blind during firearms big-game seasons on the Refuge.

Dog training allowed Sep. 1- Apr. 1.

Bag limits for all species except deer are the same as state limits.

Stop Poaching Hotline 1 800/482 9262

Mobility-impaired Hunters: Mobility-impaired hunters may apply for a refuge Special Use Permit allowing the specialized use of ATVs. For more information, please call the refuge office at 501/203 7253.

Hunter Education and Supervision

All hunters age 11 and younger who possess valid hunter education certification must remain within normal sight and voice contact with an adult age 18 or older who possesses a valid State hunting license. Hunters age 15 and younger who have not completed hunter education must be under the direct supervision (within arm's reach) of an adult age 21 or older who possesses a valid State hunting license. One adult may supervise up to two youth hunters for migratory bird and upland game hunting, but may supervise only one youth during big game hunting.

Specific Hunting Regulations

Refuge hunting regulations differ from surrounding deer zones and state seasons as follows:

The Refuge is CLOSED to all entry and public use during Quota Gun Deer Hunt Nov. 11-19. Only Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit holders are allowed to enter or use the refuge during this hunt and only for the purpose of deer hunting and the incidental take of beaver, muskrat, nutria, coyote, striped skunk, fox, bobcat, river otter, mink, and feral hogs. Exception: If a Flood Prone Region is closed to deer hunting due to flooding during the refuge's Quota Gun Deer Hunt, then the refuge, in that Flood Prone Region only, will be open to other public entry and use.

Waterfowl sanctuaries, indicated on the refuge map, are closed to ALL public entry and use, including hunting and fishing, from Nov. 15 through Feb. 28 annually.

Migratory Birds: Only non-toxic shot may be possessed or used for all migratory bird hunting.

Waterfowl (Duck, Coot, Merganser, and Geese): State Seasons (except closed Nov. 11-19 during the Quota Gun Deer Hunt)*

Morning (until 12 noon) hunting only throughout the entire season.

NOTE: All-day hunting permitted for geese during the State Conservation Order. State bag limit(s) apply.

Hunters must pick up and remove shell casings and boxes from the refuge.

Decoys, blinds, boats, and all other equipment must be removed daily by 1 pm.

All boats are prohibited on the Refuge from 12 am - 4 am during regular waterfowl season.

It is unlawful to possess, or take or attempt to take waterfowl with the use of, any simulated wing movement decoy or any decoy other than an artificial decoy that imitates the appearance of waterfowl: no moving parts or electrical components; and is not subjected to any artificial means that makes it appear to move, splash or cause ripples from the first day of the first segment of regular duck season through the last day of the last segment of regular duck season including teal and youth waterfowl season.

Exception: Manually operated "jerk strings" may be used to simulate decoy movement.

Hunters may enter the Refuge no earlier than 4 am.

Cutting or creating holes or other manipulation of vegetation (cutting bushes, mowing, weed-eating, etc.) or hunting from manipulated areas is prohibited.

Dogs are permitted.

Waterfowl (Special Youth Quota Permit Hunt): Bayou DeView and Roundpond Units. Available only to youth age 15 and under. Applications will be received Nov. 1 - 30. For more information, call the refuge office at 501/203 7253 or visit our website for complete details: www.fws.gov/cacheriver/youthwaterfowl

Dove: State seasons* Dogs are permitted.

Snipe: State seasons* Dogs are permitted.

Woodcock: State season.* Dogs are permitted.

Crow: State season.* Dogs are permitted.

Rail (Virginia and Sora): State seasons.* Dogs are permitted.

Gallinule (Common and Purple): State seasons.* Dogs are permitted.

Small Game: Only rifles and handguns chambered for rimfire cartridges, air rifles, archery tackle, or shotguns with non-toxic shot may be used for all small game hunting.

Squirrel: Sep. 1 - Feb. 29 * Dogs are permitted. Note: No road hunting allowed.

Rabbit: State season.* Dogs are permitted.

Quail: State season.* Dogs are permitted.

Furbearer: Beaver, muskrat, nutria, coyote, striped skunk, fox, bobcat, river otter, and mink may be taken incidental to any refuge hunt by the use of the device appropriate for that hunt and according to any applicable state seasons and regulations.

Feral Hog: In cooperation with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Feral Hog Control Program, feral hogs may only be taken on the refuge during the quota gun, youth gun, and muzzleloader deer hunts and by archery deer hunters from Nov. 1 - Dec. 31. Feral hogs are destructive and non-native animals that are incompatible with refuge management. Live hogs may not be possessed, transported, or released on the refuge.

Raccoon: Sep.1 - Mar. 31.* Dogs are required for hunting raccoons at night.

Opossum: Sep.1 - Feb. 29 * Dogs are required for hunting opossum at night.

Trapping: Dec.1 - Jan. 31. REFUGE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUIRED. Trapping permitted according to State regulations. Waterfowl sanctuaries are closed to all public entry and use, including trapping, Nov. 15 - Feb. 28. Contact refuge office at 501/203 7253 for additional details and requirements.

Big Game: For all deer and turkey harvested on the refuge, "Cache River NWR" must be used instead of a zone number for tagging and checking your game. In addition, ALL deer and turkey harvested on the refuge also must be checked according to state regulations.

NOTE: Arkansas Game and Fish Commission CWD regulations apply to deer harvested on the refuge in Jackson County.

Only portable stands may be used and the owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number must be permanently affixed to the stand. A portable hunting stand is any device or structure used for the purpose of hunting that can be carried in its entirety and erected by hand including but not limited to tripod stands, lean-to stands, lock-on stands, ladder stands and climbing stands. Stands may be erected 7 days prior to the refuge deer season and must be removed from the waterfowl sanctuaries prior to Nov. 15 and from the rest of the Refuge within 7 days of the closing of archery season.

Deer Limits and Refuge Legal Buck Definition: A legal buck on the Refuge is defined as any male deer (no antler restriction). Deer harvested on the Refuge are NOT bonus deer. Refuge wide season limit is four deer, no more than two bucks, which may include:

Deer (Archery/Crossbow): State season.* Either sex. State limit applies.

Deer (Muzzleloading): Oct 21-29 and Dec. 29-31. Either sex. One deer only may be taken during each hunt.

Deer (Youth Gun): Nov. 4-5. One buck and one doe, or two does.

Deer (Quota Gun): Quota hunt permit required. November 11-19.* One buck and one doe, or two does.

Only shotguns with slugs, muzzleloaders shooting a single projectile, and legal handguns and air rifles as defined as legal for deer hunting by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission may be used on the Dixie, Dixie Waterfowl Sanctuary, and Plunkett Farm Waterfowl Sanctuary Units during the youth and quota gun deer hunts

NOTE: A Cache River NWR Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit does NOT entitle you to camp on State WMAs during the refuge Quota Gun Deer Hunt.

To apply for a Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit: Hunt permits are \$12.50 and must be purchased at <https://cache.recaccess.com/>. Check the Refuge website for permit availability. Quota permits issued beginning Aug 1 first come, first served until the quota is reached, or until October 31. Permit requests will NOT be accepted in person. Permits are non-transferable and nonrefundable, even in the event of refuge deer hunt closures due to flooding.

Signs Protect Visitors and Resources

Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year. The impact of human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wildlands. Signs control recreational activities while protecting natural resources on the Refuge. Please respect the refuge signs identified in this brochure.



Refuge boundary sign. Public use permitted in accordance with refuge regulations.



Area beyond this sign closed. All public entry prohibited. Area closed to all public use. Some areas such as waterfowl sanctuaries are only

seasonally closed. Seasonally closed areas have the specific closure dates printed on the face of the sign.

Refuge lands located in Flood Prone Region B will close to all deer hunting when the White River gauge at Augusta reaches 31 feet, as reported at <http://www.weather.gov/lmrfc/>. This restriction is lifted when the gauge at Augusta falls below 30 feet and the White River gauge at Georgetown falls to or below 19 feet.

Refuge lands located in Flood Prone Region C will close to all deer hunting when the Cache River gauge at Patterson exceeds 10 feet, as reported at <http://www.weather.gov/lmrfc/> and will reopen when the same gauge reading falls below 8.5 feet.

Refuge lands located in Flood Prone Region D will close to all deer and turkey hunting when the White River gauge at Clarendon reaches 28 feet as reported at <http://www.weather.gov/lmrfc/> and will reopen when the same gauge reading falls to or below 27 feet.

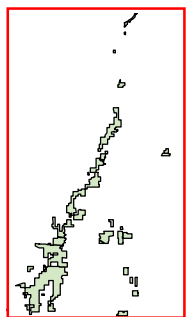
Turkey-Fall 2023 Gun: Closed.

Turkey-Fall 2023 Archery/Crossbow: Closed.

Turkey-Spring 2024 Gun: State season on all refuge lands located south of Interstate 40. Remainder of the refuge is closed with the exception of those refuge lands included in the combined Black Swamp WMA/Cache River NWR hunts administered by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

North Area



- Refuge Lands
- Waterfowl Sanctuary
(Closed Nov. 15 - Feb. 28)
- Youth Waterfowl Hunt Area
(Special Regulations in effect Nov. 15 - Feb. 28)
- Darby's Warrior Support Hunting Area
(Special Regulations in effect Dec. 1 - Jan. 31)



- Farm Units
- Wildlife Observation Tower
- Improved Boat Ramp
- Primitive Boat Ramp
- ATV Trails



1 inch = 2.6 miles

South Area

