



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge Public Use Regulations 2023–2024

Welcome

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 567 National Wildlife Refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 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 surplus animals is one tool used to manage wildlife populations. Carefully managed hunts maintain wildlife populations at a level compatible with the environment, provide recreational opportunities, and permit the use of a valuable renewable resource.

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge

91 US Highway 641 North

P.O. Box 89

Benton, Kentucky 42025

270/527-5770

fws.gov/refuge/clarks-river



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

fws.gov

1-800-344-WILD

General Information

Accessibility

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities of the Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge. Discrimination complaints should be filed with the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240 or 1-800-344-WILD.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands 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).

Vehicles

The use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) or any unlicensed vehicle is prohibited on all refuge property.

Licensed vehicles are permitted on open graveled roadways only. Abandoned railroad tracks are not considered a roadway. Vehicles blocking refuge gates will be towed.

Bicycles are permitted while engaged in wildlife related activities on refuge graveled roads and portions of the abandoned railroad tracks that are owned by the Clarks River NWR.

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting and fishing regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge Hunting/ Fishing Permit 2023-2024

CRNWR Permits are required for anyone that is also required to have a Kentucky State hunting/fishing license and is engaged in hunting/fishing activities on the Refuge. This permit is only valid when signed and must be carried on the hunter's person while engaged in hunting/fishing activities. Signing this permit is an indication that you have read, fully understand and will comply with the special regulations of this permit. Permits are available 24 hours a day at the Refuge Headquarters or at fws.gov/refuge/clarks-river. This permit is valid through August 31, 2024.

Signature (Valid only when signed)



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Hunting and Fishing Regulations - continued

Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable State of Kentucky regulations subject to the conditions stated below.

Hunting is prohibited within 100 yards (91 meters) of any residence, refuge graveled roads, hiking trails, or portions of the abandoned railroad track.

Hunters under the age of 16 must be supervised by an adult 21 years of age or older, and must remain in sight and normal voice contact with the adult. On upland game hunts the adult may supervise no more than two youths, on big game hunts no more than one youth.

Hunter orange must be worn as required by state regulations. **Caution:** other non-hunting members of the public may be in the area and not wearing hunter orange during hunting seasons.

Ground blinds used for the purpose of hunting any species during the deer modern gun, muzzleloader and youth firearms seasons must display hunter orange in accordance with state regulations on WMAs.

Only one ground blind per hunter is permitted. Ground blinds must be removed from the refuge when not occupied.

We allow the use of trail cameras. Cameras may be used year round. Cameras must have owner's name, address and phone number clearly displayed or it will be confiscated.

To retrieve or track game from a posted closed area of the refuge the hunter must first receive authorization at 270-532-7435.

The use or possession of any lead shot is prohibited on the Refuge with the exception of lead shot ammunition legal for the taking of turkey during statewide turkey seasons. This regulation does not apply to rim fire or center fire ammunition.

Waterfowl Quota Hunt

Waterfowl hunting will be allowed on the Clarks River Waterfowl Units by a quota draw hunt only. The Units will be closed to all entry with the exception of the drawn permit holder and their guests on drawn hunt days ONLY.

The **Mallard Point Unit** will be open on Saturdays and Sundays of the statewide waterfowl season, except during modern rifle and muzzleloader deer seasons, for the drawn permit holders. The **Redhead and Wolfe Units** will be open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the statewide waterfowl season, except during modern rifle and muzzleloader deer seasons, for the drawn permit holders.

- To obtain a permit a person will be required to fill out a post card with their name, address, and telephone number (OMB Control Number: 1018-0140; FWS Form Number: 3-2439) and submit to Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge, P. O. Box 89, Benton, Kentucky 42025. The application will be accepted starting September 1st and must be postmarked no later than October 15th to be considered for the drawing.
- Only one entry may be submitted per person. Preferred dates and units may be requested on the card. If the dates or units have already been assigned then refuge personnel will select the first available date and unit remaining. Individuals drawn for the quota hunt will be notified within 2 weeks of the drawing by the U.S. Mail.
- To be considered eligible for the drawing the individuals must be at least 16 years of age and possess valid and current state and federal licenses and stamps for hunting waterfowl. Hunters under 16 years of age may submit a postcard for the youth hunt weekend drawing if they will be under 16 during the hunt dates.
- Permit holders will be allowed to hunt their assigned unit on the designated date.
- The individual drawn may bring up to four guests with them to the unit. Guests are not allowed in the unit without the attendance of the permit holder (no exceptions).
- No person may sell, trade or barter their permit. The permit is the sole property of the permit holder and is non-transferable. If a person cannot make it to the unit on the dates they are drawn for, the unit will be considered closed for those dates.
- No watercraft is allowed in the Clarks River Waterfowl Units with the exception of drawn permit holders, which may use watercraft to access their assigned units and to retrieve waterfowl.
- Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise. Hunting will cease and hunters will be out of the field by 12 noon each day.

Fishing on the Refuge is allowed under Kentucky statewide regulations with the exception of the Environmental Education and Recreation Area Pond.

Environmental Educational and Recreation Area (EERA) Specific Regulations

- Daylight use only.
- Pets not on a leash are prohibited.
- Portions of the EERA are closed to all entry from November 1 to March 31.
- Area is pole fishing only with limit of 1 pole per person.
- Use of any watercraft is prohibited.
- Horseback riding is prohibited.
- Use of live fish for bait is prohibited.
- Introduction or stocking of fish is prohibited.
- Swimming is prohibited.
- Hunting or harvesting of frogs is prohibited.



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Access

The Clarks River Waterfowl Units are closed to all entry from November 1 through March 31, with the exception of drawn permit holders. During periods of high water or flood, unauthorized persons shall not enter upon the Clarks River Waterfowl Units by boat for any purpose. High water or flood conditions do not affect or change the Waterfowl Units boundary, which is marked with white "Area Beyond This Sign Closed" signs.

With the exception of hunting raccoon, opossum and bullfrog, access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset.

Horses

Horses and mules are prohibited on the refuge during the muzzleloader and modern gun deer hunts. Horseback riding is permitted on refuge-graveled roads and the portions of the abandoned railroad tracks owned by the refuge for access purposes while engaged in wildlife related activities only. Horses and mules are not permitted off these secondary access routes for any purpose.

Tree Stands

The use of nails, wire, screws or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to assist a hunter is prohibited.

Construction or use of any permanent tree stand is prohibited. Only climbing and/or portable stands may be used.

Only one stand per hunter is permitted.

Tree stands may be placed in the field no earlier than 14 days prior to the opening of season and must be removed from the field within 7 days after the season closes.

All stands left in the field must be identified by hunter's FW Customer ID number from KDFWR license, or owners name and contact information (OMB Control Number: 1018-0140; FWS Form Number: 3-2439). If stand does not contain this information, it will be confiscated.

Safety belts are required at all times with use of tree stands.

For all other species not listed in the chart below, follow statewide regulations.

EERA Specific Creel Limits

Species	Size limit	Creel limit
Bluegill	None	10
Channel Catfish	12"	5 Combined (Channel Catfish and Largemouth Bass)
Largemouth Bass	12"	

Harvest Reporting

Deer, Turkey, River Otter and Bobcat harvested on the Refuge must be telechecked through the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources at 1-800-245-4263 with public land code for Clarks River NWR. Hunters are required to follow all state CWD regulations.

Prohibited Activities

- Discarding any fish or wildlife carcasses on the refuge.
- Marking or flagging any tree or other Refuge feature with non-biodegradable reflectors, paint or other substance.
- Littering
- Camping
- Fires
- Trapping
- Searching for or removal of any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts.
- Target practice with any weapon or non-hunting discharge of firearms.
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages.
- Taking of wildlife (outside legal hunting season) or plants (including cutting trees and brush) is prohibited.
- No unauthorized person shall use or direct the rays of a spotlight or other artificial light, or automotive headlights for the purpose of spotting, locating or taking any animal within the boundaries of the refuge or along right-of-way for public or private roads within the refuge.
- Feeding of wildlife and the hunting of any wildlife by the aid of or distributing any feed, salt, minerals, or other ingestible attractants.
- The running or training of dogs outside the hunting season for a particular species is permitted by special use permits only. For information on obtaining a special use permit for running dogs call the Refuge Headquarters at 270/527-5770.
- Dog owners/handlers must have a collar on each dog with the owner's name, address and telephone number (OMB Control Number: 1018-0140; FWS Form Number: 3-2439). We allow dogs for raccoon, opossum, migratory birds, waterfowl, squirrel, rabbit and fall turkey hunting. All dogs must be detained by leash or chain if not being legally used for hunting. Other pets must be confined or on a leash.
- Release of plants or animals, including wildlife and domesticated animals.
- Harassment of any individual or group engaged in legal refuge activities.

The hunting of any species not listed on the following page is considered closed. All state bag limits, season lengths and weapon regulations apply unless otherwise specified.

Type	Season dates/bag limits	Refuge specific regulations
Duck, Goose, Coot	Same as State Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits, except in Waterfowl Units. Hunting in Waterfowl Units is only permitted through a Quota Permit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunting will cease and hunters will be out of the field by 12 noon each day. Only portable and temporary blinds are permitted. Decoys and blinds must be removed each day. Only nontoxic shot permitted. Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise. The use of dogs for retrieving purposes or in the pursuit of migratory birds is permitted. <p>*Waterfowl hunting on Clarks River Waterfowl Units is permitted by Quota Permit only.</p>
Dove, Woodcock, Snipe, Crow, Quail	Same as State Seasons and Bag Limits. Closed during all refuge modern gun and muzzleloader deer seasons, including special youth weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only nontoxic shot permitted Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset. The use of dogs for retrieving purposes or in the pursuit of migratory birds is permitted. Centerfire weapons prohibited.
Squirrel, Rabbit	Same as State Season and Bag Limits. Closed during all refuge modern gun and muzzleloader deer seasons, including special youth weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only nontoxic shot permitted Use of centerfire weapons is prohibited Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset. The use of dogs for retrieving purposes or in the pursuit of gray and fox squirrels, eastern cottontail and swamp rabbits is permitted.
Raccoon, Opossum	Same as State Season and Bag Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only nontoxic shot permitted The use of dogs in the pursuit of raccoon and opossum is permitted in accordance with State regulations. Use of dogs outside hunting season is by special use permit only. Access to the refuge after sunset is permitted
Coyote, Bobcat, Fox, Skunk, Otter, Muskrat, Mink, Weasel, Beaver	Same as State Season and Bag Limits (Bobcat and Otter taken on Refuge will be telechecked through State 1-800-245-4263 with public land code for Clarks River NWR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only nontoxic shot permitted Use of dogs is not permitted. Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset. May only be taken during daylight hours
White-tail Deer	Same as State Season and Bag Limits for Zone 1 (Deer taken on Refuge will be telechecked through State 1-800-245-4263 with public land code for Clarks River NWR) Hunters are required to follow all state CWD regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursuit of white-tailed deer with dogs is prohibited. Hunters may not hunt by organized deer drives of two or more hunters. Hunting of deer by the aid of or distributing any feed, salt, minerals or other ingestible attractants is prohibited Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset. Ground blinds are permitted, one per hunter, and must be removed daily. During modern gun, muzzleloader, and youth firearm ground blinds must display hunter orange in accordance with state regulations on WMAs.
Turkey	Same as State Seasons and Bag Limits (Turkey taken on Refuge will be telechecked through the State 1-800-245-4263 with public land code for Clarks River NWR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to the refuge is two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset. The use of dogs for retrieving purposes or in the pursuit of wild turkey is permitted in accordance with state regulations Ground blinds are permitted, one per hunter, and must be removed daily.
Bullfrogs	Same as State Seasons and Bag Limits, except in the EERA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunting of bullfrogs at the Environmental Education Recreation Area is prohibited. Access to the refuge after sunset is permitted Collection, hunting, and/or harm of all other species of reptiles and amphibians on the Refuge is prohibited.
Feral Hogs	Feral hogs will not be regarded as a game species on Clarks River NWR and control measures will be implemented to eradicate this invasive species, which may include a hunting option.	Feral hogs will not be regarded as a game species on Clarks River NWR and control measures will be implemented to eradicate this invasive species, which may include a hunting option.
Sandhill Crane, Groundhog	Closed	Closed

Paducah, KY

Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year. Human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wild lands. Signs help control recreational activities and respect private property while protecting natural resources on the refuge. Please respect the following signs:



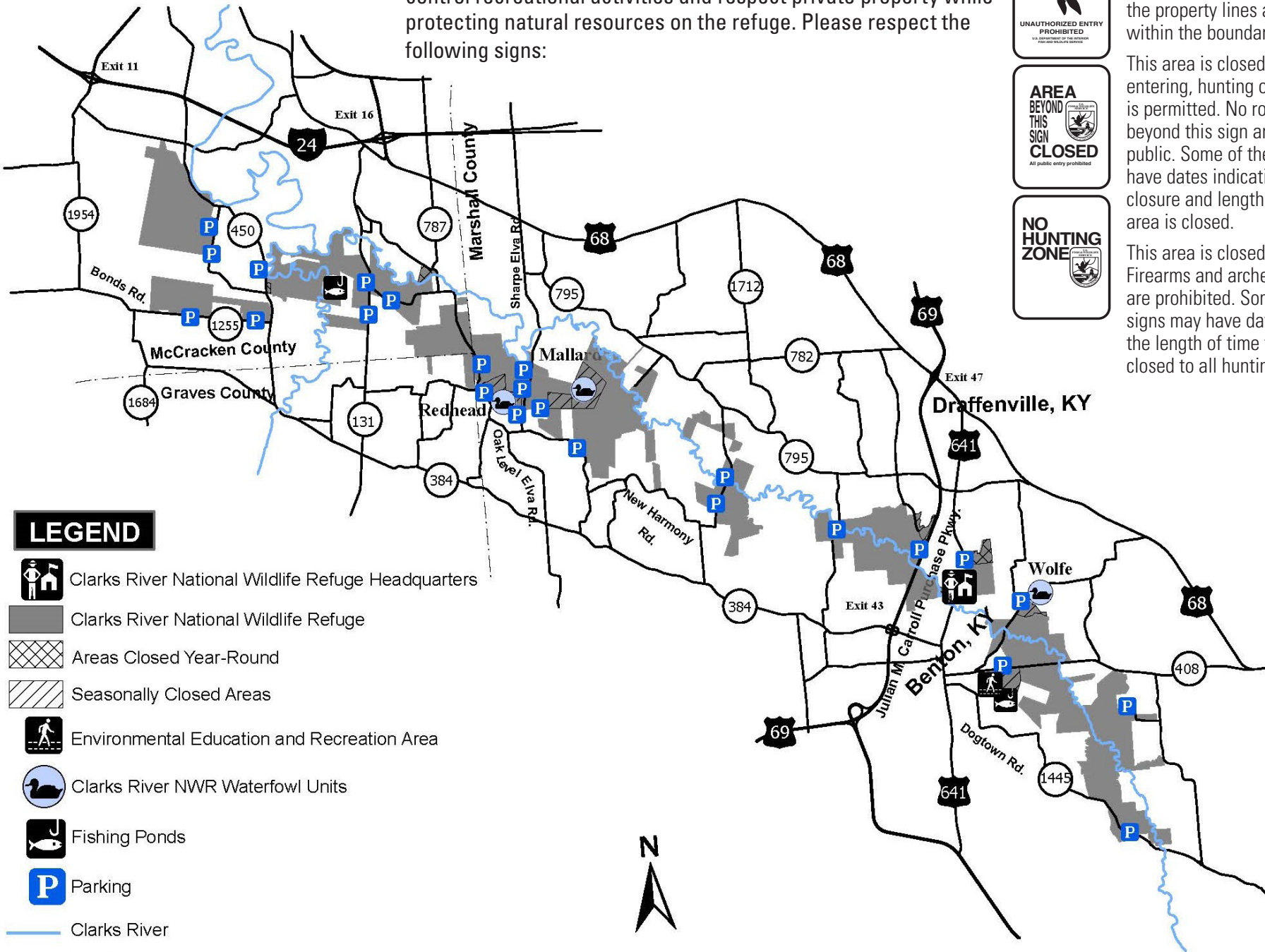
This sign and yellow paint clearly marks all refuge property. It is your responsibility to know where the property lines are and remain within the boundaries.














This area is closed to all entry. No entering, hunting or sightseeing is permitted. No roads or trails beyond this sign are open to the public. Some of these signs may have dates indicating seasonal closure and length of time the area is closed.



This area is closed to all hunting. Firearms and archery equipment are prohibited. Some of these signs may have dates indicating the length of time the area is closed to all hunting.



LEGEND

-  Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters
-  Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge
-  Areas Closed Year-Round
-  Seasonally Closed Areas
-  Environmental Education and Recreation Area
-  Clarks River NWR Waterfowl Units
-  Fishing Ponds
-  Parking
-  Clarks River
-  Roads
-  County Boundary

