



Pond Creek

National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Regulations 2025–2026

Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1994, is located along the Little and Cossatot Rivers in Southwest Arkansas. Public hunting and fishing is permitted on approximately 27,000 acres during specific times of the year.

Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1958 Central Road Lockesburg, AR 71846
870/289 2126

July 2025

General Regulations

Public use regulations are designed to protect visitors and wildlife populations. The regulations below supplement the general regulations which govern all public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. All users are permitted on the refuge in accordance with state and federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations contained herein. Individuals with fish and wildlife related violations may be denied permits for any refuge activity.

Permits

Refuge Access permits are required for all Refuge users. When signed and in your possession, (paper copy or on your phone), the cover section of this brochure serves as your permit for all permissible refuge activities and acknowledges your understanding of the regulations contained herein.

Commercial/Special Use Activities

No person including but not limited to a guide, guide service, outfitter, club or other organization shall provide assistance, services or equipment on the Refuge to any other person for compensation. 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. Violations of this regulation subjects each individual in the party to a fine if convicted of this violation.

A refuge Special Use Permit is required for all commercial activities on the refuge. Permits may be obtained by contacting our Refuge Headquarters with a formal request. All Special Use Permit applications will be subject to a two week turn-around time and applicable fees.

Motor Vehicles

All motor vehicles are restricted to normal passenger vehicle gravel roads. Roads and trails may be closed to vehicle use due to periods of high water, during wildfire occurrences or other natural events that may pose a hazard to public safety. All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) are only allowed seasonally on trails designated by ATV signs and are marked with yellow paint. The uses of ATV/UTV are restricted to wildlife-dependent recreation only. Trails marked by yellow paint are open September 1, until January 31.

We define an ATV and a UTV as an off road vehicle (not legal for highway use) with factory specifications not to exceed the following: having low pressure tires and/or tracks with a maximum of 1 ¼" lug height and a dry weight no greater than 1,750 lbs. Bicycles and ebikes are permitted on roads and designated open trails. The maximum legal speed for any land vehicle is 25 mph.

Firearms/Ammunition

Persons may only use (discharge) firearms during authorized hunting seasons while attempting to take game species and/or wildlife species approved for incidental take. All hunting weapons used on the Refuge must comply with state regulations for each game species. Possession of shot larger than that legal for waterfowl hunting is prohibited. Lead shot is prohibited Refuge wide except during Quota Turkey Hunts. Only rimfire rifles no larger than .22 caliber and shotguns are permitted except during the muzzleloader (straight-walled cartridges prohibited) and modern gun deer hunts when hunting equipment legal for these hunts is also permitted. The use or possession of buckshot is prohibited Refuge-wide.

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).



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

This is an annual permit. To save tax dollars, please use this permit for the entire season.

Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge 2025–2026 Refuge Access Permit Expires July 2026

When signed and in your possession, this portion of the brochure will serve as your permit for all permissible Refuge activities and acknowledges your understanding of the regulations contained herein.

Signature

Permits are not transferable and are valid only when signed.

Take pride in your Refuge. Don't litter.
Report violations.

Camping

Camping (no reservations or fees required) is permitted only in designated primitive camping areas and in conjunction with on-refuge wildlife-dependent activities (see map). Camping area entrances are marked by signs and boundaries are marked with ORANGE paint. Campers may stay no more than fourteen (14) days during any thirty (30) consecutive day period in any campground. Camps must be occupied daily. All disturbances, including the use of generators, are prohibited between the hours of 10 pm and 4 am. Camping on the refuge while hunting off the refuge is prohibited. Campfires are permitted only in camping areas and must be attended. Only downed wood may be used for fires. Caution: During periods of high fire danger, all open fires will be prohibited.

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Pond Creek visitors are encouraged to explore our natural resources by way of birding, canoeing, hiking, photography and observations. While the refuge continuously strives to better provide these opportunities, please feel free to contact us for the most up to date information and accommodations. All ATV/ UTV trails are open to foot traffic year round.

Animals/Pets

Dogs are allowed for hunting migratory birds, and small game during designated seasons. Dogs and other pets not being utilized for wildlife-dependent recreation must be on a leash. Horses may be used only on ATV/UTV trails and roads open to vehicles for on-refuge wildlife-dependent activities only. Horses are prohibited during the muzzleloader and modern gun deer hunts.

Physically Challenged Hunters

Physically challenged users are encouraged to consult with refuge staff at the Refuge Headquarters for available options and alternatives that may make their visit more enjoyable. Mobility Impaired Access permits are available and are required to gain special access due to disabilities.

Sport Fishing and Frogging

Sport fishing, frogging, and taking of crawfish for personal use are permitted in all refuge waters in accordance with State regulations.

The following activities are prohibited:

- Littering.
- Spotlighting - artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife.
- Open alcohol containers in parking lots, on roadways, ATV trails, boat ramps, observation deck or in plain view in campgrounds; use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Taking of wildlife or plants (including cutting trees or brush) other than specified in this brochure.
- Possession or use of herbicides.
- Marking trails with tape, ribbons, paint or any other substance or material.
- Use or possession of any electronic call or other electronic device used for producing or projecting vocal sounds of wildlife.
- Drive or screw a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree or to hunt from any tree in which such an object has been driven.
- Taking or possessing turtles or mollusks.
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts.
- Disposing unused portions of game, or fish within 300 yards of any boat ramp, parking lot or campground.
- Leaving any personal property on the Refuge unattended. Exception: Gear associated with camping in designated camping sites and deer stands, climbing sticks, portable ground blinds and game cameras.
- The use of drones and/or unmanned aircraft.
- Target practice with any firearms, archery tackle or crossbows or any non-hunting discharge of firearms.
- Blocking gates, boat ramps, or roadways with vehicles.
- Firearms, including state permitted concealed carry handguns in all refuge offices and buildings.

Hunting Regulations

For all deer and turkey harvested on the refuge, the hunter will immediately (prior to moving the animal) complete the hunting license kill information using "Pond Creek NWR" as zone of kill.

A hunter born after 1968 must carry a valid Hunter Education Card. Hunters under 16 years old do not need to have a card if they are under the direct supervision (within arm's reach) of a holder of a valid hunting license of at least 21 years of age. Youth hunters under the age of 16 who have a valid Hunter Education Card must also be supervised by an adult not less than 21 years old but must only be in sight and normal voice contact with the adult. An adult may supervise only one youth for big game hunting and up to two youths for waterfowl and small game.














- Areas posted with "No Hunting Zone" signs and/or blue paint are closed to all hunting.
- Areas posted with "Specialized Hunt Area" signs are only open for mobility impaired hunts.
- Hunting from an area where a shooting lane has been cut is prohibited.
- Hunting within 150 feet of roads, trails and pipelines open to motor vehicle use (including ATV/UTV trails) is prohibited.
- Possession, placement or hunting over bait, salt or any ingestible attractant is prohibited.

2025-2026 Pond Creek NWR Hunting Season Dates and Regulations

Species	Type	Season Dates	Bag Limits/Harvest	Specific Regulations
Duck, Goose & Coot	Legal method	State Duck and Teal Season (including the State Youth Hunts, Special Active Duty Military and Veteran Hunts).	State bag limit Geese and Coots can be taken during state duck season when state seasons for these species are open.	Hunters may not enter the hunting area before 4 am. Hunters must remain at their vehicle until 4 am if accessing hunting area by foot or ATV/UTV. Hunting ends at noon each day. Only portable blinds are permitted. All duck hunting equipment (blinds, guns, decoys, etc.) must be removed by 1:00 pm each day, either to a designated camping area, vehicle or off the Refuge. Sept teal season shooting hours are from sunrise until noon.
Squirrel and Rabbit	Legal method	Sept. 1 - Jan. 31	State bag limit	Dogs allowed November 8 through January 31. Closed during Modern Gun Deer Hunt.
Raccoon & Opossum	Legal method	Sunset Nov. 11- Jan. 31	State bag limit	Use of dogs required during hours of darkness. Closed during Modern Gun Deer Hunt.
Deer	Deer stands and/or game cameras may be placed on the refuge starting two days prior to opening day of Archery Season and must be removed by January 31. Limit is one (1) deer stand and or game camera per person. All stands and cameras must be clearly labeled. Portable tree stands and ground blinds left unattended must have the owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number clearly written in a conspicuous location. Portable, pop-up blinds, must have 144 square inches of blaze orange or chartreuse visible from all sides of the blind during firearms Deer seasons on the Refuge. Conducting or participating in deer drives is prohibited. A deer drive is defined as a deliberate action by one or more persons (whether armed or unarmed) whose intent is to cause deer to move within firearm range of one or more participating hunters. The use of deer decoys is prohibited. Deer harvested must be checked in accordance to state regulations and at the Refuge check station (see map).			
	Archery/ Crossbow	Sept. 27 - Jan. 31	Three deer total, no more than one (1) buck. A legal buck is any male deer. The total number of bucks that can be harvested through a combination of all refuge deer hunts is one (1).	
	Youth Modern Gun	State Designated Season		Youth hunt restricted to youths, 15 years of age and younger (age at opening of state-wide youth deer season) accompanied by one adult 21 years or older.
	Special Mobility Impaired	Nov. 22 - 23		Mobility Impaired Access Permit Required. NEW
	Muzzleloader	Oct. 18 - 22		Straight-walled cartridges prohibited.
	Modern Gun	Nov. 22 - 23	Two deer total (2 does or 1 buck and 1 doe)	No quota permit required. NEW
Turkey	Archery/ Crossbow	Spring State Season	State bag limit	Turkey harvested must be checked in accordance with state regulations and at the Refuge check station (see map).
	Youth Modern Gun	Same as State Youth Season	One (1) legal turkey according to state definition.	Youth Hunt restricted to youth 15 years of age and younger (age at opening of state-wide youth turkey season) accompanied by one adult 21 years or older. Turkeys must be checked in accordance with state Turkey Hunt regulations and at the Refuge check station (see map).
	Modern Gun	First two days of state season	One (1) legal turkey according to state definition. No jakes (per state regulations).	No quota permit required. NEW Turkeys must be checked in accordance with state Turkey Hunt regulations and at the Refuge check station (see map).
Beaver, Nutria, Coyote		Any Refuge Hunt	No bag limit	May be taken incidental to any daytime Refuge Hunt (without the use of dogs) with legal hunting equipment and ammunition allowed for that Hunt.
Feral Hogs	Legal Method	Muzzleloader and Modern Gun Deer Hunts, Archery Season	No bag limit	In accordance with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission regulations concerning the taking of feral swine on WMAs. Live hogs may not be transported or possessed. Use of dogs prohibited.
Furbearer	Trapping	Sunrise Nov. 12 - Jan. 31		Refuge Special Use Permit required and available at refuge office. Closed during Modern Gun Deer Hunts.

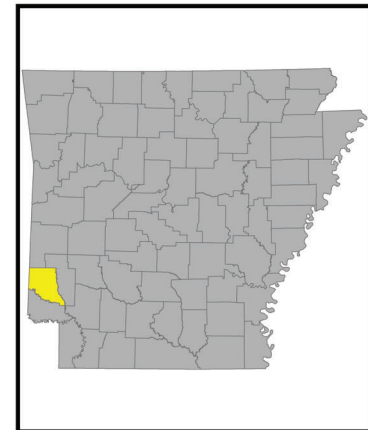
Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Legend

-  Headquarters & Check Station
-  Primitive Campgrounds
-  Refuge Boundary
-  Improved Roads (Gravel)
-  Paved Roads
-  Railroads
-  Pipeline
-  ATV Trails (Open Sept. 1 - Jan. 31)
-  Hiking Trail
-  Waterbodies
-  No Hunting Zone
-  Mobility Impaired Hunt Area
-  Private Land Inholdings



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles



Ben Lomond