

# Swan River National Wildlife Refuge

## Public Use Opportunities



The Blue Goose is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.



### Welcome

Swan River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1973 to be managed for the benefit of migratory birds.

The 1,961-acre Refuge is part of the Western Montana NWR Complex and is administered by the Refuge staff at Benton Lake NWR, which is located just north of Great Falls, Montana.

### General Information

Swan River NWR is open 1 hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. See exception in hunting regulations table.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed on the entire Refuge.

Motorized vehicle use is restricted to Forest Service Road 9714. Note that Bog Road is closed to all motorized vehicles west of the parking area.

Boating is allowed on Swan River. Note though, that this section of the river is classified as a no-wake zone.

Pets must be on a leash and attended at all times. Hunting dogs are permitted off-leash in the hunt area during waterfowl hunting season.

The Refuge provides habitat for over 200 species of birds, including 23 species of waterfowl. You may see mallard, cinnamon teal, blue-winged teal, common goldeneye, and trumpeter swans. In addition, you may observe grizzly or black bear, deer, elk, and moose.

The Swan and Mission Mountain Ranges provide important habitat for grizzly bears. The Refuge is an important corridor between these two ecosystems and bears are regularly observed on the Refuge.

The Refuge is in bear country. Be prepared for bear encounters - carry and keep bear spray readily available. For additional safety tips, visit: <https://bearaware.org/bear-safety-tips/>.

### Prohibited Activities

- Possession of a controlled substance or consumption of alcohol.
- Snowmobiles and ATVs.
- Camping and fires.
- Collecting or removing artifacts, historic items, shed antlers, and other natural objects.
- Horseback riding.
- Trapping.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices.
- Marking or flagging any tree or other Refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substance.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.

### 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.)

### Wildlife Observation and Photography

Visitors are encouraged to observe and photograph wildlife, and hike on the Bog Road and Tollefson Trails year-round.

### Hunting and Fishing Regulations

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.

Hunting and fishing are allowed on the Refuge in accordance with State regulations and the Refuge-specific regulations in this brochure.

### Hunting Regulations Table

Hunting is in accordance with State regulations. In addition, Refuge-specific regulations must be followed, and are listed in the table below and described in this brochure.

Activity	Season Dates	Hunt Areas	Other Regulations
<b>Black bear (Archery Only)</b>	Fall Season	Refuge-wide	Hunter access is allowed 2 hours before sunrise until 2 hours after sunset.  Portable tree stands are allowed from August 1 through December 15.
<b>Elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer (Archery Only)</b>	State regulations apply	Refuge-wide	Hunter access is allowed 2 hours before sunrise until 2 hours after sunset.  Portable tree stands are allowed from August 1 through December 15.
<b>Waterfowl</b>	State regulations apply	See map	Hunter access is allowed 2 hours before sunrise until 2 hours after sunset.  Non-toxic shot is required for all waterfowl hunting.  Portable blinds and decoys must be removed at the end of each day's hunt.

**Swan River National Wildlife Refuge**  
**922 Bootlegger Trail**  
**Great Falls, MT 59404**

**406-727-7400**  
**swanriver@fws.gov**  
**www.fws.gov/refuge/swan-river**  
**For State Relay Service**  
**TTY / Voice: 711**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**www.fws.gov**

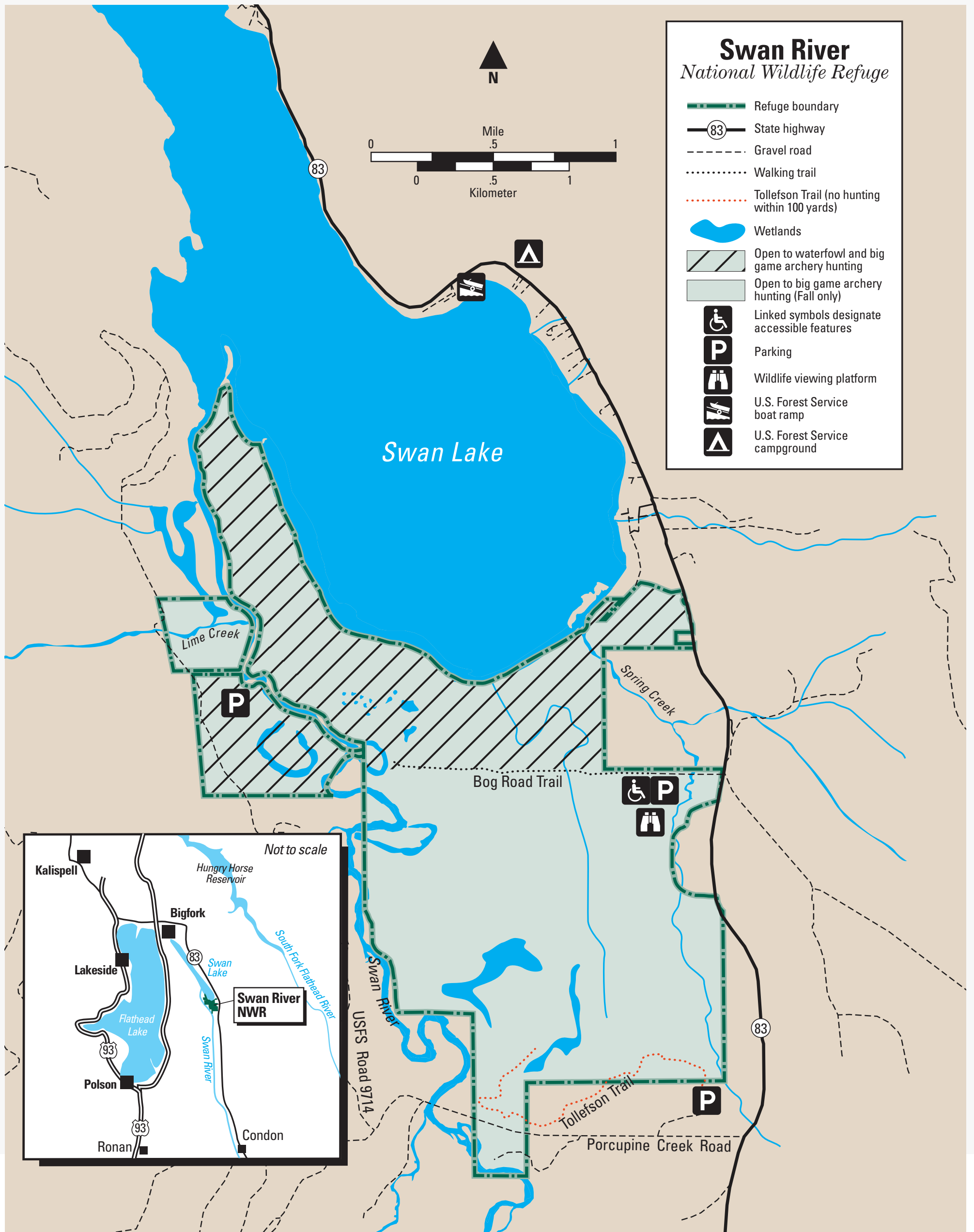
**For Refuge Information**  
**1-800-344-WILD**

**April 2022**



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**Big Game Hunting**

Big game archery hunting for black bear, deer, and elk is allowed on all of Swan River NWR. See the map for locations of open waterfowl hunt areas.

- No hunting or shooting is allowed within 100 yards of Refuge roads, trails, parking areas, or observation platforms.
- Temporary and portable blinds or blinds constructed of natural dead or down vegetation may be used.
- All blinds are available on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of who built the blind.
- All boats, decoys, portable blinds, other personal property, and any materials brought onto the Refuge for blind construction must be removed at the end of the day.

- Tree stands may be installed no sooner than August 1 and must be removed by December 15.
- Each hunter is allowed one stand or blind which must have the hunters Automated Licensing System (ALS) number visibly marked on the stand or blind.
- Stands or blinds must be placed a minimum of 100 yards from the Tollefson Trail, as shown on map.
- Game carts or boats may be used for big game retrieval.

**Waterfowl Hunting**

The Refuge is open to waterfowl hunting per the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Hunting Regulations and Refuge-specific regulations. Portions of the Refuge are open to waterfowl hunting (see map for waterfowl hunt area).

Waterfowl blinds may not be built on the Refuge prior to the opening day of waterfowl season.

**Fishing**

Fishing is allowed per State Regulations on Swan Lake, Swan River, and Spring Creek north of Bog Road trail.