



Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Regulations

Welcome

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, this barrier island refuge was established in 1924 as a sanctuary for migratory birds. In 1975, 3,000 acres of the refuge's total 5,618 were additionally designated as National Wilderness. The primary purpose of the refuge is to maintain and enhance habitat for migratory birds, nesting sea turtles, and other wildlife, and to preserve and protect this unique barrier island. Over half of the refuge is comprised of wetlands including saltwater marsh, freshwater marsh, and impoundments. The remaining 2,455 acres of uplands include maritime forest and miles of pristine, sand beaches.

The refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a national network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.

<http://www.fws.gov>

1-800-344-WILD



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Accessibility

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. For more information, please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/public-civil-rights.

General Information

Permit Procedures

All hunters, 16 years of age or older, are required to purchase, and carry while hunting, the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex Annual Hunt Permit. This permit will allow hunters access to all "non-quota" hunts on any of the following National Wildlife Refuges: Blackbeard Island, Harris Neck, Pinckney Island, Savannah, and Wassaw NWRs. Annual Hunt Permits are \$25, non-transferable, and valid for the current hunt season only (August 2025 – May 2026). To purchase a permit, please visit <https://www.recreation.gov/activitypass/savannah-complex-hunt-permit>.

State Licenses

All state license and tag requirements apply on the refuge, and hunters are responsible for acquiring all required state hunting licenses and tags. A state WMA permit is not required to hunt the refuge.

Access

Boats are needed to access the refuge; however, during hunts, the only permitted entry point is the refuge dock located on Blackbeard Creek. Access from other parts of the island is prohibited. Hunters may temporarily dock to load/unload gear but must immediately move boats to anchor in Blackbeard Creek. **Hunters are responsible for their own transport to and from anchored boats; a shuttle boat will not be provided.**

The refuge will be closed to the non-hunting public on all hunt days.

Notice for Boaters Launching from Harris Neck NWR

Barbour River Landing is open 24 hours (with a not to exceed 72 hours limit). Hunters do not need a permit to leave vehicles overnight during hunts. Hunters may exceed the limit during scheduled refuge hunts. Vehicles should be removed by end of hunt.

Boater Caution

Coastal waters are subject to extreme tidal fluctuations of six to ten feet. Hunters should be familiar with tide tables and monitor coastal weather conditions before navigating to the barrier island refuge.

Camping

Camping is allowed only during managed hunts. All camping will be at the designated camping area only. Toilets and shower facilities are available at the campground. A cooler unit is operated to store harvested deer. Fires must be confined to the camping area and should not be any larger than 3 ft. in diameter. Burning of trash and large items is strictly prohibited.

To prevent the spread of tree-killing insects and disease, hunters are prohibited from bringing firewood to the refuge. Hunters may cut what they need from dead and downed wood in and around the campground area (cutting live or standing dead trees is prohibited.)

Tree Stands

Hunters may place one stand on the refuge during the month preceding each hunt and must remove stand at the end of each hunt. Hunters assume all responsibility for the loss or damage of personal property left on the refuge. **The use of flagging, blazing, painting, or trail marking devices, including toilet paper, for locating stands or for any other purpose is prohibited. Any such markers found by refuge staff will be removed.**

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).

General Hunting Regulations

Hunting is 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 will be in accordance with applicable state of Georgia regulations subject to the conditions stated below.

Public hunting at Blackbeard Island NWR is permitted on approximately 4,500 acres. Certain areas are closed to hunting (see refuge hunt map below). Two, 3-day archery-only hunts for deer and feral hogs are held annually (see table below for dates).

Hunters must check in at the refuge dock prior to setting up camp. All persons entering the refuge during the hunts must possess a valid refuge hunt permit and all required state hunting licenses; anyone without these documents will be turned away.

Hunters may check in no more than one day in advance of the opening day of each hunt period. Hunters must be off the refuge by noon the day following the last day of hunting.

Transportation is not provided to, from, or on the refuge. Any movement within the refuge must be by foot or bicycle/e-bike **(by foot only within the National Wilderness Area)**.

Entry and exit points are limited to the check station, located at the refuge dock. Hunters are not allowed to leave by boat to reach other parts of the island.

Deer harvested during the hunt must be checked by refuge personnel and reported by the hunter to their state harvest record before leaving the refuge.

Field dressing/quartering is allowed, but all remains must be left away from main trails, out of public view. Head and meat must be returned to check station.

Wanton waste of the edible portions of any harvested big game animal is strongly discouraged. "Edible portions" is defined as all neck and chest meat, front quarters as far as the knee, hindquarters as far as the hock, and all meat along the backbone between the front and hindquarters.

Youth hunters (age 15 and under) must be supervised by a licensed adult and must remain within sight and normal voice contact with the adult at all times. An adult may supervise only one youth hunter.

Bows may not be taken from the campground during authorized scouting periods, from check-in until the beginning of hunt hours. Archery target practice will be permitted in designated areas only.

For additional regulations, see "Prohibited Activities" section.

Georgia hunting regulations and license/tag requirements apply to all refuge hunts:

Hunt Type	Season Dates	Method of Take	Bag Limit	Hunt Area	Other Regulations
Deer (Archery)	October 23, 24 & 25, 2025 December 4, 5, & 6, 2025	State authorized archery equipment	5 deer (no more than 2 antlered)	See hunt map	Refuge hunt permit required for all hunters ages 16 and older State regulations apply

Feral hogs may be taken incidentally during deer hunt.

Prohibited Activities

- Possession or use of poison or poison pods
- Distribution of bait, and hunting over bait
- Participating in "man drives" for deer
- Trapping
- Harming, harassing, or killing any other wildlife than game species being hunted
- Hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been screwed or driven to support a hunter
- Pruning/limbing of live trees and vegetation
- Use of trail or game cameras
- Use of flagging, blazing, painting, or trail marking devices, including toilet paper, for locating stands or for any other purpose
- Use of any mechanized equipment, including bicycles and wheeled carts, within the National Wilderness Area
- Use of dogs for hunting
- Possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting
- Bringing firewood
- Fires larger than 3 ft. diameter and burning anything other than firewood, including trash, pallets, and other large items.

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL HUNT COORDINATOR AT 843-226-5738.

Revised July 2025

Blackbeard Island

National Wildlife Refuge



Legend



Refuge Headquarters/
Dock



Closed to hunting



Wilderness Area
(No bicycles or carts)



Marsh