



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wapanocca

National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Regulations 2025-2026

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge

178 Hammond Avenue, Turrell, AR

72384 870/343 2595

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

www.fws.gov/southeast

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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



General Introduction

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1961, is one of 571 national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary objective of the refuge is to provide habitat for migratory birds. The refuge is located in Crittenden County, Arkansas.

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 Wapanocca 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, are conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations.

Access and Vehicle Use

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge visitors may enter the refuge no earlier than 4 am and must leave by one hour after sunset except for those engaged in raccoon/opossum hunting at night and possessing the appropriate equipment and required hunting license. Hunters trailing or retrieving deer after hours should call the refuge office at 870/343 2595 and leave a message stating their name, phone number and the general area in which they are searching for or retrieving deer.

Access into the refuge is through an automatically time-controlled gate that opens at 4 am and closes at 8 pm. If you are locked in the refuge or need assistance, call 911 on a cell phone and you will be connected to the Sheriff's office.

The refuge is closed to ALL other entry and public use Nov. 1-2 and Nov. 15-16 during the Quota Youth Gun and Quota Gun Deer Hunts. Only the Quota Youth Gun Deer and Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit holders, respectively, are allowed to enter or use the refuge during these hunts 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.

Portions of the refuge are closed as waterfowl sanctuary (see map) and are closed to ALL entry and public use, including hunting and fishing, from Dec. 1 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 vehicles, bicycles and ebikes must stay on maintained graveled roads or established parking areas. All vehicles must meet all applicable federal and state requirements regulating the use of a licensed motor vehicle. Modified vehicles equipped with oversize tractor lug tires are prohibited.

Motor vehicle speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted.

ATVs are prohibited, except for use by mobility-impaired hunters possessing a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager.

Horses/mules are prohibited.

Airboats, personal watercraft (jet-ski, etc), and hover craft are prohibited.

2025-2026 General Hunting and Fishing Permit – Wapanocca NWR

This permit must be signed to be valid. It must be carried by the individual at all times while on the refuge and in possession of hunting and fishing 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 7/31/26.

NOTE: Quota Permit also required for Quota Gun Deer and Deer Youth Gun Hunts. 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)



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

You must use the public boat ramp off Highway 77 to launch motorized boats into Wapanocca Lake. Boats may not be left overnight on the refuge. ALL boats are prohibited on Wapanocca Lake and Woody Pond from Dec. 1 through Feb. 28.

The boat launch access canal to Wapanocca Lake is a "No Wake Zone."

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.
- Nighttime use of the refuge is limited to raccoon/possum hunting and the appropriate gear and required hunting license must be possessed.
- Anyone engaged in any commercial activity must first obtain a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager.

Prohibited Activities Include:

- Possession of open alcohol containers on refuge roads, parking areas, boat ramps, fishing piers, or observation decks.
- Camping.
- Building fires.
- Cutting or defacing trees, shrubs, or other plants.
- Littering (including, but not limited to, shotgun shell hulls and cigarette butts).
- Searching for or removal of artifacts.
- Possession or use of fireworks.
- Tournament fishing.
- Use of firearms, and possession or use of archery equipment and/or 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 in the firearm or an ignition device on the muzzleloader.
- Target practice or non-hunting discharge of firearms.
- Dog field trials and organized training events.
- 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, or raccoon/possum hunting.
- Failure to remove all marking materials from the refuge following the hunt.
- Use of Drones.

Sport Fishing Regulations

Sport fishing, for personal use only, is permitted on all refuge waters from Mar. 1-Nov. 30 in accordance with state seasons and state and refuge-specific regulations.

Crawfishing, for personal use only, is permitted on all refuge waters from Mar. 1-Nov. 30 in accordance with state seasons and state and refuge-specific regulations.

Frogging, for personal use only, is permitted on all refuge waters from Apr. 15- Nov. 30 in accordance with state seasons and state and refuge-specific regulations.

Anglers (including those frogging, crawfishing, and bow fishing) may enter the refuge no earlier than 4 am and must depart the refuge by 1 hour after legal sunset.

The owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number must be permanently affixed to each crawfish trap.

Boats must be operated at speeds less than 5 mph in the "No Wake Zone" located between the boat launch and open lake.

Only bank fishing is allowed on Woody Pond and other non-waterfowl sanctuary areas from Dec. 1 through Feb. 28.

The possession or use of commercial fishing tackle is prohibited.

General Hunt Regulations

- A refuge permit 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 is located on the front of this brochure or can be downloaded and printed from the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/wapanocca>. Additional permits are required for the Quota Gun Deer and Quota Youth Deer Hunts.
- Bag limits for all species, except deer, are the same as state limits unless specified otherwise.

- Hunter Orange or Chartreuse must be worn in accordance with Arkansas Game & Fish Commission regulations during the Quota Gun Deer Hunt and Quota Youth Gun Deer Hunt.
- 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.

Mobility-impaired hunters

Mobility-impaired hunters may apply for a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager allowing the use of an ATV on designated roads. For more information, please call the Refuge at 870/343 2595.

Prohibited Hunting Activities Include:

- Trapping.
- The use of dogs for deer 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 graveled roads.
- Possession or use of lead shot or buckshot while hunting.
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Use of natural scents or lures that contain natural deer and elk urine or other biofluids.

Hunter Education and Youth Hunter 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 upland game hunting, but may supervise only one youth during big game hunting.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Specific Hunt Regulations

A refuge permit is required for all hunts. When signed, the permit on the front cover of this brochure or the downloaded website version will serve as a permit for all hunts (additional permits are required for the Quota Gun Deer and Quota Youth Gun Deer Hunts) and must be signed and carried on your person while hunting. 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. Refuge regulations differ from surrounding deer zones and state seasons as follows:

NOTE: The Refuge is closed to ALL entry and public use Nov. 1-2 and Nov. 15-16 during the Quota Youth Gun Deer and Gun Deer Hunts. Only Quota Youth Gun Deer and Gun Deer Hunt permit holders, respectively, 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.

Round Pond and Pigmon Units (St. Francis County): CLOSED TO ALL MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING. ATVs are prohibited on the Round Pond access road.

Both Units are open to small game and deer hunting according to Wapanocca NWR hunting seasons, general hunting regulations, and other regulations governing public use activities. A Wapanocca NWR general permit is required for all hunting activities. A permit copy is located on the front of this brochure or may be downloaded from the refuge website at: www.fws.gov/wapanocca

Additionally, Wapanocca quota gun hunt permits are required for Quota Gun and Quota Youth Gun Deer Hunts.

Migratory Birds: Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge is CLOSED to all migratory bird hunting.

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. 28.* (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units): Dogs are permitted.

Rabbit: State season.* (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units): Dogs are permitted.

Raccoon: Sep. 1 - Mar. 31.* (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units.) Dogs are required for hunting of raccoons at night.

Opossum: Sep. 1 - Feb. 28.* (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units.) Dogs are required for hunting of opossums at night.

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 Deer and Quota Youth Gun Deer Hunts and by archery deer hunters. Feral hogs are destructive, non-native animals that are incompatible with refuge management. Live hogs may not be possessed, transported, or released on the Refuge.

Big Game: Deer harvested on the Refuge (including Round Pond and Pigmon Units) must be checked according to state regulations and "Wapanocca NWR" used instead of a zone number for tagging and checking your game.

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 seven days prior to the Refuge deer season and must be removed from the waterfowl sanctuary prior to December 1 and from the rest of the refuge within seven days of the closing of the archery deer hunt.

Deer Limits and Refuge Legal Buck

Definition: The limit for the gun quota hunt is one either-sex deer. For the archery season the refuge bag limit is three deer. The total number of bucks that can be harvested through a combination of all refuge hunts is two.

A legal buck on the refuge is defined as any male deer (no antler restriction). Deer harvested on the refuge are NOT bonus deer.

Deer (Archery/Crossbow): (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units.) State season.* Either sex. Three deer limit.

Deer (Youth Quota Gun) (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units.) Nov. 1-2. Quota permit is required. Only youth 6 to 15 years old may hunt during this special youth deer hunt. Only shotguns with slugs, muzzleloaders shooting a single projectile, non-semiautomatic centerfire firearm which fires a straight-walled rifle cartridge .30 caliber or larger, and legal handguns and air rifles as defined by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission may be used. Either sex. One deer limit.

Deer (Quota Gun) (Note: Includes Round Pond and Pigmon Units.) Nov. 15-16 Quota permit is required. Only shotguns with slugs, muzzleloaders shooting a single projectile, non-semiautomatic centerfire firearm which fires a straight-walled rifle cartridge .30 caliber or larger and legal handguns and air rifles as defined by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission may be used. Either sex. One deer limit.

To Apply for a Quota Hunt Permit

All quota hunt permits for Wapanocca NWR can be obtained at <https://wapanocca.recaccess.com/>

Quota Gun Deer Hunt permits are \$12.50 and Quota Youth Gun Deer Hunt permits are free.

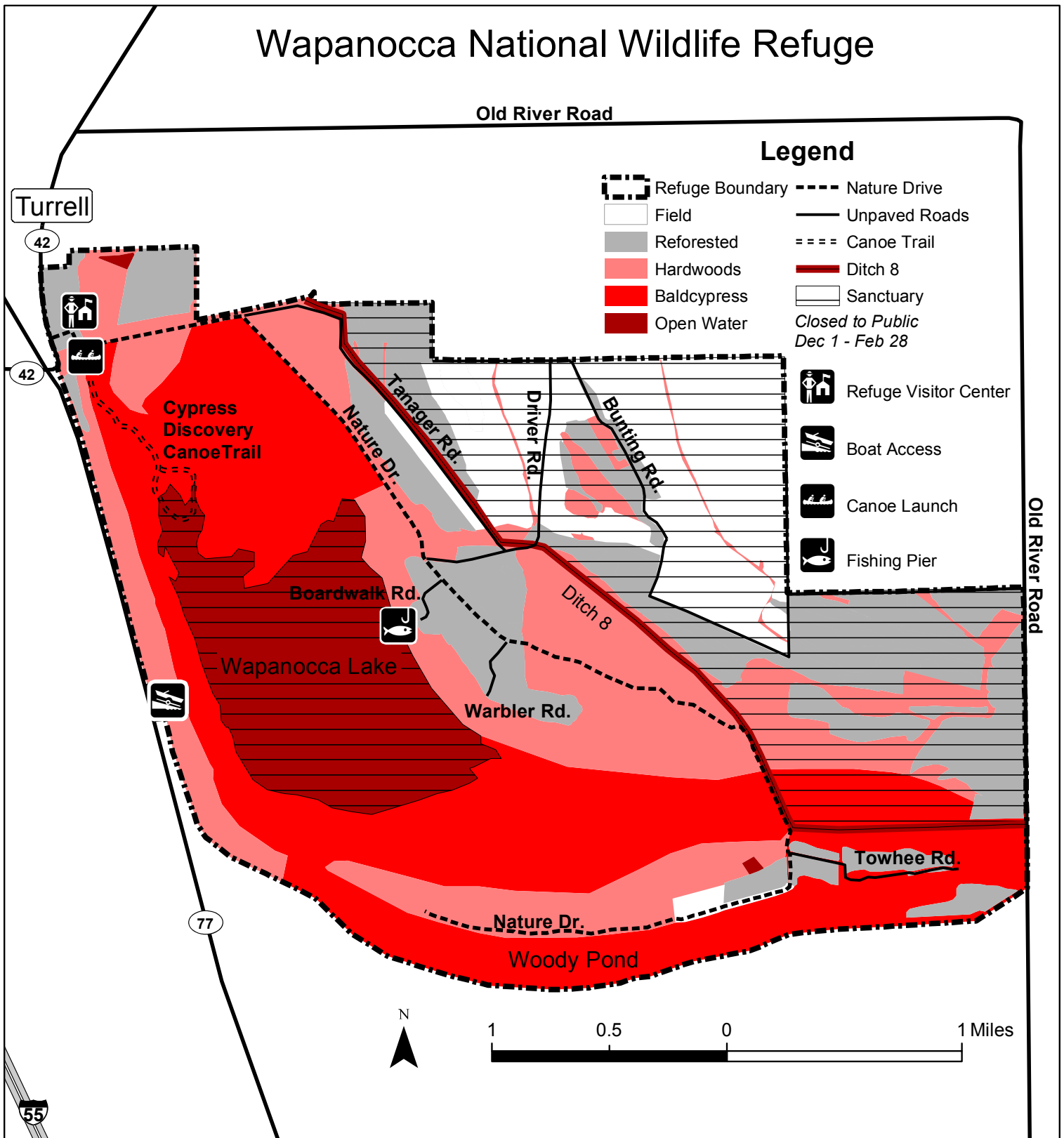
Quota permits are issued beginning Aug. 1 on a first come, first served basis until the quota is reached, or until Oct. 31.

Permit requests will NOT be accepted in person.

NOTE: Permits are non-transferable and nonrefundable, even in the event of refuge deer hunt closures due to flooding.

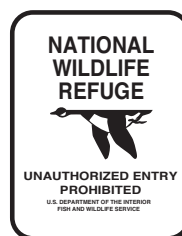
* **NOTE:** The refuge (including Round Pond and Pigmon Units) is CLOSED to all other entry and public use during Youth Quota Gun Deer Hunt and Quota Gun Deer Hunts Nov. 1-2 and 15-16 Only Youth Quota Gun Deer or Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit holders, respectively, are allowed to enter or use the Refuge during these hunts 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.

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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 and obey all refuge signs:

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



Area closed to all public entry and 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.



Take pride in your refuge. Don't litter.