



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Okefenokee

National Wildlife Refuge

Hunting Regulations 2025–2026

Welcome

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 and is one of the best-protected wilderness areas in the southeastern United States. Hunters can experience this special place, with three hunting units in the upland portion of the refuge. Hunting is permitted on approximately 3,822 acres during specific times of the year.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2700 Suwannee Canal Road, Folkston, Georgia 31537
912/496-7836

www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee/

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
excluding federal holidays.

August 2025

This brochure contains special regulations that supplement Federal and State laws with Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. These refuge specific regulations are in place to protect our natural resources while providing a rewarding outdoor experience. These refuge specific regulations may be more restrictive than and supersede State law. Careful adherence to these regulations and due respect for others will ensure the future of hunting on Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

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



Season 2025 - 2026

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Hunt Permit

Name _____

Address _____

I have read and understand Okefenokee NWR Hunt Regulations.

Signature (This permit valid only when signed.) _____

Permits

You must possess and carry a signed Refuge Hunt Permit (signed brochure) while hunting. You must have on your person at all times all applicable licenses, permits, and/or tags.

Entrance Fee

You must have a valid refuge entrance pass to hunt at the Pocket Unit. A current signed Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) covers entrance fees to all national wildlife refuges. Passes may be obtained at the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area near Folkston, Georgia or at Stephen C. Foster State Park near Fargo, Georgia.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of Federal and State 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).

Hunting Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through the wise use of renewable wildlife resources. 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 Federal and State of Georgia regulations subject to the conditions stated on the next pages.

Prohibited Activities

- Littering
- Camping without a permit
- Fires
- Overnight parking
- Trapping
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles
- The possession or use of alcohol while hunting
- Taking of wildlife (or parts thereof) except where authorized (hunting and fishing)
- Baiting or hunting over bait on all federally owned or hunting lease property
- Other activities prohibited by refuge regulations, local, state, or federal law

Specific Hunting Regulations

Hunters are responsible for knowing and following all State and Federal hunting regulations. Additionally, these refuge-specific regulations apply for all scheduled hunts:

- Hunters must sign-in, sign-out, and record harvest each day.
- Licenses, permits, all hunting equipment, effects, and vehicles or other conveyances are subject to inspection by Federal or State Officers.
- You must remove all deer stands and personal property daily. Use of nails or other metal devices to secure deer stands to trees is prohibited. Do not use metal spikes to climb trees.
- Youth hunters are those 15 and under and supervised by an adult 21 or older. Youth hunters must have successfully passed a state-approved hunter education course.



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Safety

Be prepared. Watch for changing weather conditions.

Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle.

Tell a relative or friend where you are going and when you should return. Carry water, snacks, foul weather clothing, insect repellent, and emergency light. Bring a GPS navigation system and know how to use it. Cell phone coverage can be sporadic and is sometimes unreliable.

Hunt Closure

Refuge hunts may have to be terminated early, or some of the hunt area closed, should unusual climatic conditions result in threats to visitor safety, management activities, possible degradation of habitat by visitor use, or a concentration of endangered species within the hunt area. The refuge's first obligation is to protect the visitor, habitat, and listed species.

- Enter, park, and exit the refuge only at designated points. Motor vehicles are allowed only on the paved roads shown on the attached maps. Park vehicles on the shoulder of the road. Do not block access roads.
- Use of ATVs, UTVs, and golf carts on the refuge is prohibited. Walk or bicycle into the hunt area from the paved road.
- Hunters may field dress legally harvested deer and feral hogs within refuge boundaries. Field dressing must be conducted in a manner that minimizes public visibility and avoids high-use areas such as roads, trails, parking lots, and visitor facilities.
- You may take feral hog during all refuge hunts with weapons authorized and legal for those hunts.
- The disposal of animal carcasses or remains originating from outside the refuge is strictly prohibited. Individuals must not bring game carcasses, parts, or remains taken from off-refuge locations onto refuge property for any purpose, including disposal.
- Hunting with dogs is prohibited except at the Cowhouse Unit where they only may be used for quail hunting.
- Non-motorized scouting is allowed during daylight hours beginning seven days prior to the hunt.
- Hunting of any wildlife species not specifically authorized is prohibited on federal refuge lands, including but not limited to American alligator, black bear, coyote, bobcat, dove, fox, opossum, raccoon, waterfowl, and all other unlisted species.
- We prohibit possession or use of any suppressors or silencer on any firearms.
- We prohibit possession or use of any air-compressed weapons on all federally owned properties.
- Use of flagging, reflective tape, reflective beads or paint to mark scouted areas is strictly prohibited.

Cowhouse Unit – White-tailed Deer & Wild Turkey

- Seasons: See table in brochure
- Shooting Hours: Aligns to Dixon Memorial Wildlife Management Area
- Bag limit: Aligns to Dixon Memorial Wildlife Management Area
- Hunt Area: See map for boundaries of the Cowhouse Unit. Areas outside the Cowhouse Unit and within Dixon Memorial State Forest are not included in the hunt area.

Cowhouse Unit – Small Game (Squirrel, Quail, and Rabbit)

- Seasons: See table in brochure
- Shooting Hours: Aligns to Dixon Memorial Wildlife Management Area
- Bag limit: Aligns to Dixon Memorial Wildlife Management Area
- Hunt Area: See map for boundaries of the Cowhouse Unit. Areas outside the Cowhouse Unit and within Dixon Memorial State Forest are not included in the hunt area.
- We allow the use of dogs only to locate, point, and retrieve during bobwhite quail hunts.

Pocket Unit – White-tailed Deer (Archery only)

- Season: See table in brochure
- Shooting Hours: State regulations
- Bag limit: State regulations
- Hunt Area: The hunt boundary to the North and South is the swamp/upland boundary. The Suwannee River Sill is not included in the hunt area.



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Signs Protect Visitors and Resources

Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year. The impact of human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wild lands. Signs control recreational activities while protecting natural resources on the refuge.

Please respect the following signs:

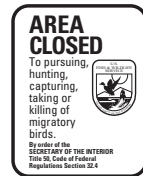
Refuge Boundary Sign -
National Wildlife Refuge -
unauthorized entry prohibited.



Area Beyond This Sign Closed
- No entry of any kind allowed
beyond this sign.



Area Closed to Hunting - No
hunting allowed in the area
beyond this sign.



Public Hunting Area- Active
hunting area, closed to the
general public.



- The refuge gates will open at 5:00 am. All hunters must leave the refuge by 8:30 pm. No exceptions.
- We only allow archery hunting and foot traffic in the Pocket Unit.
- All deer must be recorded on your Georgia harvest record and count towards your statewide limit.
- Hunters must sign in and out each hunt day and record harvest each day.
- If you are camping at Stephen C. Foster State Park, inform them you are hunting, and they will make arrangements for access through their gate. You may not clean or hang deer at Stephen C. Foster State Park.

Suwannee Canal Recreation Area – White-Tailed Deer

- Season: See table in brochure
- Shooting Hours: 30 minutes before sunrise until 12:00 pm
- Bag limit: two deer of either sex per day
- Hunt Area: See map for hunt areas at Suwannee Canal Recreation Area
- This is a lottery quota deer hunt. A total of 40 hunting spaces are available as follows:
 1. 30 permits for hunters with a valid Georgia hunting license
 2. 10 permits for mobility-impaired hunters and youth hunters, age 15 and under supervised by an adult 21 or older
- Applicants must submit a completed Big Game Hunt Application (FWS Form 3-2439). Application is available on the refuge website: www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee
- Applications will be accepted from August 15 to September 15 and should be submitted as follows:
 1. In person: Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center (check website for hours of operation)
 2. Mail: Attn: Okefenokee NWR Hunt Program, 2700 Suwannee Canal Road, Folkston, Georgia 31537
- A lottery drawing will be held for each day of the hunt. If applying for both days, you must indicate that on your application form. Only one application per person is allowed.
- Chesser Island Hunt area is zoned for mobility-impaired and youth hunters. Each mobility-impaired or youth hunter may be accompanied by one assistant. The assistant is authorized to hunt under the same permit. Only mobility-impaired hunters may use all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and vehicles on firebreaks and unpaved roads.
- We allow only shotguns or muzzleloaders.
- Hunters must sign in and out each day and record harvest each day.
- Hunting areas are open on hunt dates from 30 minutes before sunrise until noon. Remain on your stand from 30 minutes before sunrise until 9:00 am.
- Harvest limit is two deer of either sex per day. You must tag your deer with special refuge tags. Refuge-tagged deer do not count toward your state bag limit.
- Each hunter must purchase a Suwannee Canal Recreation Area Hunt Permit for each hunt day. Hunt Permits are \$15 per hunter. The Hunt Permit also serves as your entrance fee for that hunt day. The refuge's annual pass is not valid as a hunt permit.
- Hunters may line up for check-in no earlier than 4:00 a.m. Check-in begins at 5:00 a.m. daily at the Okefenokee Shop Area. Follow signs from the entrance road.



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Hunt Areas, Species, Seasons, Dates, and Notes.

Hunt Area	Species	Season/Notes	2025-2026 Dates
Cowhouse Unit	White-tailed Deer	Archery, Either Sex Sign-in/sign-out required	Sept. 13-Sept. 24, 2025 Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 2025 Oct. 5-Oct. 10, 2025 Dec. 14, 2025-Jan. 11, 2026
Cowhouse Unit	White-tailed Deer	Firearms, Either Sex Sign-in/sign-out required	Oct. 2-4, 2025 Nov. 22-Nov. 30, 2025
Cowhouse Unit	White-tailed Deer	Firearms, Either Sex Sign-in/sign-out required	(B) Sept. 25-Sept. 27, 2025 (B) Nov. 6-Nov. 8, 2025
Cowhouse Unit	White-tailed Deer	Firearms, Buck Only Sign-in/sign-out required	Oct. 11-Nov. 2, 2025
Cowhouse Unit	Turkey	Gobbler Only Sign-in/sign-out required	Apr. 4-May 15, 2026
Cowhouse Unit	Squirrel	Sign-in/sign-out required	Aug. 15, 2025-Feb. 28, 2026
Cowhouse Unit	Bobwhite Quail	Sign-in/sign-out required	Nov. 8, 2025-Feb. 28, 2026
Cowhouse Unit	Rabbit	Sign-in/sign-out required	Nov. 11, 2025-Feb. 28, 2026
Pocket Unit	White-tailed Deer	Archery, Either Sex Sign-in/sign-out required	Sept. 13-Nov 8, 2025
Suwannee Canal Recreation Area	White-tailed deer Feral Hog**	Firearms (Q30) Either Sex; by lottery shotgun/muzzleloader only	(B) Oct. 24-25, 2025
Suwannee Canal Recreation Area - Chesser Island	White-tailed deer Feral Hog**	Mobility Impaired and Youth, (Q10) by lottery Either Sex; shotgun/muzzleloader only	(B) Oct. 24-25, 2025

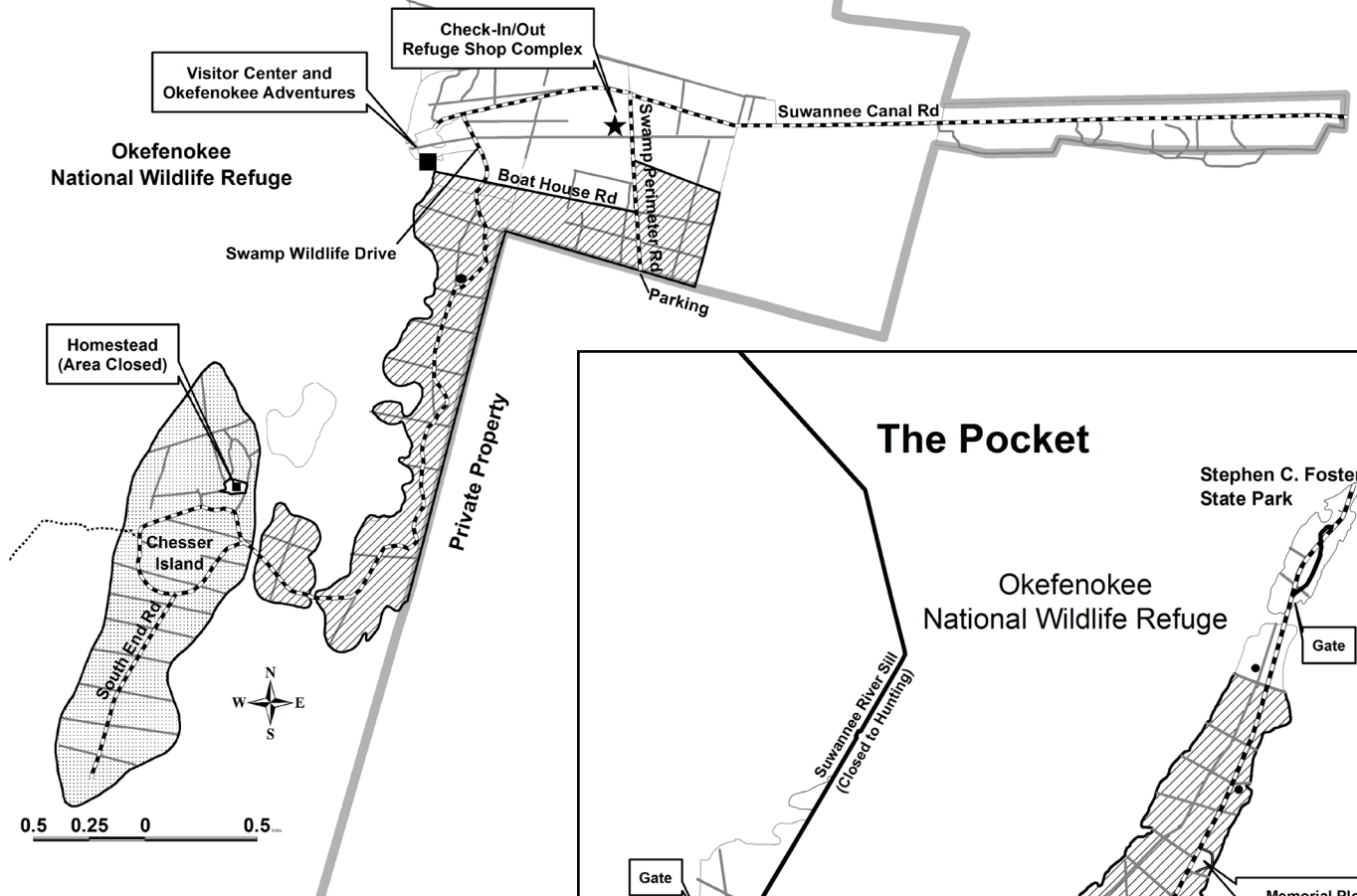
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(Q) = Quota number, (B) Bonus Hunt

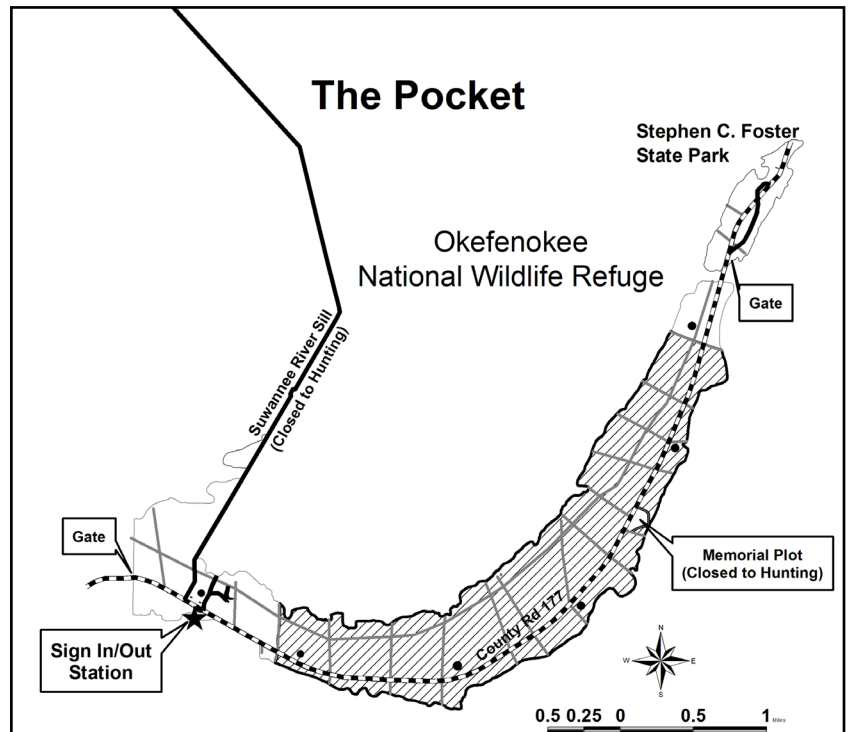


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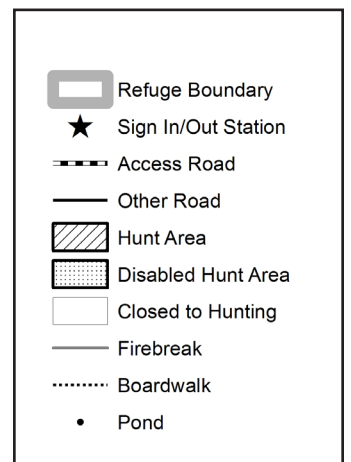
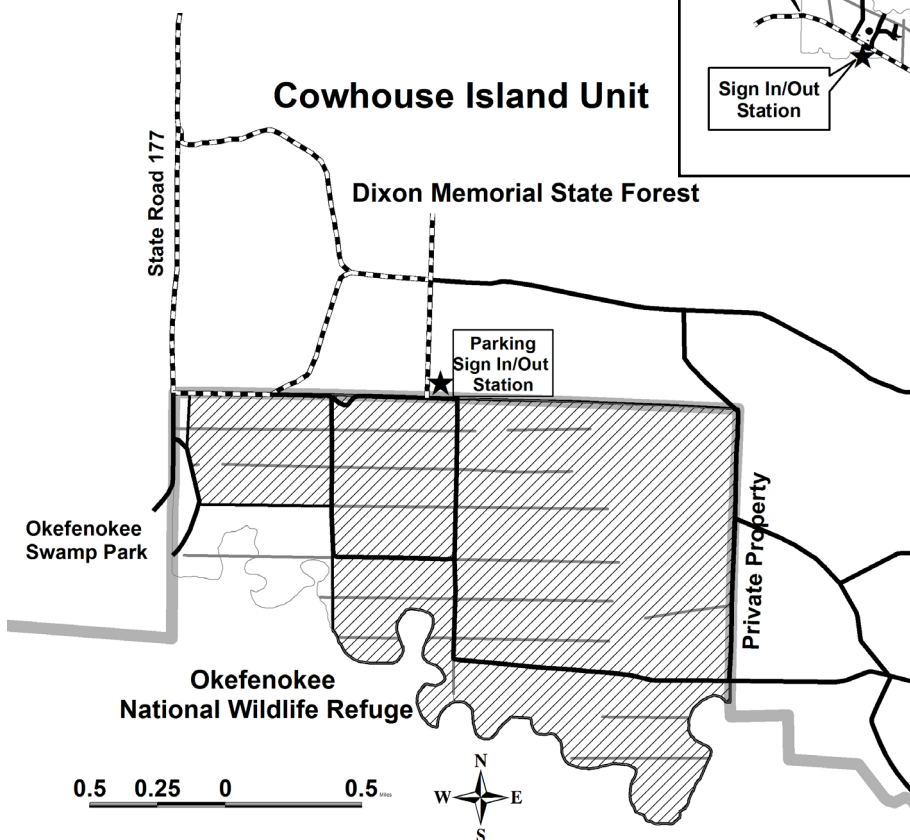
Suwannee Canal Unit



The Pocket



Cowhouse Island Unit





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