

Catahoula

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2026-2027



Welcome

Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge was established on October 28, 1958 and now encompasses a total of 25,242 acres. The 6,671 acre Headquarters Unit borders 9 miles of Catahoula Lake (Basin). The 18,571 acre Bushley Bayou Unit located 8 miles west of Jonesville, was established May 16, 2001. The Refuge is part of the Central Louisiana Refuges Complex administered out of the Grand Cote NWR headquarters office located at 401 Island Road, Marksville, LA 71351.

Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 120 Rhinehart, LA 71363
210 Catahoula NWR Road, Jonesville, LA 71343
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/catahoula>

General Information

Safety

Hunter Orange or Blaze Pink is required during the refuge primitive and modern firearms deer hunts. Four hundred (400) square inches of Hunter Orange or Blaze Pink must be displayed on the outermost layer of clothing on the chest, back, and a cap of unbroken orange or pink must be displayed at all times during these hunts, whether on the ground or on a stand. Hunters hunting from ground blinds must display 400 square inches of orange or pink above or around the blind that is visible for 360 degrees. Hunters participating in dog season for rabbits are required to wear Hunters Orange hat. All persons afield during hunting season are encouraged to display Hunters Orange.

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).

Only shotgun shells with approved non-toxic shot, .177 and .22 caliber rimfire ammunition may be used or possessed while hunting small game. The possession of slugs and or rifle ammunition larger than .22 caliber rimfire is permitted only during refuge deer firearms hunts. The possession of buckshot is prohibited.

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles are permitted only on public use roads as shown on the map. Vehicle speed limits shall not exceed 25 mph unless otherwise legally posted. ATVs are restricted to designated trails only. No UTVs allowed.

ATVs will not exceed the following:

- Weight - 750 lbs.
- Length - 85"
- Width - 48"

Tires on ATVs are restricted to those no larger than 28x12 with maximum lug height of 1" and maximum allowable pressure of 7 p.s.i. as indicated by the manufacturer. ATVs shall not exceed 25 mph when operated on the refuge.

Boats

Non-motorized and boats with motors of 10hp or less are allowed on Headquarters Unit waters March 1-October 31. Cowpen Bayou is open year round. Lakes located on the Bushley Unit are restricted to non-motorized and 10hp or less. Small boats may be hand carried and launched from non-boat ramp sites.

Attention: Permits

An annual Special Recreation Activity Permit is required for all hunters, fisherman 16-years- old and older, and ATV use on the refuge.

Our Special Recreational Activity Permit may also be purchased on-line at <https://CentralLA.RecAccess.com>. All permits purchased on-line must be printed and in the hunter's possession. Permits may also be purchased at T-Town located at 5925 Highway 84, Jonesville, LA. 71343.

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting and fishing regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. 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."

Youth hunters under age 16 must remain within sight and normal voice contact of an adult 18 or older. Each adult may supervise no more than two youths on waterfowl and small game hunts and no more than one on deer hunts.

Only pole/line or rod and reel fishing for finfish is permitted on the **Headquarters Unit**. Cowpen Bayou and the Highway 28 barrow pits are open year round. Duck Lake and its' tail waters, Muddy Bayou, Willow Lake and all other water are open March 1- October 31.

On the **Bushley Unit** recreation fishing and crawfishing is allowed year round. Pyramid nets only for crawfishing 100 lb limit nets must be attended and not left overnight. Trot lines must be attended at least once every 24 hours. 100 hook limit per line and 4 lines per boat. A maximum of 25 jugs and 25 yo-yo's per boat are allowed during daylight hours only and must be attended. Cotton line only.

We prohibit bank fishing on Bushley Creek and all fishing on other refuge waters during deer gun and primitive firearms hunts. We prohibit fishing in Black Lake, Dempsey Lake, Long Lake, Rhinehart Lake, and Round Lake during waterfowl hunts.

No more than two dogs per hunting party for squirrel hunting. All dogs must be collared with owner's name and phone number. Rabbit hunters must wear a minimum of a solid orange cap during special dog season.

Access

Hunters, fishermen, and other Refuge users may only access the Refuge from 4 am until two hours after legal sunset. Waterfowl hunting must cease by 12 noon and all decoys and blinds removed from the hunting area by 1 pm. Waterfowl and small game hunting prohibited during deer primitive firearms and gun hunts.

The use of E-bikes and bicycles are allowed and restricted to ATV trails only. No UTV's allowed on Refuge.

Tree Stands

Only portable deer stands may be used. Stands may be placed on the refuge one day before archery season and must be removed within one day after season closes. Hunters may place only ONE stand on the Refuge. Stands must have hunters name address and phone number clearly printed on them. Stands must be removed from the tree when not in use.

Harvest Reporting

Hunters must check in and check out after each hunt using the self-clearing permit available from the check station.

CWD ALERT!

Attention deer hunters, Catahoula NWR is located within a CWD Control Area. Control area regulations prohibit the transport of deer carcasses out of the control area with the exception of approved parts. More information is available on the LDWF CWD page: <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/cwd>

State hunting and fishing regulations, seasons, shooting hours, methods of take, bag limits(with exception for deer), and license requirements apply to all hunting on the Refuge. Deer hunting is closed on the Headquarters Unit when the "Center of the Lake Gauge for Catahoula Lake" reads 42 feet or more The Bushley Bayou unit closes when the Gauge reads 44 feet or more.

Refer to:
www.rivergates.com –Vicksburg District-Ouachita River basin.

Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge
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Rhinehart, La. 71363
210 Catahoula NWR Road
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<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/catahoula>
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June 2026



Prohibited Activities

- Possession of alcoholic beverages
- Fires
- Searching for or removal including cutting of trees/limbs or brush of any natural items such as antlers, plants, historic, and archaeological features.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail camera monitoring devices.
- Possession of saws, saw blades, or machetes.
- Marking or flagging any tree or other Refuge feature with paint, or other substance except bright eyes.
- Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.
- Harvest or otherwise taking of frogs, turtles, snakes, shells, or mollusks.
- Possession of cleaned or processed fish on the refuge.
- Use of deer decoys.
- Target practice.
- Trapping.
- Man drives for deer and feral hogs.
- Accessing the Refuge from private property or accessing adjoining non-refuge property from the refuge.
- Hunting or discharge of firearms from or within 150 feet of the edge of a maintained trail, road or right-of-way. Maintained means mowed, trimmed, sprayed, disked, or any other manipulation.
- Camping or overnight parking.
- Spotlighting - artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife.

- Blocking gates or roads with vehicle or ATV.
- Use of ATV on graveled roads designated for motor vehicles unless otherwise posted.

Signs and Boundaries

Signs are useful tools in regulating the use of a public area. The wordings of the signs apply to the areas behind the sign. All signs in the field supercede wording in current brochure. Please respect the following signs:



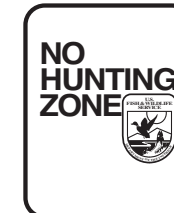
Refuge Boundary

Entry permitted in accordance with refuge regulations.



Closed Area

All entry prohibited.



No Hunting Zone

Hunting, weapons, or game retrieval prohibited.



No Vehicles

All vehicle traffic prohibited including all ATV's, motorcycles, cars, trucks, and jeeps.



ATV Vehicles

Only ATV's are allowed on these trails.

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



Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters Unit

Legend

- Headquarters
- Check In/Out Kiosk
- Boat Ramp
- Parking Area
- Fishing Pier
- Observation Tower
- Headquarters Unit
- Bushley Bayou Unit
- Refuge Vehicle Roads
- Wildlife Drive
- Year-Round ATV Trail
- Prosperity Road
- No Hunting Area
- Private Property

The map shows the Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters Unit, including the Headquarters, Check In/Out Kiosk, Boat Ramp, Parking Area, Fishing Pier, Observation Tower, Headquarters Unit, Bushley Bayou Unit, Refuge Vehicle Roads, Wildlife Drive, Year-Round ATV Trail, Prosperity Road, No Hunting Area, and Private Property. The map also shows the Catahoula River, Catahoula Parish, and LaSalle Parish. A scale bar indicates distances up to 3 miles.

Legend

	Headquarters
	Check In/Out Kiosk
	Boat Ramp
	Parking Area
	Fishing Pier
	Observation Tower
	Headquarters Unit
	Bushley Bayou Unit
	Refuge Vehicle Roads
	Wildlife Drive
	Year-Round ATV Trail
	Prosperity Road
	No Hunting Area
	Private Property

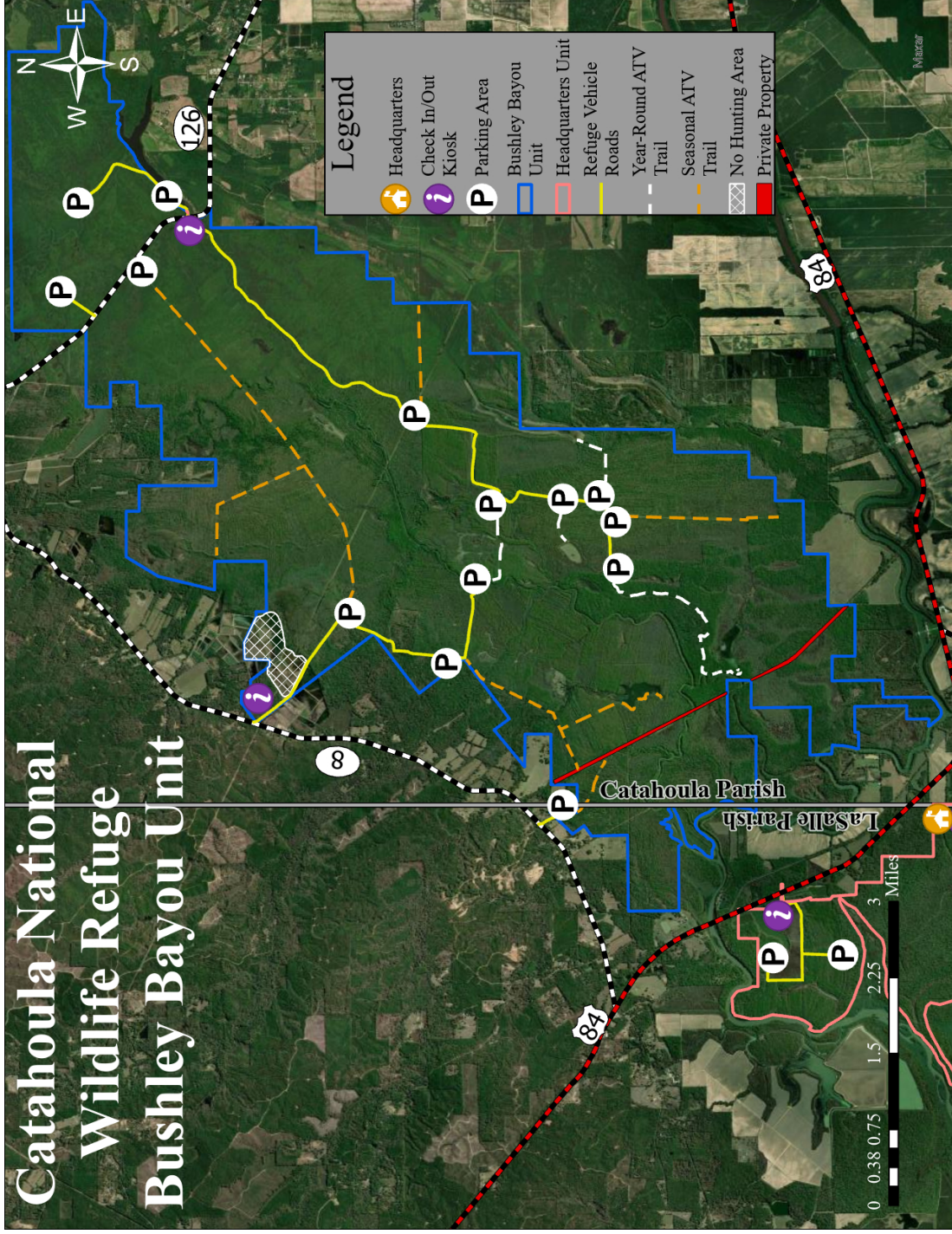
Headquarters Unit - Located south of U.S. Highway 84

Hunt Type	Season Dates	Harvest	Other Regulations
Squirrel and rabbit	October 3-31, 2026 (without dogs) February 1-28, 2027 (with/without dogs)	State regulations	Refuge permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental. The use of shotgun, .177, and .22 caliber rimfire ammunition may be used during the dog season starting Dec. 21. Non-toxic shot required
Deer -Archery	State Season	State regulations	Refuge Permit Required. Closed during primitive and modern firearms hunts. Squirrels, rabbits, beaver, nutria, coyote, raccoons, and feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
Deer- Gun Note: Area South of Prosperity Road and Muddy Bayou	December 12-13, 2026	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental. NOTE: Archery hunting allowed during gun hunt within area North of Prosperity Road
Waterfowl	Closed	Closed	Closed

Warning:

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has issued a fish consumption advisory for bodies of water within the parishes of Catahoula and LaSalle that include all waters on the Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge.

Women of childbearing age and children less than seven years of age should not consume largemouth bass, white bass, freshwater drum, flathead catfish, or bowfin and should consume no more than two meals per month of white crappie from the advisory area. Other adults and children seven years of age and older should consume no more than two meals per month of largemouth bass, white bass, freshwater drum, flathead catfish, or bowfin and should consume no more than four meals per month of white crappie from the advisory area.



Bushley Bayou Unit - Located north of U.S. Highway 84

Hunt Type	Season Dates	Harvest	Other Regulations
Squirrel and rabbit	October 3-December 21, 2026 (without dogs)	State regulations	Refuge permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
	December 21, 2026- February 28, 2027 (with/without dogs)		The use of shotgun, .177, and .22 caliber rimfire ammunition may be used during the dog season starting Dec. 21. Non- toxic shot required
Deer -Archery	State Season	State regulations	Refuge Permit Required. Closed during primitive and modern firearms hunts. Squirrels, rabbits, beaver, nutria, coyote, raccoons, and feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
Deer- Gun	December 12-13, 2026	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
Deer- Gun	November 27 - 29, 2026	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
Deer-Primitive Firearms	November 9-13, 2026	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
	December 19-20, 2026		
Waterfowl – YOUTH (with/ without dogs)	Special State Youth waterfowl hunting season East Zone until 12 noon	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
Waterfowl – (with/without dogs	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday until 12 noon of State Season	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Closed during deer gun and primitive firearms hunts. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.
Woodcock	State season on or after December 21, 2026	State regulations	Refuge Permit required. Closed during deer gun and primitive firearms hunts. Beaver, Nutria, Coyote, Raccoon and Feral hogs may be taken as incidental.