



Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Regulations

Welcome

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this 4,053-acre refuge includes Pinckney Island, Corn Island, Big and Little Harry Islands, Buzzard Island, and numerous small hammocks. Pinckney is the largest of the islands and the only one open to public use. These lands were donated to the federal government in 1975 by private landowners for the sole purpose of preserving their wildlife resources. Nearly 67% of the refuge consists of salt marsh and tidal creeks. However, a wide variety of land types, including forests, grasslands, and freshwater ponds, is found on Pinckney Island. In combination, these habitats support a diversity of wildlife species.

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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843-226-5738 (Mobile)
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Website: www.fws.gov/refuge/pinckney-island
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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/eo/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 2026 – May 2027). To purchase a permit, please visit <https://www.recreation.gov/activitypass/savannah-complex-hunt-permit>.

State Licenses

Hunters are responsible for obtaining the required state license(s) and tags. A state WMA permit is not required to hunt the refuge.

Access

Hunters access the refuge by vehicle through the main entrance gate **between 5:30 and 6:30 am**. Check-in/out is required. All hunters must be off the refuge no later than 2 hours after sunset. Boat access is prohibited during hunts. The refuge is closed to the non-hunting public on all hunt days.

Hunters will be allowed to exit the refuge at any point throughout the day. **Afternoon entry/re-entry will be allowed between 3:00 and 4:00 pm through the main entrance gate.** Gates will close at 4:00 pm and remain closed for the duration of the hunt day. All hunters must be checked out and off the refuge no later than 2 hours after sunset.

Tree Stands

Hunters may place one stand on the refuge during the week 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 regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through 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 state of South Carolina regulations subject to the conditions stated below.

Public hunting on Pinckney Island NWR is permitted on approximately 1,050 acres. Certain areas are closed to hunting (see refuge hunt map below). One, 1-day gun hunt for deer is held annually (see table below for date).

Deer harvested during the hunt must be recorded by refuge staff and tagged by the hunter with state tags 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.

Hunters must abide by State WMA visible clothing regulations (hunter orange).

Vehicles will be permitted only on the gravel road from the refuge entrance to Clubhouse Pond. Movement within all other areas of the refuge must be by foot or bicycle.

For additional regulations, see "Prohibited Activities" section.

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South Carolina hunting regulations (private lands) and license/tag requirements apply to all refuge hunts.

Hunt Type	Season Dates	Method of Take	Bag Limit	Hunt Unit	Other Regulations
Deer	October 16, 2026	State authorized shotgun (buckshot prohibited), muzzleloader, bow	State bag limit (2 deer; antlered or antlerless)	See hunt map	Refuge hunt permit required for all hunters ages 16 and older State regulations apply

Prohibited Activities

- Possession or use of buckshot
- 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 closer than 100 yards of U.S. Highway 278, the check station area, nor closer than 200 yards of the residence area.
- Hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been screwed or driven to support a hunter
- Camping and fires
- Pruning/limbing of live trees
- 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 dogs for hunting
- Target practice
- Possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting

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

Revised July 2026

Pinckney Island

National Wildlife Refuge

