



# Wassaw National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Regulations

## Welcome

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this 10,050-acre migratory bird refuge consists of a single barrier island (Wassaw Island), two smaller islands (Pine Island and Flora Hammock; collectively known as Little Wassaw Island), tidal salt marsh, and several small hammocks. 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. Today, due to little development and few land management practices, Wassaw Island is said to be the best representation of what Georgia's barrier islands looked like before Europeans arrived.

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](http://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 2026 – May 2027). 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 Wassaw 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 Wassaw 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.

### **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 Wassaw NWR is permitted on approximately 2,000 acres. Certain areas are closed to hunting (see refuge hunt map below). One 3-day gun hunt for deer is 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 opening day of the hunt. 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. Entry and exit points are limited to the check-in station, located at refuge dock. Hunters are not allowed to leave by boat to reach other parts of the island.

Deer harvested during the hunt must be recorded by refuge personnel and reported to the hunter's 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.

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

Hunt weapons may not be taken from the campground during authorized scouting periods, from check-in until the beginning of hunt hours.

For additional regulations, see “Prohibited Activities” section.

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

| Hunt Type         | Season Dates                | Method of Take                                                                    | Bag Limit                           | Hunt Units                     | Other Regulations                                                                                  |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deer<br>(Firearm) | November 5, 6, &<br>7, 2026 | State authorized<br>firearm (buckshot<br>prohibited),<br>muzzleloader,<br>and bow | 5 deer (no more<br>than 2 antlered) | See hunt map<br>(on last page) | Refuge hunt permit<br>required for all hunters<br>ages 16 and older<br><br>State regulations apply |

*Feral hogs may be taken incidentally during deer hunt.*

## 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 from a tree in which a metal object has been screwed or driven to support a hunter
- 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
- Bringing firewood
- Fires larger than 3 ft. diameter and burning trash or large items

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

*Revised July 2026*

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