



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Pocosin Lakes

National Wildlife Refuge

Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2026-2027



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

Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

P.O. Box 329

205 South Ludington Drive

Columbia, NC 27925

252/796 3004 ext. 234

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/pocosin-lakes>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

August 2026

Refuge Hunting and Fishing Permit

September 1, 2026 - August 31, 2027

To validate this permit, you must agree
to the statement and sign below.
I have read and understand these
Refuge regulations.

Signature

Welcome to Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) authorizes access to national wildlife refuges for hunting and fishing through regulations promulgated in Title 50 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. Throughout this brochure/permit, "we" refers to the Service, according to those regulations, and "you" refers to you the hunter as the permittee under this permit. This brochure/permit is specific to Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (NWR/Refuge). Not all the Federal and State regulations governing hunting and fishing are included here and you are required to abide with all regulations as they apply to Pocosin Lakes NWR.

Hunting Regulations

Permit Requirements

We require all hunters and anglers to possess and carry a signed, self-service refuge hunting/fishing permit (signed brochure) while hunting and fishing on the refuge. We require all hunters age 16 and older to purchase and carry a special refuge activity pass for hunting. Passes are purchased from Recreation.gov. We recommend printing both documents or saving them to your mobile device for offline access.

Refuge Game Animals

We allow the following to be hunted/taken in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations:

- Migratory Birds: duck, goose, swan, mourning dove, woodcock, rail, and snipe
- Upland Game: quail, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, beaver, and nutria
- Big Game: white-tailed deer
- Feral Hogs

The take or possession of any game species not specifically listed above is prohibited on the refuge, except when transporting same along NC State road or US highway. Game legally taken on private inholdings on Allen Road must be transported directly up Allen Road to Shore Drive.

The hunting of ALL canids (e.g., red wolves, coyotes, foxes) is strictly prohibited on all national wildlife refuges in eastern North Carolina. Red Wolves are collared with orange collars to help the public identify this Federally protected species, which cannot be hunted on or off refuges. Canids seen with black/white collars are coyotes that have been captured, sterilized and released back into the wild to reduce coyote numbers and limit hybridization with Red Wolves.

No Hunting Areas

We prohibit all hunting in the following areas:

- On the Davenport and Deaver tracts (which include the area surrounding the Headquarters/ Visitor Center and Scuppernon River Interpretive Boardwalk).
- On the portion of the Pinner Tract that lies east of SR 1105 (Rider's Creek Road) - where the Millennium Forest and Red Wolf Education Center are located.
- On the portion of Western Road between the intersection with Seagoing Road and the gate located south of that intersection.
- On the refuge portion of New Lake (note: ~15% of New Lake is privately owned/not refuge).
- On the unnamed road running with the southern boundary of the refuge land located west of Shore Drive, across from Pettigrew State Park's Cypress Point Access Area.



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- On the refuge lands between Lake Phelps and Shore Drive.
- In the area between Evans and Dehoog Roads from north of County Line Rd to D3 Cross Road.
- On any part of Pungo Lake. Public entry is prohibited year-round.
- Within 500 ft. of the Duck Pen Wildlife Trail leading to Pungo Lake.
- On the refuge tract between Hwy 94 and the Southwest Fork of the Alligator River and the adjacent tract west of the Southwest Fork (see map)
- Within 900 ft. of the Pungo Lake Observation platform (located on the south side of Pungo Lake and north end of Hyde Park Rd).
- Within 500 ft. of the Pungo Lake waterfowl banding sites.
- In the Pungo Shop area (fenced), on the helipad adjacent to it on the north side and adjacent cooperative farm fields.

Designated Hunting Areas and Seasonal Closures

We allow hunting in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and refuge regulations on all refuge lands except those areas designated as No Hunting Areas (see above).

The Pungo Unit is open ONLY to limited deer and feral hog hunting as described under the "Big Game and Feral Hog Hunting" section. We prohibit all hunting on the Pungo Unit from December 1st until the start of the next deer hunting season to help protect wintering waterfowl from disturbance.

Access

We allow vehicular travel on designated refuge roads (see map) in accordance with state laws and refuge regulations unless we have to close a road by posting signs, closing gates, or establishing barriers. We prohibit all off-road vehicular travel. We prohibit parking in a manner that blocks gates, roads, trails, or other travel ways.

Please note that many of the dirt roads on the refuge can become impassable during wet periods. Vehicles, including 4x4s, can become stuck. Towing services are extremely limited. Visitors should not attempt to travel through

standing water or mud holes along refuge roads.

Disabled hunters with valid proof of disability should contact the refuge office prior to arrival if special arrangements are needed.

We allow ATV/UTV operation on three designated ATV/UTV roads (see map) and only to transport hunters and their equipment to hunt and scout. We allow hunting from an ATV/UTV while on these designated roads when they are stationary and engine is turned off. ATV/UTVs may operate on designated ATV/UTV roads under the following provisions:

- When the ATV/UTV road and the surrounding area are open to hunting,
- For scouting one week prior to the area opening for hunting,
- For scouting on Sundays when the ATV road and surrounding area are open for hunting the following Monday.

We allow hunting from boats only when the motor is off and all forward momentum from a motor has ceased. We prohibit all public entry, including use of boats, on Pungo Lake. We allow boats in the following areas:

- On the refuge portion of New Lake from March through October; all public entry is prohibited during November- February to help protect wintering waterfowl from disturbance.
- In refuge canals except that we do not allow boats in the canals on the Pungo Unit during December, January, and February.

All Hunting

When a designated area is open to hunting, we allow hunters to enter and remain in the hunting area between two hours before legal sunrise (90 minutes before dawn) and two hours after legal sunset (90 minutes after dark) provided that during non-daylight hours (before dawn and after dusk) the hunter is engaged in hunting-related activities such as traveling to and from a hunting location, setting up a stand, hunting, and tracking/retrieving game. We allow nighttime raccoon and opossum hunting with a special permit – see the "Upland Game Hunting" section.

Hunting is not authorized on the refuge on Sundays.

You must obtain consent from refuge personnel to retrieve legally taken game animals from any area closed to hunting. We prohibit entry with hunting firearms into any area that is closed to hunting.

We prohibit the discharge of firearms and use of all weapons except for hunting in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. State law prohibits hunting, taking, and attempting to take any wildlife from a vehicle while the passenger area is occupied or the engine is running.

We allow only biodegradable flagging tape to mark trails, stand locations, etc. We prohibit affixing plastic flagging tape, reflectors, dots, glow tacks, and other materials to refuge vegetation.

We prohibit the use of dogs to chase, track (including wounded animals), hunt, or pursue any wildlife on the refuge except as described in the "Upland Game Hunting" and the "Migratory Game Bird Hunting" sections. All hunting dogs must be under your control at all times, and you cannot possess buckshot or slugs while hunting with dogs.

We allow the use of portable commercially available blinds and temporary blinds constructed of natural materials. However, we prohibit cutting any live vegetation on the refuge or leaving blinds and personal property on the refuge overnight.

We follow State requirements regarding wearing of hunter or blaze orange.

The following activities are prohibited:

The use and possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting

Distributing and hunting over, or by the aid of, any type of bait (food, salt, other mineral or other substance that lures or attracts animals)

The use of trail cameras and drones

Taking of plants, historic, and archaeological features.

All other activities not specifically authorized

Big Game and Feral Hog Hunting

We allow the take of white-tailed deer with the use of archery equipment, black powder firearms, and shotguns as authorized by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). Feral hogs may be taken with the same equipment authorized to take deer in areas open to deer hunting and in



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the Frying Pan Unit whenever the area is open to hunting any type of game with firearms.

The Pungo Unit is open for deer and feral hog hunting as described below:

- During the state Archery Season using archery equipment authorized by the NCWRC,
- During the state Blackpowder Season using blackpowder firearms and archery equipment authorized by the NCWRC,
- From the start of the state Gun Season through the end of October using shotguns, archery equipment, and blackpowder firearms, and
- During November using archery equipment.

Please note that some areas closed to all other public entry in November are open to November archery hunting (see map)

Upland Game Hunting

We allow upland game hunting in accordance with State and Federal regulations in all designated hunting areas except the Pungo Unit. For hunting quail, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, and opossum, we allow the use of the weapons authorized by the NCWRC

except that we do not allow rifles (other than .22 caliber rim-fire rifles) and pistols. For taking beaver and nutria, we only allow the use of shotguns and .22 caliber rim-fire rifles. We allow the take of beaver and nutria only in areas that are open to taking other game animals with firearms. You may possess only approved nontoxic shot while hunting upland game in the designated nontoxic shot zone on and west of Evans Road (see map).

To hunt raccoon and opossum at night, request a special use permit by phone, email, or at the Refuge Headquarters in Columbia, NC. There is no additional fee for this permit. We prohibit raccoon and opossum hunting during, five days before, and five days after the State bear seasons.

We allow the use of dogs for pointing and retrieving upland game and for chasing rabbit but you must always maintain control of your dogs.

Migratory Game Bird Hunting

We allow migratory game bird hunting in accordance with Federal and State regulations in all designated hunting areas except the Pungo Unit. Waterfowl hunting is prohibited on the Pungo Unit at all times. You may possess only approved nontoxic

shot while waterfowl and coot hunting. You may possess only approved nontoxic shot while hunting any migratory game birds in the designated non-toxic shot zone on and west of Evans Road (see map).

We allow the use of dogs to point and retrieve migratory game birds but you must always maintain control of your dogs.

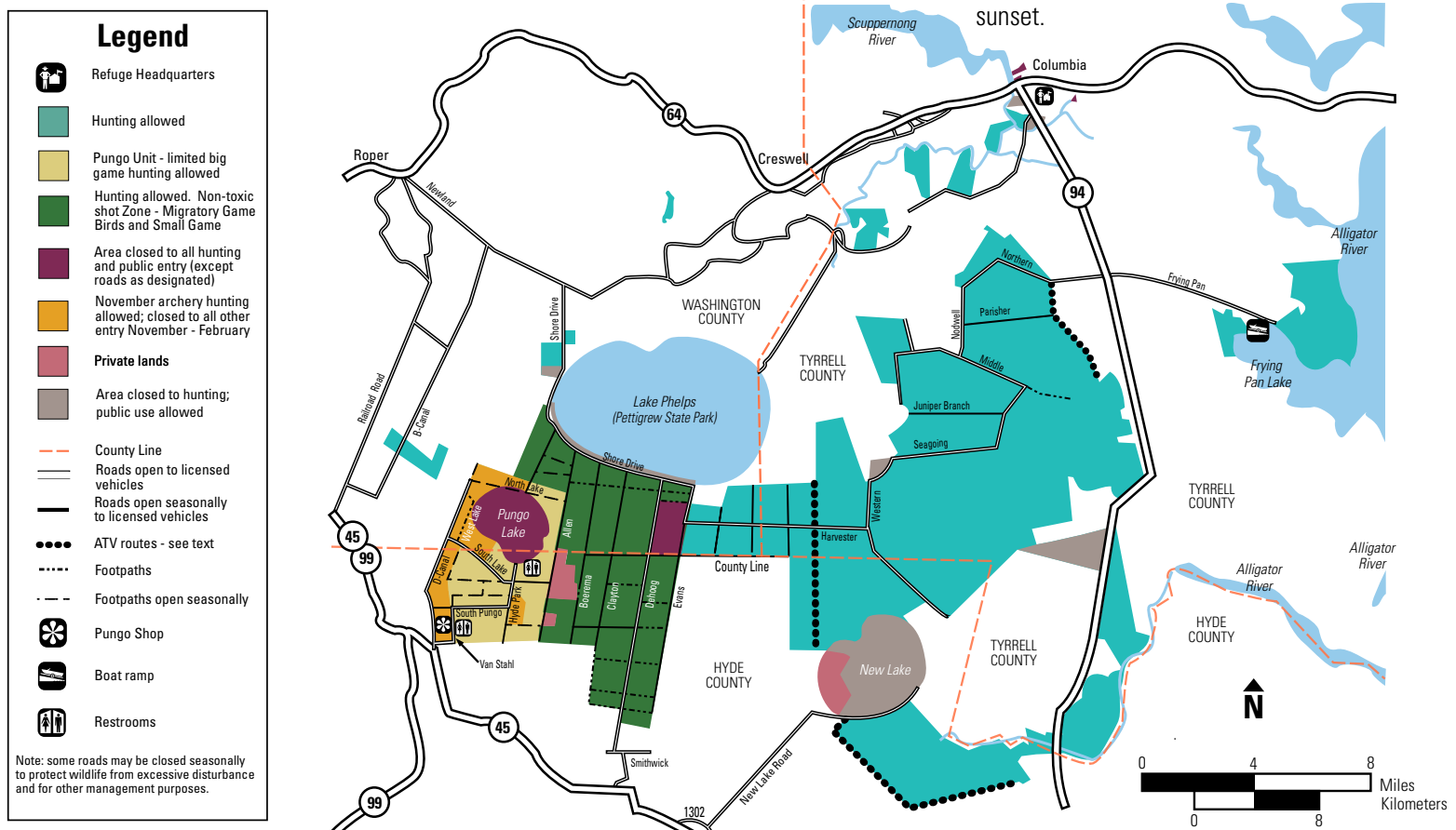
Fishing Regulations

We allow fishing in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations in the following areas:

- All refuge canals, except canals on the Pungo Unit from September – February
- In the refuge portion of New Lake from March 1 – October 31
- From the edge/bank of Pungo Lake from March 1 – October 31

You must carry a current, signed Refuge Hunting and Fishing Permit from the front page of this brochure when fishing on the refuge. You must present this signed document to any authorized refuge official upon request when fishing on the refuge.

We allow fishing from 30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset.



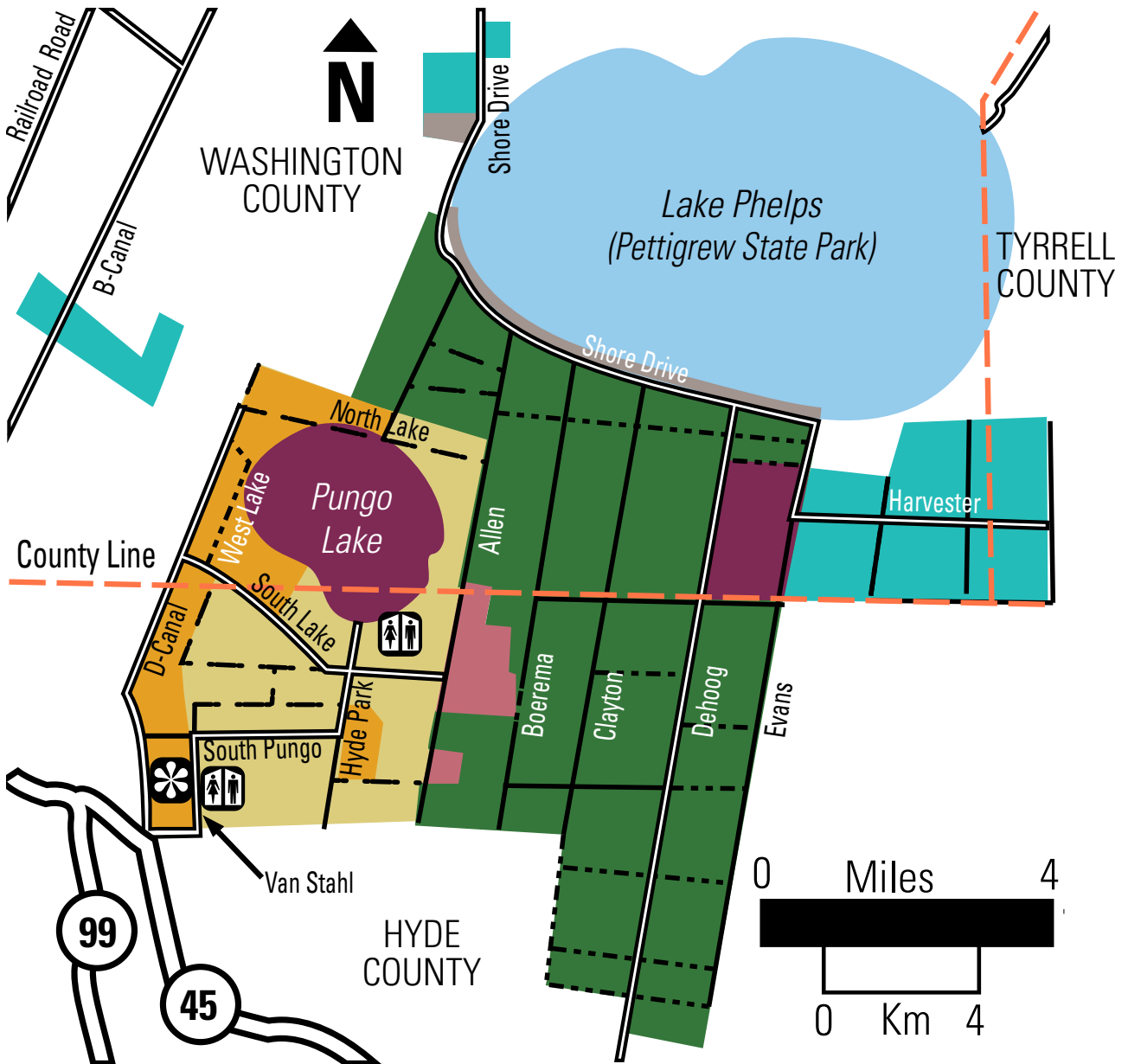


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National Wildlife Refuge

Pungo Lake Unit



Legend

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---------------------------|
| | Refuge Headquarters | | November archery hunting allowed; closed to all other entry November - February | | ATV routes - see text |
| | Hunting allowed | | Private lands | | Footpaths |
| | Pungo Unit - limited big game hunting allowed | | Area closed to hunting; public use allowed | | Footpaths open seasonally |
| | Hunting allowed. Non-toxic shot Zone - Migratory Game Birds and Small Game | | County Line | | Pungo Shop |
| | Area closed to all hunting and public entry (except roads as designated) | | Roads open to licensed vehicles | | Boat ramp |
| | | | Roads open seasonally to licensed vehicles | | Restrooms |

Note: some roads may be closed seasonally to protect wildlife from excessive disturbance and for other management purposes.