U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Laguna Unit

Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge Exotic Hunting Regulations 2026-2027

Accessibility Information

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, https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/public-civil-rights.

Call 956-244-2019 for more information about accomodations for hunters with disabilities. Request ability accomodations at least two weeks prior to scout date.

Safety

Hunts are self-guided and in remote areas with limited vehicle access. Africanized honey bees, ticks, alligators, and rattlesnakes are commonly encountered on the refuge. Wearing snake gaiters or boots is recommended. Hunters must visibly wear 400 square inches of hunter orange, including 144 square inches visible on both chest and back, and a hunter orange cap or hat on head at all times while within the units during scouting and hunting.

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).

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles are permitted only on designated Vehicle Access Roads and parking areas. ATVs and UTVs are prohibited.

Camping

The only camping allowed on the refuge is at Adolph Thomae, Jr. County Park (956-748-2044).

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting and fishing 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 is allowed in accordance with applicable Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) regulations.

Access

WHEN: Each hunt will begin on Friday at the designated legal shooting hours and conclude at the end of legal shooting hours on the last day of the scheduled hunt. During permitted hunting periods, hunter access is allowed in units 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 from 1.5 hours before legal sunrise to 1 hour after legal shooting hours. Hunters tracking game after sunset must text 956-244-2019 a description of the vehicle, parking location, and latitude and longitude of harvest area.

WHERE: Parking is allowed only at clearly designated parking areas or vehicle access roads. Hunters may only enter units via specified access points, and only drive on Vehicle Access Roads as designated on the map. Vehicles parked along public roads must be pulled entirely onto the shoulder and must not block roadways, gates, or bike lanes. Open trails in hunt units may be accessed by foot, bicycle, or e-bike. The only authorized method of travel off-trail is by foot. Unit 4 has no land access. Hunters may beach or anchor a flotation device only along the south side of the unit (this is the only unit accessible by flotation device). One Vehicle Validation Tag per hunter must be displayed face-up on the vehicle dashboard at all times.

Permit Application Process

Refuge permits are processed through the TPWD Public Drawn Hunt System. Up to 4 hunters may apply on one application. Hunters aged 9 to 16 must be under the direct supervision of an adult age 18 or older. Applications must be completed online at: https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/public_hunt_drawing/.

Fees

Permits cost $80.00 per hunter for hunts up to 3 days, and $130.00 per hunter for hunts 4 days or more, plus a processing fee of $3.00 per application. Hunt permits are non-transferable and all hunt fees are non-refundable. Hunts may be canceled/postponed without notice due to unforseen, extenuating circumstances.

Hunter Orientation

Drawn hunters must read this attachment in its entirety and be in full understanding prior to hunting on the refuge. Participation in a mandatory hunters' orientation is required for all in order to hunt due to biological monitoring. Hunter orientation will take place on scout day (Thursday) prior to the start of the scheduled hunt. A specific time will be sent out via email along with additional information. An official form of identification, state hunting license, and state hunting permit number are required upon request. Hunters must bring all required documentation to orientation.

22688 Buena Vista Rd.
Los Fresnos, TX 78566

956-244-2019
fws.gov/refuge/laguna_atascosa

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

June 2026

Activity	Season	Hunting Hours	Special Regulations
Laguna Unit Firearm Hunts	Jan. 22-24, 2027	State Shooting Hours	Center-fire rifles, muzzleloaders, .40 caliber or larger. Bag limit: One white-tailed deer, either sex. No spotted fawns. Unlimited exotic ungulates including nilgai antelope, feral hogs, and others.
A quota of 50 hunt authorizations is available for each Laguna Unit Exotic Firearm Hunt.			

Scouting/Pack Out

Hunt units are open to scouting from sunrise to sunset the day prior to each hunt period. Up to two non-permitted people may accompany each hunter into hunt units only during scouting periods. A Vehicle Validation Tag must be displayed face-up on the vehicle dashboard per hunter with all names legible. Hunt units are open to packing out blinds, equipment, or previous harvest from sunrise to sunset the day after each hunt period.

Blinds and Stands

Hunting is allowed from portable stands or blinds, or by stalking and still hunting. Blinds/stands must be labeled with permit/license number, and must not be attached to trees or include natural vegetation. Blinds/stands may be installed during scouting the day before the permitted hunting period, and must be removed no later than pack out day. Limit one blind stand per hunter.

Hunter Assistance

This can be a physically challenging hunt, and hunters are expected to harvest and retrieve their own game. Laguna Atascosa NWR is not an outfitter. A walk-in cooler is available at the Laguna Atascosa Unit Hunt Check Station (22959 Ocelot Rd., Los Fresnos, TX 78566), only for temporary storage during your hunt.

Field Dressing and Game Check

Harvested game may be field dressed (gutted) before removal from the unit. All game, including hogs, must be reported by telephone via text to the Hunt Coordinator at 956-244-2019 with the following information: permit number, sex/species of harvest (if white-tailed buck, # of points), estimated weight, unit/latitude and longitude, and photo. Hunters must take with them all skins and carcasses removed from hunt units for inspection by TAHC (optional, may leave hide in field). Hunters must have proof of sex in accordance with TPWD.

Signs and Boundaries

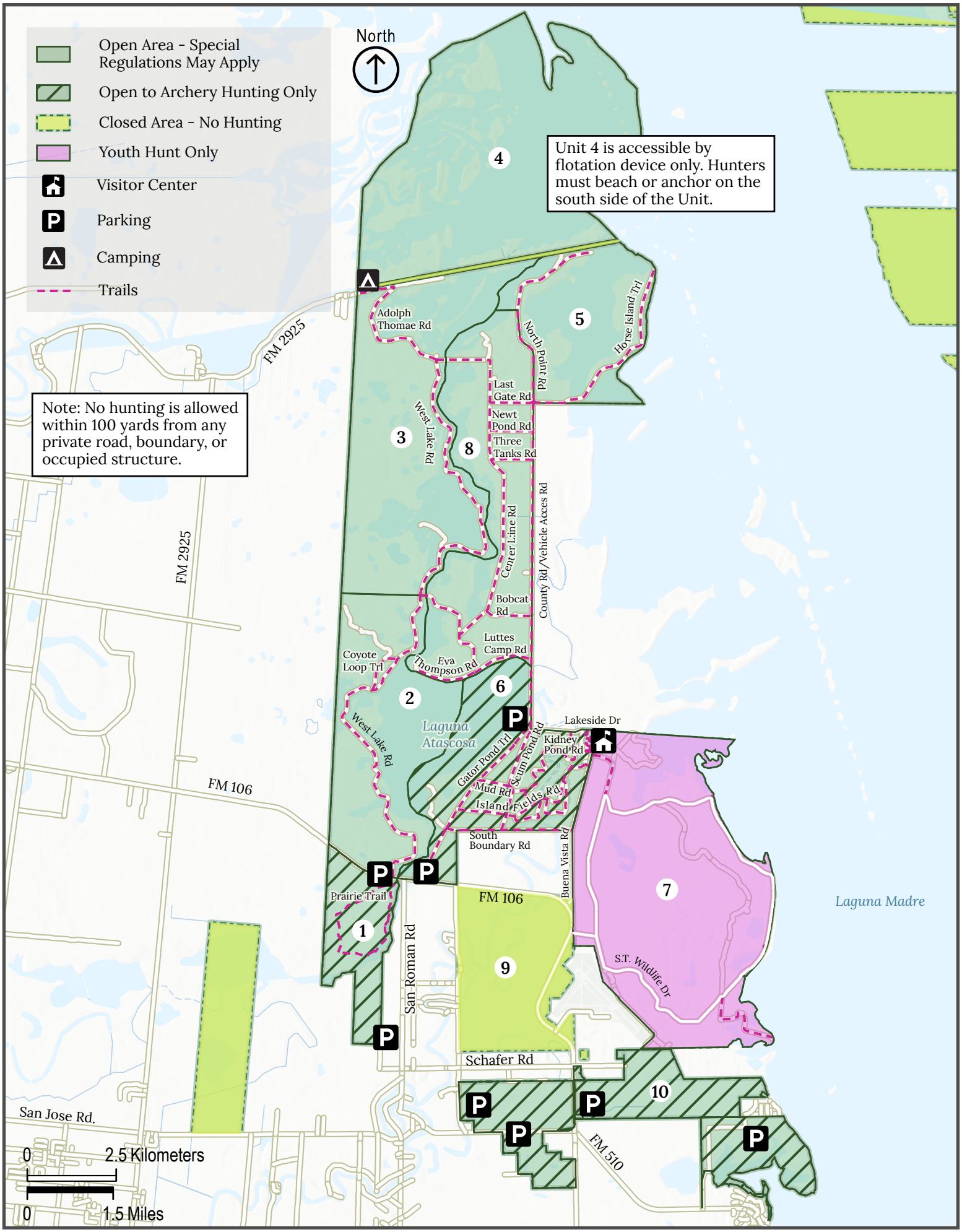
- Parking Area: Designated area to park while hunting
- Refuge Boundary: Entry permitted in accordance with refuge regulations
- Closed Area: All entry prohibited
- No Hunting Zone: Hunting, weapons, and game retrieval prohibited

Prohibited Activities

By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted. The following activities are prohibited while scouting or hunting:

- Exceeding the refuge speed limit of up to 25 mph, as posted
- Camping, except at Adolph Thomae Jr. County Park
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages and/or drugs
- Possession and/or use of dogs while scouting or hunting
- Use of motorized or electric carts or wagons
- Taking or destruction of any plant or animal species (including venomous snakes) not designated on the hunter's permit
- Distribution of bait or hunting over bait
- Use of flagging and/or markers
- Use of, or hunting from, any type of watercraft or floating device except for designated waterfowl units
- Use of drones/aircraft
- Use of any decoys for big game hunts
- Use of artificial lights (including vehicle headlights and game cameras) to locate, observe, or take animals
- Fires, littering, target practice, and commercial guiding
- Disturbing, molesting, or interfering with anyone engaged in the pursuit of an authorized activity on the refuge
- Hunting 100 yards/300 feet from any refuge boundary, public road, or occupied structure
- Hunting 50 yards/150 feet from any refuge service road or trail

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


Open Area - Special Regulations May Apply
Open to Archery Hunting Only
Closed Area - No Hunting
Youth Hunt Only
Visitor Center
Parking
Camping
Trails
North
Unit 4 is accessible by flotation device only. Hunters must beach or anchor on the south side of the Unit.
Note: No hunting is allowed within 100 yards from any private road, boundary, or occupied structure.
4
5
3
8
2
6
1
9
7
10
Adolph Thomae Rd
North Point Rd
Horse Island Trl
Last Gate Rd
Newt Pond Rd
Three Tanks Rd
West Lake Rd
Center Line Rd
County Rd/Vehicle Acces Rd
Bobcat Rd
Luttes Camp Rd
Coyote Loop Trl
Eva Thompson Rd
Laguna Atascosa
Lakeside Dr
Kidney Pond Rd
Gator Pond Trl
Scum Pond Rd
Mud Rd
Island Fields Rd
South Boundary Rd
Buena Vista Rd
Prairie Trail
FM 106
San Roman Rd
S.T. Wildlife Dr
Laguna Madre
Schafer Rd
FM 510
FM 2925
San Jose Rd.
0
2.5 Kilometers
0
1.5 Miles