

Patoka River

National Wildlife Refuge and Management Area Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2026–2027



Welcome:

Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge and Management Area was established in 1994 in Pike and Gibson Counties to conserve and manage habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds, resident wildlife, and endangered and threatened species. Public hunting is permitted on 12,391 acres and public fishing on 12,453 acres of the 12,838 acres managed to date. In addition to controlled public hunting and fishing, the refuge offers a place for the public to enjoy activities such as wildlife viewing and photography, environmental education and interpretation.

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 Civil Rights, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/public-civil-rights>.

General 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.

Individuals accessing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, harvest limits, boats, vehicles and their contents by federal and state officers. Indiana state regulations and refuge specific regulations will be enforced. Refuge specific regulations supersede state regulations. Hunting is allowed only on refuge units described in this document. Only the species listed in this document may be harvested.

Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable State of Indiana regulations subject to the conditions stated below. Brochures may be obtained by mail, at the refuge office, or from the refuge website.

Hours

The Refuge is open for hunting during daylight hours only with the exception of hunting furbearers. The refuge is open for night hunting of furbearers (coyote, raccoon, fox, opossum, skunk). Fishing is permitted 24 hours, except the

Columbia Mine Unit fishing is permitted from half-hour before legal sunrise to half-hour after legal sunset.

White River Bottoms Wildlife Management Area.

The 219-acre White River Bottoms WMA is located northwest of Petersburg, Indiana on River Road. This WMA is open to hunting and fishing consistent with the species and regulations described in this brochure.

Columbia Mine Preserve Special Regulations

The Columbia Mine Preserve is only open to deer hunting during the first week of the state defined archery, gun, and muzzleloader seasons and for the spring turkey hunting season. It is closed to hunting of all other game species. Additional regulations are in place on the Columbia Mine Preserve, which are outlined in a separate brochure and map.

Cane Ridge Wildlife Management Area

Cane Ridge WMA is closed to hunting and fishing. The area is open for wildlife viewing at the observation deck and from county roads only.

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.)

Ammunition

You may only use or possess approved nontoxic shot for waterfowl and dove. Use of shot for other species must comply with state regulations for public lands. Pick up and take out spent casings.

Motorized Vehicles

All motor vehicles must remain on maintained roads and parked so as not to interfere with other traffic. **Off-road vehicles** are not permitted on refuge lands.

Dogs

Dogs are allowed for hunting according to State regulations during designated seasons only. Otherwise, dogs must be leashed. Dog training or running in the off- season is prohibited.

Duck/Goose Blinds and Decoys

Pits or permanent blinds may not be constructed or used on the refuge area. Only portable blinds or structures constructed of native plant materials are permitted for waterfowl hunting. Blinds must be removed or dismantled at the end of each day's hunt. Decoys must be removed at the end of each day's hunt.

Deer/Turkey Stands

Permanent tree stands/blinds may not be constructed or used on the refuge area. Hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven is prohibited. Portable tree stands may be used for deer or turkey hunting and may be left overnight only during the periods specified for public lands in Indiana. Tree stands must be legibly marked with owner's name, address and phone number at eye level or lower.

To Report Violations

Indiana DNR Conservation Officer Dispatch 812-798-9538.

INDNR Turn In a Poacher (TIP) Line: 1-800-847-4367 (1-800-TIP-IDNR)

Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge & Management Area
510 ½ W Morton St, PO Box 217
Oakland City, IN 47660

812-749-3199

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/patoka_river/

TTY users may reach the Patoka River Refuge through the Indiana State Relay Service at 1-800-743-3333 (V/TTY).

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1-800-344-WILD (9453)

August 2026



Fishing Regulations

State regulations apply as to license, seasons, sizes, limits, methods of take and species of fish to be taken with the following exceptions:

- We allow fishing only with rod and reel, pole and line, bow and arrow, or crossbow
- Limb lines, jug lines, trot lines, and snares are prohibited as the method of catching fish in refuge waters other than the Patoka River channel.
- Fishing is permitted 24 hours, except the Columbia Mine Unit fishing is permitted from half-hour before legal sunrise to half-hour after legal sunset.
- Minimum size limit for largemouth bass on Snakey Point Marsh and on the Columbia Mine Preserve is 14 inches.
- Minnows, crayfish, leeches, mussels (clams), frogs, turtles and all other reptiles and amphibians are protected and may not be collected or harvested.

Boats

- On refuge property, motorboats are only permitted on Snakey Point Marsh east of the South Fork, when water levels can accommodate this use and on the Patoka River.
- Special boating regulations apply for the Miller Bridge Wetland Area and are posted on-site and available at the Refuge Headquarters.
- To minimize disturbance to wildlife, motorboats are not permitted on other refuge waters. Trolling motors are allowed.
- Air boats are prohibited on all refuge waters.
- Boats may not be left on refuge property overnight.

Prohibited Activities

- Littering/dumping including spent shotshell casings.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Target practice or random shooting.
- Camping/overnight parking.
- Trapping furbearers.
- Open campfires/swimming.
- Taking or attempting to take any wildlife not authorized in these refuge regulations.
- Accessing the refuge across private property without permission.
- Taking, cutting or destroying any plants or parts thereof including flowers, fruits, nuts, fungi, herbs, shrubs or trees other than specified for temporary blind construction.
- Use of off-road vehicles, horses, mules, llamas and bicycles other than on maintained county road rights-of- ways.
- Marking trails with tape, ribbons, paper, paint tree blazes, etc.
- Baiting or hunting over bait including salt.
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles.
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery, beads, etc. Use of metal detectors or digging for artifacts.
- Spotlighting.
- Use of fireworks, trail cameras and drones.
- Unless specifically listed as a permitted use, all uses of natural resources on the refuge are prohibited.

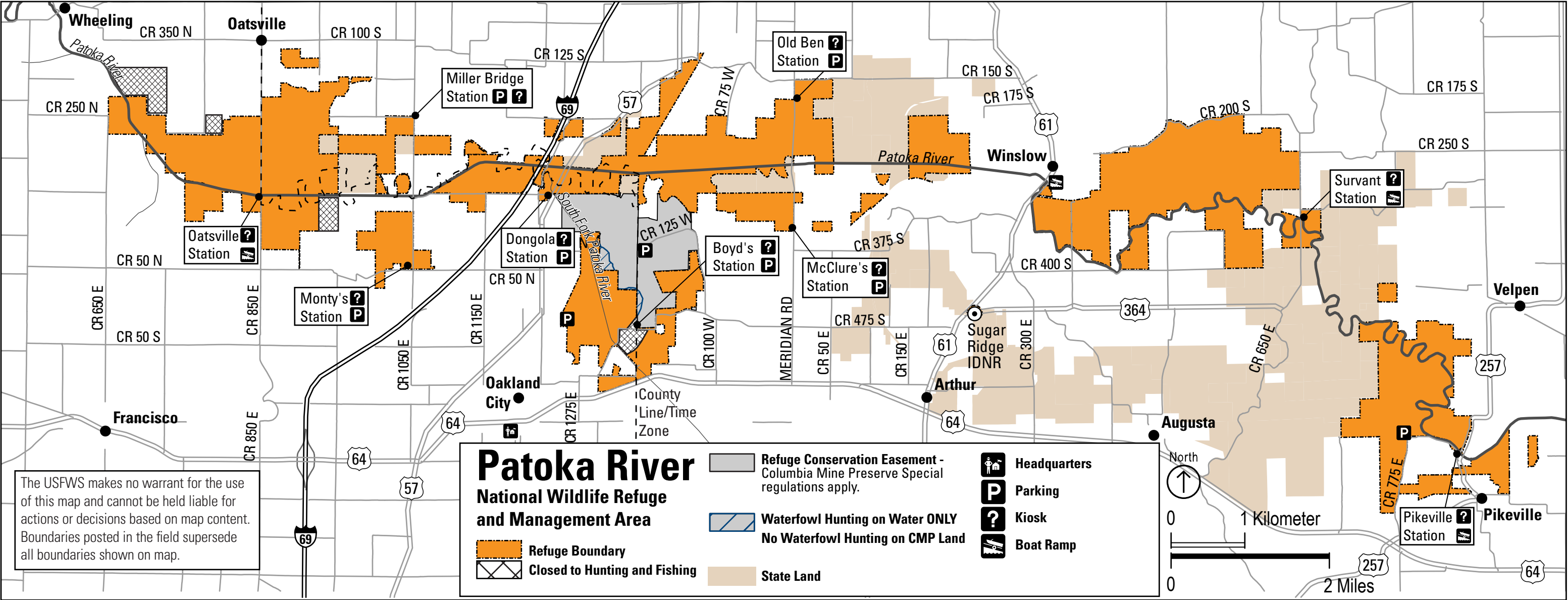
Activity	Season	Harvest	Hunting Units	Special Regulations
Big Game: (White-tailed deer & Wild Turkey)	Indiana state seasons Special season dates for Columbia Mine Preserve	State harvest limits	• Patoka • Columbia Mine Preserve • White River	State regulations apply. Special regulations apply to the Columbia Mine Preserve.
Upland Game: (quail, pheasant, rabbit, squirrel, fox, coyote, opossum, skunk, raccoon)	Indiana state seasons	State harvest limits	• Patoka • White River	State regulations apply. Night hunting permitted for furbearers ONLY.
Migratory Birds: (goose, duck, merganser, coot, dove, snipe, sora, woodcock, crow)	Indiana state seasons	State harvest limits	• Patoka • White River	State regulations apply. Non-toxic shot required for waterfowl and dove.
Fishing	Indiana state seasons	State harvest limits; The refuge prohibits the take of any turtle, frog, leech, minnow, crayfish, and mussel species.	• Patoka • Columbia Mine Preserve • Maxey • White River	State regulations apply, 14" minimum size limit for largemouth bass at Columbia Mine Preserve and Snakey Point, fishing only allowed with rod and reel, pole and line, bow and arrow, or crossbow. Other fishing regulations apply, see Fishing Regulations section of brochure.

State regulations apply for bag limits.

Safety Zones

Discharge of firearms within 150 yards of any dwelling or building on or adjacent to the refuge is prohibited. Hunters are cautioned to identify their targets before shooting. In addition to other hunters, non-hunting visitors are present on the refuge throughout the year and may be on the property at any time.

Hunting is prohibited within 50 yards of the following designated trails: Buck's Marsh Boardwalk Trail, South Fork Trail and Otter Run Trail.



Refuge Boundary
These signs mark the boundary of the refuge. It is important to understand they DO NOT prohibit access, only unauthorized uses.



Public Hunting Area
This area is open to hunting at specific times.



Public Fishing Area
This area is open to fishing at specific times.



No Hunting Zone
Hunting Prohibited.



Sanctuary Area
This area is off limits to the public unless otherwise specified.



Safety Notice!
All visitors in the field must wear fluorescent orange hat or vest in areas open to hunting during hunting season on the Columbia Mine Preserve and other locations if posted.