

Upper Ouachita

National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Regulations 2026-2027

Introduction

Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 560 national wildlife refuges. The primary objective of a national wildlife refuge is to provide habitat for the conservation and protection of all species of wildlife, particularly waterfowl and other migratory birds. The harvest of animals is one tool used to manage fish and wildlife populations. Carefully managed hunting and fishing help maintain these populations at a level compatible with the environment, provide wholesome recreational opportunities, and permit the use of valuable renewable resources.

The regulations in this pamphlet supplement the general regulations governing hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable state regulations except as noted below.

As you use the refuges, take pride in America and the refuge resources. Report violations promptly. Respect the rights of others using the refuge.

Refuge is open from sunrise to sunset except for legal hunting and fishing. The Mollicy Unit is closed to nighttime activities.

Warning

Use caution when operating boats or wading in flooded areas of the refuge. Obstructions/obstacles may be submerged and unmarked.

All boats must comply with state law and display proper navigation lights from sunset to sunrise.

General Hunting Regulations

By hunting or fishing on the refuge, you can be subjected to fish and game inspection.

Permits

A signed refuge hunting permit (front of this brochure) must be carried by all hunters.

A Self-clearing Permit is required for hunting on the Refuge. Self-clearing Permits can be obtained at entry points of the Refuge and at Headquarters on

D'Arbonne NWR. Self-clearing permits consist of three portions: Check-In, Check-Out, and a Vehicle tag. The Check-In Portion must be completed and put in the permit box prior to each day's hunt. The middle portion is the Daily Hunting Harvest Permit that must be carried by each hunter while on the refuge. At the end of the day's hunt, the Daily Hunting Harvest Permit should be completed including hours spent hunting, species hunted, and number harvested (must indicate zero if no game harvested) and put into permit box before exiting the Refuge. Each person parking an automobile on the Refuge must leave the Vehicle tag on the dashboard of the vehicle face up so it can be read from outside of the vehicle. Each person riding in the vehicle should display their Vehicle tag on the dashboard.

Restricted Areas

Hunting is restricted in certain areas as shown on the hunting map.

Refuge hunting seasons apply to all navigable waterways that are wholly within the refuge boundary.

Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than 4 am and must exit no later than two hours after legal shooting hours unless otherwise specified.

Youth

Youths are defined the same as State regulations. Supervising adult may supervise only one youth on a big game hunt and no more than two youth on a small game or waterfowl hunt.

Firearms and Ammunition

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges 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).

Firearm ammunition, used for hunting, larger than a .22 caliber rim-fire or shotgun slug are allowed only during refuge gun deer season. Lead shotgun ammunition is prohibited for all hunting.

Refuge Hunting/Fishing Permit 2026-2027 Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge

I have read and understand these regulations.

Signature of hunter/angler

This permit is valid only when signed and must be carried on hunter's or angler's person.

(Cut out permit if desired)

Safety

For public safety reasons, hunters are prohibited from discharging a firearm within 100 feet of the centerline of public roads, maintained refuge roads, ATV trails, maintained rights-of-way (pipelines), including electric transmission lines. Maintained road and maintained right-of-way is defined as one that has been mowed, disked, or bulldozed and is free from trees. No hunting on or within 50 feet of an oil or gas well tower. Target practice is prohibited on the refuge.

All hunters must wear hunter orange including orange hat during the refuge gun deer hunt as per state deer hunting regulations on WMAs. Hunters participating in special dog season for rabbit hunting must wear an orange hat. Waterfowl hunters during Refuge deer gun hunts must wear hunter orange to and from hunting locations. Although highly recommended, the International Bowhunters Education certification is no longer required to archery deer hunt on the refuge.

ATV Regulations

ATVs are permitted on trails designated for their use (see map). The trails are marked with signs and will be closed March 1 through August 31. ATVs are prohibited from two hours after legal shooting hours to 4 am. Raccoon hunters may not use ATVs. ATV tires are restricted to those no larger than 26 x 12 with a maximum 1" lug height and a maximum allowable tire pressure of 12 psi. as indicated on the tire by the manufacturer. ATVs cannot exceed 750 lbs., 85" in length and 48" in width. Use of all other ATVs or ATV tires is prohibited on the refuge. Exceptions to ATV trail closures are the ATV trail south of the levee on Mollicy Unit and the ATV trail from Eagle Nest Parking Lot to Cheney Slough which will be open March 1 through August 31 for fishing access only (see map).

Bicycles

Bicycles including electric bicycles (e-bikes) are permitted on public roads, maintained refuge roads, ATV trails, and maintained rights-of-way in areas that are not otherwise closed to public use. Maintained road and maintained right-of-way is defined as one that has been mowed, disked, or bulldozed and is free of trees. Electric bicycles must be no larger than 750 watts.

Summary of Recent Regulation Changes

1. Either sex deer gun hunting season is November 7-8, November 27-29, and December 5-6, 2026.
2. No boats permitted at Mollicy inside the levee after 1:30 pm from November 1-January 31.
3. Surface drive motors not allowed on Refuge after 1:30 pm from November 1-January 31.
4. No launching boats or operating boats in closed areas, including designated roads and ditches.
5. Operation of a boat with any muffler that is not original equipment to the engine's power unit or use of an altered exhaust system is prohibited.

Prohibited Activities

- Camping
- Open fires
- Littering
- Possession of deer decoys
- Overnight parking
- Overnight mooring of house boats
- Drones
- Target practice
- Taking of wildlife and plants other than specified in refuge regulations
- Cutting of vegetation, including limbs
- Use of airboats
- Operation of a boat with any muffler that is not original equipment to the engine's power unit or use of an altered exhaust system.
- Using motorized vehicles off the designated public access roads. This includes motorcycles, ATVs, jeeps, cars, trucks, etc. Parking is restricted to parking areas and along public access roads which are shown on map. (see map)
- Taking or possession of waterfowl, big or small game, fish, or plants by use of a guide or outfitter.
- Driving or screwing a nail, spike, or other metal object into a tree or hunting from any tree in which

a nail, spike, or other metal object has been driven or screwed.

- Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait, including any grain, salt, mineral, or any non-naturally occurring food attractant on the refuge.
- Participating in deer drives
- Possessing or using alcoholic beverages while hunting
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity, including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts
- Using horses and mules
- Leaving personal property (includes boats, deer stands, blinds, decoys, cameras)
- Leaving flagging or other trail markers
- Nighttime activity on Mollicy Unit
- Using a metal detector
- Use of night vision equipment
- Use of or installation of trail cameras

Warning

Mercury contamination has been documented on the refuge. On February 17, 2022, the State of Louisiana issued the following consumption regarding fish from the Ouachita River: Women of childbearing age and children less than seven years of age should not consume bowfin (choupique, grinnel), crappie (sac-à-last), flathead catfish, freshwater drum (gaspergou), largemouth bass, spotted or white bass; AND should limit all other species to no more than one meal per month. Other adults and children seven years of age and older should consume no more than two meals per month of bass, bowfin, catfish, crappie and freshwater drum combined.

Signs and Boundaries

Signs are useful tools in regulating the use of a public area. The wording applies to the areas behind the signs. Pay attention to the signs, watch for boundary corners, and check your location with the maps.

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This sign marks the refuge boundary. Public entry by foot is generally authorized at all times on the refuge.



This sign means that the area is closed to all entry. Do not trespass behind this sign for any reason other than an emergency.



This sign means no motorized vehicles beyond this point. This applies to all cars, trucks, jeeps, all-terrain vehicles, and motorcycles. Non-motorized and electric bicycles are allowed.



This sign designates the Louisiana-Arkansas state line. Refuge regulations may differ between states.

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



North Louisiana Refuges Complex
11372 Highway 143
Farmerville, LA 71241
318/726 4222

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD

September 2026



2026-2027 Hunting Seasons / Regulations		
Type	Season Dates	Specific Regulations
Ducks, Goose, Coot, Gallinule, Rail, Snipe	State season, including Special Teal, Special Youth and Veteran seasons. No season (closed) for Conservation order for Light Geese.	Hunting until noon. See map for areas closed to waterfowl hunting. Construction of and/or hunting from permanent blinds is prohibited. Boats, blinds, and decoys may not be left unattended overnight. Waterfowl hunters must be off the Refuge by 1:30 pm. No boats permitted at Mollicy inside the levee after 1:30 pm from November 1 - January 31. Trailerred boats can only be launched from designated boat ramps at the Mollicy Unit. No surface drive motors allowed on Refuge after 1:30 pm from November 1 - January 31. No launching boats or running boats in closed areas including designated roads and ditches.
Mourning Dove	State season	State limits and shooting hours. Steel shot or approved non-toxic shot only.
Quail, Woodcock	State season	Bird dogs may be used for hunting.
Squirrel, Rabbit	State season, except closed in spring season and during deer gun hunts	Dogs may be used for hunting after the last refuge deer gun hunt. Use of dogs in aid of hunting is prohibited on Mollicy Unit, except for waterfowl hunting only.
Raccoon, Opossum	December 1, 2026 - January 31, 2027 for night hunting. May be taken during daylight hours of rabbit and squirrel season.	Elevated levels of mercury contamination have been found in refuge raccoons. It is recommended that they not be eaten. Raccoons taken on the refuge may not be sold for human consumption.
Feral hogs, coyotes, nutria, armadillo, and beaver	All refuge hunts	No bag limit—may be taken only with weapons legal for particular season. Hunting feral hogs with dogs is prohibited.
Deer Archery	State season	Possession or use of pods is prohibited. Limit of one antlered and one antlerless deer per day. Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait is prohibited, including any grain, salt, mineral, or any non-naturally occurring food attractant on the refuge.
Deer Gun	November 7-8, 27-29, and December 5-6, 2026 Either sex	Still hunting only Limit of one antlered and one antlerless deer per day. Possession or distribution of bait while in the field and hunting with the aid of bait is prohibited, including any grain, salt, mineral, or any non-naturally occurring food attractant on the refuge.
No deer stands allowed on pine trees with painted white bands/rings. Deer stands, cameras, and blinds may not be left unattended. Muzzle loading firearms may be used during refuge deer gun hunts but refuge does not have a special muzzle loading season. No deer hunting within 100 feet of the centerline of public roads, maintained refuge roads, maintained rights-of-way including ATV trails, pipelines, electric transmission lines or within 50 feet of gas well towers or other production facilities. A leashed dog may be used to retrieve wounded or unrecovered deer during legal hunting hours. A dog may be used to trail and retrieve unrecovered deer 2 hours after legal hunting hours; however, no person accompanying a dog after legal hunting hours may be in possession of a firearm, bow, crossbow or any other means of take while in the field.		
Frogging	State season	See state regulations.
Fishing and Boating	Year round except No Hunting Area on Mollicy Unit where fishing will be permitted March 1 - August 31. Wigeon Ponds are open year round for fishing.	See state regulations. Exceptions: Commercial fishing is prohibited. Ends of trot lines must be attached by a length of cotton line which extends into the water. Trotlines and yoyos must be tended daily. No boats permitted at Mollicy from November 1-January 31 after 1:30 pm. Trailerred boats can only be launched from designated boat ramps at the Mollicy Unit. Trolling motors only at Irvine Lake and Wigeon Ponds. No surface drive motors allowed on Refuge after 1:30 pm from November 1-January 31. Operation of a boat with any muffler that is not original to the engine's power unit or use of an altered exhaust system. Taking of turtles or mollusks is prohibited
Crawfishing	State Season	Collapsible twine nets only. Daylight hours only. Nets cannot be left overnight.
Turkey	Closed	

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New Map for Your Mobile Device!

Use the QR code to download a geo-referenced map of the refuge with boundaries that is compatible with apps such as Avenza.

