

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

North Mississippi Complex

Coldwater River, Dahomey and
Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuges





With over 560 refuges scattered throughout the United States, the National Wildlife Refuge System is the most comprehensive wildlife resource management program in the world. This network of lands and waters is managed specifically for the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat for the continuing benefit of the American people.



This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The North Mississippi Refuges Complex was established in 1989 to manage U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands in north Mississippi. Staff based in Grenada manage lands throughout 29 counties, including Coldwater River, Dahomey and Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). These refuges were established to protect wetlands, like bottomland hardwood forests, and provide wintering waterfowl habitat within the Mississippi Alluvial Valley.

History

Most of the lands that make up the North Mississippi Refuges Complex were cleared for agriculture at some point in time. Extensive ditches were created to drain the wetlands to be farmed. When the refuges were established, the initial focus was on creation and restoration of wetland habitats. Today, refuge staff manage vegetation and water levels within these areas for a variety of migratory birds and resident wildlife.

Dahomey NWR

Dahomey NWR was established in 1992 to provide wintering habitat for waterfowl and protect forested wetlands. This 9,691-acre refuge includes the largest contiguous tract of bottomland hardwood forest occurring outside the Mississippi mainline levee in northwest Mississippi. Since the refuge was established, staff have reforested approximately 900 acres of farmland. Other fields have been leveed and are now managed to provide food and cover for wintering waterfowl.

Visitors may experience the refuge through a variety of activities, including hiking, hunting, fishing, or birdwatching. A 500-acre "No Hunt" area offers a place to hike and observe wildlife year-round. Happy Hollow Lake provides bank fishing for bass and sunfish.

A variety of wildlife can be seen on Dahomey NWR. Neotropical migratory birds and waterbirds pass through the refuge during spring and fall. Common summer nesting species include painted and indigo buntings, prothonotary warblers, Mississippi kites, and wood ducks. Once winter arrives waterfowl begin to appear, including mallards, Northern shovelers, and gadwall.

Left: Tippo Bayou, credit USFWS

Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge

Legend

- Refuge Boundary
- School Board Tract
- Closed to Hunting
- Road
- Herbert Trail
- Unimproved Trail
- Headquarters
- Information
- Observation Blind
- Tower
- Lakes and Sloughs

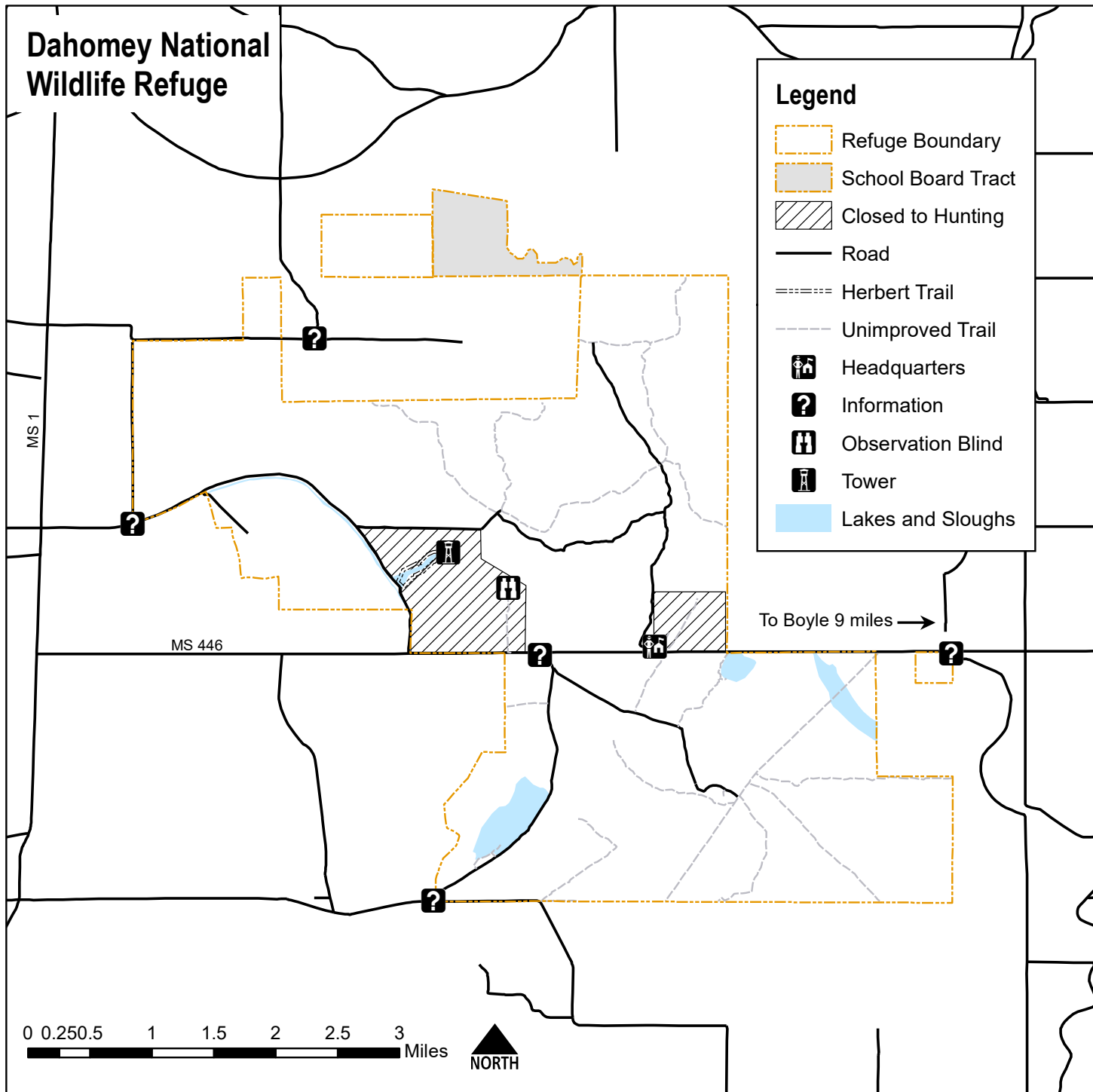
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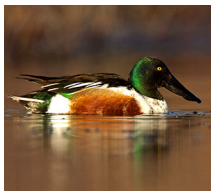
MS 446

To Boyle 9 miles →

0 0.250.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 Miles

NORTH





Northern Shoveler, credit Larry Pace

Coldwater River NWR

Coldwater River NWR was established in 1991 to provide habitat for migratory birds, particularly wintering waterfowl. It was originally a unit of Tallahatchie NWR but was separated as a stand-alone refuge in 2000. The refuge provides approximately 2,000 acres of sanctuary

for migratory birds in addition to a 325-acre waterfowl hunt unit. Bottomland hardwood forests and former catfish ponds provide valuable habitat for migratory and resident wildlife. The ponds are managed by varying the timing and intensity of disturbance to provide a diversity of habitats. Habitats range from sparsely vegetated pools of open water to densely vegetated units used by secretive marsh birds like bitterns and rails.

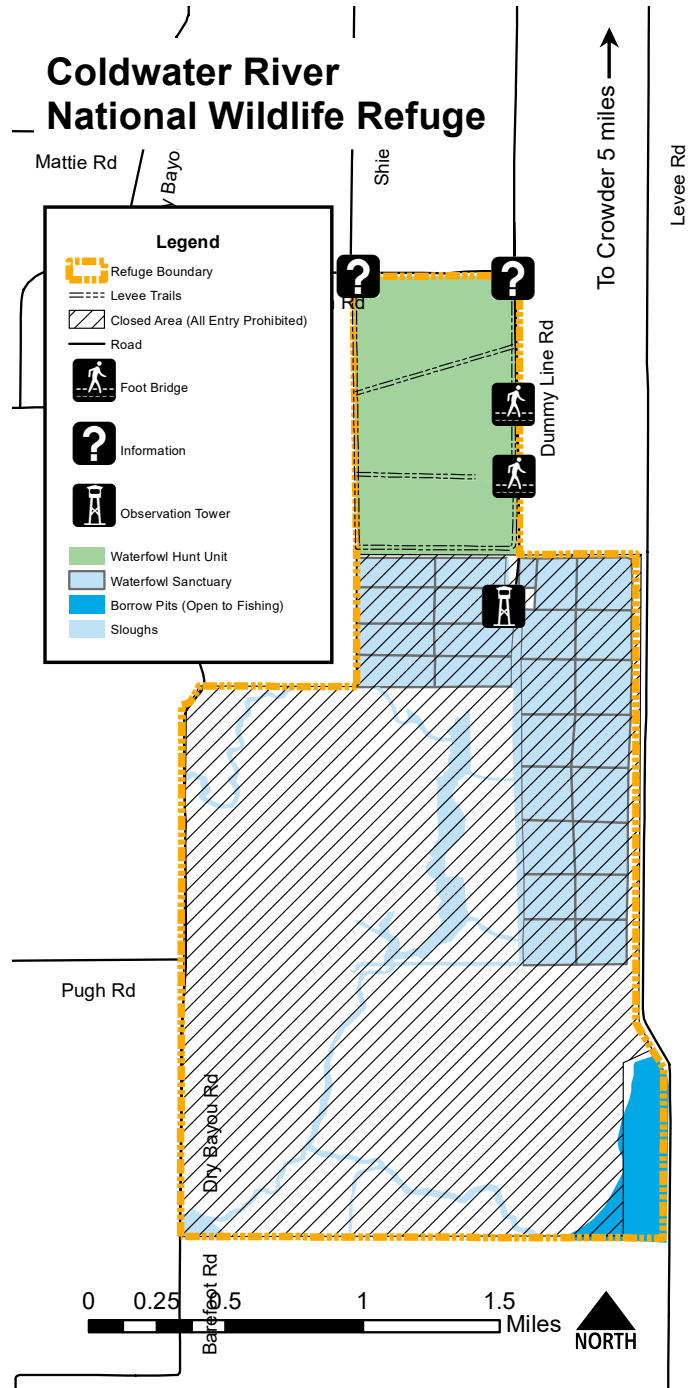
Due to its importance as a waterfowl refuge, most of the refuge is closed to public use. Visitors may view the closed area from the observation tower year-round to see waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and other wildlife that use the ponds. The best wildlife viewing is during the winter when thousands of ducks and geese use the ponds to refuel before heading back north to breed. In the fall and spring, shorebirds stop and feed during their migration.

Wading birds like herons and egrets are present year-round but congregate during the spring and summer as ponds dry and make foraging easier.

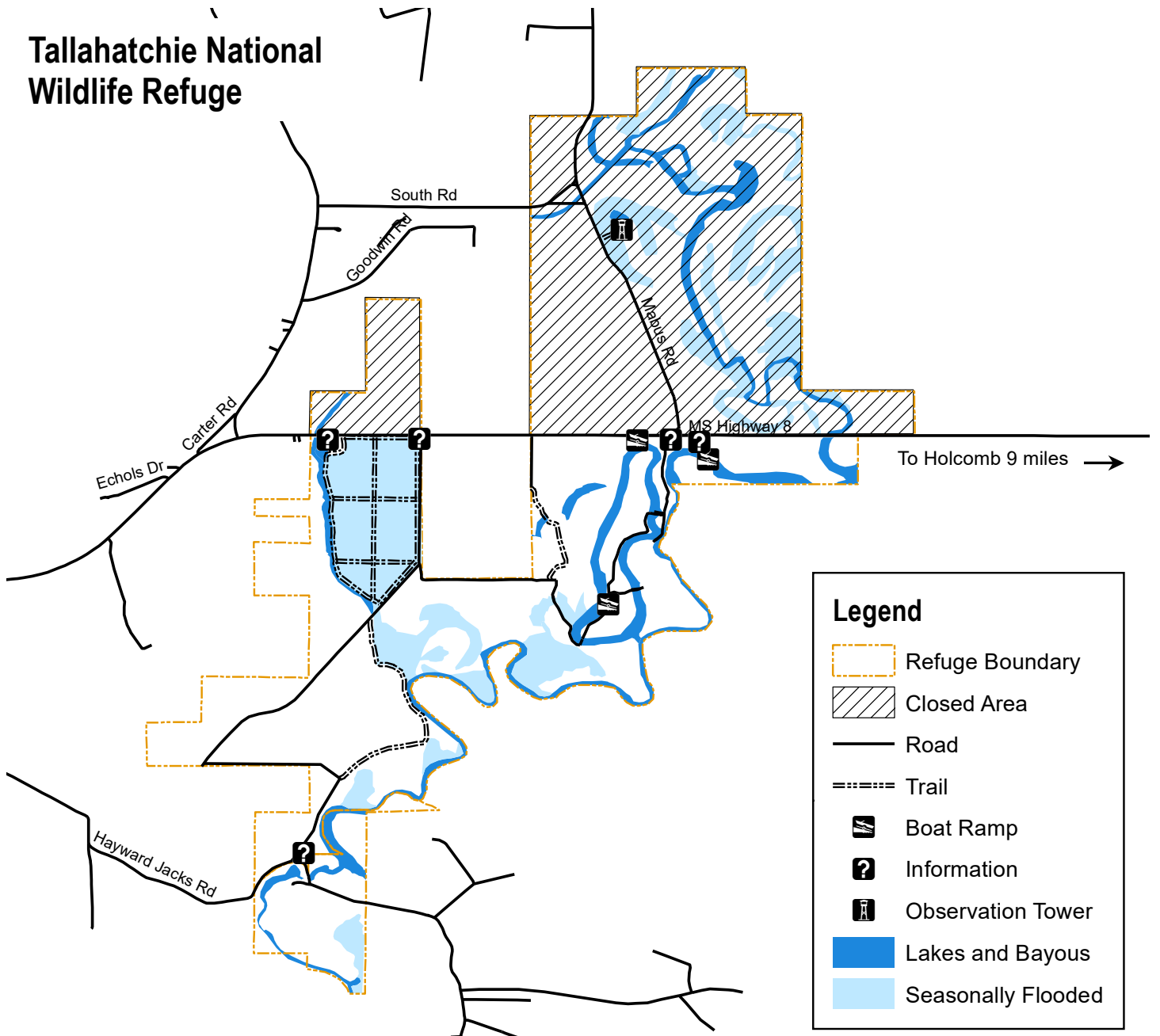


Wood storks and Roseate Spoonbills, credit Larry Pace

Waterfowl hunting is available seasonally on the hunt unit, located north of the catfish ponds. The borrow pits at the southeastern corner of the refuge are open for fishing year-round.



Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge



Legend

- Refuge Boundary
- Closed Area
- Road
- Trail
- Boat Ramp
- Information
- Observation Tower
- Lakes and Bayous
- Seasonally Flooded

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles





Prothonotary warbler, credit Larry Pace
forms the eastern boundary of the refuge.

Popular activities on the refuge include visiting the Beaver Brake boardwalk and observation tower, fishing at Long Branch, paddling a kayak or canoe along Tippo Bayou, and hunting deer and waterfowl in the winter. All refuge waters south of Highway 8 are open to boating.

During the fall, visitors can see beautiful fall foliage as bald cypress and other trees prepare to shed their leaves. Winter brings waterfowl, including mallards, green-winged teal, greater white-fronted geese, and other species. Other winter wildlife includes bald eagles, northern harriers, and American kestrels.



Copper Iris / credit Larry Pace

Tallahatchie NWR

Tallahatchie NWR was established in 1991 to provide wintering waterfowl habitat. Totalling 4,388 acres, the refuge provides a variety of wetland habitats, including managed waterfowl impoundments along with natural beaver sloughs, oxbow lakes, and Tippo Bayou, which meanders and

Visitor Activity Guide

Refuges are open to daylight use only.

- Biking is allowed on any road open to vehicles.
- No camping, swimming, or fires.
- Kayaks, canoes, and motorboats are permitted in Long Branch, Tippo Bayou, and Happy Hollow.
- Collection of plants, animals, or historic artifacts is prohibited.
- No pets allowed except as permitted in hunting regulations.

See annual North Mississippi Refuges Complex Hunting and Fishing Regulations brochure for refuge regulations.

Directions

Coldwater River NWR is located 5 miles south of Crowder, MS on Dummy Line Road.

Dahomey NWR is located 10 miles southwest of Cleveland, MS on Highway 446.

Tallahatchie NWR is located 9 miles west of Holcomb, MS on Highway 8.



Public use paddling, credit USFWS

**Coldwater River, Dahomey, and Tallahatchie
National Wildlife Refuges**
2776 Sunset Drive
Grenada, MS 38901
662/226 8286

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/coldwater_river
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Dahomey>
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Tallahatchie>

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Belted kingfisher, credit Larry Pace