



# Pocosin Lakes

## National Wildlife Refuge

### Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2022–2023

#### Welcome

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. While some of the regulations apply generally to all national wildlife refuges, some information in this brochure/permit applies only to Pocosin Lakes. Not all of the Federal and State regulations governing hunting and fishing are included here and you are encouraged to become familiar with all of them as they apply to Pocosin Lakes.

#### Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

P. O. Box 329

205 South Ludington Drive

Columbia, NC 27925

252/796 3004

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/pocosin\\_lakes](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/pocosin_lakes)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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August 2022



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

#### General Information

##### Refuge Game Animals

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

- Migratory Birds: ducks, geese, swans, mourning doves, woodcock, rails, and snipe
- Upland Game: quail, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, beaver, and nutria
- Big Game: white-tailed deer
- Feral Hogs

**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.**

We prohibit the taking or possession of any other wildlife, or any part thereof, including reptiles and amphibians.

##### Designated Hunting Areas

We allow hunting in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations on all refuge lands except the following (i.e. we do not allow any hunting):

- On the Davenport and Deaver tracts (which include the area surrounding the Headquarters/ Visitor Center and Scuppernon River Interpretive Boardwalk).
- In the Pungo Shop area (fenced) and on the helipad adjacent to it on the north side.
- On the refuge portion of New Lake (note: ~15% of New Lake is privately owned/not refuge).
- On the refuge lands between Lake Phelps and Shore Drive.
- 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.

#### Refuge Hunting and Fishing Permit 2022-2023

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Note: to hunt on Pocosin Lakes NWR, you must also purchase a Refuge Recreational Activity Permit (see inside for details).



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- 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.
- On the Pungo Unit, except that we allow limited deer and feral hog hunting (see the "Big Game and Feral Hog Hunting" section below) on parts of the Pungo Unit. We prohibit all hunting:

On any part of Pungo Lake.

Within 500 ft. of the Duck Pen Wildlife Trail leading to Pungo Lake.

Within 900 ft. of the Pungo Lake Observation platform (located on the south side of Pungo Lake).

Within 500 ft. of the Pungo Lake waterfowl banding sites.

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

When a designated hunting area is open to hunting, we allow hunters to enter and remain upon 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 below.

### Hunting Permits

You must carry a current, signed Refuge Hunting and Fishing Permit when hunting on the refuge. The permit is the signed brochure – *Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations*. If you are 16 years of age or older, you must also pay a \$15 special recreation permit fee to obtain a special recreational permit to hunt on the refuge. **Your receipt for payment serves as your Refuge Recreational Activity Permit.** You may pay the fee and receive the permit in person at the Refuge Visitor Center in Columbia, NC, or online.

Permits are usually available at the Refuge Visitor Center located at 205 South Ludington Drive, Columbia, NC, during our core business hours (except Federal holidays). It's a good idea to call before making the trip to our HQ/VC (252/796 3004 extension 234 for the Visitor Center or 221 for the Administrative Assistant's desk) to ensure someone will be available to help you.

You may pay the hunt fee online via the refuge web page:

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/pocosin-lakes/visit-us/activities/hunting> You are required to carry your valid Refuge Hunting and Fishing Permit (signed brochure) and your current special recreation permit at all times when hunting on the Refuge. You must present these documents to any authorized refuge official upon request when hunting on the refuge.

### 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.

We allow ATV/UTV operation on four designated ATV/UTV roads (see map) under the following provisions:

- ATV/UTVs can only be used to transport hunters and their equipment to scout and hunt and
- ATV/UTVs can only be used when
  - the ATV/UTV road and the surrounding area are open to hunting,
  - one week prior to the area opening for hunting (for scouting), and



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on Sundays, when the ATV road and surrounding area are open for hunting the following Monday (for scouting).

We prohibit hunting from an ATV/UTV under power and operating ATV/UTVs anywhere other than on designated ATV/UTV roads.

We prohibit all public entry on Pungo Lake year-round; i.e. boats/watercraft are not allowed on Pungo Lake. We allow boats on the refuge portion of New Lake from March through October; we prohibit all public entry on the refuge portion of the lake during November, December, January, and February to help protect wintering waterfowl from disturbance. We allow boats in refuge canals except that we do not allow boats in the canals on the Pungo Unit during December, January, and February. We allow hunting from boats only when the motor is off and all forward momentum from a motor has ceased.

### **Big Game and Feral Hog Hunting**

We allow the take of deer with those weapons authorized by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) except that we do not allow the use of modern rifles and pistols (i.e. we allow the use of archery equipment, black powder firearms, and shotguns). We allow the take of feral hogs in areas open to deer hunting using the same weapons we allow for taking deer. In addition, we allow the take of feral hogs in the Frying Pan Unit whenever the area is open to hunting any type of game with firearms using the same weapons we allow for taking deer.

The Pungo Unit is closed to all hunting except for the limited deer and feral hog hunting opportunities described here. We allow the take of deer and feral hogs on designated areas of the Pungo Unit

- 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.

We prohibit all hunting on the Pungo Unit from December 1<sup>st</sup> until the start of the next hunting season to help protect wintering waterfowl from disturbance.

We allow the use of portable tree stands for deer and feral hog hunting. We prohibit leaving stands on the refuge overnight. We prohibit using nails, wire, screws, bolts, and other hardware to attach a stand to a tree. We prohibit hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven (including lag screw type steps).

We prohibit the use of dogs to pursue, chase, track, or otherwise aid in taking deer, including tracking a wounded deer.

### **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 permit at Refuge Headquarters in Columbia, NC. There is no 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 maintain control of your dog(s) at all times.



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### **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. 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 maintain control of your dog(s) at all times.

### **All 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. Hunting is not authorized on the refuge on Sundays.

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, hunt, or pursue deer, bear, or other wildlife on the refuge except as specified above. 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. We prohibit leaving blinds and personal property on the refuge overnight.

We follow state requirements regarding hunter or blaze orange.

### **We prohibit:**

- 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 plants,
- all other activities not specifically authorized.

### **Fishing**

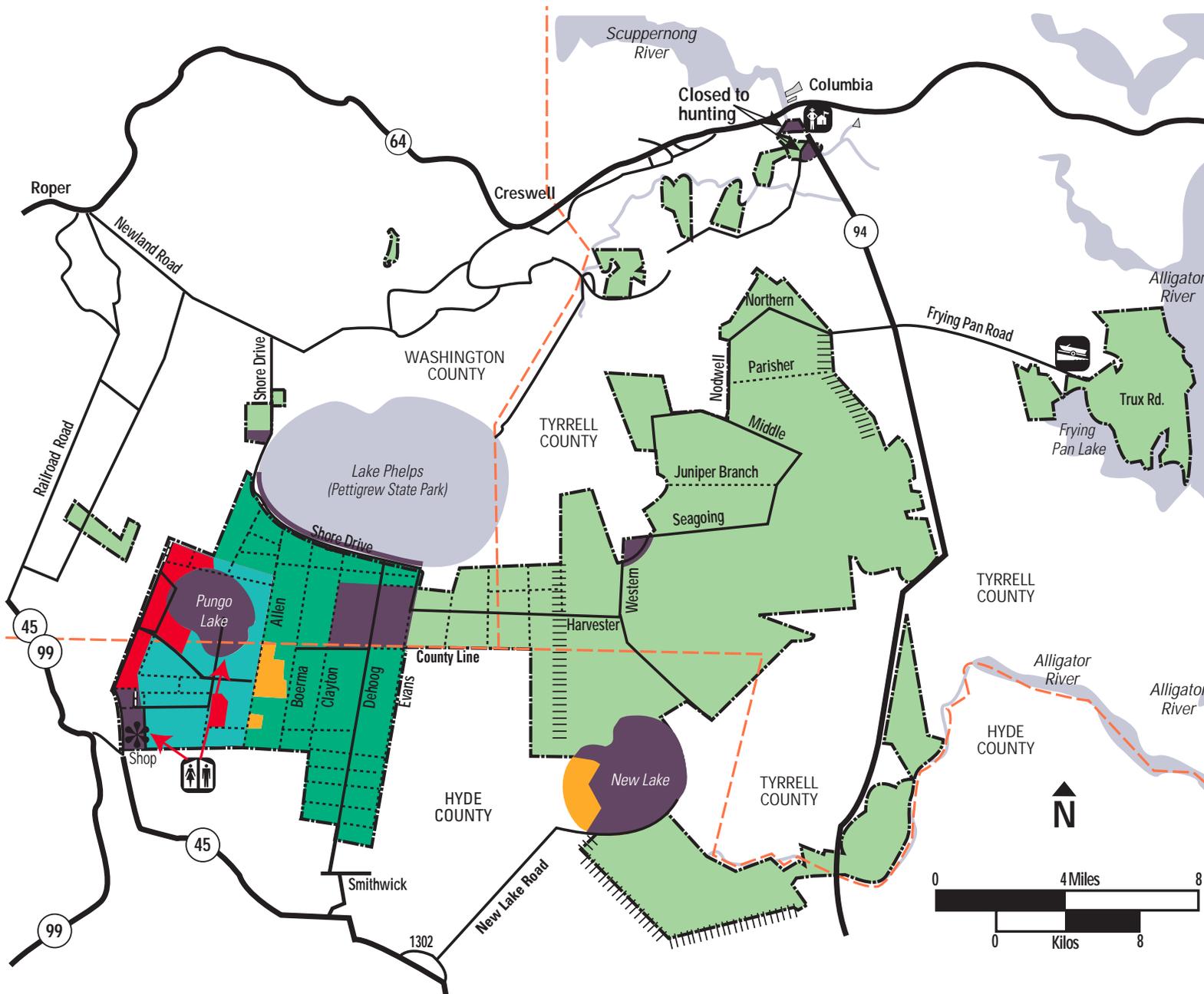
We allow fishing in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations in the following areas:

- All refuge canals except canals on the Pungo Unit during Sep., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan., and Feb.
- In the refuge portion of New Lake except during November, December, January, and February.
- In Pungo Lake, from the edge/bank, except during November, December, January, and February.

You must carry a current, signed Refuge Hunting and Fishing Permit when fishing on the refuge. The permit is on the front cover of this brochure – *Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations*. 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.

# Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge



**Legend**

-  Refuge office
-  Hunting allowed.
-  Pungo Unit Limited hunting allowed.
-  Hunting allowed. Non-toxic shot Zone-Migratory Game Birds and Upland Game
-  Area closed to all hunting and public entry.
-  Area closed to all public entry November-February (except for November archery hunting)
-  Private lands
-  Roads open to licensed vehicles
-  County lines
-  Roads open seasonally to licensed vehicles
-  Roads closed to all vehicles
-  ATV routes - see text
-  Pungo Shop
-  Boat ramp
-  Restroom

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