

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee

*National Wildlife
Refuge Fishing and
Boating Regulations*



The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge consists of three designated fishing areas: Headquarters, Hillsboro, and 20-Mile Bend Areas. The main refuge access point is located at 10216 Lee Road between Boynton Beach Blvd. and Atlantic Ave. off of U.S. 441.

Loxahatchee NWR provides wildlife dependent public uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation. However, the primary objective of a national wildlife refuge is to provide habitat for the conservation of all species of wildlife. Sport fishing is permitted at a level that does not adversely affect wildlife or their environment. Fishing provides recreational opportunities and permits the use of a valuable renewable resource.

Refuge Specific Fishing and Boating Regulations for the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

Sport fishing and boating will be in accordance with all applicable Federal, State and Refuge specific regulations. Fishing regulations are designed to protect the fisherman and wildlife populations. Fishing and boating activities on the Refuge are listed within this brochure. The regulations within this brochure supplement the general regulations that govern fishing and boating on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations; Sections 27 and 32. (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr>).

Mercury health hazards

Mercury is a naturally occurring element in the environment. However, unnaturally large quantities occur in the environment primarily from power generation and industrial pollution. Rain washes it into the waterways where it settles and is eaten by microorganisms, which are in turn eaten by fish. Because mercury levels build up in fish, the older fish, and those that eat other fish (such as bass and pickerel) have the highest mercury levels. For these species, it is recommended that people eat fish 12 inches or less in length. Mercury is very hazardous for humans and eating fish contaminated with mercury can result in serious health problems, including heart disease and damage to the brain and nervous system. Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain starting to form or grow. Therefore babies in the womb, nursing babies, and young children are at most risk.

For more information about the levels in the various types of fish and who and what you can safely eat, see the FDA food safety website at www.cfsan.fda.gov/~frf/sea-mehg.html or the EPA website at www.epa.gov/ost/fish

*Access and
Hours*

There are three entrances to the Refuge. The Headquarters Area (10216 Lee Road in Boynton Beach), the Hillsboro Area (west end of Loxahatchee Road in Boca Raton), and the 20-Mile Bend Area (off of Southern Blvd, SR-80 in West Palm Beach). Anglers and boaters are welcome to use all authorized entrances

Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge is a federal entrance fee area. An entrance fee per vehicle or per pedestrian is required for daily visits. Refuge entrance passes, Senior Passes, Annual Passes, Access Passes, and Federal Duck Stamps are available upon request at the Refuge headquarters entrance station located off US 441/SR 7 in Boynton Beach.

*Freshwater fish
at Loxahatchee
National
Wildlife Refuge*

Freshwater native species found on the Refuge include but are not limited to: largemouth bass, channel catfish, black crappie, redear sunfish, chain pickerel, longnose gar, bluegill, and warmouth.

Possession limits

Refer to State regulations.

*Exotic species
found in South
Florida*

Mayan Cichlid, Butterfly Peacock bass, Oscar, Spotted Tilapia, and Sailfin Catfish, etc.

*Alligators and
other wildlife*

Alligators when fed lose their natural fear of humans and become attracted to people. Alligators that have been fed may be more likely to attack, and must be destroyed. It is unlawful to feed alligators or any other wildlife on the Refuge. This includes allowing alligators to eat unwanted or released fish.

Native Fresh Water Fishes

Black Crappie
(*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*)



Longnose Gar
(*Lepisosteus osseus*)



Channel Catfish
(*Ictalurus punctatus*)



Warmouth
(*Lepomis gulosus*)



Bluegill
(*Lepomis macrochirus*)



Chain Pickerel
(*Esox niger*)



Largemouth Bass
(*Micropterus salmoides*)



Redear Sunfish
(*Lepomis microlophus*)



Exotic Freshwater Fishes

Mayan Cichlid
(*Cichlasoma urophthalmus*)



Butterfly Peacock
(*Cichla ocellaris*)



Oscar
(*Astronotus ocellatus*)



Spotted Tilapia
(*Tilapia mariae*)



Sailfin Catfish
(*Pterygoplichthys multiradiatus*)



Requirements and Regulations

All recreational anglers must possess a valid Florida fishing license in accordance with the laws of the state of Florida. Daily bag and possession limits are in accordance with Florida regulations. To review additional information, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recreational Fishing Regulations may be found at www.myfwc.com/fishing.

- Fishing is permitted south of a line of latitude of N 26.27.130 and in the rim canal around the rest of the Refuge. The Refuge prohibits fishing in Management Compartments A, B, and C, and those areas posted as closed to fishing or the public.
- Only rods, reels, and poles are allowed, and anglers must attend them at all times.
- The Refuge prohibits commercial fishing as well as the taking of frogs, turtles, and other wildlife.
- The Refuge prohibits the possession or use of cast nets, seines, trot lines, jugs, gigs, and other fishing devices.
- All boaters must comply with U.S. Coast Guard and State of Florida boating regulations including required running lights.
- Boats equipped with outboard or electric motors and non-motorized vessels are permitted. Prohibited vessels include airboats, mud-boats, hovercraft, personal watercraft (Jet Skis, Wave Runners, etc).
- All boats operating in the flats and trails outside of the main canals, must fly a 12 inch by 12 inch (30 cm x 30 cm) orange flag, 10 feet (3 m) above the vessel's waterline.



- Do not feed or harass the wildlife.

- Disturbing, collecting, injuring, or attempting to disturb or injure any plant, artifact, rock, or animal is unlawful.

- Cutting or removing any live or dead vegetation, limbs, trees etc. is prohibited.

- The Refuge does not allow fires, camping and/or overnight parking.
- The Refuge does not allow pets.
- Do Not Litter. It is illegal, unsightly, and poses a serious threat to fish, wading birds, and turtles. They get entangled in fishing line and plastic causing injury and death. Place all unused monofilament line in the white recycle tube. There is a white recycle tube located at the Headquarters Area and at 20-Mile Bend Area. Never throw pieces of plastic or let fishing line go into the water.

Inspections

Fishermen, their vehicles, boats, equipment and other belongings are subject to inspection by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officers.

For emergencies or to report violations, contact law enforcement personnel at 1.800.307.5789.

Boating Safety

Use extreme caution when you are launching into the canal. Place your vehicle in park and set the parking brake. Boaters are urged to wear their life jackets at all times. All U.S. Coast Guard, State of Florida and Refuge boating regulations must be followed for your safety.

Motorboat travel on the Refuge may be hazardous due to underwater or floating debris, floating vegetation, and wakes from other boats. Please look for and obey all posted No Wake Zones and Speed Zones. There is a 35 MPH maximum speed on all waters of the Refuge. These areas are posted to keep visitors safe and to protect wildlife. Slow down when passing other boats and when you see alligators and other wildlife in the area. Be prepared and observe regulations concerning: Posted hours, closed areas, fishing or hunting license requirements, boat registration, life jackets, and other required safety equipment.

Do not leave valuables in your vehicle.

Ensure your boat is seaworthy. Have all your safety equipment on board. Ensure you have plenty of fuel. Pack a Global Positioning System (GPS), a cell phone and a marine radio. Carry insect repellent, drinking water, foul weather clothing, and emergency lights or flares.

Remember the sun magnifies the effects of alcohol. Limit alcohol consumption. Boating while intoxicated is as serious as driving while intoxicated and law enforcement officers regularly check boaters for levels of intoxication.

Allow time to return to your vehicle and to leave the area before posted closing time. Remember, floating vegetation and changing water levels can block canals and hide boat trails.

If you should become lost or stranded please observe the following procedures, which will aid personnel in locating you.

First, hail other boaters in your area or passing you for help. U.S. Coast Guard regulations require that boaters render assistance to fellow boaters.

Call the Refuge Emergency Dispatch number, 1.800.307.5789 or 911. Leave your number and your location, as well as where you launched and your status of emergency. Law enforcement officers also monitor VHF Channel 16.

Do not leave your boat in order to walk out. Try to paddle to the canal and get on the levee. Should your vehicle be found in the parking areas after closing time, personnel will begin search and rescue procedures. If you have a portable or strobe light, turn it on after dark.

During the first phase of the search, officers will drive the levees looking for you. If you are located, a boat or aircraft will be used to reach you.

Signal aircraft using a flag, shirt, or light. Aircraft will direct officers in boats to your location. As the search boat nears you, it will turn off its engine. At that time, call and make noises to assist officers in pinpointing your location.

Remember, filing a false report or making a false distress signal or call is a serious offense. Refuge personnel will **not** tow your vessel except in an emergency.

Refuge Signs— Know Their Meaning

Signs protect visitors and resources. They are used to grant or restrict certain activities while protecting the Refuge from undue human disturbance and abuse. The wordings of the signs below apply to the areas behind the signs. Please respect all Refuge signs as you traverse the refuge and immediately report witnessed violations to law enforcement at 1.800.307.5789.

National Wildlife Refuge

These signs mark the boundary of the Refuge.



Area Closed

Certain areas of the Refuge are closed to visitors for safety and management purposes. Unauthorized entry beyond this sign is prohibited.



No Vehicles

Unauthorized motor vehicles are not allowed beyond this sign. This applies to all cars, trucks, jeeps, and motorcycles. Walking and non-motorized bicycles are allowed. Please do not block access through Refuge gates.

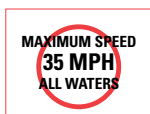


No Fishing

Fishing is prohibited beyond this sign.

Boat speed

The maximum speed for boats is **35 mph**. Speeds are managed at the Refuge for the safety of the boating and fishing public and to protect wildlife. Please obey all speed zones for your safety and that of wildlife.



**For more information contact:
Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge**

**Visitor Center
10216 Lee Road
Boynton Beach, FL 33473-4797
Phone: 561.734.8303
Visitor Center Hours: 9 am - 4 pm, seven days a week
Website: www.fws.gov/loxahatchee
24 hour emergencies or violation reporting
1-800-307-5789**

**Headquarters
10216 Lee Road
Boynton Beach, FL (capital L not small l) 33473-4797
Phone: 561.732.3684
Office Hours: 8 am - 4 pm Monday - Friday**

Available in alternative formats upon request at Visitor Center

June 2010

