

Black Bayou Lake

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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Joe Saenz, Project Leader
Brett Hortman, Refuge Manager
Black Bayou Lake NWR
11372 Highway 143
Farmerville, LA 71241
Phone: 318/387 1114
Fax: 318/387 2629
E-mail: FW4RWNorthLARefuges@fws.gov

Refuge Facts

- Established: 1997
- Acres: 4,522
- Other Refuges in Complex: D'Arbonne, 17,421 acres; Upper Ouachita, 46,065 acres; Handy Brake, 500 acres; Red River, 10,290 acres.
- Location: The refuge is located three miles north of the city of Monroe, just east of highway 165, in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana.

Natural History

- The 1,500 acre Black Bayou Lake is owned by the city of Monroe and is leased for free to the US FWS for 99 years. It serves as the secondary water source for the city of Monroe.
- Bottomland hardwood forest, reforestation areas, mixed pine/hardwood uplands, and the open water of Black Bayou Lake provide habitat for a diversity of upland and wetland dependent fish and wildlife such as waterfowl, wading birds, neotropical migrants, and game fish.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- North Louisiana Refuges Complex 19-person staff
- 38,000 visitors annually

Refuge Objectives

- Provide wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities with emphasis on environmental education.
- Promote the conservation and management of migratory bird diversity and resident wildlife in support of national, regional, and ecosystem habitat and conservation goals.
- Restore, enhance and maintain healthy wetlands and associated bottomland hardwood and upland forest to support a natural diversity of plant and animal species and to foster the ecological integrity of Black Bayou Lake NWR.

- Protect the long-term water quality of Black Bayou Lake.

Management tools

- Forest management and reforestation
- Community partnerships and volunteer programs
- Law enforcement
- Water level management
- Control of invasive species

Public Use Opportunities

- Visitor Center and Conservation Learning Center with classroom, interpretive/ live exhibits
- Amphitheater, arboretum, and prairie demonstration area
- Wildlife observation and photography
- Environmental education and interpretation
- Fishing and hunting
- Boating/ canoeing
- Interpretive trails
- 1,300 foot accessible wildlife pier

Calendar of Events

March: Walk Where the Wildlife Walks

May: International Migratory Bird Day

October: Annual Fall Celebration, The Big Sit

Frequently asked questions

How do you get to the refuge?
The Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge is just north of Monroe, Louisiana. Exit 118B off I-20 and travel north on Highway 165 for seven miles. Turn east on Richland Place Drive.

Can you hunt on Black Bayou Lake NWR?

Yes, in the designated hunting area only. The refuge offers archery only deer hunting, along with waterfowl,

quail, woodcock, raccoon, opossum, rabbit, and squirrel hunting. Please refer to the refuge hunting and fishing regulations brochure for more information.

When is the Refuge open?

The lands and waters of the refuge are open 365 days a year from dawn until dusk. The visitors center is open seven days a week, excluding all federal holidays, from 8 am - 4 pm Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5 pm Saturday, 1 pm - 5 pm Sunday.

What does it cost to visit the refuge?

There are no entrance fees. There is a \$2 boat launch fee (\$1 for America the Beautiful Pass holders)

What is "Friends of Black Bayou, Inc."?

This is the refuge support group consisting of volunteers from all walks of life. New members are welcome. Contact the Refuge office for details.