

Coldwater River

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: Becky Rosamond



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photo: Fred Broerman

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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1991.
- Acres: 2,702 acres in Tallahatchie and Quitman counties, Mississippi.
- Managed by North Mississippi Refuges Complex in Grenada, MS.
- Location: located 4.5 miles south of Crowder, MS.

Natural History

- All refuge lands were agricultural lands at the time of acquisition. Since then over 1,170 acres have been reforested with bottomland hardwood species.
- The refuge includes a former catfish farm consisting of 24 ponds, ranging in size from 14 to 21 acres. These ponds are managed for waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds.
- Large numbers of shorebirds feed in the mudflats from July through September. Large concentrations of waterfowl can be seen on the ponds and flooded portions of the refuge in winter. Wading birds feed in shallow pools during the summer.
- Nearly 300 acres on the western portion of the refuge are managed for grassland birds.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Approximately 2,400 visitors annually, primarily hunting, fishing, and birdwatching.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory birds.
- Restore agricultural lands to bottomland hardwood forest.

Management Tools

- Water management (drawdowns, reflooding).
- Disking, mowing, and selective herbicide applications.
- Reforestation.
- Cooperative farming.

- Hunting.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships, particularly with research organizations, to use the best available science to meet goals and objectives.

Public Use Opportunities

- Hunting – November-January, waterfowl only on the 300-acre Warwick tract, south of the main refuge. Also includes a youth hunt, following state season. Requires a refuge hunting/fishing annual permit. Please see the North MS Refuges Complex Hunting and Fishing Regulations for specific details. Regulations are published annually.
- Fishing – Year-round on the Warwick tract and on the borrow pits located on the southeastern corner of the main refuge. Requires a refuge hunting/fishing annual permit. Please see the North MS Refuges Complex Hunting and Fishing Regulations for specific details. Regulations are published annually.
- Birdwatching/Wildlife Photography – Year-round from the Army Corps of Engineers levee along the eastern boundary of the refuge. Access to the ponds requires a Special Use Permit. Contact the Complex office for more information.

Calendar of Events

March – April: Migrating shorebirds feed on drawn down ponds.

July – October: Post-breeding concentrations of wading birds and migrating shorebirds use evaporating ponds.

November – February: Wintering waterfowl congregate on ponds.

Questions and Answers

Is Coldwater River National Wildlife Refuge open to public use including waterfowl hunting?

No. The refuge is too small, has no access roads, and is intensively managed for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. The large concentrations of waterfowl and shorebirds which use the refuge decline when frequently disturbed.

Will the Service condemn land to expand the size of the refuge?

No. While the Service has an ongoing acquisition program, all lands acquired have been and will continue to be on a willing seller basis.