

Tensas River

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



photo: Garry Tucker/USFWS



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Kelly Purkey, Refuge Manager
Tensas River NWR
2312 Quebec Road
Tallulah, LA 71282
Phone: 318/574 2664
Fax: 318/574 1624
E-mail: tensasriver@fws.gov

Refuge Facts

- Established: 1980.
- Acres: 76,000.
- Located in Madison, Tensas and Franklin parishes, LA.
- Other management: conservation easements—11 in three parishes totaling 1066 acres; fee title tracts—four in three parishes totaling 1,656 acres.
- Location: the refuge is located 7 miles west of Tallulah, LA on U.S. Hwy. 80, then 8 miles south on the Quebec Road.

Natural History

- Refuge is in the upper basin of the Tensas River in northeast Louisiana. Prior to the 2004 discover at Cache River NWR in Arkansas, Tensas River NWR was the last documented home of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.
- Home to one of the last concentrations of the threatened Louisiana black bear.
- In 1907, Teddy Roosevelt hunted bear just north of the refuge boundary and the “Teddy Bear” was introduced as a result of an incident during the hunt.
- Concentrations of ducks, geese, raptors, wading birds and shorebirds.
- Several rookeries present.
- Open water 1,514 acres, woodlands 54,808 acres, croplands 3,007 acres, reforested former agricultural fields 2,413 acres, moist soil management 1,000 acres.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- 12-person staff.
- 72,000 visitors annually.

Refuge Objectives

- For preservation and development of environmental resources.

- Conserve diversity of fish and wildlife and their habitats.
- Development of outdoor recreation opportunities and interpretive education.

Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl, wading birds and shorebirds.
- Cooperative farming to provide habitat for migratory birds and Louisiana black bears.
- Forest habitat management for bears, neo-tropical birds and other forest dwelling species.
- Education/interpretation.
- Deer management with public hunting.
- Outreach programs to get the message of the Service to the public and information to users.
- Law enforcement to provide safety for the using public and protection of the resources.
- Partnerships to make programs ecosystem in scope.

Public Use Opportunities

- Trails.
- Auto tour route.
- Fishing.
- Two observation towers.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.
- Hunting, including youth hunts.

Calendar of Events

May: Migratory Bird Day.

September: National Hunting and Fishing Day.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

October-January: squirrel/rabbit hunting.

November-December: youth deer hunt.

November-December: limited permit deer hunts.

November-January: archery deer hunting.

November-January: waterfowl hunting.

December-January: Christmas Bird Count.

Questions and Answers

How many bears are on the refuge?

The current estimate of the number of Louisiana black bears on the Tensas River NWR is approximately 300 bears.

Are there hiking trails available on the refuge?

The Tensas River offers two interpreted hiking trails—the .25 mile-long Hollow Cypress Wildlife Trail and the 3.5 mile-long Rainey Lake Hiking Trail. The Hollow Cypress Wildlife Trail and the first .25 mile of the Rainey Lake Hiking Trail are fully accessible. In addition to the designated hiking trails, approximately 30 miles of ATV trails are open to hikers, as are many abandoned logging roads.

Are school groups welcome at the refuge?

Yes. The refuge has a large environmental education program open not only to school groups, but also to scout troops, church groups, and other groups and organizations. We ask that groups pre-register two to three weeks in advance to ensure availability of the refuge's education facilities and instructors. We welcome requests for programs tailored to specific classroom related topics.