

# Wapanocca

## National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1961.
- Acres: 5,620. Much of it acquired from the former Wapanocca Outing Club, one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious hunting clubs.
- Located in Crittenden County AR, three miles from the Mississippi River, adjacent to the city of Turrell, 20 miles northwest of Memphis, TN.
- Other management: two fee title tracts in St. Francis County totaling 509 acres.
- Location: from the north: exit I-55 at exit number 23 onto Highway 77 south, two miles to Highway 42 east 1/8 mile. From the south: exit I-55 at exit number 21 onto Highway 42 east 1.5 miles.

### Natural History

- Refuge lies in the historic floodplain of the Mississippi River but no longer subject to flooding due to the Mississippi River protection levees.
- Wapanocca Lake was once a bend in the Mississippi River, but is now cut off from its historic water sources.
- Designated as a Continentally Important Bird Area by American Bird Conservancy.
- Concentrations of wintering and migrating ducks, geese, and raptors.
- Major migration stopover of warblers and other neo-tropical migrants.
- Large great blue heron, common egret, anhinga rookery.
- Active bald eagle nest.
- Largest colony of water spider orchid in Arkansas.
- Open water 612 acres; swamp 1,760 acres; reforestation 917 acres; bottomland hardwoods 1231 acres; croplands 500 acres; moist-soil impoundments 200 acres; grasslands 400 acres.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Two-person staff.
- 40,000 visitors annually.

### Refuge Objectives

- Provide high quality, diverse habitats for wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, other migratory birds, and other native wildlife species.
- Provide nesting and brood-rearing habitat for wood ducks.
- Provide compatible hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation opportunities for the public.

### Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl, shorebirds, and marsh and water birds.
- Water management to benefit wetland ecosystem health.
- Forest and grassland management for migratory songbirds and other native wildlife.
- Cooperative farming to provide high energy foods for wintering waterfowl.
- Mechanical/chemical control of invasive/exotic plants.
- Providing waterfowl sanctuaries.
- Law enforcement.
- Conservation partnerships.
- Nuisance beaver and feral hog control.

### Public Use Opportunities

- New visitor contact station funded by the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*.
- Nature drive.
- Observation platform on Wapanocca Lake.
- Hunting.
- Fishing.

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

- Wildlife observation.
- Nature photography.
- Education/interpretation.
- Boat access to Wapanocca Lake.

### Calendar of Events

**March-October:** fishing.

**May:** peak warbler migration, International Migratory Bird Day.

**June:** National Fishing Week.

**September-December:** squirrel/ rabbit hunting.

**October:** National Wildlife Refuge Week.

**October-January:** archery deer hunting.

**November:** quota deer gun hunting.

**November - December:** raccoon/ opossum hunting.

**December-January:** peak waterfowl numbers.

### Questions and Answers

*When does the lake open?*

The lake opens to the public March 15 and closes October 31.

*Do you allow camping?*

No. There is a privately-owned campground located along I-55 at James Mill.

*Do you allow hunting?*

Yes.

Squirrel/rabbits: September 1-December 31.

Raccoon/opossum: November 1 - December 31.

Archery deer: October 1 - January 31.

Quota gun deer (special permit required): First weekend of Arkansas modern gun deer season.

*How is fishing?*

The Wapanocca Lake fishery is recovering from the 2006 drawdown. Smaller fish are abundant and fishing success is fair.

*What is being done to restore the lake?*

Long term: Monies are being sought to fund a study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate potential sources of water supply for the lake.

Short term: Funding has been received through *The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* to improve water flow from rainwater runoff into Wapanocca Lake by installing several water diversion structures in various locations and improving channel conditions in several water supply ditches to bring water into the lake and Woody Pond. Additionally, water control structures will be installed to improve capability to manage water levels in the lake and surrounding wetlands to maintain ecosystem health and enhance important habitats for wildlife and fisheries.