

# Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

## *Fishing Regulations*

Blackbeard Island NWR, Harris Neck NWR, Pinckney Island NWR, Savannah NWR, Wassaw NWR, Wolf Island NWR

### Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

The chain of National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) that forms the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex extends from Pinckney Island NWR near Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, to Wolf Island NWR near Darien, Georgia. Between these lie Savannah, Wassaw, Tybee, Harris Neck, and Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuges. Together they span a 100-mile stretch of coastline and total over 57,000 acres. The Savannah Coastal Refuges are administered from headquarters located at the Savannah NWR Visitor Center in Hardeeville, South Carolina.

Fishing is permitted in accordance with state regulations on Blackbeard Island, Harris Neck, Wassaw, and Wolf Island NWRs, located in Georgia, and on Pinckney Island, located in South Carolina (Tybee NWR is closed to all public use). Fishing is also permitted on Savannah NWR, which has lands in both Georgia and South Carolina; there is no reciprocal agreement between the two states, therefore anglers must obtain the correct license for the state they are fishing in. Specific regulations for each refuge are listed separately in this brochure.

Anglers seeking freshwater opportunities should try Savannah NWR. Freshwater species include: largemouth bass, striped bass, catfish, crappie, sunfish and bowfin. Those anglers seeking saltwater fishing opportunities should try Pinckney Island, Wassaw, Blackbeard Island, Harris Neck, and Wolf Island NWRs. Saltwater species include flounder, red drum, spotted sea trout, black drum, sheepshead, whiting, and mullet.

### General Fishing Regulations for the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

The regulations within this brochure supplement the general regulations that govern fishing on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in the Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr>.

State fish laws and regulations are adopted and set in effect unless they have been further restricted by Federal law or regulations.

Licenses, permits, all fishing equipment and effects, and vehicles, boats, or other conveyances are subject to inspection by federal or state officers.

*Crabbing:* State regulations apply to all crabbing activities in refuge waters.

*Cast Netting:* State regulations apply to all cast netting activities in refuge waters.

*Daily Possession Limits:* State regulations apply to all freshwater and saltwater game species limits. Please visit <http://www.georgiawildlife.com/fishing/regulations> or <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/regs/fishing.html> for details.

*Boat, Motor, and Operation Limits:* Motorized boat usage is prohibited within the freshwater areas of Blackbeard Island, Harris Neck, Pinckney Island, Wassaw, and Wolf Island NWRs. Boats are allowed at Savannah NWR; however, only non-motorized boats or boats with electric motors are permitted within freshwater impoundments, including Kingfisher Pond. All Coast Guard and state boating regulations will be enforced.

### License Requirements

All Georgia recreational anglers must possess a valid state fishing license, as well as the state's free Saltwater Information Permit (SIP) to fish on Blackbeard Island, Harris Neck, Wassaw, and Wolf Island NWRs. For Georgia waters within the Savannah NWR, only the state fishing license is required (not valid in South Carolina waters). Fishing licenses for the state of Georgia can be obtained through the Georgia Department of Natural Resources website at: <http://www.gofishgeorgia.com/>

South Carolina anglers must possess a valid state freshwater fishing license to fish the Savannah NWR (not valid in Georgia waters). For Pinckney Island NWR, a state saltwater fishing license is required. Fishing licenses for the state of South Carolina can be obtained through the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources website at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/>

*No special refuge permits are required for recreational sport fishing.*

### Activities Prohibited throughout the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

- Leaving boats on refuge property overnight;
- Taking, possessing, or attempting to take or possess any wildlife including, but not limited to, alligators, turtles, frogs, snakes, and crawfish;
- The sale, or offer for sale, of any fish, crab, shrimp or other wildlife resource taken from the refuge;



## Activities Prohibited throughout the Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex continued

- Cutting or removing any live vegetation, limbs, etc.;
- Disturbing, collecting, injuring, or attempting to disturb, collect, or injure any plant, artifact, rock, or animal on any refuge;
- Feeding or harassing wildlife;
- Littering;
- Fires;
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles;
- Removal of any object or equipment owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Camping and/or overnight parking;
- Pets are not allowed on any refuges within the complex.

## Pinckney Island NWR Specific Regulations

Sport fishing on Pinckney Island NWR is permitted on designated areas of the refuge, in accordance with all applicable state regulations, and subject to the following conditions:

Saltwater fishing is permitted year-round in the estuarine waters adjacent to the refuge.

Freshwater fishing is prohibited.

A South Carolina saltwater fishing license is required.

## Savannah NWR Specific Regulations

Sport fishing on Savannah NWR is permitted on impounded waters, tidal creeks, and canals within the refuge boundaries. Sport fishing shall be in accordance with all applicable state regulations and subject to the following special conditions:

Fishing from boats is permitted year-round in Kingfisher Pond (non-motorized or electric motor boats only) and all tidal creeks, unless otherwise posted.

Fishing from boats (non-motorized or electric motor boats only) within all other impounded waters and canals is permitted **March 1 – November 30**.

Bank fishing is permitted year-round throughout the refuge, unless otherwise posted.

Only non-motorized boats and boats with electric motors are permitted on Kingfisher Pond and other impounded waters and canals.

All areas posted with “Area Closed” signs are closed to all activities including fishing.

No one will be allowed on the refuge before sunrise and all persons must be off the refuge no later than one half hour after sunset.

A Georgia fishing license is required for fishing in GA waters; A South Carolina freshwater fishing license is required for fishing in SC waters (includes refuge impoundments and bank fishing from Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive.)

## Wassaw NWR Specific Regulations

Sport fishing on Wassaw NWR is permitted on designated areas of the refuge, in accordance with all applicable state regulations, and subject to the following special conditions:

Saltwater fishing is permitted year-round in the estuarine waters adjacent to the refuge.

Bank/beach fishing into estuarine waters is permitted only from sunrise to sunset (except during managed hunts when refuge is closed.)

Freshwater fishing is prohibited.

*Boater Caution:* Coastal waters are subject to extreme tidal fluctuations of six feet. Fishermen should be familiar with the tide tables, and monitor coastal weather conditions before navigating to the barrier island refuge.

A Georgia fishing license and SIP permit are required.

## Harris Neck NWR Specific Regulations

Sport fishing on Harris Neck NWR is permitted on designated areas of the refuge, in accordance with all applicable state regulations, and subject to the following special conditions:

Saltwater fishing is permitted year-round in the estuarine waters adjacent to the refuge.

Bank fishing into estuarine waters is permitted year-round, from sunrise to sunset (except during managed hunts when refuge is closed).

Freshwater fishing is prohibited.

Barbour River Landing (boat ramp and parking area) is closed to the public from 12 am (midnight) to 4 am.

A Georgia fishing license and SIP permit required.

*Directions to Barbour River Landing:* From I-95, take Exit 67 and travel south on U.S. 17 for 1.0 miles to GA 131 (Harris Neck Road). Turn left and drive approximately seven miles to the end of Harris Neck Road. Veer left onto Barbour River Road and follow to the boat landing parking area.

## Blackbeard Island NWR Specific Regulations

Sport fishing on Blackbeard Island NWR is permitted on designated areas of the refuge, in accordance with all applicable state regulations, and subject to the following special conditions:

Saltwater fishing is permitted year-round in the estuarine waters adjacent to the refuge.

Bank/beach fishing into estuarine waters is permitted only from sunrise to sunset (except during managed hunts when refuge is closed.)

Freshwater fishing is prohibited.

*Boater Caution:* Coastal waters are subject to extreme tidal fluctuations of six feet. Fishermen should be familiar with the tide tables, and monitor coastal weather conditions before navigating to the barrier island refuge.

A Georgia fishing license and SIP are required.

## Wolf Island NWR Specific Regulations

Sport fishing on Wolf Island NWR is permitted on designated areas of the refuge, in accordance with all applicable state regulations, and subject to the following special conditions:

Saltwater fishing is permitted year-round in the estuarine waters adjacent to the refuge.

All beach, marsh, and upland areas are closed to the public.

A Georgia fishing license and SIP permit are required.

## Signs Protect Visitors and Resources

Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year. The impact of human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wild lands. Signs control recreational activities while protecting natural resources on the refuge. Please respect the following signs:



**National Wildlife Refuge**  
This sign marks the boundary of the refuge. Consult the refuge manager for authorized activities.



**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, ATV's, and motorcycles. Walking and non-motorized bicycles are allowed. Please do not block access through refuge gates.



**No Wake Zone**  
Boat speeds are managed to improve public safety and to reduce bank erosion.

## Common Fish

### Freshwater



*Largemouth Bass*



*Bowfin*



*Channel Catfish*



*Black Crappie*



*Bluegill*



*Redear Sunfish*



*Striped Bass*

### Saltwater



*Spotted Sea Trout*



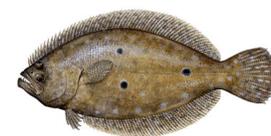
*Red Drum*



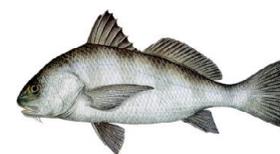
*Striped Mullet*



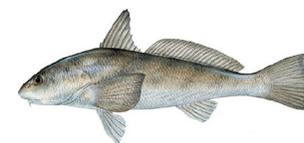
*Sheepshead*



*Flounder*



*Black Drum*



*Southern Kingfish (Whiting)*

# Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex

