



News Release

Department of the Interior / U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Cameron Prairie NWR
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For Immediate Release
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The Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex, comprised of Cameron Prairie, Sabine, and Lacassine National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) will open for public sport fishing Thursday, March 15, 2007 through October 15, 2007. Possession of all applicable fishing licenses is required. Fish species may be taken in accordance with Louisiana Recreational Fishing Regulations.

Fishing is opening at Sabine NWR for the first time since Hurricane Rita, however, not all areas will be open. Only areas accessible by boat from launches off-refuge will be opening March 15. This includes refuge areas accessible from Sabine Lake and Black Bayou on the western side and from Calcasieu Lake on the eastern side. All Recreational areas, boat launches, and canals along Highway 27 will remain closed to all activities until repairs are completed.

Boats with outboard motors of 40 horsepower or less may be used in Sabine's Unit 3 impoundment, however, the boat carts formerly used to lift boats across the levee into the impoundment have not been replaced. Boats that are less than 59 inches wide will be able to enter the impoundment from the Northline Canal through a designated bay in the water spillway.

Sabine's hours have changed to permit boat access from one hour before legal sunrise to one hour after legal sunset, however, all permitted activities such as fishing and crabbing may only occur from sunrise to sunset.

Fishing areas at Cameron Prairie NWR include Bank Fishing Road, Outfall Canal, and East Cove Unit when the Grand Bayou Boat Bay is open. Anglers can check on the status of the boat bay openings by calling 337-598-4235. Refuge hours are legal sunrise to legal sunset.

Cast netting on Cameron Prairie (East Cove Unit only) and Sabine will be permitted only during the Louisiana Inland Shrimp season. Cast netting hours at Sabine are set from noon to sunset. Possession of all applicable Louisiana fishing licenses is required to cast net on the refuges. Cast net size will follow state regulation which is a maximum of an 8.5 foot radius.

Lacassine NWR is open from one hour before legal sunrise to one hour after legal sunset. Boats with outboard motors of 25 horsepower or less may be used in Lacassine Pool. Lacassine's roads have been improved since last year and visitors are asked to obey all speed limits to reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality. The water level in the Pool is at full pool.

Please practice good boating and safety habits, observe and obey "No Wake Zones", and respect the rights of fellow fishermen and refuge visitors. Please do not litter and take off the refuge what you take on.

Safety Warning - Motorboat travel on the refuges may be hazardous due changed geography, underwater or floating debris, narrow boat runs, rough water, limited visibility, fog, vegetation, blind crossings, and swells or wakes from other watercraft.

Fishing regulation brochures for all the Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges - Cameron Prairie, Lacassine and Sabine have been compiled into one fishing regulation brochure. This brochure will be available on the main page of our Refuge Complex website at <http://www.fws.gov/swlarefugecomplex> under the **Fishing** link after February 21, 2007 and hard copies will be available after March 5, 2007. Anglers may call the refuge at 337-598-2216 to have a copy mailed or you may pick one up at kiosks located near refuge launch areas.