



United States Department of the Interior



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Southwest Florida Gulf Coast Refuge Complex

Florida Panther and Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuges

12085 State Road 29 South Immokalee, Florida 34142

Phone: 239-657-8001 Fax: 239-657-8002

Email: floridapanther@fws.gov

Dear Hunter,

This 2015-2016 season, Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge has shifted its Hunting Regulations brochure and permit to a virtual format available online. This letter details how you can obtain your permit for the 2015-2016 season. Thank you in advance for helping us transition to this updated version of the Hunting Regulations.

The virtual brochure and permit is available on the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge website.

Type the following web address into your internet browser: www.fws.gov/refuge/Florida_Panther/

You will see links to the permit and this hunt letter on the website homepage as well as under Permits in the Visit section of the site. If you wish to obtain more than one copy of the permit, please print multiple copies from the web address. If you are unable to connect to the internet or print a copy of the permit, please contact our office for assistance.

Next year, for the 2016-2017 season, the Refuge will not be sending this letter or the Hunting Regulations via mail. **If you would like to add your email to a list of hunters to be emailed a copy of the brochure or to be reminded of next year's permit availability and where to print it, please send your email address to floridapanther@fws.gov.** Again, if you are unable to connect to the internet or print a copy of the permit, please contact our office for assistance.

Aside from changing to the virtual format, the most notable change for this season is in the Hunt Days and Youth Hunters sections. **We have designated Tuesday, December 22, 2015 as a youth-only hunt day.** We hope this will encourage the next generation of waterfowl hunters and will provide enjoyable experiences for families to share the outdoors together.

To hunt legally on the Refuge, you must have a Refuge permit completed, signed, and in your possession.

The permit is located on the front of the brochure and is not transferrable. Each hunter in your party is required to carry a Refuge permit in addition to all other state and federal licenses, stamps, and permits.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions or concerns. We thank you for your interest in Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you,

Kevin Godsea
Project Leader

Hunt Areas

Public hunting is permitted only in the area shown on the map on the reverse side of this brochure. Areas closed to hunting in proximity of the hunt area are established as buffer areas to respect adjoining landowners and other refuge users. Closed areas will be posted.

Entry into the refuge for hunting may not begin until 4 am for designated hunt days. Hunters are strongly encouraged to scout marsh and wetland hunt areas during daylight hours prior to the hunting season.

Hunting or Shooting

Jump shooting is not encouraged as the hunt area is limited and one could easily infringe upon another hunter's setup. Hunting or shooting in the US 41 roadway or across it is prohibited by state law.

Boats

Air thrust boats, hovercraft, personal watercraft, and off-road vehicles are prohibited at all times. Marsh water levels are generally shallow, less than 18 inches. As the season progresses, water levels will get extremely shallow and dry up entirely. Hunters may need to push boats for long distances along marked waterways and elsewhere.

Motorized watercraft is limited to outboard motors with a maximum of 25 HP and short shaft motors with 5-10 HP will generally operate better. Go-Devil engines are also allowed; however hunters should confine the use of motors to the marked trails, and use paddles, push poles or trolling motors as they cross over marsh grasses.

Hunters may call the refuge office for the latest information on water levels.

Dogs

The use of dogs is encouraged to retrieve dead or wounded waterfowl. Dogs must remain under the control of their handlers at all times. A good dog will speedily retrieve your game and lessen disturbances to flying birds in the area.

Camping

Camping and overnight parking is prohibited.

Non-toxic Shot

Only steel shot or other approved non-toxic shot may be used. Use and possession of lead and any other toxic shot in any gauge is prohibited.

Hunting Guides

All guides are required to purchase a refuge Special Use Permit (SUP) and have it in their possession while in the field. Inquire at the Refuge Office for details.

Alcohol

The possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

Guns

Ducks and coots may be taken with shotguns only. Possession of handguns and other long guns is prohibited unless specifically authorized under the provisions of subchapter C of 50 CFR 27.41.

Refuge Management Notes

The refuge will be evaluating the 2015-2016 waterfowl hunting season and potential changes to the hunt to improve hunt quality and hunter safety. We are interested in your comments which can be received at the refuge office address.

Refuge staff is participating in all aspects of environmental restoration of the former Southern Golden Gate Estates area now known as the Picayune Strand State Forest (PSSF) immediately north of US41. The removal of roads and filling of canals in PSSF will return a more natural water flow into the Ten Thousand Islands estuary and promote a healthier and more productive habitat for migratory birds and many other species. The refuge plans to conduct prescribed burns in the marshes to maintain existing marsh and retard the spread of undesirable vegetation. These activities should improve waterfowl habitat.

Hunting Recommendations

Decoys and calls should be used to bring birds into ideal shooting range. When setting out decoys, place the outer decoy 25-30 yards from the blind. This will help you judge when to shoot and result in fewer cripples and more birds in your bag.

Be a sportsman and respect the rights of other hunters afield. Before setting up, make sure you are not too close to others (allow a minimum of 150 yards between setups). This will allow birds more room to work and lessen the chances of flaring ducks working another hunter's decoys.

An important aspect of the hunter's experience is watching birds work over decoys. Sky busters flare ducks and make them wary of hunting areas. Letting the birds come in close and picking your shots will make for a more rewarding experience for all hunters.

Be sure of your shot. Many endangered and threatened wildlife species also use the refuge.

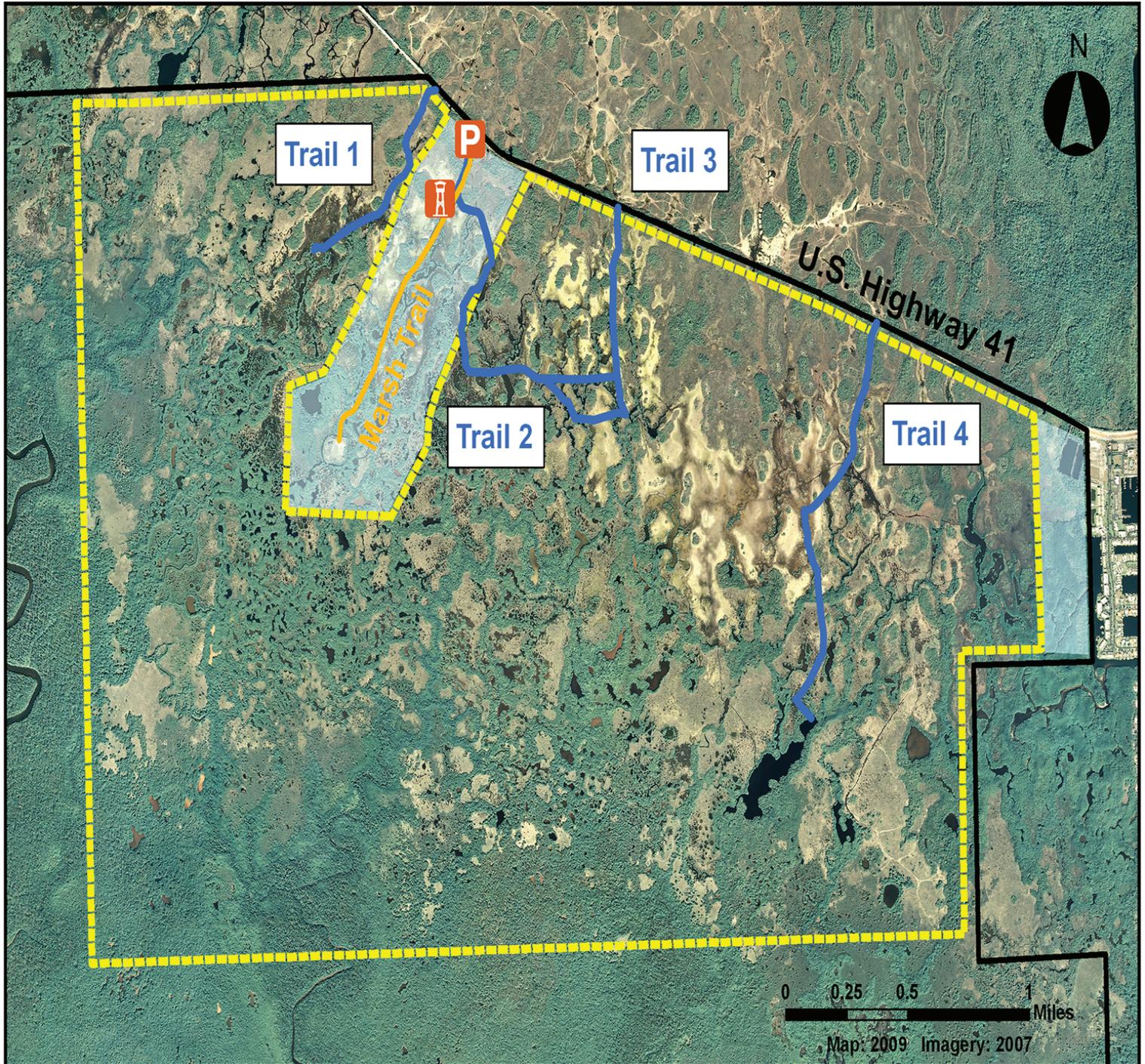
The area around Marsh Trail is closed to hunting to provide a quality experience for trail visitors during hunting season.

For further information or to provide comments, please contact:

Refuge Manager
Ten Thousand Islands
National Wildlife Refuge
12085 State Road 29 South
Immokalee, FL 34142

Phone: 239/657 8001
Email: floridapanther@fws.gov
Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4 pm

Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge



Parking Area	Hiking Trail	Duck and Coot Hunting Area
Observation Tower	Canoe Trails	Area Closed to Hunting
		Refuge Boundary