U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

A.R.M. Loxahatchee
National Wildlife Refuge

photo: USFWS

photo: M. D. Maffei

photo: USFWS

photo: R. Hirschboeck

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Refuge Facts
- Established: 1951.
- Acres: 143,954.
- Located in Palm Beach County, FL.
- Location: the refuge is located on US 441/SR7 between Boynton Beach Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue, approximately 6 miles west of Boynton Beach, FL.
- Administers Hobe Sound NWR.

Natural History
- Refuge occupies the last of the northern Everglades.
- Nearly 50,000 acres infested with invasive exotic plants such as melaleuca and Old World climbing fern.
- Other management concerns include water quality, quantity, timing, and distribution.
- Concentrations of migratory waterfowl, migratory passerines, wood storks, wading birds.
- Rookeries present include great blue heron, anhinga, white ibis, little blue heron, tricolored heron, black-crowned night-heron, great egrets, cattle egret, snowy egrets.
- Composed of typical Everglades habitat including wet prairies, sloughs, sawgrass, tree islands.
- Impoundments .....2,150 acres
  Wet prairies.....53,453 acres
  Sloughs .....1,448 acres
  Sawgrass .....40,074 acres
  Tree island.....36,210 acres
  Cattail .....10,139 acres
  Cypress swamp .....400 acres

Financial Impact on Refuge
- 25 person staff.
- 300,000 visitors annually.

Refuge Objectives
- Restore and conserve the natural diversity, abundance and ecological function of the refuge.
- Conserve natural and cultural resources through partnerships and protection.
- Develop appropriate and compatible wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education programs.
- Continue a partnership with the South Florida Water Management District.

Management Tools
- Water management for snail kite and wading bird rookeries.
- Prescribed fire.
- Mechanical/chemical/biological control of exotic pest plants.
- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.

Public Use Opportunities
- Nature trails.
- Environmental education.
- Visitor center.
- Observation tower.
- Observation platform.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.
- Everglades canoe trail.
- Fishing.
- Waterfowl hunting, including youth hunt.
- Alligator hunting.
- Bicycling.

Calendar of Events

February: Everglades Day.

June: National Fishing Week.

August-October: Alligator hunting.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

November-January: Waterfowl hunting.

Year-round: Calendar of events activities.

Questions and Answers

Where are the airboat rides?
We have no airboat rides on the refuge. Airboats have been determined to be an incompatible use of the refuge. Airboat rides are by private enterprise and are available in adjacent Water Conservation Area #2.

Who was Arthur R. Marshall?
Art Marshall, a former Fish and Wildlife Service employee, was a biologist and conservationist who worked tirelessly for Everglades restoration. His work led to the formation of the Save the Everglades program, and in 1985, the Florida Wildlife Federation named him Conservationist of the Decade. The refuge was renamed in his honor, from Loxahatchee NWR to A.R.M. Loxahatchee NWR, in 1986.

What is the fruit on the tree near the back door of the visitor center that looks like an apple? Is it edible?
The tree is called the Pond Apple Tree. The fruit is called the Pond Apple, or the old timers used to call it alligator pear. It is edible, but quite cottony and not very tasty. It's very attractive to wildlife.

Where are the alligators?
Alligators are most likely found along the Marsh Trail in open waters. Smaller alligators can usually be found in the ponds behind the Visitor Center. Many larger alligators can be found at the boat ramp and fishing pier. The refuge has the greatest density of alligators south of Lake Okeechobee.

What is the "red stuff" on the trees?
The "red stuff" on the bark of the trees is called lichen. This is a primitive plant that has a symbiotic relationship between an algae and a fungus. This particular lichen is called Baton Rouge, or Red Stick.

What are the nobby protrusions sticking up out of the water? Are they young or small cypress trees?
Those knobs are called cypress knees. They are an extension of the root system and their function is still being debated. Some say it helps support the tree as it has a shallow root system. These protrusions tend to stabilize the tree during storms. The second theory is that they provide a gaseous exchange for the roots which are covered with water. The third theory, and most recent, is that the tree stores starch in the knees.