

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge  
2700 Suwannee Canal Road  
Folkston, GA 31537  
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<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

Date: May 6, 2015

Contact: Susan Heisey, 912-496-7366, ex 233  
Supervisory Refuge Ranger

## **REEL in some FUN at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Banks Lake Fishing Derby**

Lakeland, GA...The 15<sup>th</sup> annual Banks Lake Youth Fishing Derby will be held on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Children ages 3-15 are invited to join the festivities starting at Flatlanders Lake, located off Highway 221 in downtown Lakeland. Registration is from 7:00 a.m.-7:30 a.m., and fishing from 7:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. First, second, and third place trophies will be awarded for largest fish by weight and most fish to each age group. Participants are encouraged to bring their own rod/reel, bait, and bucket or stringer as a limited number will be available. This event is hosted by the following partners; Banks Lake Outdoors, the City of Lakeland, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Lakeland-Lanier Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Valdosta Bassmasters Club.

Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge, off Highway 122 (2 miles west of Lakeland), will offer family-friendly activities following the derby from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Activities include games, crafts, knot tying demonstrations, “grunting” for worms, live animal exhibits, and more. Bring your own t-shirt for fish printing, or buy one there for \$3.00 (supply is limited)! Refreshments will be provided by Valdosta Bassmasters along with door prizes, donated by event supporters. The refuge is also celebrating National Fishing and Boating Week, June 6<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. During this week, the public can enjoy time spent boating and fishing during “Georgia Free Fishing Days” June 6<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup>. During the “Georgia Free Fishing Days,” Georgia residents 16 years and older do not need a fishing license. All other fishing regulations apply. For more information about this event, please contact the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center located at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge at 912-496-7836 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

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The Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (East Entrance) to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is the primary entrance managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is located 11 miles southwest of Folkston, GA off Hwy 121/23. Entrance fees are \$5 per vehicle/\$1 per bicycle for a daily pass (good for 7 days). Annual passes are also available. The refuge is open daily and offers a variety of opportunities for the visiting public. Call 912-496-7836 or visit the refuge website at [www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee) for hours of operation, upcoming events, and entrance fee information.

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to our events for all participants. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in our events should contact Susan Heisey at (912) 496-7366 ext. 233 or [Susan\\_Heisey@fws.gov](mailto:Susan_Heisey@fws.gov). In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please contact us for assistance at least five business days before the event.*

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook pages at [www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge](https://www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge) or [www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast](https://www.facebook.com/usfwssoutheast)*