



# Banks Lake

## National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



photo: USFWS



photo: USFWS

**Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Okefenokee NWR Manager**  
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<http://www.fws.gov/bankslake/>

### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1985
- Size: 4,049 acres (1500 acres marsh, 1459 cypress swamp and 1000 acres open water)
- Location: Lanier County, Georgia
- Budget: No operational budget. Banks Lake NWR is administered by the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge which provides all of the manpower and supplies.
- Entrance Fee: None
- Visitors: Estimated 20,000 per year

### History

- Banks Lake is a natural pocosin, a type of freshwater wetland saturated with groundwater. It was most likely formed by tidal action of the ocean during a more temperate climate thousands of years ago.
- In the 1800's Banks Lake was transformed into a mill pond when a low-level dam was built across the drainage creek in order to use the water to power a mill.
- The Nature Conservancy purchased the land on March 14, 1980 after the owner planned to drain Banks Lake and harvest the timber.
- In April, 1980 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service entered into a lease agreement with The Nature Conservancy for management and operation of Banks Lake.
- On February 22, 1985 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased Banks Lake from The Nature Conservancy.

### Hours of Operation

- Refuge- Open 24 hours daily
- Banks Lake Outpost- call 229-482-3453 for current times.

### Objectives

- To provide optimum habitat for a wide diversity of native fauna and flora.
- To provide optimum habitat and protection for endangered and threatened species.
- To provide opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation, interpretation, and environmental education.
- To provide a showcase outdoor recreational opportunity for the physically challenged.
- To provide quality (trophy) fishing opportunities through a naturally sustaining sport fishery.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Walking trail
- Boating
- Fishing for chain pickerel, bluegill, largemouth bass, lake chubsucker, gar, warmouth, crappie and bowfin.
- Observing such wildlife as wood storks, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks, osprey, black and turkey vultures, American kestrel, barred owls, white ibis and wood ducks. Large numbers of sandhill cranes visit the refuge during the winter months.
- Banks Lake Outpost offers canoe and kayak rentals, snacks and drinks, a gift shop, restrooms, tackle and bait.
- Youth fishing derby held on the first Saturday in June

### Directions

- Banks Lake NWR is located in the western half of Lanier County in southern Georgia, two miles west of Lakeland, GA along State Highway 122 (See map on back)



Moody Air Force Base

Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge

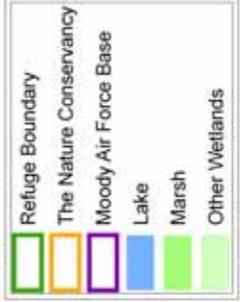
Old Field

Banks Lake

Lakeland

Refuge Entrance

Lake Erma



To Valdosta

To Homerville  
Valdosta

135

To Ray City

129

122

To Hall County  
75

