



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

News Release

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Increased Public Access to Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Folkston, GA – In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and in coordination with the Governor and local public health authorities, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is increasing public recreational access by resuming normal hours of operation to Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge near Folkston, GA. The refuge is working with federal, state, and local public health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and is using a phased approach to safely increase access to refuge lands and facilities as rapidly as possible.

Beginning Saturday June 27, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will resume normal hours of operation at the Main Entrance – Suwannee Canal Recreation Area. The refuge will resume opening at 30 minutes before sunrise and closing at 7:30 p.m. daily. Entrance fee collection has resumed – a 7-day pass is only \$5 or a refuge-specific annual pass can be purchased for \$15. The onsite concession, Okefenokee Adventures, is offering modified services at this time. Information on services and hours of operation for the concession can be found on their website www.okefenokeeadventures.com or by calling 912-496-7156.

In addition, the following areas continue to be open and available for public access:

- Swamp Island Drive
- Hiking Trails
- Chesser Island Boardwalk
- Chesser Island Homestead grounds
- Boat ramp access to water trails for day-use
- Kingfisher Landing
- Suwannee River Sill
- The Pocket

The health and safety of our visitors, volunteers, and employees remains our number one priority and the following facilities or areas remain closed with no projected date of resuming these operations at this time:

Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center

Overnight Campsites (permit issuance has been suspended until further notice)

As we continue to review access, services, and programs, a return to full operations at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will be phased in according to protocols set by Governors and local public health officials. These decisions will be informed by the most current guidance and information from the Department of the Interior, [CDC](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and others to ensure the health and safety of those visiting and working at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge are protected. We will continue to closely monitor conditions and adjust our operations accordingly.

We continue to urge our visitors to do their part when visiting Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and to follow CDC guidance to prevent the spread of infectious diseases by maintaining a safe distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others; washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; and most importantly, staying home if you feel sick.

Updates about the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service's response to coronavirus are posted at <https://www.fws.gov/home/public-health-update.html>.

Please check our website for current updates and status: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.