



News Release

For Release: 2/02/2021

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Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Big Lake WMA Closed Monday, February 8 through Friday, February 12, 2021

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Big Lake WMA will be closed to daytime public access on Monday, February 8 through Friday, February 12, 2021. With favorable weather, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services (USDA, APHIS, WS), in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and Missouri Department of Conservation, will be conducting aerial gunning operations aimed at reducing feral hog populations on the federal and state lands.

Aerial operations are scheduled to begin Feb. 8 and continue through February 12. Public safety during the flights is the primary concern for the temporary closures. To provide safety for the public and comply with USDA regulations, access will not be allowed during ongoing operations.

Varying weather and site specific conditions will not allow for specific dates of the closures. The dates allow some flexibility to take advantage of resources over large contiguous tracts of habitat. In the event that access to the WMAs or NWR is restricted, Refuge staff and partnering agency staff will be on-site to maintain road and access closures.

The aerial operations are the result of planning and coordination of multiple partners, condensed into several days of actual operations. The AGFC, USFWS, MDC, and USDA APHIS would like to thank the public in advance for their patience and understanding while these activities are underway and apologize for any inconvenience related to the operation.

For additional information concerning the Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge please contact Steven Rimer at (870) 564-2429. For additional information concerning AGFC WMAs please contact AGFC Assistant Chief Luke Lewis at (501) 223-6350.

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.