Ten Thousand Islands

National Wildlife Refuge
Hunting Regulations 2015-2016

Welcome to Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refge
Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1996 to develop, advance, manage, conserve, and protect the refuge's estuarine ecosystem and its fish and wildlife resources. With a variety of coastal habitats, including freshwater and saltwater marsh systems and brackish ponds, these areas provide significant wintering habitat for migratory birds. Ducks and coots occur in these habitats in the fall and winter. Duck species occurring on the refuge include lesser scaup, mottled duck, ring-necked duck, hooded merganser and blue-winged teal.

Hunting on Ten Thousand Islands NWR
Only duck and coot hunting is permitted on approximately 4,000 acres of fresh and brackish water of the refuge's 35,000 acres. Please be aware that private property adjoins refuge lands. No other wildlife may be taken or hunted on the refuge.

Boat Access
Hunters are responsible for safe use along the US 41 roadway when launching any watercraft and are strongly urged to exercise caution. Hunters should only use launching sites for as long as needed to off-load watercraft then promptly remove their vehicles and trailers to another location so that other hunters will be able to use launch sites.

Hunt Regulations
Hunting regulations are designed to protect wildlife populations and the sportsman. All hunting will be in accordance with State and Federal regulations. If there are questions concerning State regulations, hunters should consult with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or their officers. Hunters and fishermen, their vehicles, vessels and equipment are subject to inspection by Service Law Enforcement Officers.

Season
The open season for ducks and coots is concurrent with seasons established by the State of Florida. No other species other than ducks and coots may be taken.

Hunt Days
Hunting is allowed only on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays within the state season from one half hour before sunrise until 12 pm when all hunting will cease. During the September duck season, hunters may hunt all days in that season as designated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. All hunting gear (decoys, guns, blinds) will need to be removed by 1 pm. Tuesday, December 22, 2015 is a youth-only hunt day. See Youth Hunters section below.

Youth Hunters
In accordance with State regulations, hunters under age 16 may hunt with an adult 21 years of age or older. In addition to the State youth hunting days, the Refuge Manager designates Tuesday, December 22, 2015 as a youth-only hunt day.

Permits/Licenses
All hunters must possess a signed refuge hunting permit, attached to this leaflet. This permit is required to be carried at all times when hunting. In addition, hunters will need to carry all required licenses (state hunt), stamps (federal and state waterfowl stamp), and permits (refuge, migratory bird hunt) when hunting. Refuge permits are non-transferrable.

Hunting Blinds
Hunters are encouraged to bring portable blinds made of man-made or native vegetation materials. All temporary blinds must be broken down at the end of each hunt day. Manufactured or man-made materials must be removed from the refuge. Cutting of mangroves or other federal and state protected plants is prohibited in accordance with state law. Construction of permanent blinds or pits is prohibited.

Personal Property
Decoys, guns, blinds, and boats used for hunting must be removed from the refuge by 1 pm daily.

Ten Thousand Islands
National Wildlife Refuge
12085 SR 29 South
Immokalee, FL 34142

Phone: 239/657 8001
Email: floridapanther@fws.gov
Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8 am-4 pm

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD

August 2015

Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge
Duck and Coot Hunt Permit 2015 -2016

Name _____

Address _____

I have read and understand the refuge hunting regulations.
This permit must be completed, signed and in my possession during hunts.
Permits are not transferable.

Signature _____

Hunt Areas
Public hunting is permitted only in the area shown on the map on the reverse side of this brochure. Areas closed to hunting in proximity of the hunt area are established as buffer areas to respect adjoining landowners and other refuge users. Closed areas will be posted.

Entry into the refuge for hunting may not begin until 4 am for designated hunt days. Hunters are strongly encouraged to scout marsh and wetland hunt areas during daylight hours prior to the hunting season.

Hunting or Shooting
Jump shooting is not encouraged as the hunt area is limited and one could easily infringe upon another hunter's setup. Hunting or shooting in the US 41 roadway or across it is prohibited by state law.

Boats
Air thrust boats, hovercraft, personal watercraft, and off-road vehicles are prohibited at all times. Marsh water levels are generally shallow, less than 18 inches. As the season progresses, water levels will get extremely shallow and dry up entirely. Hunters may need to push boats for long distances along marked waterways and elsewhere.

Motorized watercraft is limited to outboard motors with a maximum of 25 HP and short shaft motors with 5-10 HP will generally operate better. Go-Devil engines are also allowed; however hunters should confine the use of motors to the marked trails, and use paddles, push poles or trolling motors as they cross over marsh grasses.

Hunters may call the refuge office for the latest information on water levels.

Dogs
The use of dogs is encouraged to retrieve dead or wounded waterfowl. Dogs must remain under the control of their handlers at all times. A good dog will speedily retrieve your game and lessen disturbances to flying birds in the area.

Camping
Camping and overnight parking is prohibited.

Non-toxic Shot
Only steel shot or other approved non-toxic shot may be used. Use and possession of lead and any other toxic shot in any gauge is prohibited.

Hunting Guides
All guides are required to purchase a refuge Special Use Permit (SUP) and have it in their possession while in the field. Inquire at the Refuge Office for details.

Alcohol
The possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

Guns
Ducks and coots may be taken with shotguns only. Possession of handguns and other long guns is prohibited unless specifically authorized under the provisions of subchapter C of 50 CFR 27.41.

Refuge Management Notes
The refuge will be evaluating the 2015-2016 waterfowl hunting season and potential changes to the hunt to improve hunt quality and hunter safety. We are interested in your comments which can be received at the refuge office address.

Refuge staff is participating in all aspects of environmental restoration of the former Southern Golden Gate Estates area now known as the Picayune Strand State Forest (PSSF) immediately north of US41. The removal of roads and filling of canals in PSSF will return a more natural water flow into the Ten Thousand Islands estuary and promote a healthier and more productive habitat for migratory birds and many other species. The refuge plans to conduct prescribed burns in the marshes to maintain existing marsh and retard the spread of undesirable vegetation. These activities should improve waterfowl habitat.

Hunting Recommendations
Decoys and calls should be used to bring birds into ideal shooting range. When setting out decoys, place the outer decoy 25-30 yards from the blind. This will help you judge when to shoot and result in fewer cripples and more birds in your bag.

Be a sportsman and respect the rights of other hunters afield. Before setting up, make sure you are not too close to others (allow a minimum of 150 yards between setups). This will allow birds more room to work and lessen the chances of flaring ducks working another hunter's decoys.

An important aspect of the hunter's experience is watching birds work over decoys. Sky busters flare ducks and make them wary of hunting areas. Letting the birds come in close and picking your shots will make for a more rewarding experience for all hunters.

Be sure of your shot. Many endangered and threatened wildlife species also use the refuge.

The area around Marsh Trail is closed to hunting to provide a quality experience for trail visitors during hunting season.

For further information or to provide comments, please contact:
Refuge Manager
Ten Thousand Islands
National Wildlife Refuge
12085 State Road 29 South
Immokalee, FL 34142

Phone: 239/657 8001
Email: floridapanther@fws.gov
Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4 pm

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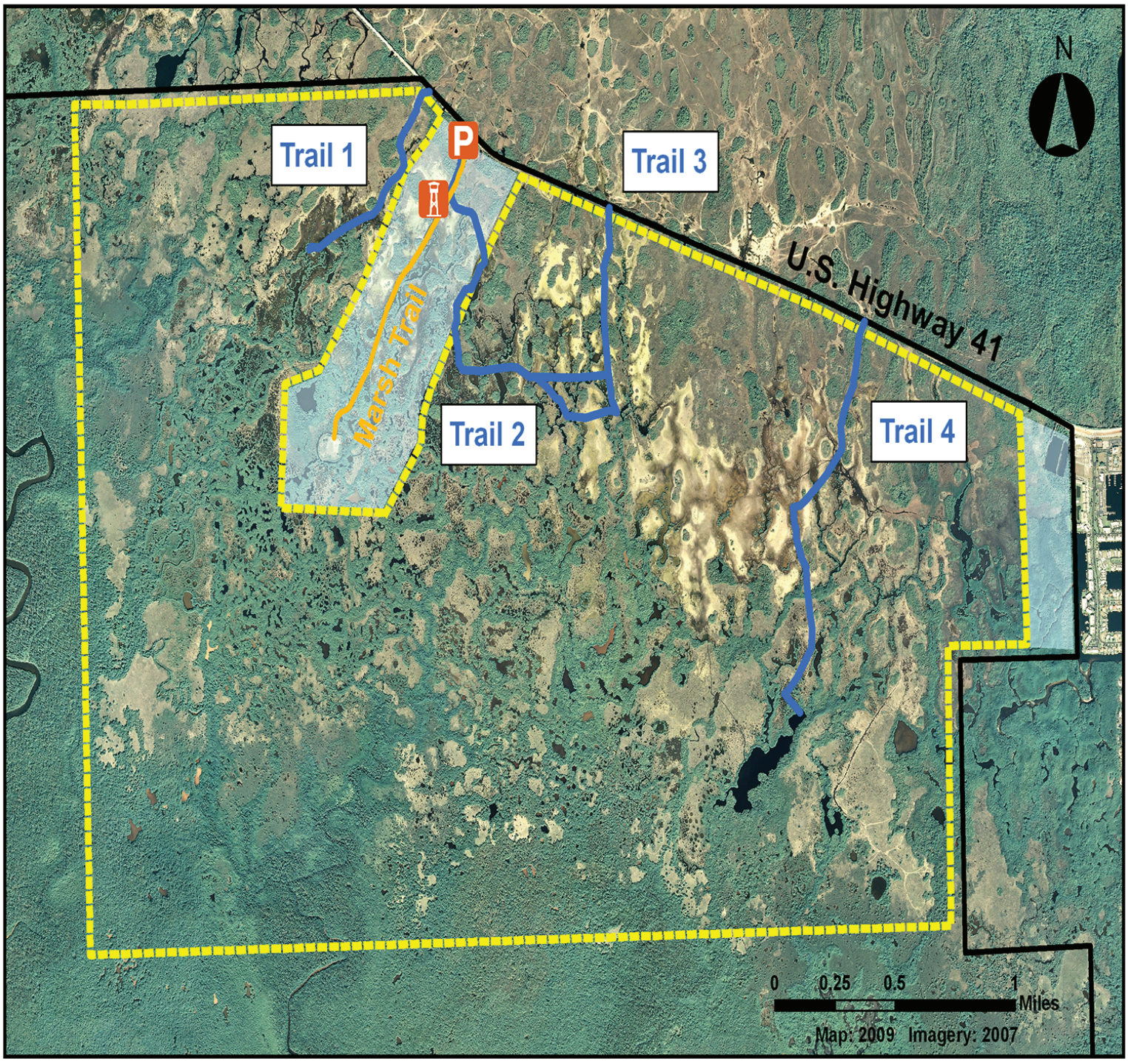

Parking Area
Observation Tower
Hiking Trail
Canoe Trails
Duck and Coot Hunting Area
Area Closed to Hunting
Refuge Boundary