

Grand Bay

National Wildlife Refuge



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1992.
- Acres: 10,000 in Jackson County, Mississippi and Mobile County, Alabama.
- Other management: FMHA tracts 930 acres.
- Location: this refuge is located about 10 miles east of Pascagoula, MS, and 20 miles southwest of Mobile, Alabama. The office is currently located on Bayou Heron Road.

Natural History

- Major habitats consist of tidal marsh on the south portion and pine/pine savanna on the central and north portions.
- Federally listed threatened species that are on or may visit this refuge include the brown pelican, gopher tortoise, and bald eagle.

Financial Impact of the Refuge

- One-person staff.
- 700 visitors annually.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide diverse habitats (pine/savanna, wetlands, and coastal marsh).
- Provide environmental education, interpretation, and wildlife oriented recreation to refuge visitors.

Management Tools

- Restoring open savanna habitat/wetlands with prescribed fire.
- Mechanical/chemical control of noxious plants.
- Law enforcement.
- Education/interpretation.
- Partnerships.

Public Use Opportunities

- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.
- Boating through the tidal marsh.

Calendar of Events

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Questions and Answers

Will the refuge be open to the public?

Yes, a major emphasis is being developed for environmental education and interpretation. For example, several group/agencies will work as partners in this effort.

Will the refuge be open to hunting?

Yes, limited public hunting will be available as it is compatible with other uses.

Who are the primary partners?

- Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).

- Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Grand Bay Bioreserve.

What kind of habitat is on this refuge and what lives in it?

Habitats on this refuge basically consist of tidal marsh and pine/savanna. These habitats provide excellent food and cover for many species of fish and wildlife. Coastal marsh contributes essential food and cover for over 90 percent of marine fishes such as spotted seatrout, red drum, flounder, blue crab, and shrimp.

The Mississippi/Alabama seafood industry is highly dependent on coastal marsh. These tidal wetlands also provide valuable habitat for wildlife such as waterfowl, wading birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

How do you manage the pine savannas?

Pine/savanna is primarily located in the central and northern part of the refuge and represents a unique habitat type consisting of plants such as wiregrasses, sundews, rushes, sedges, pitcher plants, and orchids.

Many species of wildlife such as wading birds, neo-tropical migrants, raptors, foxes, raccoons, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians use pine savannas for food, cover, and nesting.

Fire under controlled conditions (prescribed burns) is an important wildlife management tool. Prescribed burning is critical for converting the more dense vegetation, (i.e. pine flatwoods\shrub lands) to savanna. Once the savannas are restored they are burned every three to five years to maintain habitat values and prevent them from returning to the shrub and flatwoods habitats. The succulent green vegetation that returns shortly after burning is heavily utilized by wildlife such as deer, turkey and rabbit.