

General Introduction BIG LAKE

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1915, is one of over 565 national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary objective of the Refuge is to provide habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. The Refuge is located in Mississippi County, Arkansas.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation are priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These wildlife-dependent uses are carefully managed on Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge to ensure they are compatible with refuge purposes and provide safe, high-quality, low impact, recreational opportunities. Users of the Refuge must obey all signs pertaining to visitation, access, and public use regulations. All public uses, including hunting and fishing, are conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations.

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge is located adjacent to Big Lake Wildlife Management Area, managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Regulations may vary between the two areas, consult the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for regulations pertaining to Big Lake Wildlife Management Area.

Access and Vehicle Use

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge Visitors may enter the Refuge no earlier than 4:00 am and must leave by one hour after sunset except those that may hunt or fish at night with the appropriate equipment and required license.

Motorized boat entry into the Big Lake Wilderness is prohibited any time.

The entire lake, Baker’s Field Island, and the Sand-Slough Moist Soil Unit are waterfowl sanctuaries and are closed to ALL entry and public use, including hunting and fishing, from November 1 - February 28.

Boats are prohibited November 1 - February 28, except in Ditch 28, Ditch 81 and south of Sand Slough Dam.

Boat access by hunters from November 1 - February 28 is limited to launching at Seven Mile boat ramp and boat use in Ditch 28 only.

Personal watercraft (e.g., jet-skis, etc.), hover craft, and airboats are prohibited.

Boats may be launched only in designated areas.

Climbing onto and/or fishing from any water control structure and associated wingwalls and fences, or the top of the Floodway Dam south of Highway 18, or entering any closed areas (areas are designated by signs) are prohibited.

Most refuge roads are open to the general public. However, roads may be closed at any time hazardous or poor road conditions exist or other administrative needs warrant. A locked gate or other barrier, road closed sign, or no vehicle sign means the road is closed to ALL vehicle travel but not to foot travel unless signed otherwise.

All vehicles must stay on maintained roads or established parking areas and meet all applicable federal and state requirements regulating the use of a licensed motor vehicle. Vehicles equipped with oversize tractor lug type tires are prohibited.

Motor vehicle speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted.

ATVs are prohibited, except for use by mobility-impaired hunters possessing a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager.

Horses/mules are prohibited.

General Refuge Regulations

Permitted activities are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Nighttime use is limited to fishing, frogging, and/or raccoon/opossum hunting and the appropriate tackle or gear must be possessed.

Commercial Activities

Anyone engaged in any commercial activity, including fishing, must first obtain a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager.

Prohibited Activities include:

- Possession of open alcohol containers on refuge roads, ATV trails, parking areas, boat ramps, fishing piers, or observation decks.

- Camping.

- Building fires.

- Cutting or defacing trees, shrubs, or other plants.

- Littering (including, but not limited to shotgun shell hulls and cigarette butts).

- Searching for or removal of artifacts.

- Horseback riding.

- Possession or use of fireworks.

- Use of firearms and possession or use of archery/crossbow equipment except during refuge hunts that allow their use.

- Loaded hunting firearms in or on a vehicle or boat under power. “Loaded” is defined as having shells in the firearm or an ignition device on the muzzleloader.

- Target practice or non-hunting discharge of firearms.

- Dog field trials and organized training events.

- Fishing tournaments.

- Taking or possessing turtles or mollusks.

- Possession, use, or manufacturing of illegal drugs.

- Artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife, except as authorized for frogging and raccoon/opossum hunting.

- Possession or use of non-biodegradable materials to mark trails.

- Failure to remove all marking materials from the Refuge after the hunt.

- Use of Drones.

- The use of natural scents or lures that contain natural deer and elk urine or other biofluids.

Sport Fishing and Frogging Regulations

Sport fishing is permitted on all refuge waters from March 1 - October 31 in accordance with state regulations.

Frogging is permitted in accordance with the state season and regulations but ends on October 31.

Crawfish may be collected for personal use only. The owner’s Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number must be permanently affixed to each trap.

Sport fishing with the use of non-motorized boats and boats with electric trolling motors is permitted in the Sand Slough-Mud Slough area (designated on map and on the area by signs) from November 1 - February 28 during daylight hours only.

General Hunt Regulations

A Refuge permit is required for all hunting activities.

Permits are non-transferable and must be signed by the hunter and carried at all times while on the refuge in possession of hunting gear. A permit is located on the front of this brochure or can be downloaded from the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/biglake>.

Bag limits for all species are the same as state limits unless specified otherwise.

Mobility-impaired hunters

Mobility-impaired hunters may apply for a refuge Special Use Permit allowing the use of an ATV on Oak Island Trail. For more information, please call the Refuge at 870/564 2429.

Prohibited hunting activities include:

- Trapping.

- Driving or screwing any metal object into a tree or hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been driven or screwed to support a hunter.

- Building or hunting from permanent blinds or stands.

- Possession or distribution of bait or hunting over bait, salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for wildlife.

- Hunting from mowed or gravel roads.

- Hunting in Sand Slough Moist Soil Unit, Baker’s Island Field, and refuge headquarters area (see map).

- Possession or use of lead shot or buckshot while hunting.

- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages while hunting.

- FmHA Tracts: (Lawrence & Craighead Counties) Closed to ALL entry and public use.

Hunters under the age of 16

Anyone born after 1968 must complete a hunter education course and carry a valid hunter education card to hunt in Arkansas. Children under 16 may hunt without hunter education as long as they are under the direct supervision of an adult who is 21 years old and has a valid hunting license. Home state hunter education cards will be honored.

Migratory Birds

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Ditch 28 are CLOSED to ALL waterfowl and migratory bird hunting.

Small Game

Only rifles chambered for rimfire cartridges or shotguns with steel shot or other non-toxic shot may be used for small game hunting.

Squirrel: September 1, 2019 - February 29, 2020. Dogs allowed North of Timm’s Point.

Rabbit: September 1, 2019 – February 29, 2020
Dogs allowed North of Timm’s Point.

Furbearer

Beaver, nutria, and coyote may be taken incidental to any refuge hunt by the use of the device appropriate for that hunt and according to any applicable state regulations.

Raccoon: September 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020. Dogs are required for hunting raccoons at night.

Opossum: September 1, 2019 – February 29, 2020. Dogs are required for hunting opossums at night.

Feral hogs may not be taken on the refuge during any hunts. Feral hogs are destructive, non-native animals that are incompatible with refuge management. Hogs may not be possessed, transported, or released on the Refuge.

Big Game

All deer harvested on the refuge must be checked according to state regulations and the zone to be immediately recorded on your hunting license is 030.

Hunters may use long, recurve, compound, and crossbows for the archery deer hunt. Use of firearms, muzzleloaders, and dogs are prohibited.

Only portable stands may be used and the owner’s Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number must be permanently affixed to the stand. A portable hunting stand is any device or structure used for the purpose of hunting that can be carried in its entirety and erected by hand including but not limited to tripod stands, lean-to stands, lock-on stands, ladder stands and climbing stands. Stands may be erected 7 days prior to the refuge deer season and must be removed within 7 days of the closing of the archery hunt.

We prohibit leaving any tree stand, ground blind, or game camera on the refuge without the owner’s Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number clearly written in a conspicuous location.

The Refuge may be closed and archery hunting suspended at the discretion of the Refuge Manager during periods of severe flooding.

Deer Limits and Refuge Legal Buck Definition

Refuge bag limit of three deer. The total number of bucks that can be harvested is two. A legal buck on the Refuge is defined as any male deer (**no antler restriction**).

Deer harvested on the Refuge are NOT bonus deer.

Deer (Archery/Crossbow): September 28, 2019 - February 29, 2020.

Seasons

Deer – Archery/Crossbow

September 28, 2019 - February 29, 2020

Squirrel & Rabbit

September 1, 2019 - February 29, 2020

Raccoon

September 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

Opossum

September 1, 2019 - February 29, 2020

Legend

- Refuge Headquarters
- Boat Access
- Gravel Roads
- Wildlife Drive 3.1 Miles
- Refuge Boundary
- Wilderness Area Public Law 94/557

Open to fishing November 1 - February 28

Trolling motors only

Closed to hunting

Signs Protect Visitors and Resources
 Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year. The impact of human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wildlands. Signs control recreational activities while protecting natural resources on the refuge. Please respect the following signs.



Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 P.O. Box 67
 2274 Highway18 East
 Manila, AR 72442
 870/564 2429

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast>
<http://www.fws.gov/biglake>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 1800/344 WILD

July 2019



2019-2020 General Hunting Permit – Big Lake NWR

This permit must be signed to be valid. It must be carried by the hunter at all times while on the refuge and in possession of hunting gear. Permit expires 6/30/20. **I have read and understand the refuge hunting regulations and agree to obey them and agree to allow USFWS and AGFC officers to inspect or search all equipment used during my hunt.**

 Signature (Permit not transferable)

MISSOURI

ARKANSAS

DUNKLIN CO.

MISSISSIPPI CO.

North End Water Control Structure

Earth Plug

North Dam

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Seven-mile Boat Access

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Big Lake Wildlife Management Area

Timm's Point Observation Area

Mid-Lake Water Control Structure

Wildlife Auto Drive

Oak Island Nature Trail 1.2 Miles

2 Miles to Manila

Ditch 81 Water Control Structure

Brights Landing Observation area accessible pier, bank fishing 1 mile nature loop, Boat launch

Ditch 28

AGFC Mallard Lake

Sand Slough Moist Soil Unit

AGFC Headquarters - Big Lake WMA

12 Miles to Blytheville

Take pride in your refuge. Don't litter.
 Report violations. Stop Poaching Hotline 1800/482 9262



Big Lake

National Wildlife Refuge Public Use Regulations 2019-2020