

# Panther Swamp

## National Wildlife Refuge

photo: USFWS



photo: WF Stevens



photo: USFWS



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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1978.
- Acres: 38,601.
- The refuge was established with the initial purchase of the 12,022-acre Curran Tract from The Nature Conservancy.
- Directions: 4 miles east of Holly Bluff, MS and 4 miles southwest of Yazoo City, MS.
- Located in Yazoo County between Lake George and the Yazoo River.

### Natural History

- Refuge habitat types are dominated by bottomland hardwood forests interspersed with numerous wooded sloughs, cypress-tupelo brakes and bayous.
- Moist soil areas, farm acreage and wooded wetlands attract 50-100,000 ducks annually.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Staff of two permanent employees.
- Annual visitation: 110,000.

### Refuge Objectives

- Provide resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds.
- Provide habitat for resident wildlife.
- Protect endangered and threatened species.
- Provide public use opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental education.

### Management Tools

- Moist soil management.
- Water management.
- Wetland restoration.
- Cooperative farming.
- Timber management.
- Reforestation.
- Law enforcement.

- Deer herd management through limited public hunts.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Hunting.
- Fishing.
- Wildlife observation and photography.

### Calendar of Events

(fishing open year round)

**April:** limited turkey season.

**August:** Yazoo Wildlife Association Field Day.

**October:** National Wildlife Refuge Week.

**October-January:** limited deer hunts, waterfowl hunting, squirrel and rabbit hunting, wildlife observation.

### Questions and Answers

*Why is duck season closed during firearms deer hunts?*

It is strictly a hunter safety necessity. Duck hunters don't wear orange so the risk is too great. Duck hunters are given 44 days to hunt the refuge while deer hunters have only 16 days. In addition, deer hunters are limited in numbers by a drawing. Duck hunters are not limited. One of the refuges in our complex, Mathews Brake, has no firearms deer hunting and is open to duck hunters the entire season.

*Why can't we duck hunt on the entire refuge?*

This is a waterfowl refuge designed to provide feeding and resting areas for migrating and wintering ducks. Allowing disturbance through duck hunting refuge-wide would defeat the intended purpose for which the refuge was established. Our existing waterfowl hunt area is in prime habitat and provides more than adequate area to meet the demand for duck hunting.

*When are you going to improve the access trails?*

We have requested funding to improve ATV trails but as yet have not been successful.

*Why are you cutting the trees in here and when are you going to stop the beaver damage?*

The timber is scientifically cut to allow for successional growth which will ensure continued forests in the future. In the meantime, these cuts actually improve wildlife habitat by providing diversity. As for the beavers killing trees, we do the best we can, but with only three people working 35,000 acres, we need another person on staff to handle nothing but beaver control.

*Why are you shooting does in the deer hunt?*

This is our only means of controlling the deer herd to ensure that it remains healthy. At the same time, this control protects the habitat from overuse and protects the crops of refuge neighbors.