

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cat Island

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



*The mission of
the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife
Service
is
working
with
others to*



USFWS

*conserve, protect
and enhance fish,
wildlife, plants
and their habitat
for the continuing
benefit of the*



*This blue goose,
designed by J.N.
Ding Darling,
has become the
symbol of the
National Wildlife
Refuge System.*

Introduction

Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge was established in October 2000 as the 526th refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System. It is located near the town of St. Francisville, Louisiana, which is 25 miles north of Baton Rouge.

The refuge was established to conserve, restore, and manage native forested wetland habitats for migratory birds, aquatic resources, and endangered and threatened plants and animals. Additionally, it was created to encourage the participation of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, local communities, and conservation organizations to promote public awareness of resources of the refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.



Mike Boylan

*Above: great
egret; left:
Champion
baldcypress tree*

In 2000, The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana purchased the 9,500 acres that eventually was acquired by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Congressionally-approved acquisition boundary is 36,500 acres.

Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge is along the southern-most unleveed portion of the lower Mississippi River and completely floods in most years. The river may rise several times during the year beginning in late December through June. Some areas of the refuge receive more than 15 feet of water. As the river rises, the refuge becomes closed to all vehicular access. River levels can be checked at “www.srh.noaa.gov/lmrfc” or by checking Baton Rouge’s newspaper, “The Advocate.”

LEGEND



Refuge land



Refuge entrance & kiosk



Locked gate



Water



Paved road



Gravel road



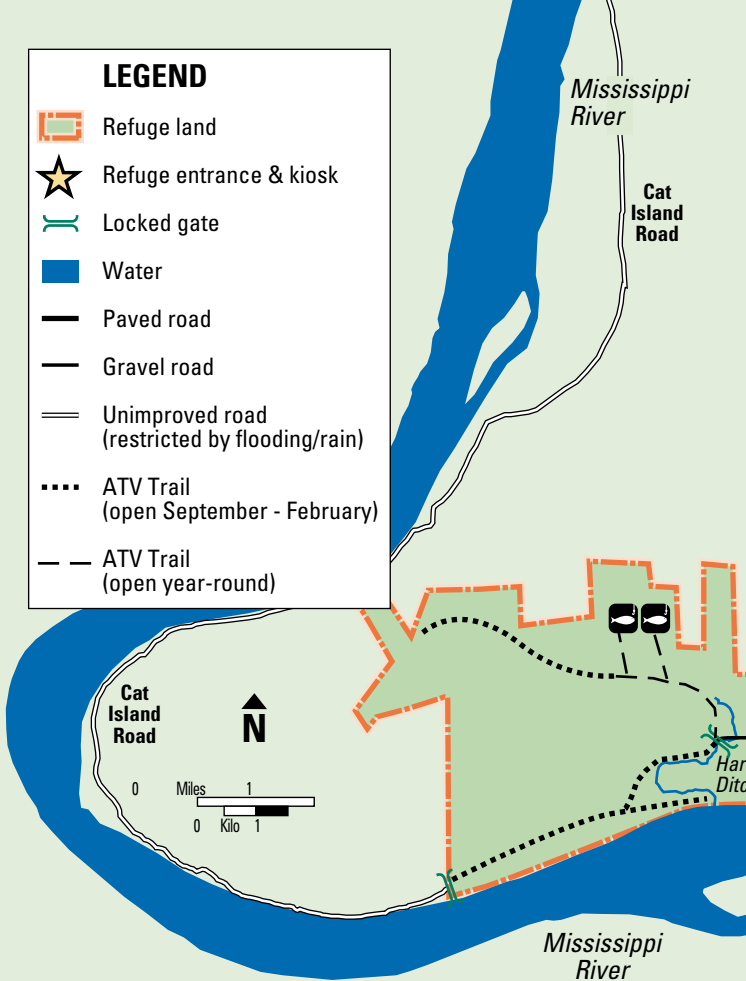
Unimproved road
(restricted by flooding/rain)



ATV Trail
(open September - February)



ATV Trail
(open year-round)



Cat Island

National Wildlife Refuge



Wildlife

The refuge is home to many fish, wildlife and plant resources. As Mississippi River floodwaters recede from the refuge in the spring, water and fish remain in oxbow lakes and depressed areas in the swamp.

Fish species known to occur include largemouth bass, bream, catfish, crappie, buffalo, and alligator gar.

The Mississippi River is a major bird migration corridor and the refuge is located within an area of high importance for neotropical migratory birds. Other wildlife found in the area include white-tailed deer, bobcat, river otter, black-crowned night-heron, wood duck, woodcock, solitary sandpiper, and prothonotary warbler.

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Bob Loudon



*Top: spider;
middle: yellow-
crowned night-
heron; bottom:
red-shouldered
hawk*

Habitat

Common trees on the refuge include water tupelo, baldcypress, overcup and Nuttall oak, bitter pecan, sugarberry, and sweetgum. Many of the baldcypress trees are estimated to be 500 to 1,000 years old.

Public Use

Public use opportunities such as wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, hunting, and fishing are available on the refuge.

Big Cypress Trail

The National Champion baldcypress tree is located along this 1-1/2-mile-long trail. The trailhead is located about five miles from the refuge entrance. The champion tree is the largest tree of any species in the United States east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Blackfork Trail

This 2 1/2 mile-long trail follows along scenic Blackfork Bayou. Several large baldcypress trees are located along the trail. The trailhead is about 1 3/4 miles from the refuge entrance.

Refuge Regulations

Daylight use only.

Vehicles are restricted to public roads and designated parking areas. No parking is allowed on refuge roads.

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) use is permitted on designated trails only.

An annual Special Recreational Activity Permit is required for hunting, fishing, and ATV use on the refuge. Contact the refuge or visit the refuge website for more information.

The Following Activities are Prohibited

Taking wildlife or plants or parts thereof (including cutting trees or brush).

Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts.

Boat launching by trailer from refuge roads and parking lots.

Using motorized or air thrust boats on refuge.

Accessing the refuge by boat from the Mississippi River.

Firearms, excepts during refuge hunts.

Horses and bicycle riding.

Camping and open fires.

Unleashed pets.

Littering.

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Dane Menhe



Top: white-tailed deer; middle: swamp milkweed; bottom: wood ducks

James C. Leupold



Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 217
Sibley MS 39165
Phone: 601/442 6696
Fax: 601/446 8990
Email: catisland@fws.gov
Website: <http://www.fws.gov/catisland>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

December 2005

