

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Lower Mississippi River Refuge Complex - St. Catherine Creek, Bayou Cocodrie and Cat Island NWRs

*Annual Public Use
Regulations
2017-2018*

Permits can be obtained at:
<https://lowermiss.recaccess.com>

Lower Mississippi River Refuge Complex Regulations

Refuge Introduction

Lower Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex consists of St. Catherine Creek (Sibley, MS), Bayou Cocodrie (Ferriday, LA) and Cat Island (St. Francisville, LA) NWR's grouped together for administrative and management purposes. Complex staff composed of administrative, law enforcement, refuge management, biological, forestry, and maintenance professional's work together to support all three refuges within the complex. The Complex Headquarters office is located on St. Catherine Creek NWR. The Complex provides a wide variety of wildlife dependent public uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, environmental education, wildlife interpretation and observation. For more information about these or other national wildlife refuges visit the national wildlife refuge web site at refuges.fws.gov.

Public Use regulations are designed to protect the visitor, sportsman, wildlife populations and habitats. Hunting and fishing seasons open on the Complex are listed in this brochure. The regulations within this brochure supplement the general regulations that govern hunting on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50 Volume 6 Chapter 1 Parts 18-199 Code of Federal Regulations. All hunting is in accordance with applicable state licensing and regulations, unless otherwise stated in these refuge specific regulations.

General Refuge Regulations

*St. Catherine Creek (Complex Headquarters),
Bayou Cocodrie, and Cat Island NWR's*

- Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by law enforcement officers.
- Refuge Managers may close any refuge or cancel a refuge hunt at their discretion due to inclement weather, road conditions, safety issues, excessive flooding, etc.

Permit Information

- Hunters and anglers age 16 and over are required to possess a valid Annual Public Use Permit. By possessing this permit, users acknowledge their understanding of all refuge regulations. In addition to the Annual Public Use Permit, users must possess all applicable state licenses and a picture ID at all times while on refuge property.

- Permits are available online at <https://lowermiss.recaccess.com>. For questions about online permits, please contact refuge headquarters at 601/442 6696 or saintcatherinecreek@fws.gov. Permits are also available in person only at St. Catherine Creek NWR Headquarters office and at various sales outlets. Contact the Complex office for exact locations. Permits acquired at refuge headquarters require payment in the form of a money order. **All money orders must be made payable to USFWS.**
- Permits are valid from August 1 through July 31 of each year.
- All persons under 16 years of age, while hunting must be in the presence and under direct supervision of a licensed or exempt hunter at least 21 years of age in Mississippi (18 years of age in Louisiana). A licensed hunter supervising a youth as provided in this section must hold all required licenses and permits.
- All applications for lottery hunts must be submitted online at <https://lowermiss.recaccess.com>. See refuge specific regulations for application deadlines.
- Lottery notification will be provided by CarVaTech USA via email. No lottery information will be given out by refuge personnel.
- No applications or any monies will be accepted by mail.

Refuge Hours

- General refuge hours are sunrise to sunset. Complex headquarters office hours are Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 4 pm, closed on Federal holidays. During hunting season, hunters may enter the refuge at 4 am and must exit no later than two hours after legal sunset. Fishermen may enter the refuge ½ hour before sunrise and must exit no later than ½ hour after sunset.

Restricted and/or Closed Areas

- It is unlawful to hunt from or shoot into a 150' zone along either side of designated roads, trails, or parking lots (see refuge specific maps).
- Vehicles must not obstruct roads, gates, turn rows, field access ramps, or fire lanes and must only be operated on designated roads.
- Vehicles may not be operated on a flooded road with the exception of the low water crossing on Cat Island Road.

- Temporary or permanent closure of refuge areas may occur due to unforeseen circumstances and may not be included in this brochure. Please check for on-the-ground signage and/or updates at check stations/kiosks and entry points or refuge website at: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/St_Catherine_Creek/
- For Mississippi river stages go to: <http://155.76.244.230/offices/ed/edh/docs/bullet.txt>

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV), Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) and Boats

- ATV and/or UTVs may only be used for hunting and fishing purposes. No recreational riding allowed on refuges. (see refuge specific maps).
- Trails open for scouting the third Saturday in September. Trails close to all access February 28th. (Exception: Cat Island Fishing Access – see refuge specific regulations)
- ATV and/or UTVs may be used only on, designated ATV/UTV (see refuge specific maps) trails and are not allowed off trail for any purpose.
- ATV and/or UTVs may not obstruct roads, gates, turn rows, field access ramps, or fire lanes.
- ATV/UTVs may not be operated on a flooded road or trail.
- All coast guard regulations apply to boats.

Firearms and Ammunition

- Persons possessing, transporting or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50CFR 27.42 and specific regulations in 50CFR Part 32).
- Archery: State defined.
- Primitive Firearms: State defined. (Youth are not allowed to use center-fire rifles except during specified youth-only hunts).
- Rifles: State defined.
- Ammunition: Possession of lead shot, buckshot, or any shotgun ammunition other than approved non-toxic shot is prohibited on the refuge. (Exception: Youth turkey hunters may use lead shot).

Pets/Animals

- Dogs are allowed for hunting migratory birds, squirrels, rabbits and raccoon during designated seasons only.
- All other domestic animals are prohibited.
- Pets must be on a leash and under control by owner.
- Horses and mules are not allowed on refuge lands.

Bag Limits

- State season bag and possession limits apply unless otherwise stated. Consult current state regulations for details.
- Hunters are allowed only one deer per day on refuges.

Check Stations

- All deer harvested on the refuge must be checked daily at the nearest Check Station identified on the refuge specific map.
- All deer harvest information must be recorded on jaw bone tags located at check stations, attach it to the jaw bone, and place it in the designated basket.
- Deer that will be mounted – complete two jaw bone tags, place one in the basket and return the other to the refuge along with the jawbone when it has been returned by the taxidermist. Jawbones must be returned within 30 days of harvest.

Deer Stands

- It shall be illegal to construct or to hunt from any permanent stands or blinds.
- Valid permit holders are allowed to have one portable stand or blind on the refuge.
- All stands on the refuge must be identified with permitted hunter's name and phone number legibly written on or attached to the stand. Stands left on the refuge do not reserve the hunting locations.
- Stands may be placed two days prior to established hunting season dates and must be removed two days after the season closes. Stands not in compliance with these regulations may be confiscated and disposed of by the refuge personnel.
- A hunter cannot hunt from an untagged deer stand.

- While climbing a tree, installing a tree stand that uses climbing aides or while hunting from a tree stand, hunters must use a fall-arrest system that is manufactured to Tree Stand Manufacturer Association standards.
- Deer stands and or steps cannot be nailed to trees nor can any blind or stand be attached to a tree by any metal object driven, screwed, or otherwise inserted into the tree.

Migratory Birds

- Waterfowl hunters are allowed no more than 25 shot shells per person.
- Waterfowl hunting is allowed on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during the state season from ½ hour before sunrise until 12 noon in designated areas. (see refuge specific regulations)
- Decoys, blinds and spent shells must be removed from the hunting area by 1 pm each day.

Small Game

- All hunters using shotguns for small game must use approved non-toxic shot. Small game may also be hunted with .22 magnum, .17 and .22 caliber rimfire rifles, and archery equipment using arrows with points other than broadheads.
- Small game hunting is closed during all deer firearm hunts, primitive firearm hunts, lottery hunts, and youth hunts.

Fluorescent Orange

- During the refuge deer firearm season, primitive firearm season, youth deer firearm season, all hunters on the refuge, except waterfowl hunters, must wear in full view a minimum of 500 square inches of solid, unbroken fluorescent orange garment and a fluorescent orange cap at all times.
- While hunting from concealed ground blinds a minimum of 500 square inches of fluorescent orange must be displayed above or around the blind and visible from all sides.

Prohibited Activities

- All commercial activities, including guiding or participating in a paid guided hunt.
- Searching for or removing any object of archeological or historical significance, including arrowheads, pottery, or other artifacts, as well as any natural materials such as plants, mushrooms, berries and antler sheds.
- Commercial fishing
- The use of artificial light, including vehicles headlights, to locate or take any animal except for raccoon hunting.
- Use or possession of any drug or device for deploying any such drug for hunting.
- Use or possession of any trail marking material.
- Use or possession of alcohol.
- Fire, camping, or littering.
- Organized drives for deer/big game.
- Baiting, possession of bait in the field, or hunting over bait.
- Removal or destruction of any trees, or part of tree to include removal of tree limbs, plants, or other vegetation on the refuge for any reason.
- Trapping
- Overnight parking
- Target shooting
- Any form of snagging of fish
- Field dressing game or leaving remains within 150' of any road, trail or parking lot.
- Use or possession of any items that nail or screw into trees are prohibited.
- Leaving personal property, except portable deer stands, on refuge.
- Parking or hunting within 150' of any oil well site, production facility or equipment.
- Tampering with any petroleum facility or equipment.
- Use of trail cameras.

Youth Hunts

- Youth eligible to participate are those defined by the appropriate state.
- Youth lottery hunts have refuge specific regulations.
- Adults may not carry a firearm during any youth hunts.

General Fishing Regulations

- All federal and appropriate state regulations governing boating, creel limits, and license requirements must be followed by refuge anglers.
- Hook and line only. Users must have a pole to fish.
- Trot lines and yo-yos are prohibited.

Other Regulations

- Violations of refuge regulations may be cause of loss of hunting/fishing privileges.
- Beaver, nutria, coyote, raccoon and feral hogs may be taken during any hunting season while in compliance with the regulations within the appropriate season.



Signs Protect Visitors and Resources

This sign delineates the refuge boundary. Entry is permitted only for authorized uses (hunting, fishing, sightseeing, etc.) in accordance with refuge regulations.



This area is closed to all entry. No hunting, fishing or sightseeing is permitted. No roads or trails are open to the public.



This area is closed to all hunting.



Louisiana Black Bear

Be aware that the Louisiana Black Bear was recently delisted under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 occurs throughout the refuge. It remains unlawful for anyone to take, harass, disturb, etc. any Louisiana Black Bear.



St. Catherine Creek NWR

Specific Refuge Regulations

Boats

- Hunters may not enter the refuge from public waterways.
- Boat access for hunters will be restricted by high water as determined by the Refuge Manager.
- Only electric motors can be used in Swamp Lake, except during high water.
- Swamp Lake is closed to all boats November 15 – March 31 and all boats must be hand launched in Swamp Lake.
- The use of outboard motors north of the Sibley Unit ring levee is prohibited.

Fishing

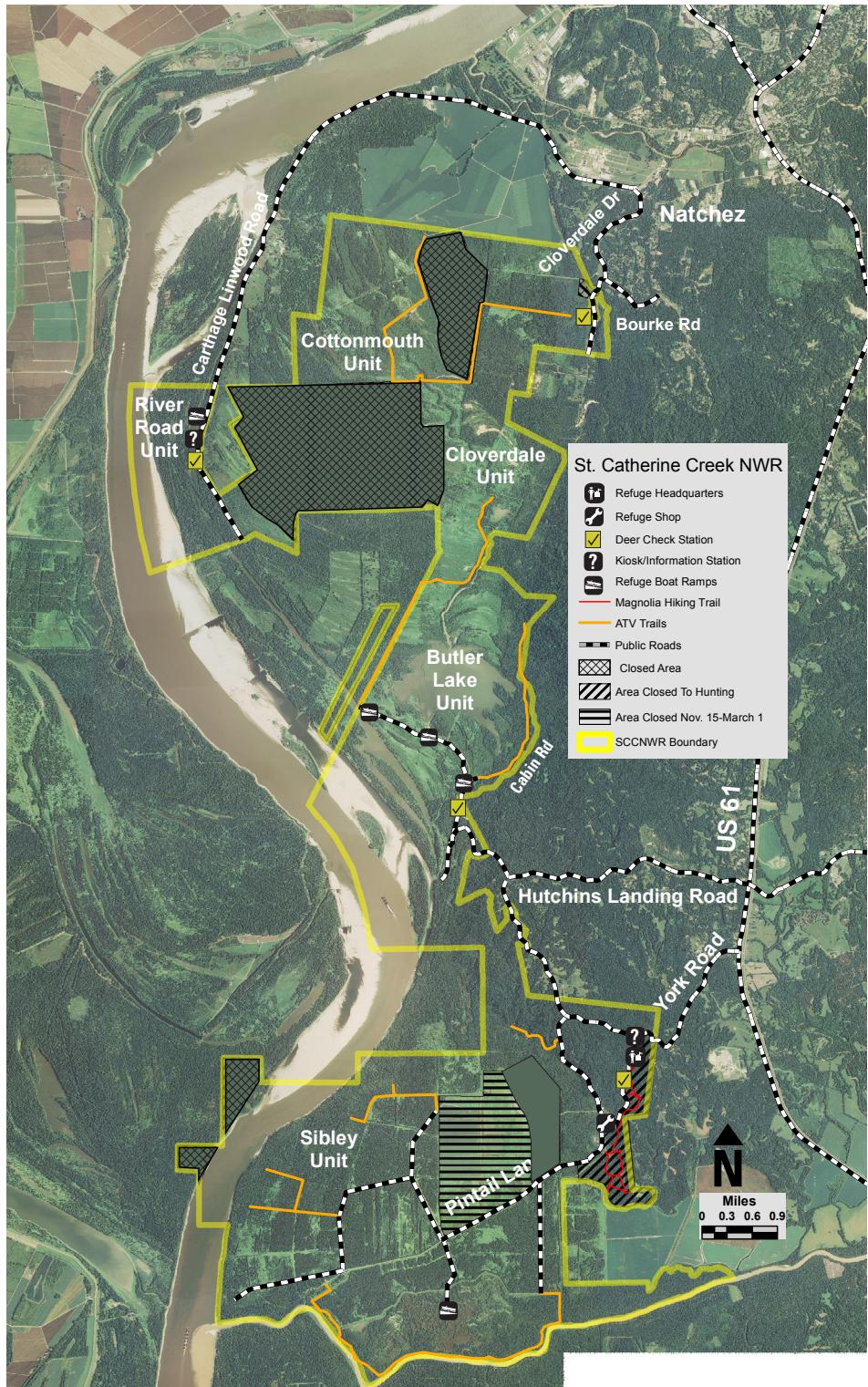
- Taking of alligator gar is prohibited.
- Hidden pond is a youth-only fishing area. Youth are defined by state regulations. Youth must be accompanied by an adult age 21 or older at all times.

Access

- Hunters are prohibited from entering the refuge from private property or public waterways.
- Cottonmouth Unit closes to all access December 31st.

Mobility Impaired Hunters

- Special access blinds are available to mobility impaired hunters.
- A mobility impaired hunter is defined as a person who is (1) permanently confined to a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker or (2) missing one or both legs.



- Mobility impaired hunters are required to pre-register at the refuge headquarters prior to hunting the designated blinds.

Youth Turkey Lottery Hunt

- Eligible youth are defined by state regulations.

- Youth hunters may harvest one gobbler per day.

- Application deadline is due by COB on the second Friday in February.

- ATV/UTVs are prohibited during this hunt.

- Hunt area is limited to Butler and Sibley Units only.

Raccoon Hunting

- No hunting from Carthage Linwood Road (River Road Unit).

- Use of boats and ATV/UTVs prohibited.

- 22 long rifles only.

Migratory Birds

- No access from Cabin Rd.

- Limited only to Gilliard Lake area south of Sibley Ring Levee, Salt Lake and Butler Lake.

Bayou Cocodrie NWR

Refuge Specific Regulations

Access

- Hunters may enter the refuge from private property and public waterways.

- Entering the refuge by boat from U.S. Highway 84 is prohibited.

- Boats must be hand launched on the Hoover Slough Unit.

- Commercial fishing is not allowed in the Cross Bayou Cut.

- The use of outboard motors/commercial fishing are prohibited in the Cross Bayou Unit.

ATV/UTVs

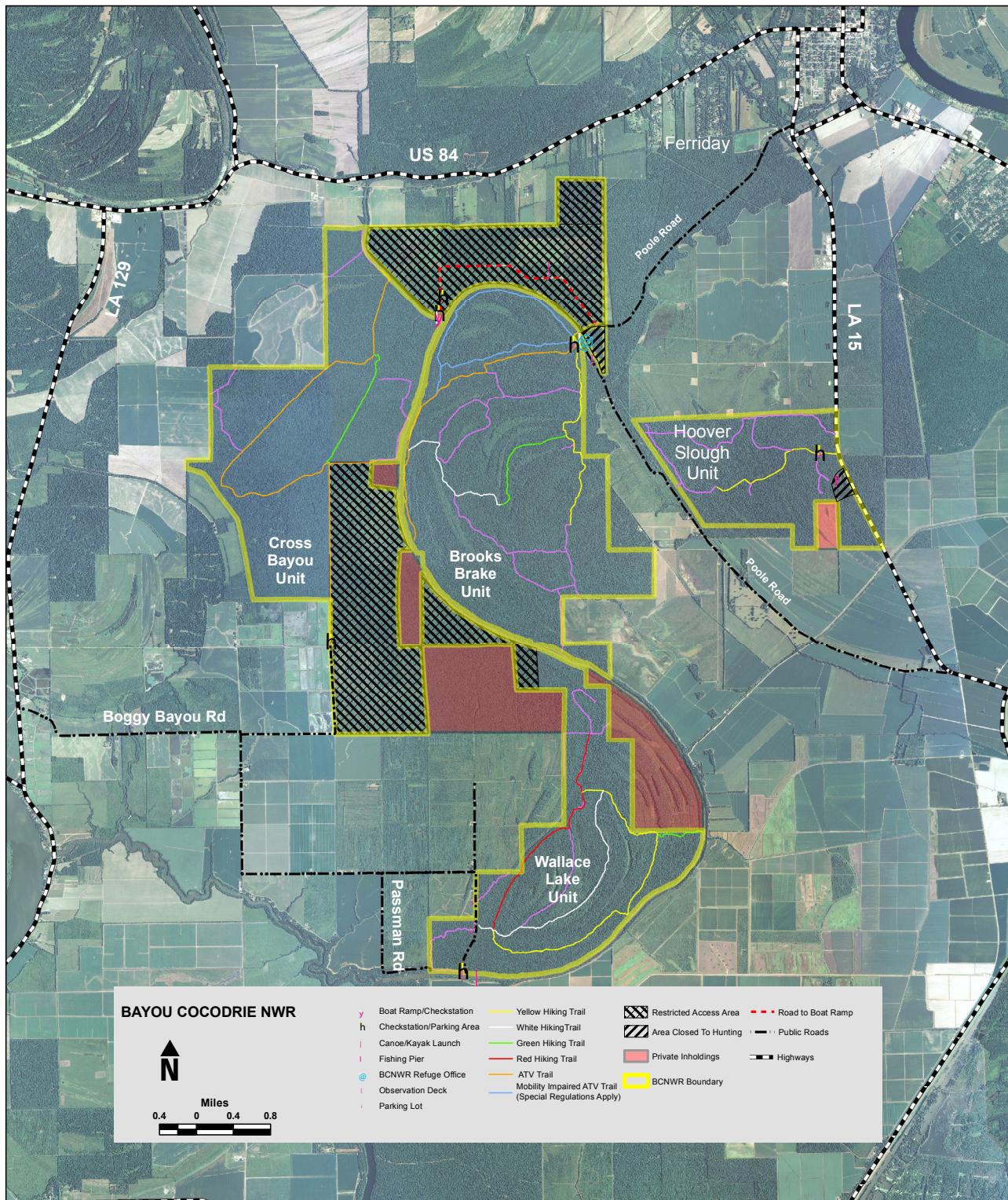
- ATV/UTV size requirements and tire sizes are defined by state WMA regulations.

- The Mobility Impaired ATV/UTV trail is restricted to those defined by the state.

Migratory Birds

- Migratory bird hunting is closed only during Primitive Firearms season.





Cat Island NWR

Refuge Specific Regulations

ATV/UTVs

- ATV/UTV size requirements and tire sizes are defined by state WMA regulations.
- Portions of Wood Duck Trail are open throughout the year for fishing access (see refuge specific map)

Access

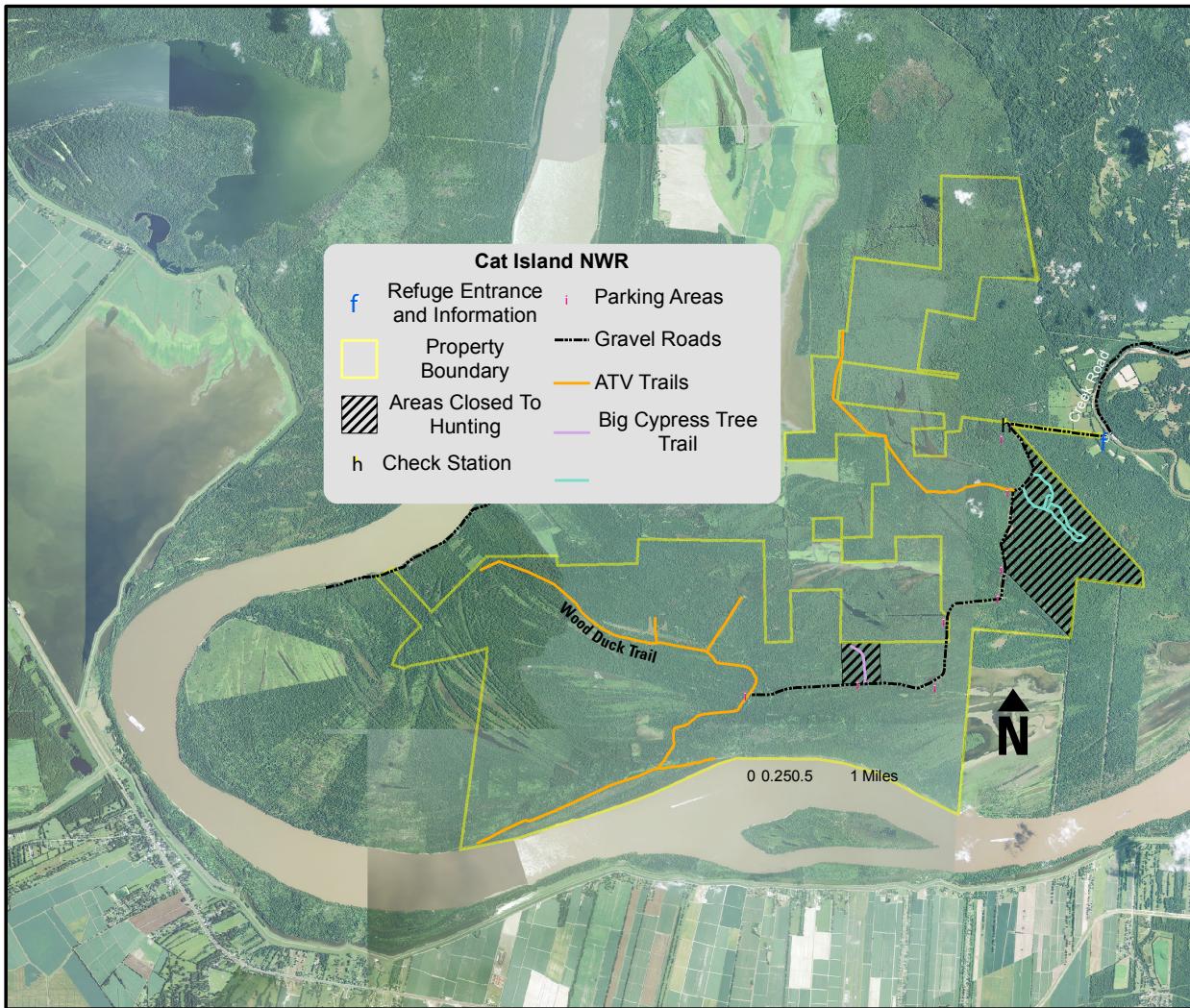
- Hunters may not enter the refuge from private property or from public waterways.
- All boats must be hand launched on the refuge, except at the designated boat ramp.

Crawfishing

- Traps defined by state law.

A state recreational gear license is required to use wire crawfish traps.

- Traps must be marked with a waterproof tag with the name and state recreational gear license number of the fisherman legibly printed on the tag. Only 20 traps per angler are permitted on the refuge at the same time.
- Harvest limit is 50 pounds per person per day.
- All traps and nets must be attended at all times and may not be left on the refuge overnight.



Seasons and Dates by Refuge 2017 - 2018

| | St. Catherine Creek NWR | Bayou Cocodrie NWR | Cat Island NWR |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Fishing | Feb 1-Nov 15 | Year Round – Closed during Deer Primitive Firearm Hunt | Year Round |
| Crawfishing | Prohibited | Prohibited | Mar 15- July 31 |
| Deer Archery | Oct 1 – Jan 31 Closed during Youth Deer Firearm Hunt | First Saturday in Nov – end of state archery season. Closed during Deer Primitive Firearm. | State season |
| Deer Primitive Firearm | Nov 18-Nov 26 and Jan 5-Jan 14 Bucks ONLY / One deer per day | Dec 1- Dec 3 Either Sex/ One deer per day | Nov 10 – Nov 11 Either Sex / One deer per day |
| Mobility Impaired (Deer) | State seasons | State seasons | Not available |
| Youth Firearm Gun | First weekend of State Youth Firearm Hunt | First weekend of State Youth Firearm Hunt | First weekend of State Youth Firearm Hunt |
| Small Game without Dogs | State season Closed during Primitive Firearm and Youth Deer Firearm season | State season Closed during Primitive Firearm and Youth Deer Firearm season | State season Closed during Primitive Firearm and Youth Deer Firearm season |
| Youth Small Game | First weekend of State Youth Small Game Season | First weekend of State Youth Small Game Season | First weekend of State Youth Small Game Season |
| Small Game with Dogs | Jan 2 – Feb 28, closed during Primitive Firearm | Jan 2 – Feb 28 | Jan 2 – Feb 28 |
| Raccoon (Dogs Required) | Feb 1- Feb 28 | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Waterfowl | Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during State Season Closed during Deer Primitive Firearm | Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during State season Closed during Deer Primitive Firearm | Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during State season Closed during Deer Primitive Firearm |
| Youth Waterfowl | State Zone Dates | State Zone Dates | State Zone Dates |
| Woodcock | State season after Jan 1 Closed during Deer Primitive Firearm | State season after Jan 1 | State season after Jan 1 |
| Youth Turkey | Dates will be assigned upon Lottery Drawing | Dates will be assigned upon Lottery Drawing | Prohibited |

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Lower Mississippi Complex
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
601/442 6696 Headquarters Office
<http://www.fws.gov/stcatherinercreek>**

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