

Wapanocca

National Wildlife Refuge



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Glen R. Miller, Refuge Manager
Wapanocca NWR
P.O. Box 279
Highway 42 East
Turrell, AR 72384
Phone: 870/343 2595
Fax: 870/343 2416
E-mail: glen_miller@fws.gov

Refuge Facts

- Established: 1961.
- Acres: 5,484. Much of it acquired from the former Wapanocca Outing Club one of the oldest and most prestigious hunting clubs.
- Located in Crittenden County AR, three miles from the Mississippi River, adjacent to the city of Turrell.
- Other management: two fee title tracts in St. Francis County totaling 509 acres.
- Location: from the north: exit I-55 at exit number 23 onto Highway 77 south, two miles to Highway 42 east 1/8 mile. From the south: exit I-55 at exit number 21 onto Highway 42 east 1.5 miles.

Natural History

- Refuge lies in the Mississippi Delta protected from the river by the river levee.
- Refuge was once a bend in the Mississippi River.
- Concentrations of wintering and migrating ducks, geese, and raptors.
- Major migration stopover of warblers and other neo-tropical migrants.
- Large great blue heron, common egret, anhinga rookery.
- Active bald eagle nest.
- Open water 600 acres; swamp 1,800 acres; upland hardwoods 900 acres; bottomland hardwoods 500 acres; croplands 1,200 acres; grasslands 400 acres.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Two-person staff.
- 16,000 visitors annually.
- Current budget (FY 00) \$170,000.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for wintering migratory waterfowl and other birds.
- Provide habitat for nesting wood ducks.
- Provide environmental education and interpretation opportunities to the public.
- Provide recreational (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation) opportunities for the public.

Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl, marsh and water birds and shorebirds.
- Forest management for neotropical birds.
- Cooperative farming.
- Mechanical/chemical control of undesirable plants.
- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.
- Fishery management by water level manipulation.
- Commercial fishing for rough fish.
- Trapping to reduce problem beavers.

Public Use Opportunities

- Nature drive.
- Visitor contact station.
- Observation platform.
- Wildlife observation.
- Fishing.
- Hunting.
- Photography.
- Canoeing.

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Calendar of Events

March: raccoon hunting.

March-September: fishing.

May: peak warbler migration,
Migratory Bird Day.

June: National Fishing Week.

October: National Wildlife Week.

October-November: squirrel/rabbit
hunting.

November: raccoon hunting.

Questions and Answers

When does the lake open?

The lake opens to the public March 15 and closes September 30.

Do you allow camping?

No. There is a campground, "Best Holiday Trav-L-Park," along I-55 at James Mill.

Do you allow hunting?

Yes. Squirrel/rabbits—October 1-November 30. Raccoon—November 1-30 and March 1-31.

How is fishing?

Fishing is poor. Most of the game fish have been lost due to low water levels. The lake has lost its water sources, other than rainfall which is not enough to keep the lake at desired levels. Until an alternative water source is found, the lake will not sustain a fishable population.

What is being done to restore the lake?

Long term: Monies are being sought to fund a study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate potential sources of water supply for the lake.

Short term: Monies are being sought to:

- Clean out the lake outlet channel so that the lake can be completely drained and the lake bottom dried up.
- Pump water back into the lake with regular pumping to keep water at levels beneficial to fisheries and waterfowl.