

Lake Woodruff

National Wildlife Refuge



Photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1964.
- Acres: 21,552.
- Located in west Volusia County and Lake County, FL.
- Two conservation easements totaling 652 acres in Putnam County, FL.
- Location: the refuge is located 25 miles west of Daytona Beach; 1 block west of U.S. Highway 17 in DeLeon Springs, FL.

Natural History

- Refuge surrounds the 2,200-acre Lake Woodruff, 1,800-acre Lake Dexter, and numerous other waterways including the St. Johns River which forms the western boundary.
- Concentrations of ducks, wading birds, raptors and deer.
- Endangered and threatened species protected: manatee, snail kite, wood stork, bald eagle, limpkin, indigo snake, gopher tortoise and American alligator.
- Freshwater marsh—11,100 acres; hardwood swamp—4,800 acres; upland—3,400 acres; lakes, streams, and canals—1,000 acres.
- Refuge is included in a wildlife corridor of ecologically sensitive lands along the St. Johns River extending from Wekiva River to Lake George.
- Several archaeological sites are present.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and wading birds.
- Provide habitat and protection for endangered and threatened species.
- Provide wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education for the public.

Financial Impact

- Five full time and two six-month seasonal staff.
- 31,000 visitors annually.
- Current budget (FY 00): \$417,600.
- Refuge visitors spend in excess of \$1,000,000 in the local area.

Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl and wading birds.
- Prescribed fire.
- Chemical control of noxious plants.
- Deer and feral hog management with public hunting.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.
- Friends group.

Public Use Opportunities

- Wildlife observation.
- Hiking trails.
- Bicycling.
- Photography.
- Observation tower.
- Fishing.
- Hunting (archery, primitive gun).

Calendar of Events

September-October: hunting.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

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Questions and Answers

What will we see?

The three impoundments in our Public Use Area are maintained for migratory waterfowl and wading birds. Walking around the ponds, you will see a variety of herons, egrets, ibis, limpkins, coots, moorhens, maybe even a rail or an American bittern, and during the winter months blue and green winged teal, hooded mergansers, and nesting black-necked stilts. Many warblers can be found in the brush along the pond shores. Usually there are eagles, osprey, kingfishers, and several species of hawks and vultures flying overhead. There are also alligators, turtles and river otters in the water. An observation tower is a 3/4-mile hike from the parking area and is equipped with a fixed pair of binoculars which provide a spectacular view of both wildlife and habitat.

Can I see any alligators?

The alligators like to sun themselves during the day, so look for them on some of the small islands in the ponds. There is a 14-foot alligator usually lounging around in the back of pool three. These are wild animals, so please do not harass them in any way or try to feed them.

Can I fish at Lake Woodruff Refuge?

There is bank fishing available in the ponds at the Public Use Area. Bass, crappie and sunfish are the most commonly caught species. Fishing is also allowed in the various lakes and streams within the refuge boundaries, however a boat is needed to reach these sites. A valid state of Florida freshwater fishing license is required.

How do I get to Lake Woodruff?

There are no boat launching facilities on the refuge. However, launching facilities and boat rentals are available to the north at Tedders Fish Camp and DeLeon Springs State Recreation Area which will take you through Spring Garden Run to Lake Woodruff, and to the south at Highland Park Fish Camp where you can travel through Norris Dead River.

What do you do here?

Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge was established as a refuge for migratory waterfowl and wading birds. There are over 21,000 acres within the refuge boundaries, mostly marsh, rivers and lakes. The staff constantly maintains the area to provide shelter, nesting, and feeding habitat for these birds, and maintains the Public Use Area to provide a safe and pleasant place for visitors to observe nature. Some of our maintenance programs include controlled burns when and where necessary; permitted hunting to control the deer and feral hog population; and mowing and road maintenance for access to the Public Use Areas. Ongoing surveys are conducted to determine how many birds and other wildlife are utilizing the refuge and if environmental conditions are affecting their existence. Environmental programs and tours are presented to kindergarten through high school students, scout groups, environmental groups and just about any group that is interested.