

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Eufaula

*National Wildlife Refuge
Wildlife Drive*

An Interpretive Auto Tour



Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge



Welcome to the 11,184 acre Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge. As you travel the Wingspread Wildlife Drive, you will naturally look for wildlife. The refuge is home to almost 300 species of birds, 40 mammal species and many more amphibians, reptiles and fishes. Our hope is that you will also gain an appreciation for the valuable habitat that supports animal life. The major habitat types you will encounter include woodlands, croplands, old fields, grasslands, edges, open water, and marsh lands. Each of these provide the food, cover and protection for a diversity of animal species.

Many opportunities await you on your visit to Eufaula Refuge and more than 500 other refuges nationwide. We are not only interested in wildlife and their habitat, but also providing you with a positive wildlife experience.



The wildlife drive has a seven-mile summer route that traverses all roads in the Upland and Houston Units. The route is reduced to five-miles during the winter to assure adequate waterfowl sanctuary. This added protection is important for female ducks to rest and store needed food reserves for their return to northern nesting grounds in late winter.

As you travel this route, feel free to linger at areas of interest, even stop and take a walk. You might use a spotting scope or binoculars to get that up-close view or you might want to take pictures. Whatever your experience, remember that the world of outdoors is dynamic; it is unpredictable. Each visitor's chances of observing that unforgettable sight is "time" dependent. It depends on the time of year, time of day and time spent looking.

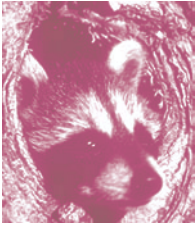


Enjoy your visit and please plan a return visit with friends soon.

What you should learn from a drive through Eufaula Refuge

In each of the broad habitat types you will encounter, there are certain species you are more likely to see. The following summary will describe these habitats and their related species.

Woodlands



There are about 2,700 acres of woodlands on the refuge. They consist of pine, hardwood and mixed pine/hardwood. All timber management is conducted with wildlife benefits in mind. Fire is a useful tool in managing pine habitat, but not in hardwoods or mixed hardwoods since fire kills hardwood species. Animal species a visitor might see in woodlands could include deer, squirrel, raccoons, armadillo, hawks, owls and songbirds.

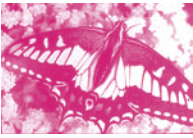
Croplands



The 300 acres of agricultural lands are fields for wildlife needs. Crops planted include corn, wheat, soybeans, sunflowers, and grain sorghum. Biologists monitor these fields to assure proper chemical use, crop rotation, and soil conservation. Wildlife species likely seen in summer could include deer, turkey, raccoons, armadillo, hawks, bluebirds, and other songbirds. Some winter species added to this list would be sandhill cranes, ducks and geese.

Old Fields

Several hundred acres of former agricultural fields can be found on the refuge; some are scattered along the wildlife drive. These early successional stages of vegetation provide important growth of herbaceous plants, briars, vines and young woody growth. They are important because they provide cover year-round. Many species find these old fields especially valuable during hard winters. Species often associated with old fields include



Native Grasslands



Edges



Open water



deer, rabbits, mice, rats, hawks, owls, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, quail, various species of songbirds and butterflies.

About 220 acres of warm season grasses occur on the refuge and can be seen along the drive. These grasses serve as some diversity for certain species. During the growing seasons, these fields provide some long grass conditions. Often seen animals include deer, turkey, armadillo, rabbits, hawks, owls, meadow larks, indigo buntings and bluebirds.

The term "edge" means those transitional zones between different habitat types. They are found between woodlands and croplands or croplands and wetlands, etc. Hedgerows and grown-up ditch banks are also valuable edges. These all serve as highways for movement, escape cover from danger, or nesting, feeding and loafing areas. Edges provide habitat for an abundance of species. These areas provide viewing for deer, rabbits, hawks, owls, raccoon, opossum, foxes, bobcats, rodents, quail, and many other species of birds and butterflies.

There are about 4,000 acres of open water on the refuge including rivers, creeks and impoundments. Open water can be seen along the wildlife drive as it passes near the Chattahoochee River or other backwaters of the reservoir. The lake is valuable for fishery resources where bass, bream, crappie and catfish are sought by anglers. The lake's shallow edges are important for wading and shorebirds. Open water is also where you might see ducks, geese, coots, gallinules, herons, egrets, wood storks, beaver, alligators, osprey and an occasional bald eagle.

Marshland



Almost 3,000 acres on the refuge are considered marsh; half are within man-made dikes where water levels are regulated. This habitat type is observed along the wildlife drive from the Houston dike. The dominant plant species are floating aquatic plants, sedges, grasses, and willows. Only in late summer are these areas dry. They provide valuable habitat for marsh and aquatic species. Notable species include rails, snipe, woodcock, wading and shorebirds, wood storks, sandhill crane, raccoon and deer.

Opportunities for people



Along the Wingspread Wildlife Drive you might encounter others, like yourself, using the refuge for various purposes. In addition to a casual drive through the various habitats along the drive, you should notice two viewing structures. The Houston Observation Tower provides an overlook at the Chattahoochee River bottom and a nice wetland habitat. The Upland Waterfowl Viewing Platform presents a panoramic view of the refuge's upland habitat. It is especially suited for visitors to observe waterfowl since it overlooks the Upland Impoundment, which is managed for moist soil production and is later flooded in the fall. The best viewing period is late fall and winter.



You might see others enjoying hunting, fishing, walking, biking or bird watching. The refuge provides guided tours to organized groups such as school groups and university classes that arrange refuge visits.



165



Headquarters

Main Entrance

285

Maintenance Facility

Goose Pen

Upland Waterfowl Viewing Platform



Upland Impoundment



Houston Observat Tower

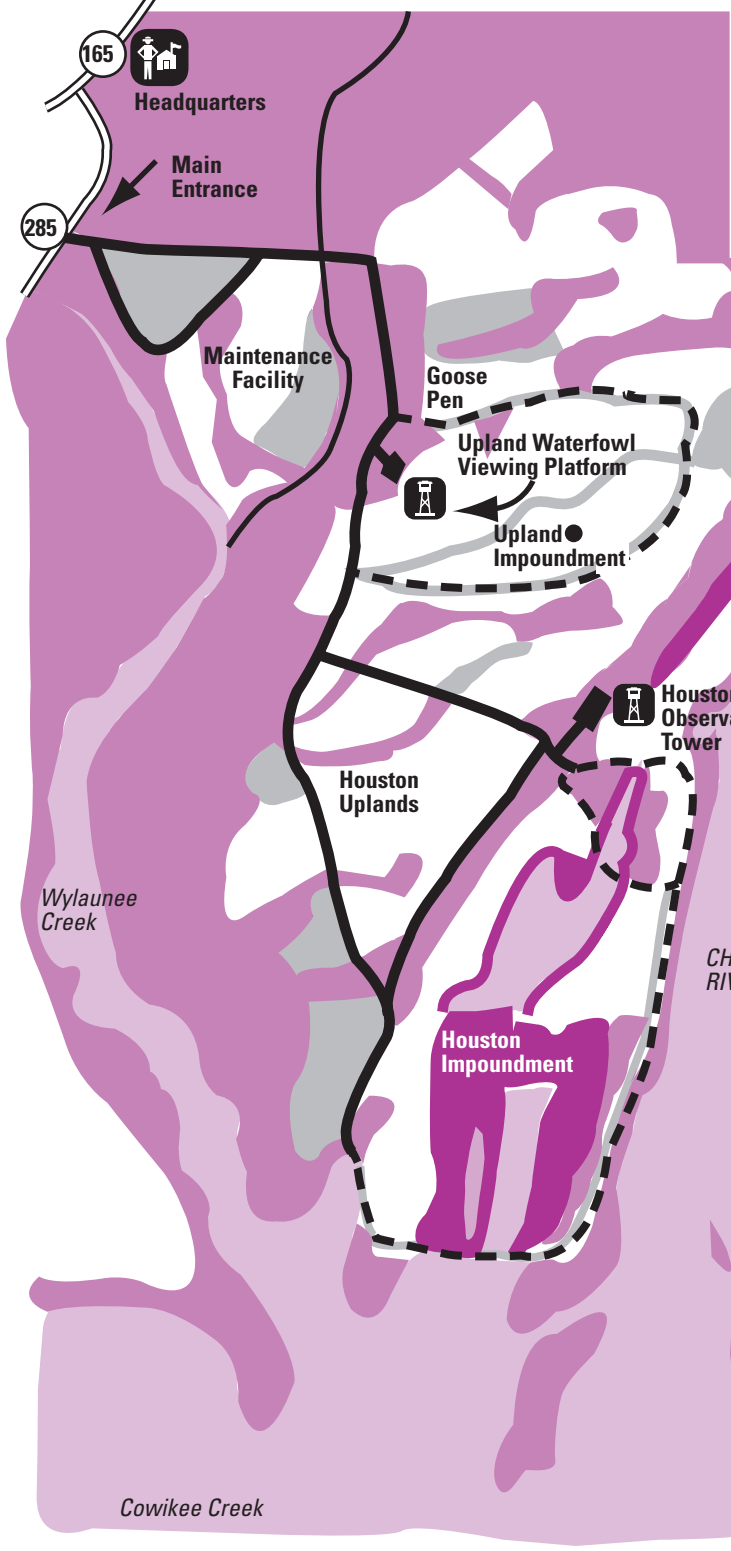
Houston Uplands

Wylaunee Creek

Houston Impoundment

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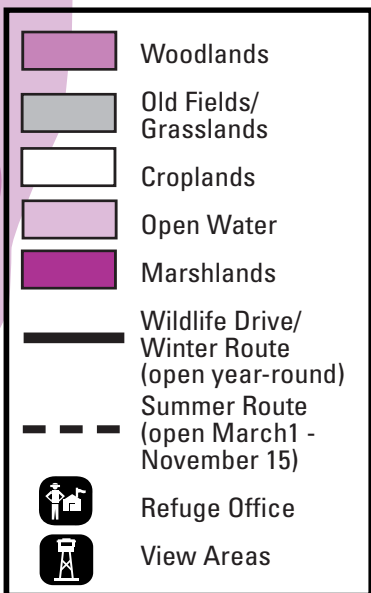
Cowikee Creek



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**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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