

Dahomey

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: Becky Rosamond



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Alejandro Galvan, Refuge Manager
Dahomey NWR
831 Hwy 446
Boyle, MS 38730
Phone: 662/742 9331
Fax: 662/742 3378
E-mail: FW4RWNorthMSRefuges@fws.gov

Refuge Facts

- Established in 1990
- Size: 9,691 acres in Bolivar county, Mississippi
- Currently staffed by one refuge manager and one engineering equipment operator.
- Location: located on Hwy 446, approximately 8 miles west of Boyle and about 15 miles southwest of Cleveland, MS.

Natural History

- The refuge is the largest contiguous tract of bottomland hardwood forest in northwest Mississippi, outside of the mainline levee.
- Flooded forests provide important habitat for overwintering waterfowl. Flooding recharges vernal pools and provides important habitat for a variety of amphibians.
- Large numbers of migratory songbirds including red-eyed vireos, painted buntings, and prothonotary warblers are attracted to the forest in summer months.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Approximately 7,600 visitors annually, primarily hunting and birdwatching.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory birds.
- Restore, enhance, and manage the values and functions of the wetland habitats within the refuge.

Management Tools

- Forest management, including reforestation.
- Water management (drawdowns, reflooding).
- Cooperative farming.
- Hunting.
- Law enforcement.

- Partnerships, particularly with research organizations, to use the best available science to meet goals and objectives.

Public Use Opportunities

- Hunting – October–April. Includes seasons for: deer, squirrel, rabbit, quail, turkey, waterfowl, raccoon, and wild hog. Also includes youth hunts, following state seasons. Requires a refuge hunting/fishing annual permit. Please see the North MS Refuges Complex Hunting and Fishing Regulations for specific details. Regulations are published annually.
- Fishing – Year-round. Requires a refuge hunting/fishing annual permit. Please see the North MS Refuges Complex Hunting and Fishing Regulations for specific details. Regulations are published annually.
- Wildlife viewing – Thirty-five miles of roads and hiking trails provide access to the various habitats on the refuge.
- Wildlife photography.
- Environmental Education/ Interpretation – Programs available upon request.

Calendar of Events

March – June: Neotropical migrants arrive and fill the forest with their songs. Copper iris (*Iris fulva*) blooming along forested creeks (April). Mississippi kites return and can be seen soaring over the treetops (April).

July – August: Shady forests provide some relief from the unrelenting summer heat—but watch out for the mosquitoes!

September – October: Marbled salamanders begin moving to breeding sites and laying eggs under logs.

November – February: Waterfowl concentrate to feed in flooded farm fields and roost in flooded bottomland hardwood forest.