

Reelfoot

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1941.
- Acres: 10,428.
- Located in Obion County, TN and Fulton County, KY.
- Other management: water level management on Reelfoot Lake and associated 25,000-acre wetland.
- Location: the refuge headquarters is located 15 miles southwest of Union City, TN on Highway 157 near the Walnut Log Community.

Natural History

- Refuge habitat created by a series of violent earthquakes from December 1811 to February 1812.
- Large concentrations of ducks, geese, raptors, wading birds, and shorebirds.
- Reelfoot Lake area has the largest concentration of wintering bald eagles in the continental United States.
- Several rookeries present along with bald eagle and osprey nests.
- Habitat acreage:
Open water ... 2,085
Wetlands 1,148
Woodlands 6,048
Croplands 1,147

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other birds.
- Provide habitat and protection for endangered species.
- Provide recreation and environmental education for the public.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- 19-person staff.
- 600,000 visitors annually.
- West Tennessee Refuge Complex FY 05 budget is \$1,916,000.

Management Tools

- Reelfoot NWR along with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Tennessee State Parks cooperatively manage the fish and wildlife resources associated with the upland and aquatic habitats at Reelfoot Lake.
- Water management for waterfowl, wading, and shore birds.
- Cooperative farming for wildlife.
- Mechanical/chemical control of noxious vegetation.
- Big and small game management with public hunting.
- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.
- Cooperative partnerships.
- Volunteers.

Public Use Opportunities

- Wildlife observation.
- Two accessible observation towers.
- Auto tour route.
- Photography.
- Hunting.
- Fishing.
- Trails.

Calendar of Events

January: waterfowl concentrations of up to 400,000 ducks and 150,000 geese.

February: bald eagle population at its peak, over 200 on Reelfoot Lake area.

April: refuge quota turkey hunt.

May: Migratory Bird Day, excellent time for bird watchers.

June: National Fishing Week, Youth Fishing Rodeo.

August: squirrel hunt.

October: archery deer hunt and raccoon hunt.

November: refuge quota deer gun hunt.