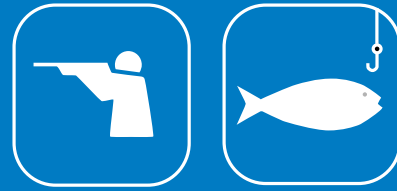


Lake Ophelia

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2008-2009



To:

Lake Ophelia
National Wildlife Refuge
401 Island Road
Marksville, LA 71351
318/253 4238
<http://www.fws.gov/lakeophelia>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD

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The Refuge

Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1988 primarily to preserve wintering and breeding habitat for waterfowl, is located in the Red River floodplain in east central Louisiana, approximately 10 miles northeast of Marksville. Public hunting and fishing is permitted on approximately 12,000 acres during specific times of the year. Special arrangements can be made to accommodate persons who have medically certified disabilities by contacting the refuge office.

Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by refuge officers.

To ensure your safety and enjoyment while visiting Lake Ophelia, please take the time to become familiar with the following regulations.

General Regulations

Hunting and fishing regulations are designed to protect the sportsman as well as wildlife populations. The regulations below govern hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable state regulations subject to the following regulations.

The refuge is open to public access from 4 am to one hour after sunset. The refuge boundary is marked with boundary signs and yellow boundary paint.

Weapons and Ammunition

Firearms, archery tackle, and crossbows are permitted on the refuge only during designated refuge hunts. The use of crossbows is limited to individuals who have a Louisiana State issued Crossbow Permit or who are over the age of 60. Firearms carried in vehicles or boats must be unloaded AND encased or dismantled. Firearms carried on ATV's must be unloaded. Loaded is defined as shells in gun or caps on muzzleloader. Archery tackle and crossbows must be uncocked with arrow unnoocked from string. Up to .22 caliber rimfire rifles and shotguns are permitted except during the muzzleloader deer hunts. Handguns are not permitted on the refuge.

Possession of shot larger than that legal for waterfowl hunting is prohibited; use or possession of lead shot is prohibited refuge wide.

Exceptions

During quota deer and turkey hunts, lead ammunition legal for taking deer and turkey may be used. Small game, furbearers, feral hogs, beaver, nutria, and coyotes may be hunted with up to .22 caliber rimfire lead ammunition during open seasons.

Permits

An annual Special Recreational Activity Permit is required for all hunters and fishermen 16 years old and older, and for all terrain vehicle (ATV) use on the refuge. The Central LA NWR Special Recreational Activity Permit applies to all refuges within the complex (Lake Ophelia, Grand Cote and Catahoula). Permits are available at the Refuge Headquarters located at Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge, 7 miles west of Marksville, LA on Hwy 1194. Office hours are Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 4 pm, except for federal holidays when the office is closed. Permits may also be purchased at the Catahoula NWR Office, located on US Highway 84, approximately 12 miles east of Jena, LA, and 1 mile west of the junction of highways US 84 and LA 28. On weekdays and weekends, permits may be purchased at Dupuy's Grocery store, located 7 miles north of Marksville on Highway 452.

To order permits by mail, send us your name, address, phone number and \$15.00 (money order or cashier's check: personal checks not accepted) to the Refuge address shown on the front of this brochure. Refuge permits authorize participation in all refuge hunting and fishing except quota muzzleloader and youth deer hunts. The permit must be signed and in your possession whenever hunting, fishing, or using an ATV on the refuge, and acknowledges your understanding of refuge regulations.

Commercial Activities

Commercial hunting and fishing activities are prohibited. Specifically, we prohibit any person or group acting as a hunting guide, outfitter, or in any other capacity that any other individual pays or promises to pay directly or indirectly for services rendered to any other person(s) hunting on the refuge, regardless of whether such payment is for guiding, outfitting, lodging or club membership. Anyone planning to pursue a commercial activity on refuge land, lake, bayous or waters is advised to contact the refuge manager for information on permitted commercial activities and special use permits.

Lottery Muzzleloader Deer Hunts Dec. 6-7, Jan. 3-4, and Jan. 17-18

Quota hunt applications will be available August 1 at the refuge office and on our internet site at <http://lakeophelia.fws.gov>. Up to five individuals may apply in a group.

There is a \$5.00 application fee for each individual applying for a lottery hunt. Application fees must be in the form of a money order - cash is no longer accepted. You can combine application fees for each member on one money order. This fee is non-refundable and must be received with your application.

Completed applications and the \$5.00 application fee must be returned to the refuge office **by close of business (4 pm) on August 29.**

Duplicate, incomplete, or incorrect applications will be removed from consideration.

Applicants will be selected at a public drawing, which is to be held at the refuge headquarters at 10 am Wednesday, September 10, 2008. Successful applicants will be notified by mail.

Permits are non-transferable and must be in the hunter's possession at all times while on the refuge during the permitted hunt. Only hunters with valid quota permits are permitted in the hunt area during quota hunts.

Only legal muzzleload weapons that are loaded from the muzzle end of the barrel and that uses black powder or a black powder substitute are permitted.

Lottery Youth Deer Hunts (Nov. 25, Dec. 13 and Dec. 30)

There will be three lottery deer hunts for youths ages 12-15 (applicants must be 12 by the date of the hunt). Thirty youths total will be selected (10 per hunt). Applicants previously selected are not eligible to apply.

Ten, 3-man ground blinds will be provided. Each youth must be accompanied by one parent/guardian 21 years or older. A refuge staff/volunteer will also accompany each youth to their blind. Rifles will be allowed.

We will accept applications from August 1-29. Applications will be available at the refuge office or on the refuge's website (<http://lakeophelia.fws.gov>). Applicants will be selected at a public drawing, which is to be held at the refuge headquarters at 10 am on Wednesday, September 10, 2008. Successful applicants will be notified by mail.

Spring Turkey Hunts (First 16 days of the State Season)

Certain portions of ATV trails are closed during turkey season. ATV's are restricted to marked trails. The use of turkey gobbler decoys and incidental hog hunting during refuge turkey season is prohibited. Harvested turkeys must be checked at Dupuy's Grocery, located 7 miles south of the refuge on Hwy 452.

Motorized Vehicles

All motorized vehicles are restricted to roads that are delineated on refuge map. Vehicle wheels with a wheel-tire combination having a radius of 17 inches or more from the center of the hub (measured horizontal to ground) are prohibited. The vehicle speed limit shall not exceed 25 mph except as otherwise legally posted.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

All ATVs are restricted to ATV trails that are delineated on refuge map. ATV's are allowed only for hunting, fishing, and scouting activities. The vehicle speed limit shall not exceed 25 mph except as otherwise legally posted.

Restrictions: Standard manufacturer's high flotation all-terrain vehicles or ATV's (3 and 4-wheelers) with factory specifications not to exceed the following: weight – 750 lbs., length – 85", and width – 48". ATV tires are restricted to those no larger than 25 x 12 with a maximum lug height of 1" and a maximum allowable tire pressure of 7 p.s.i. as indicated on the tire by the manufacturer. ATV trails are open from September 11 through the last day of Refuge Turkey season. Exceptions are the Duck Lake trail which is open all year and certain designated trails open during refuge turkey season.

Boats

Lake Ophelia is open during 1B archery deer season, only electric or non-motorized boats may be used. Boats may not be left on the refuge overnight.

Lake Long, Possum Bayou (South of boat ramp), and Dooms Lake are open all year and only electric or non-motorized boats may be used.

Duck, Nicholas, West Cut Lakes, Possum Bayou (North of boat ramp), Palmetto Bayou and Point Basse are open all year, and motors up to 25 horsepower may be used.

Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited on Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge:

- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting or operating an ATV or boat
- Littering
- Camping / overnight parking
- Taking of wildlife, or parts of, or plants (including cutting trees or brush) other than specified in this brochure.
- Target practice
- Hand guns, pellet guns, bb guns
- Use or possession of bait or hunting over bait, or any attractant
- Hunting within 150 feet of any designated road, ATV or hiking trail, or hunting in or within 150 feet of any harvested or unharvested ag field.
- Marking trails with non-biodegradable flagging tape
- Trapping

- Riding horses or mules

- Fires

- Spot-lighting – artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife.

- Man-drives for deer or feral hogs

- Crawfishing

- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts.

- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles or ATV.

- Driving or screwing a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree or to hunt from any tree in which such an object has been driven; or using climbing spikes.

- Possession of saws, saw blades, or machetes.

- Harvest of frogs, turtles, snakes, shells, or mollusks

- Collection and removal of antlers

- Use of remote cameras

- Use of deer or turkey gobbler decoys

- Geocaching

Specific Hunting Regulations

State bag limits apply unless otherwise specified. The only seasons open are those listed in this brochure.

Hunting is permitted only in designated areas during dates shown on map.

Hunters under 16 years of age must possess proof of completion of an approved Hunter Safety Course and be accompanied (in sight and in normal voice contact) at all times by an adult 21 or older. Each adult must have a refuge permit and can supervise only one youth during deer hunts and not more than two youths during all other hunts.

During special dog season for rabbit, archery hunters must wear a minimum of an unbroken hunter orange cap.

Hunter participation and wildlife harvest data are vital to the management of refuge wildlife resources. **All hunters must check-in and check-out after each hunt using a self-clearing permit available from a check station.** Reporting your hunting activity and any wildlife harvest after each and every hunt will help us better manage your refuge.

Archers must collect biological data on all deer harvested including weighing, measuring antlers, pulling a jawbone, and recording data on a self-

clearing permit at the check station. Equipment, data forms, and instructions will be provided. This data will assist us in better managing the refuge's deer herd.

All refuge users must enter and exit the refuge at designated parking lots only. Accessing private land from any part of the refuge or from refuge parking areas is prohibited.

Waterfowl, small game and archery hunting is prohibited during quota muzzleloader hunts.

Archery hunting is prohibited in Units 1B and 2B during youth deer hunts.

All deer taken on youth, archery, or muzzleloader hunts must be checked at the refuge check station at the west-end of Lake Long road immediately after harvest. **All hunters must provide deer jaw bones from harvested deer.**

Only portable deer stands may be used, and may be erected two days before bow season. Deer stands must have the owners name, address and phone number clearly printed on the stand. Stands must be placed in a non-hunting position when not in use and must be removed from the refuge on or before the last day of the state archery season. Portable blinds may be used, but must be removed daily. When using portable blinds, a minimum of 400 square inches of hunters orange must be attached to the blind at the tallest point and must be visible from 360 degrees around.

Beaver, feral hogs, nutria and coyote may be taken **incidental to any refuge hunt** with weapons legal for that hunt until the daily bag limit of game is taken.

Mourning doves, snipe, and rail may be taken incidental to any of the migratory bird hunts with a weapon legal for that hunt until the daily bag limit of game is taken.

Hunting with pointer/retriever dogs during migratory bird seasons and hunting with rabbit or squirrel dogs during the rabbit season is permitted. However, rabbit dogs are allowed **ONLY** after the Louisiana deer season has closed until the close of the state rabbit season. Use of dogs to trail wounded deer or hogs is prohibited.

No more than two dogs per hunting party for squirrel hunting. Only beagles that do not exceed 15 inches at front shoulders may be used for rabbit hunting. All dogs must be collared with owner's name and phone number. Rabbit hunters must wear a minimum of an unbroken orange cap during special dog season.