

## General Introduction

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1915 is one of over 548 national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary objective of the refuge is to provide habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. The refuge is located in Mississippi County, Arkansas.

Public use, hunting and fishing are allowed under carefully controlled conditions in order to maintain wildlife populations at levels compatible with the ecosystem. This permits the wise use of a valuable natural resource and provides wholesome recreational opportunities for the public. Users of the refuge must obey all signs pertaining to visitation, access, and public use regulations. All public uses, including hunting and fishing, are conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations.

### Access and Vehicle Use

Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than 4:00 am.

The eagle sanctuary is closed to all public entry.

The entire lake, Baker’s Field Island and the Sand-Slough Moist Soil Unit are waterfowl sanctuaries and are closed to all entry and public use November 15 through February 28.

Most refuge roads are open to the general public. However, roads may be closed at any time hazardous or poor road conditions exist or other administrative needs warrant. A locked gate or other barrier, road closed sign, or no vehicle sign means the road is closed to **all** vehicle travel but not to foot travel unless signed otherwise.

All vehicles must stay on maintained roads or established parking areas and meet all applicable federal and state requirements regulating the use of a licensed motor vehicle. Modified vehicles equipped with oversize tractor lug tires are prohibited.

Horses are prohibited. Personal watercraft (e.g., jet-ski, etc.), hover craft, and airboats are prohibited.

Boats may be launched only in designated areas. Boat access by hunters after October 31 is limited to launching at Seven Mile boat ramp and boat use in Ditch 28 only.

## General Refuge Regulations

Public use of the refuge is permitted throughout the year. Permitted activities are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation.

**Refuge permits are required for all hunting activities. Permits are nontransferable and must be carried at all times by anyone on refuge land in possession of hunting**

**gear. A permit can be found on the front of this brochure.**

Nighttime use is limited to fishing, frogging and/or raccoon/opossum hunting and the appropriate tackle must be possessed.

**FmHA Tracts:** (Lawrence & Craighead Counties) The FmHA tracts are open to hunting of state species in accordance with state seasons and bag limits, except **closed to all Migratory Bird hunting.** A Big Lake Refuge general permit is required for all hunts and the same refuge public use regulations apply.

### Commercial activities

Refuge regulations require anyone engaged in a commercial activity to first obtain a refuge special use permit.

### Prohibited activities

- Camping
- Building fires
- Cutting or defacing trees, shrubs or other plants
- Littering
- Searching for or removal of artifacts
- Horseback riding
- Possession or use of fireworks
- Target practice
- Training and pleasure running of dogs
- Taking or possessing turtles
- Possession, use, or manufacturing of illegal drugs
- Use of artificial light to locate wildlife except as authorized for frogging and raccoon/opossum hunting.
- Possession or use of firearms, archery equipment and crossbows except during refuge hunts. Firearms are prohibited south of Highway 18 and at Bright’s Landing boat access.

Only biodegradable paper flagging or reflective tape/tacks may be possessed or used to mark trails.

### Sport fishing and Frogging regulations

Commercial fishing requires a Special Use Permit.

- Sport fishing is permitted on all refuge waters from March 1 through October 31.
- The area around Floodway Dam south of Highway 18 Bridge is open to bank fishing year round, 24 hours a day.

- Climbing onto and/or fishing from all electrically operated water control structures and associated wingwalls or from on top of the Floodway Dam south of Highway 18 or entering associated signed closed areas is prohibited.

- Frogging is permitted in accordance with the state season and regulations but ends on October 31.

- Crawfish may be collected for personal use only. All crawfish traps must have the owner’s name and address permanently affixed.

- Collecting or possessing turtles and mollusks is prohibited.

- Possessing largemouth bass less than the established minimum length of 15 inches is prohibited.

- Boats are prohibited November 1 through February 28 except in Ditch 28.

- Sport fishing with the use of non-motorized boats and boats with electric trolling motors is permitted in the Sand Slough-Mud Slough area (designated on map and on the area by signs) from November 1 through February 28 during daylight hours only.

### General Hunt Regulations

Bag limits for all species except deer are the same as state limits unless specified otherwise.

Stop Poaching Hotline 1800/482 9262

### Mobility-impaired hunters

Mobility-impaired hunters may apply for a special permit allowing the use of ATVs on existing refuge roads. Issuance of the permit is restricted to persons who are permanently confined to a wheelchair, require the use of mechanical aids (braces, crutches, or walkers) to walk, or have complete single leg amputations. For more information, please call the refuge at 870-564-2429.

### Hunter sign out requirements

Hunters **must** sign out after completion of the hunt and provide harvest information at the Hunter Information Station located outside the office building main entrance.

### Firearms

Firearms must be completely unloaded, including chamber and magazine and caps on muzzleloaders, and cased while in a vehicle and on any refuge road, parking area or boat ramp.

Firearms are prohibited on the refuge except during refuge squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, and opossum seasons.

**Only non toxic shot or rimfire rifles may be possessed and used for all small game hunting.** The possession or use of buckshot is prohibited.

### Prohibited hunting activities

- Trapping
- Driving or screwing any metal object into a tree or hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been driven or screwed to support a hunter.
- Building or hunting from permanent blinds.
- Baiting or hunting over bait, salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for wildlife.
- Hunting from mowed or gravel roads.
- Hunting in Sand Slough Moist Soils Unit and refuge headquarters area (see map).
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages while hunting.

### Hunters under the age of 16

Hunters under the age of 16 must be supervised by an adult not less than 21 years old and must remain in sight and normal voice contact with the adult. For small game hunts, the adult may supervise no more than two youths. For big game hunts, the adult may supervise only one youth.

A hunter born after 1968 must carry a valid Hunter Education Card. Hunters under the age of 16 do not need a card if they are under the direct supervision (within arm’s reach) of a holder of a valid hunting license at least 21 years of age. Home state Hunter Education Cards will be honored.

### Specific Hunt Regulations

A refuge permit is required for all hunts. When signed, the permit on the front cover of this brochure will serve as a permit for all hunts and must be carried on your person while hunting. Regulations differ from surrounding deer zones and state seasons as follows:

### Migratory Birds

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge is **closed** to **all** waterfowl hunting.

### Small Game

**Squirrel:** September 6 - October 31, 2008. Dogs allowed North of Timm’s Point. Spring season closed.

**Rabbit:** September 6 - October 31, 2008. Dogs allowed North of Timm’s Point.

### Furbearer

**Beaver, nutria, feral hogs, muskrat, armadillo and coyote:** may be taken incidental to any refuge hunt by the use of the

device appropriate for that hunt and according to any applicable state regulations.

**Raccoon and Opossum:** October 6-21, 2008. No limit. Dogs are required for night hunting.

### Big Game

For all deer harvested on the refuge, the zone to be immediately recorded on your hunting license is 030. All harvested deer must be recorded at the refuge Hunter Information Station located at the refuge headquarters. All deer must also be checked at an official State check station.

Hunters may possess long, recurve, compound and crossbows for the archery deer hunt. Firearms, muzzleloaders and dogs are prohibited.

Only portable stands capable of being carried by one person may be used and the owner’s name and address must be permanently affixed to the stand. Stands may be erected 7 days prior to the refuge deer season and must be removed by the last day of archery season.

The refuge may be closed and archery hunting suspended during periods of severe flooding.

Statewide bag limit of three deer applies. The total number of bucks that can be harvested is two. A legal buck on the refuge is defined as any male deer (**no antler restriction**). Deer harvested on the refuge are NOT bonus deer.

**Deer (Archery/Crossbow):** November 1 – December 31, 2008.

### Signs Protect Visitors and Resources

Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year.

The impact of human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wildlands. Signs control recreational activities while protecting natural resources on the refuge. Please respect the following signs:



**Refuge boundary sign.** Public use permitted in accordance with refuge regulations.



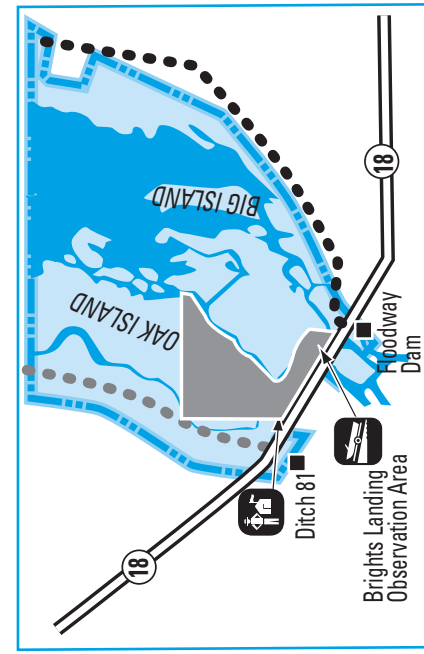
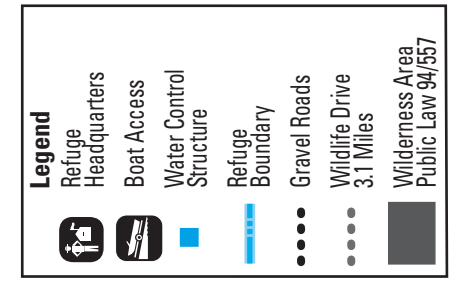
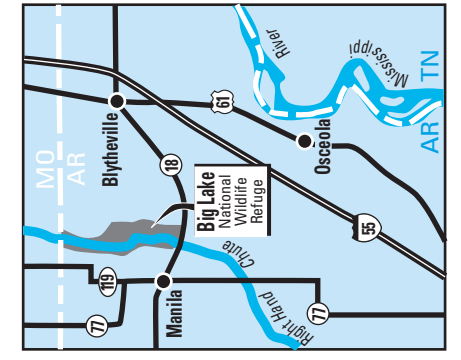
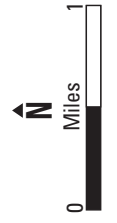
**Area closed to public.** Some areas such as waterfowl sanctuaries are only seasonally closed. Seasonally closed areas have specific dates printed on the face of the sign.

MISSOURI  
DUNKLIN CO.  
MISSISSIPPI CO.  
ARKANSAS

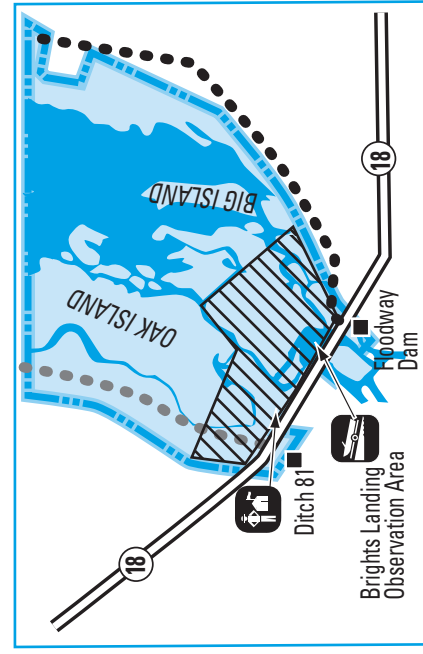
# Big Lake

National Wildlife Refuge

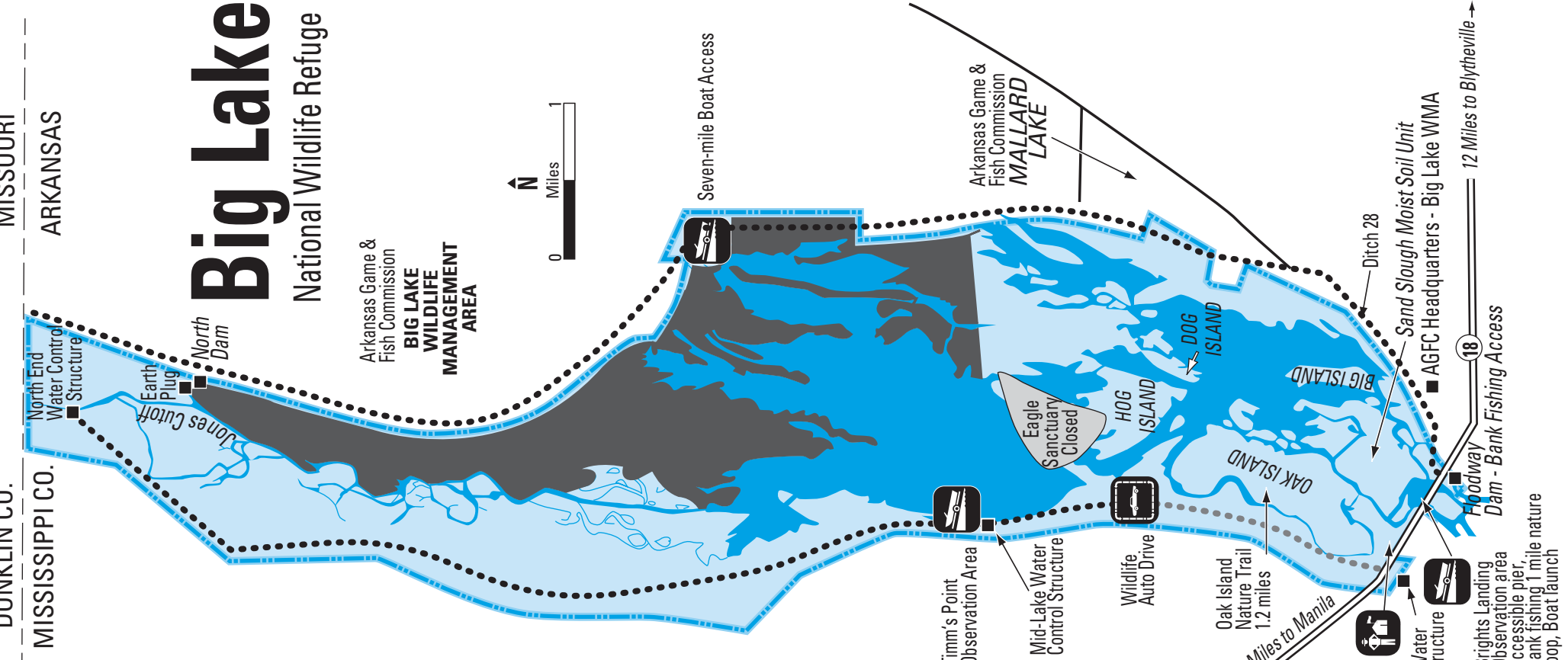
Arkansas Game & Fish Commission  
**BIG LAKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**



**Open to fishing November 1-February 28**  
Trotting motors only



**Closed to hunting**



Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
PO Box 67  
Manila, Arkansas 72442  
870/564 2429  
<http://www.fws.gov/southeast>  
<http://www.fws.gov/biglake>

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

July 2008



# Big Lake

National Wildlife Refuge Public Use, Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2008-2009

**2008-2009 General Hunting Permit – Big Lake NWR**  
This permit must be signed to be valid. It must be carried by the hunter during the hunts. Permit expires 6/30/2009.

I have read and understand the refuge hunting regulations and realize that hunting on the refuge is a privilege and willingly agree to allow USFWS officers to inspect or search all equipment used during my hunt.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Permit not transferable)