

News Release

Department of the Interior / U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge
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For Immediate Release
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Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge taking Fishing Guide Permit Applications for East Cove Unit

The Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Refuge Complex) will begin taking permit applications for the new annual fishing guide permits for the East Cove Unit of Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge beginning May 5, 2008. This permit will give qualified fishing guides or "Permittees" and their pre-identified guiding employees' permission to take paying clients on fishing excursions into the 14,927 acre East Cove Unit when the area is open to public fishing. To apply for a permit, fishing guides must call the Refuge Complex permit branch at 337-598-2216 to set up an appointment.

Only qualified fishing guides may apply for the Refuge fishing guide permit. A "Qualified Guide" is defined as:

- Licensed as a commercial guide by the state of Louisiana as applicable.
- Must possess a current vessel operator license issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. Minimum license shall be Operator Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV). The license shall be valid for the area of operations and type(s) of vessel operated.
- Must possess a current CPR and First Aid training certificate issued by a recognized national organization. A copy of the certificates should be kept on file at the Permittee's business office and individuals must possess a copy of their card or certificate when guiding on the East Cove Unit.
- **Must carry insurance including a minimum of business liability insurance covering their service and their clients and comprehensive for all operations.**

Proof of each of the above will be required to apply for the permit. Additionally, each applicant will need to provide documentation of boat registration numbers for each vessel that they would like to have permitted.

Each permitted fishing guide service will be assessed a \$350.00 fee for the first boat and guide for this activity. If a Permittee has multiple guides and/or boats working for them, each will be assessed an additional \$50.00 fee (\$50.00 per boat + \$50.00 per guide). All fees are non-refundable. Payment must be in the form of a certified check or money order made payable to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All permitted boats will be required to affix a Refuge Complex decal on the port side of the vessel directly behind the boat registration number. Each guide will be required to have a signed copy of the issued Special Use Permit in their possession. Permits are good for one fishing season and must be renewed annually, in January.

Permitted Fishing guides are not entitled to any exclusive use of any specific area nor may they operate outside any state or federal regulation applicable to the area. They will be required to respect the use of the area by non-guided recreational fishing enthusiasts and other public users of this National Wildlife Refuge. For additional information about any of the SW LA National Wildlife Refuges call 337-598-2216 or view our website at <http://www.fws.gov/swlarefugecomplex>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System that encompasses more than 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. The agency also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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