

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

St. Catherine Creek

National Wildlife Refuge





Introduction

St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge was established in January 1990 to preserve, improve and create habitat for waterfowl. Intensive management programs on the refuge will provide excellent winter habitat and resting areas for waterfowl in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

Outdoor enthusiasts will find the diverse habitat on the refuge ideal for fishing, hunting, photography, hiking, and bird-watching.

Encompassing 24,125 acres, with a potential size of 34,256 acres, the refuge is located in the western section of Adams County in southwest Mississippi, seven miles south of Natchez, Mississippi. The western boundary of the refuge is the Mississippi River with the eastern boundary following the bluffs and the southern boundary, the Homochitto River.

Habitat

Habitat within St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge offers a myriad of ecological niches for wildlife. Cypress swamps and hardwood forests teeming with oak, gum, elm, ash, and cottonwood comprise 30 percent of the refuge. Ten percent of the acreage is open water, while the remaining area consists of cleared land and land created due to the meandering of the Mississippi River.

Rains and backwater flooding fill depressions and basins in low areas creating optimum wintering ground for waterfowl as well as unique habitat for other forms of wildlife. Natural water bodies and a multitude of beaver ponds create ideal habitat for summer nesting wood ducks.

Reforestation

Management Efforts

The Lower Mississippi River Valley abounded with bottomland hardwood forests in the late 60's. The early 70's marked an era when the farm economy was at its peak, dense forests were cut and cleared to give way to agricultural development and to the high values of the soybean market. Prime wildlife habitat and a valuable timber resource were lost.

Current refuge management strategies aim to restore major portions of the refuge with several hardwood species including oaks and bald cypress that grew native before man's intervention. Reforestation efforts will enhance wildlife diversity as well as prevent loss of valuable soil as a result of wind and backwater flooding from seasonal fluctuations of the Mississippi River.

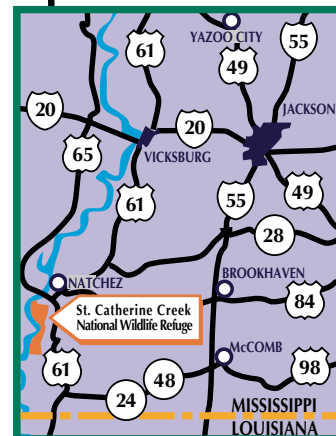
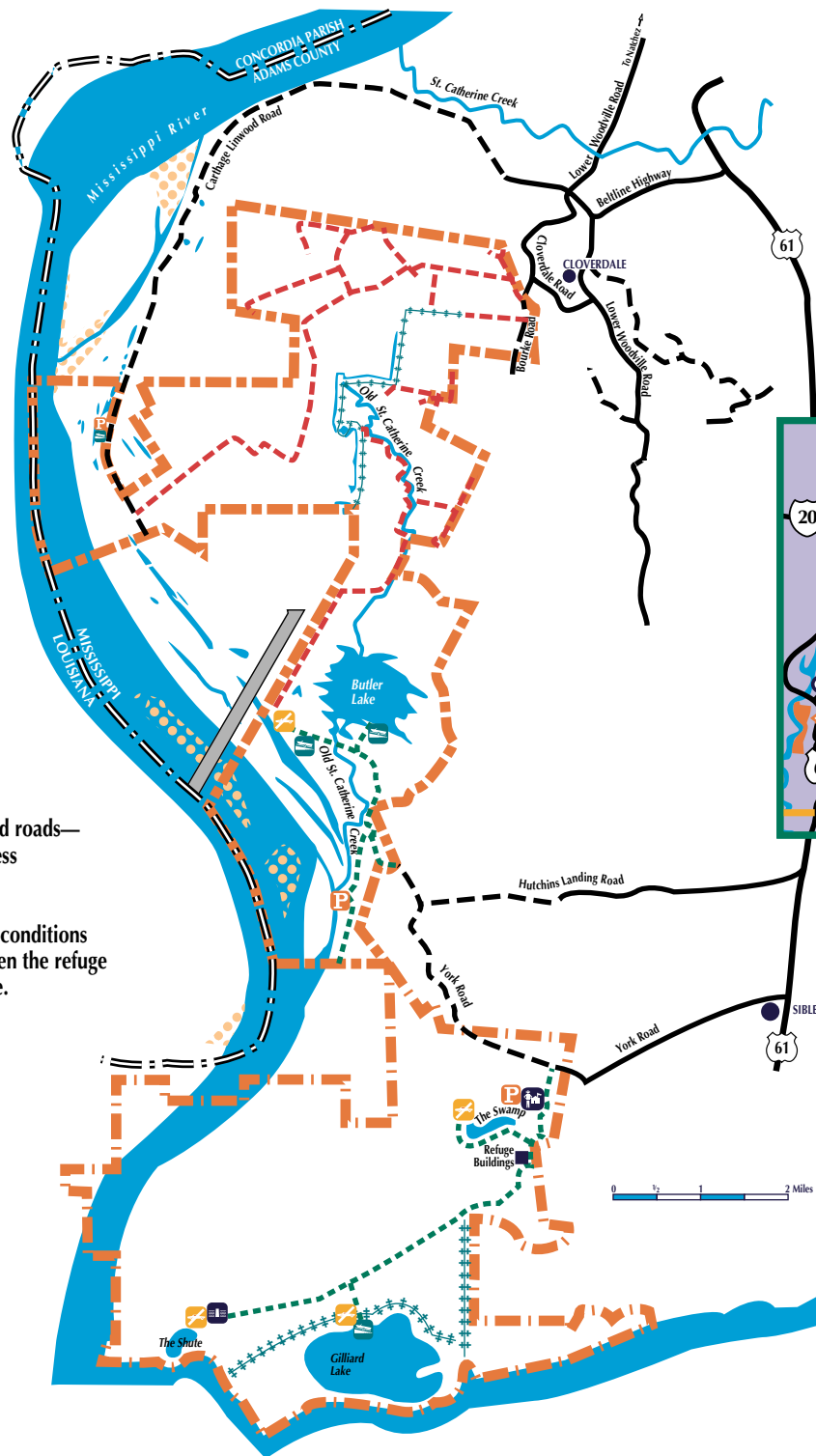
Waterfowl Habitat Improvement

One of the primary objectives of St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge is to enhance the potential of the refuge's wetland areas to support migrating and wintering waterfowl. Presently, the refuge floods via backwater from St. Catherine Creek and the Mississippi River. However, when the backwater recedes to within the banks of the creek, many acres of potential wetland habitat are no longer available.

Refuge management efforts include installing water control structures, culverts, and improving a levee/road system which will retain backwater for those periods when areas may otherwise become dry. Several of the low sites retaining water



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LEGEND

- Refuge Boundary
- Sandbar
- Unpaved or unimproved roads—closed to public access
- Paved county roads
- Unpaved county roads
- Roads open to public—conditions permitting AND when the refuge is open to public use.
- Levee
- Parking Areas
- Refuge Headquarters
- Boat Ramp
- Pumping Station
- No vehicles beyond this point

0 1/2 1 2 Miles

are managed for production of moist soil vegetation such as smartweed, common millet, sprangletop and rushes while other areas of the refuge are cooperatively managed for agricultural crop production.

The farmers with cooperative agreements are required to leave a portion of the crop unharvested. The combination of natural and agricultural foods available helps accommodate the nutritional and energetic requirements of wintering waterfowl and other wildlife using the refuge. Management plans include lowering water levels in waterfowl impoundments in the spring to provide feeding and resting areas for shorebirds and other migrant species.



Enjoy the Refuge

The public is welcome to visit the refuge year round. There is something for everyone to enjoy: fishing, hunting, nature observation, and hiking. You are encouraged to stop at the refuge headquarters located on Pintail Road at the southern most area of the refuge off of York Road. A nature trail is available near the headquarters where a variety of wildlife may be observed. Public hunting is available during the state seasons (permits required). Fishing is permitted from March 1st through September 15th.

For further information, please contact:

Refuge Manager
St. Catherine Creek National
Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 117
Sibley, Mississippi 39165
601/442 6696



Refuge Regulations

Refuge headquarters: open 7:30 am. to 4:00 pm., Monday - Friday.

Refuge hours: sunrise to sunset



Hiking/nature trail available to observe wildlife.



Firearms permitted only during refuge hunts.



Littering is prohibited.



All vehicles are permitted on public roads and in designated parking areas.



All-terrain vehicles are prohibited.



Camping and open fires are prohibited.



Pets are prohibited.

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