

Tennessee

National Wildlife Refuge



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1945.
- President Harry S. Truman established Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge by Executive Order No. 9670. The area was designated for use by the Department of the Interior as a wildlife management area for migratory birds and other wildlife.
- On December 29, 1945, the Department of the Interior and the Tennessee Valley Authority entered into agreement with respect to the lands that were to be reserved and used as the wildlife refuge. Under this agreement, the establishment of Tennessee Refuge in Benton, Decatur, Henry, and Humphreys counties was to further the purpose of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (45 Stat 1222) and be in the public interest.
- In 1994 an additional 113 acre tract was acquired from FMHA in Warren County, TN.

Natural History

- The primary habitat types on Tennessee Refuge are 25,179 acres of rivers, streams and water, 18,800 acres of various timber (primarily upland hardwood), 3,000 acres of farmland, 3,254 acres of seasonally flooded basins, and 764 acres of miscellaneous lands.
- Waterfowl utilization in recent years has varied between 16 and 24 million use-days in a single year. During the past ten years, geese have averaged at 20,000 birds and ducks have peaked at more than 320,000. Management for neo-tropical landbirds has increased in importance in recent years as the Partners In Flight Program has increased awareness of the plight of these birds. Tennessee Refuge also hosts a sizeable population of bald and golden eagles, with a peak recorded in 2001 of 94 birds.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- 12-person staff.
- 500,000 visitors annually.
- Current budget (FY 05) \$1,362,000.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.
- Provide habitat and protection for threatened and endangered species such as bald eagle, pink mucket mussel, ring pink mussel, orange foot pipleback mussel, Cumberland pigtoe mussel and least tern.
- Provide recreation and environmental education opportunities for the public.

Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl, wading bird rookeries and neo-tropical landbirds.
- Cooperative farming.
- Prescribed fire.
- Mechanical/chemical control of noxious plants.
- Deer management with public hunting.
- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.

Public Use Opportunities

- Trails.
- Auto tour route.
- Fishing.
- Observation platform/photo blind.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.
- Hunting, including youth hunts.

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Calendar of Events

March: Tennessee Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

March-October: fishing in interior waters.

September-October: archery deer hunting.

March-May: turkey hunting.

April-August: neo-tropical migrant viewing.

May: Migratory Bird Day.

August-October: squirrel hunting.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week, deer hunting.

November-January: waterfowl viewing.

Questions and Answers

When can I apply for refuge quota hunts?

We process quota hunt applications during the month of July.

When will the refuge be open for fishing?

Refuge interior waters are open for fishing from March 16 through October 31.

Where can I camp on the refuge?

Camping is not permitted on the refuge.

When is the best time to visit the refuge to view waterfowl?

Peak numbers of waterfowl are usually on the refuge during December and January.

How do I know what roads are closed on the refuge?

Call the refuge headquarters at 901/642 2091 and follow the voice mail instructions to receive current road closures, waterfowl survey numbers, and hunting and fishing information.