

Chickasaw

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: Ron Singer



photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1985.
- Acres: 24,096.
- Located in Lauderdale County, TN.
- Location: the refuge headquarters is located 9 miles north of Ripley (Highway 51) on Edith Nankipoo road, then left on Hobe Webb Road 1.25 miles, then right on Sand Bluff Road .5 mile.

Natural History

- Refuge occupies land that was once owned by a private timber company (Anderson-Tully Inc.) and then a Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Wildlife Management Area.
- Refuge lies in the floodplain of the Mississippi River.
- Concentrations of ducks, geese, raptors, shorebirds, wading birds, and neotropical migrants.
- Currently two active bald eagle nests.
- Habitat acreage:
 - Bottomland hardwood forest: 21,221
 - Cropland: 1,227
 - Open Water: 325
 - Grassland-Scrub/Shrub: 500
 - Upland Forest: 550

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Three-person staff.
- 130,000 visitors annually.
- Base funding is from Reelfoot NWR Complex budget.

Refuge Objectives

- Protect, enhance, and manage habitat for migratory birds and endangered species.
- Maintain and enhance bottomland hardwood forest.
- Restore and enhance the hydrology of the refuge's watershed.

- Provide compatible consumptive and non-consumptive opportunities for public use.

Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds.
- Cooperative farming.
- Mechanical/chemical control of noxious weeds.
- Silvicultural techniques for resident and migratory wildlife.
- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.
- Cooperative partnerships.
- Sanctuary for waterfowl.

Public Use Opportunities

- Hunting, including youth hunts.
- Fishing year-round in Mississippi and Forked Deer Rivers, and four small lakes.
- 20 miles of gravel/paved roads for refuge access.
- Logging trails for hiking/hunter access.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.

Calendar of Events

March-June: crappie and bass fishing peak; wildflowers are abundant; northern snowmelt swells Mississippi River; birds migrating north; excellent wildlife viewing opportunities.

July-September: catfishing still good; habitat management programs busy; heat, humidity, and bugs can be extreme.

September-December: squirrel hunting begins; other hunts follow through end of year; National Wildlife Refuge Week in October; excellent wildlife viewing opportunities.

January-March: small-Mississippi-River rises can inundate refuge; hunting closes end of February; wintering waterfowl use peaks.