

### General Information

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 National Wildlife Refuges nationwide. Established in 1938, Wheeler Refuge lies within portions of three counties (Limestone, Madison, and Morgan) in north-central Alabama. The Refuge consists of 34,500 acres with a mixture of upland forested areas, bottomland hardwoods, back water embayments, and agricultural fields. These areas provide habitat for over 500 species of wildlife including 285 species of birds, 115 fishes, 74 reptiles and amphibians, and 47 mammals. Ten of these species are federally listed as threatened or endangered.

The primary purpose of the Refuge is to provide resting and feeding habitat for migratory waterfowl. Other objectives include providing habitat for a diversity of wildlife, providing habitat and protection for threatened and endangered species, and providing opportunity for wildlife-oriented recreation and interpretive activities. Compatible public uses such as wildlife observation and photography, hiking, hunting, and fishing are encouraged.

### Fishing

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge occupies roughly the middle third of the Tennessee Valley Authority’s (TVA) Wheeler Reservoir on the Tennessee River. It is one link in a chain of several TVA lakes. Approximately 18,000 surface acres of water within the Refuge are available for fishing at the full lake level. Refuge water levels vary with seasons and precipitation. The levels typically begin to rise in early spring, are high during summer months, and are lowered during the fall. Water levels during winter months fluctuate with rainfall

amounts in this area and in other lake areas both upstream and downstream due to drawdowns by TVA for flood control and power production.

Fishing is very popular at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. An estimated 200,000 anglers try their luck in Refuge waters annually. Improved boat launching ramps are located at Hickory Hills, Bluff City, Cotaco Creek, and Talucah Landing on the south side of the Tennessee River and Arrowhead Landing and Triana on the north side. There are also several unimproved ramps at various locations for smaller boats and canoes. A universally accessible fishing pier is located near the Refuge Headquarters on the north side of Highway 67, approximately three miles west of I-65.

Many creeks and sloughs adjoin the main channel of the Tennessee River throughout the Refuge. Old river channels, open backwater embayments, and miles of tree-lined creeks and streams are all available for fishing. Twenty-three families of fishes including 115 different species ranging from cavefish to catfish have been documented in Refuge waters. This provides excellent fishing opportunities for largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, striped, and Hybrid bass, bluegill and redear sunfish, crappie, sauger, and several species of catfish.

### Regulations

Sportfishing on Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge including method of take, daily creel limits, possession limits, and size limits is permitted in accordance with State regulations. The special Refuge regulations listed below supplement the general regulations which govern fishing on National Wildlife

Refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

Fishing in the Waterfowl Display Pool and other waters adjacent to the Visitor Center is prohibited.

Discarding monofilament line on the Refuge is strictly prohibited.

Bank fishing is prohibited around the shoreline of the Refuge headquarters and housing units.

Several Refuge roads and bodies of water are closed seasonally for sanctuary purposes or due to flooding. Such areas will be marked with “Area Closed” signs.

Entry and use of air boats and inboard waterthrust boats, such as but not limited to, jetskis, watercycles, and waterbikes are prohibited on all waters within the boundaries of the Refuge except in the main channel of the Tennessee River and in Flint Creek from its mouth up to mile-marker three.

Some areas of the refuge are idle speed only. These areas will be marked.

Water skiing is restricted on portions of the refuge. These areas will be marked.

Vehicles and horses are allowed on open, gravel roads only. Vehicles must be parked so that traffic and gates are not blocked.

Boats may not be moored or left on the Refuge overnight.

All watercraft, including canoes, are prohibited in Crabtree Slough and the White Springs Unit from November 15 - February 15 annually.

Commercial fishing nets are prohibited refugewide from October 15-February 15.

Littering, vandalism, and tampering with water control structures is strictly prohibited.

Camping, fires, and ATV’s are prohibited on the Refuge.

The taking of frogs and/or turtles is prohibited in refuge impoundments.

Any person entering, using, or occupying the Refuge for fishing must abide by all terms and conditions in the Refuge fishing brochure.

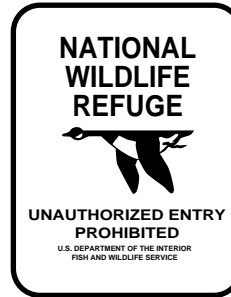
Discarded monofilament and other litter is hazardous to wildlife. Help us keep Wheeler Refuge clean and safe for people and wildlife. Please do not litter.

Facilities and activities accessible to the disabled are available. Please ask for details.

Take pride in your refuge. Report violations. Please take your trash with you when you leave.



No entry beyond this sign. These signs are erected to minimize disturbance to waterfowl or other wildlife.



Delineates refuge boundary. Refuge property is behind the sign.



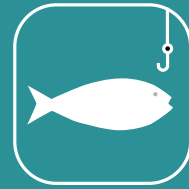
Improved and unimproved boat launching ramp. (See map for ramp locations).



Designates parking lots. Please use these areas when available.

# Wheeler

## National Wildlife Refuge Fishing Information



Wheeler  
National Wildlife Refuge  
2700 Refuge Headquarters Road  
Decatur, Alabama 35603  
256/350 6639  
<http://www.fws.gov/~r4eao>

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

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