

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wheeler

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1938 as a wintering area for ducks, geese and other migratory birds.

photo: Tuck Stone



Today the refuge is one of over 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

photo: USFWS



This blue goose, designed by J.N. Ding Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Waterfowl and Wildlife

This 35,000 acre refuge attracts thousands of wintering waterfowl each year. The refuge hosts 115 species of fish, 74 species of reptiles and amphibians, 47 species of mammals, and 285 species of birds. The refuge also manages and protects habitat for 10 federally listed endangered or threatened species.

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge is comprised of a great diversity of habitat types including bottomland hardwoods, wetlands, pine uplands, shoreline or riparian woodlands, agricultural fields, and back

water embayments. These habitats provide excellent feeding, loafing and roosting sites for wintering waterfowl, as well as nesting sites for migratory songbirds and many species of resident wildlife.

photo: USFWS



Management for Wildlife

photo: Helen Kittinger



Waterfowl Food Production
Approximately 3,500 acres of cropland are cultivated by local farmers on a share agreement. During harvest, a portion of the crop is left in the field as a food source for ducks, geese, and other wildlife. Each fall the refuge provides green browse for wintering geese by planting wheat.

Water Control

Water control structures are used in wetland areas to change water levels in a controlled manner. This type of management provides food for waterfowl and other birds by encouraging the growth of native plants in moist areas.

Providing Habitat Diversity

Wheeler NWR's wide variety of habitat types are managed to produce as much quality food and cover as feasibly possible for wildlife.

photo: USFWS



Banding

Ducks and other birds are banded each year in an effort to maintain current information on nesting success, harvest numbers, migration routes, and the general condition of populations.

photo: David McEwen ©



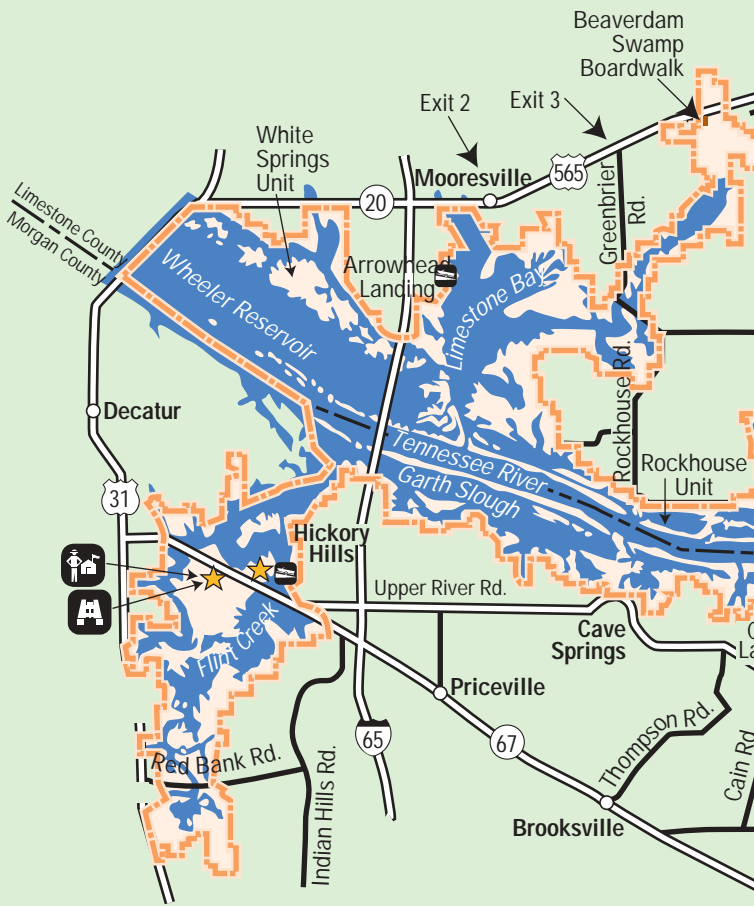










Use by the Public

The public is encouraged to visit the refuge and participate in the many activities designed and offered for outdoor enjoyment. Wildlife observation, fishing, hiking, nature study, and hunting of small game and deer are just a few of the opportunities available.

The Visitor Center located on Highway 67, 2.5 miles west of I-65, should be the first stop for all visitors planning a trip to the refuge. At the Visitor Center, visitors can obtain information about the refuge, enjoy the exhibits, watch the orientation video, use the observation building and trails, and find out about other interesting activities that might be available.



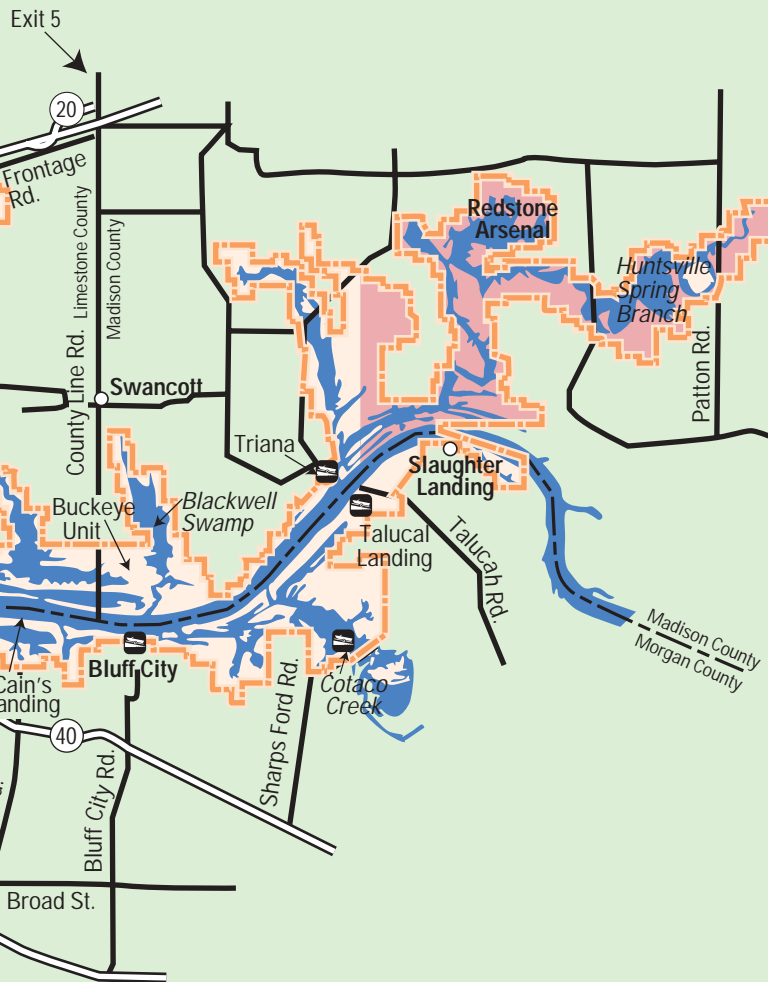


-  Refuge Lands Within Redstone Arsenal
-  Highways
-  Roads
-  Refuge Boundary
-  Visitor Center
-  Wildlife Observation
-  Boating
-  Flint Creek Environmental Area & Universally Accessible Fishing Pier

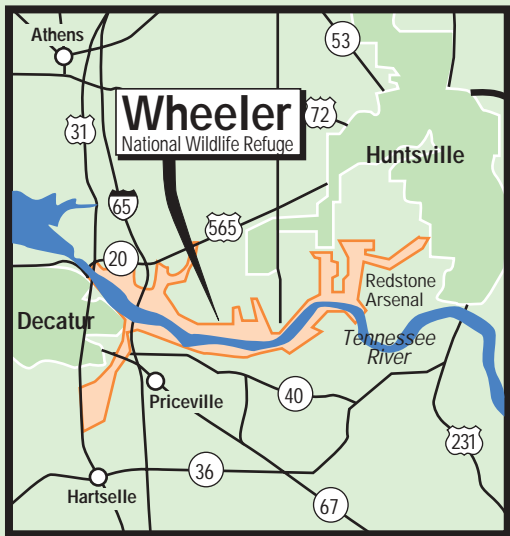
Wheeler












National Wildlife Refuge





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<i>Visitor Center Hours</i>	<p>Enjoy Your Visit October 1-February 28 Daily 9:00 am-5:00 pm</p>	
<i>Wildlife Observation</i>	<p>March - September Tuesday - Sunday 9:00 am-4:00 pm</p> <p>Permitted. An observation building and platform are provided.</p>	 
<i>Fishing and Hunting</i>	<p>Open to fishing subject to State regulations; managed hunts are held for small game and deer. Permit required.</p>	
<i>Boating</i>	<p>Permitted. Six improved boat-launching ramps available. Water skiing restricted and personal watercraft prohibited. Overnight mooring prohibited.</p>	 
<i>Bicycles</i>	<p>Permitted on graveled roads only.</p>	
<i>Horses and Mule Riding</i>	<p>Permitted on open graveled roads only. Not permitted for refuge hunting access.</p>	
<i>Vehicles</i>	<p>Only licensed vehicles permitted. Access is limited to graveled roads only and a portion of these are closed at certain times. ATV's prohibited.</p>	
<i>Firearms</i>	<p>Prohibited, except on managed hunts.</p>	
<i>Camping</i>	<p>Not permitted.</p>	
<i>Artifact Collecting</i>	<p>Surface and subsurface collecting is prohibited.</p>	





Calendar of Wildlife Events

This calendar is meant to serve as a guide to general wildlife events for visitors. Weather and fluctuating water levels may cause variations in these events.

January

Waterfowl numbers are at their peak during the first half of the month. Canada and snow geese are abundant along with many species of ducks; mallards are the most abundant. Waterfowl begin moving north by the end of the month.

February

Waterfowl numbers begin to decline rapidly. Wood duck nesting begins. Depending on the weather, fishing can be good by the end of the month.



March

Waterfowl numbers are low, but a variety of species can still be seen. Blue-winged teal and shorebirds begin migrating. Turtles are present on sunny days. Crappie fishing is at its best.

April

Teal migration is at its peak. Warblers, vireos, and other small passerine birds are migrating. Migrant songbird nesting is in full progress. Wildflowers are at their peak.

May

Broods of wood ducks, mallards, and black ducks appear. Young songbirds and rabbits begin to appear. The last

of the migrant songbirds and shorebirds are moving through the refuge.

June

With migration at an end, only resident birds and mammals are seen. Fishing for bluegill and bass is fairly good.

July

Waterfowl activity is at its lowest ebb for the year. Songbird young are common in the woods and fields.

August

The fall migration of songbirds begins with purple martins bunching for their southward move. Large numbers of swallows move through and some early shorebird migration begins. A few blue-winged teal begin arriving. Fishing for catfish is good.

September

Blue-winged teal migration is at its peak. Shorebirds and large numbers of swallows begin moving through. The first incoming geese arrive during the latter part of the month.

October

Sport fishing is good. Waterfowl continue to arrive with good concentrations present by the end of the month. The mass of southward bound fall songbird migration is at its peak.

November

Although songbird migration is at an end, waterfowl numbers continue to increase.

Large numbers of great blue heron can be seen congregating. Red-tailed and northern harriers, along with other raptors, are common.



photo: David McEwen ©



photo: USFWS

December

Waterfowl numbers reach their peak during the latter part of the month. Bald and golden eagles, although not common, may be present.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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