

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Lacassine

*National Wildlife
Refuge*



Mission: to protect, restore, enhance, and manage for public benefit a representative portion of bottomland hardwood forest, wetland, and associated habitats for wintering waterfowl, other migratory birds and endangered and threatened species.





This blue goose, designed by JN “Ding” Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Introduction

Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 to preserve a portion of the vast marshlands of Louisiana and to provide habitat for wintering and migrating waterfowl. The refuge, located in Cameron Parish in southwest Louisiana, supports one of the largest concentrations of wintering waterfowl of any refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System.



© Sherry Hogan

Most of the 35,000 acre refuge is freshwater marsh, characterized by dense emergent growths of maidencane and bull tongue with only a few natural ridges, spoil banks and levees. The dominant feature of the refuge is the Lacassine Impoundment, locally known as “The Pool.”

The impoundment was created by enclosing a 16,000 acre marsh with a low levee. Large waterfowl concentrations of up to 800,000 ducks and geese have been observed in the Lacassine Impoundment in the past. The Impoundment serves as a daytime sanctuary for waterfowl, with large concentrations flying out to feed at sunset and returning by dawn.

*cover photo:
Gary M. Stolz/USFWS
photo at left:
Bobby Brown*

Wildlife

Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge, located at the southern end of the Mississippi and Central Flyways, preserves one of the major wintering grounds for waterfowl in the United States. During the winter months, the refuge supports peak populations of over 300,000 ducks and 80,000 geese.



© Sherry Hogan

Large wintering concentrations of white-fronted and snow geese can be found here. Pintails, blue-winged and green-winged teal, mallards, ring-necked ducks, gadwalls and American wigeons are the common migratory ducks. Nesting waterfowl include wood ducks, fulvous and black-bellied whistling-ducks, mottled ducks and occasionally blue-winged teal.



© Steve R. Emmons

A variety of wading birds are common on the refuge, particularly during the breeding season. The first American nesting colony of cattle egrets outside of Florida was found here. One of the only roseate spoonbill nesting rookeries in Louisiana is located in Lacassine Impoundment. Other common marsh and water birds include neotropical cormorants, anhingas, least bitterns, great blue, tricolored and little blue herons, great and snowy egrets,



black-crowned and yellow-crowned night herons, white and white-faced ibis, king rails, American coots, common moorhens, purple gallinules, and black-necked stilts.

Rice fields surrounding the refuge are well known for supporting large populations of migrating shorebirds in the spring and fall, and waterfowl and yellow rails in the fall and winter.



The refuge also provides suitable habitat for armadillos, swamp rabbits, fox squirrels, nutria, mink, muskrats, skunks, opossums, otters, raccoons, coyotes, white-tailed deer and a large population of American alligators.

The Federally listed threatened Louisiana black bear has made an occasional visit to the refuge since 1990. Sightings of this elusive animal are very rare.



Management Activities

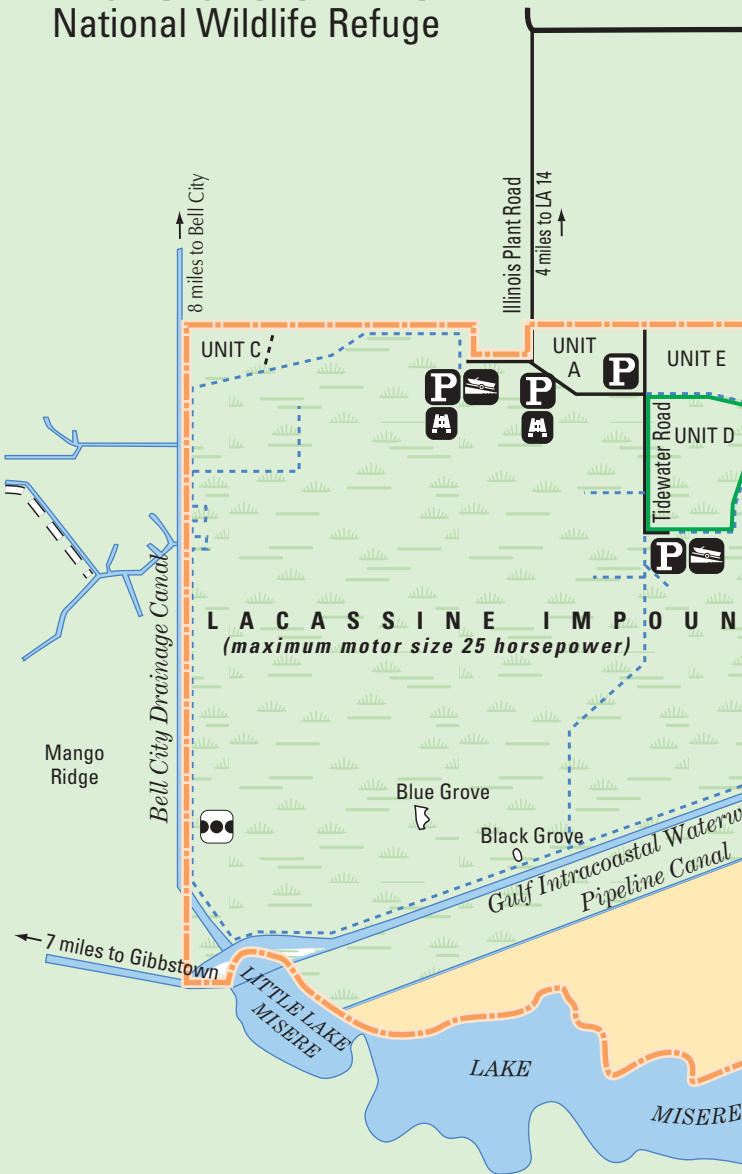
Refuge habitat is managed for use by all wildlife, with special emphasis on waterfowl. Management techniques used at Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge include burning, managing for moist soil plants, planting food crops and water level manipulation.

Approximately 2,129 acres are managed for moist soil plants and agricultural crops to provide desirable waterfowl foods.

Marshlands continually undergo a natural process called succession, the development of different plant communities over time, eventually reaching a dry land stage. The refuge uses different management techniques to slow succession within Lacassine Impoundment in order to provide optimum conditions for waterfowl.












Lacassine

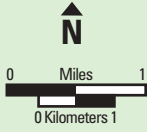
National Wildlife Refuge



Take pride in your refuge! Protect and enjoy its wildlife.



-  Refuge Boundary
-  Paved Road
-  Unpaved Road
-  Wildlife Drive
-  Levee
-  Marsh
-  Wilderness Area
-  Headquarters Complex
Office, Visitor
Contact Station
-  Public Boat Launching
-  Observation Area
-  Parking Area
-  Water Control Structures





Special Habitats

Wilderness

A 3,345 acre wilderness area has been designated in the refuge. This area is relatively unimpacted by man's activities. Most of the marshes outside of this area have been influenced to some extent by petroleum exploration activities.

The Prairie

The 345 acre Duralde Prairie was transferred from the Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA) in 1993. A coastal prairie restoration project, calling for the former farmland to be restored to a coastal prairie mixture of grasses and forbs, was initiated in 1994. Prior to the advent of farming, southwestern Louisiana prairie encompassed as much as 2.5 million acres of land. Today, the few remaining remnants of original prairie are found only on narrow strips of land along railroad tracks.



Public Use-Where and When

Office-Located at the end of Highway 3056. If traveling west on Interstate 10, take Exit 64 (Jennings) and travel south on Highway 26 to Highway 14 in Lake Arthur, west on Highway 14 for 7 miles to Highway 3056, then south 4.5 miles. If eastbound on Interstate 10, take exit 54 (Welsh) and travel south on Highway 99 to Highway 14, east on Highway 14 for 3 miles to Highway 3056, then south 4.5 miles. The office is open year-round Monday-Friday 7:00 am - 4:00 pm, excluding federal holidays.

Lacassine Impoundment-Located at the end of Illinois Plant Road. Travel west from Lake Arthur on Highway 14 for 15 miles or east from Hayes on Highway 14 for three miles to Illinois Plant Road, then south 4.5 miles. Access is allowed year-round from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Boats are allowed from March 15 -October 15.



Unit B-Located at the end of Streeter Road near the refuge office. Travel 3.5 miles south of Highway 14 on Highway 3056 to Streeter Road, then west two miles. An observation platform and fishing pier are open year-round from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset.

Duralde Prairie-Located in Evangeline Parish, north of Eunice, Louisiana. This unit is currently under development by the refuge. Contact the refuge manager for additional information.

Other Units of the Refuge-Access is allowed in other units of the refuge from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset from March 15 through October 31. Certain areas may be closed for management purposes and are identified by closed area signs.



Disabled Access-Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to contact the refuge manager for information on special accommodations which are available.



Activities to Enjoy



Hiking-Although no designated trails have been developed, hiking is permitted on about 30 miles of levees and service roads at the Lacassine Impoundment and Unit B.



Wildlife Observation/Photography-The best opportunities for waterfowl observation and photography are during the fall and winter months at either Unit B or at the Lacassine Impoundment. In addition to waterfowl, many other types of wildlife may be seen on the refuge throughout the year.



Boating-Refuge canals, bayous and waterways are open to boat travel during most of the year. Two public boat launches are available in the Lacassine Impoundment. Only commercial (fee) boat launching facilities are available for access to portions of the refuge outside of the Lacassine Impoundment.



Note: Motors are restricted to 25 horsepower or less in the Lacassine Impoundment. Marshes outside of the Lacassine Impoundment may be entered only by paddling and poling—not by the use of motors. Airboats may not be used on the refuge. Visitors are cautioned that motorboat travel on the refuge may be hazardous due to water conditions, weather and restricted view from vegetation.



Fishing-Recreational only. Fish include bass, bowfin (choupique), bream, crappie, catfish and gar. Consult the refuge fishing brochure for specific regulations. The refuge has fishing piers available for use at the Lacassine Impoundment and at Unit B.

Before doing any activity not listed here, ask if it is permitted.



Hunting-Waterfowl hunting is permitted on the 6,400-acre waterfowl hunting area. Archery deer hunting is permitted on the refuge. Consult the refuge hunting brochure for specific regulations.

Restricted Activities



Vehicles-All motor vehicles are restricted to designated roads and parking areas. No overnight parking.

Alcoholic Beverages-Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting on refuges is prohibited.



Camping-Camping is not permitted on the refuge.



Littering-Help keep these marshes beautiful by taking all of your litter home.



Fires-A major danger to man and wildlife; please help preserve the refuge. Do not light fires.

Collecting-Keep wild things wild—all plants, animals, flowers and insects are protected. Please leave them for others to enjoy.

Weapon Possession-Only archery equipment during the refuge archery deer season, and shotguns with non-toxic shot in the waterfowl hunting are permitted.



Harassing Wildlife-The refuge is home to all wildlife including frogs, turtles, and snakes, both nonpoisonous and poisonous. Please help us protect it by only looking. Do not feed any wildlife including alligators.



Pets-Pets are not recommended on the refuge because of alligators. All pets must be kept on leashes.



Swimming-Swimming is prohibited on the refuge.



Horseback riding-Horses and horseback riding are prohibited on the refuge.



Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge
209 Nature Road
Lake Arthur, LA 70549
Phone: 337/774 5923
Fax: 337/774 9913
e-mail: fw4rwlacassine@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>
<http://lacassine@fws.gov>

October 2002



CELEBRATING A
CENTURY
of CONSERVATION