

## General Introduction

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1915, is one of over 550 national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary objective of the Refuge is to provide habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. The Refuge is located in Mississippi County, Arkansas.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation are priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These wildlife-dependent uses are carefully managed on Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge to ensure they are compatible with refuge purposes and provide safe, high-quality, low impact, recreational opportunities. Users of the Refuge must obey all signs pertaining to visitation, access, and public use regulations. All public uses, including hunting and fishing, are conducted in accordance with state and federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations.

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge is located adjacent to Big Lake Wildlife Management Area, managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Regulations may vary between the two areas, consult the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for regulations pertaining to Big Lake Wildlife Management Area.

## Access and Vehicle Use

Hunters may enter the Refuge no earlier than 4:00 am.

**The entire lake, Baker’s Field Island, and the Sand-**

**Slough Moist Soil Unit are waterfowl sanctuaries and are closed to ALL entry and public use, including hunting and fishing, from November 1 - February 28.**

Motorized boat entry into the Big Lake Wilderness is prohibited.

Personal watercraft (e.g., jet-skis, etc.), hover craft, and airboats are prohibited.

Boats may be launched only in designated areas.

Climbing onto and/or fishing from any water control structure and associated wingwalls and fences, or the top of the Floodway Dam south of Highway 18, or entering any closed areas (areas are designated by signs) is prohibited.

Most refuge roads are open to the general public. However, roads may be closed at any time hazardous or poor road conditions exist or other administrative needs warrant. A locked gate or other barrier, road closed sign, or no vehicle sign means the road is closed to ALL vehicle travel but not to foot travel unless signed otherwise.

All vehicles must stay on maintained roads or established parking areas and meet all applicable federal and state requirements regulating the use of a licensed motor vehicle. Vehicles equipped with oversize tractor lug type tires are prohibited.

ATVs are prohibited, except for use by mobility-impaired hunters possessing a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager.

Horses/mules are prohibited.

## General Refuge Regulations

Public use of the Refuge is permitted throughout the year. Permitted activities are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Nighttime use is limited to fishing, frogging, and/or raccoon/ opossum hunting and the appropriate tackle or gear must be possessed.

## Commercial Activities

Anyone engaged in any commercial activity, including fishing, must first obtain a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge Manager.

## Prohibited Activities include:

*Possession of open alcohol containers on refuge roads, ATV trails, parking areas, boat ramps, fishing piers, or observation decks.*

Camping.

Building fires.

Cutting or defacing trees, shrubs, or other plants.

Littering (including, but not limited to shotgun shell hulls and cigarette butts).

Searching for or removal of artifacts.

Horseback riding.

Possession or use of fireworks.

Use of firearms and possession or use of archery equipment, and/or crossbows, except during refuge hunts, in areas open to hunting.

Loaded hunting firearms or muzzleloaders in or on a vehicle, ATV, or boat under power. “Loaded” is defined as having shells in the firearm or an ignition device on the muzzleloader.

Target practice or non-hunting discharge of firearms.

Dog field trials and organized training events.

Organized fishing tournaments.

Taking or possessing turtles or mollusks.

Possession, use, or manufacturing of illegal drugs.

Artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife, except as authorized for frogging and raccoon/opossum hunting.

Possession or use of non-biodegradable materials to mark trails.

Failure to remove all marking materials from the Refuge after the hunt.

## Sport Fishing and Frogging Regulations

Sport fishing is permitted on all refuge waters from March 1 - October 31.

The area around Floodway Dam south of Highway 18 Bridge is open to bank fishing year-round, 24 hours a day.

Climbing onto and/or fishing from any water control structure and associated wingwalls and fences, or the top of the Floodway Dam south of Highway 18, or entering associated signed closed areas is prohibited.

Frogging is permitted in accordance with the state season and regulations but ends on October 31.

Crawfish may be collected for personal use only. The owner’s name and address must be permanently affixed to each trap.

Boats are prohibited November 1 - February 28, except in Ditch 28, Ditch 81 and south of Sand Slough Dam.

Sport fishing with the use of non-motorized boats and boats with electric trolling motors is permitted in the Sand Slough-Mud Slough area (designated on map and on the area by signs) from November 1 - February 28 during daylight hours only.

## General Hunt Regulations

**A Refuge permit is required for all hunting activities.**

**Permits are non-transferable and must be signed by the hunter and carried at all times while on the refuge in possession of hunting gear. A permit is located on the front of this brochure or can be downloaded from the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/biglake>.**

Bag limits for all species are the same as state limits unless specified otherwise.

Boat access by hunters from October 31 - February 28 is limited to launching at Seven Mile boat ramp and boat use in Ditch 28 only.

## Mobility-impaired hunters

Mobility-impaired hunters may apply for a refuge Special Use Permit allowing the use of an ATV on Oak Island Trail. For more information, please call the Refuge at 870/564 2429.

FmHA Tracts: (Lawrence & Craighead Counties) The FmHA tracts are open to hunting of state species in accordance with state seasons and bag limits, except **closed to all Migratory Bird hunting**. A Big Lake NWR general permit is required for all hunts and all refuge public use regulations apply. A permit can be found on the front of this brochure or downloaded and printed from the refuge website at [www.fws.gov/biglake](http://www.fws.gov/biglake). Access to these refuge lands is currently through private lands and all refuge visitors must obtain permission from adjacent landowners prior to crossing private land to reach refuge lands.

## Prohibited hunting activities include:

Trapping.

Driving or screwing any metal object into a tree or hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been driven or screwed to support a hunter.

Building or hunting from permanent blinds or stands.

Possession or distribution of bait or hunting over bait, salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for wildlife.

Hunting from mowed or gravel roads.

Hunting in Sand Slough Moist Soil Unit, Baker’s Island Field, and refuge headquarters area (see map).

Possession or use of lead shot or buckshot while hunting.

Possession or use of alcoholic beverages while hunting.

## Hunters under the age of 16

Any hunter born after 1968 must carry a valid hunter education card. Hunters less than 16 years old who have a valid hunter education card must be supervised by an adult of at least 21 years of age and remain within sight and normal voice contact with the adult. Hunters less than

16 years old do not need to have a card if they are under the direct supervision (within arm’s reach) of a holder of a valid hunting license of at least 21 years of age. An adult may supervise up to two youths for upland game hunting, but only one youth for big game hunting. Home state hunter education cards will be honored.

## Specific Hunting Regulations

Refuge hunting regulations differ from surrounding deer zones and state seasons as follows:

## Migratory Birds

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Ditch 28 are CLOSED to ALL waterfowl hunting.

## Small Game

**Only rifles chambered for rimfire cartridges or shotguns with non-toxic shot may be used for all small game hunting.**

**Squirrel:** September 1, 2012 – February 28, 2013. Dogs allowed North of Timm’s Point.

**Rabbit:** September 1, 2012 – February 28, 2013. Dogs allowed North of Timm’s Point.

## Furbearer

Beaver, nutria, and coyote may be taken incidental to any refuge hunt by the use of the device appropriate for that hunt and according to any applicable state regulations.

**Raccoon and Opossum:** September 1, 2012 – February 28, 2013.

Dogs are required for hunting raccoons and opossums at night. Training or pleasure running of dogs is prohibited.

Feral hogs are destructive, non-native animals that are incompatible with refuge management. Live hogs may not be possessed, transported, or released on the Refuge.

## Big Game

For all deer harvested on the Refuge, the zone to be immediately recorded on your hunting license is 030. All harvested deer must be recorded at the Refuge Hunter Information Station located at the refuge headquarters.

In addition, all deer harvested on the refuge must be checked according to state regulations.

Hunters may use long, recurve, compound, and crossbows for the archery deer hunt. Use of firearms, muzzleloaders, and dogs are prohibited.

Only portable stands capable of being carried by one person in its entirety may be used and the owner’s name and address must be permanently affixed to the stand. Stands may be erected 7 days prior to the refuge deer season and must be removed within 7 days of the closing of the archery hunt.

**The Refuge may be closed and archery hunting suspended at the discretion of the Refuge Manager during periods of severe flooding.**

## Deer Limits and Refuge Legal Buck Definition

Statewide bag limit of three deer applies. The total number of bucks that can be harvested is two. A legal buck on the Refuge is defined as any male deer (**no antler restriction**). Deer harvested on the Refuge are NOT bonus deer.

**Deer (Archery/Crossbow):** October 1, 2012 – February 28, 2013.

**Take pride in your refuge.**

**Don’t litter.**

**Report violations.**

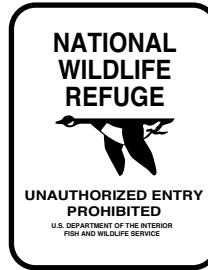
**Stop Poaching Hotline 1800/482 9262**

# Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge

## Public Use, Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2012-2013

- Seasons**  
*Deer - Archery*  
 October 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013
- Squirrel & Rabbit*  
 September 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013
- Raccoon & Opossum*  
 September 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013

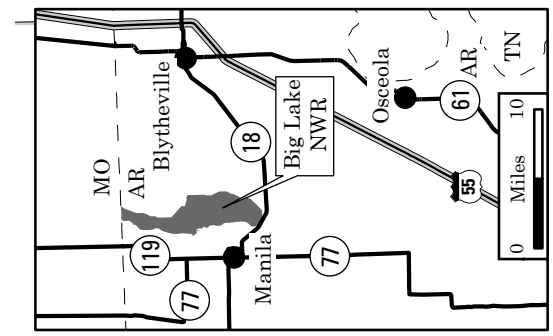
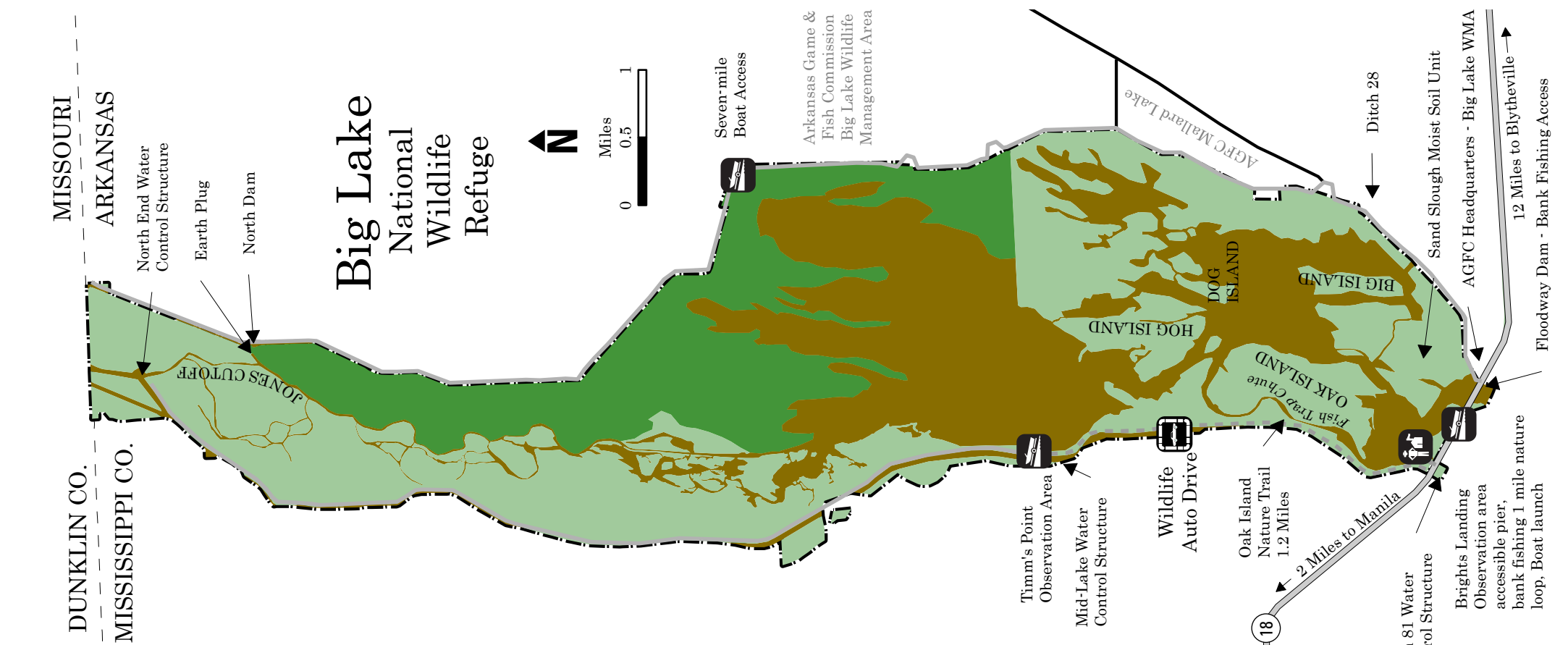
**Signs Protect Visitors and Resources**  
 Millions of people visit national wildlife refuges each year. The impact of human activity, if not regulated, can degrade these wildlands. Signs control recreational activities while protecting natural resources on the refuge. Please respect the following signs.



**Refuge boundary sign.** Public use permitted in accordance with refuge regulations.

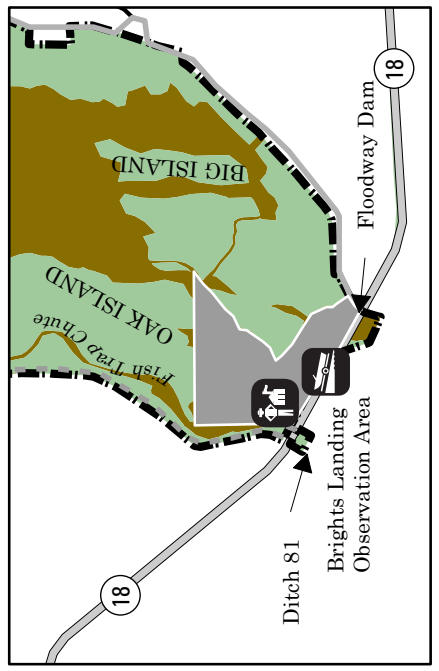


**Area closed to all public entry and use.** Some areas such as waterfowl sanctuaries are only seasonally closed. Seasonally closed areas have the specific closure dates printed on the face of the sign.

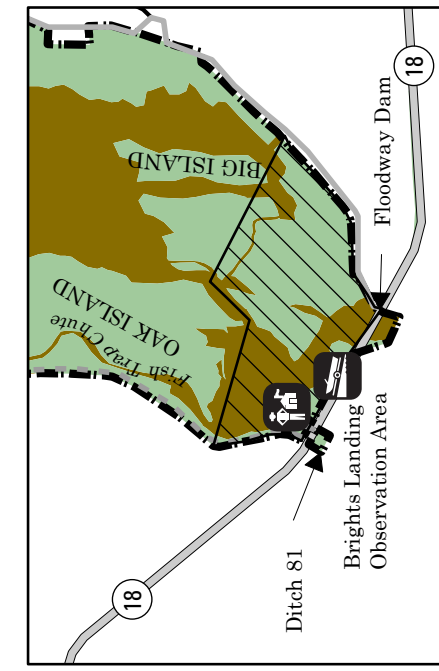


**Legend**

- Refuge Headquarters
- Boat Access
- Gravel Roads
- Wildlife Drive 3.1 Miles
- Refuge Boundary
- Wilderness Area Public Law 94/557



Open to fishing November 1 - February 28  
 Trolling motors only



Closed to hunting

- Hunting Seasons**
- Deer - Archery  
October 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013
  - Squirrel & Rabbit  
September 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013
  - Raccoon & Opossum  
September 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 P.O. Box 67  
 2274 Highway 18 East  
 Manila, AR 72442  
 870/564 2429

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast>  
<http://www.fws.gov/biglake>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
 1800/344 WILD

July 2012



**2012-2013 General Hunting Permit - Big Lake NWR**

This permit must be signed to be valid. It must be carried by the hunter at all times while on the refuge and in possession of hunting gear. Permit expires 6/30/13. I have read and understand the refuge hunting regulations and realize that hunting on the refuge is a privilege and willingly agree to allow USFWS and AGFC officers to inspect or search all equipment used during my hunt.

Signature (Permit not transferable)