

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Lower Mississippi River
Refuge Complex -
St. Catherine Creek,
Bayou Cocodrie and
Cat Island NWRs**

*Annual Public Use
Regulations
2016-2017*

**Permits can be obtained at:
www.lowermississippipermits.com**

Lower Mississippi River Refuge Complex Regulations

Refuge Introduction

Lower Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex consists of St. Catherine Creek (Sibley, MS), Bayou Cocodrie (Ferriday, LA) and Cat Island (St. Francisville, LA) NWR's grouped together for administrative and management purposes. Complex staff composed of administrative, law enforcement, refuge management, biological, forestry, and maintenance professional's work together to support all three refuges within the complex. The Complex Headquarters office is located on St. Catherine Creek NWR. The Complex provides a wide variety of wildlife dependent public uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, environmental education, wildlife interpretation and observation. For more information about these or other national wildlife refuges visit the national wildlife refuge web site at refuges.fws.gov.

Public Use regulations are designed to protect the visitor, sportsman and wildlife populations and habitats. Hunting and fishing seasons open on the Complex are listed in this brochure. The regulations within this brochure supplement the general regulations that govern hunting on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50 Volume 6 Chapter 1 Parts 18-199 Code of Federal Regulations. All hunting is in accordance with applicable state licensing and regulations, unless otherwise stated in these refuge specific regulations.

General Refuge Regulations

St. Catherine Creek (Complex Headquarters), Bayou Cocodrie, and Cat Island NWR's

- Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by law enforcement officers.
- **Check-In Portion:** Before entering the refuge for each visit, everyone must complete the check-in side of the card and put the top portion in the nearest refuge card box. The bottom portion of the check-in card must be displayed on their vehicle dash in plain view.
- **Check-Out Portion:** Before leaving the refuge, visitors must complete the check-out side of the card and deposit it in the nearest refuge card box.
- Refuge lands are open during daylight hours only, with the exception of legal hunting and fishing activities.

- Refuge Managers may close any refuge or cancel a refuge hunt at their discretion due to inclement weather, road conditions, safety issues, excessive flooding, etc.

Permit Information

- Hunters and anglers age 16 and over are required to possess a valid Annual Public Use Permit. By possessing this permit, users acknowledge their understanding of all refuge regulations. In addition to the Annual Public Use Permit, users must possess all applicable state licenses and a picture ID at all times while on refuge property.
- Permits are available online at **www.lowermississippipermits.com**. For questions about online permits, contact Kinsail at 703/994 4194, or service@kinsail.com. Permits are also available in person only at St. Catherine Creek NWR Headquarters office and at various sales outlets. Contact the Complex office for exact locations. Permits acquired at refuge headquarters require payment in the form of a money order. **All money orders must be made payable to USFWS.**
- Permits are valid from August 1 through July 31 of each year.
- All persons under 16 years of age, while hunting must be in the presence and under direct supervision of a licensed or exempt hunter at least 21 years of age in Mississippi (18 years of age in Louisiana). A licensed hunter supervising a youth as provided in this section must hold all required licenses and permits.
- All applications for lottery hunts must be submitted online at **www.lowermississippipermits.com**. See refuge specific regulations for application deadlines.
- No applications or any monies will be accepted by mail.
- A fee will be assessed for each lottery application excluding Youth and Special Access applications.
- Lottery notification will be provided by Kinsail via email. No lottery information will be given out by refuge personnel.
- All successful lottery applicants must possess a valid Annual Public Use Permit as well as their winning lottery notification email to participate in these hunts. Exception: Youth hunters are not required to possess the Annual Public Use Permit.

Refuge Hours

- General refuge hours are sunrise to sunset. Complex headquarters office hours are Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 4 pm, closed on Federal holidays. During hunting season, hunters may enter the refuge at 4 am and must exit no later than two hours after legal sunset. Fishermen may enter the refuge ½ hour before sunrise and must exit no later than ½ hour after sunset.

Restricted and/or Closed Areas

- It is unlawful to hunt from or shoot into a 150' zone along either side of designated roads, trails, or parking lots (see refuge maps).
- Vehicles must not obstruct roads, gates, turn rows, field access ramps, or fire lanes and must only be operated on designated roads.
- Vehicles may not be operated on a flooded road with the exception of the low water crossing on Cat Island Road.
- Temporary or permanent closure of refuge areas may occur due to unforeseen circumstances and may not be included in this brochure. Please check for on-the-ground signage and/or updates at check stations/kiosks and entry points or refuge website at: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/St_Catherine_Creek/
- For Mississippi river stages go to: <http://155.76.244.230/offices/ed/edh/docs/bullet.txt>

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV), Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) and Boats

- ATV and/or UTVs may only be used for hunting and fishing purposes. No recreational riding allowed on refuges. (See refuge specific maps).
- Trails open for scouting the third Saturday in September. Trails close to all access February 28th. (Exception: Cat Island Fishing Access – See Refuge Specific Regulations)
- ATV and/or UTVs may be used only on established, designated trails and are not allowed off trail for any purpose.
- ATV and/or UTVs may not obstruct roads, gates, turn rows, field access ramps, or fire lanes.
- ATV/UTVs may not be operated on a flooded road or trail.
- All coast guard regulations apply to boats.

Firearms and Ammunition

- Persons possessing, transporting or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50CFR 27.42 and specific regulations in 50CFR Part 32).
- Archery: State defined.
- Primitive Firearms: State defined. (Youth are not allowed to use center-fire rifles except during specified youth-only hunts).
- Rifles: State defined.
- Ammunition: Possession of lead shot, buckshot, or any shotgun ammunition other than approved non-toxic shot is prohibited on the refuge. (Exception: Youth turkey hunters may use lead shot).
- Waterfowl Hunters: Allowed no more than 25 shot shells per person.

Pets/Animals

- Dogs are allowed for hunting migratory birds, squirrels, rabbits and raccoon during designated seasons only.
- All other domestic animals are prohibited.
- Pets must be on a leash and under control by owner.
- Horses and mules are not allowed on refuge lands.

Bag Limits

- State season bag and possession limits apply unless otherwise stated. Consult current state regulations for details.
- Hunters are allowed only one deer (either sex) per day on refuges.

Check Stations

- All wildlife harvested on the refuge must be checked daily at the nearest Check Station identified on the refuge specific map.
- All deer harvest information must be recorded on jaw bone tags located at check stations, attach it to the jaw bone, and place it in the designated basket.

- Deer that will be mounted – complete two jaw bone tags, place one in the basket and return the other to the refuge along with the jawbone when it has been returned by the taxidermist. Jawbones must be returned within 30 days of harvest.

Deer Stands

- It shall be illegal to construct or to hunt from any permanent stands or blinds.
- Valid permit holders are allowed to possess and hunt from one portable stand or blind on the refuge.
- All stands on the refuge must be identified with permitted hunter's name and phone number legibly written on or attached to the stand. Stands left on the refuge do not reserve the hunting locations.
- Stands may be placed two days prior to established hunting season dates and must be removed two days after the season closes. Stands not in compliance with these regulations may be confiscated and disposed of by the refuge.
- A hunter cannot hunt from an untagged deer stand.
- While climbing a tree, installing a tree stand that uses climbing aides or while hunting from a tree stand, hunters must use a fall-arrest system that is manufactured to Tree Stand Manufacturer Association standards.
- Deer stands and or steps cannot be nailed to trees nor can any blind or stand be attached to a tree by any metal object driven, screwed, or otherwise inserted into the tree.

Migratory Birds

- Waterfowl hunters are allowed no more than 25 shot shells per person.
- Waterfowl hunting is allowed on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during the state season from ½ hour before sunrise until 12 noon.
- Decoys, blinds and spent shells must be removed from the hunting area by 1 pm.

Small Game

- All hunters using shotguns for small game must use approved non-toxic shot. Small game may also be hunted with .22 magnum, .17 and .22 caliber rimfire

rifles, and archery equipment using arrows with points other than broadheads.

- Small game hunting is closed during all deer firearm hunts, primitive firearm hunts, lottery hunts, and youth hunts.

Fluorescent Orange

- During the refuge deer firearm season, primitive firearm season, youth deer firearm season, all hunters on the refuge, except waterfowl hunters, must wear in full view a minimum of 500 square inches of solid, unbroken fluorescent orange garment and a fluorescent orange cap at all times.
- While hunting from concealed ground blinds a minimum of 500 square inches of fluorescent orange must be displayed above or around the blind and visible from all sides.

Prohibited Activities

- All commercial activities, including guiding or participating in a paid guided hunt.
- Searching for or removing any object of archeological or historical significance, including arrowheads, pottery, or other artifacts, as well as any natural materials such as plants, mushrooms, berries and antler sheds.
- Commercial fishing
- The use of artificial light, including vehicles headlights, to locate or take any animal except for raccoon hunting.
- Use or possession of any drug or device for deploying any such drug for hunting.
- Use or possession of any trail marking material.
- Use or possession of alcohol.
- Fire, camping, or littering.
- Organized drives for deer/big game.
- Baiting, possession of bait in the field, or hunting over bait.
- Removal or destruction of any trees, or part of tree to include removal of tree limbs, plants, or other vegetation on the refuge for any reason.

- Trapping
- Overnight parking
- Target shooting
- Any form of snagging of fish
- Field dressing game within 150' of any road, trail or parking lot.
- Use or possession of any items that nail or screw into trees are prohibited.
- Leaving personal property, except legal deer stands, on refuge.
- Parking or hunting within 150' of any oil well site, production facility or equipment.
- Tampering with any petroleum facility or equipment.
- Use of trail cameras.

Youth Hunts

- Youth eligible to participate are those defined by the state.
- Youth lottery hunts have refuge specific regulations.
- Adults may not carry a firearm during any youth hunts.

General Fishing Regulations

- All federal and state regulations governing boating, creel limits, and license requirements must be followed by refuge anglers.
- Hook and line only.
- Trot lines and yo-yos are prohibited.

Other Regulations

- Violations of refuge regulations may be cause of loss of hunting/fishing privileges.
- Beaver, nutria, coyote, raccoon and feral hogs may be taken during any hunting season while in compliance with the regulations within the appropriate season.

Signs Protect Visitors and Resources



This sign delineates the refuge boundary. Entry is permitted only for authorized uses (hunting, fishing, sightseeing, etc.) in accordance with refuge regulations.



This area is closed to all entry. No hunting fishing or sightseeing is permitted. No roads or trails are open to the public.



This area is closed to all hunting.



No public vehicles or ATV/UTVs pass this sign.

Louisiana Black Bear

Be aware that the threatened Louisiana Black Bear listed under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 occurs throughout the refuge. It is unlawful for anyone to take, harass, disturb, etc. any Louisiana Black Bear.

St. Catherine Creek NWR

Specific Refuge Regulations

Boats

- Hunters may not enter the refuge from public waterways.
- Boat access for hunters will be restricted by high water as determined by the Refuge Manager.
- Only electric motors can be used in Swamp Lake, except during high water.
- Swamp Lake is closed to all boats November 15 – March 31 and all boats must be hand launched in Swamp Lake.
- The use of outboard motors north of the Sibley Unit ring levee is prohibited.

Fishing

- Taking of alligator gar is prohibited.
- Hidden pond is a youth-only fishing area. Youth are defined by state regulations. Youth must be accompanied by an adult age 21 or older at all times.

Access

- Hunters are prohibited from entering the refuge from private property or public waterways.
- Cottonmouth Unit closes to all access December 31st.

Mobility Impaired Hunters

- Special access blinds are available to mobility impaired hunters.
- A mobility impaired hunter is defined as a person who is (1) permanently confined to a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker or (2) missing one or both legs.
- Mobility impaired hunters are required to pre-register at the refuge headquarters prior to hunting the designated blinds.

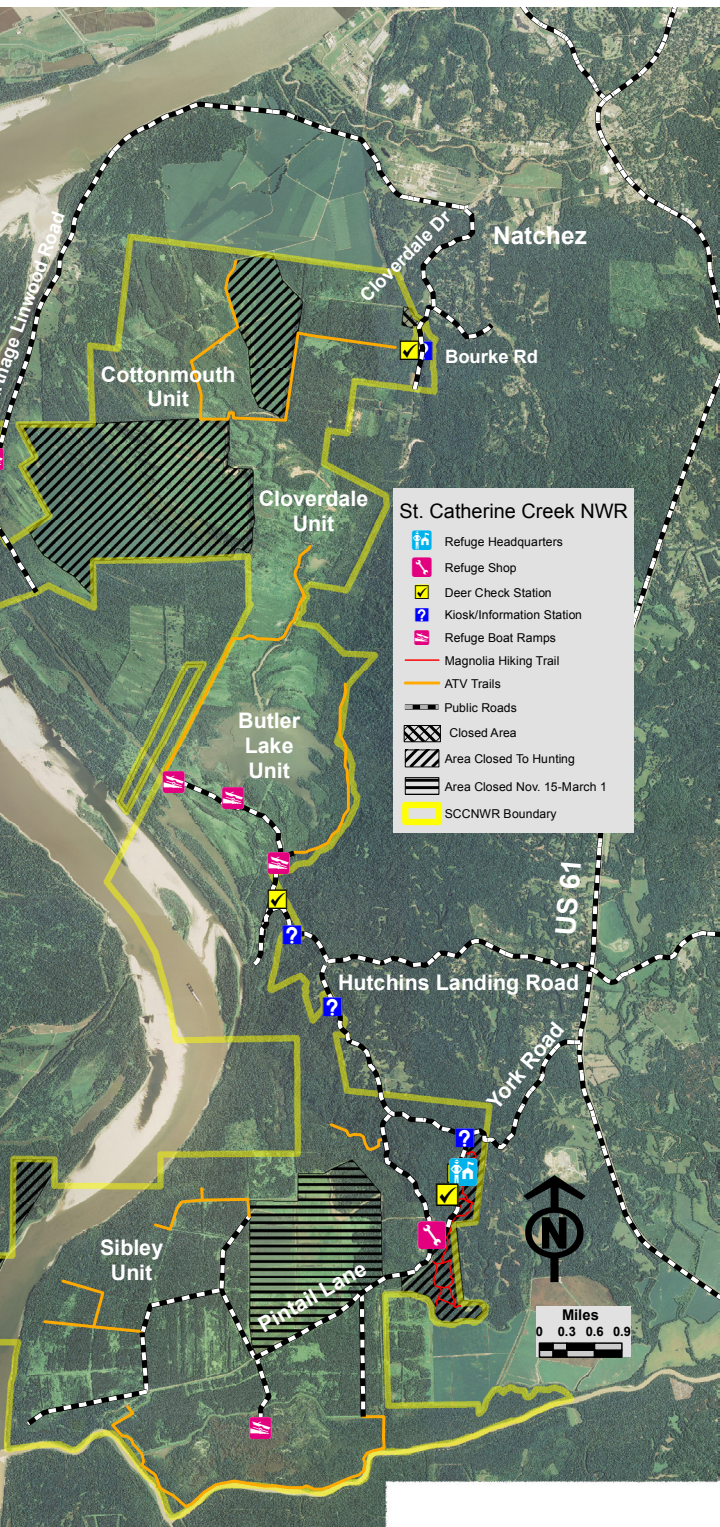
Youth Turkey Lottery Hunt

- Eligible youth are defined by state regulations.
- Youth hunters may harvest one gobbler per day.
- Application deadline is due by COB on the second Friday in February.
- ATV/UTVs are prohibited during this hunt.
- Hunt area is limited to Butler and Sibley Units only.

Raccoon Hunting

- No hunting from Carthage Linwood Road (River Road Unit).
- Use of boats and ATV/UTVs prohibited.
- 22 long rifles only.





Bayou Cocodrie NWR

Refuge Specific Regulations

Access

- Hunters may enter the refuge from private property and public waterways.
- Entering the refuge by boat from U.S. Highway 84 is prohibited.
- Boats must be hand launched on the Hoover Slough Unit.
- Commercial fishermen who would like to access Bayou Cocodrie via the refuge boat launch must apply for an annual Special Use Permit which must be approved and issued by the Refuge Manager.
- Commercial fishing is not allowed in the Cross Bayou Cut. Also, no motorized vessels allowed.
- The use of outboard motors/commercial fishing are prohibited in the Cross Bayou Unit.

ATV/UTVs

- ATV/UTV size requirements and tire sizes are defined by state WMA regulations.
- The Mobility Impaired ATV/UTV trail is restricted to those defined by the state.

Archery

- Archery hunting is closed during the Lottery Firearm Deer Hunt and the Open Youth Firearm Deer Hunt. Migratory bird hunting is closed during the Youth Lottery and Special Access Hunts on the Cross Bayou Unit and the section of the Brooks Brake Unit that lies north of the Brooks Brake ATV Trail.

Migratory Birds

- Migratory bird hunting is closed during the Lottery Firearm Deer Hunt and the Open Youth Firearm Deer Hunt. Archery hunting is closed during the Youth Lottery and Special Access Hunts on the Cross Bayou Unit and the section of the Brooks Brake Unit that lies north of the Brooks Brake ATV Trail.

Special Access Hunt

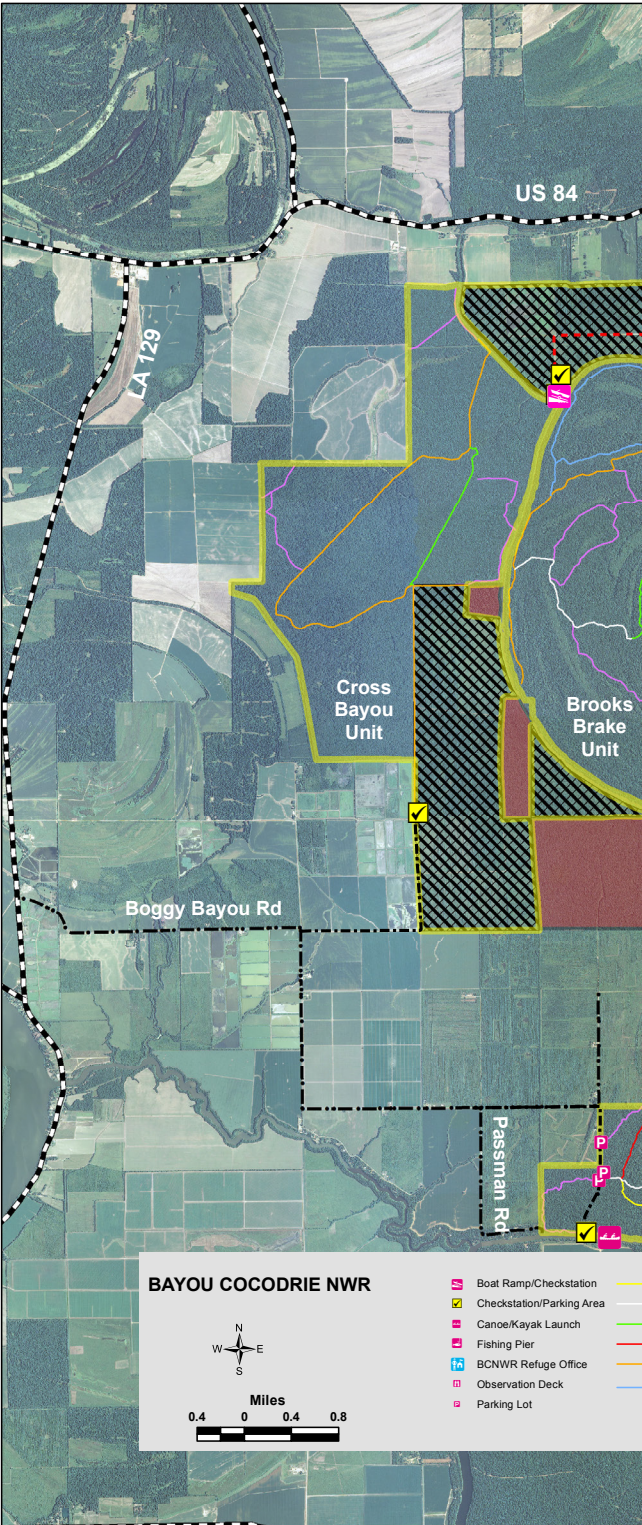
- Only hunters who are wheelchair dependent as per LDWF Classes I & II Standards are allowed to apply and participate in this hunt. All hunters must possess a copy of valid disabled hunter card issued by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and a doctor's certification stating the nature of the wheelchair dependency at the time of the hunt.
- Application deadline is the first Friday in January.

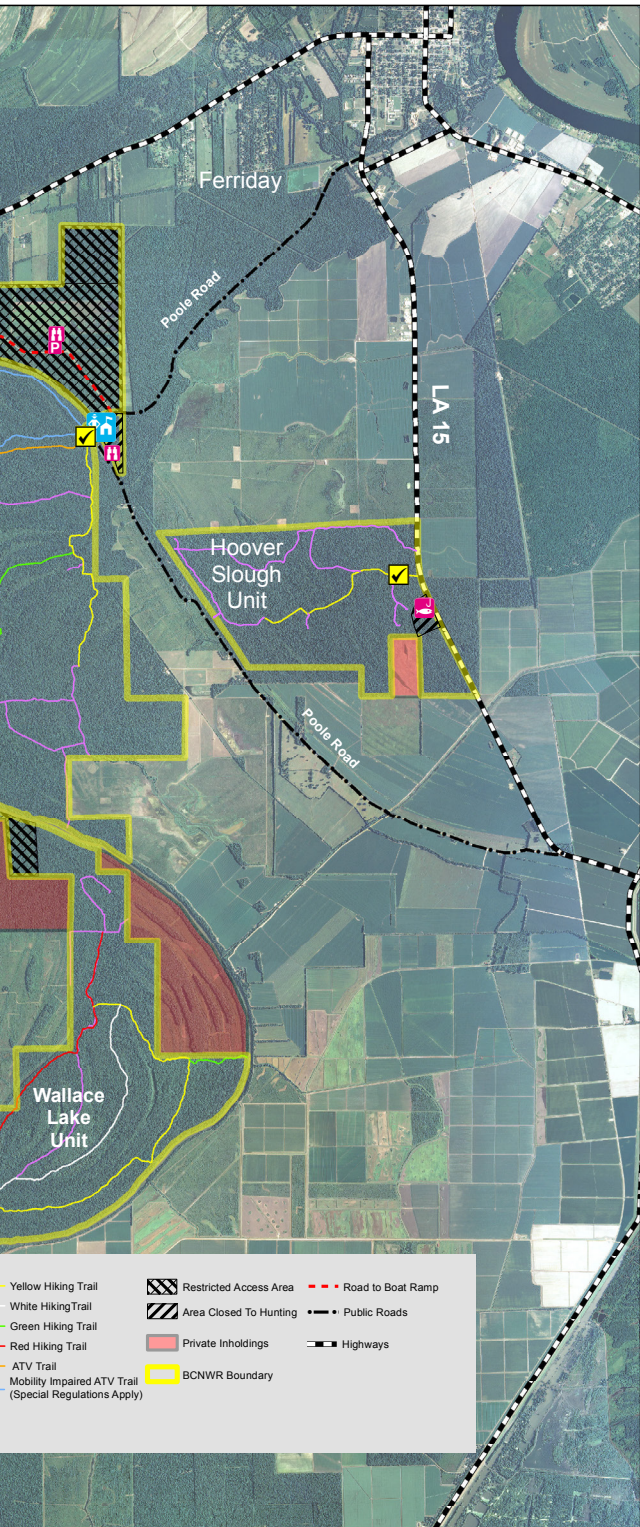
Youth Lottery Hunts

- Application deadline is the last Friday in September.
- Youth Lottery is limited to youth ages 10-15.
- Hunter safety is required for youth lottery applicants.
- These hunters must be supervised by a licensed adult age 21 or over.

Lottery Firearm Hunt

- Application deadline is the last Friday in September.





Cat Island NWR

Refuge Specific Regulations

ATV/UTVs

- ATV/UTV size requirements and tire sizes are defined by state WMA regulations.
- Portions of Wood Duck Trail are open throughout the year for fishing access (see refuge specific map)

Access

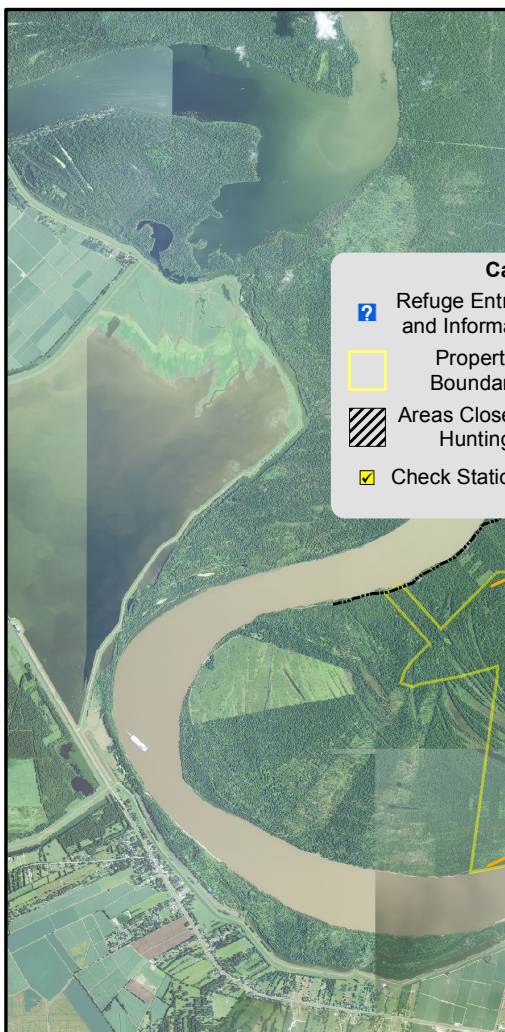
- Hunters may not enter the refuge from private property or from public waterways.
- All boats must be hand launched on the refuge, except at the designated boat ramp.

Firearm and Primitive Firearm Lottery Hunts

- Fishing, waterfowl, archery and small game hunting are closed during the firearm and primitive firearm lottery hunts.
- Application deadline is the last Friday in September.

Crawfishing

- Minimum mesh size for crawfish traps must be a hexagon of 3-quarters by 11-sixteenths of one inch (measured from wire to wire, not including coating).

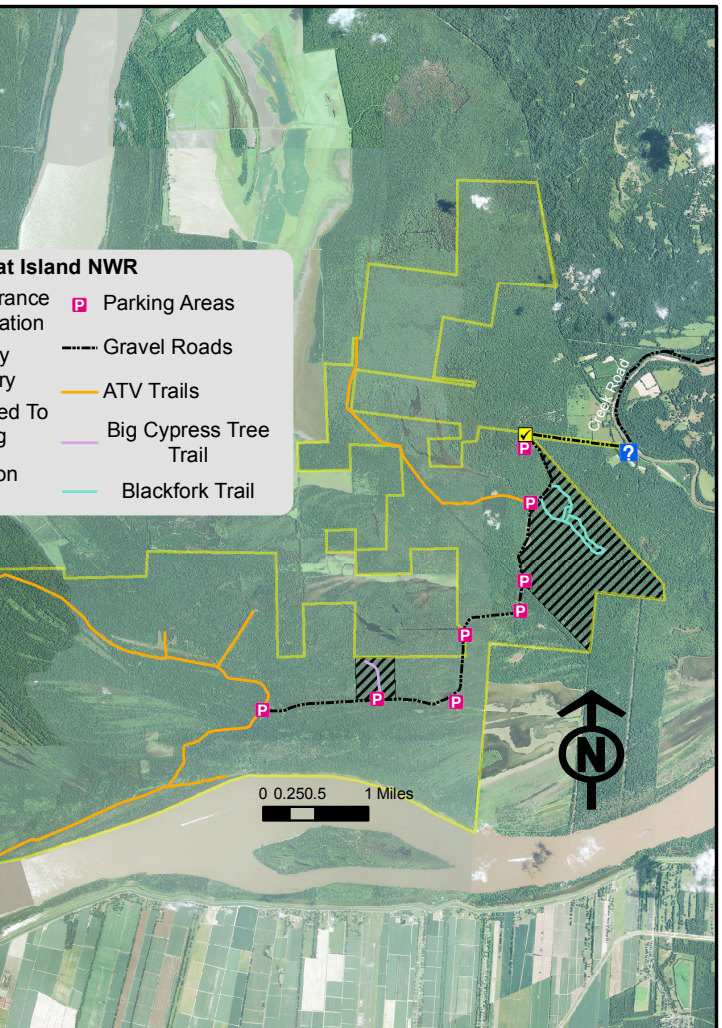


A state recreational gear license is required to use wire crawfish traps.

- Traps must be marked with a waterproof tag with the name and state recreational gear license number of the fisherman legibly printed on the tag. Only 20 traps per angler are permitted on the refuge at the same time.
- Harvest limit is 50 pounds per person per day.
- All traps and nets must be attended at all times and may not be left on the refuge overnight.

Lottery Firearm Hunt

- One deer will be allowed per lottery drawn hunt.



Seasons and Dates by Refuge 2016 - 2017

	St. Catherine Creek NWR
Fishing	Feb 1-Nov 15
Crawfishing	Prohibited
Deer Archery	Oct 1, 2016 – Jan 31, 2017 Closed during Youth Deer Firearm Season
Deer Primitive Firearm	Nov 19-Dec 1, 2016 and Jan 6-14, 2017
Deer Firearm	Prohibited
Mobility Impaired (Deer)	State Seasons
Special Access Hunt	Not available
Youth Firearm Gun	First weekend of State Youth Firearm Hunt
Youth Deer Lottery	Not available
Small Game without Dogs	State season Closed during Primitive Firearm Season and Youth Deer Firearm Season
Youth Small Game	First weekend of State Youth Small Game Season
Small Game with Dogs	Jan 2-Feb 28, 2017 Closed during Primitive Firearm Season
Raccoon (Dogs Required)	Feb 1-28, 2016
Waterfowl	Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during State Season
Youth Waterfowl	State Zone Dates
Woodcock	State Season after Jan 1, 2017 Closed during Primitive Firearm Season
Youth Turkey	Dates will be assigned upon Lottery Drawing

Bayou Cocodrie NWR	Cat Island NWR
Year Round- Closed during Lottery Firearm, Primitive Firearm, and Open Youth Firearm Hunts	Year Round Closed during Rifle and Primitive Firearm Lottery Hunts
Prohibited	Mar 15-Jul 31, 2016
First Saturday in Nov-end of State archery season See Refuge Specific Regulations for Season Closures.	State Season Closed during Rifle and Primitive Firearm Lottery Hunts and Youth Firearm Hunt
Jan 3-8, 2017	Nov 11-13, 2016 (Lottery Hunt)
Dec 2-4, 2016 (Lottery Hunt)	Dec 9-11, 2016 (Lottery Hunt)
Not Available	Not Available
Jan 13-14, 2017 (Lottery Hunt)	Not Available
First weekend of State Youth Firearm Hunt	First weekend of State Youth Firearm Hunt
Dec 10, 2016, Dec 17, 2016, Jan 21, 2017 (Lottery Hunt)	Not available
State season Closed during Lottery, Primitive Firearm, Open Youth Firearm Hunts, and Spring Season	State season Closed during Rifle and Primitive Firearm Lottery Hunts, Youth Firearm Hunt and Spring Season
First weekend of State Youth Small Game Season	First weekend of State Youth Small Game Season
Jan 22-End of State Season	Jan 2-Feb 28, 2017
Prohibited	Prohibited
Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during State Season	Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during State Season
State Zone Dates	State Zone Dates
State Season Closed during Lottery, Primitive Firearm, and Open Youth Firearm Hunts	State Season Closed during Rifle and Primitive Firearm Lottery Hunts and Youth Firearm Hunt
Dates will be assigned upon Lottery Drawing	Dates will be assigned upon Lottery Drawing

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Lower Mississippi Complex

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

601/442 6696 Headquarters Office

<http://www.fws.gov/stcatherinecreek>

July 2016

