

Piedmont

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: J.L. Hannah



photo: USFWS



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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1939.
- Acres: 35,000.
- Located in Jones County and Jasper County, Georgia.
- Other management: active conservation easements, 10 in nine counties (Georgia) totaling 819 acres.
- Location: refuge is located 25 miles northeast of Macon, Georgia and 11 miles north of Gray, Georgia.

Natural history

- 35,000 acres of mixed pine/hardwood forest, bottomland hardwoods, creeks and streams.
- 39 active clusters of endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers.
- Habitat for wood ducks, migratory ducks and geese, wading birds, song birds, white-tailed deer and turkey.
- 11 freshwater ponds managed for the benefit of waterfowl, fish, reptiles and amphibians.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- 11-person staff.
- Current budget (FY 05) \$887,000.
- Resident and non-resident visitors generate in excess of \$20 million yearly to Jasper and Jones counties, GA.
- 60,000 visitors annually.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers.
- Provide habitat for migratory birds.
- Provide habitat for resident native wildlife species.
- Provide wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, interpretation and environmental education to the public.

Management Tools

- Prescribed fire.
- Forest management.
- Mechanical control of vegetation in RCW colony sites.
- Deer herd management with public hunting.
- Water management for wintering waterfowl and other wildlife.
- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.

Public Use Opportunities

- Walking trails.
- Auto tour route.
- Fishing.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photoblind.
- Visitor Center.
- Hunting.
- Environmental education.

Calendar of Events

January: raccoon/possum hunts.

March-April: refuge quota turkey hunts.

April: National Wildlife Week/Earth Day.

May: Migratory Bird Week.

May-June: red-cockaded woodpecker nesting—best time to view.

May-September: public fishing on refuge ponds/creeks.

August-March: small game hunting during state season(squirrel, rabbit, quail).

September-November: refuge deer hunts.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

October-November and April: peak migration for neo-tropical birds.

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Questions and Answers

Where are the best places to hunt deer/turkey?

Deer and turkey are harvested throughout the refuge, especially near streams and feeding areas. Some refuge compartments are more heavily hunted than others, but successful hunting spots change from year to year. We encourage hunters to scout the refuge before hunts. Also, previous years' harvest data are available at the refuge office.

When do your ponds open for fishing?

The refuge ponds are open to fishing May 1 through September 30, during daylight hours only. We advise anglers to obtain a copy of the refuge fishing regulations, as some ponds are closed to fishing. A copy of these regulations is available at the refuge office.

Do you have nature/hiking trails?

Yes. Five miles of hiking trails are available to visitors year-round. A 1.5-mile loop trail leaves the visitor center and passes through pine and bottomland hardwood forests to connect with Allison Lake Trail. The one-mile Allison Lake Trail provides viewing opportunities for wintering waterfowl along the lake. The Red-cockaded Woodpecker Trail is 2.5 miles and passes through a colony site. Maps and interpretive leaflets are also available at the refuge office.

Where are the best places to view the red-cockaded woodpecker and other song birds?

The refuge trail system, including the 2.5-mile Red-cockaded Woodpecker Trail, offers excellent opportunities for bird watchers. Also, many nesting sites are observable from refuge access roads. Bachman's sparrows can be observed in many red-cockaded sites during the nesting season. Refuge personnel can provide directions to the best bird-viewing sites throughout the year. Visitors are reminded to obey all refuge regulations and posted signs.

Do you need a WMA stamp to hunt/fish on the refuge?

No. WMA stamps are required for State Wildlife Management areas. Piedmont Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Federal lands, part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Hunters must possess a valid state hunting license and a signed refuge hunt permit. Deer and turkey hunts require special use permits, which are obtained through an application and drawing process. Fishermen must possess a valid state fishing license. Contact the refuge office for hunt permits and applications.