

Sabine

National Wildlife Refuge



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Refuge Fact

- Established: 1937.
- Acres: 124,511.
- Location: the refuge is located eight miles south of Hackberry, on State Highway 27, the Creole Nature Trail All American Road, in Cameron Parish, Louisiana.

Natural History

- Refuge occupies the marshes between the Calcasieu and Sabine Rivers in southwest Louisiana.
- Concentrations of ducks, geese, alligators, muskrats, nutria, raptors, wading birds, shorebirds, blue crabs and shrimp. Olivaceous cormorant, snowy egret and common egret rookeries present.
- Open water 39,844 acres and grass/marsh 84,667 acres.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Four-person staff.
- Approximately 300,000 visitors annually.
- Refuge visitors contribute to the local economy through the purchase of gasoline, food items, and fishing/hunting license sales.
- Current budget (FY 06) \$1,044,000.
- Gas and oil exploration activities generate financial returns to the local economy during oil well drilling and seismic exploration activities, and in the form of federally mandated excise tax revenues to local governments from oil extraction activities.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other birds.
- Preserve and enhance coastal marshes for fish and wildlife.
- Provide outdoor recreation and environmental education for the public.

Management Tools

- Water management to control salinity levels and preserve marsh and aquatic habitats.
- Creation of marsh through beneficial use of dredge material.
- Open water terracing for waterfowl and fishery habitat enhancement.
- Impoundments for preserving marsh and freshwater fishery.
- Prescribed fire for marsh and coastal prairie restoration and maintenance.
- Mechanical and chemical control of invasive, non-native plant species.
- Trapping of nutria and alligators for population management.
- Environmental education and interpretation of importance of coastal wetlands.
- Law enforcement for protection of wildlife resources and public safety.
- Public and private partnerships for resource management and outreach.

Public Use Opportunities

- 1.5 mile Wetland Walkway and observation tower.
- Visitors center with interpretive displays.
- Four waterside recreational areas with boat launches.
- Salt and fresh water fishing, crabbing and seasonal castnetting for shrimp.
- Canoeing and kayaking canals, bayous and marshes.
- One mile Blue Goose Trail and observation tower.
- Wildlife observation and photography.
- Waterfowl hunting and special youth waterfowl hunt.

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Calendar of Events

January: Refuge waterfowl hunts; Fur and Wildlife Festival in nearby Cameron; refuge open year round to fishing and crabbing at recreational areas along Highway 27, the Creole Nature Trail All American Road.

February: Wintering waterfowl prepare for spring migration to breeding areas; first mottled duck hatchlings appear.

March: Refuge interior opens to boating and other recreational activities on the 15th.

April: Peak songbird migration; bull alligators calling in the marsh; refuge celebrates International Migratory Bird Day on the last Saturday of the month; turtles lay eggs.

May: Recreational cast netting for brown shrimp opens; alligators begin to nest.

June: National Fishing and Boating Week.

July: Federal Duck Stamp on sale.

August: Recreational cast netting for white shrimp opens; migrating shorebirds begin to arrive.

September: early teal duck hunting season; baby alligators begin to hatch; alligator trapping season; refuge celebration of National Public Lands Day; National Hunting and Fishing Day.

October: Refuge interior closes to boating and other activities; fall bird migration in full swing; refuge celebration National Wildlife Refuge Week at the Cal-Cam Fair in Sulphur.

November: regular waterfowl hunting season begins.

December: Audubon Christmas Bird Counts.

Questions and Answers

Where is the Wetland Walkway?

The Wetland Walkway is located four miles south of the headquarters on the right hand side of the road. There is a parking lot, restrooms and a water fountain for your convenience.

How long is the Wetland Walkway?

The Wetland Walkway is a 1.5 mile loop with two additional spurs. It is a concrete walk with a boardwalk portion, an observation tower, and several rest shelters.

Where can I see an alligator?

The alligator or the “King of the Marsh” can be found in any of the refuge canals and bayous and along the Wetland Walkway.

What kind of fish can I catch?

The most common fish species caught are red fish, flounder, speckled trout, alligator gar, largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, blue catfish, and sunfish.

Have there been any unusual bird sightings?

Birders are a great asset in answering this question. A bird sighting log is available to note bird sightings in, as well as read to see what others have seen. Stop in the visitor center and get the latest bird sightings or record some of your own.

Where is the Blue Goose Trail?

The Blue Goose Trail and scenic overlook is located just north of the Refuge Headquarters on the east side of State Highway 27, the Creole Nature Trail All American Road.

How long is the Blue Goose Trail?

The Blue Goose Trail is one mile round trip. It is a primitive trail that winds through a brackish marsh and levee woodlands to the lake bank of West Cove.