

# North Louisiana

## *National Wildlife Refuges Calendar of Wildlife Events*



### Visitor Information

The headquarters for the North Louisiana Refuge Complex is located on D'Arbonne NWR six miles north of West Monroe, Louisiana on Highway 143. D'Arbonne NWR consists of 17,421 acres. The Arkansas/Louisiana border marks the northern boundary of the 41,000 acre Upper Ouachita NWR. The refuge is located along either side of the Ouachita River and measures approximately 18 miles north to south and from 1 to 10 miles wide. The 2,000 acre Black Bayou Lake NWR is located three miles north of Monroe on US Highway 165. The 435 acre Handy Brake NWR is located six miles north of Bastrop, Louisiana. All refuges are predominately bottomland hardwood areas in which D'Arbonne and Upper Ouachita NWR are subject to backwater flooding, making access difficult during the flooding season. However, there are numerous public boat ramps located on or near the refuges.

Visitors are encouraged to become familiar with all refuge regulations so that your stay will be an enjoyable one. If additional information is needed before you arrive, please feel free to write Refuge Manager, Route 2, Box 401A, Farmerville, Louisiana 71241 or call 318/726-4222 or email R4RW\_LA.DRB@mail.fws.gov

North Louisiana  
Refuge Complex  
Route 2, Box 401A  
Farmerville, LA 71241  
318/728 4222

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov/~r4eao>

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### Calendar of Wildlife Events

This calendar is a general guide to seasonal wildlife events. Weather may cause slight variations. Please contact the Refuge Manager for more information.

#### January

Total waterfowl numbers are often highest this month. January is usually the best month to see canvasbacks in open, flooded areas. Ruddy ducks may be present if the water is high.

#### February

Numbers of most species of waterfowl normally are down by this time with the exception of ring-necked ducks which may use the refuge heavily on their trip north. Wood ducks begin nesting and pairs may be seen even in upland woods searching for suitable nest cavities. Fishing picks up as the water rises and fish move upstream. Fishing for crappie begins to improve with both yo-yos and hand-held poles late in the month.

#### March

The peak flooding season arrives and the bottomland hardwoods are usually flooded. It is green-up time with the exception of those tree species which are adapted to deep water flooding such as overcup oak, bitter pecan and to a lesser extent, willow oak. Most wood duck nesting occurs in March. Early migrant songbirds such as prothonotary warblers along the waterways and white-eyed vireos in the uplands make their first appearance. Running trot lines for catfish is very popular.

#### April

Blue-winged teal have a spring population peak as they stop over on their characteristically late migration schedule. White pelicans are occasionally observed resting on open waters. Colorful songsters such as the hooded warbler; summer tanager and indigo bunting arrive to claim their nesting territories. The songbird population is at



a high point of activity and diversity near month's end. Choruses of spring breeding frogs can be heard on warm nights. Snakes become more active with the warmer weather so be careful! Louisiana is a great place to be now if you are a bass or bream fisherman. There should be lots of water and fish!

#### May

Floodwaters begin to fall, concentrating fish and other food items in puddles, lakes, and sloughs. This is good for fishermen as well as herons and egrets which begin to use these areas. Wood duck broods may be observed in flooded woods. Songbird nesting is in full swing. Red-cockaded woodpeckers can be observed bringing food to their young late in the month.

#### June

Green treefrogs are in full chorus in shrubby backwaters. Fishing use is at its highest as the waters level nears summer pool stage. Numbers of wading birds will increase as food is concentrated by receding waters.

#### July

Fishing use will drop drastically after the fourth of July weekend due to hot weather.

#### August

Weather is usually hot and dry causing bottoms to dry out. Herons, egrets, wood storks and anhingas feed in remaining pools. Various shorebirds are present if mudflats are still wet. Wading birds may be abundant in the moist-soil management area.

#### September

Weather again is hot and dry, but late in September a few cool mornings hint of fall. Blue-winged teal arrive as well as a few marsh hawks. Fishing begins to pick up as the temperatures moderate.

#### October

Migration is evident as blue-winged teal show a fall peak. White pelicans stop on

their way south and cormorants are easily seen near open water areas. Small game hunting and archery hunting for deer begins. Mosquitoes become intolerable early and late each day.

#### November

Backwater flooding of very low areas may begin late in November. Access to bottoms becomes more difficult.



Waterfowl numbers increase significantly with pintails, gadwalls and wigeon reaching their fall peak. Bald eagles usually appear late this month to spend the winter. Big game, resident game and migratory bird hunting seasons are in progress.

#### December

Increased backwater flooding of bottomland hardwoods create a feast for the waterfowl population. Mallards, wood ducks and green-winged teal are the most abundant species at this time. The D'Arbonne Christmas Bird Count is held on the refuge. Roughly 100 bird species use the refuge in winter.

