

Lake Ophelia

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations 2004-2005



To:

Lake Ophelia
National Wildlife Refuge
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Marksville, LA 71351
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<http://southeast.fws.gov>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD

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The Refuge

Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1988 primarily to preserve wintering and breeding habitat for waterfowl, is located in the Red River flood plain in east central Louisiana. Public hunting and fishing is permitted on approximately 12,000 acres during specific times of the year. Special arrangements can be made to accommodate persons with bona fide disabilities by contacting the refuge office.

Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by refuge officers.

To ensure your safety and enjoyment while visiting Lake Ophelia, please take the time to become familiar with the following regulations.

General Regulations

Hunting and fishing regulations are designed to protect the sportsman as well as wildlife populations. The regulations below govern hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable state regulations subject to the following regulations.

The refuge is open to public access from 4:00 am to one hour after sunset. The refuge boundary is marked with boundary signs and red boundary paint.

Weapons and Ammunition

Firearms, archery tackle, and crossbows are permitted on the refuge only during designated refuge hunts. Firearms carried in vehicles or boats must be unloaded AND encased or dismantled. Firearms carried on ATV's must be unloaded. Loaded is defined as shells in gun or caps on muzzleloader. Archery tackle and crossbows must be uncocked with arrow unnoocked from string. Up to .22 caliber rimfire rifles and shotguns are permitted except during the muzzleloader deer hunts. Handguns are not permitted.

Possession of shot larger than that legal for waterfowl hunting is prohibited; use or possession of lead shot is prohibited refuge wide.

Exceptions

During quota deer and turkey hunts, lead ammunition legal for taking deer and turkey may be used.

Small game, furbearers, feral hogs, beaver, nutria, and coyotes may be hunted with up to .22 caliber rimfire lead ammunition during open seasons.

Permits

An Annual Hunting, Fishing and ATV Use Permit is required for all hunters and fishermen 16 years old and older, and for all terrain vehicle (ATV) use on the refuge. Permits are available at the Refuge Headquarters located at Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge, 7 miles west of Marksville, LA on Highway 1194. Office hours are Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. Permits may also be ordered by mail at Refuge address shown on the front of this brochure. Request for permits must include name, address, phone number, drivers license number and \$15.00 (money order or cashier's check: personal checks not accepted). Refuge permits authorize participation in all refuge hunting and fishing except quota muzzleloader deer, youth waterfowl and turkey hunts. The permit must be signed and in your possession whenever hunting, fishing, or using an ATV on the refuge, and acknowledges your understanding of refuge regulations.

Commercial Activities

Refuge regulations require anyone engaged in a commercial activity (fishing, hunting, etc.) to first obtain a refuge special use permit. Anyone planning to pursue a commercial activity on refuge land, lakes, bayous or waters are advised to contact the refuge manager for information on permitted commercial activities and special use permits.

To Apply for Quota Hunt Permits

Quota hunt applications will be available August 2 for quota deer hunts. Applications are available at refuge office and on our internet site at <http://lakeophelia.fws.gov>

Return completed applications and the \$5.00 application fee to refuge office by close of business (4:00 pm) on August 27.

A \$5.00 application fee will be charged for each individual applying for the lottery hunt. This fee must be in the form of a money order, no cash or personal checks will be accepted. This fee will be non-refundable.

Applicants will be selected via random computer drawing and will be notified by September 30.

Permits are non-transferrable and must be in the hunter's possession at all times while on the refuge during the permitted hunt. Only hunters with valid quota permits are permitted in the hunt area during quota hunts.

Motorized Vehicles

All motorized vehicles are restricted to roads that are delineated on refuge map. Exceptions: Standard manufacturer's high flotation all-terrain vehicles or ATV's (3 and 4-wheelers) with factory specifications not to exceed the following: weight - 750 lbs., length - 85", and width - 48". ATV tires are restricted to those no larger than 25 x 12 with a maximum height of 1" and a maximum allowable tire pressure of 7 p.s. as indicated on the tire by the manufacturer. ATV trails are open from September 11 through the last day of squirrel/rabbit season. Exceptions are the Duck Lake trail which is open March 1 to October 15 for fishing access only and certain designated trails open during refuge turkey season.

ATV's are allowed only for wildlife dependent activities. The vehicle speed limit shall not exceed 25 mph except as otherwise legally posted.

Boats

The use of boats is authorized in the following refuge waters, subject to date and motor restrictions. Boats may not be left overnight on the refuge. Lake Ophelia - March 1 to October 15, motors allowed up to 25 horsepower; November 1 to November 30 electric powered or non-motorized boats only; Possum Bayou (north of boat ramp), Palmetto Bayou and Nicholas Lake - September 6 to January 31, motors allowed up to 25 horsepower; Westcut Lake, Duck Lake, Dooms Lake, Point Basse, Lake Long and Possum Bayou (south of boat ramp), electric powered or non-motorized boats only.

Prohibited Activities

- The following activities are prohibited on Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting or operating an ATV.
- Littering
- Camping / overnight parking
- Taking of wildlife, or parts of, or plants (including cutting trees or brush) other than specified in this brochure.

- Target practice
- Baiting or hunting over any bait or salt.
- Hunting within 150 feet of any designated road, ATV or designated hiking trail
- Marking trails with non-biodegradable flagging tape
- Trapping
- Riding horses or mules
- Fires
- Spot-lighting — artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife.
- Man-drives for deer or feral hogs
- Crawfishing
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts.
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles or ATV.
- Driving or screwing a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree or to hunt from any tree in which such an object has been driven; or using climbing spikes.
- Harvest of frogs or turtles

Specific Hunting Regulations

State bag limits apply unless otherwise specified. The only seasons open are those listed in this brochure.

Hunting is permitted only in designated areas during dates shown on map.

Hunters under 16 years of age must possess proof of completion of an approved Hunter Safety Course and be accompanied (in sight and in normal voice contact) at all times by an adult 21 or older. Each adult must have a refuge permit and can supervise only one youth during deer hunts and not more than two youths during all other hunts.

Archery hunters (regardless of age) must possess proof of completion of the International Bowhunter Education Course.

All hunters (except youth and quota muzzleloader deer hunters) must check-in and check-out after each hunt using a **self-clearing permit** available from the check station.

Hunter participation and wildlife harvest data are vital to the management of refuge wildlife resources. Please help us to better manage your refuge by reporting your hunting activity and any wildlife harvest after each and every hunt.

All hunters and anglers must enter and exit the refuge at designated parking lots only.

Waterfowl, small game and archery hunting is prohibited during refuge youth and quota muzzleloader deer hunts.

All deer taken on youth, archery, and muzzleloader hunts must be checked at the refuge check station on same day harvested. All archery hunters must provide jaw bone.

Only portable deer stands may be used. Deer stands must have the owners name, address and phone number clearly printed on the stand. Stands may be erected two days before hunting season and removed the last day of archery State Season.

Beaver, feral hogs, nutria, and coyote may be taken **incidental to any refuge hunt** with weapons legal for that hunt until the daily bag limit of game is taken.

Hunting is permissible with pointer/retriever dogs during migratory bird seasons, recognized rabbit and squirrel dogs during the rabbit and squirrel season from the end of Louisiana deer gun season until the end of the State Rabbit Season.

No more than two dogs per hunting party for squirrel hunting. Only beagles that do not exceed 15 inches at front shoulders may be used for rabbit hunting. All dogs must be collared with owners name and phone number. Use of dogs to trail wounded deer or hogs is prohibited.

Sport Fishing Regulations

Sport fishing is permitted only in Lake Ophelia, Duck, Westcut Lakes, Possum Bayou, Lake Long and in the immediate vicinity of the Lake St. Agnes drainage culverts on the Red River.

Use of gear or equipment other than hook and line to catch fish or bait fish is prohibited.

Fishing is permitted from March 1 through October 15 during daylight hours only.

Yo-yo's are permitted during daylight hours only and must be attended (within sight) at all times.

Largemouth bass must be a minimum of 14 inches long. Possession of largemouth bass less than 14 inches long is prohibited on the refuge.

Black and white crappie (white perch) must be a minimum of 10 inches long. Possession of crappie less than 10 inches long is prohibited on the refuge.

Possession of cleaned or processed fish on the refuge is prohibited.

Creel limits, boating safety, and license requirements are in accordance with state regulations unless otherwise specified in this brochure.