

General Information

Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge is made up of over 55,000 acres along the Suwannee River in Dixie and Levy Counties. More than 100 miles of roads provide either vehicle or foot/bicycle access to many habitat types open to hunting. The Refuge provides a variety of public hunting opportunities.

All general Refuge regulations apply unless specifically addressed in this leaflet. Restrictions and designations on the map in this leaflet also apply. Please note that forest management activities including prescribed burns and logging operations may occur at any time during the year. Annual plans will be posted at Refuge hunter check stations. The Refuge is not responsible for damage to or theft of tree stands. The Refuge reserves the right to temporarily close roads or land areas for management reasons without prior notification.

The annual Hunter Working Group meeting will be held at Refuge Headquarters on the third Thursday in April, at 2:00 PM. Please contact the refuge if you are interested in attending.

The following regulations supplement Florida State hunting regulations and general regulations governing hunting on Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

Permit Requirements

All hunters must purchase and possess a Refuge hunting permit and a State of Florida Hunting License, unless otherwise exempt. Hunting permits can only be purchased through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission licensing website, county tax office, or other outlets that sell State licenses. A general hunt permit will be required for all hunters, ages 16 and older, to hunt during all refuge hunts. Youth hunters 15 and under are not required to possess a general refuge hunt permit. State Wildlife Management Area stamps are not required. Unless otherwise exempt, hunters are required to have appropriate archery, muzzleloader, deer, and turkey stamps/permits. Unless exempt, waterfowl hunters are required to have appropriate State and Federal waterfowl stamps.

Successful hunters are required to report their bag by completing a Bag Report Form provided at each check stand, or by calling the Refuge at 352/493-0238 on the day of the harvest. Bag reports must include the legible name of the person that harvested the game as well as the FWC Customer ID number. These reports allow us to better determine population health, numbers, and stability.

General Hunting Regulations

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.

A state issued photo ID must be in possession at all times while on Refuge property.

All motorized land vehicles are restricted to designated roads shown on the map. Vehicles must be parked in a manner which does not block roads or gates. Use of all-terrain vehicles (three-wheeler, four-wheeler, etc.) is prohibited.

Hunters (including all persons accompanying hunters) must wear a minimum of 500 square inches of fluorescent orange visible above the waistline while hunting during Muzzleloader, General Gun, Hog Hunts, and Family Hunts.

In addition to State hunter education requirements, hunters under the age of 16 must be supervised by an adult 18 years of age or older. Parent or adult guardians, 18 and older, are responsible for supervising hunters under the age of 16 and must remain within sight and normal voice contact of the youth hunter. During Waterfowl, Small Game, and Family Hunts, one adult may supervise no more than two youth hunters. During Archery, Muzzleloader, General Gun, and Spring Turkey Hunts, the adult may supervise no more than one youth hunter.

Dogs may only be used as an aid to taking raccoon during the raccoon night-hunting season and for waterfowl season. Except as otherwise specified, dogs must be kept on a leash and under the control of the owner at all times.

Hunters using the Refuge are subject to inspection of licenses, permits, hunting equipment, bag limits, vehicles and their contents, during compliance checks by Federal or State officers.

Temporary tree stands may be left on the Refuge starting one week before Archery Season and must be removed by the last day of Hog Season. All tree stands left on the refuge within the hunt season must display the hunters name and hunting license number legibly written on or attached to the stand. Tree stands not in compliance may be confiscated and disposed of according to Federal Regulation. Tree stands may also be used during Small Game season, but must be removed by the last day of this season.

Flagging, reflective markers, paint, litter, or pins may NOT be used for marking in any manner on refuge property,

with the exception of the following: clothes type pins or clips with reflective or colored markings can be used for the temporary marking of vegetation in order for identifying a route of travel to or from a tree stand. These pins must be removed by the end of the scheduled deer season. Each clothes type pin or clip must contain both the name and hunting license number of the hunter.

Hunters may enter no earlier than 1 and 1/2 hours before sunrise and must be out of the woods no later than 1 and 1/2 hours after sunset.

Prohibited Actions

- All commercial activities including guiding or participating in a guided hunt are prohibited.

- Target practice or any non-hunting discharge of a weapon is prohibited.

- The use of organized drives for taking or attempting to take game is prohibited.

- Marking any tree, or other Refuge feature with carving, flagging, litter, paint or blaze is prohibited.

- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited while hunting.

- Camping, fires, littering, and horses are prohibited.

- Collecting or harvesting any articles of antiquity, plants, animals or parts thereof is prohibited unless specifically authorized by this permit.

- Cutting trees, removing wood or other plant matter from the Refuge is prohibited.

- Hunting or shooting from within 150-feet of Refuge roads, open to public vehicle travel, is prohibited.

- Hunting from a tree in which a metal object has been inserted is prohibited.

- Field dressing or discarding an animal carcass or parts thereof within 1000 feet of any developed public recreation area, game check station, gate, or within 100 feet of a road or trail, open to the public, is prohibited. Dumping of game carcasses is prohibited.

- The head and evidence of gender may not be removed from the carcass of any deer or turkey until it has been

properly checked in at one of the Refuge check stations and transported from Refuge.

- Construction of permanent blinds or stands is prohibited.

- The placing of, or hunting with the aid of bait, salt, oil or ingestible attractant is prohibited.

Specific Hunt Regulations

State bag limits and firearms regulations apply unless otherwise listed. In designated Archery Only Areas (see map), only bows and crossbows are allowed. Wild hogs, coyote, and beaver may be taken during Archery, Muzzleloader, General Gun, Small Game, and Family Hunt seasons.

Waterfowl

State waterfowl season; ducks and coots only. Decoys and boats must be removed daily. Hunters must use and be in possession of shells containing non-toxic shot only.

Legal Deer:

Antlered deer – Deer must have at least 2 points (1 inch or more in length) on one side to be legal to take. Hunters 16 years of age and older may not take during any season or by any method an antlered deer that does not have an antler with at least 2 points on one side. However, youth 15-years-old and younger may take any antlered deer with at least one antler 5 or more inches in length. Antlerless deer are deer that do not have antlers or have antlers less than 5 inches in length.

Antlerless deer – Deer (except spotted fawn) that do not have antlers or have antlers less than 5 inches in length. It is illegal to take spotted fawns.

Archery

September 22 - October 14, 2018; Archery equipment (bow and Crossbow) are allowed. Legal to take antlered or antlerless deer. Also wild hog, gray squirrel, rabbit, armadillo, opossum, and raccoon may be taken by hunters.

Muzzleloader

October 20 – October 28, 2018; muzzleloader firearms and archery equipment only; Legal to take antlered deer and hogs (no size or bag limit for hogs).

General Gun

November 3 - 11, 2018; Legal to take antlered deer and hogs (no size or bag limit for hogs).

Family Hunt - - Up to 2 (two) youth hunters (less than 16 years old) may hunt but must be supervised by an adult 18 years of age or older. The supervising adult may also hunt, but must accompany at least one youth hunter. NEW THIS YEAR – Senior adult hunters (65 years of age or over) may also hunt during the Family Hunt and may be accompanied by 1 (one) companion of any age that may also hunt.

November 16 - 18, 2018; Legal to take antlered deer or antlerless deer or hogs (no size or bag limit for hogs). The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Antlerless Deer Season (Deer Management Unit C3) bag limits apply during the family hunt.

Wild Hog Hunt

November 19 - December 9, 2018; Legal to take hogs only (no size or bag limit). An annual Florida hunting license and Refuge hunt permit is required to hunt hogs.

Small Game

February 2 - 17, 2019; legal to take wild hog (no bag or size limit), gray squirrel, armadillo, opossum, rabbit and raccoon. Only .17, .22, and .22 magnum caliber rimfire firearms or smaller, bows, or shotguns with shot no larger than #4 birdshot, or muzzleloader .40 caliber or less, may be possessed.

NOTE: this hunt is a small game hunt allowing the use small caliber firearms and archery equipment only. Hogs can only be taken with approved small game weaponry.

Raccoon/Opossum

February 2 - 17, 2019. Night hunting only, from sunset until sunrise. State regulations, weapons, and ammunition requirements apply. Limit 2 raccoons per night.

Youth Spring Gobbler Hunt (Only youth under 16 years of age may hunt and must be under the supervision and in the presence of an adult not younger than 18 years of age. The youth hunter must carry the firearm. Adults with required licenses and permits for taking wild turkeys may participate when in the presence of a youth, but may not harvest a wild turkey

March 9 - 10, 2019. Shooting hours from 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1 pm. Bearded turkeys only. Shotguns with shot no larger than size 2 common shot, and bow only may be used.

Turkey (Spring season)

March 16 through April 7, 2019. Bearded turkeys only. Shooting hours from 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1 pm. Shotguns with shot no larger than size 2 common shot and bow only.

