



This is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Dale Bumpers White River NWR
PO Box 205, St. Charles, AR 72140
870/282 8200

www.fws.gov/refuge/dale-bumpers-white-river

Office/Visitor Center Hours

Monday – Friday, with the exception of all Federal holidays, 8 am – 3:30 pm.

An **Annual Public Use Permit** is required to hunt, fish, launch boats and utilize campgrounds on Dale Bumpers White River NWR. The permit cost is \$20.00 for those 16 years of age and over and is **free** to those 15 years of age and younger. The revenue generated from the sale of these permits stays on Dale Bumpers White River NWR to help administer, maintain, and improve hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation on the Refuge.

Holders of other permits, passes and/or Duck Stamps are **not exempt** from the Annual Public Use Permit requirement. To obtain an Annual Public Use Permit, visit <https://whiteriver.recaccess.com/>

Users are no longer required to carry a signed copy of this brochure while on the Refuge.

This brochure is designed to provide the public with information and a summary of regulations pertaining to hunting and fishing on Dale Bumpers White River National Wildlife Refuge. These regulations supplement regulations governing hunting and fishing on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations and applicable State regulations. Violation of Refuge or State regulations may result in confiscation of Refuge Permit in addition to prosecution.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Dale Bumpers White River

National Wildlife Refuge Public Use Regulations 2024-2025

Dale Bumpers White River National Wildlife Refuge

Dale Bumpers White River National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1935, contains approximately 160,000 acres of prime bottomland hardwood habitat located within the floodplain of the lower White River. For management purposes, most of the lands within the refuge have been divided into a North Unit and a South Unit which are separated by Arkansas Highway 1. Refuge out-lying tracts are not depicted in this brochure; however maps are available upon request. These outtracts are open for hunting in accordance with state seasons and bag limits of surrounding zone (except waterfowl hunting ends at noon). All users are permitted on the refuge in accordance with State and Federal regulations as supplemented by the following special refuge regulations.

Required Permits

An Annual Public Use Permit is required to hunt, fish, launch boats and utilize campgrounds on Dale Bumpers White River NWR. Possession of an Annual Public Use Permit (**paper copy or on your phone**) is required and certifies that you understand and will comply with refuge regulations contained in this brochure. To obtain an Annual Public Use Permit, visit <https://whiteriver.recaccess.com/>. Permits are valid for one year from date of purchase.

Vehicle and Boat Use

The maximum speed for any land vehicle is 25 mph, unless posted otherwise. Refuge roads/trails on the South Unit are opened March 1 through December 15 except the Jacks Bay Hunt Area and Levee Hunt Area will remain open through duck season. All other refuge roads/trails are open year-round. Roads/trails may be closed to land vehicles due to flooding. A locked gate, closed sign, or other barrier (i.e. mounded dirt) means the road is closed to all vehicles but not to foot travel unless signed otherwise. For refuge road and closure information, call the refuge headquarters at 870/282 8200, extension #1. Bicycles and e-bikes are allowed only on open vehicle roads and open ATV/UTV trails.

All licensed vehicles must stay on gravel or paved roads. ATV's or UTV's may only be used on yellow marked trails and are only allowed for hunting and fishing activities. The trails are marked with high visibility yellow paint on trees.

An ATV or UTV is defined as a vehicle with a maximum dry weight of 1750 lbs. and tires having a lug depth of 1 ¼ inch or less. NEW

Only those vehicles originally designed by their manufacturer to be ATVs or UTVs are allowed; mini-trucks or other modified off-road vehicles are prohibited. Personal watercraft (jet-ski, sea-do) are also prohibited. ATVs or UTVs may not be stored on the refuge or left unattended except while actively hunting or fishing near the ATV or UTV.

Jon Boats 16 feet or less (without motors) with the owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number displayed or valid registration may be left on the refuge from March 1 to October 31. All boats must be removed from the refuge November 1 through the last day of February. Boating will be in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Outboard motors with modified exhaust are prohibited. **NEW**

Mobility-impaired Users

Individuals with a State issued Mobility Impaired Access Permit may apply for a permit allowing the use of ATV's in accordance with Special Use Permit guidelines. For more information, please call the refuge at 870/282 8200.

Commercial Uses

A refuge Special Use Permit is required for all commercial activities. Commercial guiding for the take of wildlife or fish is prohibited. No person including but not limited to a guide, guide service, outfitter, club or other organization shall provide assistance, services or equipment on the Refuge to any other person for compensation.

Prohibited Activities Include:

- Cutting, painting or defacing trees.
- The use of horses or mules.
- Unleashed dogs if not actively hunting.
- Littering (including, but not limited to shotgun shell hulls and cigarette butts).
- Operating an ATV or UTV without a valid state drivers license.
- Boating or waterfowl scouting from November 1 through February in the Jacks Bay Hunt Area and Levee Hunt Area, except from 4 am to 1 pm on days when waterfowl hunting is open. **NEW**
- Operating an ATV/UTV on gravel roads.
- Operating a bicycle or e-bicycle on a closed road or trail.
- Searching for or removal of artifacts, objects of antiquity or other value.
- Personal property (i.e. decoys, weapons, etc.) left unattended.
- Possession and/or use of trail/game cameras.
- Hunting with the aid of or possession of bait, salt or ingestible attractant.
- Use of dogs from any gravel roadway during squirrel or raccoon hunts.
- Marking trails with materials other than biodegradable paper flagging.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting; consumption of alcoholic beverages in parking lots and on roadways.
- Cutting shooting lanes or other manipulation of vegetation or hunting in such areas.

Camping

Camping, in conjunction with on-refuge wildlife-dependent activities, is permitted only in designated campgrounds and dates as listed in map legend. Persons camping and/or physical camps may not stay on the Refuge longer than 14 days during any 30 consecutive day period. Camps must be occupied daily. All disturbances, including the use of generators, are prohibited between 10 pm and 4 am. Campfires are permitted only in camping areas and must be attended. Campfires are prohibited if county burn ban is in effect for the county in which you are camping. Down wood may be gathered for use as firewood at campsites. To prevent the spread of harmful invasive insects, please do not bring firewood from elsewhere. Campers are required to remove all of their trash from the refuge. Only paper and wood materials may be placed in fires. In an effort to reduce damage to mowers, please remove rock fire rings upon departure from camp grounds. Campers must stay within the area blazed with white paint in designated camping areas.

General Hunt Regulations

State bag limits apply for all hunts unless indicated otherwise in this brochure. NOTE: The Refuge is closed to all entry and public use during the Quota Deer Hunt. Only Quota Deer Hunt permit holders are allowed to enter or use the refuge during this hunt. Exception: camping.

Beaver, nutria, and coyote may be taken without the use of dogs during any daytime refuge hunt with weapons legal for that hunt until the daily limit of game is taken. In cooperation with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Feral Hog Control Program, Feral Hogs may be taken incidental during the modern gun, muzzleloader, and archery deer hunts.

NEW

A hunter born after 1968 must carry a valid Hunter Education Card. Hunters under 16 years old do not need to have a card if they are under the direct supervision (within arms reach) of a holder of a valid hunting license of at least 21 years of age. Youth hunters under the age of 16 who have a valid Hunter Education Card must be supervised by an adult not less than 21 years old and must also remain in sight and normal voice contact with the adult. An adult may supervise only one youth for big game hunting and up to two youth for waterfowl and small game. Home state Hunter Education Cards will be honored.

For all deer and turkey harvested on the refuge, the hunter will immediately (prior to moving the animal) complete the hunting license kill information. All big game taken must be recorded as either South Unit (Zone 145) or North Unit (Zone 146) as zone of kill. Out-lying tracts are the same zone number of the surrounding state zone.

Call 877/731 5627 or visit www.agfc.com or use the AGFC mobile app to check your deer or turkey within 12 hours of harvest.

Weapons

Persons may only use (discharge) firearms during authorized hunting seasons while attempting to take game species. All hunting weapons used on the refuge must comply with state regulations for each game species, except the use or possession of buckshot, lead shot, or shot containing lead is prohibited.

Prohibited activities continued:

- All forms of man-deer drives.
- Firearms hunting from or across ATV trails, roadways, campgrounds, levees, and maintained utility rights-of-way. (Exception: Waterfowl may be hunted in these areas when flooded.)
- Driving or screwing any object into a tree or to hunt from a tree in which an object has been driven or screwed.
- Target practice
- Possession and/or use of drones.
- Possession of a loaded hunting weapon within 100 yards of a campground.
- Chaining or tying dogs to trees in campgrounds.

Cooks Lake Unit

This property is closed to hunting except for special hunts administered by NWR and AGFC. Fishing for youth and mobility impaired users is allowed from March - August when river levels allow. Fishing is only allowed on Cooks Lake. All other waters are closed to public access. Mobility impaired anglers are required to possess a State-issued Mobility Impaired Access Permit. For those wanting to visit the property, please call 501/404-2321 to register or set up a special event.

Hours of operation: Fridays and Saturdays, March - August, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Special Youth Deer Hunt at Cooks Lake

December 7-8. Youth Quota Permit required. Limit one deer (either sex, no antler restrictions, Bonus Deer). Call 870/282 8200 for details.

Mobility Impaired Modern Gun Hunt at Cooks Lake

December 12-14. Mobility Impaired Quota Permit required. Limit one deer (either sex, no antler restriction, Bonus Deer). Call 870/282 8200 for details.

Flood Zone Closure Regulations

The North Unit closes to deer and turkey **NEW** hunting when the White River gauge at St. Charles reaches 26 feet, as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at <https://rivergages.mvr.usace.army.mil/WaterControl/new/layout.cfm>. This restriction is lifted when the gauge falls to or below 23.5 feet.

The South Unit closes to deer and turkey **NEW** hunting when the White River gauge at Graham Burke Outlet reaches 150 feet MSL (30 ft.) and the gauge at Arkansas Post Canal at Lock 1 (Norrell) on the Arkansas River reaches 145 feet MSL simultaneously, as reported by the US Army Corps of Engineers at <https://rivergages.mvr.usace.army.mil/WaterControl/new/layout.cfm>. This restriction is lifted when the White River gauge at Graham Burke Outlet falls to or below 148 feet MSL (28 ft.) and the gauge at the Arkansas Post Canal at Lock 1 (Norrell) on the Arkansas River falls to or below 143 feet MSL.

For safety reasons, quota deer hunts will adhere to a more restrictive flood zone closure that is explained on the actual quota hunt permit cards. SEE INFORMATION ON QUOTA HUNT PERMITS FOR MORE DETAILS.

Deer

An additional quota hunt permit is required to participate in the modern gun and the muzzleloader quota deer hunts. An annual public use permit is not required to apply for quota deer hunts. If selected, hunters will be required to purchase the annual public use permit. Hunters will not be required to pay an additional permit fee if drawn for quota hunts. To apply for quota hunts, visit <https://whiteriver.recaccess.com/>. The quota hunt application period is August 1 – August 31.

State Deer “Zone 9” bag limit applies and either sex with no antler restrictions (Button bucks will be checked as bucks). The total number of bucks that may be harvested through a combination of all refuge hunts is two. Only four deer total may be taken from a combination of both units of the refuge.

Hunters who have harvested their limit of deer and need to assist others to a stand and/or help remove a deer must do so without being in possession of a weapon.

Portable tree stands and ground blinds may be erected 7 days prior to the refuge deer hunt and must be removed from the refuge within 7 days of the close of the deer hunt. Portable tree stands and ground blinds left unattended must have the owner’s Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer ID number clearly written in a conspicuous location.

Archery Deer

North Unit: October 1 –January 31.

South Unit: October 1–December 31.

Muzzleloader Deer

North & South Unit, Quota Hunt: October 19-21. Limit one deer (either sex)

North Unit Only: October 22-25. Limit one buck

Straight-walled cartridges are prohibited. **NEW**

Modern Gun Deer Youth Hunt

North and South Unit: November 2-3. Limit one deer (either sex)

Modern Gun Deer

North and South Unit Quota Hunt: November 9-11. Limit one deer (either sex)

North Unit Only: November 12-13. Limit one buck

Waterfowl

Waterfowl (Duck, Coot, Merganser, Goose) hunting is permitted until 12 noon on all Refuge lands (including outtracts). Retriever dogs are permitted. Only portable blinds are permitted. Waterfowl hunters may not enter refuge designated hunt areas until 4 am. Blinds, blind material, and decoys must be removed from the refuge by 1 pm each day. Afternoon scouting (boat, foot or ATV) for waterfowl is prohibited. **NEW** Personal property (i.e. decoys, weapons, etc.) may not be left unattended. Vehicles waiting in line overnight for waterfowl hunting must be attended. Unattended vehicles will be towed.

Waterfowl hunting is closed on the White River from Holly Lake downstream to Benzal Bridge.

To possess, or take, or attempt to take waterfowl with the use of, any simulated wing movement decoy or any decoy other than an artificial decoy that imitates the appearance of waterfowl: contains no moving parts or electrical components; and is not subjected to any artificial means that makes it appear to move, splash or cause ripples is prohibited. Exception: Manually operated ‘jerk strings’ may be used to simulate decoy movement. **NEW**

All boating traffic on the refuge must maintain a minimum distance of 100 feet (approximately 6-boat lengths) between boats proceeding in the same direction of travel.

Boating and waterfowl scouting is prohibited from November 1 through February in the Jacks Bay Hunt Area and Levee Hunt Area, except from 4 am to 1 pm on days when waterfowl hunting is open.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

North Unit: Open statewide duck season, and special youth, veteran and active-duty military hunt day(s).

Waterfowl hunting on Kansas Lake Area is prohibited.

South Unit, south of Arkansas Hwy 1: CLOSED, EXCEPTION: JACKS BAY HUNT AREA open every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and special youth, veteran and active-duty military hunt day(s) of the statewide duck season.

LEVEE HUNT AREA: Open every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and special youth, veteran and active-duty military hunt day(s) of the statewide duck season. Levee hunt area may ONLY be accessed from the White River Levee. Vehicles must travel on gravel roads. Vehicles must park at the end or along the shoulder of gravel roads. Walk-in or non-motorized boats only.

Dove

Dove hunting is permitted from 12 noon until sunset on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the statewide season in September and October. Retriever dogs are permitted. Areas in which dove hunting is permitted: Demonstration Area, Dry Lake Area, Turner Tract Area, Kansas Lake Area, and Surround Fields Area.

Woodcock

Woodcock hunting is permitted on the North Unit from December 1 until the end of the state woodcock season. Retriever dogs are permitted.

Furbearer

North Unit: 12 noon, November 14 – 12 noon, January 31. Dogs may be utilized from sunset to sunrise only.

South Unit: 12 noon, December 1 – 12 noon, December 15. Dogs may be utilized from sunset to sunrise only.

Taking of any furbearing animal is limited to archery, rimfire weapons and shotguns.

Furbearer (Trapping)

Must obtain Special Use Permit from Refuge Headquarters at St. Charles: 870/282 8200

North Unit and South Unit: February 1 - March 31 **NEW**

Rabbit and Squirrel

North Unit: September 1 – January 31. Dogs are allowed December 1 – January 31.

South Unit: September 1 – November 30. No dogs allowed.

Turkey

Fall Gun and Archery Season: Closed

Spring Turkey Season: (See Flood Zone Closure Regulations) **NEW**

North Unit: Same as state season for Zone 1.

South Unit: Same as state season for Zone 2.

Bag Limit of 1 Legal Turkey.

Bear season closed on all refuge lands including cooperatively managed tracts.

Sport Fishing and Frogging Regulations

Fishing is permitted year round in LaGrue, Essex, Prairie, Scrubgrass & Brooks Bayous, Big Island Chute, Moon and Belknap Lakes next to Arkansas Highway 1, Indian Bay, the Arkansas Post Canal and adjacent drainage ditches, those borrow ditches located adjacent to the west bank of that portion of the White River Levee north of the Graham Burke pumping station, and all refuge owned waters located north of Arkansas Highway 1. All other refuge waters are open to sport fishing from March 1 through November 30 unless posted otherwise.

Frogging is permitted on all refuge owned waters open for sport fishing as follows: South Unit, frogging is permitted from the beginning of the state season through November 30; North Unit, frogging is permitted for the entire state season.

To report a violation, contact the AGFC Tip Line 833-356-0824 or 501-255-3475.

Division of Refuge Law Enforcement, National Wildlife Refuge System Turn In Poachers (TIPs), 1/844/FWS/TIPS (397-8477)