



NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE SYSTEM

Public Information Bulletin

U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge
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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Expands Hunting at Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge in St. Mary Parish, Louisiana

Hunting on national wildlife refuges (NWRs) is a tradition that dates back to the early 1900s. Today, more than 370 refuges are open to the public for hunting across the country. Here in the southeast, NWRs are a huge part of this tradition. We welcome sportswomen and sportsmen of all backgrounds and abilities to experience challenging hunting in amazing places.

After reviewing all comments submitted on the proposed hunt program changes at Bayou Teche NWR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, USFWS) announces the final decision to expand hunting to the Mitigation Units at Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in St. Mary Parish, Louisiana; the decision was published in the Federal Register as part of the 2024-25 Hunting and Sport Fishing Rule. The Service is making minor changes to the existing hunting program at Bayou Teche (NWR, refuge) by adding hunting at the Mitigation Units for: (1) migratory birds (waterfowl, firearms) and (2) white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) with incidental take of feral hog (*Sus scrofa*) (archery). The Service recently acquired approximately 835.19 acres, known as the Mitigation Tracts, for the refuge. Under the proposal, the Service would add these 835.19 acres to the refuge's existing public hunting program as a new hunt unit to be named Mitigation Units in accordance with the 2021-22 Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex Hunt Package (including the Bayou Teche NWR Hunting Plan and Environmental Assessment [EA] for Migratory Game Birds, Upland Game, and Big Game; USFWS 2021); the Bayou Teche NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) / EA / Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (USFWS 2009a, 2009b); and Federal, state, local, and refuge-specific regulations. The 2021-22 Hunt Package built on and updated the refuge's hunt program and 2007 Hunt Package (USFWS 2007). The 2021-22 Hunt Package specifically included and analyzed the 835.19-acre Mitigation Tracts in anticipation of their future acquisition and inclusion in the refuge's hunt program. For clarity, since the current action only includes waterfowl hunting and archery big game hunting, lead ammunition is not included.

The final documents are now available on the refuge's website (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/bayou-teche>) with publication in the Federal Register of the 2024-25 Hunting and Sport Fishing Rule (<https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection/2024->

[25905/national-wildlife-refuge-system-2024-2025-station-specific-hunting-and-sport-fishing-regulations](#)).

Across the country, national wildlife refuges work closely with state and Federal agencies, Native American Tribes, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and private partners to expand access to hunting and fishing where it is compatible with refuge purposes. Hunting and fishing provide opportunities for families to enjoy the outdoors, create memories, and pass on family traditions.

References:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge Sport Hunting Package: EAS, Sport Hunting Plan, Environmental Assessment, Compatibility Determination, FONSI, Section 7, Letter of Concurrence, Press Release, Outreach Plan. Southeast Region. April 2007. Atlanta, GA. 67 pp. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/Reference/Profile/34718>.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2009a. Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region. October 2009. Atlanta, GA. 122 pp. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/Reference/Profile/135841>.
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 2009b. Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment, Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region. May 2009. Atlanta, GA. 152 pp. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/Reference/Profile/135843>.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2021. 2021-22 Hunt Package for Bayou Sauvage, Bayou Teche, Big Branch Marsh, Bogue Chitto, Cat Island, Delta, and Mandalay NWRs, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex; Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Terrebonne, Washington, and West Feliciana Parishes, Louisiana and Pearl River County, Mississippi. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region. August 2021. Atlanta, GA. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/Reference/Profile/158637>.

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