
Appendix D. Compatibility Determination

Use: Hunting - Alligator

- (a) **What is the use? Is it a priority public use?** The use being evaluated in this compatibility determination (CD) is hunting. The huntable species that inhabit the Refuge include alligators. Alligator hunting is being evaluated in order to expand the State hunts onto the Refuge. Hunting is a wildlife-dependent recreational activity designated as a priority public use of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) as established in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.
- (b) **Where would the use be conducted?** All portions of the Refuge covered by water are being proposed for alligator hunting.

The refuge boundary that facilitates hunting can be found on refuge website maps:
https://www.fws.gov/refuge/banks_lake/.

- (c) **When would the use be conducted?** Hunting will be allowed in accordance with all applicable federal and state regulations. Hunting will occur within the hunting season framework established by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Federal regulations in 50 CFR pertaining to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as well as existing Refuge-specific regulations will apply. However, the Refuge Manager may, upon annual review of the hunting program and in coordination with the DNR, impose further restrictions on hunting, recommend that the Refuge be closed to hunting, or further liberalize hunting regulations within the limits of state seasons and regulations, or as otherwise approved by DNR. The Refuge Manager may restrict hunting opportunities if it conflicts with other, higher priority Refuge programs or endangers Refuge resources or public safety. Legal hours are from sunset Friday and end at sunrise on Monday. This use could be suspended or terminated at any time at the discretion of the Refuge Manager for Refuge management, safety, or other reasons.

Alligator hunting on the Refuge will be limited to the first two weekends in accordance with the state season. Hunters must apply for the Georgia alligator quota hunt at www.gohuntgeorgia.com and have all applicable state licenses. The refuge will be open to hunters drawn for Zone 04. Hunt days and hours may be further restricted on the Refuge and are subject to change for management purposes.

All hunts and quotas are subject to change depending on wildlife species population survey results, hunter success rates, environmental conditions, conflicting management activities (prescribed burns, low water levels, exotic plant removal, etc.), and/or staffing. Maintaining flexibility for hunts allows the Refuge to provide a limited, but quality hunt. Annual hunt dates will be announced through the Georgia DNR's hunting regulations and/or on the Refuge's website.