U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Plan 2021

View of Wapanocca Lake - Steven Rimer, USFWS

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge
Hunting and Fishing Plan

August 2021

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge
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SECTION A
WAPANOCCA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
UPLAND AND BIG GAME HUNTING AND FISHING PLAN

I. Introduction

National Wildlife Refuges are guided by the mission and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), the purposes of an individual refuge, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) policy, and laws and international treaties. Relevant guidance includes the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (Administration Act or NWRSAA) of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Improvement Act or NWRSIA) of 1997, Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, and selected portions of the Code of Federal Regulations and Fish and Wildlife Service Manual.

The Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex includes six individual and unique National Wildlife Refuges (NWR, refuge). These are Bald Knob NWR, Big Lake NWR, Cache River NWR, Holla Bend NWR, Logan Cave NWR, and Wapanocca NWR. With the exception of Logan Cave NWR, hunting and fishing are approved and existing uses on each of these refuges (USFWS 2009, 2010).

Wapanocca NWR was established pursuant to the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1934.The primary purpose of the refuge is "...for use an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purposes, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1934).

Wapanocca Lake formed 5,000 years ago when the Mississippi River changed course. The lake is surrounded by old-growth bald cypress forest which remains flooded year-round. The water elevation in the lake normally drops two feet during hot, dry summers and refills during winter rains. The refuge manages Wapanocca Lake and the surrounding bottomland hardwood forest to provide high quality habitat for wintering waterfowl and breeding forest birds. The refuge was formed when the Wapanocca Outing Club agreed to sell the original piece of land to the Service after successfully lobbying Congress. Wapanocca Outing Club was founded in 1886 when a group of Memphis waterfowl hunters purchased Wapanocca Lake. Club member Nash Buckingham, a famous outdoor writer, developed a passion for conservation while hunting at Wapanocca. Wapanocca NWR was established in January 1961 as a sanctuary for migratory waterfowl. The refuge is literally an island of forest in a sea of agriculture. Lying only four miles west of the Mississippi River and 15 miles northwest of Memphis, the refuge is an important stopover for waterfowl traveling the Mississippi Flyway and for neotropical songbirds as they migrate to and from Central and South America. The refuge is recognized as a Continentally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and is listed as an Urban Refuge by the NWRS.

The mission of the NWRS, as outlined by the NWRSAA, as amended by the NWRSIA (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), is to:

"... to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

The NWRSAA (16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(4) mandates the Secretary of the Interior in administering the NWRS to:

- Provide for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats within the NWRS;

- Ensure that the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the NWRS are maintained for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans;

- Ensure that the mission of the NWRS described at 16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(2) and the purposes of each refuge are carried out;

- Ensure effective coordination, interaction, and cooperation with owners of land adjoining refuges and the fish and wildlife agency of the States in which the units of the NWRS are located;

- Assist in the maintenance of adequate water quantity and water quality to fulfill the mission of the NWRS and the purposes of each refuge;

- Recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general public uses of the NWRS through which the American public can develop an appreciation for fish and wildlife;

- Ensure that opportunities are provided within the NWRS for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses; and

- Monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants in each refuge.

Therefore, it is a priority of the Service to provide for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, when those opportunities are compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established and the mission of the NWRS. Hunting and fishing are consistent with this act and the larger goals to develop compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation programs that lead to enjoyable experiences; a greater understanding of fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation; and a greater appreciation for the value of Wapanocca NWR. Hunting and fishing were historically popular activities on Wapanocca Lake and its surrounding woodlands.

This Hunting and Fishing Plan is tiered from the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) (USFWS 2009) and based on the 2007 Hunt plan and 1989 fish plan (USFWS 2007 and 1989); hunting and fishing as outlined herein is consistent with the CCP. This draft Hunting and Fishing Plan for the refuge was developed based on Alternative B (Proposed Action) in the Environmental Assessment (EA) in Section B. The companion Hunting and Fishing Compatibility Determinations (CDs) are included in Appendix B and C. Upon approval, these documents will replace the existing Hunt and Fish Plans and existing Hunting and Fishing CDs.

II. Statement of Objectives

Hunting and fishing are consistent with the NWRSIA and the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (USFWS 2009) goals and objectives to develop compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation programs that lead to enjoyable experiences; a greater understanding of fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation; and a greater appreciation for the value of Wapanocca NWR.

The Wapanocca NWR CCP goals and objectives of the hunting and fishing program are (USFWS 2009):

Wapanocca Goal 4: Develop compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation programs that lead to enjoyable experiences; a greater understanding of fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation; and a greater appreciation for the value of Wapanocca NWR.

> **Wapanocca NWR Objective 4-3:** Hunting. Annually provide and expand quality, compatible hunting opportunities as feasible.
>
> **Wapanocca NWR Objective 4-4:** Fishing. Annually provide and expand quality, compatible fishing opportunities as feasible.

III. Description of Hunting and Fishing Program

The hunting and fishing seasons and species will be generally consistent with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) season framework and regulations. While specific hunting and fishing seasons, days, and times may vary from the state framework, these variances are approved by AGFC. The Wapanocca NWR hunt and fish public use brochure will be annually updated to reflect more specific information and regulations, including seasons, days, times, bag limits, access, licenses and permits, hunting and fishing devices, ammunition, other equipment, quota application process, and other refuge-specific regulations

A. Areas to be opened to Hunting and Fishing

The areas of Wapanocca NWR open to hunting and/or fishing total approximately 5,624 acres.

Hunting:

Hunting for upland and big game species would occur in the Cactus Ridge Hunt Unit that is approximately 3,174 acres. This unit consists primarily of bottomland hardwood forest and cypress swamp. The Unit extends from the north boundary just north of the office/ visitor center, to the west boundary (which is defined by State Highway 77), south to include Woody Pond, and to the east boundary (that is defined by Old River Road). The Waterfowl Sanctuary Hunt Unit (approximately 2,450 acres that consist primarily of the lake, agricultural fields, and forest restoration sites) also will be open for hunting of upland and big game but is closed annually to all public entry and use, including hunting, between December 1st through February 28th (Figure 1).

Fishing:

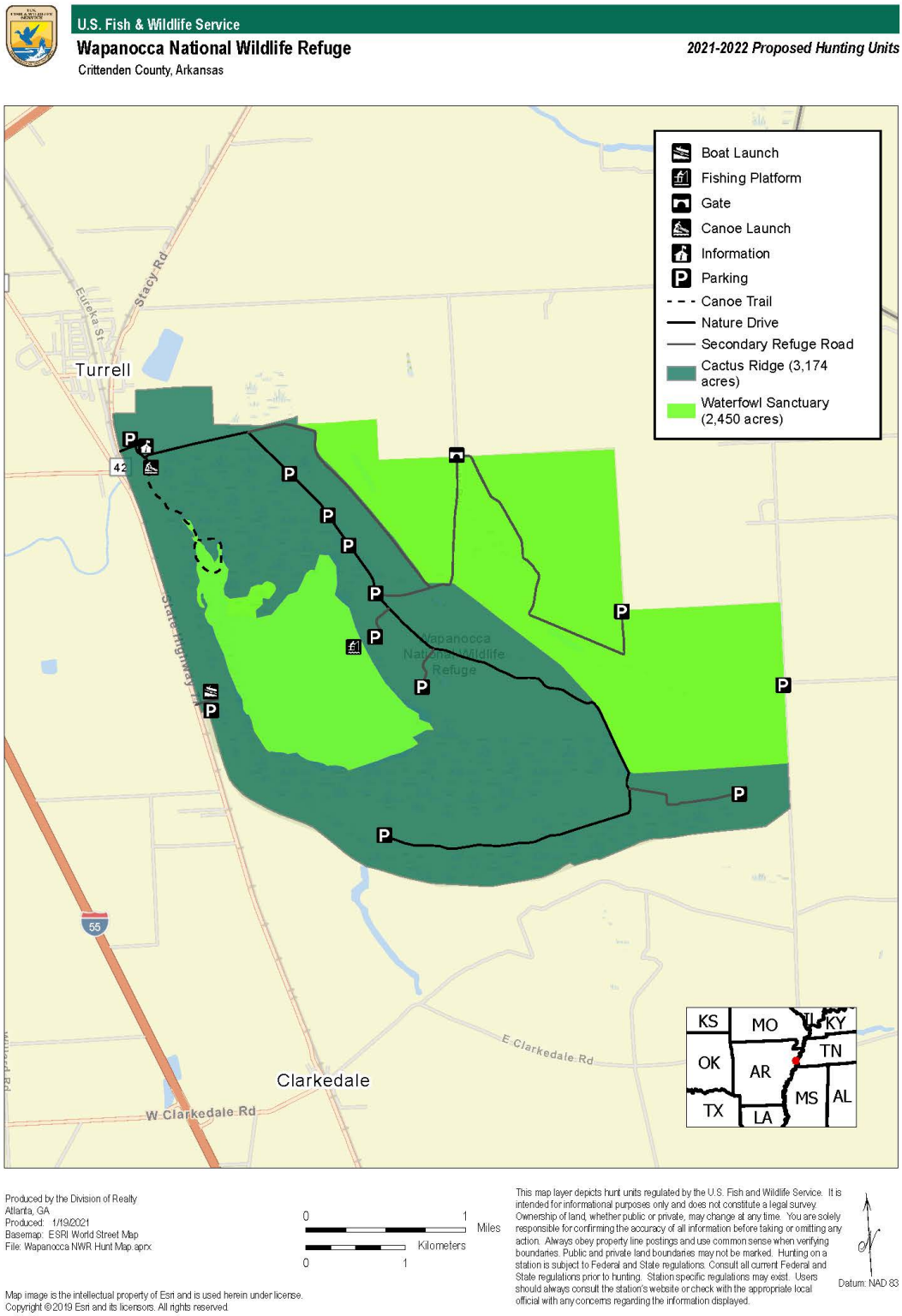
Fishing is allowed on all refuge waters from March 1st through November 30th in accordance with state regulations. From December 1st through February 28th fishing is restricted to Woody Pond (no boats allowed) and areas outside of the Waterfowl Sanctuary (Figure 1). The Waterfowl Sanctuary Hunt Unit is closed annually to all public entry and use, including fishing, between December 1st through February 28th (Figure 1).

B. Species to be Taken, Hunting Periods, Hunting and Fishing Periods and Access

Any changes will be identified in the annual refuge public use brochure.

Rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus, S. aquaticus*) - follows the statewide season in accordance with state and refuge-specific seasons and regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and refuge hunting public use brochure. Dogs are permitted.

Figure 1. Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge Hunt Units.



Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis, S. niger*) - hunting is allowed in accordance with state regulations and with refuge-specific season and regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and annual refuge public use brochure. Dogs are permitted.

Quail (*Colinus virginianus*) – will follow the state-wide season in accordance with state and refuge-specific regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and annual refuge public use brochure. This hunt will be conducted when a sustainable population is maintained and both refuge and state managers agree to conduct the hunt. Dogs will be permitted.

Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) - hunting is allowed in accordance with state regulations and with refuge-specific season and regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and annual refuge public use brochure. Dogs are required when hunting at night.

Opossum (*Didelphis virginana*) - follows the state-wide season in accordance with state and refuge-specific regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and annual refuge public use brochure. Dogs are required when hunting at night.

Furbearer (coyote (*Canis latrans*), beaver (C*astor canadensis*), nutria (*Myocastor coypus*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, red fox (*Vulpes vulpes)*, mink (*Mustela vison*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus)*, striped skunk (*Mephites mephitis*), bobcat (*Felis rufus*), and river otter (*Lutra canadensis*)- open for incidental take with devices legal for refuge hunts that occur from September 1st to March 31st, and according to any applicable state regulations.

Feral hog (*Sus scrofa*) **-** open for incidental take only during the modern gun deer seasons with hunting devices legal for those hunts and by archery hunters from November 1st through December 31st, or as otherwise prescribed by AGFC**.**

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus)* – Archery hunting follows the state-wide season in accordance with state and refuge regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and in the annual refuge public use brochure.

The modern gun quota deer requires a quota permit (FWS Form 3-2439). Hunt seasons and regulations will be listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and in the annual refuge public use brochure.

The modern gun youth quota hunt requires a quota permit (FWS Form 3-2439). The hunt will occur during the first statewide youth hunt weekend. The season and regulations for this hunt will be listed in the AGFC Hunting Guidebook and in the annual refuge public use brochure.

Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) - The Firearms Quota Spring Turkey and Youth Quota Spring Turkey hunts will follow the seasons listed in the AGFC Turkey Hunting Guidebook and in the annual refuge public use brochure. These hunts will be conducted once a sustainable population is maintained and both refuge and state managers agree to conduct the hunt and agree on length of season and numbers of hunters.

Note: of the above-listed species, red and gray fox, bobcat, river otter, mink, and striped skunk (and also frogs) are species that would be newly opened for take under this hunting and fishing plan.

Hunting Access: Hunters may access refuge hunting areas no earlier than 4:00 a.m. and must leave one hour after sunset except for those engaged in raccoon/opossum hunting with the appropriate equipment and required license. Hunters trailing or retrieving deer after hours should call the Refuge Office and leave a message stating their name, phone number and the general area in which they are searching for or retrieving deer.

Sport Fishing: Fishing, frogging, and crawfishing is allowed on all refuge waters during daylight hours from March 1st through November 30th in accordance with state and refuge regulations listed in the AGFC Fishing Guidebook and annual public use brochure. Anglers can enter and use the refuge from 4:00 a.m. until one hour after sunset. All boats are prohibited on Wapanocca Lake and Woody Pond from December 1st through February 28th. The public boat ramp off Highway 77 must be used to launch motorized boats into Wapanocca Lake. Boats may not be left overnight on the Refuge.

C. Hunter and Angler Permit Requirements

Hunters are required to have a State hunting license, as well as a Refuge-Specific Hunting Permit and, if applicable, a Refuge Quota hunt permit (FWS Form 3-2439). Anglers are required to have a State fishing license, but currently a Refuge-Specific permit is not required.

D. Consultation and Coordination with the State

The refuge reviewed the operations and regulations for neighboring State wildlife management areas and refuges to find consistency where possible. Biennially, plans for the upcoming hunting seasons are presented to the AGFC at the Hunt Coordination Meeting for concurrence. The refuge follows state seasons, bag limits, and regulations, deviating only when necessary for biological, safety, staffing or hunt quality reasons as approved by AGFC. The Service recognizes that AGFC is the authority in the state of Arkansas regarding the population status and sustainability of resident wildlife, including the species that are hunted on Wapanocca NWR. The Service strives to provide hunting opportunities at Wapanocca NWR that are within the State season framework. We have continued to consult and coordinate on specific aspects of the draft Hunting and fishing Plan.

Wapanocca NWR and AGFC will continue to work together to ensure safe and enjoyable recreational hunting opportunities. Wapanocca NWR will support the State in its disease prevention and surveillance efforts as appropriate. Hunter participation and harvest data are collected by the AGFC and law enforcement officers. Wapanocca NWR and AGFC work together to patrol the refuge, safeguarding hunters, visitors, and both game and nongame species.

E. Law Enforcement

Enforcement of refuge violations normally associated with management of a National Wildlife Refuge is the responsibility of commissioned Federal Wildlife Officers. Other officers, Special Agents, State Wildlife Officers, and the local Sheriff's Department often assist the Central Arkansas Complex Federal Wildlife Officers.

The following methods are used to control and enforce hunting and fishing regulations:

- Refuge and hunt area boundaries and fishing site locations will be clearly posted.
- The Refuge will provide a public use brochure that shows hunting and fishing areas; and
- Central Arkansas Complex Federal Wildlife Officers and AGFC Wildlife Officers will randomly check hunters and anglers for compliance with Federal and State Laws.

F. Funding and Staffing Requirements

Annual administration costs for the hunting and fishing program at Wapanocca NWR, including salary, equipment, law enforcement, brochures, collection of data and analysis of biological information, etc. totals approximately $13,650 (Table 1). It is anticipated, based on current costs, that funding would continue to be sufficient to continue the hunting and fishing program at Wapanocca NWR in the future.

Table 1. Approximate annual costs of administering hunting and fishing programs at Wapanocca NWR

Hunting and Fishing Program Needs	**Cost**
Staff (Maintenance Workers, Biologist, and Refuge Managers)	$4,850
Maintain roads, parking lots, trails*	$5,000
News releases, fact sheets, and reports	$500
Maintain signage	$500
Law Enforcement	$2,800
Total Annual Cost	**$13,650**
Offsetting Revenue for the Complex	$39,662
**Refuge trails and roads are maintained for a variety of activities. Costs shown are a percentage of total costs for trail/road maintenance on the refuge and are reflective of the percentage of trail/road use for hunting and fishing. Volunteers account for some maintenance hours and help to reduce overall cost of the program.*	

IV. Conduct of the Hunting and Fishing Program

A. Hunter and Angler Permit Application, Selection, and/or Registration Procedures

A refuge permit (signed brochure) is required for all hunts. This refuge general hunting permit must be signed by the hunter to be valid. It must be carried by the hunter at all times while on the refuge and in possession of hunting gear. Permits are non-transferable. A permit is located on the front of the public use brochure or can be downloaded and printed from the refuge website. An electronic signed copy of the permit may also be produced on a person's own cellular phone or other type of portable electronic device that clearly displays and accurately reproduces all of the information. This permit expires June 30. Signing the permit acknowledges that the hunter has read and understands the refuge hunting regulations and agrees to obey them and agrees to allow Service and AGFC officers to inspect or search all equipment used during the permittee's hunt. NOTE: A Quota Permit (FWS Form 3-2439) also is required for the Quota Deer and Quota Turkey Hunts.

To apply for deer and turkey quota hunts, each hunter will be required to create an account with RecAccess. Each hunter will assigned a RecAccess identification number that be an individual

hunter's number that will remain consistent from year to year.

All hunters, including those drawn for quota hunts, must comply with state requirements for hunter education. In addition, all hunters under the age of 12 who possess valid hunter education certification must remain within normal sight and voice contact with an adult at least 18 years of age who possesses a valid State hunting license. Hunters under the age of 16 who have not completed hunter education must be under the direct supervision (within arm's reach) of an adult at least 21 years old who possesses a valid State hunting license. One adult may supervise up to two youth hunters for migratory bird and upland game hunting but may supervise only one youth during big game hunting. On any quota hunt, the supervising adult may not hunt any species unless they also possess a quota permit for that same hunt.

The Refuge is closed to all entry and public use during the Quota Gun Deer Hunt. Only Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit holders are allowed to enter or use the Refuge during this hunt and only for the purpose of deer hunting and incidental take of listed species. Quota hunt permits (FWS Form 3-2439) are $12.50 (current fee; subject to change based on administrative/operational need) and must be purchased from https://wapanocca.recaccess.com. Quota permits are issued on a first come, first serve basis beginning August 1st until the quota of 60 permits is reached. Permit requests will not be accepted in person. Permits are non-transferable and non-refundable, even in the event of refuge deer hunt closures due to flooding.

The Refuge is closed to all entry and public use during the Youth Quota Gun Deer Hunt. Only Youth Quota Gun Deer Hunt permit holders are allowed to enter or use the Refuge during this hunt and only for the purpose of deer hunting and incidental take of listed species. Only youth 6 to 15 years old may hunt during this special youth deer hunt. Youth deer hunt permits are free. Quota youth permits (FWS Form 3-2439) are issued on a first come, first serve basis beginning August 1st until the quota of 20 permits is reached, or until one week prior to the hunt. Contact the refuge office or consult the refuge website at www.fws.gov/refuges/wapanocca for application instructions. Permits are non-transferable and the hunt may be cancelled in the event of refuge deer hunt closures due to flooding.

Quota Gun Youth Turkey Hunters (when state and federal officials agree that a hunt will be conducted due to favorable turkey numbers) must contact the refuge office or consult the refuge website at www.fws.gov/refuges/wapanocca for application instructions. Only youth 6 to 15 years old may hunt during this special youth turkey hunt. Youth turkey quota hunt permits are free. Quota permits (FWS Form 3-2439) are issued on a first come, first serve basis beginning August 1 until the quota of 10 permits is reached. Permits (free) will be obtained from https://wapanocca.recaccess.com. Permits are non-transferable, and the hunt may be cancelled in the event of refuge hunt closures due to flooding.

Quota Gun Turkey Hunters (when state and federal officials agree that a hunt will be conducted due to favorable turkey numbers) will purchase hunt permits for $12.50 (current fee; subject to change based on administrative/operational need) at https://wapanocca.recaccess.com. Quota permits will be issued on a first come, first serve basis beginning August 1st until the quota of 10 permits is reached, or until December 1st. Permit requests will not be accepted in person. Permits will be non-transferable and non-refundable, even in the event of refuge turkey hunt closes due to flooding.

The quota hunt application procedures, costs, selection processes, and number of permits issued are subject to change, due to administrative circumstances. Any changes to these

procedures, costs, or processes will be provided to the public on the Refuge website and in the annual refuge public use brochure.

Anglers currently are not required to obtain a refuge-specific fishing permit, but they must have in their possession a valid AGFC fishing license.

Hunting blinds accessible by wheelchair-bound hunters may be provided in designated areas on the refuge for big game hunting. Blinds may be moveable or fixed, and their placement sites may vary depending on water/habitat conditions and use of areas by the target game species. Blinds/access paths will be of such construction and placement that will ensure compatibility, safety, minimal environmental footprint, and minimize conflicts with other users. A draw permit system would be used to assign hunters to these blinds. Permits would be free. Fishing platforms are already in use for wheelchair-bound anglers but additional structures may be constructed in areas suitable for their placement in a manner that will ensure compatibility, safety, and minimize conflicts with other users.

B. Refuge-Specific Hunting Regulations

Specific hunting and fishing seasons, days, and times may vary in some instances from state frameworks, however, these differences are approved by AGFC. The Wapanocca NWR annual public use brochures will be updated to reflect more specific information and restrictions, including seasons, days, times, bag limits, access, licenses and permits, allowable hunting and fishing devices and ammunition, other equipment, quota application process, and other refuge-specific regulations. To ensure compatibility with refuge purposes and the mission of the NWRS, hunting must be conducted in accordance with State and Federal regulations, as supplemented by refuge-specific regulations, and information sheets/brochures. Stipulations are detailed in the Hunting Compatibility Determination (Appendix B). The following hunting regulations apply at Wapanocca NWR:

(i) *Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge*

1) *Migratory bird hunting.* [Reserved]

(2) *Upland game hunting*. We allow hunting of squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, nutria, beaver, coyote, quail, muskrat, river otter, mink, bobcat, fox, striped skunk, and opossum on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:

(i) We require a signed refuge hunting permit (FWS Form 3-2439). Anyone on the refuge in possession of hunting equipment must sign and possess the permit (FWS Form 3-2439) at all times.
(ii) Hunters may enter the refuge at 4 a.m. and must leave the refuge no later than 1 hour after legal sunset, except that we allow hunting of raccoon and opossum at night on the refuge.
(iii) During the quota gun hunts, we close the refuge to all other hunts and public entry.
(iv) We allow squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, and quail hunting according to season dates and bag limits provided in the annual refuge public use brochure.
(v) We allow the incidental take of nutria, beaver, muskrat, river otter, mink, bobcat, fox, striped skunk, and coyote during any refuge hunt with the weapons allowed for that hunt, subject to applicable State seasons and regulations.
(vi) Hunters may use only shotguns, rifles and handguns chambered for rimfire cartridges, air rifles, and archery tackle.
(vii) We prohibit hunting from mowed and/or gravel road rights-of-way.

(viii) All hunters age 11 and younger who possess valid hunter education certification must remain within normal sight and voice contact with an adult age 18 or older who possesses a valid State hunting license. Hunters age 15 and younger who have not completed hunter education must be under the direct supervision (within arm's reach) of an adult age 21 or older who possesses a valid State hunting license. One adult may supervise up to two youth hunters for upland game hunting, but may supervise only one youth during big game hunting.
(ix) From December 1 to February 28, we close all waterfowl sanctuaries (including Wapanocca Lake) to all hunting and public entry.
(x) We prohibit the use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), except that ATVs may be used by mobility-impaired hunters possessing written authorization issued by the refuge manager.
(xi) Hunters and anglers may use motor vehicles, bicycles, and e-bikes only on public use roads not closed by a locked gate, other barrier, or signage.
(xii) Hunters and anglers must use the public boat ramp on Highway 77 to launch motorized boats into Wapanocca Lake.
(xiii) Hunters and anglers must operate boats at speeds of less than 5 miles per hour between the Highway 77 boat launch and the open lake.
(xiv) We prohibit the use of personal watercraft (e.g., jet skis), airboats, and hovercraft for hunting and fishing on the refuge.
(xv) Hunter and anglers may not leave motor vehicles, bicycles, e-bikes, or boats unattended overnight on the refuge.
(xvi) We prohibit hunting from a vehicle.
(xvii) The Round Pond and Pygmon Units in St. Francis County are subject to all regulations for hunting and fishing for Wapanocca NWR.

(3) *Big game hunting*. We allow hunting of white-tailed deer and turkey, and incidental take of feral hog, on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:
(i) The conditions set forth at paragraphs (i)(2)(i) through (iii), (v), and (vii) through (xvii) of this section apply.
(ii) During the quota gun deer hunts, we allow only hunters possessing a valid quota gun deer hunting permit (FWS Form 3-2439) on the refuge and only for the purposes of deer hunting and the incidental take of allowable species.
(iii) You may erect portable stands or blinds 7 days prior to the refuge deer season, and you must remove them from the waterfowl sanctuaries by December 1 (see §27.93 of this chapter). You must remove all stands and blinds on the remainder of the refuge within 7 days of the closure of archery season (see §27.93 of this chapter).
(iv) We allow portable tree stands, blinds, and game cameras on the refuge only if the owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission customer identification number is clearly written on them in a conspicuous location.
(v) We allow archery/crossbow, muzzleloader, and modern gun deer hunting according to season dates and bag limits provided in the annual refuge public use brochure.
(vi) Hunters may only use shotguns with slugs, muzzleloaders, handguns with barrel lengths longer than 4 inches, large-bore air rifles, and archery/crossbow tackle for modern gun deer hunting.
(vii) Hunters may only take feral hog incidental to modern gun and muzzleloader deer hunts and during a specified period during archery deer hunting according to season dates provided in the annual refuge public use brochure.
(viii) The annual refuge public use brochure provides season dates and bag limits for turkey hunting.

(ix) We prohibit the possession or use of lead shot or buckshot for deer hunting. We allow lead shot for turkey hunting.
(x) We prohibit the use of dogs for deer hunting.

C. Refuge-Specific Fishing Regulations

To ensure compatibility with refuge purposes and the mission of the NWRS, fishing must be conducted in accordance with State and Federal regulations, as supplemented by refuge-specific regulations, and information sheets/brochures. Stipulations are detailed in the Fishing Compatibility Determination (Appendix C). The following fishing procedures apply at Wapanocca NWR:

(4) *Sport fishing*. We allow sport fishing, frogging, and crawfishing on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:

(i) The conditions set forth at paragraphs (2)(iii), (ix), (x) through (xv), and (xvii), and (i)(3)(ii) above apply.
(ii) From March 1 through November 30, we allow fishing, frogging, and crawfishing on all refuge waters. From December 1 through February 28, we allow bank fishing only on Woody Pond and other non-waterfowl sanctuary areas.
(iii) Anglers, including those frogging and crawfishing, may enter the refuge at 4 a.m. and must leave the refuge no later than 1 hour after legal sunset.
(iv) We prohibit the take or possession of turtles and/or mollusks (see §27.21 of this chapter).
(v) Anglers may launch boats only in designated areas.
(vi) We allow fishing, frogging, and crawfishing for personal use only. All crawfish traps must have the owner's Arkansas Game and Fish Commission license customer identification number permanently affixed.
(vii) We prohibit tournament fishing.

D. Relevant State Regulations

The refuge generally conducts its hunting and fishing program within the framework of State and Federal regulations. Any variation in hunting and fishing seasons, bag limits, hours, methods, regulations, etc. Additionally, the refuge coordinates with the State as needed to maintain regulations and programs that are consistent as feasible with the State's management programs. All relevant refuge-specific regulations are listed above in Section IV, subsection B.

- Reporting Harvest – Hunters will be required to check harvest of deer and turkey according to AGFC regulations.

- The use of natural scents or lures that contain natural deer or elk urine or other biofluids is prohibited.

E. Other Refuge Rules and Regulations for Hunting and Fishing

- Hunters may access refuge hunting areas no earlier than 4:00 a.m. and must leave one hour after sunset except for those engaged in raccoon/opossum hunting with the appropriate equipment and required license.

- Only portable stands may be used and the owner's AGFC license customer ID number must be permanently affixed to the stand. A portable hunting stand is any device or structure used for the purpose of hunting that can be carried in its entirety and erected by hand including but not limited to tripod stands, lean-to stands, lock-on stands, ladder stands, and climbing stands.

- Deer bag limits will be listed for various seasons in the annual hunting public use brochure. A legal buck on the Refuge is defined as any male deer (no antler restriction). Deer harvested on the Refuge are not bonus deer.

- Nighttime use is limited to raccoon and opossum hunting and the appropriate gear and dogs must be possessed.

- Round Pond and Pigmon Units (St. Francis County) are administered by Wapanocca NWR and follow all hunting and fishing rules and regulations listed in the AGFC Hunting/ Fishing Guidebooks and in the annual refuge public use brochure for Wapanocca NWR. This hunt plan also applies to both Units, including all quota permit hunts.

- No fires are allowed on the refuge.

- No camping is allowed on the refuge.

- Building or hunting from permanent blinds or stands is prohibited.

- Possession or use of bait (feed, grains, etc.) or salt (or minerals) to lure or attract wildlife is prohibited.

- Driving or screwing any object into a tree or hunting from a tree in which an object has been driven or screwed in is prohibited.

- Target practice and the non-hunting discharge of firearms is prohibited.

- Hunting from a vehicle or using a vehicle as a deer stand is prohibited.

- Cutting or defacing trees, shrubs, or other plants is prohibited.

- Possession or use of non-biodegradable materials to mark trails is prohibited. Trail markings must be removed after the hunt.

- Artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife, except as authorized for fishing, frogging, and raccoon/opossum hunting.

V. Public Engagement

A. Outreach for Announcing and Publicizing the Hunting and Fishing Program

The Refuge maintains a mailing list, for information bulletin purposes, to local newspapers, radio, and websites. Special announcements and articles may be released in conjunction with

hunting and fishing seasons. In addition, information about the hunt will be available at Wapanocca NWR headquarters or on the Wapanocca NWR website.

B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunting and Fishing Program

Based on the comments received during the CCP (2009) planning process and given hunting and fishing have been allowed on Wapanocca NWR for more than 30 years, little negative public reaction is expected. Hunting and fishing are important economic and recreational uses of Arkansas' natural resources. The public is expected to welcome increased opportunity for hunting and fishing on Wapanocca NWR (See Appendix D for public comment and Service Response).

C. How Hunters and Anglers Will Be Informed of Relevant Rules and Regulations

General information regarding hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent public uses can be obtained at Wapanocca NWR headquarters at 178 Hammond Avenue, Turrell, AR 72384 or by calling (870) 343-2595. Dates, brochures, hunting unit directions, maps, and permit requirements about the hunt will be available on the station website at: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/wapanocca/ and at the Refuge Visitor Center. Information on hunting and fishing in Arkansas can be found at https://www.agfc.com/ or by calling 800-364-4263.

VI. Compatibility Determination

Hunting and fishing are compatible with the purposes of the refuge. See attached Compatibility Determinations (Appendices B and C).

VI. References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. Wapanocca NWR Hunt Plan. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1989. Wapanocca NWR Fish Plan. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region.

USFWS 2009. Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex Bald Knob, Big Lake, Cache River, and Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuges. Atlanta, GA. 523 pp.