

RECREATIONAL HUNTING PLAN  
CAT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
P.O. BOX 1936  
ST. FRANCISVILLE, LA 70775

Virginia Petteg  
Refuge Manager

11/2/01  
Date

Remond W. Sharp  
Project Leader

11/7/01  
Date

Eric A. Smith  
Area Supervisor

12/3/01  
Date

William A. Gault  
Regional Chief, National Wildlife  
Refuge System

12-13-01  
Date

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established on October 27, 2000 in Public Law 106-369, known as the "Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge Establishment Act." The refuge is located in West Feliciana Parish about 4 miles west of St. Francisville, LA. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) initially purchased about 9,500 acres which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to purchase as Congressional appropriations come available. To date, 2,354 acres have been purchased from TNC. Additionally, a 13.4 acre entrance road was donated by The Timber Company (the previous landowner) to the Service for access to the refuge.

The acquisition boundary encompasses 36,500 acres, which is the entire area historically known as "Cat Island Swamp." This peninsula is bounded by the Mississippi River to the north, west and south and by a ridge to the east. The refuge is completely inundated by the river almost yearly. Typically, this occurs in March/April and again in June. In 2001, river levels were over 35 feet on the Baton Rouge river gauge, which resulted in about a 5-10 foot rise on the refuge, depending on location. Blackfork Bayou and several canals dug to drain agricultural lands serve to drain and initially flood the swamp as river levels change.

The refuge was established to conserve, restore, and manage native forested wetland habitats for migratory birds, aquatic resources, and endangered and threatened plants and animals. Additionally, it was created to encourage the use of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the Service, local communities, and conservation organizations to promote public awareness of refuge resources and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The habitat contained within the refuge acquisition boundary varies. Several types of forested habitat including overcup oak-bitter pecan, hackberry-elm-ash, nuttall oak-ash-sweetgum, and shrub-scrub swamp occur. Additionally, about 4,000 acres of cleared agricultural lands are located in the area, which have been farmed for soybeans for about 40 years. The most unique habitat type, however, is old growth baldcypress-tupelo. Many of the cypress trees are estimated to be 500 to 1,000 years old. The National Champion cypress, which is also the largest tree of any species east of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, is located there.

The Threatened Louisiana black bear is known to use Cat Island NWR on a seasonal basis. Bears probably move between the refuge and the Tunica Hills, including Tunica Hills Wildlife Management Area to the north. Birds known to use the refuge include the Threatened bald eagle, swallow-tailed kites (a species of special concern), and a host of neotropical migrant songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl and wading birds. Other species of wildlife that occur include white-tailed deer, fox squirrel, swamp rabbit, coyote, river otter, alligator, red-eared slider, and tree frog. Fish species include largemouth bass, bream, catfish, and crappie. Additionally, the Endangered pallid sturgeon and the Threatened gulf sturgeon have been found in the Mississippi River north of the refuge.

## II. CONFORMANCE WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 authorize public hunting on refuges where the hunting program is compatible with the major purposes for which the area was established. As part of this document, a compatibility determination was performed and assuming that harvest decisions are based on sound biological principles, hunting is deemed compatible and a worthy recreational opportunity to provide the public.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System as set forth by Congress in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 is:

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

Additionally, the act determines that six compatible, wildlife-dependent recreational uses that are appropriate on refuges include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. Development and enhancement of a quality and biologically sound hunt program that leads to enjoyable recreation experiences, greater understanding and appreciation of wildlife resources, and aids in the conservation of wildlife populations and their habitats, is the overall goal for the hunt program at Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge.

The Refuge Recreation Act requires that funds be available for the development, operation, and maintenance of hunting programs. The operating budget of the refuge is expected to grow over the first few years of the hunting program, which will parallel continued land acquisition. It will cost approximately \$13,000 per year to run the hunt program, which includes costs to create and print the hunt brochure, for law enforcement, and to maintain ATV trails. It is estimated that initially about 1,000 hunters will visit the refuge each year. Expansion of the hunt program will likely increase that number to about 5,000 in the future.

## III. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The purposes for which Cat Island NWR was established are:

1. to conserve, restore and manage habitats to contribute to migratory bird population goals;
2. to conserve, restore, and manage aquatic resources;
3. to conserve, enhance, and restore the historic native bottomland community and its

associated fish, wildlife, and plant species;

4. to conserve, enhance, and restore habitat to maintain and assist in the recovery of endangered and threatened plants and animals; and
5. to encourage the use of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the Service, local communities, conservation organizations, and others to promote public awareness of the resources of the refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The objectives for the Cat Island NWR hunt program are:

1. to promote public understanding of and increase public appreciation for the area's natural resources;
2. to provide opportunities for high-quality recreational and educational hunting experiences;
3. to maintain viable, diverse populations of wildlife based on sound biological principles and data that seek to maintain wildlife populations at sustainable levels;
4. to manage waterfowl in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan;
5. to manage resident wildlife species (e.g., white-tailed deer, rabbit, squirrel, wild turkey); and
6. to pursue reductions in non-native animal populations to minimize impacts to native flora and fauna.

#### IV. ASSESSMENT

Cat Island NWR is currently 2,354 acres but is in an active acquisition stage. TNC has purchased about 9,500 acres. Of this, the Service will eventually acquire approximately 9,000 acres. The Congressionally-approved acquisition boundary is 36,500 acres. Attachment "A" illustrates the current status of acquisition. This plan will primarily address hunting based on the initial 9,000-acre acquisition, but some issues related to future expansion will be discussed.

This hunt plan will review seasons for white-tailed deer, waterfowl, rabbit, squirrel, woodcock, and turkey. Additionally, incidental take of feral hogs, coyote, beaver, raccoon, and nutria during established refuge hunts is proposed.

A. White-tailed Deer

The area traditionally known as Cat Island Swamp has been a popular white-tailed deer hunting area for decades due to the abundance of deer as a result of the high quality habitat available. Several hunt clubs on the peninsula (Bayou Sara Game Preserve, Silos Lodge and Farm, and Cypress Farms) have been involved in Louisiana State's "Deer Management Assistance Program" for several years.

Harvest data compiled from these clubs (9,631 acres) indicate that for the last four years they have maintained an approximate harvest rate of one deer per 50 acres. Mean weights and antler points for 1.5 year old bucks, generally a good density-dependent indicator of overall herd density and health in relationship to the habitat, harvested during the 2000-01 hunting season were 124 lbs. and 2.4 points, respectively. A high and low comparison of mean weights and antler points of harvested 1.5 year old bucks in similar bottomland habitats ranges from 90-130 lbs. and antler point ranges from 2-4 points (per conservation with Dave Moreland, Deer Program Coordinator, LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries). This suggests that deer harvests in the past have been adequate enough to maintain a healthy herd and that harvest levels can be maintained at this rate or slightly increased to meet desired objectives.

Thirty percent of the does harvested from these clubs during the 2000-01 hunting season were  $\geq 3.5$  years old and the percentages have ranged from 40 to 50 for the previous three seasons. The age distribution of harvested does suggest that harvest has been light-to-moderate previously. Harvested animals usually represent the actual population, and the age composition of this population may be a direct result of the harvest intensity from previous years.

According to DMAP data, the doe-to-buck harvest ratio has ranged from 4:1 to 2:1 in the last four years. The harvest ratios for the previous six years were about 1:1. Either-sex deer hunting will occur at Cat Island NWR with the objective of maintaining a 1:1 doe-to-buck ratio. This harvest strategy may be adjusted in the future to create or maintain this ratio if population surveys, harvest data, or LDWF indicate otherwise.

Prior to refuge establishment, the previous landowner removed large trees from some portions of the site. This resulted in a mosaic of mature forested areas intermingled with early-successional shrubby areas that provide excellent cover and forage for deer and other wildlife. These areas should provide good forage and escape cover for deer.

B. Waterfowl

Waterfowl species found on the area include wood ducks (migratory and resident), mallard, gadwall, American wigeon, Northern pintail, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, and Northern shoveler. Occasional use by divers such as lesser scaup, ring-necked duck, redhead, and hooded merganser occurs in some of the deeper wetlands.

Waterfowl use of the area is variable due to reliance on the Mississippi River for habitat. Typical flooding begins in December/January, although the river has risen as early as October. Generally, when the river begins rising it continues to rise throughout the waterfowl season. Habitat is created as the river rises, which makes food available and disperses the waterfowl population. Additionally, ducks are pushed south by periodic freeze events to the north. Thus, they use Cat Island NWR as a stop-over area as they continue south to the marshes of Louisiana.

It is difficult to quantify available waterfowl habitat because of fluctuating river levels. Traditionally-used areas include Blackfork Lake, Lake Platte, and numerous swales on the western portion of the peninsula. The lakes dry up in many years and only fill after substantial rainfall or when the river rises. Thus, early in the fall there may be less than 200 acres of waterfowl habitat available in the area. In wet years, over 750 acres or more of open water habitat and bayous/sloughs may be available in fall. As the river rises, waterfowl habitat increases.

According to hunters in the area, the best waterfowl hunting occurs late in the season due to the river rise and weather. Additionally, the area has not been heavily used by duck hunters primarily due to accessibility problems. Hunting opportunities will be made available to the public but will not have a substantial effect on waterfowl populations due to habitat variability, availability, and accessibility.

C. Small Game/Furbearers

Swamp rabbits and fox squirrels are abundant on the refuge. The refuge is a forested landscape dominated by a variety of hardwood trees interspersed with cut-over areas, openings and trails that supply an abundance of food and habitat for these animals. The plant species on the refuge provide them with acorns, fruits, and forbs. Fox squirrels of varying color morphs, including black and rust, occur on the refuge. Some gray squirrels are present, but are generally rare.

Some unregulated quadrupeds and nuisance animals on the refuge include coyote, feral hog, raccoon, nutria, and beaver. These species are thought to occur throughout the refuge in varying densities. Several species, including hog and beaver, may destroy or change habitat. Feral hogs compete with native wildlife for

food resources, which has a negative impact on other species (i.e., deer, squirrels and songbirds).

D. Woodcock

The refuge is on the extreme southern edge of the American Woodcock's breeding range. The birds primarily use the area during migration and winter. During those times, woodcock are known to use bottomland hardwood habitats with a brushy understory. Forested areas near agricultural fields are especially important.

The abundance of woodcock on the refuge has not been quantified to date, but they should be present in suitable habitat. Prior to refuge establishment, the previous landowner performed clearcuts on about 3,000 acres of forested area. These 10 to 20-year-old cut-over areas provide good woodcock daytime roosting habitat. Additionally, the refuge is adjacent to over 3,000 acres of privately-owned agricultural fields, which provide nighttime foraging habitat. Available habitat, though, decreases as river levels rise and woodcock move on to other areas with suitable habitat. Therefore, woodcock will likely be impacted by habitat availability more than hunting pressure.

E. Wild Turkey

Turkey, and a variety of other wildlife including deer, are limited in their use of the refuge by the rising Mississippi River. They typically move between the bottomlands and the adjacent hills. Thus, their population is based on a multitude of factors. In some years, turkey successfully breed on the refuge. In others, they may build a nest only to have it destroyed by rising spring waters. Breeding also occurs in the hills to the east. As flood waters recede, turkey readily move back into the drying swamp to take advantage of food resources.

Turkey surveys will be required to determine the status of this migrant turkey population. Therefore, turkey hunts will not be provided initially. However, based on river level data, Cat Island Swamp was flooded over 28' (Baton Rouge gauge) for 20 of the last 32 years for most of turkey season. At that level, water is present throughout the swamp. Therefore, it is likely that flooding may preclude turkey hunting in many years. If turkey surveys indicate a huntable population is present, spring turkey hunting opportunities will be available in years when the river does not flood the refuge.



V. DESCRIPTION OF HUNTING PROGRAM

A. Program

Season dates, bag limits, and weapon restrictions will follow the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) guidelines to the greatest extent possible, and will be coordinated with them annually. More restrictive regulations will be implemented, as necessary, to conserve wildlife populations and provide for safe quality wildlife-dependent recreation. Refuge personnel will coordinate with the LDWF to manage hunting opportunities on the refuge and to set management goals and objectives. Designation of season dates will be coordinated with dates set at nearby State and Federal wildlife management areas/refuges as much as possible to allow the public a variety of hunting options throughout the season.

Hunting will be permitted on Cat Island NWR beginning with the 2002-2003 hunt season. At that time, it is anticipated that the refuge will contain at least 5,000 acres. Based on that assumption, the following program will be established:

<u>GAME</u>	<u>SEASON</u>
Deer, archery (Portable stands only, must be removed daily; dogs and "driving" deer prohibited; all hunters must possess proof of completion of the International Bowhunter Education Course)	State season
Deer, muzzleloader (Portable stands only, must be removed daily; dogs and "driving" deer prohibited)	Two, two-day lottery hunts; either sex
Deer, gun (Portable stands only, must be removed daily; dogs and "driving" deer prohibited)	One, two-day lottery hunt; either sex
Squirrel and rabbit (dogs allowed after close of State gun deer season only; recognized breeds of squirrel/rabbit dog only)	State season
Woodcock (recognized breeds of bird dog only)	State season
Waterfowl (ducks, geese, coots)	State season; refuge open to waterfowl hunting on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday until noon
Feral hog, raccoon, nutria, beaver, coyote	May be taken during refuge hunts.
Youth Waterfowl Day (under age 16)	State season
Youth Deer Hunt (under age 16)	To be announced

\*\* During youth, muzzleloader and gun deer hunts, all other seasons are closed.

Hunters must be in possession of all necessary State and Federal licenses and stamps and a refuge hunt permit while hunting on Cat Island NWR. The refuge hunt permit will be available at Refuge Headquarters, at the entrance gate and some area sporting goods stores. The permit will provide refuge hunt regulations, safety information, and a refuge map.

Only non-toxic shot may be used for ALL refuge hunts. Hunters may not be in possession of lead shot while on the refuge. Only .22 caliber rimfire rifles and shotguns are permitted except during the muzzleloader and gun deer hunts. Handguns are not permitted.

A self-clearing check station will be installed at the refuge entrance to keep records of harvest and public use data. Additionally, refuge personnel may take harvest data from hunters as they exit the refuge during key hunts and times.

Deer stands must be portable, and may not be permanently attached to trees or refuge property (for example, by nails, spikes, or other metal objects).

Only temporary waterfowl hunting blinds are allowed. Blinds and decoys must be removed daily.

Enforcement of refuge regulations to protect trust resources and provide for a quality recreational opportunity will occur via regular patrols by refuge law enforcement officers. Currently, there is only one refuge officer assigned to Cat Island NWR, but it is anticipated that additional personnel will be acquired during the first few years of program implementation. The refuge is part of the Central Louisiana NWR complex, whose staff will provide law enforcement assistance until a full complement of refuge officers are employed at Cat Island NWR. Additionally, personnel from the Enforcement Division of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will occasionally assist refuge officers.

B. Opportunity

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 mandates that six Priority Public Uses be provided to the visiting public. These include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. A total of 807 acres of the refuge in the vicinity of Blackfork Bayou will be closed to hunting to develop the area for environmental education and interpretation (see Attachment "A"). Additionally, up to about 75 acres surrounding the National Champion cypress tree will be closed to allow visitors to walk to the tree and hike a short trail in the vicinity. These areas will likely be heavily used during cooler weather at times that coincide with refuge hunts. These two "no-hunt" zones will reduce time and space use conflicts among refuge visitors and allow

implementation of all Refuge Improvement Act priorities simultaneously.

To maintain healthy deer populations in the "no-hunt" zones, special hunts may occur (e.g., youth hunts). An overabundance of deer in this area may reduce forest health (by overbrowsing) and reduce overall herd health. Special hunts in these areas will be publicized via refuge brochures, at the entrance gate, and printed in local newspapers.

There are no known sensitive areas on the refuge such as wading bird rookeries or bald eagle nests. Refuge personnel have not determined that any specific area should be designated as sanctuary for waterfowl. However, as surveys are conducted in the next few years, some areas may be deemed wildlife sanctuary and possibly closed on a seasonal basis to all public use.

It is anticipated that the acreage available for hunting during the first refuge hunt season (2002-2003) will be less than the area designated as the hunt zone in Attachment "A." Certain restrictions, therefore, may apply until all 9,000 acres are under Federal ownership. For example, lottery drawings or actual closure of some seasons may be required. Refuge personnel will allow as much quality hunting as possible until the full 9,000 acres have been acquired. It should be noted, however, that at this time it is unknown as to when all of that land will be part of Cat Island NWR. After the initial 9,000 acres becomes part of the refuge, future expansion based on purchases from willing sellers is unknown. Therefore, it is not possible to determine future hunting locations.

Archery and lottery muzzleloader hunts will be established for deer. Deer gun hunting on the refuge will be initiated when the refuge has acquired the initial 9,000 acres. Lottery drawings will be conducted for muzzleloader and gun deer hunts. The number of hunters given permits will be based on a target harvest objective based on herd size. Over time, the refuge deer population will be monitored. Hunting guidelines and permits will be based on deer abundance, herd quality, and hunter safety.

Opportunities for youth hunters and disabled hunters are important. Designation of specific trails and hunting locations for special user groups will be provided as is demanded by the public. It is important to provide hunting opportunities for all facets of the visiting public.

C. Access

The following information is an establishing framework based on discussions with local sportsmen. Over the first few years of refuge ownership, the Service will continually assess the impact of the Mississippi River on wildlife, public access,

and hunting opportunities. The intention is to provide safe, quality hunting opportunities that consider the welfare of the refuge's wildlife resources.

Primary access to the refuge is via a limestone road from Creek Road near Bayou Sara. The refuge road has two low-water crossings that flood much sooner than the surrounding land. Because standard vehicles cannot traverse those crossings when the Mississippi River rises, the road will be closed to the public when they begin to fill with water. Those crossings are generally impassable when the Baton Rouge gauge of the Mississippi River reaches 23'. According to historical data of river levels, in 17 of the last 32 years the river reached 23' in December and water generally stayed up through the remainder of hunting season. During 15 of the last 32 years, the river never reached 23' during hunting season.

Initially, the eastern portion of Cat Island Swamp floods and river water moves westward through the swamp. Therefore, when the refuge road is closed, access to the refuge will still be available via the Parish-owned Cat Island Road. Based on conversations with long-time hunters of the area, by the time the river reaches 28' there is standing water on the area that pushes wildlife into the adjacent hills. At 32' most of the deer-hunting opportunities have passed. Once the river reaches about 34' in Baton Rouge, the entire swamp is flooded and vehicular access to the area is eliminated.

The Service has not established a fixed river gauge level in which the refuge will be closed to small and big game hunting. As stated above, over the next few years personnel will study the issue to determine if closures related to river stages are necessary. In particular, observations will be made to determine if rising flood waters concentrate animals to higher portions of the refuge. This would cause undue stress on those animals. If that situation is observed, closures related to specific river levels will likely be instituted. If so, these closures will be published in local newspapers and posted at the refuge and refuge headquarters in St. Francisville.

Generally, when Mississippi River levels rise above 32', waterfowl habitat and duck hunting opportunities are available on the refuge. Flooded sloughs are the primary habitat available for such hunting. Access to these areas will be by boat only along several canals that feed to the river. These include the main canal, Hardwick's Ditch, and other canals around the Cat Island peninsula (see Attachment "A").

Any vehicles with wheels measuring 17 inches or more from the center of the hub to the outside of the tire (measured horizontal to ground) are prohibited.

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use is allowed only on designated trails and only during hunting season and in pursuit of hunting-related activities. Tires may be inflated only up to 7 psi and have a maximum lug height of one inch.

Hunting is prohibited within 100 feet of any road, trail, parking area, or other designated public use facilities such as kiosks, pavilions, picnic areas, restrooms or buildings.

VI. MEASURES TAKEN TO AVOID CONFLICTS WITH OTHER MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

A. Biological Conflicts (also see Section 7 Evaluation and Environmental Assessment)

As stated above, the refuge objectives include the conservation, enhancement, restoration and management of habitat to benefit native fish, migratory songbird and wildlife populations and threatened and endangered species. During hunting season, the primary threatened or endangered species known to occur on the refuge include the Louisiana black bear and bald eagle. The level of disturbance from hunting activities to these animals and other non-target species is expected to be minimal based on information gathered from other refuges. The presence of a no-hunt zone will help reduce disturbance to some wildlife. Refuge personnel may designate specific areas as sanctuary, if necessary. Those areas would be closed to all public use.

Restrictions on methods of hunting should aid in reducing incidental take of non-target species. Designating trails for ATV use will concentrate that type of disturbance to specific areas. Waterfowl hunts will be permitted four days per week and only until noon to provide waterfowl disturbance-free periods to rest, feed and roost. Driving deer with dogs adversely impacts many wildlife species due to disturbance. This activity is prohibited on the refuge. Additionally, refuge personnel will educate hunters about the impacts of different types of disturbance to wildlife.

B. Social Conflicts

Other recreational uses of the refuge that will occur at the same time and in some of the same areas as hunting include fishing, wildlife observation (birdwatching, photography, hiking), and guided tours. Potential conflicts among users include hunting and non-hunting visitors that disturb hunters in blinds and stands; possible conflict between anglers and duck hunters seeking game at the same location; and potential safety concerns perceived by non-hunting visitors. The inclusion of a non-hunted zone on the refuge should reduce conflicts between visitors pursuing different activities on the refuge. Prior to and throughout the refuge hunting season, notices explaining season dates and closed areas (maps) will be posted at the refuge entrance, the refuge office, and in local newspapers.

## VII. HUNT SPECIFICS

### A. Refuge-specific Regulations

The following activities are PROHIBITED at Cat Island NWR:

1. Taking any wildlife, plant or part thereof other than specified in refuge regulations
2. Littering
3. Camping/overnight parking
4. Fires
5. Spot-lighting
6. Target practice
7. Use or possession of alcohol while hunting
8. Marking trails with tape, paper, paint, etc.
9. Driving ATV's on trails/roads that are not specifically designated for ATV use
10. Riding horses or mules
11. Frogging
12. Trapping
13. Hunting within 100 feet of any designated road, trail or refuge facility
14. Hunting from permanent blinds (waterfowl)
15. Installing or hunting from stands that have been attached to trees with nails, spikes, or other metal objects
16. Baiting or hunting over bait
17. Waterfowl hunting after 12:00 P.M.
18. Driving deer (man drives) or use of deer dogs

### B. Hunter Application and Registration Procedures

All hunters will be required to carry a signed refuge hunt permit while hunting. Some hunts may require a lottery drawing to select hunters. Those guidelines will be developed as needed.

A mandatory self-clearing hunter check station will be installed at the entrance gate to the refuge. This will provide refuge staff with hunter use information and harvest data that will help mold future hunts on the refuge. A self-clearing check station is more cost-effective and requires less time from refuge personnel than a manned check station.

### C. Description of Hunter Selection Process

All seasons (except lottery hunts) are open to all hunters. If safety concerns from high hunter demand require it, use will be restricted by lottery drawings. The

selection procedure for all lottery drawings is a computerized random drawing. Equal opportunity is given to all regardless of age, sex, race, or state of residence.

D. Draft News Release Regarding the Hunting Program

[All hunt-related matters will be publicized in The Democrat (St. Francisville), The Pointe Coupee Banner (New Roads) and The Advocate (Baton Rouge) newspapers and newspapers in the Woodville, MS area. Information will also be posted on the Refuge web site and at the Refuge entrance and headquarters. Refuge hunt brochures will be available prior to and during the hunting season.]

The Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge manager recently announced that hunting will be available on the refuge beginning with the 2002-2003 season. Hunting for the following will be permitted: white-tailed deer (archery, muzzleloader, and gun), rabbit, squirrel, woodcock, and waterfowl. Additionally, feral hogs may be taken during these hunts with legal weapons for those hunts.

Hunters are required to possess a refuge permit to hunt on the refuge. The permits contain a map that should assist hunters. Permits are free and are available at the refuge headquarters office in St. Francisville. The office is co-located with the St. Francisville Inn at 5720 Commerce Street. Hunters may also request a permit be mailed to them by calling 225/635-4753

The refuge is accessible by vehicle until the Baton Rouge gauge reaches about 25'. At that point, the refuge can be accessed via Cat Island Road until about 28'. The refuge is then only accessible by boat. The nearest boat launch to the refuge is on the Mississippi River in St. Francisville.

If you have any questions regarding hunting opportunities on the refuge call the headquarters at 225/635-4753.

E. Hunter Orientation

Hunter orientation of the refuge will be achieved by providing a map of the refuge in the general hunt brochure. The map will have all refuge roads, trails, public use areas, closed areas etc. clearly defined. Participants in the hunting program will be able to access the refuge year-round to acquaint themselves with the refuge road and trail systems. Although all-terrain vehicle trails will be closed for off-road-vehicle from mid-September to the end of squirrel/rabbit season the trails will remain open to foot travel. Hunters can address questions to refuge staff by calling, writing, or e-mailing refuge headquarters.

F. Hunter Requirements

1. Age- Individuals under 16 years of age are subject to the following regulations:

Youth hunters must have successfully passed a State-approved hunter education course. While hunting, youth hunters must possess a certificate that illustrates satisfactory completion of the course.

Youth hunters must be supervised by an adult 21 years of age or older while hunting and must remain in sight and normal voice contact with that adult.

During small game and waterfowl hunts, one adult may supervise up to two youth. During big game hunts, one adult may supervise only one youth.

2. Allowable equipment- Firearms and archery tackle will be permitted on the refuge only during designated hunts. Any weapons possessed by hunters must be specified as appropriate and permitted by state and refuge regulations for the hunt in which they are participating. Hunters are required to have all firearms unloaded and encased during transport in a motorized vehicle or boat. Only non-toxic shot of the appropriate size specified by State and Federal regulations will be allowed by hunters utilizing shotguns in the pursuit of small game. All blinds and stands must be portable.
3. License and permits- All hunters are required to possess and carry all applicable State and Federal permits, licenses, and stamps while hunting. Refuge permits are available at the headquarters and select locations within the community. When the permit is signed and in the hunter's possession, the hunter acknowledges understanding of the regulations contained therein.
4. Reporting requirements- All game taken must be checked at a self-clearing check station prior to leaving the refuge. All hunters must check in and check out to assist refuge personnel in documenting harvest and hunter participation.
5. Hunter training and safety- All hunters are required to comply with State regulations regarding the Hunter Safety Course. All bowhunters must possess proof of completion of the International Bowhunter Education Course
6. Vehicles- All motor vehicles are restricted to designated roads. Roads and trails may be closed by the refuge manager at any time due to adverse conditions. Any vehicles with wheels measuring 17 inches or more from the



center of the hub to the outside of the tire (measured horizontal to ground) are prohibited.

7. All-Terrain Vehicles- ATV's are only permitted on trails designated for ATV use. Only ATV's with normal maximum tire pressure of 7 pounds per square inch are permitted and have a maximum lug height of one inch.

## UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

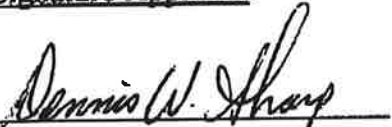
Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and determine that the action of opening Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge to regulated public hunting

Check One:

- ☐ is a categorical exclusion as provided by 516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1 section. No further NEPA documentation will therefore be made.
- ☒ is found not to have significant environmental effects as determined by the attached environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.
- ☐ is found to have significant effects and, therefore, further consideration of this action will require a notice of intent to be published in the Federal Register announcing the decision to prepare an EIS.
- ☐ is not approved because of unacceptable environmental damage, or violation of Fish and Wildlife Service mandates, policy, regulations, or procedures.
- ☐ is an emergency action within the context of 40 CFR 1 501.11. Only those actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency will be taken. Other related actions remain subject to NEPA review.

Other supporting documents: Hunting Plan, Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact, Section 7 Evaluation, Compatibility Determination, Letter of Concurrence, Refuge-specific Regulations.

Signature Approval:

  
(1) Originator

12/5/01  
Date

  
(2) Regional Environmental  
Coordinator

12/10/01  
Date

(3) Assistant Regional  
Director

Date

  
Acting (4) Regional Director

12/13/01  
Date

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

RECREATIONAL HUNTING PLAN  
CAT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
P.O. BOX 1936  
ST. FRANCISVILLE, LA 70775

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I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The primary purpose of the proposed action is to provide recreational hunting opportunities on Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge. One of the six priority public uses of a refuge is to provide hunting, which is a traditional wildlife-oriented recreational opportunity that is compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative)

The proposed action would establish a recreational hunting program on most of Cat Island NWR. A portion of the refuge (about 800 acres) would remain closed to hunting to develop environmental education and interpretation sites. The hunt program would comply with all State, Federal and refuge-specific regulations, and Service policies and directives.

B. No Action

This alternative would not allow recreational hunting to occur on Cat Island NWR. Visitors would be prohibited from taking any game species during approved State hunting seasons. There would be no change to the current public use and management strategies at the refuge.

C. Open Entire Refuge to Hunting

This alternative would allow recreational hunting on all areas of the refuge open to public use.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the area's natural environment, including vegetation, fish and wildlife resources, and cultural resources.

A. General

Cat Island NWR is located about 5 miles from St. Francisville, LA in West Feliciana Parish on a peninsula that is surrounded by the Mississippi River. This peninsula is along the southernmost unleveed portion of the river. The river overflows the area at least once in most years, and often floods the area twice (early spring and "the June rise"). Much of the refuge may be flooded at least 10-foot-deep in those instances. Once river levels drop, the refuge "dries up" and can be traversed by foot. Some sloughs and small lakes remain wet for much of the

year. There are a few roads on the refuge that allow easy access to the areas open to the public. The entire refuge is a bottomland hardwood forest/swamp. Wildlife moves seasonally to escape rising river waters. Many species of neotropical migrant songbirds, resident birds, mammals, fish and other wildlife breed here.

B. Vegetation and Land Use

The refuge is comprised of varying communities of hardwoods. Several habitat types including overcup oak-bitter pecan, hackberry-elm-ash, nuttall oak-ash-sweetgum, and shrub-scrub swamp occur. The most unique type, however, is old growth cypress-tupelo. Many of the cypress trees are estimated to be 500 to 1,000 years old. The largest baldcypress tree in the United States, which is also the largest tree of any species east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, is located on the refuge.

Several canals and bayous traverse the peninsula. These canals were dug in the 1960's to increase the drainage rate of the swamp to aid soybean farmers to the north. These canals, which were not all completed, force water to move off the area at a faster rate than historically occurred. The refuge is surrounded by privately-held lands to the west, north and east. Much of the land is forested and leased to hunting clubs. Several thousand acres is maintained in agriculture and currently farmed.

C. Wildlife Resources

The refuge is a haven to myriad wildlife species. When river levels rise, much of the wildlife moves to the adjacent Tunica Hills and upland areas to the east. This includes wild turkey, white-tailed deer, coyotes, and the threatened Louisiana black bear. Other species of wildlife utilize flooded areas while the river is rising and falling. As the river falls, thousands of wading birds and shorebirds take advantage of fish and invertebrates in pools and canals. Osprey fly in to feed on fish that are concentrated in these areas as well. River otters use flooded areas that are dry throughout most of the year.

When the river drains, mammals on the refuge include white-tailed deer, coyote, fox squirrel, cottontail rabbit, Louisiana black bear, mink, beaver, nutria, raccoon, opossum, and armadillo. Neotropical migrant songbirds that breed on the area include Northern parula, prothonotary warbler, painted bunting, yellow-billed cuckoo, and swallow-tailed kite. Resident birds include wild turkey, wood duck, carolina wren, pileated woodpecker, and red-shouldered hawk. Wintering birds include blue-winged teal, Northern pintail, American wigeon, and American woodcock. Hundreds of additional species of birds use the area but are too numerous to mention here. Reptiles and amphibians found on the refuge include

American alligator, yellow-bellied water snake, red-eared slider, green treefrog, bullfrog, and bronzed frog. Dozens of butterfly species occur including red-spotted purple, viceroy, Eastern tiger swallowtail, giant swallowtail, and Horace's duskywing.

D. Aquatic Resources

As the Mississippi River rises it carries numerous fish species into the refuge. These include largemouth bass, bream, channel catfish, crappie, buffalo, and alligator gar. As the river drops, fish become concentrated in the canals that drain the area. Pools that remain filled with water can hold fish for months. The bigger lakes in the area are breeding grounds for some of these species. The endangered pallid sturgeon is known to occur in the Mississippi River near the refuge. The extent of the mussel population on the refuge is currently unknown.

E. Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires the Service to evaluate the effects of any of its actions on cultural resources (historic, architectural, and archaeological properties) that are listed or eligible for listing in the national Register of Historic Places. In accordance with the regulations under Section 106, the Service consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

The SHPO indicated that the proposed action would not likely effect any cultural resources that may be located on the refuge. The future discovery of any cultural resources will be reported to the SHPO immediately.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative)

Under the proposed action, recreational hunting would be permitted, but limited to designated areas on the refuge. All or part of the refuge may be closed to hunting at any time, if necessary, for public safety, to provide wildlife sanctuary, in response to rising Mississippi River levels or other reasons. All seasons will be coordinated with and within the framework of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Some hunting regulations may be more restrictive than State regulations to meet refuge objectives. As the hunting program on the refuge progresses, harvest information is collected, and public use is evaluated, modifications may be made to refuge-specific regulations and/or the program.

A refuge hunting program would allow the general public an opportunity that was once afforded only to paying lease-holders. This area has been popular with hunters for decades and will provide even more recreation when opened to hunting. It will allow for the consumptive use of a renewable resource without adversely impacting wildlife populations, habitat or other refuge objectives. It is anticipated that resident and migratory game animals will be harvested at levels sufficient to provide a quality, recreational experience while maintaining healthy, viable wildlife populations.

This alternative will allow for the development of environmental education zones. Though these zones would not be considered "sanctuary" because the public would be permitted to enter, the closed area would provide some refuge for some individuals of game species. At least the same or even more disturbance to wildlife is conceivable from non-hunting users in the closed area due to large groups that would be present as part of refuge programs.

The proposed action may result in temporary disturbance to non-game animals, killing of non-target animals through illegal activities, and damage to refuge roads and ATV trails in wet conditions. Hunting programs at other refuges have illustrated that these impacts are minimal. There may be concern that hunting may adversely impact threatened species on the refuge such as the Louisiana black bear and bald eagle. In the Section 7 evaluation, it was determined that this action would not likely adversely affect these species. Damage to habitat is expected to be minimal.

B. No Action

Under this alternative no recreational hunting program would be initiated at Cat Island NWR. If this alternative is pursued, wildlife populations would not be regulated through refuge-administered harvests; the public would not be permitted to harvest renewable resources, which is one of the six priority purposes for refuges nationwide; the public would not have an increased awareness of the National Wildlife Refuge System by visiting the refuge; and the Service would not be meeting its public use demand.

Benefits to the refuge from this alternative include less disturbance to non-game wildlife; possibly less killing of non-target animals; and no damage to refuge roads and trails from ATV's. Threatened species may benefit minimally but non-hunting refuge visitors would still be permitted to traverse the area.



C. Open Entire Refuge to Hunting

This alternative would permit hunting on the entire refuge throughout the hunting season. No areas would be closed to hunting or specifically designated as environmental education zones, as proposed in Alternative "A". All seasons would be coordinated with and within the framework of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Some hunting regulations may be more restrictive than State regulations to meet refuge objectives. As the hunting program on the refuge progresses, harvest information is collected, and public use is evaluated, modifications may be made to refuge-specific regulations and/or the program itself.

The proposed action may result in temporary disturbance to non-game animals, killing of non-target animals through illegal activities, and damage to refuge roads and ATV trails in wet conditions. The Section 7 review determined that hunting on the refuge is not likely to adversely impact the bald eagle and the Louisiana black bear.

This alternative would not allow for a non-hunted environmental education zone in the vicinity of the National Champion baldcypress tree, which is expected to be a primary visitor destination for West Feliciana Parish. It would also allow hunting in areas where hiking trails are established and interpretive trails are under consideration in the Blackfork Bayou area. A "no hunting" zone on the refuge will facilitate the implementation of all six of the Priority Public Uses as defined in the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This draft environmental assessment will be reviewed by refuge personnel, the Regional Office of the Service, the general public and personnel from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. A public hearing will be held in Fall 2001 to allow the public to comment on the hunt plan.

VI. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The actions proposed in the preferred alternative will be carried out according to all applicable local, State and Federal laws.

VII. CAT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE OBJECTIVES

The purposes for which Cat Island NWR were established are:

- A. to conserve, restore and manage habitats to contribute to migratory bird

population goals;

- B. to conserve, restore, and manage aquatic resources;
- C. to conserve, enhance, and restore the historic native bottomland community and its associated fish, wildlife, and plant species;
- D. to conserve, enhance, and restore habitat to maintain and assist in the recovery of endangered and threatened plants and animals; and
- E. to encourage the use of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the Service, local communities, conservation organizations, and others to promote public awareness of the resources of the refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

## VII. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) proposes to provide hunting on Cat Island NWR. Hunting activities will be permitted, but administratively limited to those areas specified in the refuge-specific regulations. All or part of the refuge may be closed to hunting at any time, if necessary for public safety, to provide wildlife sanctuary, in response to rising Mississippi River levels, or for other reasons. Alternatives considered included: proposed action, no action, or open entire refuge to hunting.

The Service has analyzed the following alternatives to the proposal in an Environmental Assessment (copy attached):

- A. No action alternative: Cat Island NWR would not be open to public hunting
- B. Open entire refuge to hunting: Hunting would be permitted on all portions of the refuge throughout the hunting season

The preferred alternative was selected because:

- A. The preferred alternative would allow public harvest of a renewable resource, promote wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities, increase awareness of Cat Island NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and meet public demand.
- B. The preferred alternative is compatible with Service policy regarding establishment of hunting on National Wildlife Refuges.
- C. The preferred alternative is compatible with the purposes for which Cat Island NWR was established.
- D. The preferred alternative encourages implementation of all six of the Priority Public Uses as defined by the Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.
- E. The proposal does not initiate widespread controversy or litigation.
- F. There are no conflicts with local, State, regional, or Federal plans or policies.

Implementation of the agency's decision would be expected to result in the following environmental, social, and economic effects:

- A. The public would be permitted to harvest a renewable resource.

- B. The public would have increased opportunity for wildlife-oriented recreation.
- C. West Feliciana Parish would increase economically from increased hunter visitation.
- D. The Service would be perceived as a good steward of the land by continuing traditional uses of land in Louisiana.
- E. Healthy game populations would be maintained.

Measures to mitigate and/or minimize adverse effects have been incorporated into the proposal in the following ways:

- A. Two "no hunt" zones will be created on the refuge. About 75 acres in the vicinity of the National Champion baldcypress tree and 800 acres along Blackfork Bayou will be developed as environmental education areas.
- B. ATV's will only be permitted on designated trails and only within the hunted areas of the refuge.
- C. Refuge brochures and publication of hunt information in local newspapers will inform hunters of refuge regulations.
- D. An aggressive law enforcement program will ensure hunt regulation compliance and will protect refuge resources.

The proposal is not expected to have any significant adverse effects on wetlands and floodplains, pursuant to Executive Orders 11990 and 11988 because the area has traditionally been hunted by lease-holders with no long-term impacts to wetlands.

The proposal has been thoroughly coordinated with all interested and/or affected parties, including:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Office, Lafayette, LA
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- adjacent landowners
- hunt club lessees on adjacent property

Copies of the Environmental Assessment are available from:

Cat Island NWR  
5720 Commerce Street  
P.O. Box 1936  
St. Francisville, LA 70775

Therefore, it is my determination that the proposal does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment under the meaning of section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (as amended). As such, an environmental impact statement is not required. This determination is based on the following factors (40CFR 1508.27):

1. Both beneficial and adverse effects have been considered and this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment (EA, page 7).
2. The actions will not have a significant effect on public health and safety (EA, page 7).
3. The project will not significantly effect any unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historical or cultural resources, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas (EA, page 3).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial (EA, pages 7, 8).
5. The actions do not involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown environmental risks to the human environment (EA, pages 7, 8).
6. The actions will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (EA, page 7).
7. There will be no cumulative significant impacts on the environment. Cumulative impacts have been analyzed with consideration of other similar activities on adjacent lands, in past action, and in foreseeable future actions (EA, page 7).
8. The actions will not significantly affect any site listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, nor will they cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources (EA, page 3).
9. The actions are not likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species, or their habitats (Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Evaluation form).
10. The actions will not lead to a violation of federal, state, or local laws imposed for the protection of the environment (EA, pages 4, 5, 7).

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Acting**

Regional Director

12/13/01  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CONTACT—Bob Strader, Project Leader, (601) 442-6696**

United States Department of the Interior – United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge, Post Office Box 217, Sibley, Mississippi 39165

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**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Seeks Comments on a Compatibility Determination for  
Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge**

A draft Compatibility Determination for Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge (CINWR) located near Saint Francisville, Louisiana in East Feliciana Parish will be available for a 15-day public review on September 10, 2012. The comment period will end on September 25, 2012.

The Compatibility Determination currently available for public review evaluates and justifies the compatible use of all-terrain and off-road vehicles on Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge by the visiting public.

Copies of the Compatibility Determination can be requested from CINWR and copies are available for review at the:

West Feliciana Historical Society and Tourist Information Center  
11757 Ferdinand Street  
St. Francisville, Louisiana

Written comments, requests for a copy of the document or questions can be directed to

Bob Strader, Project Leader (601) 442-6696  
P.O. Box 217  
Sibley, Mississippi 39165  
Email comments: bob\_strader@fws.gov

Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge was established on October 27, 2000 in Public Law 106-369 known as the "Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge Establishment Act." Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge was established as a part of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve, restore, and manage native forested wetland habitats for migratory birds, aquatic resources, and endangered and threatened plants and animals. Additionally, it was created to encourage the use of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the Service, local communities, and conservation organizations to promote public awareness of refuge resources and the National Wildlife Refuge System. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service manage the 94 million acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 550 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

## COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

**Refuge Use:** All-Terrain and Off-Road Utility Vehicle Use

**Refuge Name:** Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge (CINWR)

**County:** West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana

**Date Established:** October 27, 2000

**Refuge Purpose:**

- To conserve, restore and manage native forested wetland habitats for migratory birds, aquatic resources, and endangered and threatened plants and animals; and
- To encourage the use of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, local communities, conservation organizations, and others to promote public awareness of the resources of the refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

### **CINWR Management Goals**

**Fish and Wildlife Populations.** Maintain viable, historically diverse populations of native fish and wildlife species consistent with sound biological principles.

**Habitat.** Conserve, restore, and manage the functions and values associated with a diverse bottomland hardwood system in order to achieve refuge purposes and wildlife population objectives.

**Land Protection and Conservation.** Conserve natural and cultural resources through partnerships, protection, and land acquisition from willing sellers.

**Education and Visitor Services.** Develop and implement a quality wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education program that leads to a greater understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife resources and enjoyable recreation experiences.

**Refuge Administration.** Provide administrative support to ensure that the goals and objectives for refuge habitats, fish and wildlife populations, land conservation, and visitor services are achieved.

### **Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System:**

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 National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Administration Act of 1966 as amended by the

habitats, such as bird rookeries, wintering waterfowl, threatened/endangered species, or to provide for public safety.

Implementation of an effective law enforcement program and development of site-specific refuge regulations/special conditions will eliminate most user-conflict problems (e.g., disturbing research or wildlife photography).

Service policy pertaining to ATV/UTV use requires that such use be in conjunction with wildlife-dependent activities only, and be confined to designated areas or trails identified for such use. All other off-road use is restricted to foot travel only.

ATV/UTV use is limited to designated trails and seasons set annually within the Annual CINWR Public Use Regulations brochure. If ATV/UTV use approaches levels potentially harmful to habitat or wildlife, the staff will reevaluate the use which could be modified or suspended.

### **Justification:**

A large portion of the refuge is inaccessible to conventional vehicles due to either impassible roads or no roads. In order to disperse visitors and access remote areas for public activities, hunters and fishermen have historically utilized ATV/UTV. Considering the topography of the area and its remoteness, the need for limited use of ATV/UTV by certain refuge users is apparent. It will be impossible to develop an effective public use program that provides optimum consumptive use opportunities without providing for ATV/UTV use.

With regulations in place that restrict access to designated trails, ATV/UTV use on the refuge in support of wildlife-dependent activities is compatible with the purposes for which this refuge was established.

**Mandatory 10- or 15-Year Re-evaluation Date:** December, 2022

### **Literature References**

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1986 Refuge Manual 5 RM 20, Compatibility Determinations. U. S. Department of the Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2001. Recreational Hunting Plan Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge, U. S. Department of the Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2001. Environmental Action Statement and Environmental Assessment Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge, U. S. Department of the Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2012. Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, U. S. Department of the Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service