

Apalachicola River

Wildlife and Environmental Area

Regulations Summary and Area Map

July 01, 2019 – June 30, 2020

This brochure is designed to provide the public with information and a summary of regulations pertaining to hunting and other recreational use on the Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area. **Regulations that are new or differ substantially from last year are shown in bold print.** Area users should familiarize themselves with all regulations. For exact wording of the wildlife laws and regulations, see the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's wildlife code, on file with the Secretary of State and state libraries. This brochure, the Florida Hunting Regulations handbook, and quota permit worksheets should provide the information necessary for you to plan your hunting activities. These publications are available at MyFWC.com.

Persons using wildlife and environmental areas are required to have appropriate licenses, permits and stamps. The following persons are exempt from all license and permit requirements (except for quota permits when listed as "no exemptions," recreational use permits, released quail permits, antlerless deer permits and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp [federal duck stamp]): Florida residents who are 65 years of age or older; residents who possess a Florida Resident Disabled Person Hunting and Fishing Certificate; residents in the U.S. Armed Forces, not stationed in Florida, while home on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders; and children under 16 years of age. Children under 16 years of age are exempt from the duck stamp. Anyone born on or after June 1, 1975 and 16 years of age or older must have passed a Commission-approved hunter-safety course prior to being issued a hunting license, except the Hunter Safety Mentoring exemption allows anyone to purchase a hunting license and hunt under the supervision of a licensed hunter, 21 years of age or older.

Licenses and permits may be purchased from county tax collectors, license agents, by telephone at 888-486-8356 or at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com. A no-cost Migratory Bird Permit is available when purchasing a hunting license. Any waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older must possess a federal duck stamp. Released quail permits may only be obtained online at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com.

Quota Permit Information:

Quota permits are not required for this area.

General Area Regulations:

All general laws and regulations relating to wildlife and fish shall apply unless specifically exempted for this area. Hunting or the taking of wildlife or fish on this area shall be allowed only during the open seasons and in accordance with the following regulations:

1. Any person hunting deer or accompanying another person hunting deer shall wear at least 500 square inches of daylight fluorescent-orange material as an outer garment, above the waistline. These provisions are not required when hunting with a bow and arrow during archery season.
2. Taking of spotted fawn, swimming deer or roasted turkey is prohibited.

3. It is illegal to hunt over bait or place any bait or other food for wildlife on this area.
4. Driving a metal object into any tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven, is prohibited.
5. No person shall cut, damage or remove any natural, man-made or cultural resource without written authorization of the landowner or primary land manager.
6. Taking or attempting to take any game with the aid of live decoys, recorded game calls or sounds, set guns, artificial light, net, trap, snare, drug or poison is prohibited. Recorded calls and sounds can be used to hunt furbearers, wild hog and crows.
7. The wanton and willful waste of wildlife is prohibited.
8. Hunting, fishing or trapping is prohibited on any portion of the area posted as closed to those activities.
9. People, dogs, vehicles and other recreational equipment are prohibited in areas posted as "Closed to Public Access" by FWC administrative action.
10. Taking or herding wildlife from any motorized vehicle, aircraft or boat, which is under power is prohibited until power, and movement from that power, has ceased.
11. Most game may be hunted from ½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset (see exceptions for each season).
12. The release of any animal is prohibited, except by permit from FWC or written authorization from the landowner or primary land manager.
13. The head and evidence of sex may not be removed from the carcass of any deer or turkey on the area.
14. The planting or introduction of any non-native plant is prohibited, without written authorization of the landowner or primary land manager.
15. Wild hog may not be transported alive.
16. A hunting license is not required to hunt wild hog.
17. Littering is prohibited.
18. Fires other than campfires are prohibited. It is unlawful to set fire to any forest, grass or woodlands.
19. An FWC Law Enforcement Officer may search any camp, vehicle or boat, in accordance with law.
20. Digging into or disturbance of archaeological sites or removal of artifacts is prohibited.
21. Turtles may only be taken by hand, baited hooks, minnow seine nets or dip nets.

Public Access and Vehicles:

1. Open to public access year round.
2. Vehicles may be operated only on named or numbered roads.
3. Named or numbered roads may be closed to motorized vehicles by yellow gates in areas with established wildlife plantings beginning 2 days after the end of general gun season through the last day of the first phase of dove season. A red gate designates a service road and is closed to motorized vehicles throughout the year.
4. Parked vehicles may not obstruct a road, gate or firelane.
5. No motor vehicle shall be operated in areas designated as closed to vehicular traffic.
6. The use of all-terrain vehicles is prohibited in that portion of the area posted as Northwest Florida Water Management District land and on those lands lying east of East Bay and Cash Bayou.

Hunters and Harvest Reporting:

1. Hunting equipment may not be taken onto the WEA until after 8 a.m. the day before the opening of a season and shall be removed by 6 p.m. 1 day after the end of the season.
2. **All deer harvested must be reported to the harvest reporting system within 24 hours of harvest. See Florida Hunting Regulations handbook for deer harvest reporting instructions.**

Guns:

1. Hunting at night with a gun is prohibited (see exceptions under wild hog-dog and fox, raccoon, opossum, and bobcat seasons).
2. **Muzzleloading guns used for taking deer must be .30 caliber or larger if firing a single bullet, or be 20 gauge or larger if firing 2 or more balls.**
3. Hunting deer with rimfire or non-expanding, full metal jacket (military ball) ammunition is prohibited.
4. Hunting wildlife (other than migratory birds) with air guns is allowed. See Florida Hunting Regulations handbook for details.
5. Hunting deer with air guns is prohibited, except pre-charged pneumatic (PCP) air guns propelling a bolt, arrow or bullet .30 caliber or larger are allowed.
6. Hunting turkey with air guns is prohibited, except PCP air guns propelling a bolt or arrow are allowed. During general gun season, PCP air guns propelling a bullet .20 caliber or larger may also be used for hunting turkey.
7. Children under the age of 16 hunting with a firearm or airgun must be in the presence of a supervising adult.
8. No person shall discharge a firearm or have a loaded firearm in hand while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
9. For hunting non-migratory game, only shotguns, rifles, pistols, air guns, bows, crossbows or falconry may be used.
10. For hunting migratory game, only shotguns, bows, crossbows or falconry may be used. Shotguns shall not be larger than 10 gauge and shall be incapable of holding more than 3 shells in the magazine and chamber combined.
11. Hunting with full automatic firearms, centerfire semi-automatic rifles having a magazine capable of holding more than 5 rounds, explosive or drug-injecting devices and set guns is prohibited.
12. The discharge of a firearm outside of periods open to hunting or in areas closed to hunting is prohibited per s. 790.15 FS.

Dogs:

1. Hunting deer or wild hog with dogs is prohibited in still hunt areas (except when hunting wild hog during wild hog-dog season in the wild hog-dog area) and during the archery, muzzleloading gun and archery/muzzleloading gun seasons.
2. Hunting with dogs, other than bird dogs or retrievers, is prohibited in that portion of the area posted as Northwest Florida Water Management District land (except those lands lying south of the Chipola River and east of the St. Joe Canal and during wild hog-dog season in the wild hog-dog area) and on those lands lying east of East Bay and Cash Bayou (except during wild hog-dog season in the wild hog-dog area).

3. The use of dogs, other than bird dogs or retrievers, on posted dove fields is prohibited during the first phase of dove season.
4. No person shall allow any dog to pursue or molest any wildlife during any period in which the taking of wildlife by the use of dogs is prohibited.
5. Deer dog training is prohibited except during the general gun season.
6. Dogs on leashes may be used for trailing wounded game.
7. For purposes other than hunting, dogs are allowed (except during spring turkey season), but must be kept under physical restraint at all times.

Camping:

1. Camping is allowed throughout the area, except within the Tate's Hell State Forest portion of the area. Camping within designated campgrounds (see map) is allowed by permit only and subject to permit provisions.
2. Permits may be obtained through the online reservation system at myfwc.com/viewing/recreation/camping/ or by calling the Northwest Regional Office at (850) 265-3676 during regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. CST).
3. Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days and prohibited where posted as "no camping".
4. Camping is limited to tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles. Kitchen stoves, refrigerators and freezers are prohibited, unless contained in mobile campers. Lumber, sheet metal or other building materials are prohibited.
5. No person shall bring building materials onto the area or erect permanent or semi-permanent structures.

Bag and Possession Limits:

1. **Deer - No person shall exceed statewide bag limits.**
 - A. **Area limits - See statewide limits below.**
 - B. **Statewide limits - Annual limit 5 deer (only 2 of which may be antlerless), daily limit 2, possession limit 4.**
 - C. **As part of the statewide annual deer limit, youth less than 16 years of age may harvest 1 deer annually not meeting antler point requirements but having at least 1 antler 5 inches or more in length.**
2. Wild hog - No size or bag limit.
3. Turkey - No person shall exceed statewide bag limits.
 - A. Area limits - Daily limit 1.
 - B. Statewide limits - All fall seasons combined limit 2, spring season limit 2, daily limit 2, possession limit 2.
4. Gray squirrel, quail and rabbit - Daily limit 12, possession limit 24 for each (No bag limit for released quail).
5. Raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk and nutria - No bag limits.
6. Bobcat and otter - Possession limit 1 unless in possession of a trapping license.
7. Migratory birds - See Florida Hunting Regulations handbook.

Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat Season:

Allowed year round except the possession of dogs is prohibited during spring turkey season (March **21** through April **26**).

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license.

Legal to Hunt - Fox, raccoon, opossum, bobcat, otter, coyote, skunk, nutria, armadillo, beaver and rabbit. Bobcat and otter may be killed only from December 1 through March 1. Killing fox is prohibited.

Regulations Unique to Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat Season -

1. Species that are legal to hunt may be pursued with dogs during the day and at night except during the spring turkey season.
2. Hunting with gun and light is prohibited, except raccoons and opossums may be hunted at night by aid of a light and dogs, with .22 caliber rimfire firearms other than .22 magnum, or with a single-shot .410 gauge shotgun using shot no larger than No. 6. Hunting raccoon or opossum by display or use of a light from a moving vehicle, boat or animal is prohibited.

Wild Hog-Dog Season (Wild Hog-Dog Area only):

July **19-21**, August **16-18** and September **20-22, 2019**; and May **15-17** and June **19-21, 2020**.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license.

Legal to Hunt - Wild hog, raccoon, opossum, rabbit, coyote, skunk, nutria, armadillo and beaver.

Regulations Unique to Wild Hog-Dog Season -

1. Hunts begin at 12:01 a.m. Friday morning and end at midnight Sunday evening.
2. Wild hog may be taken during the day or at night by aid of a light with dogs and a firearm, provided that no wild hog shall be shot until bayed by dogs. The hunting of wild hog by display or use of a light from a moving vehicle, boat or animal is prohibited.

Archery Season:

October **26** through November **24**.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, archery permit, deer permit (if hunting deer), wild turkey permit (if hunting wild turkey), migratory bird permit (if hunting migratory birds), and state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal to Hunt - Deer with at least 1 antler having 2 or more points (each point 1-inch or more in length) and having at least 1 antler 5-inches or more in length, antlerless deer (which includes does and bucks with antlers less than 5 inches in length, but not spotted fawn), wild hog, turkey of either sex, gray squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria and migratory birds in season.

Regulations Unique to Archery Season - Hunting with guns or crossbows (except by disabled crossbow permit) is prohibited except as allowed during other open seasons.

Small Game Season:

November 9 through March 1.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, released quail permit (if releasing northern bobwhite), migratory bird permit (if hunting migratory birds), and state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal to Hunt - Wild hog, gray squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria and migratory birds in season. Bobcat and otter December 1 through March 1.

Regulations Unique to Small Game Season -

1. Hunting with centerfire rifles is prohibited, except during general gun season.
2. Hunting wild hog with dogs is allowed in the Dog Hunt Area except during the archery, muzzleloading gun and archery/muzzleloading gun seasons.
3. Northern bobwhite may be released and taken by shotgun provided each individual or group participating possesses a daily released quail permit and proof (including the name and address of the vendor and date of purchase) that the northern bobwhite were purchased within the past 90 days from a game farm licensed by the Commission or another state. See <http://myfwc.com/hunting/by-species/quail/> for more information.
4. Northern bobwhite may only be released only in that portion of the area east of the Apalachicola River, east of the East River, north of Sam's Creek Cutoff, and west of East Bay.

General Gun Season:

November 28 through December 1 and December 14 through February 5.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, deer permit (if hunting deer), wild turkey permit (if hunting turkey), migratory bird permit (if hunting migratory birds), and state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal to Hunt - Deer with at least 1 antler having 2 or more points (each point 1-inch or more in length) and having at least 1 antler 5-inches or more in length, wild hog, bearded turkey or gobbler (through January 19 only), gray squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria and migratory birds in season. Bobcat and otter beginning December 1.

Trapping Season:

December 1 through March 1.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Trapping license.

Legal to Trap - Raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria, otter and bobcat.

Muzzleloading Gun Season:

December 7-9.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, muzzleloading gun permit, deer permit (if hunting deer), wild turkey permit (if hunting turkey), migratory bird permit (if hunting migratory birds), and state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal to Hunt - Deer with at least 1 antler having 2 or more points (each point 1-inch or more in length) and having at least 1 antler 5-inches or more in length, wild hog, turkey of either sex, gray squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria, bobcat, otter and migratory birds in season.

Regulations Unique to Muzzleloading Gun Season - Hunting with archery equipment or guns, other than muzzleloading guns, is prohibited except as allowed during other open seasons.

Archery/Muzzleloading Gun Season:

February **6-16**.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, archery permit (if hunting with archery equipment), muzzleloading gun permit (if hunting with a muzzleloading gun), deer permit (if hunting deer), migratory bird permit (if hunting migratory birds), and state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal to Hunt - Deer with at least 1 antler having 2 or more points (each point 1-inch or more in length) and having at least 1 antler 5-inches or more in length, wild hog, gray squirrel, quail, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, beaver, coyote, skunk, nutria, bobcat, otter and migratory birds in season.

Regulations Unique to Archery/Muzzleloading Gun Season - Hunting with crossbows (except by disabled crossbow permit) or guns (except muzzleloading guns) is prohibited except as allowed during other open seasons.

Spring Turkey Season:

March **21** through April **26**.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license and wild turkey permit.

Legal to Hunt - Bearded turkey or gobbler.

Regulations Unique to Spring Turkey Season -

1. **Legal shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise until sunset.**
2. The possession of dogs is prohibited.
3. Only bows, crossbows, PCP air guns propelling a bolt or arrow and shotguns using a #2 or smaller shot size may be used for hunting.

Migratory Bird Seasons:

Rails, common moorhen, snipe, ducks, geese, coot, mourning dove, white-winged dove, woodcock and crows may be hunted during statewide migratory bird seasons except on posted dove fields, where dove may be hunted on Saturdays only during the first phase of the mourning and white-winged dove season (see Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations pamphlet).

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license, migratory bird permit, and state waterfowl permit and federal duck stamp (if hunting waterfowl).

Legal to Hunt - See Florida Hunting Regulations handbook.

Regulations Unique to Migratory Bird Seasons - All Migratory Bird Regulations shall apply.

1. Hunting ducks, geese and coot with lead shot is prohibited.
2. Centerfire shotguns are allowed for hunting during established area seasons when migratory birds are legal to hunt.

3. The use of dogs, other than bird dogs or retrievers, on posted dove fields is prohibited during the first phase of dove season.
4. **Shooting hours for mourning and white-winged dove are noon until sunset during Phase 1 and ½ hour before sunrise until sunset during Phases 2 and 3.**

Fishing and Frogging:

Allowed year round.

Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Fishing license (if fishing).

Legal to Take - See Florida Freshwater Fishing Regulations Summary.

Regulations Unique to Fishing and Frogging - All General Freshwater Fishing Regulations shall apply. Shooting frogs is allowed only during the listed open hunting seasons and only with the legal methods of take during each particular season.

General Information:

1. Information for persons with disabilities can be found at MyFWC.com/ADA.
2. If you have any questions about this material, please call the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 850-265-3676 (TDD 800-955-8771).
3. The FWC is not responsible for protection of personal property and will not be liable for theft of or damage to personal property.
4. Please report the location of any sick or extremely skinny deer to the Chronic Wasting Disease hotline, toll free at 866-293-9282.

Cooperation Requested:

If you see law violators or suspicious activities, contact your nearest Commission regional office or call 888-404-FWCC. You may qualify for a cash reward from the Wildlife Alert Reward Association.

The U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: The Office for Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. The project described in this publication is part of a program funded by federal dollars under the Wildlife Restoration Act. Federal funds pay 20 percent of the cost of the program.

Apalachicola River

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

83,192 acres
Franklin and Gulf Counties

