

Arthur R. Marshall  
**Loxahatchee**  
*National Wildlife Refuge*

Visitor Services Plan Initiatives  
Rolf Olson/Project Leader  
SFWMD Recreational Public Forum  
March 15, 2021



# Refuge Hours Change

## Hours changed in July 2019

**Hillsboro Area** (Boca Raton, FL) open 24 hours.

**20 Mile Bend** (Loxahatchee, FL) open 24 hours.

## No Changes

**Headquarters Area** (Boynton Beach, FL) trails, boat ramps, and other outdoor facilities (including the A, B, and C Impoundments) is open daily from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm.

**Visitor Center** Open 9:00 am to 4:00 pm daily.

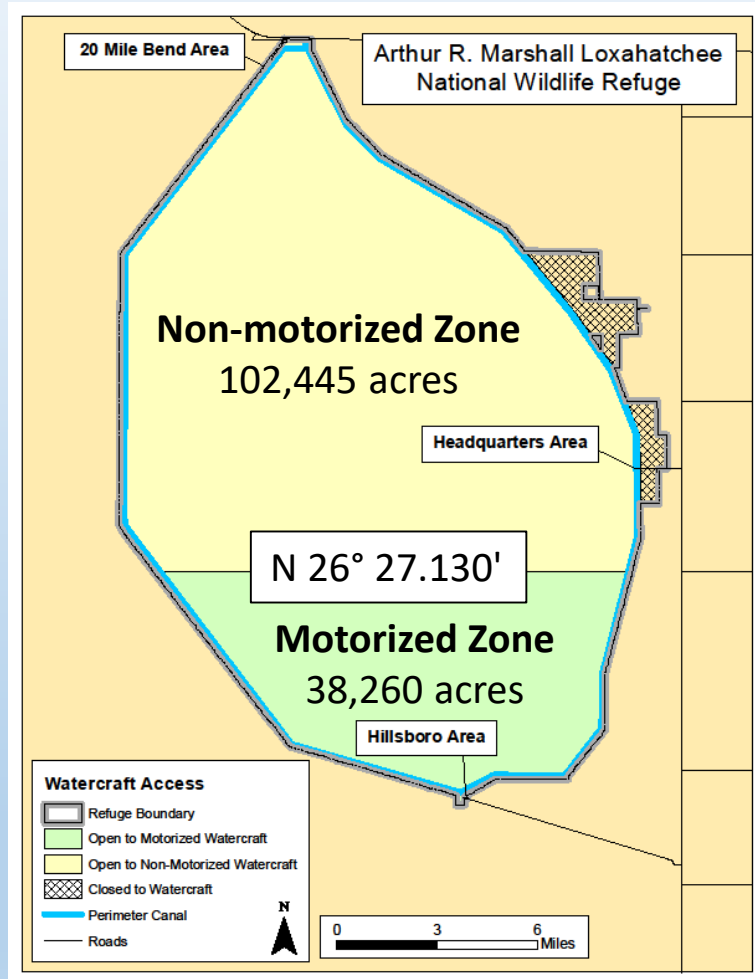
Closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas.

**Headquarters Office** Open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon - Fri

Closed on all Federal Holidays.



# Increasing Watercraft Access



**102,445 acres opened Sept. 2019**

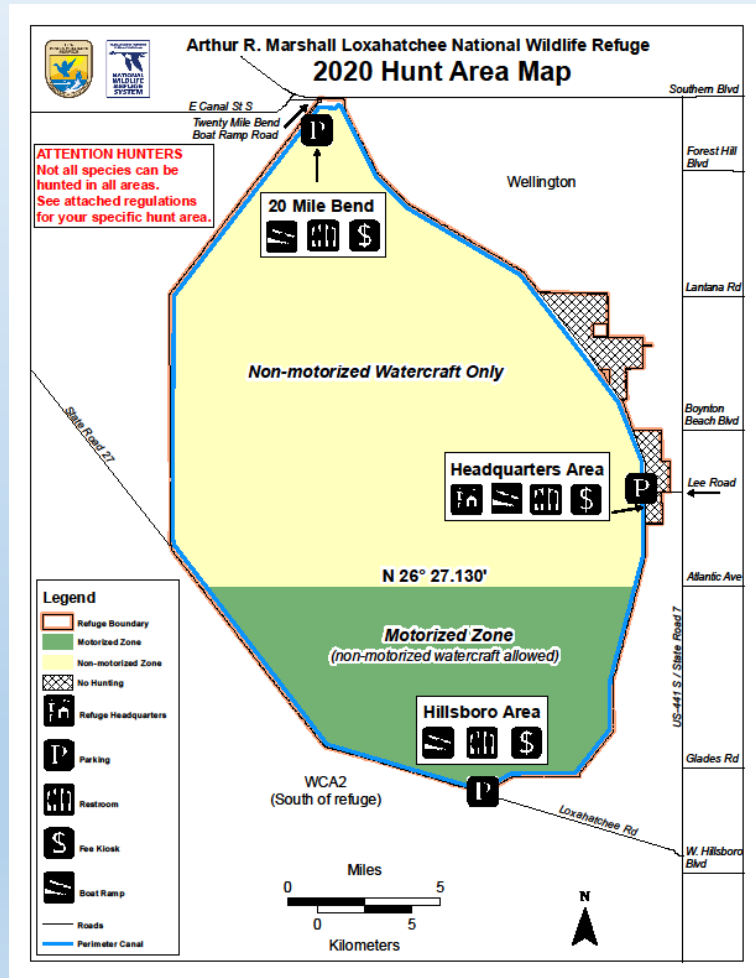
Non-motorized zone: Canoeing, kayaking, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, duck and coot hunting.

Watercraft is not allowed on tree islands, Strazzulla, and the A, B, C Impoundments.

All boats operating outside of the perimeter canals in Refuge Interior **must** fly a 10-inch by 12-inch (25-cm × 30-cm) orange flag 10 feet (3 m) above the vessel's waterline.



# Expanded Hunt Area for Duck and Coot Hunting



Implemented for 2020-2021 duck and coot season

Additional 102,445 acres open to non-motorized watercraft

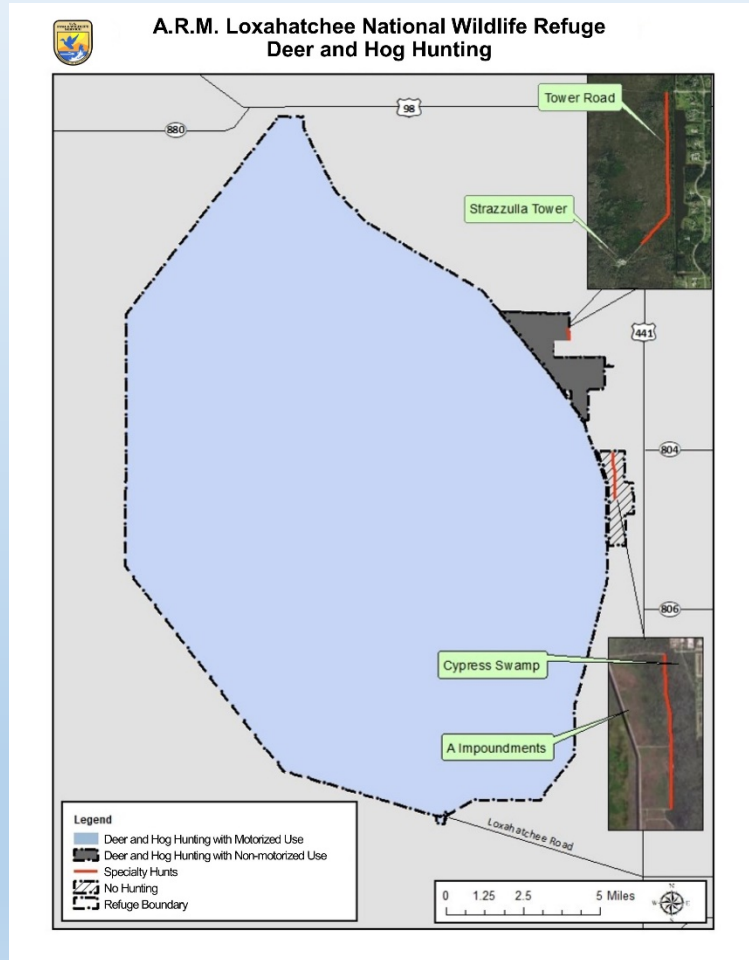
Open state hours and days

New hunt brochure format





# New Deer/Hog Hunting Opportunities



## **Strazzulla Archery Hunt** proposed Aug 6-8, 2021

- 8 permits available
- Parking locations TBD

## **Refuge Interior Hunt** proposed Dec 3-5, 2021

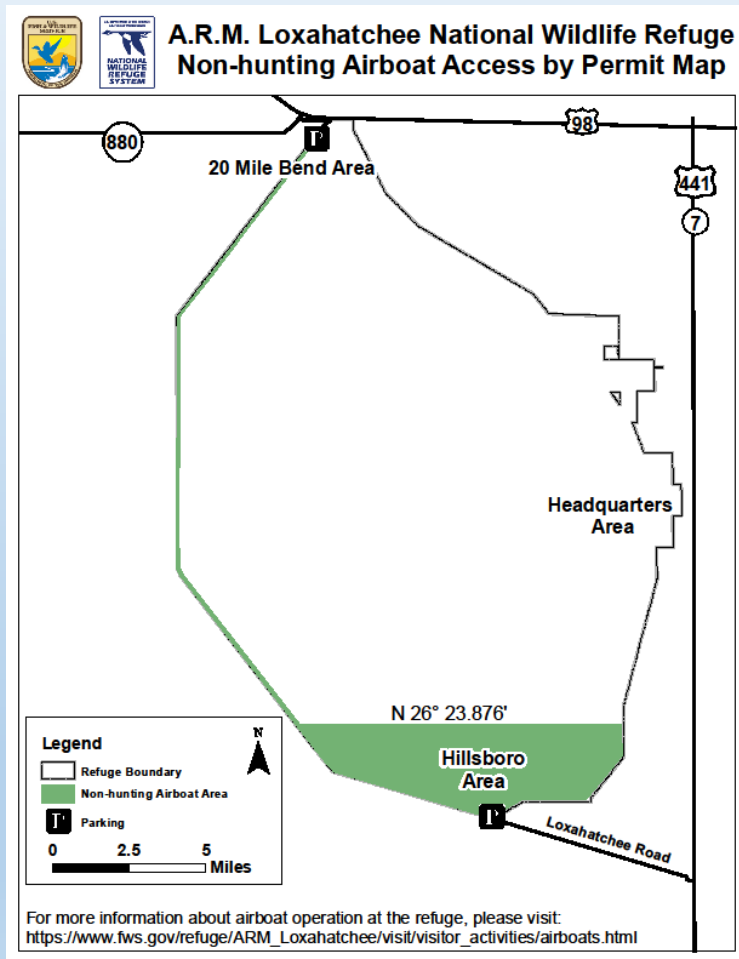
- 10 permits available
- Airboat permit available for \$100
- Can use non-motorized watercraft

## **Mentored Youth Hunt** proposed Dec 3-5, 2021

- Targeting urban youth 3 permits
- Working with FWC and HuntMasters to plan a quality hunt



# Non-hunting Airboats by Permit



Implemented July 3, 2020

July-November

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday

Restricted during duck and coot seasons

Online permit application process

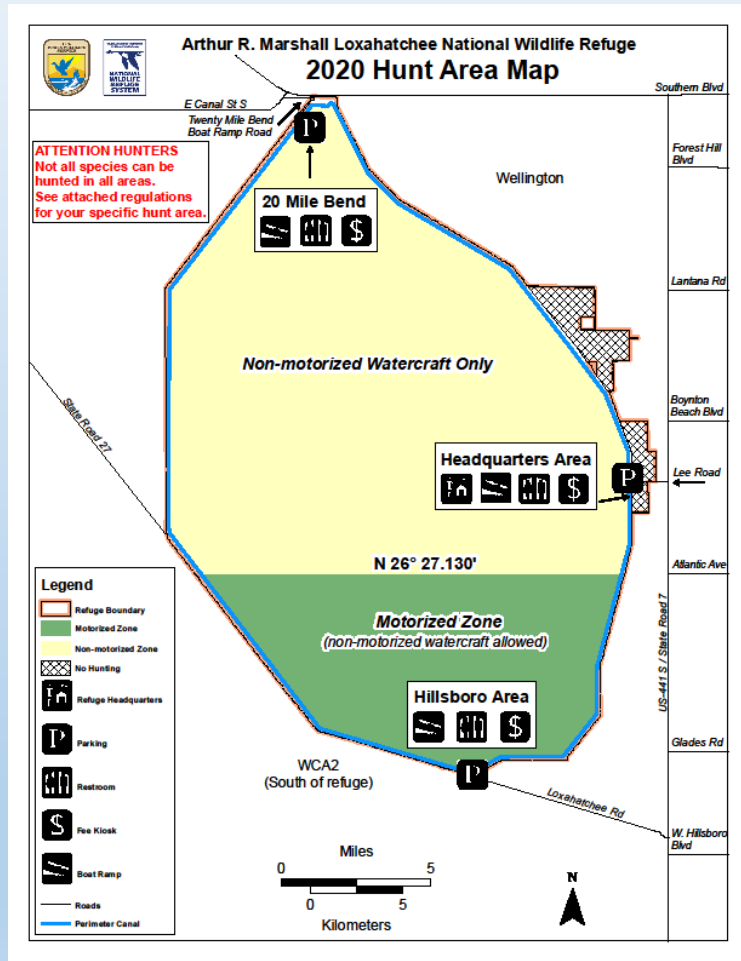
- 2020: 10 permits available, 18 applications received
- 2021 permit applications available in early May

Permitted Area (13,900 acres)

- South of latitude line N 26° 23.876'



# Airboat Permits for Hunting



## Alligator Hunt Airboat Permit

*2021 hunt dates: to be announced*

- 2020: 11 permits available, 1 application received
- 2021 permit applications available in early June

## Duck and Coot Hunt Airboat Permit

*2021 hunt dates: to be announced*

- 2020: 5 permits available, 7 applications received
- 2021 permit applications available in early October

## Deer Hunt Airboat Permit

*Hunt days proposed for Dec 3-5, 2021*



# 2020 Alligator Hunt

- 18 of the 22 tags were used.
- The average length of the harvested alligators is 8'3" which is identical to the statewide average for the 2020 alligator hunt.
- Two of the 11 permittees did not use their tags.



# New Fishing Opportunities

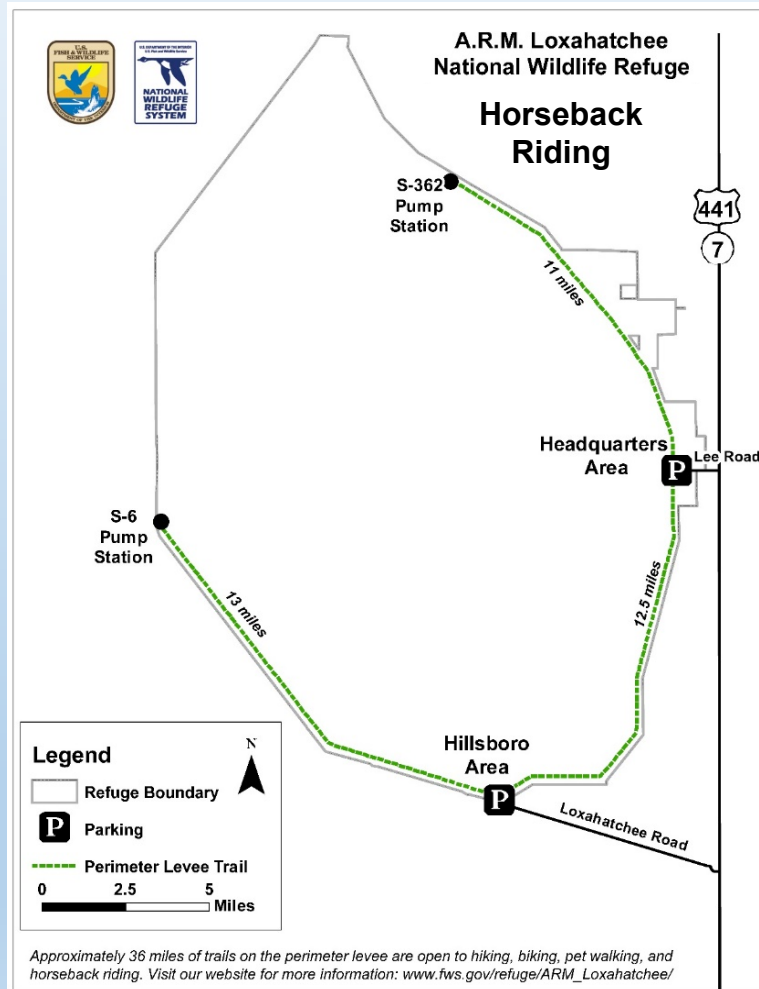
Additional 102,445 acres (non-motorized area) open to fishing in September 2019

**Implemented Aug 31, 2020**

- Bowfishing – year long.
- Fish gigging – year long.
- Frog gigging - July 16 to March 15.



# Horseback Riding



Implemented February 2020

Parking at boat ramps

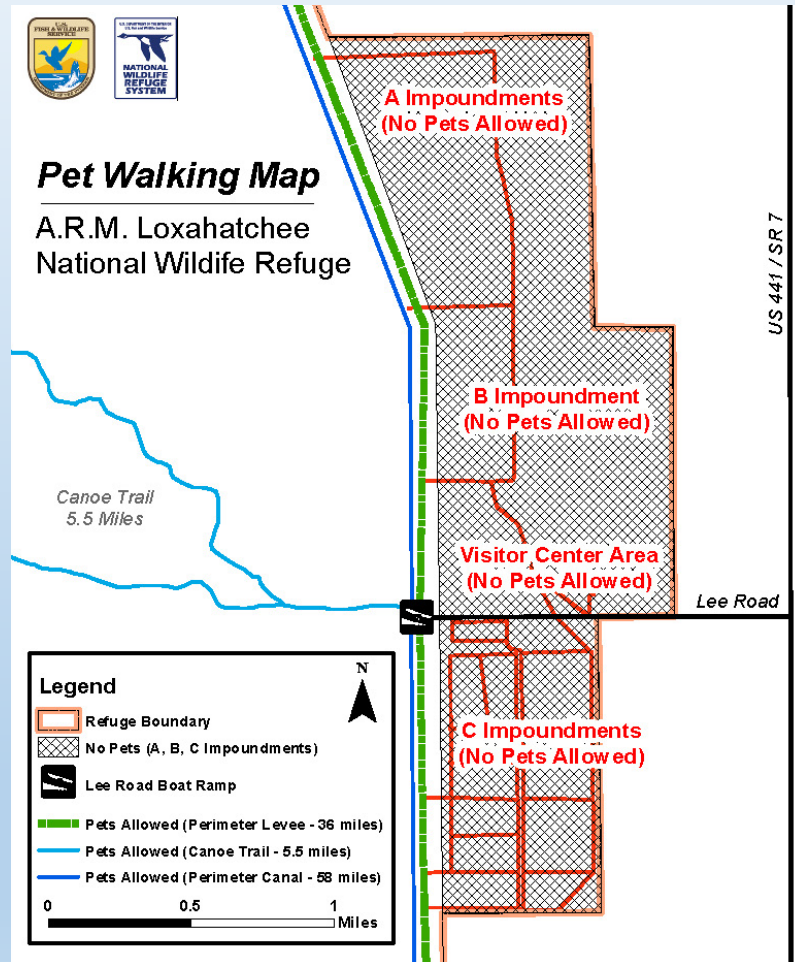
Access to 36 miles of perimeter levee. Strazzulla in plans for future

Gate modifications complete at Hillsboro Area

No horses in the A, B, C Impoundments



# Pet Walking



Implemented Sept. 2019

Must be on a leash (max. of six feet).

Designated areas: vehicles and watercraft, all boat ramp parking lots, and the perimeter levee.

“No pets” signs are posted where pets are not allowed. (HQ, A, B, C Impoundments)

Maximum of two pets per visitor.

Pet owners must immediately bag and properly dispose of pet waste.



# Entrance Passes Now Available Online

The refuge has partnered with Recreation.gov, and now visitors can purchase a daily or annual entrance pass online prior to visiting!

**Daily Pass \$10**

**Annual Pass \$25**



Learn more: <https://www.recreation.gov/sitepass/1278>



# New Infrastructure

- Marjory Stoneman Douglas Preserve (Village of Wellington): Bike and pedestrian entrance to the Refuge and the L-40 Levee.
- Acme 2, Strazzulla: Parking area, Fishing Pier, Canoe Launch.
- Osprey Pond Road, Strazzulla: Parking area and trail system.
- Lee Road Boat Ramps: Observation Tower.
- Loxahatchee Road Boat Ramps: Fishing Pier.
  
- In design and permitting.
- Dependent on funding.



# Upcoming

New Entrances at Wellington and Strazzulla

Deer Hunts in 2021

Concessionaire operations at Hillsboro Entrance

- Selection of Concessionaire underway.

Camping

- Depends on construction on west side of refuge
- SFWMD building a camping area on the L-7
- When funded

Infrastructure

- Design underway.



# Questions?

**Stay up-to-date with refuge happenings:**

*[FWS.gov/refuge/arm\\_loxahatchee/](https://fws.gov/refuge/arm_loxahatchee/)*

*[Facebook.com/ARMLoxahatcheeNWR/](https://facebook.com/ARMLoxahatcheeNWR/)*

