

Aransas

National Wildlife Refuge Rifle Hunting Regulations 2023



Welcome

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 as “a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife...” and “...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds...” Today, the refuge manages 115,324 acres of coastal marsh and upland habitat for resident and migratory wildlife, including the federally endangered Whooping Crane.

Aransas Rifle Season

The 2023 rifle season includes three separate 5-day hunts (Saturday through Wednesday):

- Rifle 1: November 4-8
- Rifle 2: November 25-29
- Rifle 3: December 9-13

The Hunt Area opens at 5:00 a.m. and closes at 8:00 p.m., road and other conditions permitting.

Rifle Hunt Area

A designated portion of the Refuge is open to rifle hunting (19,668 acres). No portion of the Hunt Area can be reserved. The entire Hunt Area is open to first come, first served. Only permitted hunters are allowed in the Hunt Area.

Scouting Access

Permitted hunters may scout and place blinds or stands in the Hunt area from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the following dates:

- Rifle 1: November 3
- Rifle 2: November 24
- Rifle 3: December 8

Each permitted hunter may bring one observer/helper during scouting only.

Safety

Keep in mind that the refuge is wild, and you may encounter venomous snakes, alligators, and biting insects. Please use caution.

Youth Hunters/Observers

In order to foster the sport of hunting, youth hunters (16 and under) may hunt for FREE. However, youth hunters MUST apply for and possess an Aransas permit, Texas hunting license, and Hunter Education certificate or one-time deferral, and must abide by all Refuge regulations. Youth are the responsibility of the adult hunter or observer with them and must remain within normal voice control of an adult at all times. Each adult may supervise one youth hunter.

Hunting Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting is permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Hunting will be in accordance with applicable State of Texas regulations subject to the conditions stated below. Licensed hunters are responsible for knowing and following state hunting laws. Texas state hunting laws are not listed in this brochure. For complete information, hunters are encouraged to read the 2023-24 Outdoor Annual Hunting Regulations or contact Texas Parks & Wildlife at 800-792-1112 or www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Access

The Hunt Area opens at 5:00 a.m. and closes at 8:00 p.m., road and other conditions permitting. Only permitted hunters are admitted into the Hunt Area. Hunters are accountable for their own entry and exit from the Hunt area.

Permits

Hunters must have a valid Aransas Rifle Season Permit to hunt on the Refuge. The hunt permit must be in the hunter’s possession. Hunters must also obtain a daily Self-Clearing Check-In Permit at the Hunt Check Station, and leave it on their vehicle’s dashboard. Hunters must fill out and drop the top portion of the permit in the IN box as they enter the

Aransas NWR Rifle Hunting 2023

I have read and understand all Rifle Hunt 2023 regulations.

Signature (authorizations are not transferable)

Permits (Continued)

hunt area, and fill out and drop the bottom portion in the OUT box as they leave the hunt area at the completion of each day.

Closed Areas

Closed areas are delineated with "AREA CLOSED" signs. Any portion of the Hunt Area may be closed due to unusual conditions without prior notification. It is the hunter's responsibility to know their location. Hunting is not allowed within 100 yards of any road. Hunters may not shoot across roads. See attached map, which can be downloaded in the "Avenza" mobile app for precise GPS locations.

Weapons

No weapons are allowed during scouting. All weapons used for hunting must be unloaded, cased and remain in the vehicle while on the Refuge during transport to and from hunt areas. Hunters may only use center-fire rifles, shotguns with slugs, or muzzleloaders (.40 caliber or larger) in accordance with state law. We prohibit hunters using handguns during the rifle hunts. Target shooting or the discharge of a weapon except to hunt is not permitted.

Vehicles

Only street legal cars and trucks are allowed in the Hunt Area. Vehicles must remain on designated roads. Parking is allowed along roadsides only in such a manner that will not interfere with normal traffic flow. The speed limit is 35 mph unless otherwise posted. All Texas driving laws apply to Refuge roads. Blocking of any roadway or gate is strictly prohibited.

Flagging

Only color-coded biodegradable flagging is authorized for marking trails and hunt stands. Flagging will be checked upon entrance to hunt area. The use of any other non-biodegradable flagging or failure to remove flagging at the end of the hunt is considered littering and is subject to a fine.

- Rifle 1: Orange flagging
- Rifle 2: Red flagging
- Rifle 3: Yellow flagging

Legal Species & Bag Limit

Only hunting of white-tailed deer and feral hogs is allowed during the Aransas Rifle Season. As part of a hunter's annual statewide bag limit, hunters may take two (2) white-tailed deer (either sex). No bonus tags are allowed. Hunters must legally tag harvested deer immediately upon kill and log the harvest at the Refuge Hunt Check Station. No limit on feral (wild) hogs.

Hunting Stands

Portable stands and blinds are allowed on the Refuge during the Rifle Hunt. There is a limit of two portable stands per permitted hunter. Hunters may set up equipment during scouting, but it must be removed by the end of their hunt. Stands or blinds must be a minimum of 100 yards away from any road. Hunters may not:

- Drive any objects (nails, wire, screws, bolts) into any trees or other objects.
- Cut any part of a tree.
- Hunt from existing structures.

Field Dress

Hunters may field dress and quarter harvested game in the Hunt Area. Meat cooler may not be available for dressed game at the Refuge Hunt Check Station; please be prepared. Hunters are responsible for carcass disposal and cleanup of processing area.

Oil and Gas Facilities

For your safety, all oil and gas facilities (pads, pumps, buildings, etc.) are off limits. Please stay 100 yards away from any designated oil and gas facilities.

Bait

Use or possession of bait, salt or any ingestible attractant is strictly prohibited on the Refuge. Use of scents is permitted.

Alcohol

Hunters are not allowed to use/possess alcohol on the Refuge or be under the influence of alcohol.

Fishing Access

Fishing is not allowed in the Hunt Area. Fishing access to San Antonio Bay is permitted at multiple access points on the refuge tour loop only from April 15- October 14. Year-round pier and wade fishing access are open at the Fishing Pier Area only. Check with the Visitor Center for more information.

While on the Refuge, hunters are subject to inspection by state and federal officers at any time.

1 Wildlife Circle
Austwell, TX 77950
361-349-1181
AransasHunts@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/aransas>

The refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a national network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.
<http://www.fws.gov/>

1-800-344-WILD

June 2023



Prohibited Activities

- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages.
- Drone use.
- UTV/ATV use.
- Camping and Fires.
- Searching for or removal of any natural items such as antlers, bison skulls, plants, historic, and archaeological artifacts.
- Fishing in the Hunt Area.
- Bringing dogs into the hunt area.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.
- Hunting within 100 yards of any road.
- Approaching and/or hunting within 100 yards of oil/gas infrastructure.
- Use or possession of bait, salt or any ingestible attractant (scents are allowed).

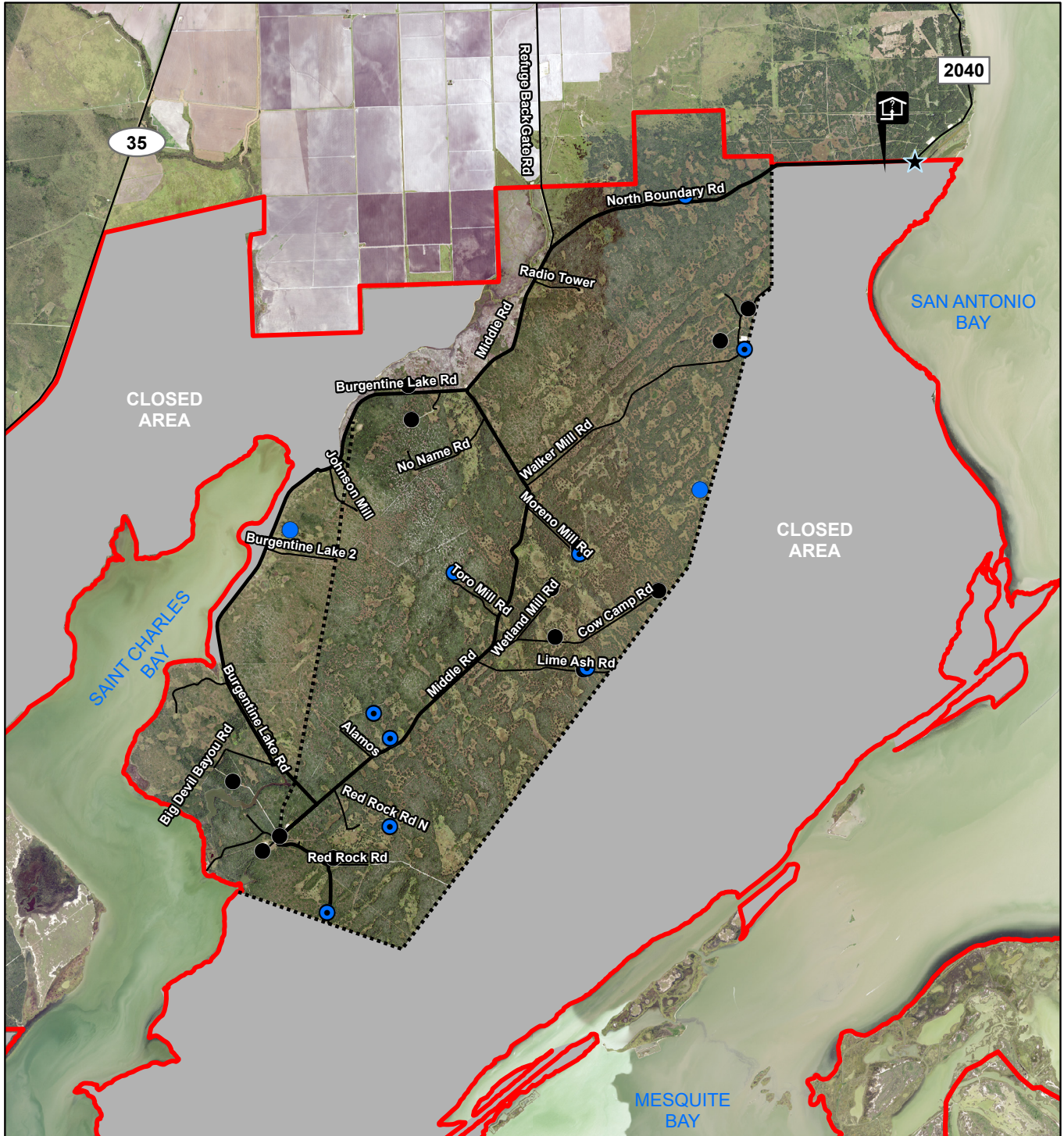




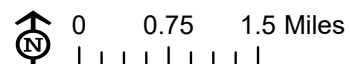
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Rifle Hunt Map V2021



- Refuge Boundary
- Primary Road
- Well Pond
- Rifle Closed Area
- Secondary Road
- Oil Pad
- ★ Hunter Entrance
- Primary Fire Break
- H Check Station
- Pond



Map features are approximate.
 Refuge signs take priority and
 should be followed at all times.



We recommend that you download the Avenza Maps app on your phone (Android or iOS). You can then upload the hunt map via the above QR code and track your location on your phone, drop pins, take and pin photos, etc.