



## REGULATIONS

Travel on the refuge is restricted to areas designated by the officer in charge. All visitors should register with the concessionaire before leaving the boat dock to enter refuge waters.

Visitors must be accompanied by a licensed guide when going into the more remote parts of the swamp.

Visitors are allowed to be on the refuge only during posted hours, except where specified overnight accommodations are available.

Fires are prohibited on the refuge except in specially designated places.

Firearms are not allowed on the refuge.

Outboard motors larger than 10 horsepower are prohibited. Each occupant of a boat is required to have a Coast Guard approved life preserver with him.

Fishing is permitted in accordance with Georgia State fishing laws, except that no live fish may be used as bait.

Swimming is not permitted in refuge waters.

Pets must be kept in cars or on a leash not exceeding 6 feet in length. They are not permitted in boats or public use buildings.

Molestation or destruction of plants and animals on the refuge is prohibited.

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# Okefenokee

## National Wildlife Refuge



As you travel through this country, you may see the sign of the flying goose—emblem of the National Wildlife Refuges. Wherever you meet this sign, respect it, for it means that those lands and waters have been dedicated to preserving as much of our native wildlife as can be retained along with our modern civilization.

**OKEFENOKEE SWAMP**, in southeastern Georgia near the Florida boundry, is one of the oldest and most primitive swamps in America. It extends about 38 miles from north to south and about 25 miles across at its widest part and contains some 412,000 acres. Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1937, occupies over nine-tenths of this fascinating region of water, woods, and wildlife.

Okefenokee is actually a vast peat bog, unique in geologic origin and history, with many unusual forms of animal and plant life. Once a part of the ocean, it is now more than a hundred feet above sea level.

The variety of life, as seen by a visitor to Okefenokee, changes throughout the day. Except during the quietness of noonday, the squealing cries of wood ducks and the discordant squawks of herons and egrets are heard repeatedly as you move along the glassy waterways. High overhead a turkey vulture may be soaring, while a flock of white ibis glides at tree top level. The persistent song of the Carolina wren and hammering of woodpeckers on shells of dead trees are most evident while you listen for rolling guttural notes of the Florida sandhill crane. In the spring the bellowing of the old bull alligators furnishes a background for amazing frog choruses.

In the tangled forest of cypress, bay, and gum—with hanging streamers of Spanish moss—are raccoons, bobcats, opossums, and otter. There are also abundant signs of bear and white-tailed deer.

The waters of Okefenokee move slowly, and as they make their lazy-way through the cypress forests, they become



stained the color of tea from the tannic acid of swamp vegetation. The principal outlet of the swamp is the Suwannee River, which starts deep in the heart of Okefenokee and flows southwest into the Gulf of Mexico. The St. Marys River empties some of the swamp water into the Atlantic Ocean.

Okefenokee's natural beauty was threatened in 1889 when attempts were made to drain the swamp to facilitate timber removal. Millions of board feet of cypress, pine, red bay, and gum were removed. Not until the best timber had been cut were the region's other values given much consideration.

Okefenokee as a wildlife refuge is an attempt to preserve an area of primitive America; to protect fragile strands of the web of life against encroachment by the sprawl of economic progress; to hold a unique region in trust for the people who need peace, beauty, and quietness sometime during their lifetime.

In its management of the swamp, the Fish and Wildlife Service plans no development that might mar inherent attractions. Nature itself is the landscaper. Already stands of young cypress have hidden the stumps left by early loggers and eventually will rear a new generation of bearded giants to replace the old.

There are three public entrances. At each entrance guided boat tours, walking trails, swamp exhibits, and picnic facilities are available. Information on tour rates and other details may be obtained from the concessionaires.

Besides guided tours; boat rentals and launching, and fishing facilities are available at Stephen Foster State Park and the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area.

Privately owned or rented outboard motors of 10 horsepower or less may be used on either private or rented boats. Travel in the swamp is permitted during posted hours.

Fishing may be done throughout the year with a Georgia State fishing license and in accordance with Georgia fishing regulations. No live fish may be used as bait. Large-mouth bass, bluegill, warmouth, catfish, and pickerel are the fish most commonly taken.

Hunting and firearms are not allowed on the refuge. Dogs are permitted only at public entrances and must be kept on a leash. Collection or molesting wildlife or plants is prohibited.

**STEPHEN C. FOSTER STATE PARK**—This area on Jones Island, managed by the Georgia Park and Historic Sites Division under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the west entrance to the swamp. It is from here that Billy's Lake, Minnie's Lake, and Big Water

are most easily accessible. A trip through the winding watercourses connecting these lakes is a never-to-be forgotten experience.

The visitor may stop at Billy's Island, named for Chief Billy Bowlegs, a distinguished leader in the Seminole Wars. He may try his luck as a photographer, or relax and enjoy the solitude and beauty of the swamp.

This is the only entrance where overnight facilities are available. There are camp sites for tents, trailers, or campers as well as cottages for rent.

The Park may be reached by leaving U.S. Highway 441 about half a mile southeast of Fargo, Georgia, and following state road 177 northeast for about 18 miles. For information on rates and reservations, write Stephen C. Foster State Park, Fargo, Georgia 31631. (Telephone 496-7509 AC 912)

**SUWANNEE CANAL RECREATION AREA**—This, the east entrance, is operated cooperatively by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a concessionaire. Here the visitor may follow the Suwannee Canal for 11 miles into the heart of the swamp. From the canal he may enter Chesser, Grand, and Mizell Prairies, the swamp's most extensive open areas. The little lakes and 'gator holes that dot the prairies offer some of the Nation's finest fresh water sport fishing. The prairies are also favorite areas for bird watching and are the home of the rare Florida sandhill crane.

Wildlife-oriented facilities include a wildlife drive, a rubber-tired interpretive train, walking trails, a 4,000-foot boardwalk over the swamp, observation towers from which wildlife may be observed in the scenic wilderness of the Okefenokee, a night tour boat, and a restored homestead.



Many swamp stories are told on the boat tours and along the walks, trails, and drives.

This entrance may be reached by traveling State Highway 23 about 7 miles southwest of Folkston, Georgia, and proceeding west about 4 miles. For further information visit the Swamp's Edge Information Center located at the Recreation Area or write the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P. O. Box 117, Waycross, Georgia 31501 (Telephone 283-2580 AC 912). For information dealing with guided tours, boat and canoe rentals, or fishing, contact the Concessionaire, Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, Folkston, Georgia 31537 (Telephone 496-7156 AC 912).

**OKEFENOKEE SWAMP PARK**—This park, the north entrance to the swamp, is managed by the Okefenokee Swamp Park Association, Inc., a nonprofit private organization. The park is distinct from the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, and most of it is located outside the refuge boundary. Here the visitor can take guided tours by boat along winding watercourses through part of the swamp's most beautiful cypress forest.

There is much to see during a stroll through the park grounds. The boardwalk, museum, animal habitats, serpentarium, botanical gardens, and the observation tower, which is high in the cypress trees, put a lot of Okefenokee in a compact package for all to see.

Canoeing may also be enjoyed in Okefenokee. Six wilderness trails permit one- to six-day trips through the swamp. More canoeing information may be obtained by contacting the refuge manager.

The park is open at variable hours throughout the year and is located about 8 miles south of Waycross, Georgia, and 5 miles off U. S. Highway 1 and 23. For further information write, wire, or call Okefenokee Swamp Park, Waycross, Georgia 31501, telephone 283-0583 AC 912.



**Department of the Interior**  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service