

Boating - Boat ramps available at the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, Stephen C. Foster State Park, Kingfisher Landing, and the Suwannee River Sill. Canoe/kayak and motorboats authorized on designated trails only. Outboards are limited to 10 HP or less. Check trail conditions before going on water trails. Sign in/sign out is required at all boat launches, except the Suwannee River Sill.

Camping - Allowed on the refuge with a permit at designated overnight canoe campsites and at designated areas in Stephen C. Foster State Park.

Campfires - Permitted at designated areas in Stephen C. Foster State Park and at campsites on Floyds Island, Cravens Hammock, Mixons Hammock, and Canal Run. Campfires may be prohibited during dry periods. Firewood must be purchased onsite.

Pets - Pets are not permitted on boardwalks, inside buildings, or in boats. Pets must be restrained on a ten-foot or shorter leash. Always clean up after your pet.

Prohibited - Swimming and Paddleboarding - Prohibited in refuge waters for public safety, due to the presence of alligators.

Disturbing or collecting plants and/or animals or cultural artifacts. Leave areas as you found them for others to enjoy.

Feeding or harassing wildlife - Stay at least 20 feet (6 meters) from alligators. Never feed or harass wild animals. Feeding animals causes them to lose their fear of humans and may make them aggressive.

Alcohol - All state, federal, and county laws regarding alcohol consumption are strictly enforced.

Recreational drone (UAS) use is prohibited.

Entrances - Suwannee Canal Recreation Area (Main Entrance) The main entrance, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is located 11 miles southwest of Folkston, Georgia off Highway 121/23. Richard S. Bolt



Visitor Center, Swamp Island Drive, Chesser Island Homestead, boat ramp, boat tours and rentals are available. Entrance fee required; daily pass (good for 7 days) and annual passes available. These passes also good at Stephen C. Foster State Park entrance.

Hours - March 1 – October 31
½ hour before sunrise to 7:30 pm

November 1 – February 28
½ hour before sunrise to 5:30 pm

All day-use boats must be off the water 90 minutes before refuge closes.

Swamp Island Drive – closes 30 minutes before refuge closes. Gate closes 90 minutes before refuge closes.

Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center – Hours vary seasonally. Call 912/496 7836 for information.

Secondary Entrance: Kingfisher Landing - located off US 1, this remote entrance has a boat launch with access to the Green and Red Trails. Overnight parking with Wilderness Camping Permit ONLY.

Stephen C. Foster State Park (West Entrance) - Located 17 miles east of Fargo, on GA 177, Stephen C. Foster State Park offers boardwalks, boating trails, fishing, guided boat tours, motorboat and canoe rentals, camping and more. Entrance fee required. Refuge daily, America the Beautiful, or GA Park Pass honored.

Call 912/637 5274 for information, or 1-800/864 7275 for reservations or www.gastateparks.org.

Secondary Entrance: Suwannee River Sill - located off Hwy. 177 before entering Stephen C. Foster State Park. A driving road, boat ramp, and fishing opportunities located here. Access to the Suwannee River. Day-use only.

Okefenokee Swamp Park (North Entrance) - This private, non-profit facility is located eight miles south of Waycross, GA off US 1. Guided boat tours, Okefenokee railroad, live animals exhibits and programs available. Admission fee required. Call 912/283 0583 or www.okeswamp.com

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge



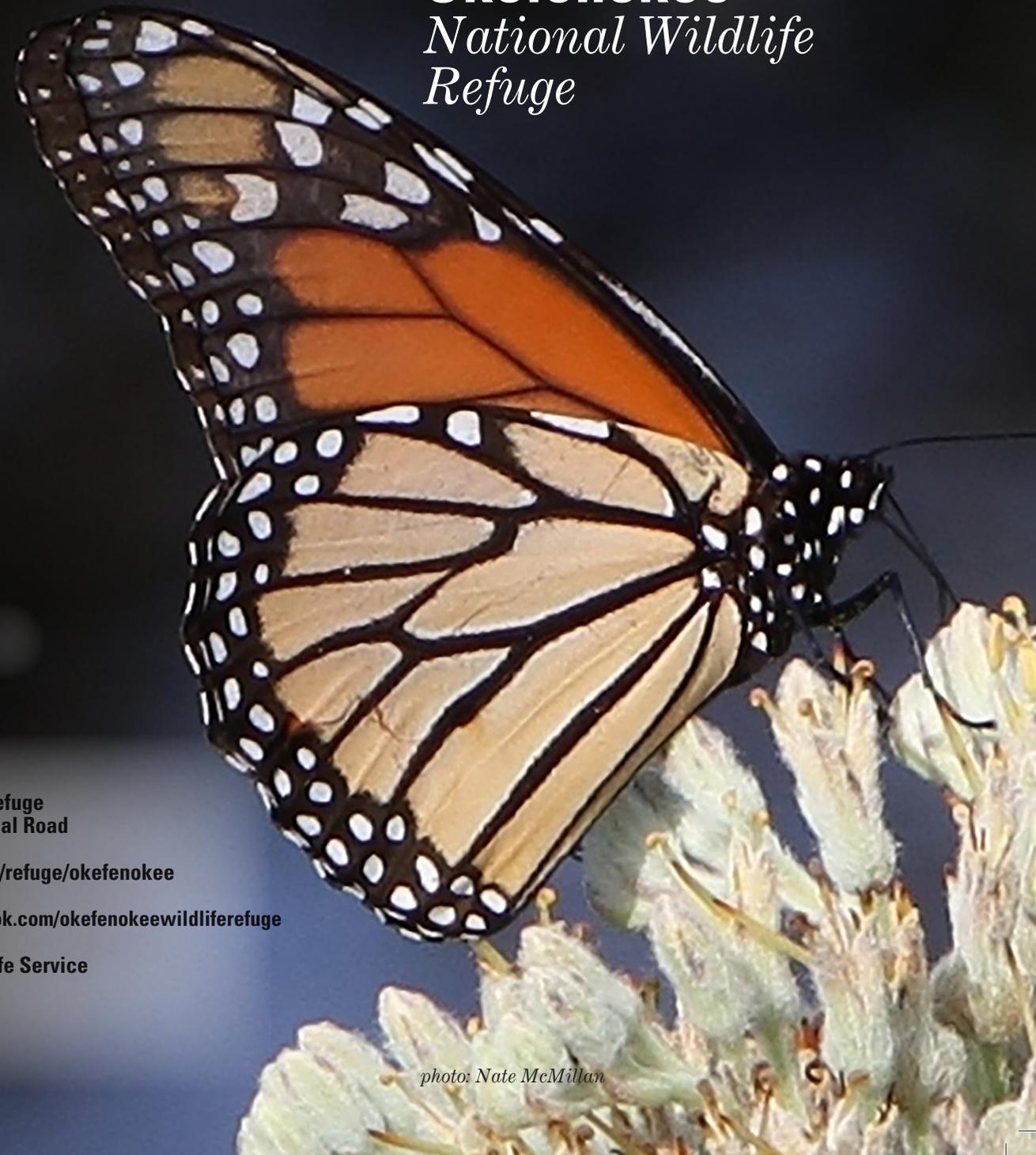
Okefenokee
National Wildlife Refuge
2700 Suwannee Canal Road
Folkston, GA 31537
<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee>

<https://www.facebook.com/okefenokeewildliferefuge>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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photo: Nate McMillan



Overview - Covering 630 square miles in southeast Georgia, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge encompasses nearly all of the world renowned Okefenokee Swamp. Alligators bask in the sun while flocks of white ibis, wood storks, and sandhill cranes forage in the shallow tea-colored water. The “Land of the Trembling Earth,” as the Native Americans called it, is an ever-changing landscape. From the open, wet prairies of the east side to the forested cypress swamps on the west, Okefenokee is a mosaic of habitats, plants, and wildlife. The pine islands and uplands surrounding the swamp are home to such species as the gopher tortoise, endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, and indigo snake.

The Okefenokee has the distinction of birthing two rivers – the St. Marys River flows east to the Atlantic Ocean forming the Georgia-Florida border, and the Suwannee River flows south through Florida into the Gulf of Mexico. The swamp’s thick peat layer is covered by slow moving, mirror-like black water. Floating peat “batteries” allow for grasses and flowers to grow, and if left long enough eventually form tree islands, known as “houses.”

Whether you have only a few hours or have several days to visit the refuge’s three entrances, you will find mystery and beauty that is only found in the Okefenokee.

National Wilderness Area - The Okefenokee Swamp is a mystical and primeval place. Its wildness is preserved by the National Wilderness Act. Nearly 354,000 acres of the refuge are designated as a National Wilderness Area. It provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and undisturbed recreation. Okefenokee is one of the rare and wild places where one can retreat from civilization and reconnect with the Earth.



Wildlife and Habitat - Okefenokee is a vast bog inside a huge saucer-shaped depression that was once part of the ocean floor. The swamp, which extends 38 miles north to south and 25 miles east to west, remains one of the most well preserved and intact freshwater ecosystems in the world. The refuge carries the designation of a Wetland of International Importance, and refuge staff work to preserve the natural qualities of the swamp.

Fire has shaped the Okefenokee for generations. Today, the refuge uses prescribed burning to reduce hazardous fuels and maintain the longleaf pine ecosystem. The longleaf pine is a slow growing tree that once covered more than 90



Photos, left to right, top to bottom: canoeing in the Okefenokee, Art Webster/USFWS; twin rainbows over Chesser Island Boardwalk, Cindy McIntyre/USFWS; prescribed fires help manage refuge habitats, USFWS; Red-cockaded woodpecker, USFWS; Chesser Island Homestead, USFWS; American alligator, Art Webster/USFWS

million acres in the southeastern United States. Only three percent of these pine forests remain and they are some of the most diverse and ecologically important habitats for several endangered species. You can observe longleaf pine communities and on-going longleaf pine restoration projects along the Swamp Island Drive and along Highway 177 to Stephen C. Foster State Park.

Visitor Opportunities

Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center (Main Entrance) - The Visitor Center is a great place to begin your visit. Learn about the Okefenokee culture by exploring the Visitor Center exhibits and watching the film in the auditorium. Maps and information are available for the hiking trails, Swamp Island Drive, and upcoming events. The Friends group for the refuge, the Okefenokee Wildlife League, operates a bookstore, where all proceeds go to refuge maintenance and visitor services programs. Hours vary seasonally.

Discover Nature App - The refuge has two mobile apps for visitors!! The Discover Nature App features a trivia game along the refuge’s Swamp Island Drive, photos, wildlife sightings and more!



Discover Nature Wilderness app features information about the refuge’s 120-mile water trail system. While pinpointing your exact location (even without cell phone service) this app is a great navigational tool for your next Okefenokee Adventure!

To download the apps - Download Discover Nature and/or Discover Nature Wilderness from the App Store or Google Play. Download Discover Oke within the app. Get the apps before your next trip to the Okefenokee so you can SEE MORE on your next visit!

Chesser Island Homestead/Boardwalk (Main Entrance) Named for the family who first settled it, Chesser Island is a 592-acre island in the swamp. The Chesser Island Homestead located there shows how the early settlers lived. Take a walk on the Chesser Island Boardwalk to the Owls Roost Tower for an expansive view of the Okefenokee Swamp.

Okefenokee Adventures (Main Entrance) - Provides guided boat tours, boat rentals, food, and gifts for purchase. You can also rent camping and fishing supplies for a trip into the swamp. Call 912/496 7156 for more information.

Billys Island (West Entrance) - Accessed through the Stephen C. Foster State Park, this historic island in the Okefenokee has been inhabited for generations. Most recently, the Hebard Cypress Company had a lumber camp on the island in 1918, eventually supporting approximately 600 people. This island is the second largest in the swamp and is only accessible by boat. A short hiking trail takes visitors through the site of the former community.

Wilderness Camping Permits - Permits are available for two to five day trips through the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. You may make reservations no more than two months in advance. Permits are available year-round and can include up to 20 people per permit. Canoes/kayaks only on overnight trips (no motorized boats).

For more information and to make a reservation, call 912/496 3331 between 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., Monday - Friday, excluding federal holidays. Please make a profile in Recreation.gov before calling to make a reservation. Information and availability of the Wilderness Camping Permits are available on Recreation.gov, but permits can only be made by calling the reservation line.

Regulations

Permitted - Wildlife Watching, Photography, Bicycling, and Hiking - Enjoy these activities in areas open to public use and along designated trails only.

Fishing - Permitted year-round in designated areas in accordance with Georgia state fishing laws. Trot lines and the use of live fish as bait are prohibited.

Hunting - Refuge-specific regulations and seasons apply.