



Choctaw NWR Special Opportunity Area Hunt Guidelines/Rules

The 2021-2022 hunting season is the genesis of a new landmark hunting opportunity through the partnership between the Alabama Department of Conservation (ADCNR) and Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). ADCNR and USFWS have come together to begin allowing more recreational hunting opportunities on USFWS owned National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) through ADCNR's SOA hunting program.

Successful applicants may be accompanied by hunting guest(s) as outlined below. Permit holders and their appropriate guest(s) must remain within their assigned hunt unit during hunting. Each hunting unit is clearly defined on the Special Opportunity Area (SOA) map and delineated with signage on the ground.

Following hunt registration and permit selection, permit holders will receive an email within a couple weeks covering specific SOA information, scouting information and unit assignments.

Note:

- A State Hunting License and Wildlife Management Area (WMA) License are required by all limited quota permit holders and guests unless exempt from needing such license.
- Statewide antlered buck season bag limit applies to all SOAs and all deer harvested are to be recorded at the check station or kiosk and reported through Game Check.
- Administrators of the hunt shall have the right to inspect all vehicles or other equipment while on the areas.
- Any violation of SOA rules and regulations (220-2-.55) or any other regulation or law while hunting on Choctaw NWR SOA will result in that individual losing their eligibility for future SOA hunts.
- Failure to unregister for an upcoming hunt outside of 7 days prior to your permitted hunt start date and failure to notify WFF personnel of cancellation within 7 days of the hunter's assigned hunt dates at Choctaw NWR SOA will result in that individual losing their eligibility for future SOA hunts.
- Hunters shall only hunt and/or scout in their assigned unit(s).

220-2-.55 Wildlife Management Areas, Community Hunting Areas, Public Hunting Areas, and Refuges of Alabama

(3) Special Opportunity Areas (SOA) – Hunting on Blackwater River, Cedar Creek, Choctaw NWR (Primitive Weapon Deer Hunt), Crow Creek, Fred T. Stimpson, Portland Landing, Prairie Glades, Uchee Creek, Upper State, Little River, and Thigpen Hill Special Opportunity Areas (SOA) will be permitted through a limited quota permit system determined by random computerized selection. In order to apply, ALL applicants are required to obtain a Conservation Identification Number (CID). Those residents who are 16 to 64 years of age and non-residents 16 years of age or older must have a valid WMA license to register for the SOA hunt selection process. Applicants must visit www.outdooralabama.com to register for a limited number of quota permits available for hunts on these AREAS.

Successful resident applicants 16 to 64 years of age and non-residents 16 years of age or older must obtain and have in possession a valid Alabama hunting license, WMA license, and state and federal duck stamps if applicable. **Any violation of any rules, regulations, or laws by permit holder or guest while hunting on any SOA will result in those individuals forfeiting the remainder of their hunt and forfeiting their SOA eligibility for the remainder of the current season and the entire following season.** Failure to participate in the solicited hunt without providing Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries 7 days prior notice of cancellation, by email to the hunt coordinator, will result in that individual losing their eligibility for future SOA hunts.

Permit holders and guests shall only hunt and scout in their assigned hunt unit(s) on specified dates. All other access on any SOA is restricted (excluding Choctaw NWR) to foot traffic and non-motorized vehicles only and only during daylight hours from May 15 to September 1; with the exception of Crow Creek, Fred T. Stimpson, Upper State, and Prairie Glades where all other access is restricted.

During the SOA hunts, permit holders and guests may use licensed and unlicensed vehicles (eg. UTV, ATV, or electric bike) on roads open to motorized vehicles to access their assigned hunt unit, unless specified otherwise.

All deer and turkey hunters are required to report all harvests pursuant to the Game Check requirements in regulation 220-2-.146. It shall be unlawful for any limited quota permitted hunter to hunt without checking in and out of the SOA daily using the Outdoor Alabama WMA Check-In Application or with a WMA Daily Permit from self-service kiosk. When using the WMA Daily Permit, the tear-off stub with number matching Daily Permit must be filled out and deposited in return slot of self-service box. The Harvest Report portion of the Permit is to be retained in possession of the hunter until the end of the day, then filled out and deposited in the self-service box before leaving the SOA each day. Hunters are required to email pictures of their harvest to the managing biologist within one week of hunt dates.

Other requirements for hunters participating in limited quota hunts on the SOAs include:

(b) On Choctaw NWR SOA:

1. Primitive Weapons Deer Hunt:

- a. It shall be unlawful to hunt on Choctaw NWR SOA during specific primitive weapons hunt dates unless selected for a limited quota permit on assigned hunt unit(s). The permit

holder and allowed guest may only hunt the assigned SOA and hunt unit(s) for those permitted times and days.

b. Each deer hunt begins at 12:00 noon on day one and ends at 12:00 noon on day four of the hunt. With the exception of the day one start time and day four end time, hunters may enter the SOA 1 ½ hours prior to legal sunrise and must exit the SOA by 1 ½ hours after legal sunset each day. Travel to and from assigned hunt unit(s) may also occur between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

c. Permit holder is allowed one properly licensed guest each day. The guest may be a different person each hunt day, but the guest bag is cumulative.

d. Deer hunters are required to record harvest date, sex, lactation status of doe, body weight, and antler measurements of bucks on provided data forms, as well as complete the provided hunter observation data sheet. Deer hunters are also required to extract a lower jawbone from each deer harvested and leave it at SOA/NWR kiosk.

220-2-.56 2025-2026 Special Opportunity Area Hunting Seasons

District V 2025-2026 Special Opportunity Hunting Area Seasons and Bag Limits (Southwest Alabama)

1. CHOCTAW NWR (Choctaw County)

DEER: (Primitive Weapons) Stalk Hunting Hunter's Choice: Nov. 18 - 21. Bag limit of one antlered buck and one antlerless deer each, for properly licensed permit holder and one properly licensed guest during 4-day hunt on specified hunt date and in specified hunt unit. Permit to be determined through limited quota random selection.