

J.D. MURPHREE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Jefferson County

The J.D. Murphree WMA contains approximately 24,500 acres of fresh, intermediate, and brackish water marsh within the coastal plain along the upper Texas coast near the Louisiana border. The WMA is divided into the BIG HILL UNIT, which is located north of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), and the SALT BAYOU UNIT, which is located south of the GIWW. All J.D. Murphree WMA teal hunts and waterfowl hunts will be administered at the WMA headquarters located on the south side of SH 73, 1/2 mile east of the Taylor Bayou Bridge, and 3 miles west of the SH 87 intersection in Port Arthur (2710 Hwy. 73 W). All hunters must report to the WMA hunter check station for orientation, assignment to a hunting compartment, and validation of their hunting permit. Waterfowl hunters may check in for the Salt Bayou Unit beginning at 4:00 a.m. and for Big Hill Unit at 4:30 a.m. on each designated hunt day. Regular Hunt Permits will be issued until 30 minutes before legal shooting time. All waterfowl hunters must check out at the WMA hunter check station in person and be off the WMA no later than 12:00 p.m.

Access to the WMA is by boat only. A shallow draft boat approximately 14-16 feet in length, equipped with an outboard motor (20-40 horsepower), light enough to be pulled over small levees, is strongly recommended. An additional canoe or small boat may aid in accessing assigned hunting areas within leveed compartments. Large, moderate draft, or heavy boats will limit access in many hunt areas due to shallow water conditions and levee portages. Rough and choppy water conditions frequently exist on windy days.

Construction of permanent waterfowl hunting blinds is prohibited. It is a hunter's responsibility to maintain a safe distance of 200 yards from other hunting parties. Airboats are prohibited on the WMA except in Big Hill, Taylor, Hildebrandt and Blind Bayous, and Keith Lake. Use of retriever dogs and waterfowl decoys will add to the success of a waterfowl hunt. Use of a retriever dog during warm weather is discouraged due to the presence of alligators.

The following equipment is necessary for hunters on the J.D. Murphree WMA: boat and outboard motor (described above), proper safety devices as required by law, paddle, flashlight, push-pole, outboard gas sufficient for 25 miles of travel, rain gear, boots or waders, insect repellent, appropriate ammunition and a shotgun. Boats (persons, equipment, harvested game, etc.) may not exceed U.S. Coast Guard approved loaded capacity. Hunt parties utilizing inadequate boats or equipment may have access only to limited hunt areas. Food, lodging and hunting supplies are not available on the WMA. Commercial lodging facilities are available in the vicinity. Hunters are strongly encouraged to thoroughly test all of their equipment before arriving at the WMA Headquarters. Call the Area headquarters for further information (409/736-2551).

