

WMA SPOTLIGHT

TALLAHALA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

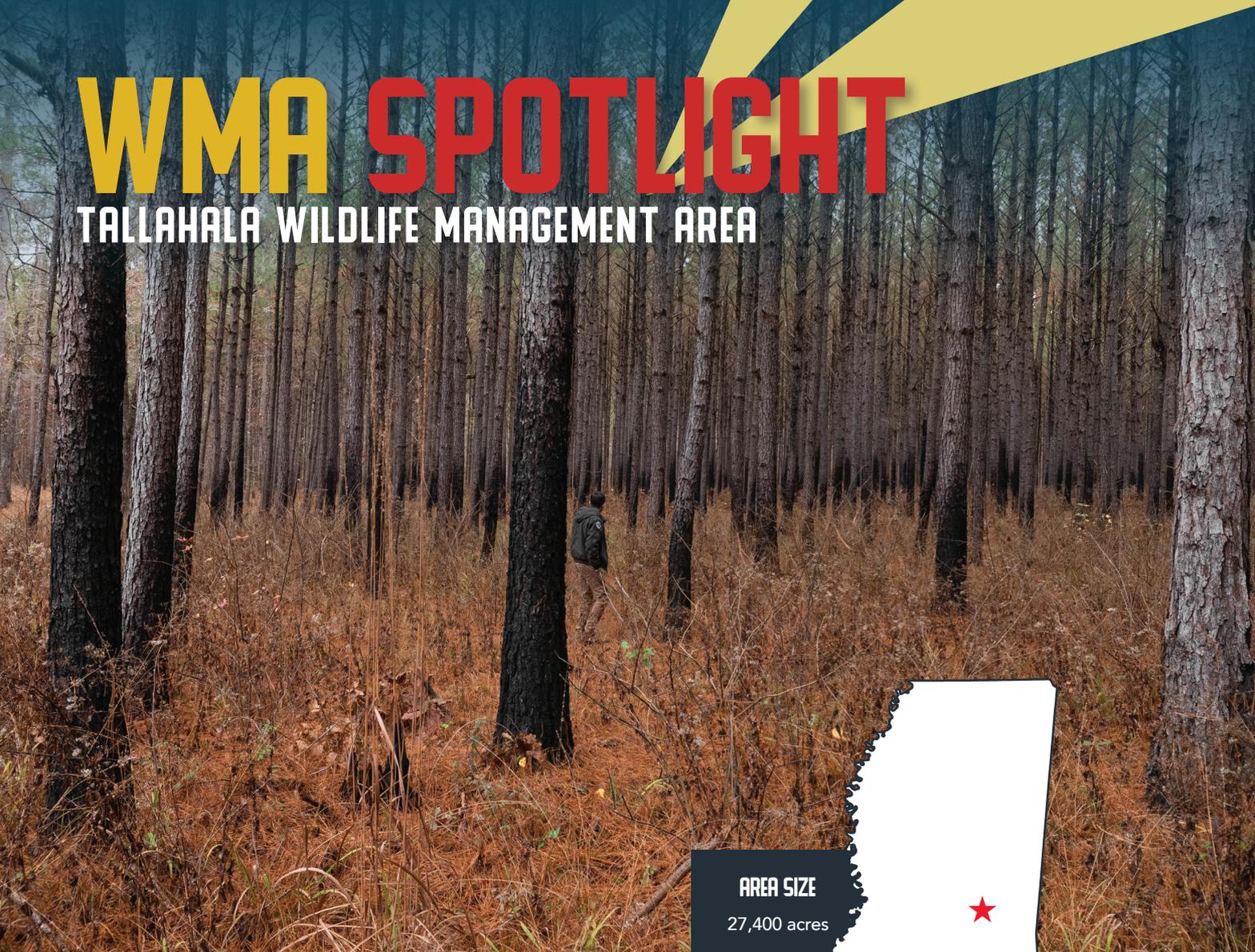


Photo by Blythe Summers

LOCATION

Tallahala Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 27,400-acre property within Bienville National Forest. Located in Jasper, Scott, Smith, and Newton counties, the headquarters is on County Road 23, approximately 6 miles northwest of Montrose.

HISTORY

Most land acquisitions that comprise the Bienville National Forest were purchased from four lumber companies in 1934. Previously known as Jasper County Wildlife Refuge, the 178,000-acre forest is owned and managed by U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and it includes Bienville, Caney Creek, and Tallahala WMAs. These areas are cooperatively managed by USFS and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP). Between 2016 and 2019, southern pine beetle activity killed approximately 16,000 acres of pines throughout Bienville National Forest, including 1,000 acres on Tallahala WMA.



Aerial view of the southern pine beetle outbreak in Bienville National Forest / Photo courtesy of USFS



Photo by Blythe Summers

LAY OF THE LAND

Tallahala's habitat consists of open pine forests, bottomland hardwoods, and riparian stream corridors. Tallahala and Quartelia are two major creeks that flow through the WMA. The WMA includes 35 acres of openings, 25 of which are planted in supplemental forage each fall. Several wildlife openings provide food and cover for a variety of game species, such as white-tailed deer, turkey, rabbit, dove, and bobwhite quail.

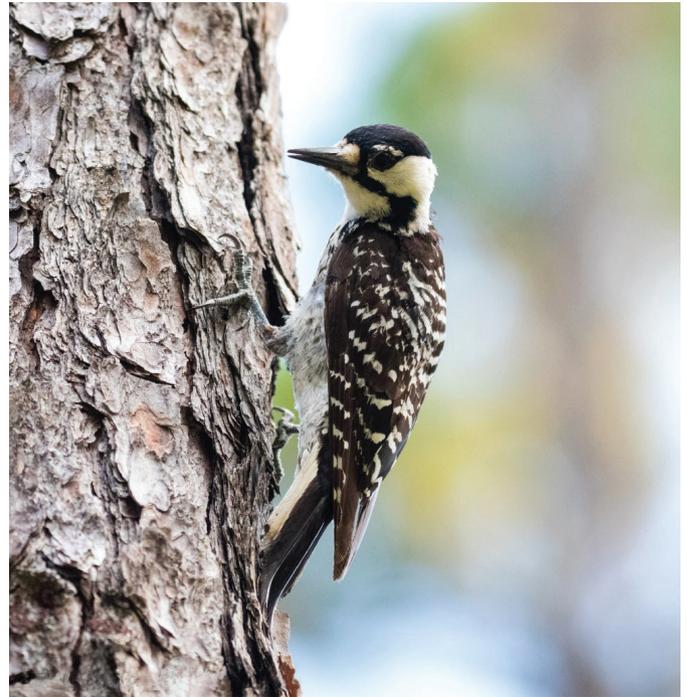
Mississippi State University students conducted one of the longest turkey research studies in the country at Tallahala from 1982-1998. Since then, the turkey population and harvest data have been stable. The average number of turkeys harvested in the past five years is 32, and the average number of hunter visits is 830 per year.



Photo by Blythe Summers

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Tallahala WMA provides suitable habitat for game and non-game species. Recreational opportunities consist of hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, birdwatching, and horseback riding. Seasons and bag limits for game species are available at each information station on the WMA, as well as www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/wma. Marathon Lake is a beautiful area nearby to enjoy an afternoon fishing or a weekend camping. Approximately 23 miles of trails are available for hiking or riding horses. Several species of songbirds, as well as the federally endangered red cockaded woodpecker, can be seen in their natural habitat on the WMA and throughout the forest.



Red cockaded woodpecker / Joseph Hood CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visitors to all WMAs in Mississippi should be familiar with the current regulations. To learn more about Tallahalla WMA, visit www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/wma or contact the MDWFP Wildlife Bureau at (601) 432-2199.

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