



# News Release

Wichita Mountains  
Wildlife Refuge  
32 Refuge Headquarters  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**For Release:** Immediate

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## Heat Restrictions Rescinded on Refuge Lands

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) issued a Heat Advisory on July 9, 2020, as a result of seasonally hot weather conditions coupled with a series of increasingly complex search and rescue operations for hikers with heat exhaustion. Effective July 20, 2020, the Refuge is lifting those restrictions. Wichita Mountains is open to hiking and other recreational activities consistent with refuge policies and guidance.

While these restrictions have been lifted, additional hot weather and/or increasing search and rescue operations due to heat may again require restrictions. Hot weather conditions, coupled with the rocky and rugged terrain of the Refuge, poses extreme risk to visitors, Refuge staff, and emergency response personnel who may be called upon for search and rescue operations during the extreme heat. Even simple hikes can become dangerous in the heat.

The refuge continues to recommend that visitors bring plenty of water, pay attention to weather forecasts, wear loose, light in color clothing that includes a cap or hat, and limit the amount of time you spend outdoors in extreme temperatures. Hikers should start early, be prepared, and know their time limitations. Consider hiking shorter, shady trails like the Environmental Education Center Trail rather than longer trails, like the Bison Trail.

The Refuge is located 25 miles northwest of Lawton, Oklahoma. From Interstate 44, take exit 45 west 10 miles to the Refuge gate. If coming in from Highway 62, take Highway 115 (Cache exit) north to the Refuge gate.

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