

Impairments due to mercury are the most relevant to the Okefenokee NWR (Figure 25). The refuge is home to a diverse native fish assemblage (USFWS 2006) and boasts renowned recreational and sport fishing. Both the Suwannee and St. Marys Rivers are failing to meet the usage classification for fishing, propagation of fish, shellfish, game and other aquatic life due to the trophic weight residue of mercury exceeding the human health standard of 0.3 mg/kg of fish muscle tissue. The TMDLs for trophic weight residue were implemented in both the St. Marys and the Suwannee Rivers in 2002. Fish consumption guidance with respect to mercury contamination is available through the EPA (EPA 2014).

5.5.2.2 NPDES Permits

NPDES permit locations within Okefenokee RHI were identified using the EPA-State combined Facility Registry System (FRS). A query of the FRS was performed to isolate facilities with any NPDES related classifications. Twelve NPDES permitted facilities were identified within the Okefenokee RHI (2 NPDES Major Facilities, and 10 NPDES Non-Major Facilities). However, nine of the facilities are considered to have no impact on the refuge due their position downstream of the refuge. Of the three facilities with the potential to impact the refuge, only one is considered “Major,” and is categorized as either:

- Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) facility with design flows ≥ 1 MGD or that serve a population $\geq 10,000$ or cause significant water quality impacts, or
- Non-POTW facility that discharges surpass a point threshold based on criteria such as toxic pollutant potential, flow volume and water quality factors such as impairment of receiving water or proximity of discharge to coastal waters (EPA 2013a).

The “Major” NPDES facility (Site 1, Table 14, Figure 25), the Waycross Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), discharges into the Satilla River. Located outside Upper Suwannee River watershed, there is no natural surface water connection that exists between the facility and the refuge. Two facilities (Site 2 and 3, Table 14, Figure 25) considered “Non-Major,” the Homerville Industrial Park and the Homerville WPCP, discharge into Tatum Creek and Woodyard Creek, respectively. Both of these “Non-Major” facilities are located upstream of the refuge.

Table 14. NPDES facilities with potential impact on the Refuge. [Source: EPA 2013b].

Figure 25			
Site ID	EPA Registry ID	Primary Facility Name	NPDES Permit Type
1	110000529456	Waycross WPCP	Major
2	110006777522	Homerville Industrial Park	Non-Major
3	110010040516	Homerville WPCP	Non-Major