



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Medicine Lake

National Wildlife Refuge

Hunting Regulations

Welcome

Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located on the heavily glaciated rolling plains of northeastern Montana, between the Missouri River and the Canadian border. The Refuge, established in 1935, provides important breeding grounds and stopover areas for a diverse array of migratory birds. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Refuge is one of over 545 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System — a system of lands set aside to conserve wildlife and habitat for people to enjoy today and for generations to come.

Medicine Lake NWR encompasses 31,702 acres and consists of two separate tracts. The 28,438-acre north tract includes the 8,218-acre Medicine Lake as well as 17 smaller water units. The 3,264-acre south tract includes the 1,280-acre Homestead Lake. Hunting Areas 1 and 2 are in the north tract, while Hunting Area 3 is located in the south tract (see map).

All hunting on the Refuge is in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations. Hunters can enjoy a quality hunting experience for upland game birds, most waterfowl, mourning doves, some big game, and mammalian predators.

Medicine Lake, its islands, and the adjacent Sandhills Unit are included in the 11,360-acre Medicine Lake Wilderness Area, part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The use of mechanical or motorized equipment is prohibited within the Wilderness Area boundary.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service cooperates with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to survey and manage wildlife populations on the Refuge and to enforce Federal and State hunting regulations. Your support and compliance with these regulations is greatly appreciated.

Refuge Hunting Regulations

- The Refuge is open from dawn until dusk. Overnight camping and open fires are prohibited.
- The use of non-toxic shot is required for all shotgun hunting on the Refuge. Field possession or use of lead shot is illegal.
- Vehicle traffic is restricted to graveled roads, parking areas, and trails marked for vehicle travel. Driving off-road for any purpose is prohibited.
- Vehicles must be parked at designated parking areas, road approaches, or off the road far enough to avoid obstructing traffic.
- The road heading east from the Refuge headquarters is closed to vehicles from September 30 through January 1.
- Marked retrieval roads (see map) are open to vehicles from 11:00 am to dusk the first 2 days of big game season and from dawn to dusk for the remainder of the season. Vehicles can be used on retrieval roads only to recover big game.
- The use of dogs during regular game bird seasons for hunting and retrieving is allowed and encouraged.
- Public hunting areas are identified by public hunting area boundary signs. All areas outside these boundaries are closed to hunting.
- Shooting into or retrieval of game from areas closed to hunting is prohibited.
- The islands in Medicine Lake are closed to all uses, and it is unlawful to trespass on them.
- Predator hunting (coyote, badger, fox, skunk, and raccoon) may be conducted after obtaining a free permit, map, and regulations from Refuge headquarters.



This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Hunting in Area 2:

- Upland game birds, mourning doves, ducks, geese, coots, jackrabbits, deer, and pronghorn may be hunted on the Refuge in Area 2 in accordance with State seasons and bag limits.
- The hunting of swans, sandhill cranes, elk, and all other animals not listed above is prohibited.
- Refuge waters in Area 2 are open to non-mechanical boats (canoes, kayaks, rowboats) used for hunting with the exception of Medicine Lake, which is closed to all boating after September 15.
- Hunting is allowed in Area 2 along the shoreline of Medicine Lake. Decoys must be placed no further than 50 yards from shore. All of the Medicine Lake shoreline outside of Area 2 is closed to hunting.

Hunting in Areas 1 and 3:

- A late season hunt for upland game birds, deer, and pronghorn in Areas 1 and 3 begins each year on November 15 and continues through the regular State seasons.

Accessibility

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 7-1-1 for a free connection to the State transfer relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 406 / 789 2305 or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

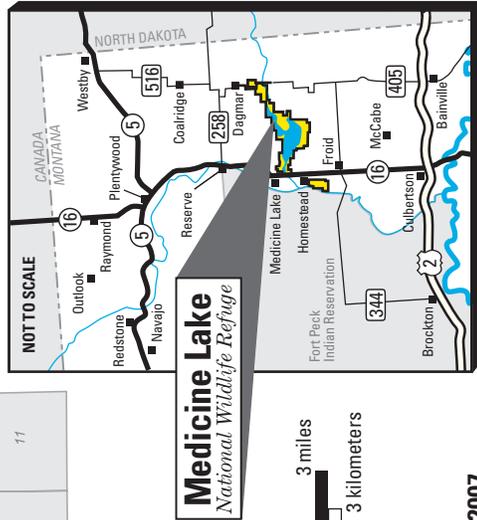
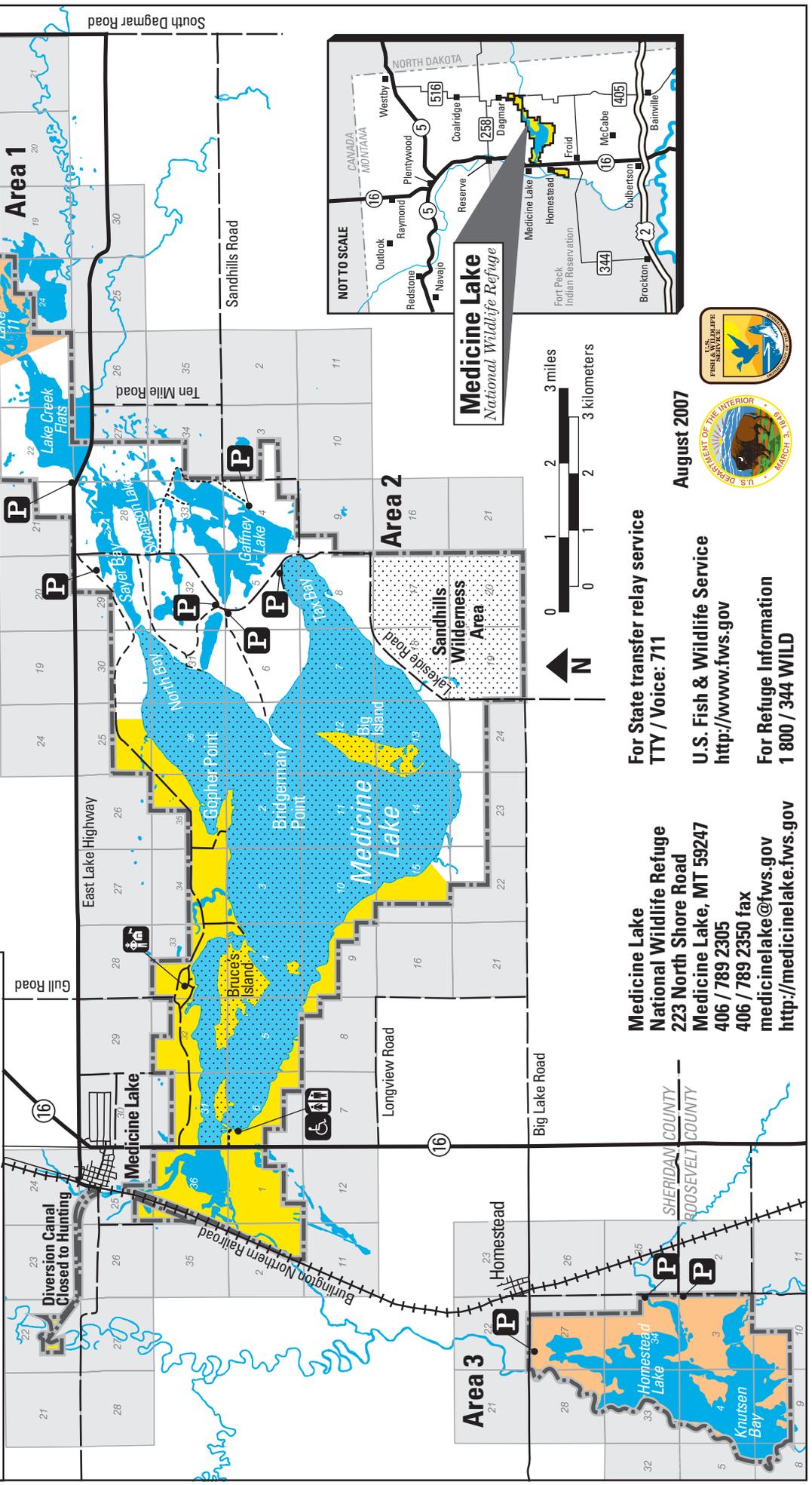
Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Headquarters
- Parking
- Accessible Restroom
- Wilderness Area
- Hunting Areas 1 and 3
- Hunting Area 2
- Closed to Hunting
- Refuge Boundary
- State Highway
- County Road
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Big Game Retrieval Road
- Access Road



Refuge Boundary Sign
Enter the Refuge only via designated access routes. Contact manager for details.

Public Hunting Area
Area may be hunted as permitted by Refuge regulations. Contact manager for regulations.



For State transfer relay service
TTY / Voice: 711

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
http://www.fws.gov
For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD