

Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey Hunting

Decision Document Package

for

DESOTO NWR

Contents

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

2007 Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey Hunting at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to open to ring-necked pheasant and wild turkey hunting on DeSoto NWR. These hunting activities will be permitted, but administratively limited in numbers of hunters and to those areas specified in the refuge-specific regulations. All or parts of the refuge may be closed to hunting at any time if necessary for public safety, to provide wildlife sanctuary, or for other reasons.

Alternatives considered included: proposed action and no action.

The Service has analyzed the following alternatives to the proposal in an Environmental Assessment (copy attached):

No action alternative - Under this alternative, no upland game hunting would be permitted on DeSoto NWR. Hunting would be limited to areas currently open to hunting and to species currently allowed to be hunted. There would be no change to current public use and wildlife management programs.

Proposed action Under this alternative, pheasant and turkey hunting would be permitted on DeSoto NWR. This would be limited to a spring two day youth and disabled turkey hunt, a spring archery turkey hunt, and a fall two-day youth pheasant hunt.

The preferred alternative was selected over the other alternatives because:

1. The preferred alternative would allow the refuge to manage wildlife populations, allow the public to harvest a renewable resource, promote hunter education and ethics to young hunters, provide a wildlife-oriented recreational opportunity, increase awareness of DeSoto NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and meet public demand.
2. The preferred alternative is compatible with general Service policy regarding the establishment of hunting on National Wildlife Refuges.
3. The preferred alternative is compatible with the purpose for which DeSoto NWR was established.
4. This proposal does not initiate widespread controversy or litigation.
5. There are no conflicts with local, state, regional, or federal plans or policies.

Implementation of the agency's decision would be expected to result in the following environmental, social, and economic effects:

1. The refuge could better manage wildlife populations.

2. This would allow the public to harvest a renewable resource.
3. The public would have increased opportunity for wildlife-oriented recreation.
4. Local area business would benefit from increased hunters coming into the area.

Measures to mitigate and/or minimize adverse effects have been incorporated into the proposal. These measures include:

1. Youth and disabled turkey hunt will be limited to 35 youth hunters and up to 12 disabled hunters for a two day hunt.
2. Youth pheasant hunters would be limited to 25 hunters per day for a two day hunt.
3. No ATV's, snowmobiles, or camping is allowed.
4. Hunting is not allowed near the bald eagle nesting area.
5. The refuge law enforcement program and closely regulated hunting season will ensure hunt regulation compliance and will protect refuge resources.

The proposal is not expected to have any significant adverse effects on wetlands and flood plains, pursuant to Executive Orders 11990 and 11988 because this area has historically had a high use of recreational hunting with no detrimental long-term effect on wetlands.

The proposal has been thoroughly coordinated with all interested and/or affected parties. Parties contacted include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Ecological Services, Rock Island Field Office, Moline, IL
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Upland Game Program Manager
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Upland Game Research Biologist

Copies of the Environmental Assessment are available by writing:

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge
1434 316th Lane
Missouri Valley, IA 51555

Therefore, it is my determination that the proposal does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment under the meaning of section 102(2)(c) of the National Environment Policy Act of 1969 (as amended). As such, an environmental impact statement is not required. This determination is based on the following factors (40 CFR 1508.27):

(for each factor list the page numbers of the EA where the factor was discussed.)

1. **Both beneficial and adverse effects have been considered and this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment (EA, pages 5-6)**

2. The actions will not have a significant effect on public health and safety (EA, page 6).
3. The project will not significantly effect any unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historical or cultural resources, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas (EA, pages 4, 6, 14).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial (EA, page 5).
5. The actions do not involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown environmental risks to the human environment (EA, page 6).
6. The actions will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (EA, page 15).
7. There will be no cumulative significant impacts on the environment. Cumulative impacts have been analyzed with consideration of other similar activities on adjacent lands, in past action, and in foreseeable future actions (EA, pages 10-16).
8. The actions will not significantly affect any site listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, nor will they cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources (EA, pages 4, 6, 14).
9. The actions are not likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species, or their habitats (Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Evaluation Form and pages 8, 13).
10. The actions will not lead to a violation of federal, state, or local laws imposed for the protection of the environment (EA, page 16).

References: Environmental Assessment of 2007 Proposed Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey Hunting on DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Hunting Plan, Compatibility Determination, Refuge-specific Regulations, Intra-Service Section 7 Evaluation

Regional Director

Date