



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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FALL HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES BEGIN NOVEMBER 7th ON AGASSIZ NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The deer hunting firearm season at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge will be held November 7-15, 2009 in accordance with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Federal regulations. Permit Area 203-Zone 200, consists of the Refuge, and Elm Lake, Eckvoll, and Mud Lac Wildlife Management Areas. Permit Area 203 is in the Intensive Deer Management Framework where five deer can be harvested, only one of which can be a buck. All licenses for this area can be purchased over the counter, according to the 2009 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regulations.

Additional hunting opportunities are available on the Refuge on Saturday, November 7. They are archery deer and ruffed and sharp-tailed grouse hunting with each closing when their respective state season closes.

Muzzleloader deer hunting is also permitted during the state season: November 28 – December 13, 2009.

This is the second consecutive year the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has recommended more liberal harvest regulations in Permit Area 203 due to its close proximity to the Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Zone 101.

The Refuge is open to pre-season scouting on Friday, November 6, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Gates close at 3:30 pm. Hunters are reminded that construction of, or hunting from, permanently constructed tree stands is illegal. Portable tree stands are legal, but cannot be put up and left overnight either the day before or during any Refuge deer season.

Walking conditions should be easier as many pools are in drawdown and many ditches will have lower water levels. During a normal year, most ditches have a water depth of 5' to 8.' Check ice conditions before attempting to cross any water areas.

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During the regular firearm deer season the Refuge is open to hunters at 5:30 am and closes as soon as possible after legal shooting hours. Some gates on Refuge roads for hunter access will open at 5:30 am. All other Refuge roads, trails, and dikes will be restricted to foot traffic, bicycles, and non-motorized carrying devices for transporting hunters and deer. Wheeled non-motorized game retrieval carts are **NOT** allowed in the Refuge's 4,000-acre Wilderness Area. Non-motorized watercraft may be used on ditches and pools. The use of snowmobiles, 3, 4, and 6-wheelers, trail bikes, and other off-road motorized vehicles is prohibited on the Refuge.

The entire Refuge will be open to deer hunting, except for two closed areas around Headquarters and Maintenance Center. These areas are posted with Closed Area signs and are clearly marked on Refuge hunting leaflets. Entrance into these areas is not permitted. If a wounded deer travels into a closed area Refuge staff or a conservation officer must be contacted before the deer can be pursued.

The mid-winter 2009 deer population was essentially the same as the 2008 deer population. In Permit Area 203, the February 2009 winter deer survey estimated 1,595 deer versus 1,620 deer in 2008. These population estimates equate to roughly 15.0 deer per square mile. The Refuge's mid-winter deer population objective is 15-20 deer per square mile. The winter of 2008-2009 was moderate in severity and overall deer survival appeared to be good. However, the prolonged snow and cold last winter may have negatively impacted fawn production this spring. Although the Refuge does not conduct any surveys to quantify fawn production, it is likely that the pre-hunt population on the Refuge may exceed 2,000 deer or 19.0 deer per square mile in 2009.

The average firearm deer season harvest in Permit Area 203 for the past ten years is 135. In 2008, a total of 173 deer were harvested. This is a thirty-eight deer or 30 percent increase over the 2007 harvest.

All deer must be registered. Antlers must remain attached until the deer is registered. There is no registration station on the Refuge. Deer can be registered anywhere in the state.

In 2008, an estimated 359 people hunted deer during the firearm season in Permit Area 203. This is a 12% decrease compared to the 2007 estimate.

Disabled hunters with a Minnesota Department of Natural Resource permit may shoot from a stationary vehicle on open Refuge roads or parking areas, as long as they are not shooting towards other hunters, vehicles, or down the road. Any hunter permanently or temporarily physically challenged who wants to use the accessible deer hunting platform on the east side of the Refuge, needs to contact Refuge staff prior to or during the deer season to reserve the platform.

Deer hunting regulation signs and maps are placed at several locations on the Refuge. Deer hunting brochures are also available at the office, Headquarters kiosk, and at the west and east kiosks along County Road 7.

No camping is permitted on the Refuge. However, adjacent Wetland Management Areas offer free primitive camp sites in designated locations and are marked with 'camping permitted' signs.

Hunter safety is always of special concern. Be sure of your target and beyond! The potential for hypothermia and heart attack also exists. Always check ice conditions and/or water depth before attempting to traverse any wetland areas. First aid rescue equipment is on hand at Refuge headquarters. Contact refuge personnel at Headquarters if assistance is needed. All hunting accidents on the Refuge must be reported immediately to Refuge staff.

Any questions about deer hunting on the Refuge can be answered by calling 218-449-4115 (extensions 203, 204, or 211) or stopping in at the Refuge office. Refuge staff would like to see and either take or receive a picture of any large or unusual deer shot on the Refuge.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.