

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge Deer Hunting 2008 - 2009

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 national wildlife refuges. The primary objective of a refuge is to provide habitat for the conservation and protection of all species of wildlife. Hunting is one tool used to manage deer populations at a level compatible with the environment, provide recreational opportunities, and permit the use of a valuable renewable resource. Hunting at Prime NWR is through the issuance of a permit. This permit can be revoked at anytime at the discretion of the Refuge Manager or his/her representative.

NEW in 2008-2009

- Permit fees are waived for hunters aged 15 years and under.
- The maximum permitted boat motor has increased to 30 horsepower.
- Note any changes in the days that refuge hunts occur.
- Scouting in the Island Farm has been decreased to minimize disturbance to wildlife and to help improve hunting quality.

GENERAL HUNT REGULATIONS:

- Public hunting of white-tailed deer is allowed during designated times and on designated areas of the refuge.
- All Federal and State hunting regulations apply. A valid State of Delaware hunting license is required unless exempt from Delaware hunting license requirements. Failure to follow regulations may result in a loss of refuge hunting privileges and/or a fine.
- When requested by Federal and State enforcement officers, hunters must display for inspection all game, hunting equipment, and ammunition.
- Possession of firearms/archery equipment on refuge lands is prohibited unless in possession of a valid refuge hunting permit.
- The use or possession of handguns is prohibited.
- Slugs only may be used – no buckshot.
- Do not shoot toward the refuge boundary or into private property.
- Before entering non-hunting areas of the refuge to retrieve a wounded deer, obtain authorization by a Refuge employee.
- The use or possession of alcoholic beverages during any scheduled hunt is prohibited.
- Deer drives are prohibited on the refuge.
- Practice or target shooting is prohibited on the refuge.
- Do Not Litter. Prime Hook NWR is a carry-in carry-out refuge. This includes shotgun shells, cigarette butts, and all trash.
- Cutting of vegetation for shooting lanes is prohibited. The use of natural vegetation for camouflaging your stand is prohibited. Only synthetic camouflage material is permitted.
- Motor vehicles are restricted to designated routes and parking areas. Areas may be closed without prior warning. Hunt only within designated hunting areas.
- Overnight camping and open fires are prohibited.
- Do not field dress animals in parking areas or near public use walking trails.
- Please be safe – use common sense, respect your fellow hunters and maintain good hunter ethics!

Seasons and Hunt Areas: The refuge has hunting seasons for archery, muzzleloader, and shotgun including a special youth hunt, hunts for disabled individuals, and party hunts. Hunt areas may be closed completely or in part, without notice when wind, ice, road conditions, etc., make entry onto hunt areas hazardous. The Jefferson-Lofland Tract and Headquarters Area Stands #9 & #10 are CLOSED to hunting in January (& February if scheduled) to minimize disturbance to endangered species. Party Zones I, II, III, and IV of the Slaughter Canal Area will be open for archery and firearms hunting for 2-10 hunters per zone. All of the zones are accessible only by boat. Hunters may walk into Zones 1 & 4; however, no loaded weapons are permitted in the safety zone. For further details on seasons and hunting areas, see refuge hunting maps and other regulations in this brochure.

Permits: A refuge permit is required to hunt and must be on your person when hunting. Permits are non-transferable. **Hunters must be present to obtain permits. Hunters may not reserve stands/zones or obtain permits for other hunters.** The questionnaire portion on the back of the permit must be filled out and returned to the CHECK STATION by the end of the day. The information that you provide from your hunt is essential in evaluating the deer herd on the refuge. All hunters must be off the refuge and permits returned to the Check Station no later than 1 ½ hours after shooting time.

Scouting: Scouting is allowed from sunrise to sunset on Sundays only from August 31 to January 11 except the Island Farm Area. The Headquarters Area will be open to scouting on November 2 and January 11. The Jefferson-Lofland Tract is closed for scouting

from November through January to minimize disturbance to endangered species. The Island Farm Area will be open to scouting only on Tuesday, October 7; Tuesday, October 28; Tuesday, December 9; and Tuesday, January 13.

Shooting Time: Hunting is permitted from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset (unless otherwise restricted). Sunrise and sunset times can be found in the 2008-2009 Delaware Hunting and Trapping Guide.

Fees: An archery fee of \$2.00 per hunt and a firearms fee of \$10.00 per hunt are charged to all hunters for all hunting areas. Permit fees are waived for hunters aged 15 years and under. Senior citizens (age 62 and older) are entitled to a 50% discount with an Interagency Senior Pass. Citizens who have been medically determined to be permanently disabled are also entitled to a 50% discount with an Interagency Access Pass (proof of medically determined permanent disability is required to receive benefits under federal law). The Interagency Senior Pass can be purchased in person for \$10.00 and the Interagency Access Pass is free of charge at the refuge headquarters during office hours.

Season Limit: Each permitted hunter has a season limit of ONLY ONE ANTLERED DEER on the refuge. Bonus Antlerless Deer tags may be used on the refuge. The taking of wildlife other than deer is prohibited.

Safety Requirements: All persons in firearms hunting areas must display a minimum of 400 total square inches of SOLID blaze ORANGE material on their head, chest, and back. Blaze orange camouflage is not acceptable. This includes archery hunting on the refuge during days that coincide with state firearms hunts for deer (e.g. October antlerless firearms season).

- During firearms hunts the only time hunters may have a loaded weapon is while on your deer stand or in active pursuit of a crippled deer. Hunters may only hunt from their permitted stands except in the Slaughter Canal Area.

Youth Hunting:

November 1 Statewide Youth Deer Hunt: A deer hunt limited to young hunters accompanied by a guardian will be conducted on November 1. For this one day statewide hunt, the refuge will follow the criteria established by the State of Delaware for hunter/guardian ages, safety qualifications, etc. Hunting is permitted during the entire day for all hunting areas except the Headquarters Area and the Slaughter Canal Area (party zones). Youth hunters choose from available stands at the stand-by lottery drawing conducted two hours before shooting time at the check station. After the morning hunt, standby hunters can obtain permits on a first-come, self-serve basis at the check station immediately following the morning lottery drawing until 2:00PM. Procedures for self-service are located in the firearms section of this brochure.

Additional Information: For any refuge deer hunt other than the statewide Youth Deer Hunt on November 1, any person aged 17 and under must be accompanied to their stand for the entire hunt by a hunting or non-hunting adult who is 18 years or older. It is recommended that the accompanying adult be licensed to hunt in the State of Delaware.

Stand Requirements

- Two individuals are permitted to be in one stand only when: (1) accompanying a youth aged 17 or under; or (2) accompanying a disabled hunter. Individuals assisting youths aged 17 and under may also hunt; however, individuals assisting disabled hunters are not permitted to hunt. Non-hunting helpers are not charged a fee.
- During refuge firearms hunts, hunters must hunt from a government stand; portable stands are permitted only in the Slaughter Canal Area (party zones) and during archery hunts. If accompanying a youth during a firearms hunt, both the youth and adult must hunt from the same government stand.
- Hunting from a stand which has been attached with nails, wire, or screws or permanently attached in any other way is prohibited. Screw-in tree spikes are prohibited. Tree stands must be portable, temporary in design, and completely removed at the end of each day. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is not responsible for any stands left over night.
- For firearms hunts, hunters must be on their assigned stand 15 minutes before legal shooting time in the morning (1/2 hour before sunrise) and remain on their stand until 9:00 AM. In the afternoon, hunters must be on their stand by 3:00 PM and remain there until the end of legal shooting time (1/2 hour after sunset). Hunters may only leave their stand to tag a deer or pursue a crippled deer. The only time hunters may have a loaded weapon is while on a deer stand or in active pursuit of a crippled deer. Hunters may only hunt from their permitted stands.
- For firearms hunts, individuals may only apply for and hunt in either an able-bodied hunt (stand or party zone) OR a disabled hunt, not for both. Unless the medical situation of a hunter changes during the season and is documented, a hunter cannot switch back and forth between disabled hunting blinds and able-bodied stands for firearms hunts.

Baiting: It is unlawful to distribute bait or hunt any species, including deer over bait.

Recover Wounded Deer: All hunters must make a reasonable effort to recover wounded deer. Tag all deer immediately and return with your deer to your stand until 9AM or until the end of legal shooting time.

Boats: Hunters must use designated launching sites to launch boats. Federal and State boating regulations apply. The maximum permitted boat motor is 30 horsepower. See Seasons and Hunt Areas section of this brochure for more information.

Archery Hunt

Season: Archery hunting is permitted daily (AM & PM) from September 1 to September 30 and on Saturdays from October 4 through January 24, unless there is a firearms deer hunt on the Refuge (Closed Nov. 1, 15, 22; Dec. 13; Jan. 17 & 31). On designated dates open to archery hunting during state firearms seasons for deer, hunters must wear at least 400 square inches of solid orange material displayed on the head, chest, and back. Blaze orange camouflage is not acceptable.

Permits: Permits are available by self-service at the check station no earlier than two hours before shooting time and no later than 2:00 PM on hunting days.

- Hunters must sign out a stand and hunt within 100 yards of the stand as a safety precaution. Adults and youth hunters must be within shooting distance of each other. Turn over the tag from green to red of the stand number on the board at the check station and also write it on your permit.
- Permits are located in the box labeled "Permits" on the counter at the check station. Place white copy of permit and fee in provided envelope, seal, and place in "permit" slot. Keep tan copy of permit on your person and return the permit to check station after hunting.

Firearms Hunts

Permits: Permits are issued at the check station for disabled and able-bodied hunters by a pre-season lottery drawing, morning stand-by lottery drawings, and by self-service. Hunters may not be on refuge any earlier than 3 hours before shooting time. The official time is indicated on the clock in the check station.

- **Pre-Season Drawing:** Preseason deer hunting applications will be available at the following locations: Headquarters Office at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Milton and the Headquarters Office at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Smyrna. The applications will not be available on the refuge's website, with the exception of the party zone applications which can be downloaded. Completed applications for the October muzzleloader season must be received in person at the refuge office or postmarked no later than September 14, 2008. The application deadline for the rest of the firearms hunts is October 8, 2008. Applications will not be accepted over the telephone. Applicants must turn 16 years of age on or before the date applied for. Pre-selected stand reservations are non-transferable. Pre-selected hunters will obtain their permits by self-service on the morning of the day they were selected to hunt no earlier than 3 hours before legal shooting time but prior to 2 hours before legal shooting time. At 2 hours before shooting time, the stands will be available for stand-by hunters. Only hunters that are listed for the party zone on the application form will receive a permit. No substitutions are allowed.
- **Stand-By Lottery Drawings:** Forfeited reservations and other available stands, and the party zones, will be awarded to stand-by hunters 2 hours before shooting time on the morning of the hunt at the check station. Only adults 18 years and older are permitted to sign up.
 - On October 10, November 14 & 22, and January 17, refuge staff will conduct the morning standby lottery drawings for stand vacancies. On all other refuge deer hunting firearms days, the morning standby lottery drawings will be conducted by standby hunters. For all firearms hunting days, hunters can also obtain permits for available stands on a first-come, self-serve basis immediately following the morning lottery drawing until 2:00PM. Self-service procedures are described in the firearms section of this brochure.
 - **Party Zone Hunting:** All members of a hunting party must be present at the stand-by drawing. If multiple people from that same party enter into the drawing or on the signup sheet for self-service standby, then they all are disqualified from obtaining a permit. The zone that is stated on the permit is the only zone where the party is permitted to hunt. Hunters in Party Zones are not permitted to hunt within 100 yards of the Refuge Boundary.
 - Disabled hunters must obtain an Interagency Access Pass number to be eligible to participate in the preseason drawing and to receive a permit for these blinds. For additional disabled hunting regulations, see the appropriate section in this brochure.
- **Procedures for Hunter Facilitated Lottery Drawing:** Except for October 10, November 14 & 22, and January 17, the morning standby lottery drawings will be **conducted by standby hunters** at two hours before legal shooting time on a self-serve basis at the check station. Hunters with pre-selected reservations have until 2 hours before legal shooting time to claim their stands or party zones. For all firearms hunting days, hunters can also obtain permits for available stands on a first-come, self-serve basis immediately following the morning drawing until 2:00PM.
 - As early as 3 hours before shooting time, hunters may begin signing up for the hunter facilitated standby lottery drawing. There will be three separate drawings in the following order: party zones, blinds for disabled hunters, and able-bodied stands. Each hunter will completely fill out a deer hunting permit, fold it in half, and place it in the appropriately labeled bucket. Permits are located in the box labeled "Permits" on the counter at the check station. Only the adult (18 years & older) accompanying a youth hunter may fill out the permit. The permit must include the youth's name (and hunting license number if applicable), indicating him/her as "hunting" or "non-hunting". If the youth is not hunting OR is aged 15 years and younger, the fee does not apply. At two hours before shooting time, permits are picked one at a time out of the appropriate

bucket by a willing hunter from the crowd. Hunters may select party zones, blinds, or stands from the tag board in the order he/she was selected from the bucket.

- Successful hunters must choose a stand or party zone by turning over the tag from green (available) to red (in use) of the stand or party zone number on the board at the check station and write it also on your permit. Place white copy of permit and fee in provided envelope, seal, and place in "permit" slot. Keep tan copy of permit on your person and return the permit to the check station after hunting. Flip your tag back to green when your hunt is over.
- **Procedures for Self-Service After the Lottery Drawing Until 2:00PM:** Hunters may sign up on the standby list for vacant stands/zones immediately following the morning drawing on a first-come, first-serve basis until 2:00pm. Hunters must be present at the check station to remain in good standing on the list. A standby hunter on the list has the option to pass up available stands/zones to other hunters on the list until a desirable stand becomes available. Hunters in possession of a permit for a stand must forfeit their stand (i.e. turn in their permit) before signing up on the standby list to select another stand on that day. For Headquarters hunt days, procedures will be posted at the check station. See above for permit processing procedures.

Disabled Hunting Regulations

- Disabled hunters are permitted to hunt in the ground blinds during the firearms seasons in the Island Farm Area. All persons who have a record of certified permanent disability are permitted to hunt from these sites designed to be accessible by wheelchair. A total of 11 ground blinds are located in the Island Farm Area. Each site has a blind that measures 4'long, 6'wide, and 3'tall. All blinds are grassed. Hunting from vehicles is not allowed. Disabled hunters may have an assistant accompany them; however only one weapon belonging to the disabled hunter is permitted in the blind. The assistant is only permitted to use the disabled hunter's weapon when attempting to track down a wounded deer.
- Hunters must obtain an Interagency Access Pass to be eligible to participate in the preseason drawing and to receive a permit for these blinds. The Interagency Access Pass is free of charge and can be obtained at the refuge headquarters during office hours.
- Disabled hunters may hunt deer using archery in the same areas open to able-bodied hunters. Hunters have the flexibility of choosing a stand and hunting within 100 yards of it.

Headquarters Area Regulations

- Once hunters exit the Headquarters Area, they can only reenter the area between 2:00-2:30 P.M.

Recommendations For Safety and Comfort

- Hip boots are strongly recommended in most areas.
- Refuge staff will not provide field dressing equipment or assist in tracking or dragging deer.

HUNT DATES

- Archery:** Daily Sept. 1 – 30; Sat. from Oct. 4 through Jan. 24, unless there is a firearms deer hunt on the Refuge (Closed Nov. 1, 15, 22; Dec. 13; Jan. 17 & 31).
- Firearms:** Early Muzzleloader (Oct. 10, 14, 16)
Early Shotgun (Nov. 14, 15, 21, 22)
Headquarters Area (Nov. 22 & Jan. 17)
December Antlerless (Dec. 13, 18)
Late Shotgun (Jan. 17, 22)
Late Muzzleloader (Jan. 31)

HUNT AREAS

- Archery & Firearms:** Prime Hook North & South Areas, Fowler's North & South Areas, Cods Road Area, & Zones I-IV of Slaughter Canal Area
- Additional Areas for Firearms:** Graves Area; Jefferson-Lofland Area (closed in January)
- Headquarters Hunt:** Headquarters Area
- Youth Hunt:** All areas except Slaughter Canal & HQ Area
- Disabled Hunts:** Island Farm Area

For further information, contact:

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Milton, DE 19968
Tel. (302) 684-8419
<http://primehook.fws.gov>

Federal Relay Service for deaf & hard-of-hearing: 1 800/877 8339
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: 1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

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