

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

DeSoto

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Regulations 2025–2026



DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Permit 2025—2026

When signed and carried, this serves as your permit for all refuge hunts and acknowledges your understanding of the regulations contained herein.
Expires August 31, 2026

Signature (permits are not transferable)

Welcome

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is located along the Missouri River and borders both Iowa and Nebraska. Within its 8,365 acres lies DeSoto Lake, an oxbow lake that used to be a bend in the Missouri River.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32.) All firearms must be 1) unloaded and 2) entirely cased or broken down while in vehicles on refuge roads during refuge firearm hunts.

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles are permitted only on public use roads and trails as shown on the map. ATVs and UTVs are prohibited.

Accessibility Information

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. For more information please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eo/public-civil-rights>.

Hunting Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Hunting will be in accordance with applicable State regulations subject to the conditions stated. Brochures may be obtained by mail, at the refuge headquarters, or from the refuge website.

Access

Hunters may only access the Refuge two hours before legal sunrise until two hours after legal sunset.

Hunters must park in designated parking areas, as identified on the map below, to access the Refuge for hunting. Access to the Refuge from private property is prohibited.

Iowa/Nebraska Reciprocity: All areas open to hunting, as outlined on the map of this brochure, may be accessed by hunters holding a resident Iowa or resident Nebraska license. Hunters holding non-resident Iowa or Nebraska licenses may only hunt on land within the state the nonresident license is issued. Hunting areas will remain open to archery during the respective states firearms deer season.

1434 316th Lane
Missouri Valley, IA 51555

712-388-4803
desoto@fws.gov
www.fws.gov/refuge/desoto
TTY Federal Relay System: 1-800-877-8339

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1-800-344-WILD

August 2025



Entrance Permit

Hunters may only enter the refuge if they also have a valid entrance fee permit (one per vehicle). Valid permits are DeSoto Annual Pass (\$15.00), Federal Duck Stamp (\$25.00), and Daily Permit (\$3.00). Other passes are available at the Visitor Center for seniors, active military, veteran's and the permanently disabled. Contact DeSoto NWR for more details. DeSoto Daily and Annual passes can be purchased online at Recreation.gov/sitepass/desoto-nwr

State Permits

Nebraska

- For all seasons: purchase state permits from— www.outdoornebraska.ne.gov

Iowa

- Spring and Fall Turkey: Purchase state permit from Iowa DNR license vendor.
- Deer Archery Either Sex: Purchase state permit from Iowa DNR license vendor.
- Deer Archery Antlerless Only: Harrison or Pottawattamie County Antlerless Archery tags valid in DeSoto Archery Area. Purchase from Iowa DNR license vendor.

Companions

Only legal hunters holding the proper state hunting license may enter and hunt the refuge hunting areas. Unlicensed companions are not permitted in the hunting area when not open to the general public.

Tree Stands

Only portable stands and blinds may be placed on the refuge during the applicable hunting season

- We allow two portable tree stands/blinds per hunter within the Archery hunt area. Of those, only one stand/blind can be left on the refuge from one week prior to the start of the designated hunt season to one week after the end of the designated hunt season.
- Unattended stands and blinds must be plainly labeled with the full name and/or hunting license number of the owner. Labels must be visible from the ground.
- Spikes, nails, screw-in bow holders, and any items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree are prohibited.
- Cutting or altering of tree branches or any vegetation is prohibited. During any deer firearm season, ground blinds must display a 12 inch x 12 inch patch of solid blaze orange material visible in all directions.

Stands and blinds not in full compliance with these regulations are subject to removal.

To Report a Violation

- Call 1-844-FWS-TIPS or 1-844-397-8477
- Refuge Law Enforcement: 712-417-0827

Prohibited Activities

- By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted.
- Possession of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and/or dug paraphernalia while hunting
- Wood/charcoal fires
- Searching for or removal of any natural items such as antlers, bison skulls, plants, historic, and archaeological features, are protected by Federal law.
- All commercial activities, including guided hunts
- Crossbows as archery equipment unless needed because of a physical disability. Contact DeSoto NWR for additional information.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices
- Use of two-way mobile radio transmitters to communicate location of game or coordinate movement of hunters.
- Participation in organized deer drives
- Field dressing any game within 100 feet of the centerline of any refuge road, trail or parking area.
- Disposal of an animal carcass on refuge property.
- Hunting is prohibited within 200 yards of any public use facility



Activity	Season Dates	Hunter Quota - Iowa	Hunter Quota - Nebraska	Hunter Permits - Iowa	Hunt Permits - Nebraska	Regulation
Turkey Archery	Spring see refuge website for current dates Fall (10/1/2025 – 12/5/2025, 12/22/2025-1/10/2026)	Unlimited	Unlimited	Valid Iowa Archery Turkey Permit	Valid Nebraska Archery Turkey Permit	Refuge-issued permit is required in addition to the proper state permit.
Deer Archery (Either Sex)	10/1/2025—1/10/2026	Unlimited	Unlimited	Valid Iowa Archery Deer Permit	Valid Nebraska Archery Deer Permit	Refuge-issued permit is required in addition to the proper state permit
See Map for Hunt Areas						
The refuge is closed to hunting of all other species not listed in the above table.						

