

Bombay Hook

National Wildlife Refuge Waterfowl Hunting Regulations 2025-2026



Welcome

Bombay Hook was established in 1937 as a link in the chain of refuges extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. It is primarily a refuge and breeding ground for migrating birds and other wildlife. The value and importance of Bombay Hook for migratory bird protection and conservation has increased through the years, primarily due to the management of the refuge and the loss of high quality habitat along the Atlantic Flyway.

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>.

Hunters with a disability must obtain a certification card from Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). For information on obtaining this card, call the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife at 302-739-9912.

Wheelchair accessible blinds are available for West Waterfowl Goose hunt days for non-ambulatory hunters that possess an Interagency Access Pass or DNREC disabled hunter certification.

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.)

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles are permitted only on public use roads and trails as shown on the map. ATVs and UTVs are prohibited. Hunters must park in designated parking areas to access the refuge for hunting. All State regulations and laws are applicable.

Boats

All hunters are required to operate their craft and possess all safety equipment in accordance with Delaware State and U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Designated launching sites must be used to launch boats.

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 of Delaware regulations subject to the conditions stated below.

Permits

Hunters are required to possess a valid Delaware hunting license and all required stamps, valid government-issued photo identification, and a valid hunting permit issued by the refuge on their person at all times during refuge hunt and scout days.

Read and sign this brochure, it serves as your permit.

Guided Hunts

Hunt permit holders may not engage in guiding, outfitting, or advertising for commercial purposes.

Scouting

Waterfowl scouting is allowed the Saturday and Sunday prior to the start of each season segment when there is not an open hunt occurring and every Sunday throughout the season. Hunting firearms may not be carried while scouting. See table for season dates.

Bombay Hook NWR Hunting Permit 2025—2026

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

Signature (permits are not transferable)

Hunts offered

Waterfowl: Permits will be available for the September Teal and Resident Canada Goose season, Youth, Veteran, Active Military days, all 3 splits of Regular Duck, and both splits of late Canada Goose.

The Snow Goose Conservation Order season will only be open in the snow goose hunt area when opened by the Refuge Manager.

Open to Hunting - Ducks, geese, coots. Mute swans may be taken during any open waterfowl hunt.

Swan identification: Mute Swans have orange and black bills with a hump at the back near the eyes. Tundra and Trumpeter swans have all black bills with no hump. Be sure before you shoot!

Closed to Hunting - All other species of wildlife not listed above are protected. Protected species include, but are not limited to, snakes, crow, beaver, otter, and muskrat.

Method of take: Shotguns shooting non-toxic shot are the only legal method of take for waterfowl on Bombay Hook.

Hours

The refuge is open for hunting access from 2 hours before legal hunting time to 1 hour after legal hunting time. Hunting days and times vary by area.

No Sunday hunting permitted.

Bombay Hook
National Wildlife Refuge
2591 Whitehall Neck Rd,
Smyrna, DE 19977
302-684-8419

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1-800-344-WILD
July 2025



Activity	Season	Open Areas	Special Regulations
Resident Canada Goose	Sept 1 - 25	Kelly Island/Mahon Tract South Upland	State regulations apply. Check in/out at the Little Creek Hunt check station. No Sunday hunting.
September Teal	Sept 20-27	Kelly Island/Mahon Tract South Upland	State regulations apply. Check in/out at the Little Creek Hunt check station. No Sunday hunting.
Youth, Veteran's, Active Military Hunt	Oct 25, Feb 7	Kelly Island/Mahon Tract South Upland	State regulations apply. Check in/out at the Little Creek Hunt check station. No Sunday hunting.
Regular Duck	Nov 1 - Nov 8 Nov 26 - Nov 29 Dec 17 -Jan 31	Kelly Island/Mahon Tract South Upland	State regulations apply. Check in/out at the Little Creek Hunt check station. No Sunday hunting.
Regular Canada Goose	Dec 20 - Jan 3 Jan 17 - Jan 31	Kelly Island/Mahon Tract South Upland	State regulations apply. Check in/out at the Little Creek Hunt check station. No Sunday hunting.
Snow Goose	Oct 18 - Jan 31	Kelly Island/Mahon Tract South Upland	State regulations apply. Check in/out at the Little Creek Hunt check station. No Sunday hunting.
Snow Goose Conservation Order	Feb 2 - Apr 10	Snow Goose Area	State regulations apply. Only when opened by refuge manager. No Sunday hunting.
West Waterfowl Fischer Tract Steamboat Landing	Nov 26, 28, 29 Dec 26-31 Jan 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13	West Waterfowl Fischer Tract Steamboat Landing	Hunting concludes at 12 p.m. and hunters must be out by 1 p.m. to reduce conflicts with other refuge uses. No Sunday hunting.
State hunting regulations and licensing requirements apply to all hunting on the refuge. Shooting hours and methods of take may differ from the state. Signed refuge hunt brochure must be in possession of hunter. Upon request, hunters and their assistants must display for inspection all licenses, permits, game, equipment, weapons, and ammunition, to Federal and State law enforcement officers. No Sunday hunting.			

Youth

Any youth from 10 years through 15 years old may participate in the designated Youth Hunt. Youth hunters must be accompanied and assisted by an adult 21 years of age or older. Adult assistants must possess a valid Delaware hunting license or LEN. Adult assistants shall not possess a firearm or other hunting device during the hunt. Hunters 13 -15 years of age must have completed a hunter education course and possess a certification card and must also purchase a Delaware junior hunting license. Adult assistants must remain within 5 feet, maintaining close visual and verbal contact, providing adequate direction to, and can immediately assume control of the firearm from the youth hunter.

Access Areas -see map

Kelly Island and the Mahon Tract are open for waterfowl and coot hunting during all State waterfowl seasons on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Permits are issued at the Little Creek Management Area check station by lottery 2 hours before legal shooting time. There are no afternoon draws. No daily fee will be charged, however, hunters must purchase & possess the Delaware annual Wildlife Area Deer Stand & Waterfowl Lottery Permit. A boat is necessary to reach all hunt areas. There are no maintained blind sites, you may set up anywhere within the units, including the bay shore.

West Waterfowl Area Hunt

The West Waterfowl Area consists of the Fischer Tract, Regular Area, and Steamboat Landing Tract. These areas are open to duck, Canada and snow goose hunting on select days, see table. Check in and out at the tag board located in the main parking area.

Hunting concludes at 12 p.m. and hunters must be out by 1 p.m. to reduce conflicts with other refuge uses. Driving on fields is allowed only when it is necessary to move a disabled hunter to and from an accessible blind. Access is by land only.

South Upland Area Waterfowl (Davey Crockett Tract)

The South Upland Waterfowl Area is open to waterfowl hunting at no charge, free-roam, first-come. Waterfowl hunting is prohibited during firearm deer seasons. Additional State Wildlife Area rules apply. Consult Delaware's Division of Fish and Wildlife's Little Creek Wildlife Area - Davey Crockett Tract Hunting Map

Snow Goose Hunting

Snow goose hunting is allowed during the Delaware season in the Kelly Island, Mahon, and South Upland tracts. Hunting is only allowed in the Snow Goose area if opened by the refuge manager during the Snow Goose Conservation Order. A press release will be published to the refuge website if/when the Snow Goose Area is opened.

1. Hunting is for snow geese only
2. No Permit required
3. No check-in or check-out is required.
4. No night hunting is allowed
5. A boat is required to hunt the area.

Potential Disturbance

Due to an ongoing research project biologists may be present in the Steamboat Landing unit. Work will be confined to the marsh areas in the Southern part of the unit. Researchers will be wearing orange vests and will wait until after 9am to enter the area on hunt days to minimize disturbance.

Prohibited Activities

By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted. Please check with the office if you have questions.

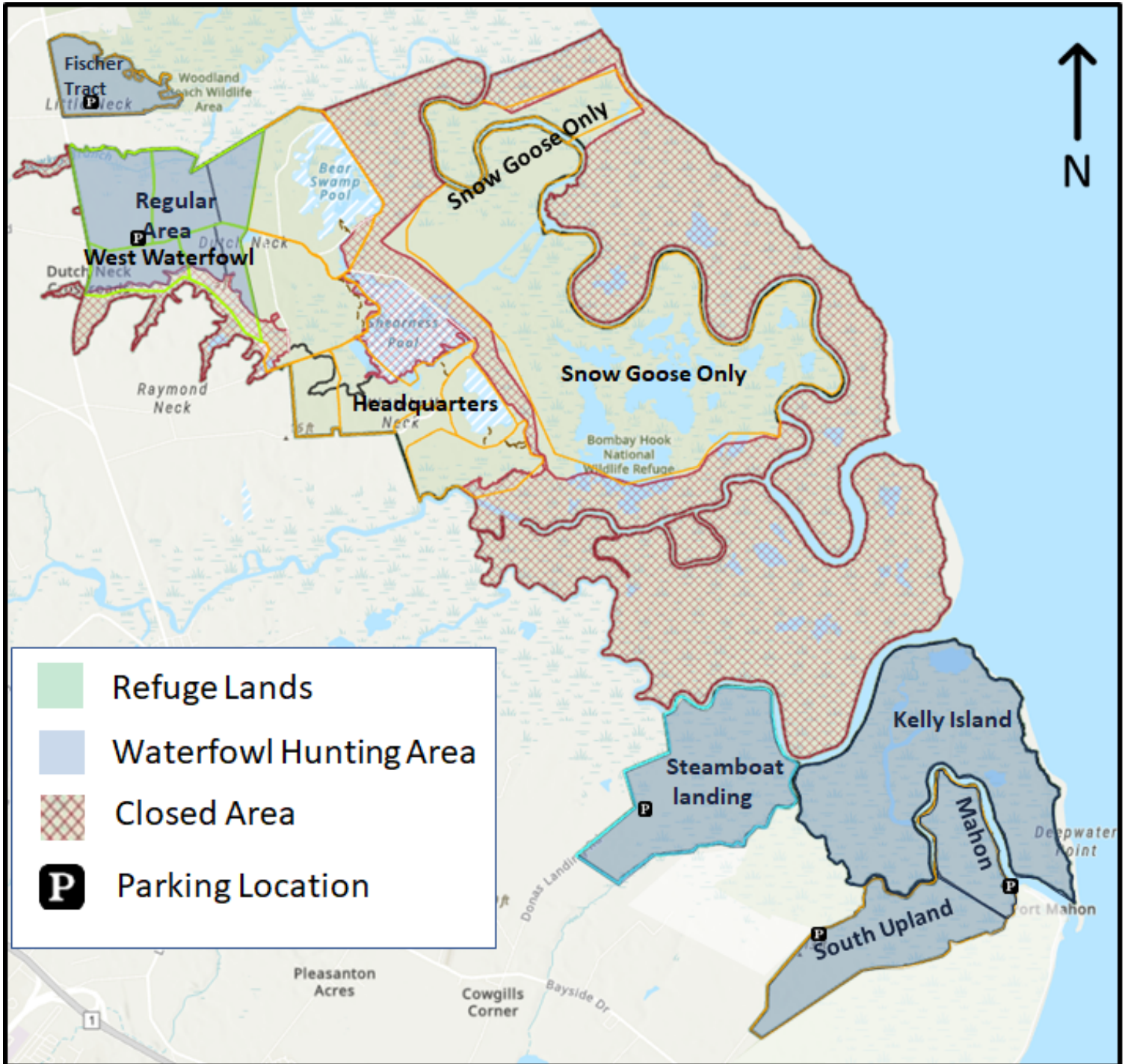
- Entering hunt areas without possessing authorized hunt permits.
- Hunting and scouting outside designated days.
- The use of rimfire or centerfire rifles and all handguns including muzzleloading pistols.
- The use or possession of buckshot while hunting.
- Use and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or other intoxicating substances while hunting.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.
- Building or maintaining any structure on the refuge.
- Leaving any property unattended.
- Cutting and damaging vegetation/trees or the use of cut vegetation/trees or organic material as camouflage for any purpose.
- Access to the refuge from private or state property.
- Distribution of bait or hunting with the aid of bait, including any grain, salt, minerals and other substances that are consumed.
- Hunting within 150 yards of any public use facility or hunting in designated safety zones as shown on hunting maps.
- Littering.
- Leaving feathers, carcasses, or other waste within 50 feet of any trail, road, or refuge structure.
- Shooting from, across or down any designated refuge road.
- Target shooting or shooting for any purpose other than legal in season hunting.
- Parking in front of or blocking gates.
- Camping and fires.
- Searching for or removal of any natural items such as antlers, skulls, plants, historic, and archaeological features.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail/game monitoring devices.
- Use of drones.



Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Hunt Unit Map

See supplementary maps for more detailed information.



THIS MAP IS FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY. THE BOUNDARY LINES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE. FOR BOUNDARY LINE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE REFUGE OFFICE. PLEASE OBSERVE AND ADHERE TO ALL POSTED AREAS REFER TO REFUGE HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR AVAILABLE HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDING HUNT DATES AND HUNT AREAS