

James River National Wildlife Refuge

2025-26 Refuge-Specific General Public Hunting Conditions

General Fact Sheet

In addition to current Code of Virginia Big Game Hunting Regulations and Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, hunting in designated areas of the Refuge is subject to the following conditions.

- We require hunters to possess a valid hunter RecAccess reservation for the day of the designated hunt, obtained electronically from <https://jamesrivernwr.recaccess.com/> prior to entering the refuge. Reservations can occur up to 48 hours in advance of the specific deer hunt. Availability is first come/first serve, as only a limited number of spots are allowed. Once the daily capacity thresholds are met, no additional reservations will be approved and no additional hunters will be allowed.
- Only deer, turkey, and coyote may be taken during designated refuge season dates and times. No other species are authorized for harvest as part of the general public deer hunt program. Earn a Buck regulations apply.
- We allow archery, muzzleloader, and shotgun hunting (as per State seasons) on designated days: Saturdays only, from Oct. 4, 2025 through January 3, 2026. We require hunters to comply with terms and conditions outlined in annual refuge hunter fact sheet/brochure. We require hunters to display their RecAccess ID number (necessary for making hunt reservations for the specific hunt date) fully visible/legible on the dashboard of their vehicle while on the refuge.
- We require hunters interested in participating in the Spring Turkey quota hunt to apply through the RecAccess website (<https://jamesrivernwr.recaccess.com/>). The application period will open in mid-February. Applications and a \$5 application fee are required. If selected in the random lottery, a \$20 permit fee is to be paid prior to obtaining a permit to hunt. We require hunters to display a RecAccess vehicle permit (contains date selected to hunt and permit number) on the dashboard of their vehicle while on the refuge so that the permit is fully visible through the windshield.
- We prohibit dogs.
- We allow only portable tree stands that hunters must remove at the end of each hunt day (see §27.93 of this chapter). We prohibit damage to trees (see §32.2(i)).
- We require hunters during archery, firearms and muzzleloader seasons to wear in a conspicuous manner (visible from 360 degrees) a minimum of 100 square inches (650 cm²) of solid-colored, hunter-orange material.

- We require that hunters using a muzzleloader (or slug gun, during shotgun season) to hunt from a stand elevated 10 feet (3 m) or more above the ground.
- Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on national wildlife refuges must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulation (see §27.42 of this chapter and specific refuge regulations in part 32).
- We prohibit the discharge of firearms or archery equipment across or within State-maintained or refuge roads, including roads closed to vehicles.
- Hunters must respect property lines, avoid hunting certain refuge boundaries and not cross into private lands, or any areas of the refuge designated as 'No Hunt Zones'. Note: Eastern boundary 'No Hunt Zone' is 200 yards (600 feet) wide.
- Refuge access is restricted to no more than 1 hour prior to the start of legal shooting time and 1 hour after the end of legal shooting time. We prohibit night hunting.
- We prohibit deer drives; any organized or planned effort to pursue, drive, chase, or otherwise frighten or cause deer to move in the direction of any person(s) who is part of the hunt and known to be waiting for the deer.
- We prohibit the use of flagging to mark trails or for any other purpose.
- A person age 17 or older, with a refuge reservation for the day's hunt (obtained through RecAccess) and carrying a valid hunting license, must accompany and directly control youth hunters ages 12 to 16. We prohibit persons under age 12 to hunt, except during two designated youth hunt days (Sept.27, 2025-Youth deer hunt and April 4, 2026-Youth turkey hunt).
- We prohibit the use or possession of alcohol while hunting on the refuge (see §32.2(j)).
- We require hunters to report accidents or injuries to the refuge office or sheriff's office within 24 hours after the incident. Hunters must report accidents resulting in serious injury to the sheriff's office immediately.
- Use of non-lead shot is recommended for deer, required for Spring Turkey. If lead shot is used for deer, field dressing harvested game on the refuge is prohibited.
- After December 6th, the northern portions of the refuge will be closed to hunting in an effort to reduce disturbance to bald eagles as they begin to build nests.

- Parking along the edge (within 20 yards) of Route 10-James River Drive, Route 639-Flowerdew Hundred Road, or Route 640-Powell Creek Road is prohibited for hunters.