

Welcome

Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935 to preserve valuable habitat for waterfowl. The 18,200 acre refuge includes boreal forest, wetland and river habitats, with the shallow 3,600 acre wild-rice producing Rice Lake being the most important resource.

The refuge continues its important wildlife management role today, while providing the community with a variety of recreational opportunities.

Safety

For emergencies, call 911. To report violations:

- Turn In a Poacher (TIP) Line: 1-800-652-9093
- 1-844-FWS-TIPS (397-8477)
- Federal Wildlife Officer: 907-252-0299

36289 State Highway 65
McGregor, MN 55760

218-768-2402

Email: RiceLake@fws.gov

Website: fws.gov/refuge/rice_lake

TTY Federal Relay System: 1-800-877-8339

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

August 2025 (All previous versions invalid)



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Rice Lake

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Regulations



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).

Shotgun hunters may use or possess only approved non-toxic shotshells when hunting small game or migratory birds.

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles are permitted only on refuge roads as shown on the map. Horses, snowmobiles, ATVs and all other OHVs (off-highway vehicles) are prohibited.

Hunters must park in designated parking areas, as identified on the map, to access the refuge for hunting.

Boats

Watercraft are permitted only on the Rice River, Mandy Lake and Twin Lakes. Gas-powered motors 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, www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/public-civil-rights.

Hunters with disabilities interested in an accessible October deer hunt should contact Refuge Headquarters for an application prior to September 1.

Hunting Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting is 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 Minnesota regulations subject to the conditions stated below. Brochures may be obtained by mail, at Refuge Headquarters, stocked brochure boxes on the refuge or from the refuge website.

Waterfowl or deer taken with a firearm outside of refuge boundaries may not be transported or possessed on the refuge.

Access

Refuge is open from sunrise to sunset. Licensed hunters may access the refuge two hours before legal shooting time until two hours after legal shooting time. You must call and/or leave a message with the Federal Wildlife Officer to remain after closing hours to retrieve or track wounded game.

Activity	Huntable Species
Small Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruffed / Spruce Grouse • Snowshoe Hare • Cottontail Rabbit • Gray / Fox Squirrel
Migratory Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Woodcock • Common Snipe <p>Note: The refuge is CLOSED to duck, goose and other migratory bird hunting.</p>
Big Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer, Archery • Deer, Firearms (special area permit holders for Area 901 ONLY) • Deer, Muzzleloader

Dogs

Hunting dogs are permitted, provided they are under the immediate control of the hunter at all times, and used only during the state hunting season, in areas open to hunting. Training and allowing pets off leash are prohibited at all other times.

Tree Stands

All property brought onto the refuge must be removed at the end of each day. This includes tree stands, vehicles, boats, decoys, trash, trail cameras and hunting equipment. Blinds made of natural materials must be disassembled at the end of each day.

Deer Firearms Permit

Hunters apply for the required either-sex special area permit for Area 901 through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Applications are typically due in early September, and details are outlined in the Minnesota Hunting & Trapping Regulations Booklet.

Special area permits are not required for the deer archery or deer muzzleloader seasons.

Harvest Reporting

All deer taken during the archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons are to be registered as taken in Permit Area 901. Deer may be registered by calling 888-706-6367 or going online at www.mndnr.gov/hunting.

Prohibited Activities

- Entering or remaining on the refuge outside of open refuge hours (see Access section).
- Attempting to take game species in any area of the refuge that is not specifically open to that species as identified in this brochure.
- The use of artificial lights or automobile headlights to locate or take wildlife.
- Distribution of or hunting over bait, including salts, minerals and attractants.
- Disposal of animal carcasses.
- Drones (UAVs) taking off, landing and/or flying on or over refuge lands.
- Fires (including cooking fires), camping and overnight parking.
- Target shooting or any non-hunting discharge of firearms.
- Shooting on, over, across or within 30 feet (9 meters) of a roadway open to public vehicle transportation at a big game animal or decoy of a big game animal.

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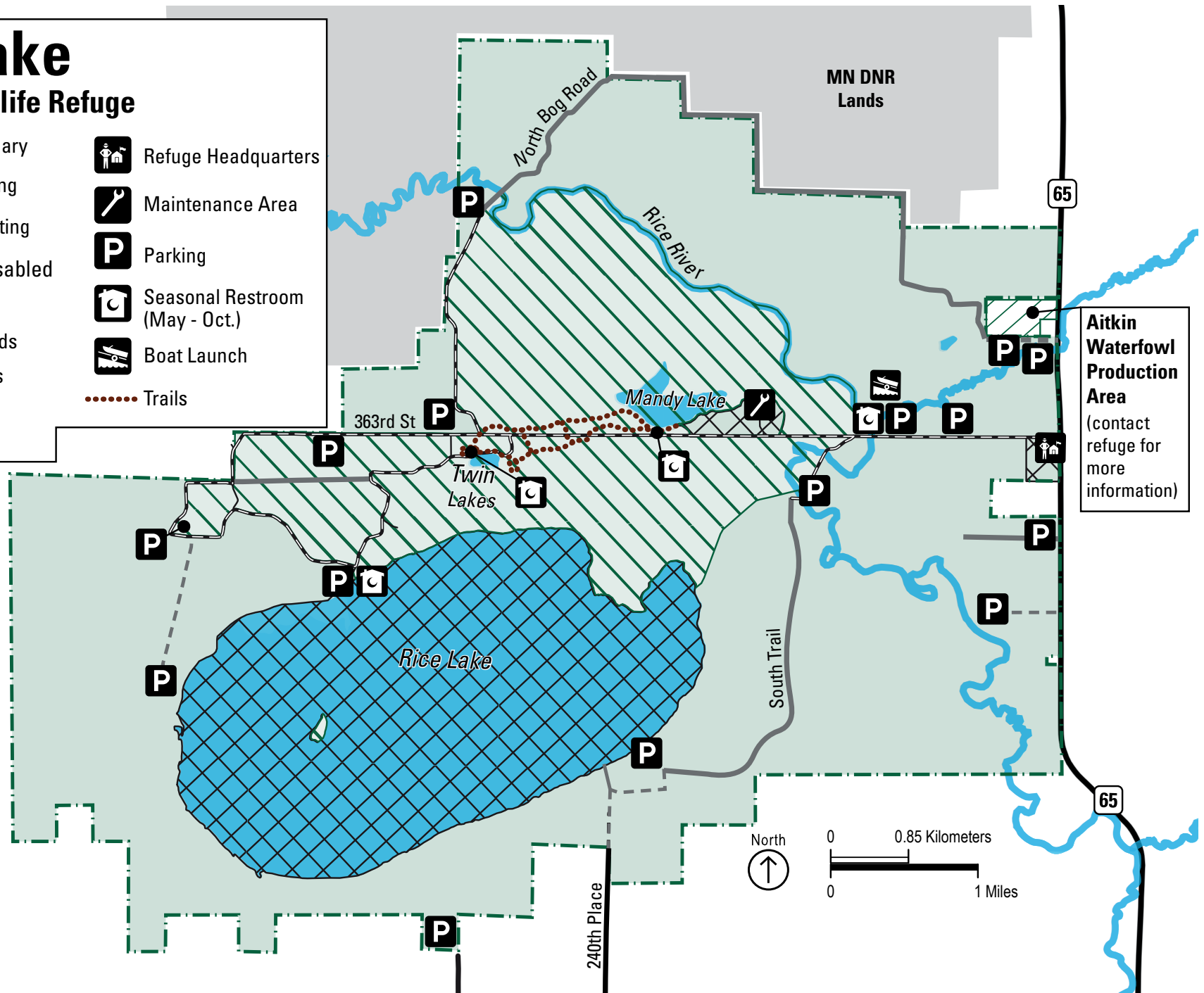
Prohibited Activities (Continued)

- Permanent tree stands, spikes, nails, screw-in steps, screw-in bow holders or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.
- Cutting, mowing, sawing, digging, collecting, injuring or removing vegetation.
- Searching for or removal of any natural items, including antlers, plants, animals and historic and archaeological features.
- Littering. All trash, including shotgun shell casings, must be packed out.
- Flagging or marking devices.
- Commercial enterprise without a special use permit.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Use or possession of fireworks, explosives or any illegal drug or drug paraphernalia.
- Hunting within 200 yards of any public use facility.
- By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted.

Rice Lake

National Wildlife Refuge

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|  | Refuge Boundary |  | Refuge Headquarters |
|  | Open to Hunting |  | Maintenance Area |
|  | Closed to Hunting |  | Parking |
|  | Managed Disabled Deer Hunt |  | Seasonal Restroom (May - Oct.) |
|  | Seasonal Roads |  | Boat Launch |
|  | Service Roads |  | Trails |
|  | Public Roads | | |
|  | Wildlife Drive | | |



Aitkin Waterfowl Production Area
(contact refuge for more information)