

# Appendix D

## Compatibility Determinations



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### **Compatibility Determination: Recreational Fishing**

**Station Name:** Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio

**Date Established:** July 28, 1961

**Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:** Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715-715r, as amended.

**Purpose(s) for Which Established:** The primary purpose for the Refuge is “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

**Description of Proposed Use:** To provide youth an opportunity and an educational experience relating to fishing. This activity is permitted to support a special event such as National Fishing Week to introduce youth to the sport and let them “wet a line.” Fishing along with environmental education programs are presented once or twice a year. The practice of “catch and release” is followed. Consequently, all fishing activity is supervised by Refuge staff and volunteers.

Fishing will be allowed only on the pond adjacent to the refuge headquarter’s building and is limited to one or two annual special events. Bank fishing during daylight hours is permitted during these special events.

Species allowed to be taken and the permitted methods of taking will be consistent with state regulations.

Refuge-specific regulations prohibit fishing, except for a special event.

**Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters, and Interests:** Little to no impact will result based on the activity held, since special events (one to two annually) are conducted at an administrative facility pond. Additionally, the group size is limited to approximately 50 individuals and the youth are required to “catch and release” the fish.

**Availability of Resources:** Staff, equipment and facilities are available to administer this use.

**The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:**  
None

**Justification:** This activity introduces local youth to sport fishing, wetland ecology, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and enhances their understanding of the environment and of the need for fish and wildlife conservation.

**Determination:**

This use is compatible X This use is not compatible    

Determined by: s/Larry D. Martin 8/22/00  
Project Leader Date

Reviewed by: s/Steven J. Lenz 9/5/00  
Refuge Supervisor (Acting) Date

Concurred by: s/Nita M. Fuller 9/12/00  
Regional Chief, Date  
National Wildlife Refuge System

**Compatibility Determination: Recreational Fishing**

**Station Name:** Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio

**Date Established:** December 18, 1964

**Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:** Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715-715r, as amended.

**Purpose(s) for Which Established:** The primary purpose for the Refuge is “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

**Description of Proposed Use:** To provide public sport fishing opportunities on Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge.

From May 1 through September 30 annually, a 15-acre borrow pit (of the 2,445-acre Refuge) is open for sport fishing during daylight hours from the bank. Furthermore, boats and floatation devices are not permitted.

Species allowed to be taken and the permitted methods of taking are the same as current state regulations allow. Enforcement activities on the Refuge are performed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and monitored during routine visits.

**Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters, and Interests:**

Controlled access and seasonal restrictions will limit human disturbance of wildlife.

Litter resulting from public use will be collected periodically by personnel and volunteers.

Bank fishing is conducted from an earthen, man-made dike and some soil erosion may occur from people fishing from the dike slope.

Bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and crappie are the most commonly fished species. Periodic restocking of these species is performed.

**Availability of Resources:** Staff, equipment and facilities are available to administer this use.

**The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:**

1. Controlled access and seasonal stipulations.
2. Litter collection.
3. Law enforcement.
4. Trail maintenance.
5. Wheelchair-accessible piers.

**Justification:**

Lake Erie has been referred to as the walleye capital of the world. Consequently the fishing community represents a significant population of anglers. However, Lake Erie fishing requires specialized equipment not available to many people. Bank fishing on the Refuge only requires the bare necessities. Likewise, some anglers prefer a tranquil, wilderness fishing experience such as what the Refuge has to offer. Since the fishing access is isolated from the major wildlife use area and because of seasonal and fishing technique restrictions, disturbance to wildlife is minimal.

**Determination:**

This use is compatible  X  This use is not compatible

Determined by:	<u>s/Larry D. Martin</u> Project Leader	<u>8/22/00</u> Date
Reviewed by:	<u>s/Steven J. Lenz (Acting)</u> Refuge Supervisor (RFS1)	<u>9/5/00</u> Date
Concurred by:	<u>s/Nita M. Fuller</u> Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System	<u>9/12/00</u> Date

## **Compatibility Determination: Waterfowl Hunting**

**Station Name:** Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio

**Date Established:** July 28, 1961

**Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:** Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715-715r, as amended.

**Purpose(s) for Which Established:** The primary purpose for the Refuge is “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

**Description of Proposed Use:** The controlled waterfowl hunt plan identifies Canada, snow and white-fronted geese and ducks as huntable species on the refuge. Hunting will take place only from designated blinds located along the perimeter of the Ottawa unit. Twelve blinds are proposed for use during the 2000 waterfowl hunting season. However, the number and placement of blinds is subject to annual review.

Refuge-specific regulations are: 1) Permits are required; 2) Hunting hours are legal shooting time until 12 noon; 3) Hunter must report back to check station and submit waterfowl for examination; 4) No more than two hunters per blind and shooting must take place in blind and/or within 75 yards of blind; and 5) Each hunter may not possess more than 25 shells of nontoxic shot.

Waterfowl species allowed to be taken and the permitted methods of taking will be consistent with Federal and State regulations.

In addition to the regulations stated above, the hunt is scheduled for 4 days per week, usually Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

A cooperative agreement provides for the hunt to be administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, and they conduct the permitting process and blind maintenance.

**Availability of Resources:** Staff, equipment and facilities are available to administer this use.

### **Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters, and Interests:**

Statewide the giant Canada goose population has increased to the point that Ohio conducts an early nuisance goose hunting season. Additionally, wildlife managers expend a lot of time and dollars responding to goose depredation complaints, transporting nuisance geese from unwanted areas, and issuing landowners goose scare-away devices. Without a hunting program, this population will denude habitat for other wetland-dependent species as well as impact the surrounding agricultural fields.

Canada, snow and white-fronted geese and ducks are included in the waterfowl hunting program. Historically, snow and white-fronted geese are incidentally harvested due to low local populations.

Controlled access, blind placement near the Refuge perimeter, and seasonal restrictions will limit human disturbance of wildlife and maintain the interior of the Refuge as a sanctuary for migrant waterfowl.

The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:

1. Controlled access and seasonal stipulations
2. Law enforcement activities
3. Biological surveys

**Justification:** Public interest, especially the agricultural community, supports the Refuge's controlled hunt. Statewide, the giant Canada goose population has increased to the point that Ohio conducts an early nuisance goose hunting season. Additionally, wildlife managers expend a lot of time and dollars responding to goose depredation complaints, transporting nuisance geese from unwanted areas, and issuing landowners goose scare-away devices. Without a hunting program, this population will denude habitat for other wetland-dependent species as well as impact the surrounding agricultural fields.

**Determination:**

This use is compatible  X  This use is not compatible

Determined by:	<u>s/Larry D. Martin</u> Project Leader	<u>8/22/00</u> Date
Reviewed by:	<u>s/Steven J. Lenz (Acting)</u> Refuge Supervisor (RFS1)	<u>9/5/00</u> Date
Concurred by:	<u>s/Nita M. Fuller</u> Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System	<u>9/12/00</u> Date

**Compatibility Determination: Wildlife Observation, Photography, Environmental Education and Interpretation**

**Station Name: Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio**

**Date Established:** July 28, 1961

**Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:** Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715-715r, as amended.

**Purpose(s) for Which Established:** The primary purpose for the Refuge is “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

**Description of Proposed Use:** To provide public wildlife observation and photographic opportunities, environmental education and interpretation on Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.

A 7-mile interpretive foot trail system is available for visitors to hike/bicycle on a daily basis during daylight hours. The trails are composed of dike-top roads surrounding moist soil units, open pools, and foot trails meandering through woodlots. Interpretive panels and bench sites provide management and wildlife information to the visitor. An elevated (5 feet high) platform was constructed along one of the trails and this was designated as a “watchable wildlife” area. The trail system has been designated as a National Recreation Trail. Several times a year an auto tour route is opened during special refuge events.

**Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters, and Interests:** Due to the Refuge’s close proximity to high population centers (Detroit, Cleveland, and Toledo), high visitor numbers could impact the Refuge. However, except for periodic auto tour route openings, public use is confined to a centralized 500-acre area of the 4,800-acre Refuge. Historically, visitor numbers indicate approximately 120,000 total visits per year. Biological surveys monitor wildlife to determine if there is a disturbance factor in the public use area.

Litter resulting from public use will be collected periodically by personnel and volunteers.

Controlled access and seasonal restrictions will limit human disturbance of wildlife.

The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:

1. Controlled access and seasonal stipulations
2. Law enforcement activities
3. Biological surveys
4. Trail maintenance and litter collection

**Availability of Resources:** Staff, equipment and facilities are available to administer this use.

**Justification:** The Refuge trail system, combined with observation platforms, provides an interpretive wildlife observation route that visitors can interface with the natural ecosystem. This public use area is confined to a centralized 500-acre area of the 4,800-acre Refuge. Periodic auto tour route openings provide opportunities to a broader public. Biological surveys are used to monitor wildlife and people to determine if there is a disturbance factor in the public use area.

**Determination:**

This use is compatible X This use is not compatible    

Determined by:	<u>s/Larry D. Martin</u> Project Leader	<u>8/22/00</u> Date
Reviewed by:	<u>s/Steven J. Lenz (Acting)</u> Refuge Supervisor (RFS1)	<u>9/5/00</u> Date
Concurred by:	<u>s/Nita M. Fuller</u> Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System	<u>9/12/00</u> Date

## **Compatibility Determination: White-tailed Deer Hunting**

**Station Name:** Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio

**Date Established:** July 28, 1961

**Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:** Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715-715r, as amended.

**Purpose(s) for Which Established:** The primary purpose for the Refuge is “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

**Description of Proposed Use:** Public hunting is to be used primarily as a management tool for balancing the white-tailed deer population objectives with other wildlife objectives, thereby inhibiting this species from impacting the quality of vegetative habitat. An annual hunt, using primitive weapons only, will be conducted through a lottery system. The entire refuge is divided into management zones to evenly distribute hunters for harvest success and safety reasons.

### **Refuge-specific regulations are:**

- 1) Permits are required and all state deer hunting regulations apply unless otherwise stated in the refuge deer hunt plan;
- 2) Hunting hours are as determined by state regulations;
- 3) Deer harvested must be checked at the Ottawa Refuge check station before leaving the premises;
- 4) Hunters may use blinds if provided or must otherwise stay within their designated hunting zone;
- 5) Each hunter may not possess more than 1 legal caliber/gauge weapon including longbows or crossbows;
- 6) Total hunt days will be determined by state regulations with a goal of at least 14 successful hunters per day;
- 7) Blinds accessible by physically challenged hunters will be provided;
- 8) Hunters will be selected through a lottery process for 1 hunt day with 2 partners of their choice;
- 9) Biological data will be collected and analyzed to ensure that the hunts are conducted in a biologically sound manner and meet refuge deer hunt management objectives;
- 10) Hunt dates and types will be coordinated with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and will receive state approval and will be listed in their statewide public meeting process;
- 11) An active refuge law enforcement program will ensure regulation compliance and will protect refuge resources;

- 12) An annual hunt evaluation report that addresses compatibility will be prepared by the refuge biologist and will be reviewed and approved by the refuge project leader;
- 13) Vehicle use will be limited to regularly maintained roads and vehicles must be parked in parking areas designated for each management zone during hunts;
- 14) Successful applicants wishing to transfer permits to another party must sign and date the permit in the appropriate section before release of the permit is valid;
- 15) During a special deer hunt, all hunters must wear a hat and vest or jacket that is colored blaze orange regardless of weapon used.

Guidance, procedures, and documentation consistent with the Ohio Revised Code are provided for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. A letter of concurrence from the Ohio Division of Wildlife will be sought.

#### **Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters and Interests:**

Statewide, the white-tailed deer population has increased to the point that Ohio conducts special antlerless deer and urban-zone hunting programs to supplement harvest during the regular season. These additional programs are designed to meet population target level objectives and fulfill management direction.

The population estimate at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge was determined from a winter white-tailed deer helicopter survey. Our estimates indicate that our current deer population is at 47.3 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>. In Ohio, buck harvest goals are based on landowner attitudes and desires, and deer-vehicle collision statistics. Extrapolation from Ohio's figures indicate pre-harvest density estimates for Lucas and Ottawa counties are 0.6 and 0.9 deer/square mile (unpubl. rep., Ohio Division of Wildlife 1993). In the Midwest agricultural region, statewide deer densities range from 1-15 deer/square mile (Gladfelter 1984). Our population estimate is 315% above the upper end of average densities reported for the agricultural Midwest region. DeCalesta (1994) suggested threshold deer densities for effect on habitat and songbirds within managed (100-year rotation) forests to be between 7.9 and 14.9 deer/km<sup>2</sup>. This converts to 5 and 9 deer/mi<sup>2</sup> at the lower and upper ends of the threshold scale, respectively.

Wildlife managers expend a lot of time and dollars responding to deer-vehicle accident and crop depredation complaints. Without a hunting program specifically used as a management tool, the refuge deer population may degrade habitat quality not only for that population, but for other important species. Additionally, the population is expected to impact the surrounding agricultural fields.

Controlled access, blind placement and hunting opportunity in designated management zones, and seasonal restrictions will limit human disturbance of wildlife and provide wildlife a refuge interior sanctuary.

The following stipulations are required to ensure compatibility:

1. Controlled access and seasonal stipulations
2. Law enforcement activities
3. Biological surveys

**Availability of Resources:** Staff, equipment and facilities are available to administer this use.

**Justification:** Sport hunting has been a long-standing tradition in the Lake Erie marshes region. Public interest, especially from the local agricultural community, supports the white-tailed deer population reduction goal. Statewide, the white-tailed deer population has increased to the point that Ohio conducts special antlerless deer and urban-zone hunting programs to supplement harvest during the regular season.

The white-tailed deer population (47.3 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>) at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge exceeds Ohio's pre-harvest density estimates (0.6 and 0.9 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>) for Lucas and Ottawa counties and the Midwest agricultural region's statewide deer density ranges (1-15 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>). It also exceeds the threshold deer densities for effect on habitat and songbirds within managed (100-year rotation) forests (5-9 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>).

Without a hunting program specifically used as a management tool, the refuge deer population is expected to adversely affect associated plant and animal communities, and hence alter ecological diversity and succession (Warren 1991). This may result in significant negative impacts on both plant and other animal communities including some of special concern or of Service trust responsibility. This impact has been well documented and accepted through research over a period of many years. A list of literature citations used to develop this compatibility determination is attached. The white-tailed deer hunting plan objectives will ultimately result in a deer density of 15 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>. This deer density will maintain the refuge deer population at the upper limit of a reasonable equilibrium with its environment as estimated for the Midwest agricultural region.

Antlerless deer harvest will be based on these considerations: status of management unit deer population in relation to goals (at goal, higher, or lower) as determined by inventories; and past effects of varying antlerless deer harvest levels on populations (gained through experience). As recommended by Creed et al. (1984), an antlerless deer to buck harvest ratio will eventually be established to maintain deer densities at optimum levels after initial herd reduction. Winter severity is not assumed to be limiting at the refuge's latitude and accordingly, such information is not used in southern

Michigan or Ohio. Therefore, the available lower Winter Severity Index values will be used to establish future harvest ratios.

Disturbance to other species of refuge wildlife will be minimal because the hunt will be held during periods of low migratory bird use. This disturbance will be periodic and of short duration. No evidence exists that such activity causes biological problems for these other species. The population reduction is expected to affect good health in the refuge deer herd and greatly reduce disease potential and nutritional deficiency problems.

Literature Cited

Creed, W.A. 1984. Harvest management: the Wisconsin experience, Chapter 11 in *White-tailed Deer: Ecology and Management*. L.K. Halls, ed. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA. 870pp.

deCalesta, D.S. 1994. Effect of white-tailed deer on songbirds within managed forests in Pennsylvania. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 58:711-718.

Gladfelter, H.L. 1984. Midwest agricultural region, Chapter 22 in *White-tailed Deer: Ecology and Management*. L.K. Halls, ed. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA. 870pp.

Warren, R.J. 1991. Ecological justification for controlling deer populations in eastern national parks. Abstracts: 56th North American Wildl. And Nat. Resour. Conf. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

**Determination:**

This use is compatible  X . This use is not compatible  \_\_\_\_\_ .

Determined by:  s/Larry D. Martin 8/22/00   
Project Leader Date

Reviewed by:  s/Steven J. Lenz (Acting) 9/5/00   
Refuge Supervisor (RFS1) Date

Concurred by:  s/Nita M. Fuller 9/12/00   
Regional Chief, Date  
National Wildlife Refuge System