

Eastern Massachusetts  
National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
73 Weir Hill Road  
Sudbury, MA 01776  
978/443 4661  
978/443 2898 Fax  
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/easternmanwrcomplex/>

Federal Relay Service  
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing  
800/877 8339

US Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov>

June 2011



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Eastern Massachusetts

*National Wildlife  
Refuge Complex*

*Hunt Regulations  
and Information*

*Assabet River National  
Wildlife Refuge*

*Great Meadows National  
Wildlife Refuge*

*Oxbow National Wildlife  
Refuge*

## Welcome



This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Welcome to the Assabet River, Great Meadows and Oxbow national wildlife refuges. These three refuges, along with five others, are part of the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex. There are more than 550 national wildlife refuges in the country. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers these refuges and is responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the people.

**In response to hunter feedback and to streamline the hunt program, some refuge regulations and procedures have changed. Hunters are encouraged to read this information carefully.**

It is imperative that you conduct yourself with the highest level of consideration for the safety and enjoyment of others. Please respect and observe refuge regulations, boundaries and safety zones. A lack of responsibility on your part could result in a reduction or closure of refuge hunting opportunities in the future.



*Gray squirrel*

## Hunt Seasons

Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge is open for the hunting of white-tailed deer (archery, muzzleloader, shotgun), spring turkey, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, Eastern cottontail rabbit, and gray squirrel. Great Meadows NWR is open for white-tailed deer (archery only) and waterfowl (ducks and geese). Oxbow NWR is open for white-tailed deer (archery, muzzleloader, shotgun), spring and fall turkey, waterfowl (ducks and geese), snipe, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, Eastern cottontail rabbit, and gray squirrel. NOT ALL PARTS OF EACH REFUGE ARE OPEN FOR EACH HUNT SEASON. Be familiar with the hunt maps and regulations to ensure you are hunting in an open area.

Archery permits are valid during shotgun and muzzleloader seasons.

Applicable refuge hunting dates and times correspond to state regulations. See state abstracts for details.

## Refuge Permits

All hunters are required to have a refuge-issued permit along with state licenses in their possession to scout or hunt on each refuge. Applications are typically available July 1st through July 31st at <http://www.easternmapermits.com>.

## Refuge Regulations and Information

The information provided below outlines refuge-specific hunt regulations. 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 regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32). Please contact us if you are

confused about any of our special regulations.

### *Closed Areas*

Not all areas of the three refuges are open for hunting. Please refer to the maps in this brochure to ensure that you are hunting on land or along rivers where hunting is allowed. Hunters must also comply with the 500-foot safety zone around occupied



*Duck  
taking  
flight*

buildings and 150-foot safety zone from public roads.

Waterfowl hunting at Great Meadows NWR is authorized between the buoys on the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. Waterfowl hunting on the rivers is allowed only between buoys 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, and 7 and 8. There are no buoys on the Nashua River as waterfowl hunting there is only allowed south of Route 2 to the Still River Depot Road boat launch.

### *Nature Trails*

Nature trails are located on all refuges in areas where hunting is allowed. Other outdoor enthusiasts

may be using the Nashua River, Sudbury River or Concord River during the hunting season. Please exercise caution when hunting on or near the rivers or near nature trails. It is your responsibility to



*Woodcock*

know where trails are located. Also realize that some people may wander off trails (even though they are not supposed to!). Please be aware that non-hunters may not know that hunting is allowed on some parts of the refuges.

### *Refuge Management Activities*

Refuge staff, volunteers and contractors may be working at any time on any of the refuges during hunting season. Our management activities for wildlife and habitat management are important and will continue to be conducted during the hunt season. We apologize if our activities disturb your hunt, but some disturbance will be unavoidable.

### *Parking*

You will receive a parking pass with your refuge permit. The number on this pass will correspond with your permit number. The pass must be visible on your dashboard at all times when parked in a designated parking lot.

We ask hunters to park in designated refuge hunt parking areas shown on the hunt maps. You may be fined or

## *Turkey*

towed if your vehicle blocks gates, roads or buildings. Some hunt areas have limited or no parking access—we encourage carpooling or being dropped off and picked up.

Some parking areas are on non-refuge lands (Rt. 225 boat launch in Bedford and Lake George Street in Devens) or are commonly used by the general public to access the Sudbury River. Please be courteous of others if parking in these areas. Also, ensure you are on refuge property before you begin hunting.

At Great Meadows NWR, hunters **MUST NOT** access the refuge from Town of Carlisle conservation lands. Parking is available off the driveway at 342 Maple Street, Carlisle. Please be courteous as this is a private residence.

## *Scouting*

Scouting may only be done on the four Sundays prior to opening day of the permitted season. Hunters engaged in scouting must carry state and refuge licenses and permits.

## *Hours*

Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than one and one-half hours before legal hunting hours and leave

no later than one and one-half hours after legal sunset.

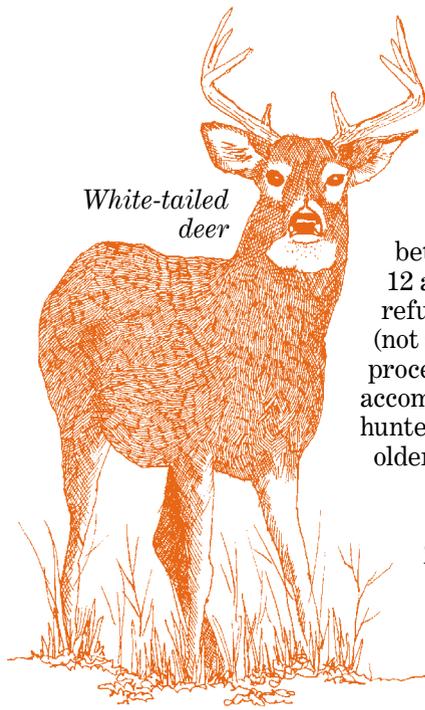
## *Tree stands*

Refuge hunters will be allowed to keep **one** tree stand on each refuge during the white-tailed deer archery, shotgun and muzzleloader seasons. Tree stands must be marked with the hunter's permit number in such a fashion that it can be visible from the ground. Tree stands may be put up as early as the first eligible scouting day of the permitted season and **must** be removed by January 15 of the permitted season. Any tree stand remaining on the refuge after January 15 may be confiscated. Climbers or ladder type tree stands are recommended. Nails, spikes, screws or other objects may not be driven into any tree to access or secure the stand.

Having a tree stand in place does not claim your right to a specific area of the refuge. Hunters must rely on good judgment and hunter ethics to avoid conflict. Tree stands left up are done so at the sole risk of the hunter. Stands left on the refuge may be secured with a lock. The

## *Eastern cottontail rabbit*





*White-tailed  
deer*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged property.

*Youth hunting*  
Any child

between the ages of 12 and 17 can receive a refuge hunting permit (not subject to lottery process) and must be accompanied by a licensed hunter 18 years of age or older when hunting.

*Non-hunting  
companion*

We no longer issue companion hunt permits. However, we will allow each permitted hunter to be accompanied

by one non-hunting companion. Non-hunting companions cannot engage in the act of hunting but they can help retrieve and carry downed game. All companions must carry personal identification with them and be willing to show it to any law enforcement official. Non-hunting companions must be close enough to the hunter to speak to them without raising their voice.

*Hunter orange*

During any season in which it is legal to hunt deer with a shotgun or muzzleloader, we require all hunters and companions to wear a minimum of 500 square inches of **solid-orange** clothing or material on their **chest, back and head (except if hunting waterfowl from a blind or boat)**. During all other times, hunters engaged in woodcock, ruffed grouse, squirrel, or cottontail rabbit hunting at Assabet

River or Oxbow NWRs, as well as snipe hunting at Oxbow NWR, are required to wear at the minimum a solid-orange hat. Camouflage orange alone is NOT permitted. This is a safety consideration for yourself as well as for refuge visitors, staff or contractors who may be in the area. During turkey season, hunters must wear an orange cap when moving to and between their hunt location.

*Refuge boundaries*

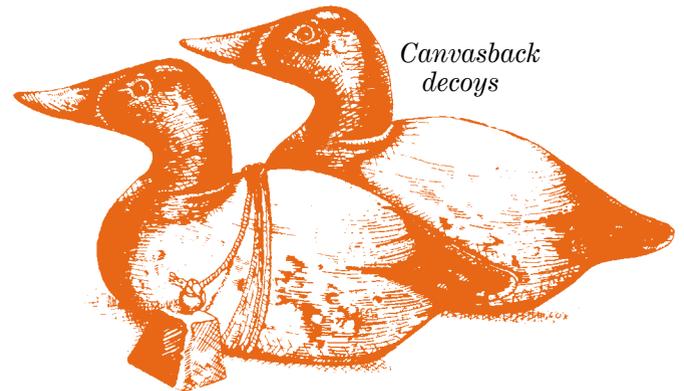
We have tried to clearly mark refuge boundaries. However, not all refuge areas are completely signed. Please refer to the refuge maps and call the refuge office if you need clarification on a refuge boundary.

*Approved shot*

Hunters may possess only approved non-toxic shot when hunting ruffed grouse, rabbit, squirrel and migratory birds.

*Dogs*

Dogs are not allowed on any of the refuges during scouting. For seasons



*Canvasback  
decoys*

where State regulations allow the use of dogs, we allow no more than two dogs per hunting party.

*Decoys*

Decoys can only be used while hunting waterfowl or turkey.

### *Trail markers*

We do not permit the marking of any tree, trail, or other refuge feature with flagging or paint. Hunters may use reflective tacks and other small reflective markers, which need to be removed at the end of the season. We encourage the use of a GPS to avoid putting up markers.

### *Law enforcement*

Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by federal or state law enforcement officers. Any member of the refuge staff may ask to see your refuge permit.

## **Prohibited Activities**

- Driving of deer by any means
- Littering
- Use of a spotlight or other artificial light to locate wildlife
- Baiting or hunting over bait or salt
- Use of electronic calls
- Driving or screwing a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree or hunting from any tree in which such an object has been driven
- Trimming or cutting vegetation greater than the diameter of a quarter
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting
- Use of ATVs, dirt bikes and/or other motorized vehicles
- Target practice
- Camping and campfires
- Overnight parking
- Searching for, or removing, any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles
- Dog training

## **An Important Message**

Our wildlife is a valuable resource. Laws and regulations are intended to protect them, while allowing for some consumptive use. Hunters are

encouraged to report any violations they may encounter to a State or federal employee.

The future of hunting on the refuges requires responsible hunter behavior and compliance with regulations. You can help us by complying with these regulations, reporting unethical hunter behavior and providing us with feedback.

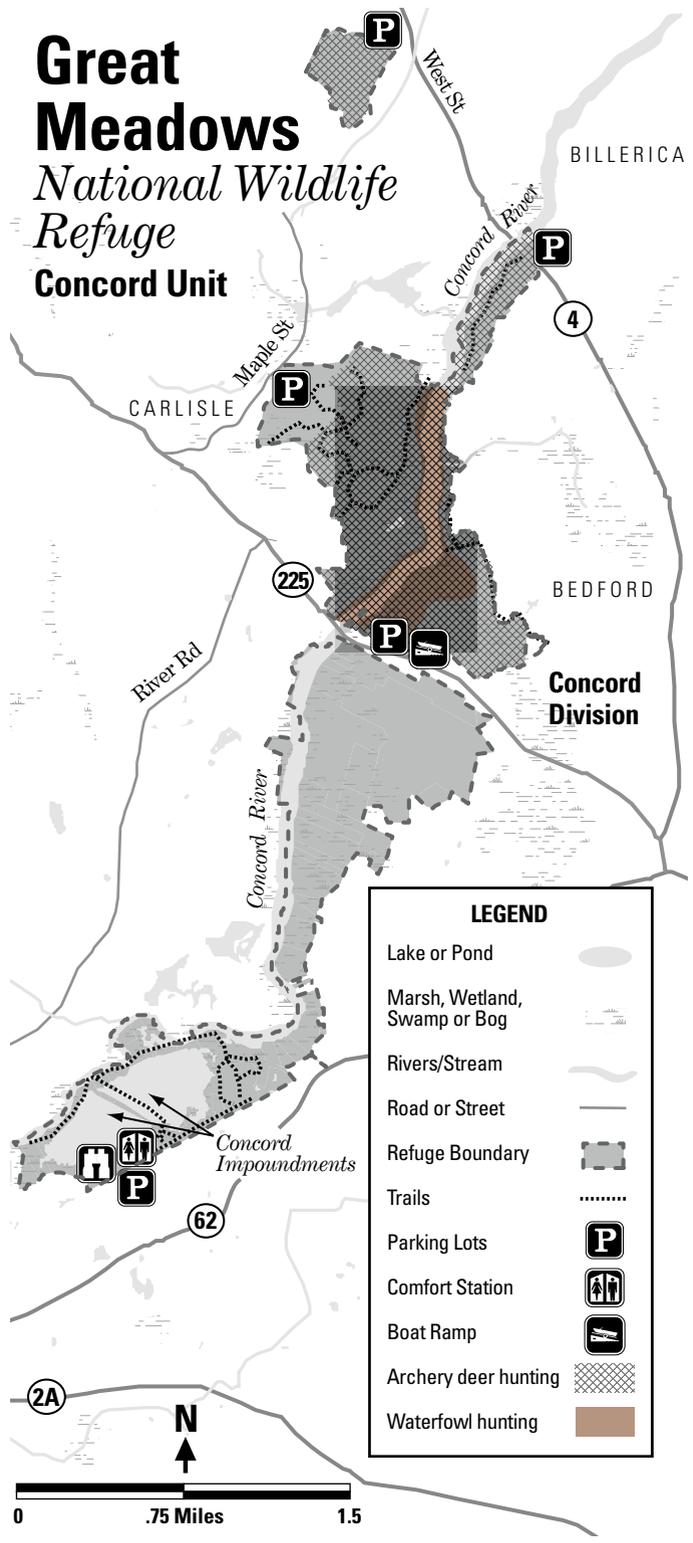
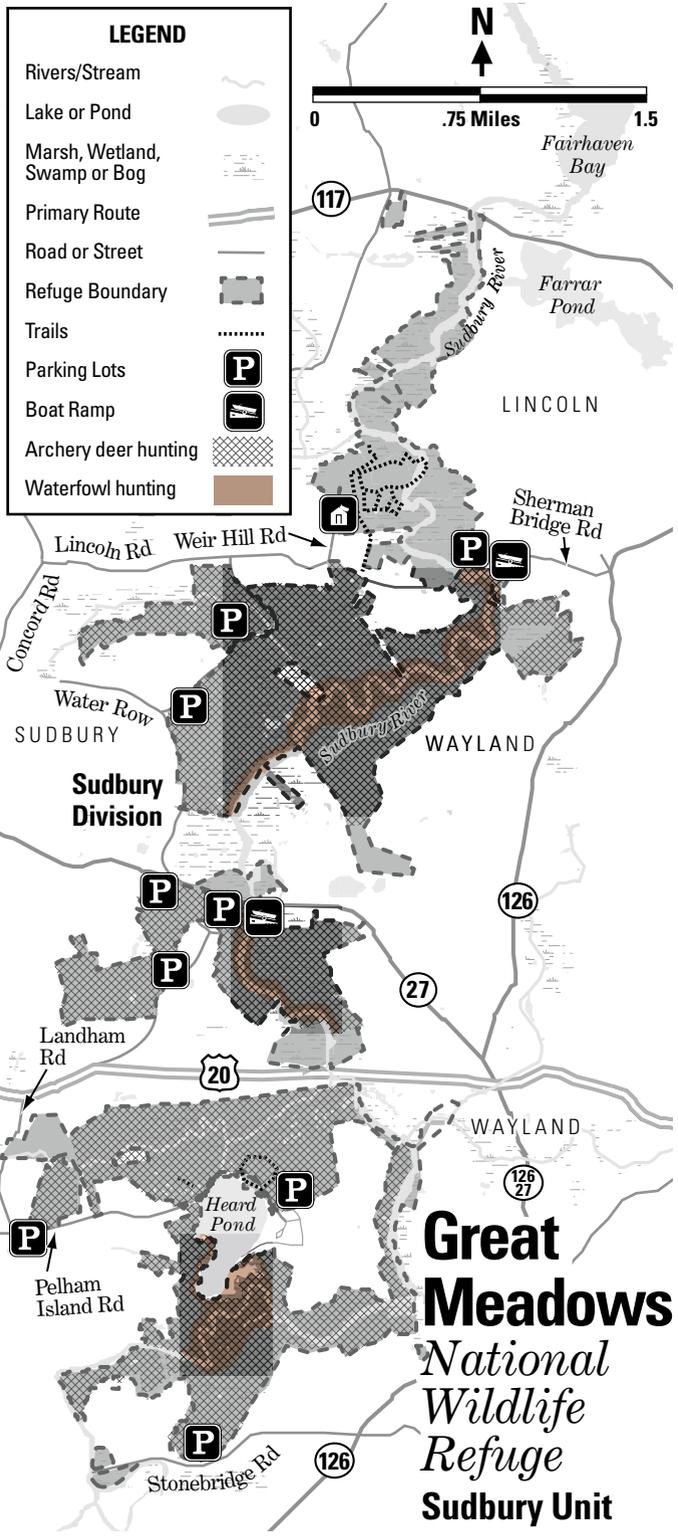
***Thank you. Have a safe and enjoyable hunting experience.***

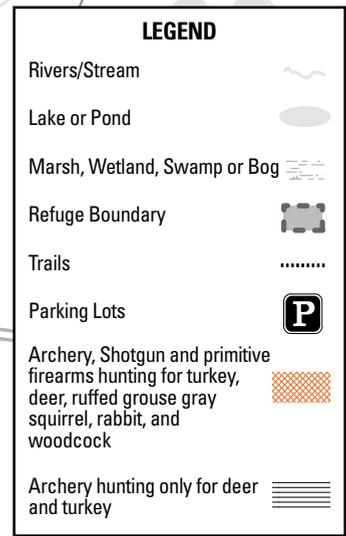
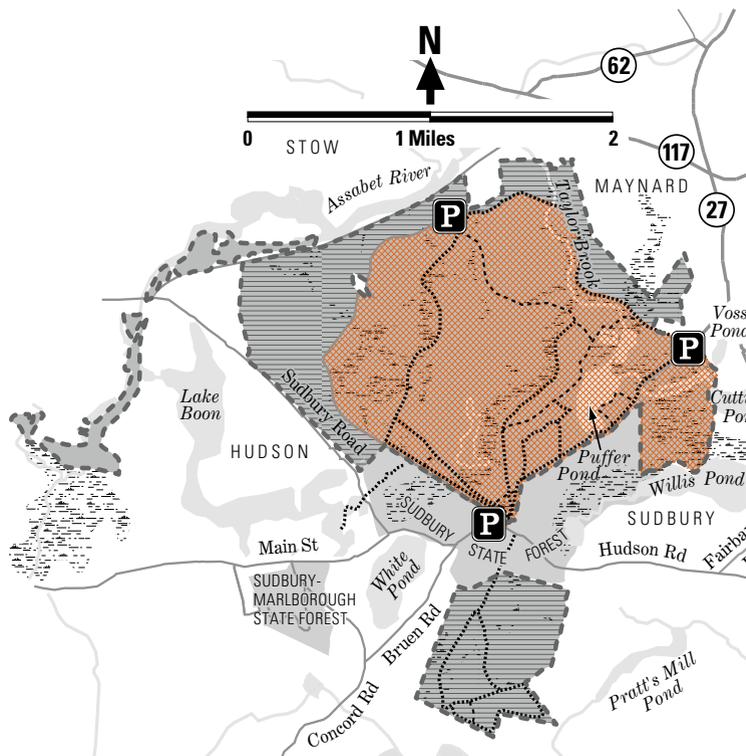
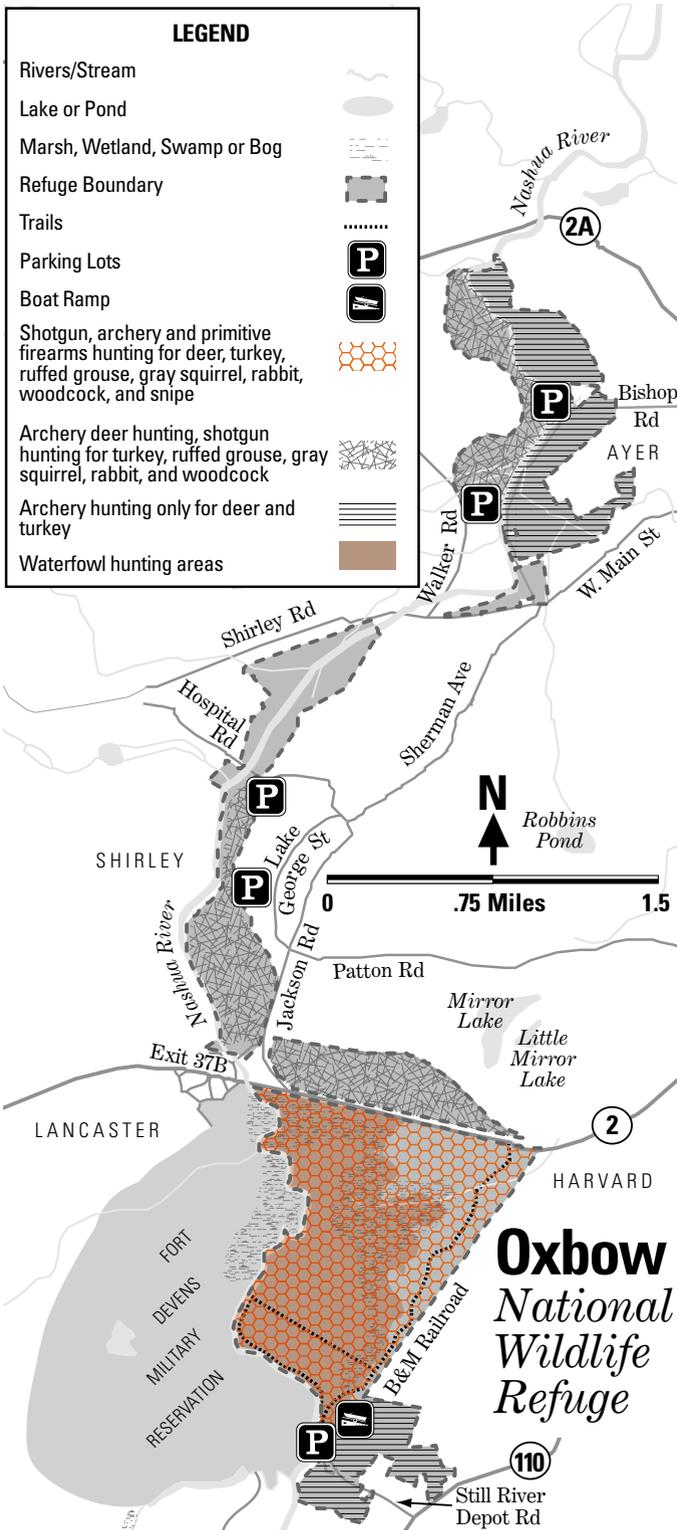
For information on how to apply, please contact us at:

Eastern Massachusetts National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex  
73 Weir Hill Road  
Sudbury, MA 01776  
978/443 4661  
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/easternmanwrcomplex/>  
To apply online, visit  
<http://www.easternmapermits.com>

*Ruffed  
grouse*







**Assabet River**  
*National Wildlife Refuge*