

# News Release



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## Service Proposes to Expand Hunting Opportunities on National Wildlife Refuges in Eight States

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced a proposal to open [Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge](#) in Minnesota to deer and turkey hunting for the first time, while expanding hunting activities at nine other refuges in eight states. If approved, the proposal would provide additional public hunting opportunities in fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.

“For decades, the National Wildlife Refuge System has offered some of the nation’s best public hunting and fishing, helping to connect generations of Americans to their sporting heritage. The Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to expanding these opportunities wherever they are compatible with refuge purposes,” said Service Director Dan Ashe.

In addition to the new deer and turkey program at Crane Meadows, other proposed changes include:

- [Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge](#), CO, would increase big game hunting by offering elk hunting for the first time. The refuge also allows migratory bird hunting, upland game hunting and fishing.
- [Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge](#), LA, would open for the first time to migratory bird hunting of waterfowl and coot. The refuge also allows fishing.
- [Coldwater River National Wildlife Refuge](#), MS, would open for the first time to migratory bird hunting of duck and geese; upland game hunting of squirrel, rabbit and raccoon; and big game hunting of deer and hogs. The refuge also permits fishing.
- [Currituck National Wildlife Refuge](#), NC, would open for the first time to big game hunting of deer and hogs.
- [Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge](#), MN, would increase acreage for migratory bird hunting, upland game hunting and big game hunting.

- [Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge](#), MN/IA, would increase acreage for migratory bird hunting, upland game hunting and big game hunting. The refuge would expand the species for migratory bird and upland game hunting.
- [Ouray National Wildlife Refuge](#), UT, would allow upland game hunting of turkey and big game hunting of elk for the first time. The refuge also allows migratory bird hunting and fishing.
- [Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge](#), MN, would open new areas to migratory bird hunting. It would allow big game hunting of turkey and deer for the first time. The refuge is also open for fishing.
- [Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge](#), TX, would open three new units to upland game hunting of squirrels and rabbits, and big game hunting of feral hogs and white-tailed deer. The refuge is also open for migratory bird hunting and fishing.

While definitions of hunting categories vary by refuge and state, migratory bird hunting generally includes ducks and geese. Upland game hunting may cover such animals as game birds, rabbit, squirrel, opossum and coyote. Big game hunting may include such animals as wild turkey, deer and feral hogs.

Hunting is an important tool for wildlife management, giving resource managers a valuable tool to control populations of some species that might otherwise exceed the carrying capacity of their habitat and threaten the well-being of other wildlife species, and in some instances, that of human health and safety.

Under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the Service can permit hunting and fishing as well as four other types of wildlife-dependent recreation where they are compatible with refuge purpose and mission. Hunting, within specified limits, is permitted on more than 300 national wildlife refuges. Fishing is permitted on more than 270 national wildlife refuges. Other wildlife-dependent recreation on national wildlife refuges includes wildlife photography, environmental education, wildlife observation and interpretation.

Notice of the proposal was published in the *Federal Register* on July 5, 2011; the public has until August 4, 2011, to provide comments. To comment on the proposed hunting rule changes, please visit <http://frwebgate1.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/PDFgate.cgi?WAISdocID=o3Y9mC/1/2/0&WAISAction=retrieve>.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/usfws](http://www.facebook.com/usfws), follow our tweets at [www.twitter.com/usfwshq](http://www.twitter.com/usfwshq), watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>*