

# Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) - 2025-26 Trapping Information



## REFUGE TRAPPING PROGRAM

Furbearer trapping on Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (HNWR) is an important management tool used to meet refuge goals and objectives. Wetland habitats, dike maintenance, and migratory bird management are influenced by furbearer management. The primary target species of the refuge trapping program are muskrat and raccoon, but other species can be taken pursuant to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Trapping regulations.

A joint public trapping auction for the Horicon Marsh, including the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) and the Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area (WIDNR) will be held at the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, W4279 Headquarters Rd. Mayville, WI on **Wednesday, October 15, 2025**. Doors will open at 5 p.m. to allow trappers the opportunity to ask questions and review the information. The auction will begin promptly at 6 p.m. USFWS and DNR personnel will review trapping seasons and regulations, unit boundaries, special conditions, and restrictions of each unit before the bidding starts.

All NWR and DNR trapping units will be sold to the highest bidder, with a limit of one unit per trapper. Bidders must be at least 18 years of age at the time of the auction. Trappers who are bidding must be present at the auction and will be required to make full payment at that time. The refuge will accept payments by check, money order, debit card, or credit card. No cash will be accepted. Trapping permits will be issued to the successful bidders following the auction.

Horicon NWR trapping units are comprised of the following:

### **Wetland Units**

Eleven wetland trapping units will be auctioned off on the Horicon NWR for the 2025-26 trapping season. A trapper, including the helper, will be allowed one trapping unit on the Horicon Marsh and may not have a unit on both the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge and the Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area. Boats with electric motors and skiffs are allowed in all units. ATVs may be used over the ice but must be equipped with flotation devices.

### **Senior/Disabled Trapping Unit**

Unit 7/Hiking Trails will be set aside for seniors and/or trappers with a disability. To be eligible for the drawing seniors must be age 62 + and trappers with disabilities must have a disabled permit from the DNR. Trappers must meet the age requirement before the start of the trapping season. A free permit will be issued to two trappers randomly drawn at the auction. Trappers do not have to be present at the drawing and can enter the drawing by emailing/calling a request to the Horicon NWR contact. The area will not be divided. Each trapper may have one helper who also must meet the age requirements. *No pre-staking will be allowed in the Youth and Senior/Disabled trapping units since the areas are shared.*

### **Youth Trapping Unit**

Any interested youth between the ages of 12 and 17 will be allowed to trap Unit 11/Frankfurth. No random drawing will be held, but the youth must obtain a free refuge permit. Adult supervisors may accompany the youth trappers but will not be allowed to physically assist in trapping. *No pre-staking will be allowed in the Youth and Senior/Disabled trapping units since the areas are shared.*

## **Upland Permits**

Upland trapping permits will be given free of charge to any person with a valid DNR trapping license and will be included with all wetland trapping permits. Upland trappers are restricted to the designated areas as outlined on the upland trapping map.

***\*\* NEW administrative procedures for the 2025 Season are outlined below:\*\****

## **Maximum Bids**

A max bid of \$1,500 will be set for all trapping units.

A max bid will allow more trappers the opportunity to bid and will reflect today's fur market value. If multiple trappers bid the maximum amount, those bidders will be entered into a random drawing to determine the winning bid. Minimum bid requirement will remain \$25.

## **Mentorship Opportunities**

Youth and novice trappers will be allowed to accompany permittees in all trapping units. The youth/novice trapper must be listed on the permit and enrolled or have completed a WI-DNR hunter trapper education program.

## **Assisting Trappers with Disabilities**

A permittee who holds a class A, B, C, or D hunting permit may be accompanied by and receive assistance from any person who possesses a valid trapping authorization in all trapping units (in addition to the one helper currently allowed). This includes assisting with trap setting, trap checking, tagging, and registration of these species if the disabled person has been issued the appropriate approval to do so. The accompanying person must be listed on the permit and follow all trapping rules and regulations. Ensuring safe access is of utmost priority. Please reach out directly to discuss individual alternative accommodation needs.

## **TRAPPING SPECIES AND SEASONS**

### ***Raccoon, fox, coyote, weasel, skunk, opossum (no fisher or bobcat trapping on the refuge):***

Opens on Oct. 18, 2025, and closes on Feb. 15, 2026. Non-residents may not trap raccoons until Nov. 1, as per state trapping regulations. No open marsh trapping (>25 yards from the shoreline/dike toe) until Dec 1.

***Mink and muskrat:*** Follows State of Wisconsin season dates for Central Zone. Opens on Oct. 25, 2025, and closes on Mar. 22, 2026. No open marsh trapping (>25 yards from the shoreline/dike toe) until Dec. 1.

***Beaver and otter:*** Opens on Nov. 1, 2025, and closes on Mar. 22, 2026. No open marsh trapping (>25 yards from the shoreline/dike toe) until Dec. 1.

## **SCOUTING INFORMATION**

Scouting on refuge areas that will be open to trapping will be allowed on Tuesday, Oct. 14, and Wednesday, Oct. 15; daylight hours only. Interested trappers must obtain a scouting permit before accessing the units. Scouting permits and unit maps may be picked up outdoors at the main entrance to the Horicon NWR Visitor Center on the scouting days. Scouting permits may also be requested via phone or email.

## **OTHER TRAPPING INFORMATION – See Special Trapping Regulations**

### **Horicon NWR Trapping Program Contact Information:**

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