

# **Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge**

## **Turkey Hunting Regulations 2026**

These regulations apply to the 2026 turkey hunt on Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.

The regulations listed in this document supplement the general regulations that govern hunting on national wildlife refuges set forth in [Title 50: Part 27 and 32, Code of Federal Regulations](#). Hunting will be in accordance with State regulations and subject to the following conditions and regulations. Failure to abide by any Federal laws, State laws, or the terms and conditions under which a hunt permit is issued may result in the revocation of the permit and hunting privileges.

Please remember! Your hunt permit authorizes you to take specified game only. Harming or needlessly disturbing any other wildlife is a violation of refuge regulations.

### **General Information**

Season bag limits: 1 bearded Eastern wild turkey.

Hunting Season: April 18, 21, and 28, May 2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19 and 23.

Youth Hunt: Saturday, April 11.

Hunting Hours: April 18 through May 9: One half hour before sunrise to noon. May 12 through May 23 and April 11: One half hour before sunrise to sunset.

A daily maximum of 13 hunters will be selected for each of the 10 turkey hunting days. The maximum number of hunters for each area are: One for Area B1\*(hunters with a permanent disability), two for Area M2, one for Area N, two for Area R, two for Area S, two for Area T, and three for Area U.

### **Application Guidelines**

You must apply for the refuge turkey hunt through [Recreation.gov](#). See table below for important dates.

Permits, other than the youth and disabled hunts, will be awarded through a lottery. A hunter will be selected for one day only. If any hunts are unclaimed by the release date, they will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Permit and License Requirements**

Each hunter must have the following in his/her possession while hunting and scouting and display them upon request.

1. Valid Maryland hunting license.
2. Valid government-issued photo identification.
3. Valid refuge turkey hunt permit.

All hunters must obtain a permit regardless of age. Permits are non-transferable. There will be no standbys.

Each permitted hunter may be accompanied by a non-hunting assistant. The non-hunting assistant must remain within sight and normal voice contact of the hunter. Non-hunting assistants must not be afield with a hunting firearm, bow, or other hunting device, must read the turkey hunting regulations, and must sign the permit of the person they are assisting in ink. Non-hunting assistants must possess a valid government-issued photo identification on their person. Non-hunting assistants who call and/or set up decoys must possess a valid Maryland hunting license.

## **Scouting**

You may only scout within your permitted hunt area. Scouting will be permitted within your hunt area on the day before your hunt, and on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 a.m. until sunset.

## **Blinds**

Temporary blinds are allowed on the refuge. Blinds may be put in place during scout days. Refuge blinds will not be provided for hunters in Area B1. Unoccupied blinds must be clearly tagged with your MD DNR ID number and year. The refuge assumes no responsibility for your blind. Blinds must be removed by the end of your hunt.

## **Youth Turkey Hunt**

The Youth Turkey Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Youth hunters must be 16 years of age or younger to participate and must be accompanied by only one licensed or licensed exempt, unarmed adult, 21 years of age or older. Scouting for the Youth Turkey Hunt will be permitted on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 a.m. until sunset.

## **Hunters with Disabilities**

Hunters wishing to qualify for the hunt in Area B1 must have a Federal Access Pass when they apply. Hunters with a permanent disability may have a non-hunting assistant as described above. We require assistants to remain within sight and normal voice contact. To hunt from a vehicle, including ATVs, hunters are required to have a U (Universal Disability Pass) designation on their MD State hunting license or a handicap placard and a Universal Disability Pass (formerly known as a "hunt from vehicle" permit), and a Federal Interagency Access Pass.

## Area B1 Access Regulations

- We only allow hunters with a permanent disability to operate ATV/ORVs. If the hunter with a disability is unable to physically do so, the assistant may operate the ATV/ORV.
- Assistants may not operate an ATV/ORV without being accompanied on the same ATV/ORV by a hunter with a disability.
- We only allow ATV/ORVs to be operated on established routes of travel and around field edges.
- We do not allow ATV/ORVs to be operated in excess of 10 MPH.
- All ATV operators and passengers must wear a DOT approved helmet and eye protection.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS

### Tagging and Checking

- All turkeys harvested will count toward the State's regional limit and must be tagged, recorded, and checked in according to Maryland State guidelines using **code 543**.

### Access Regulations

- Hunters may not enter the refuge before 4:00 a.m. on hunt days and must exit the refuge no later than two hours after legal shooting hours.
- The use of bicycles is permitted on established roads and trails.
- Access by boat and the use of ATVs is prohibited.
- The maximum speed limit on all refuge unpaved roads is 15 MPH.
- Parked vehicles may not impede any road traffic.
- Parking in front of any gate is prohibited.
- You must notify and receive permission from a Service law enforcement officer, refuge manager, or designee if you need to enter a refuge closed area or another hunting area for which you do not possess a valid permit to retrieve game.

### Other Regulations

- We prohibit shooting a projectile from a firearm, muzzleloader, bow, or crossbow from, down, or across any refuge road; a refuge road is any road that is traveled by vehicular traffic.
- Shooting or hunting within 150 yards of any occupied structure is prohibited.
- Automatic, motion-activated, game, or trail cameras are prohibited on the refuge.
- Commercial guiding, outfitting, or advertising is prohibited.
- Cutting vegetation for any purpose is prohibited.
- Pets and open fires are prohibited.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.
- All personal property including decoys and blinds must be removed by the end of the hunt day.
- All other State hunting and refuge regulations apply.
- You may not leave or remove anything from a national wildlife refuge, including sheds and feathers.

Report accidents, injuries, and illegal activity to Federal Wildlife Officer Coles at **443-737-7678**.

## TABLE OF IMPORTANT DATES

<b>DATES</b>	<b>INFORMATION</b>
February 17, 2026	Lottery Opens at 10 am EST
March 3, 2026	Lottery Closes at 10 am EST
March 9, 2026	Applicants notified of lottery results at 4 pm EST
March 9, 2026 - March 19, 2026	Acceptance period opens at 4 pm EST on 3/9/2026 and closes at 11:59 pm EST on 3/19/2026
March 20, 2026	Released inventory/youth and disabled hunt inventory opens at 10 am EST
March 28, 2026	Scout dates from 4 am EST - Sunset
March 29, 2026	Scout dates from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 4, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 5, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 10, 2026	Scout date for Youth Hunt from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 11, 2026	Youth Hunt date
April 12, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 17, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 18, 2026	Hunt date
April 20, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 21, 2026	Hunt date
April 27, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
April 28, 2026	Hunt date
May 1, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 2, 2026	Hunt date
May 4, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 5, 2026	Hunt date
May 8, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 9, 2026	Hunt date
May 11, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 12, 2026	Hunt date
May 15, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 16, 2026	Hunt date
May 18, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 19, 2026	Hunt date
May 22, 2026	Scout date from 4 am EST - Sunset
May 23, 2026	Hunt date

# TURKEY HUNT UNITS

## BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

