

# Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge

## Hunting and Fishing Information



### Hunting Regulations Table

Hunting is in accordance with State regulations. In addition, Refuge-specific regulations must be followed and are listed in the table below.

Activity	Season Dates	Hunt Areas	Other Regulations
<b>Mule deer, white-tailed deer</b>	State regulations apply.	See map	Hunters can access the Refuge 2 hours prior to sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset. Temporary blinds and stands are allowed and must be removed at the end of each day.
<b>Pronghorn</b>	Archery pronghorn hunting begins September 1.	See map	Hunters can access the Refuge 2 hours prior to sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset. Temporary blinds and stands are allowed and must be removed at the end of each day.
<b>Grouse, pheasant</b>	State regulations apply.	See map	Non-toxic shot required.
<b>Migratory Birds (crow, dove, duck, goose, merganser, rail, snipe)</b>	Open during State-defined open seasons that occur between September 1 through March 15.	See map (one unit only)	State regulations apply.
<b>Cottontail rabbit, jackrabbit</b>	Open during State-defined open seasons that occur between September 1 through March 15.	See map	State regulations apply.

The Blue Goose is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.



### Welcome

Welcome to Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The 45,849-acre Refuge was established in 1931 as a refuge and breeding ground for birds and wild animals. The native prairie landscape, interspersed with wetlands, attracts an abundance of wildlife.

### General Information

Crescent Lake NWR is located in the southwestern portion of the Nebraska Sandhills, approximately 28 miles north of Oshkosh, Nebraska.

The Refuge is open during daylight hours only, with two exceptions: Hunters may enter the Refuge 2 hours before sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset; anglers may enter the Refuge 1 hour before sunrise and remain until 1 hour after sunset.

Vehicles and bicycles are allowed only on roads that are open to the public and in parking areas. Most trails require the use of a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

Driving off roads and trails is prohibited, and travel in the wilderness area is by foot or horseback only.

Pets must be leashed, except dogs used for bird hunting during appropriate hunting seasons.

### Prohibited Activities

- Off-road vehicle use.
- Vehicles, bicycles, and the use of wheeled carts for removing or transporting game harvested in the proposed wilderness area.
- Use of boats with internal combustion (gas-powered) motors are prohibited on all Refuge waters except Blue Lake.
- Driving on frozen lakes.
- Possession of alcoholic beverages.
- Commercial guiding or use of a commercial guide to hunt or fish.
- Target shooting.

- Tree stands, tree-climbing spikes, or screw-in steps that penetrate bark and cause damage to the tree.
- Camping and open fires.
- Swimming.
- Possession or use of live or dead minnows.
- Shooting from a motor vehicle or roadway.
- Use of ATVs and UTVs.
- Flying drones over the Refuge.

### Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands 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).

### Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Hunting and fishing are allowed on the Refuge in accordance with State regulations and the Refuge-specific regulations in this brochure.

Hunters and anglers may hunt or fish only in areas open to those activities as shown on the map.

The Refuge is open to hunting September 1 through March 15 according to State and Refuge regulations. Please see the hunting regulations table for more information.

Non-toxic shot is required when hunting with a shotgun.

Island Lake, Crane Lake, Smith Lake, and Blue Lake are open to fishing year-round, during daylight hours, in accordance with State regulations.

Non-motorized boats are allowed on all waters open to hunting and fishing. Boats with electric motors only are allowed on Island Lake, Smith Lake, and Crane Lake. Boats with internal combustion (gas-powered) motors are allowed only on Blue Lake.

**Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge**  
10630 Road 181  
Ellsworth, NE 69340

308-762-4893  
[crescentlake@fws.gov](mailto:crescentlake@fws.gov)  
[www.fws.gov/refuge/crescent\\_lake/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/crescent_lake/)

**For State Transfer Relay Service**  
TTY / Voice: 711

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
[www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

**For Refuge Information**  
1-800-344-WILD

**October 2021**

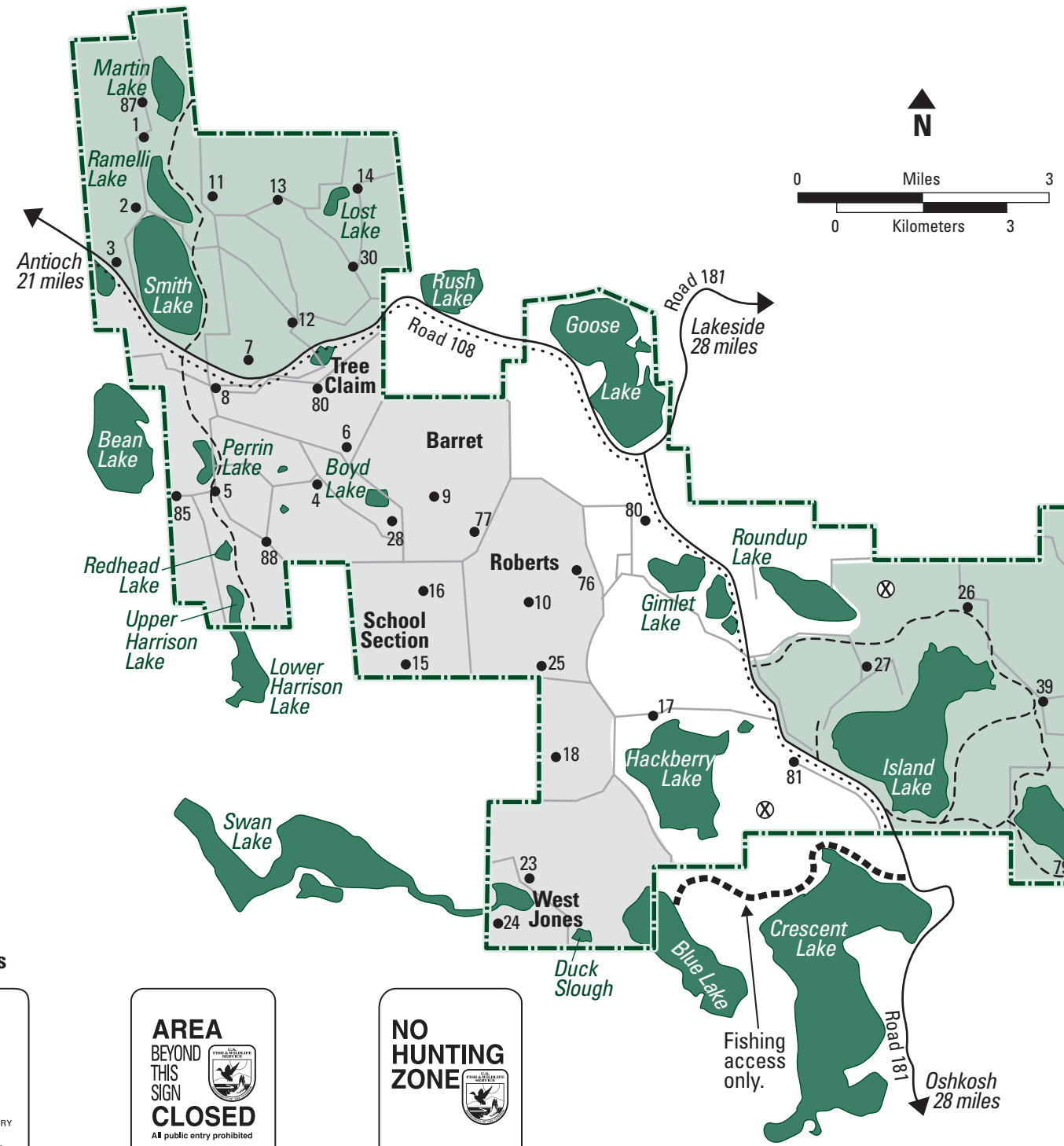
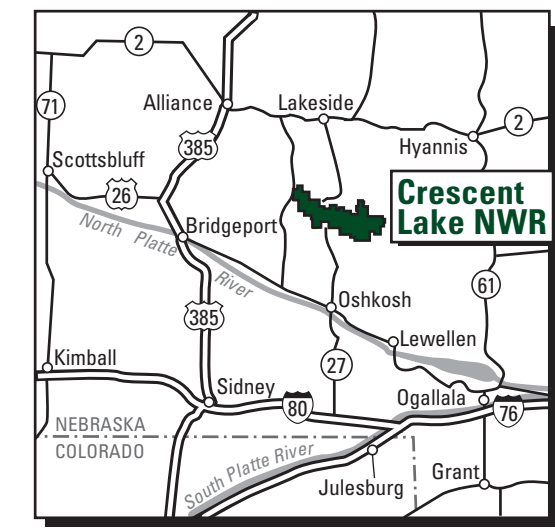


### Accessibility

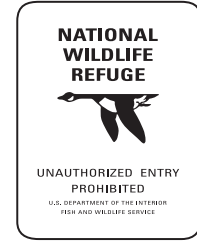
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# Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Refuge boundary	Refuge headquarters
Public road	- Information kiosk
Auto tour route	- Accessible restroom
4WD only (required)	- Hiking trail
Public trails (4WD recommended)	- Accessible nature trail
Historic trail	Information kiosk
Fences	Lake open to fishing
Open to hunting	14 ● Windmill / solar well
Open to hunting <b>except</b> migratory birds	⊗ Closed fire tower
Open to hunting (Proposed wilderness area – foot travel or horseback only)	
Closed to hunting	



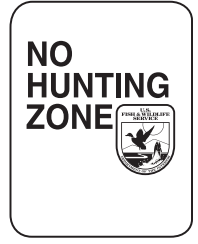
### Refuge Signs



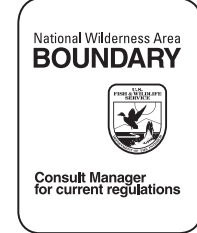
Refuge boundary sign – area behind these signs are Refuge lands.



Closed area sign – all public entry prohibited.



No hunting is allowed in the area behind these signs.



Motorized vehicles are prohibited within the proposed Wilderness Area.



Only four-wheel drive vehicles permitted on this trail.



Motorized vehicles are allowed on mowed trails only.

### Origin of Refuge Location Names

This part of the Nebraska Sandhills was settled under the Kinkaid Act of 1904, a modification to the Homestead Act. The Kinkaid Act allowed settlers to homestead 640 acres rather than the standard 160 acres allowed under the original Homestead Act. Unfortunately, even 640 acres was not a viable size in the Sandhills. Many homesteads were sold or abandoned, and the land was soon consolidated into larger ranches.

Most of the Refuge location names shown in the map (e.g., Roberts, west of Refuge headquarters) are named for the homesteader who first settled that meadow, flat, or valley.

