

Ohio River Islands

National Wildlife Refuge

Free Hunting Permit and Regulations 2025-2026

Established in 1990, the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 560 refuges across the nation administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. With 22 islands and four mainland tracts scattered along 362 miles of the Ohio River in three states, the refuge protects and conserves habitat for native wildlife in one of our nation's busiest inland waterways.

This document provides regulations for hunting on the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge and serves as a Refuge Annual Hunt Permit when signed. Regulations governing hunting on national wildlife refuges can be referenced in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

In addition, all state hunting regulations and seasons apply on the refuge. Hunters please note, the refuge spans across three states. You are responsible for knowing the regulations for the state in which you are hunting.

Twenty refuge islands and two mainland properties are open to hunting. See "Refuge Property Hunt Status" section for more information. A boat is needed to access the islands with the exception of Middle Island.

Permit and License Requirements

While hunting on the refuge, all hunters are required to have in their possession:

- A photo ID
- Appropriate state hunting licenses
- A signed Refuge Annual Hunt Permit (this document)

Waterfowl hunters are additionally required to have in their possession:

- A Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) number
- A signed Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation (Duck) Stamp

Refuge Annual Hunt Permit

Hunters may print a Refuge Annual Hunt Permit from our website: www.fws.gov/refuge/ohio_river_islands or pick up a copy in person at the refuge visitor center (address on back page). Permit applicants must fill in their name, address, telephone number, and signature before the permit is valid.

Permitted Species

We allow hunting for all species consistent with state regulations, with the following exceptions: reptiles, amphibians, sandhill crane, porcupine, snowshoe hare, elk, and wild boar.

General Hunt Regulations

- All state hunting regulations are in effect.
- The Refuge is open from one hour before legal sunrise until one hour after legal sunset.

All hunting is closed before September 6, 2025 and after May 24, 2026.

- Deer, turkey, and bear hunting is open to archery only.
- It is unlawful to drive a nail, spike, climbing screws, or other metal object into any tree or to hunt from any tree where such objects have been driven.

- No motorized vehicles permitted off refuge roads.

- Littering is prohibited. This includes but not limited to leaving shell casings, flagging, reflectors, and paint.

- The use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

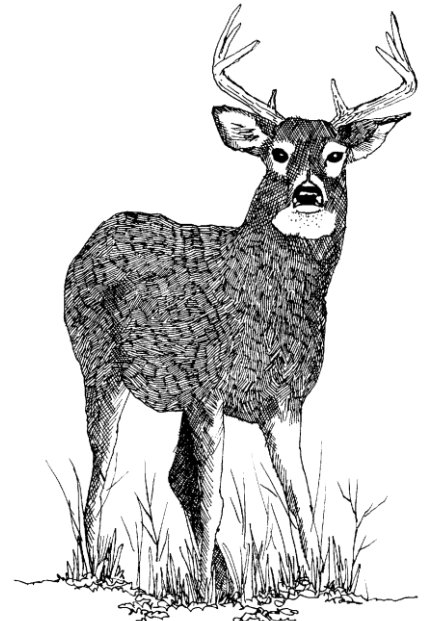
- Organized deer drives are prohibited. A drive is defined as an act of chasing, pursuing, disturbing, or otherwise directing deer so as to make the animals more susceptible to harvest.

- Only portable stands and blinds may be used.

- Baiting is prohibited.

- Camping, building fires, mowing, and tree cutting are not permitted.

- All accidents or injuries must be reported to the refuge headquarters as soon as possible, tel. 304/375 2923.
In the event of a serious emergency, call 911 before contacting the



| Refuge Property Hunt Status | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Property (River Mile / Acres Open to Hunting) | Big Game (Archery) | Migratory Birds | Upland Game |
| ✓ = Hunting Allowed | | | |
| Pennsylvania | | | |
| Phillis Is. (35/39) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Georgetown Is. (38/16) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| West Virginia | | | |
| Buffalo Creek Tract (75/0) | Closed to all hunting | | |
| Wheeling Is. (89/0) | Closed to all hunting | | |
| Captina Mainland Tract (108/138) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Captina Is. (108/17) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fish Creek Is. (113/48) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Paden Is. (132/81) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Williamson Is. (134/126) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Witten Towhead (135/8) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Crab Is. (138/0) | Closed to all hunting | | |
| Wells Is. (139/43) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mill Creek Is. (141/19) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Grandview Is. (143/8) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Grape/Bat Is. (152/45) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Middle Is. (153/160) | *✓ | *✓ | *✓ |
| Broadback Is. (159/51) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Buckley Is. (169/160) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Buckley Mainland (169/40) | **✓ | | |
| Muskingum Is. (175/93) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Muskingum Mainland (175/0) | Closed to all hunting | | |
| Neal Is. (181/104) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Buffington Is. (216/162) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Letart Is. (235/29) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Kentucky | | | |
| Manchester #1 Is. (395/20) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Manchester #2 Is. (395/94) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

An Important Message

The future of hunting on this refuge requires responsible hunter behavior and compliance with regulations. The Refuge Hunt Permit authorizes hunters to take specified game only. Harming or needlessly disturbing any other wildlife including birds, mammals, turtles, frogs, and snakes is a violation of refuge regulations and is a cause for prosecution.

Hunter Notice

Non-toxic ammunition is required because it minimizes the deposition of lead into refuge wetlands and bodies of water, reducing the risk of lead poisoning to waterfowl and other wildlife.

To report violations, please contact:

Federal Wildlife Officer
Cell Phone: 304/834 0449
or 304/375 2923 ext. 113

Ohio River Islands
National Wildlife Refuge
3982 Waverly Road
Williamstown, WV 26187
304/375 2923
Email: OhioRiverIslands@fws.gov
Website:
www.fws.gov/refuge/ohio_river_islands

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard of hearing
1 800/877 8339
West Virginia Relay Center
1 800/982 8771 - TDD
1 800/828 1140 - Voice

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD (9453)
www.fws.gov



Refuge islands and mainland properties are marked by refuge boundary signs.

* See maps on island for zoned area where hunting is permitted.

** See maps at trailhead for zoned area where hunting is permitted.

Hunter Please Note - Report Bird Band Numbers -- Call Toll Free 1 800/327 BAND (2263)

By reporting band numbers you will be helping to manage our continental waterfowl resource. When you call the Bird Banding Lab, you will be asked when and where you encountered the bird. You will then be told when and where the bird was banded. A certificate of appreciation with additional information will be mailed to you.

I have read and understand this document and agree to abide by the regulations governing hunting on the refuge.
This permit expires May 24, 2026

Printed Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____ Guardian Signature: _____

(Required for hunters under 18 years of age)



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Ohio River Islands

National Wildlife Refuge

- ▲ Refuge Island - Owned
- △ Refuge Island - Partially owned
- △ Non-Refuge Island

