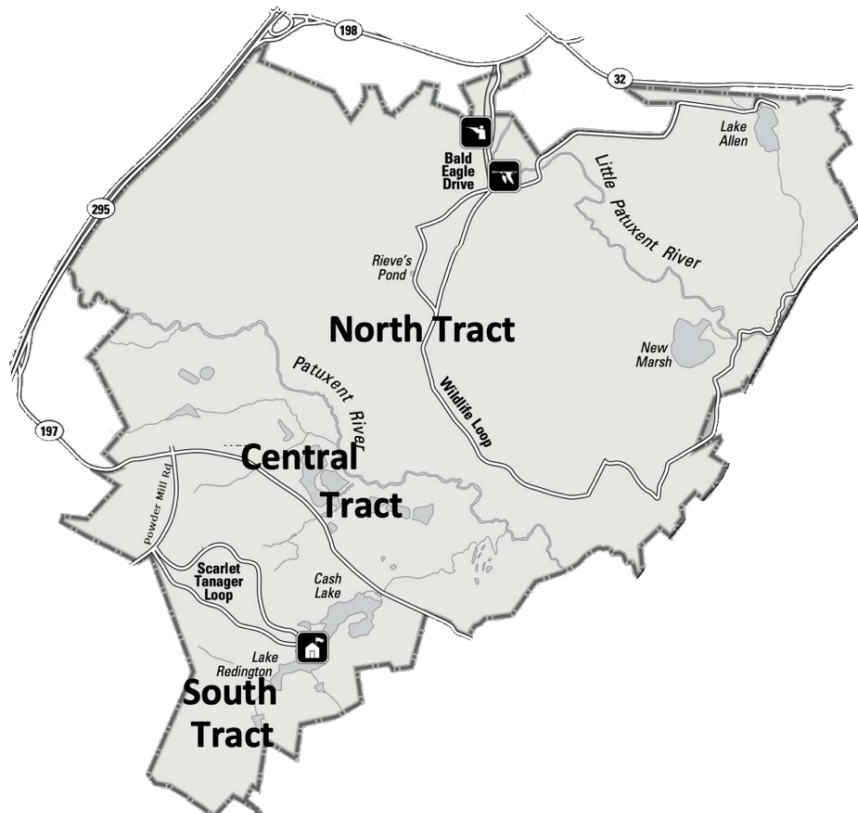




U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Patuxent Research Refuge

Hunting Guidelines 2025-2026 Season



Have a Safe and Enjoyable Hunting Season!


Table of Contents

GOALS OF THE HUNTING PROGRAM	1
HUNTER REQUIREMENTS	1
HUNTING GUIDELINE CHANGES FOR THIS YEAR:	1
I. PERMITS, FEES, PENALTIES	3
II. HOURS OF OPERATION	4
III. HUNTING AREAS	4
IV. CHECK-IN / CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES	6
V. GENERAL HUNTING GUIDELINES	6
VI. SCOUTING.....	7
VII. OBSERVERS	8
VIII. WHITE TAIL DEER HUNTING	8
IX. MIGRATORY/WATERFOWL GAME BIRD HUNTING	9
X. UPLAND GAME HUNTING	9
XI. WILD TURKEY HUNTING.....	9
XII. SPECIAL HUNTS	9
XIII. PROHIBITED ITEMS AND ACTIVITIES	12
XIV. SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS	14
XV. SAFETY INFORMATION	15

Patuxent Research Refuge Hunting Guidelines 2025-2026 Season

Hunting at Patuxent Research Refuge is a privilege!

All State of Maryland and federal hunting regulations are in effect unless otherwise noted here or posted at the North Tract Hunting Control Station.

 *Beginning November 29, 2025, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), in coordination with the Federal law enforcement partners, will expand Federal law enforcement partners use of the firing ranges located on the North Tract. To ensure everyone's safety during range operations, access to five hunting zones—Zones D, E, F, G and H—will be closed to the public except for specified dates. Zone Z will be archery only hunting when hunting for deer, turkey, and small game. Waterfowl hunting can continue to use firearms as permitted.*


GOALS OF THE HUNTING PROGRAM

- Provide an opportunity for participation in a traditional outdoor activity.
- Provide the public an opportunity to participate in wildlife dependent recreation.
- Conservation of wildlife and land.
- Helps ensure environmental health for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Provide increased opportunities for families to experience compatible wildlife dependent recreation, particularly opportunities for parents and children to safely engage in a traditional outdoor activity.
- Allows monitoring the status of trends of wildlife on the Refuge.

HUNTER REQUIREMENTS

- **Comply with Federal and Maryland State Hunting Regulations and Laws**
- **Read and understand these guidelines prior to hunting.**
- **Obtain a Refuge Hunt Permit to hunt or scout on the Refuge.**
- **Close all interior gates upon entering or exiting Refuge roads regardless of the position of the gate when they come to it.**
- **Stay within their designated area boundaries – check maps for restricted areas such as cemeteries and Range 1 buffer zones.**
- **Remove all equipment, trail cams, flagging, ammunition, and trash when leaving.**
- **Report dead deer and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) to Hunting Control Station immediately.**
- **Do not cut any vegetation.**
- **Prevent the spread of invasive species by cleaning clothes and boots before entering and after exiting hunt area.**

HUNTING GUIDELINE CHANGES FOR THIS YEAR:

-  **New Closure Notice:** Effective November 29, 2025, Zones D, E, F, G and H on the North Tract are closed to hunting access due to expanded use of the firing ranges except on specific days. These closures are necessary to ensure **public safety** during

range operations. Please consult updated maps at the Hunting Control Station (HCS).

- Zone C access has changed. Due to road damage, vehicle travel past Mabbott Pond is not possible. There will be areas marked for parking before Mabbott Pond on Telegraph Road.
- Area W is OPEN
- Lottery hunts are available to all permit holders.
- Please check the Hunting Guidelines page on the MNHA website for clarifications and updates.
- Check the Patuxent Research Refuge Facebook page for closure alerts, including for adverse weather conditions.

I. PERMITS, FEES, PENALTIES

- A. Hunting Permits.** Hunting permits are purchased through the Meade Natural Heritage Association (MNHA) in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Patuxent Research Refuge (PRR) through a cooperative agreement. MNHA uses permit fees to hire staff to manage the Hunting Control Station to increase hunting opportunities at the PRR.

Where	Hunting Control Station (HCS) 200 Bald Eagle Drive, Laurel MD 20724
When	August – Sundays from 9AM to 3PM Sep 1 to Feb 4 – when the HCS is open (see below)
Cost	A fee schedule is posted at the HCS and the MNHA website. Senior and Youth Hunters may hunt at a reduced fee. Golden Age and Golden Eagle Passports or other entrance fee programs are not applicable towards hunting permit fees. Cash or check only – we do not accept electronic payments.
What you need	You must complete/bring the following. Forms can be found at www.mnha.net and the Refuge website or can be picked up at HCS. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) System Hunt Application (FWS Form 3-2439, OMB 1018-0140) 2. NWR Statement of Hunter Ethics (FWS Form 3-2516). 3. Current Maryland Hunting License. 4. Hunting stamps as required by the State of Maryland to hunt specific seasons/species (e.g., muzzleloader, waterfowl) 5. Disabled hunters must provide documentation of disability, see Section D below.

- B. Youth Hunters.** Anyone possessing a Youth/Junior Hunting License.
1. Must have a parent or legal guardian present to countersign/obtain a Refuge Hunting Permit.
 2. Must be accompanied by a licensed Refuge permitted adult who is at least 21 years of age while hunting on the Refuge.
 3. While hunting, the adult and youth must maintain visual contact and be within a 50-yard distance.
- C. Senior Hunters.** Anyone possessing a Senior Hunting License.
- D. Disabled Hunters.** Individuals with a physical or intellectual impairment as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Must provide the following:
1. Federal or Maryland State documentation of disability, e.g., MD hunting license with a “U” -“Universal Disability Pass” endorsement.
 2. NPS Form 10-597, available at HCS and the Refuge website.
- E. Penalties. Failure to comply with any Federal and State laws, or Refuge regulations may result in the following:**
- Maximum of \$10,000 fine and/or 1-year imprisonment
 - Arrest, seizure, and/or forfeiture of hunting equipment and vehicles
 - Forfeiture of harvested game
 - Hunting permits may be revoked by Federal Wildlife Officers and/or Refuge Management. Maximum revocation period is lifetime.

II. HOURS OF OPERATION

- A. Hunting is permitted Monday through Saturday during the hunting season, unless the PRR is closed for Federal Holidays or adverse weather. No hunt-related activities (archery practice, archery qualifications, tracking, scouting, etc.) may take place when the HCS is closed.

	Open	Close	Notes
August	9:00AM	3:00PM	Sundays Only, Scouting, Permit Sales
Sep 1 – Feb 4	5:00AM	1 ½ hours after sunset	Monday to Saturdays. Last Check in is 1 hour before Sunset for NT and 1 ½ hours for ST/Schafer Farm All hunters must return to HCS no later than 1½ hours after sunset.
Resident Goose Season	FIRST day of Resident Canada goose (Early Goose Season), check in begins at 4:30 AM.		
Deer Firearm	FIRST day of Deer Firearm Season, check in begin at 4:30 AM		
Spring Turkey	Lottery hunters must check in between 4:30 – 5:00 AM – see Spring Wild Turkey hunts for important information.		

- B. **Holidays.** The PRR holiday schedule is as follows:

Labor Day, Columbus Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day	CLOSED
Veterans Day	OPEN
Thanksgiving	Hunting ends at 12:00 PM Thanksgiving Eve, HCS closes at 1:00 PM Closed Thanksgiving Day
Christmas	Hunting ends at 2:00 PM Christmas Eve, HCS closes at 1:00 PM Closed Christmas Day

- C. **Adverse Weather or Emergency Closures.** If Patuxent Research Refuge is closed, no hunting will be permitted. If North Tract is closed, then all hunting will be closed on all tracts. If the South Tract, Central Tract, and Schafer Farm are closed but North Tract remains open, hunting will be permitted on North Tract ONLY. **The Refuge Manager or designee can close any section of the Refuge at any time.** Check the Patuxent Research Refuge Facebook page for closure alerts.

III. HUNTING AREAS

- A. The PRR includes the North Tract, South Tract, Schafer Farm, and Central Tract/MR. PRR uses a zone system to manage hunting activities, access to active firing range impact areas, and prevent overcrowding. Maps are available on the MNHA website and at the HCS. Hunters should remain aware of area closures.

B. North Tract

- The following areas are closed to hunting activities, except on designated days:
 - Zones D, E, F, G, and H will be closed to the public.
 - Zone Z will remain open for archery-only hunting for deer, turkey, and small game. Waterfowl hunting can continue to use firearms as permitted.
 - See map posted at the HCS for additional no-hunting zones (e.g., cemeteries).
- Designated Hunting Days for North Tract Zones D, E, F, G, and H**

Access to the above zones will be permitted for hunting on the following dates:

- Monday, December 1, 2025
- Friday, December 5, 2025
- Saturday, December 6, 2025
- Monday, December 8, 2025
- Friday, December 12, 2025
- Saturday, December 13, 2025

The area around the Wildlife Viewing Area and trail system in Area I. (The area is marked with orange carsonite markers and No Hunting Zone signs along Wildlife Way and the trail.)

C. South Tract

1. South Tract Areas A and B are accessed through the former Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Airport. The entrance gate is located on Springfield Road and marked with a sign that says "P11." The designated parking areas include: east and south ends of the old runway, accessible areas of Telegraph Road, and along the tram route (when Area C is opened).
2. South Tract Area C - Due to road damage, vehicle travel past Mabbott Pond is not possible. There will be areas marked for parking before Mabbott Pond on Telegraph Road.
3. South Tract Area D is accessed through Gate # 4 off MD Route 197. Parking is at the designated parking area. Hunters must sign out a gate access badge when checking-in.
4. **No driving or parking along the Scarlet Tanager Loop** (entrance /exit to the National Wildlife Visitor Center) is permitted for any purpose, including the retrieval of game.
5. Setback boundaries are marked with orange carsonite signs 50 yards from the road along the National Wildlife Visitor Center Scarlet Tanager Loop and a portion of Telegraph Road. Hunters must stay within boundaries.
6. **NOTE: Area C is only open for deer during the Muzzleloader and Firearms seasons.**

D. Schafer Farm

1. Schafer Farm is accessed through Gate #10 on north side of MD Route 197.
2. Schafer Farm setback boundaries are marked with orange carsonite signs. Hunters must stay within boundaries.

E. Central Tract / MR

1. Closed for hunting except for CT Lottery Deer Hunts.

F. Hunters with Disabilities Hunting Location

2. Deer hunters with documented disabilities (Section **I.D**) may hunt from the roadside in open zones except on Wildlife Way and Bald Eagle Drive.
3. The Refuge has designated locations on North Tract where deer hunters with disabilities may hunt from their vehicle on a first-come, first-serve basis. The areas are marked with "disabled hunter" signs. Other hunters may hunt within the area, but they are not allowed to drive into the designated disability location. A map is posted at the HCS.
 - Vehicles must be stopped, in park, and the keys out of the ignition prior to loading and firing any method of harvest.
4. Additional accommodations may be made for hunters with disabilities in the following locations: North Tract, South Tract, and Central Tract and MR Lottery Hunts, and other

areas approved by the Refuge Manager/Refuge Law Enforcement. Disabled hunters are required to request accommodations at least 24 hours prior to checking in at the HCS.

IV. CHECK-IN / CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

- A.** Hunters are required to check in and out at the HCS every time they enter or exit the Refuge, or to change hunting areas. Hunters leaving their designated hunt zone for any reason must proceed directly to the HCS to check out and must check back in when returning. No hunting spots will be reserved.
- B.** Check-in procedures.
 - 1. Exchange Refuge hunting permit for daily hunting or scouting pass and vehicle pass. Hunters will NOT be permitted to check in without their Refuge hunting permit.
 - 2. Select desired hunting area from authorized hunting areas map at HCS. If available, a daily hunting and vehicle pass will be issued to you.
 - 3. Indicate activity (e.g., scouting, deer, duck, squirrel hunting) and method of harvest (shotgun, bow, crossbow, etc.) to hunt manager.
 - 4. Hunters are permitted to have no more than two observers with them afield. All observers must sign in, or in the case of a youth, a parent or guardian must sign for them. See Section VII for observer requirements.
 - 5. After checking in, hunters must proceed directly to their selected area. Vehicle pass must be prominently displayed in vehicle. Hunting pass must be carried at all times.
- C.** Check-out procedures:
 - 1. Exchange daily hunting passes for Refuge hunting permit.
 - 2. Notify HCS manager of any game harvested. Bring harvested game to the weigh-in shed (check station) located next to the HCS for biological data collection. Hunters must tag harvested deer and turkey. Anyone found in violation of any of the tagging/check-in requirements will be subject to law enforcement action.
 - 3. Hunters returning to the HCS after the designated checkout hours (Section II) will be subject to law enforcement actions.
- D.** Hunters who wish to change hunting methods of harvest while afield, may call the HCS manager to report the change of method.

V. GENERAL HUNTING GUIDELINES

- A.** Hunters must use designated and authorized roads and parking areas only.
 - 1. Vehicles must be parked inside the boundaries of the hunter's selected area.
 - 2. It is illegal to park vehicles in such a manner to block gates or other vehicle traffic.
 - 3. Vehicle pass must be prominently displayed in vehicle.
 - 4. Hunters may drive on access roads that are closed to the general public (i.e., marked with 'no vehicles' sign) ONLY to access their assigned hunting area. Hunters must close the gates when entering and leaving these areas.
- B.** Hunters must have in their possession the following items and present these to any Law Enforcement Officer upon request.
 - 1. Daily hunting or scouting pass

2. Valid Maryland State hunting license and any applicable stamps and permits
 3. Special permits for disabled eligibility, if applicable
 4. Driver's license or a valid government photo ID
- C. Safety Zones.** Hunting is not permitted on, from, or across any road (paved, gravel, dirt, opened and/or closed); within 50 yards of any road; within 150 yards of any building or shed; nor within 25 yards of any designated "No Hunting" or "Safety Zone" areas, with following exceptions:
1. You may hunt from the vehicle, at designated areas, if you possess a Maryland State Universal Disability Pass - see Section III.F for details.
 2. You may hunt from the road starting 50 yards beyond the gate at Blue Heron Pond.
 3. You may hunt from the road starting 50 yards beyond the gate at Wood Duck Pond when area F is open.
- D.** You may hunt waterfowl (goose/duck) from North Tract refuge permanent photo/hunt blinds if the zones are open.
- E.** Hunters are permitted one method of harvest while in the field. Additional methods of harvest must be secured in the vehicle in accordance with state regulations.
- F.** Hunters, who are checked in for one species, may harvest another species if it is in-season and using the appropriate method of harvest/ammunition. For example, someone hunting doves may harvest a squirrel so long as both are in season.
- G. Use of non-toxic ammunition** is required to hunt all species on the PRR, except deer (see Section VIII).
- H.** FALCONRY is permitted.
- I. Flagging and any other personal property** (i.e. cameras, stands, blinds) must be removed at the end of EACH hunt visit. Items left behind are considered litter and subject to law enforcement action.
- J. Ground hunting blinds are permitted;** however, no natural vegetation, from either on-Refuge or off-Refuge, may be used to supplement the blind material. During the muzzleloader and firearm seasons, and youth hunt day, fluorescent orange/pink shall be placed either on or near any ground blind set up. **Blinds must be removed at the end of each hunt.** Blinds used for the PRR/DNR Mentor Hunt may be left overnight.
- K.** Hunters must field dress harvested game in the woods and not along the side of the road nor at the HCS.
- L.** Hunters pursuing a wounded animal or bird are expected to make every effort to recover the game and return the next day (except Sundays and federal holidays) to continue searching if necessary. Violators risk losing their hunting privileges. See Wounded Deer and Tracking for additional information.

VI. SCOUTING

- A.** Hunters participating in scouting activities must be **unarmed** and must be **checked in** at the HCS as "scouting" for a specific area of the Refuge. Hunters must wear fluorescent orange/pink while scouting.

1. Scouting is permitted in open zones when the HCS is open – see Section II. for hours of operations.
2. South Tract Area C is closed for scouting.
3. Scouting is prohibited for spring turkey hunting.

VII. OBSERVERS

- A. Hunters are permitted to have no more than two observers with them afield.
- B. Observers must check in at the HCS with the hunter. Observers under the age of 16 must have a parent or guardian must sign for them.
- C. **Observers must remain with the hunter at all times**, must be unarmed, and wear fluorescent orange/pink as required by season.

VIII. WHITE TAIL DEER HUNTING

- A. The taking of mature deer is encouraged for management purposes.
- B. Deer hunters may use archery and firearms in accordance with Maryland Regulations. **The use of single solid projectile ammunition for firearms is required. Buckshot is prohibited.** Deer hunters are strongly encouraged to use non-toxic ammunition.
- C. It is unlawful to hunt any animal other than deer on the first day of Deer Firearm Season.
- D. Deer taken from Patuxent Research Refuge do not count against the Maryland state bag limit and do not require bonus or additional stamps.
- E. Deer attractants like Buck Bomb, scent pads, and cotton balls are permitted but must be removed after each hunt visit. Items left behind are considered litter and subject to law enforcement action. Heat-based scents are prohibited.
- F. **Wounded Deer and Tracking:**
 1. Hunters who wound, cripple, or kill a deer shall make a reasonable effort to retrieve the animal, even if it includes next day tracking (except Sundays and federal holidays), otherwise they risk losing their hunting privileges.
 2. **A hunter wounding a deer in the evening must notify the Hunting Control Station Manager immediately.** The HCS Manager will let you know how much time you have until closing.
 3. If a deer hunter needs assistance tracking wounded game beyond 1 hour after sunset, they must report in person or call the HCS. **The HCS manager will call a Federal Wildlife Officer or Refuge Manager or designee to gain consent to track.** If permission is granted, the HCS manager will arrange to keep the HCS open.
 4. All tracking will end 2 hours after sunset.
 5. If you mistakenly enter Zones D, E, F, G, or H on the North Tract after November 29, 2025 during a **closed day**, you must immediately exit the area and report the incident to the Hunting Control Station (HCS) manager.
 - If you are tracking a wounded deer, you are expected to make every effort to avoid entry, and failure to comply may result in enforcement action.
 6. If a deer hunter needs assistance tracking wounded game that has entered the closed zones they must report in person or call the HCS. **The HCS manager may call a Federal Wildlife Officer or Refuge Manager or designee to gain consent to track.**

IX. MIGRATORY/WATERFOWL GAME BIRD HUNTING

- A.** Migratory game birds are limited to geese (Canada and Light), certain species of ducks, and mourning dove in accordance with federal and state regulations.
- B.** No felt-soled boots are permitted in Refuge waters; footwear shall be clean of debris and decontaminated before entering Refuge waters as per Maryland DNR guide.
- C.** Hunters may use a paddle-driven kayak or canoe to retrieve downed waterfowl only. (No hunting from watercraft.) Hunters should wear a personal flotation device while in the kayak/canoe.
- D.** It is unlawful to hunt waterfowl from or with the aid or use of a motor vehicle.
- E.** Migratory/Waterfowl hunting is prohibited around Rieve's Pond in Area P.
- F.** Canada Goose Hunting:
 - 1. Hunters may pre-register for the opening day of the early resident Canada goose season starting at 10 AM on the first Saturday in August when the HCS opens for permit sales. The hunter must pre-register in person at the HCS and the hunter is permitted to pre-register two other individuals.
 - 2. Resident Canada goose hunters may NOT drive on Range 1 in Area "D" interior roads to set-up and retrieve goose decoys as the Zone will be closed.

X. UPLAND GAME HUNTING

- A.** Upland game is limited to gray squirrels, eastern cottontail rabbits, and woodchuck on the North Tract, South Tract (Areas A, B and D) and Schafer Farm. South Tract Area C is closed to upland game hunting.
- B.** It is unlawful to hunt any animal other than deer on the first day of Deer Firearm Season.

XI. WILD TURKEY HUNTING

- A. Winter Turkey Season.** The season is only open on North Tract. Turkey hunters are highly encouraged to wear fluorescent orange/pink while hunting.
- B. Spring Turkey Season.** See Section XII.D.

XII. SPECIAL HUNTS

- A. Youth/Junior Deer and Waterfowl Hunting Days**
 - 1. Youth/Junior Hunt harvested deer do not count towards the youth's Refuge bag limit.
- B. Central Tract (CT) and MR Lottery Deer Hunts**

The PRR conducts two lottery hunts on CT and MR – one AM and one PM. Dates are listed in Section XIV. Selection for participation in the Central Tract and MR lottery hunts will be by lottery conducted by staff. There are 3 bow/crossbow sites and 30 firearm sites at CT HQ; two firearm sites are reserved for disabled hunters. There are 9 firearm sites in the MR area that are not assigned to a specific location. (Total of 42 hunters.)

 - 1. This is a deer management hunt and the lesser weapon rule does not apply. Shotguns or straight walled rifles with single projectile ammunition must be used at sites 1-30 and MR 1-9. Bow or crossbow must be used at sites 31-33. All other weapons are prohibited for the lottery hunts.
 - 2. Hunters may register for the lottery hunts at the HCS up to two weeks prior to the hunt

date. Hunters must select the dates, method of hunt (firearm and/or bow/crossbow), and disabled site (if applicable).

3. Selected hunters will be notified by email at least one week prior to the scheduled hunt. A list of selected hunters will be posted at the HCS and on the MNHA website.
4. Primary hunters should notify MNHA as soon as possible if they must cancel so the next alternate can be notified. **Failure to attend the hunt without advance cancellation notice (minimum 24 hours) will result in the hunter being ineligible for ALL lottery hunts for one year.**
5. Selected hunters must check in at the HCS by the time specified on the notification letter. After the specified time, available hunting slots will be issued to alternate hunters and then standby hunters by random drawing. Drawings will be performed at the HCS.
6. Access for lottery hunters for Central Tract and MR will be via Gate 1 on American Holly Drive, opposite the intersection of MD Route 197 and Powder Mill Road. All selected hunters are required to attend a pre-hunt orientation provided by an MNHA hunt control manager and Law Enforcement Officer on Central Tract prior to going afield.
7. Firearm stand sites 1-30 and bow stand sites 31-33 are marked with a reflective band on the assigned tree. Zones of fire are marked with arrows. All firing must be within the zone of fire.
8. The use of a hunter-provided tree stand, a minimum of 10' off the ground, and a full body harness is mandatory at all CT and MR sites, except for the two disabled firearm sites when used by a disabled hunter.
9. Hunters must leave the field by 12 PM on the morning hunt or by 1 hour after sunset on the evening hunt.
10. Youth hunters must have a permitted adult observer.

C. Mentored Deer Hunt

Maryland DNR in cooperation with the FWS hosts a Mentored Deer hunt at PRR. DNR provides participants with a schedule of events including range days, scouting, and hunting days. Dates and designated areas for the mentored hunt will be posted so general hunters are aware of any potential closures. Additional information is available at:
https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/Mentored-Hunt-Program.aspx.

D. Spring Wild Turkey Lottery Hunt

Spring Turkey hunting is by lottery only. There are separate lottery hunts for youth, disabled, and general hunters. Turkey hunters are encouraged to attend a National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) clinic if they have not attended one in the past. The NWTF and MNHA offer turkey hunting assistants for those requesting them prior to the date of the hunt.

Lottery	Qualification	Day of Week / Location	Number of Hunters
Youth	Individuals must possess a Refuge youth hunting permit.	Saturdays at the North Tract	3 youth hunters per hunt date
Disabled	Individuals must have applicable documentation described in Section I.D.	Mondays at the North Tract	2 disabled hunters per hunt date
General	All other hunters	Monday hunts will be on the North Tract. Saturday hunts will be on the South Tract (Areas A, B and D) and Schafer Farm	4 general hunters per Monday hunt date 3 hunters per Saturday hunt date

- Hunters may register for the lottery hunts at the HCS until the last day the HCS is open in February.
- Hunters may only be selected once for the turkey lottery as a primary hunter (youth, disabled, or general). If there is an insufficient number of eligible hunters to fill the alternate slots for the disabled hunts, then general hunters not selected in the general hunt lottery will be drawn to fill the remaining disabled alternate slots.
- Selected hunters will be notified by email at least two weeks prior to the scheduled hunt. The selected hunter list will also be posted at the HCS and on the MNHA website.
- Primary hunters should notify MNHA as soon as possible if they must cancel so the next alternate can be notified. **Failure to attend the hunt without advance cancellation notice (minimum 24 hours) will result in the hunter being ineligible for ALL lottery hunts for one year.**
- Alternate hunters will be notified of vacancies by phone and/or email as soon as possible.
- Primary Hunters must check in at HCS by 5:00 AM or risk losing their slot.
- Alternate and standby hunters may wait at the HCS on the mornings of each hunt. If a primary hunter does not show on the day of the hunt, then the vacated spot will be given to another hunter in the following order:
 - Alternate hunters in order starting with Alternate Hunter #1.
 - Lottery selection for standby hunters conducted at the HCS.
 - If there is a vacant disabled slot and no disabled alternates/standbys are present, then a general hunter may fill the vacant disabled slot. Vacant youth slots will not be filled with an adult hunter.
- Hunters are allowed to switch zones for which they are drawn on the morning of the hunt if both hunters agree prior to going afield. **HCS manager must be notified of the change prior to hunters going afield.**
- If a turkey is harvested before 9 AM on any hunt day, the vacated zone may be filled in

the following order:

- a. Any hunter in the field may report in person to the HCS to request permission to move to an open zone(s). If they move, then their vacated zone is available.
 - b. An alternate or standby hunter following the process above (see #7).
 - c. The HCS manager must be notified of when hunters move to another zone(s) prior to the move occurring.
10. All members of the turkey hunting party are strongly encouraged to wear a fluorescent orange/pink cap while moving.
 11. Spring Wild Turkey Hunt hours are from ½ hour before sunrise until 12PM. Hunters must leave the field and check out at the HCS by 1PM.
 12. Ground blinds may be used – see Section V.J for more information.
 13. Youth hunters must have a permitted adult observer.

E. Veteran Wild Turkey Lottery Hunt

1. The Refuge may authorize one additional weekday morning hunt during the spring turkey season for a veteran's hunt in coordination with MNHA, NWTF, and a vetted veteran's organization.
2. This hunt will be advertised as early as possible.
3. This hunt will follow the process, dates, and times described in paragraph **D** above.

XIII. PROHIBITED ITEMS AND ACTIVITIES

The following are **PROHIBITED** on the Refuge. Violations are subject to penalties listed in Section I.E.

- A.** Interference with any law enforcement activity.
- B.** Littering. Litter is ANY item left behind including, but not limited to: flagging, scent pads, trail cameras, blinds, stands, food wrappers, cans, and bottles.
- C.** Baiting of game animals. This includes the **possession or use** of any natural or man-made food sources such as grain, salt, corn, or commercial licks, “Deer Caine”, etc.
- D.** Heat-based scents.
- E.** Shooting of any non-permitted species (e.g., racoon, woodcock, coyotes and foxes).
- F.** Shooting of dogs. Hunters who see dogs are instructed to notify the HCS manager as soon as possible. Do not shoot dogs!
- G.** Field dressing harvested game along the side of the road or the HCS.
- H.** No harvested game, or parts thereof, once removed from the Refuge, may be returned for disposal.
- I.** The use of all-terrain vehicles and utility vehicles, except under special circumstances and with prior approval from the Refuge Manager.
- J.** Any harassment of wildlife. This includes spotlighting or use of artificial light to spot wildlife.
- K.** Deer drives or taking part in a deer drive.
- L.** Possession or use of buckshot.
- M.** Possession or use of lead ammunition other than ammunition for deer.
- N.** The discharge of any bow or firearm before or after legal shooting hours, including the

unloading of muzzleloaders.

- O.** Felt-soled boots in Refuge waters.
- P.** The use of reflective pins or nails (i.e. trail markers).
- Q.** The use of nails, wire, screws, and bolts to attach a stand or any other equipment to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter.
- R.** Screw-in steps and permanent stands. Please report any permanent tree stands to the HCS manager; mark the stand so it can be located by law enforcement.
- S.** Possession or use of alcohol or drugs and/or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- T.** Touching, moving, or otherwise disturbing any UXO. Take photo and GPS coordinates and contact the HCS manager immediately.

Report violations of state, federal, and PRR regulations and guidelines for your safety and the safety of others.

XIV. SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS**All hunting ends on Feb 4 except for Spring Turkey Hunts.**

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASON & BAG LIMIT			
Season	Dates / Times	Bag Limit	Notes
Canada Goose	State Regulations	State Regulations	NORTH TRACT ONLY
Light Goose	State Regulations	State Regulations	NORTH TRACT ONLY
Ducks	State Regulations	State Regulations	NORTH TRACT ONLY
Youth/Junior Veteran and Military Waterfowl	State Regulations	State Regulations	NORTH TRACT ONLY
Mourning Dove	State Regulations	State Regulations	North Tract, South Tract, Schafer Farm

UPLAND GAME SEASON & BAG LIMIT			
Season	Dates	Bag Limit	Notes
Gray Squirrel/Woodchuck	State Regulations	State Regulations	North Tract, South Tract (Areas A, B, and D only), Schafer Farm
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit	State Regulations	State Regulations	

TURKEY SEASON & BAG LIMIT			
Season	Dates	Bag Limit	Notes
Winter Wild Turkey	State Regulations	1 Male or Female Counts toward MD Fall bag limit.	NORTH TRACT ONLY
Spring Wild Turkey	Youth – April 11, 18, 25; May 2, 9, 16	1 Bearded Counts toward MD Spring bag limit.	Lottery only. 1/2 hr. before sunrise to noon.
	Adult General and Disabled - April 18, 20, 25, 27; May 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23	1 Bearded Counts toward MD Spring bag limit.	Lottery only. 1/2 hr. before sunrise to noon. General/Disabled- Mondays on NT; General Hunt ST – Saturdays.

WHITE-TAILED DEER SEASON & BAG LIMIT NORTH TRACT / SOUTH TRACT / SCHAFFER FARM			
Season	Dates	Bag Limit	Notes
Bow/Crossbow	State Regulations	4 deer (2 antlered, 2 antlerless) for entire Refuge regardless of method/season. Do not count toward MD bag limit.	You may not shoot more than 2 antlered deer. You may not shoot more than 2 antlerless deer.
Muzzleloader	State Regulations		
Primitive	State Regulations		
Firearm	State Regulations	Do not count toward Refuge bag limit. Do not count toward MD bag limit.	Harvest in any order. Follow state regulations for antler restrictions.
Youth/Junior Firearm	State Regulations		

WHITE-TAILED DEER SEASON & BAG LIMIT CENTRAL TRACT AND MR LOTTERY HUNTS			
Season	Dates	Bag Limit	Notes
Firearm (Sites 1-30, MR)	Nov 15 - PM	Deer harvested during Central Tract Lottery Hunts count toward refuge bag limit. Do not count toward MD bag limit.	Harvest in any order. Follow state regulations for antler restrictions. This is a deer management hunt and no species other than deer can be harvested.
Bow/Crossbow (for sites 31-33)	Dec 6 - AM		

XV. SAFETY INFORMATION

Avoiding hunting accidents is a primary objective. Strict compliance with the following safety rules is essential.

A. Range Safety Closure Reminder:

1. If you mistakenly enter Zones D, E, F, or G on the North Tract after November 29, 2025, you must immediately exit the area and report the incident to the Hunting Control Station (HCS) manager. These zones are closed due to expanded range operations.
2. If you are tracking a wounded deer, you are expected to make every effort to avoid entry, and failure to comply may result in enforcement action.
3. If a deer hunter needs assistance tracking wounded game that has entered the closed zones they must report in person or call the HCS. **The HCS manager may call a Federal Wildlife Officer or Refuge Manager or designee to gain consent to track.**
4. Do not attempt to continue your activity in these areas without permission.

B. Hunters are encouraged to carry a whistle (or other noise making device), compass, cell phone, and/or GPS when hunting all areas.

C. Hunters are strongly encouraged to wear orange/pink when moving through the woods.

D. Report Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). If you encounter any ordnance (hand grenades, artillery simulators, or any other unknown metal object), **do not touch or try to move it.** Contact the HCS manager immediately. Mark the exact location, take a photo and GPS coordinates, and immediately report the discovery to the HCS manager who will notify Refuge personnel.

E. Report dead deer. Take a photo and GPS coordinates and contact the HCS manager immediately.

F. Hunters must be aware of their safety when hunting around any old building foundations, septic tanks, or former wells.

G. If you get lost, stay where you are. A search will be conducted. If you are carrying a cell phone, call the HCS at 301-328-1518. (On your hunting pass.)

H. In the event of an accident or injury, initiate appropriate first aid measures and report the incident immediately to the HCS manager. If the HCS is unavailable, call 911, and then notify Refuge law enforcement personnel (Federal Wildlife Officer Ryan Baxter) at 240-786-8283. If FWO Baxter cannot be reached, then call Federal Law Enforcement Communication Center at 1-800-637-9152.

To ensure rapid response, give the following information:

- WHERE - Location of the emergency; be specific. Give Area letter, distance from road, and accessibility to site (ground and air).
- YOUR NAME - Provide your full legal name.
- PHONE NUMBER - Provide the phone number you are calling from.
- WHAT HAPPENED - Description of accident or injuries.
- HOW MANY - Provide the number of possible victims needing care.
- WHAT IS BEING DONE - Is first aid, CPR, etc. being performed?
- STAY ON THE LINE - Provide any additional information requested.
- YOU HANG UP LAST - Let the person you called hang up first.
- ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO MEET THE RESCUE SQUAD AT THE

ENTRANCE GATE AND ESCORT THEM TO THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE HUNTERS!

All State of Maryland and federal hunting regulations are in effect unless otherwise noted here or posted at the North Tract Hunting Control Station.