

Des Lacs

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Regulations



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 Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), one of over 570 refuges and 38 wetland management districts in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. The Refuge is made up of 19,500 acres along the Des Lacs River and has a mix of natural lakes and managed wetlands for migratory birds and other wildlife.

General Information

Portions of the Refuge are open to hunting deer, elk, moose, grouse, partridge, pheasant, and turkey. Hunting any other wildlife species on the Refuge is prohibited. It is the hunter’s responsibility to be aware of all special Refuge regulations and the boundaries of the areas open and closed to hunting before going afield.

For the protection of wildlife, habitat, and other visitors, please familiarize yourself with all information and regulations in this brochure.

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 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	Other Regulations
Deer (bow, gun, and muzzleloader)	State seasons (including youth)	On opening day of each deer hunting season, hunters must wait to enter the Refuge until 12:00 pm (noon). Permanent tree stands are not allowed on the Refuge. Portable tree stands and ground blinds may be used, but they must be removed daily. Screw-in steps, bolts, nails, wire, or other objects that penetrate the bark and injure the tree cannot be used. During deer gun season only, hunters may drive authorized vehicles on designated Refuge retrieval roads to retrieve harvested deer from 9:30 am to 10:00 am; 1:30 pm to 2:00 pm; and for ½-hour following legal shooting time.
Elk and moose (bow and gun)	State seasons	On opening day of the season, hunters may enter the Refuge ½-hour before sunrise. Elk hunters must use non-toxic bullets and may not have toxic bullets in their possession.
Grouse, partridge, and pheasant	Late season hunting opens on the day following the close of the regular deer gun season through the end of the State season.	Hunters must use non-toxic shot and may not have toxic shot in their possession. The use of dogs is encouraged but they must be under the handler’s control at all times.
Turkey (bow and shotgun)	State seasons (spring and fall)	Hunters using a shotgun must use non-toxic shot and may not have toxic shot in their possession.

Access and Vehicle Use

- Snowmobiles, bicycles, e-bikes, and all other off-road vehicles are prohibited.
- Hunters may drive authorized vehicles on the auto tour route while hunting.
- Driving an authorized vehicle on designated retrieval roads to retrieve a deer is allowed, but hunting and dropping hunters off on retrieval roads is not allowed. Refuge retrieval roads are identified with signs and are also shown on the map.
- All other Refuge roads and trails are closed to all motorized vehicles, bicycles, and e-bikes.
- Hunters must carry, drag, or use a cart to transport a harvested deer, elk, or moose to their vehicle.

General Hunting Regulations

Hunting is allowed in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, State regulations, and the Refuge-specific regulations in this brochure.

Hours and Location

Hunting hours follow those set in the State hunting regulations.

The Refuge is open to the public from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm daily. The Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge headquarters is located 1 mile west of Kenmare, North Dakota, off Ward County Road 1.

A large entrance sign is situated at the junction of County Roads 1 and 1A. The visitor center is open from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except for Federal holidays.

Prohibited Activities

- By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices.
- Marking or flagging any tree, brush, or other refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substances.
- Baiting or use of scent wicks/lures.
- Drones (UAVs) taking off, landing and/or flying on or over refuge lands.
- Use or possession of toxic (lead) shot while hunting birds and elk.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.
- Searching for or removal of any natural items such as antlers, skulls, plants, and/or historic and archaeological features protected by Federal law.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Use of watercraft.
- Use of horses.
- Camping and fires.
- Littering.
- Fishing.

Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge
42000 520th St. NW
Kenmare, ND 58746

701-385-4046
deslacs@fws.gov
www.fws.gov/refuge/des-lacs

Telecommunications
Relay Service
TTY / Voice 711

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

For Refuge Information
1-800-344-WILD

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