

2026 Spring Youth Turkey Hunt

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge



Permits are available for the 2026 spring youth turkey hunt at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge! Wertheim is a 2,688-acre wildlife refuge located on Long Island's south shore that hosts a variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands, ponds, tidal marshes and bays. Wertheim was established in 1947 for migratory bird conservation, fish and wildlife-oriented recreation, natural resource protection and threatened and endangered species conservation.

National Wildlife Refuges are mandated by Congress (through the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997) to provide hunting and fishing opportunities to the visiting public. Hunting is one of the six priority public uses designated for National Wildlife Refuges by the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997.

General Information

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge is located entirely within Suffolk County and the Town of Brookhaven. Approximately 773 refuge acres provide habitat for wild turkey. New York Turkey Harvest information can be found on the Turkey Harvest Dashboard: <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/turkey/turkey-harvest-management>

The Carmans River, refuge trails and Visitor Center are NOT open to the non-hunting public during the youth turkey hunt. However, hunters should demonstrate extreme caution when hunting on the refuge.

The spring turkey hunt is open to youth hunters aged 12 to 15 years and per state regulations must be accompanied by a licensed and permitted adult hunter. State regulations require youth 12 or 13 years of age be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or person over 21 years of age, with written permission from their parent or legal guardian. State regulations require youth 14 or 15 years of age be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or person over 18 years of age, with written permission from their parent or legal guardian. State regulations require both junior and adult hunters to have a New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) hunting license, NYDEC turkey permit, and a refuge turkey permit for the turkey hunt.

Disabled hunters and/or disabled accompanying adults with a NYDEC Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD) Permit or Non-Ambulatory Hunter Permit may request handicap access by contacting the refuge office for details at 631-286-0485. To see if you qualify for these permits, go to <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/30419.html>.

To report a hunting violation, call the **NYDEC hotline at (844) 332-3267** and/or the **National Park Service (NPS) dispatch at (570) 426-2457**. You may also report violations to the refuge hunt phone, which is listed on your refuge permit.

Orientation

All youth hunters and their accompanying non-hunting adult must attend the NYDEC's Suffolk County Youth Turkey Hunt prior to the hunt, unless they have participated in a previous year's orientation.

The NYDEC will host this year's orientation at the Long Island Shooting Range in Ridge on Thursday April 23, 2026, at 4:30PM. New hunters can register for the orientation by contacting Officer Taylor Della Rocco at Taylor.DellaRocco@dec.ny.gov. For immediate assistance, Officer Della Rocco may also be reached at (347) 308-4589.

Hunters and their accompanying non-hunting adult may be asked to pair up with an NYDEC Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO) during their hunt.

Parking

Refuge parking lots are located (see map):

Unit 3 North: Smith Road and Probst Drive;

Unit 3 South: Smith Road and Ranch Drive;

Unit 4: access through 360 Smith Road maintenance gate;

Unit 6: access through 360 Smith Road maintenance gate.

All parking lots are labeled on the attached hunt map. Please note that NYDEC defines legal shooting hours as one half hour before sunrise to 12:00 pm. In accordance with NYDEC shooting hours, hunters must enter the refuge no earlier than 90 minutes before sunrise and must exit the refuge no later than one hour after the end of legal shooting hours. If a hunter has a turkey down and is not able to retrieve the bird before 1:00 pm, they must call the hunt phone at 631-291-5860. **Each hunter must call the hunt phone at 631-291-5860 upon exiting the refuge for the hunt day.**

In lieu of a lottery system, youth hunt permits will be made available for purchase on a **first come, first serve basis** starting on **Saturday, March 9th, 2026, at 12:00PM**. Youth hunters will choose their unit when they purchase their permit. The number of hunters per hunt unit are limited to one youth hunter per unit, so hunters must park in their assigned hunt unit parking lot.

Hunters may not block access roads, Smith Road or entrance gates. Hunters must limit parking and congregating at restrooms; this area is for restroom use only. Hunters are required to drive on roads carefully and obey posted speed limits. Refuge regulations prohibit overnight parking.

Hunting Regulations

The refuge adheres to all state regulations. Please refer to the current *New York State Hunting and Trapping Regulations* handbook for more details.

Refuge regulations prohibit muzzleloaders, rifles or air guns, handguns firing a bullet and crossbows. Refuge regulations prohibit the marking of any tree, trail, or other refuge feature with flagging, paint, reflective material, or any other substance. Refuge regulations prohibit driving or screwing a nail, spike, or other metal object into a tree or hunting from any tree in which such an object has been driven. Refuge staff encourage hunters to wear a fluorescent orange or pink hat, vest and/or coat during hunt sessions.

Stands and Blinds

Each hunter may only use one ground blind. Hunters must attach clearly legible identification on their stands with their name, address, and phone number. The refuge will not be responsible for any stolen property. Hunters may trim branches up to the diameter of a quarter to accommodate a ground blind. Ground blinds must be removed from the hunt unit at the end of the hunt session.

Harvesting a Turkey

The bag limit for the youth hunt is one bearded bird. Hunters must make every effort to locate and retrieve a downed turkey. Upon kill, hunters must complete a New York State carcass tag for the turkey. Hunters must immediately attach tags to the turkey carcass. If a hunter fails to follow these procedures, they will be in violation of both Federal and State hunting laws. The refuge discourages field dressing harvested turkey in refuge parking lots or along refuge trails. Refuge staff discourage transporting harvested turkey uncovered, which may affect the public perception of ethical hunting. Refuge staff encourage hunters to be respectful of the non-hunting public and to be good ambassadors of their sport.

Hunters must call the hunt phone to report a successful harvest. Hunters must also report all turkey harvested on the refuge according to NYDEC harvest requirements within 7 days by phone 1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778), online at , <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest> or by using the mobile app HuntFishNY.

To improve the future hunt experience and hunt management, refuge staff encourage hunters to complete the Hunt Harvest Report following your hunt session:
<https://forms.office.com/g/01wfmtP12e>.

Important Signs



These signs are no longer applicable and will be removed at a future date. Hunters are responsible for knowing where they are in relation to hunting zones and refuge boundaries. <https://www.fws.gov/hunting/map>



This is a sign with the National Wildlife Refuge System's blue goose symbol. This sign is used to mark the refuge boundary.



This sign designates areas protected for wildlife and habitat closed to the general public. Hunters with valid refuge hunt permits are allowed to access hunt units beyond these signs (see the hunt map).

Additional Prohibited Activities

- Littering
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal substances
- Use of ATVs and/or dirt bikes, or other non-licensed vehicles
- Target practice
- Camping and campfires
- Searching or removing objects of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other items
- Searching for or removing plants or animals other than turkey from the refuge
- Pets are not permitted on the refuge at anytime

While hunting on the refuge, hunters are responsible for knowing and abiding by all State, Federal, and refuge regulations. Hunters must know where they are and respect private property.

Permits

In addition to the New York State hunting license and turkey permit, all participating youth hunters and accompanying adults must obtain a refuge permit. Refuge permits are not transferable. The refuge does not provide NYDEC carcass tags. Hunters must supply their own NYDEC tags for the turkey they harvest.

Youth hunt permits are available for purchase through RecAccess starting on **Saturday, March 28th, 2026, at 12:00PM** at <https://longisland.recaccess.com>. All youth hunters must purchase a permit online for a \$15 fee. Permits may be purchased through the Monday before orientation (April 20, 2026) until all spots are full for the 2026 turkey season.

2026 Schedule of Hunt Permit Process

March 28th, 2026 – Youth hunt permits available for purchase online through <https://longisland.recaccess.com/>

April 20, 2026 – Deadline for youth hunters to purchase a permit

April 23, 2026 – NYDEC orientation at the Long Island Shooting Range in Ridge
(4:30PM to 9:00PM)

April 25 & 26, 2026 - Youth Turkey Hunting

