

Crab Orchard

National Wildlife Refuge Open Area Hunting Regulations 2026–2027



Welcome

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1947, with four broad management objectives: to provide wildlife conservation, agricultural development, recreational use, and industrial operations. The unity of these elements fashion the refuge as one of the most unique in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

For managing the hunting program, the lands within the refuge have been divided into an Open Hunt Area and a Special Hunt Area.

Open Hunt Area

Hunting is authorized in accordance with state hunting seasons within the Open Hunt Areas. The Open Hunt Area Permit on the front of this brochure must be signed and in the hunter's possession while hunting on the refuge. Trapping on the Refuge requires a Special Use Permit authorized by the Refuge Manager.

Special Hunt Area

Hunting in the Special Hunt Area requires additional regulations and permits. See the Special Hunt Area brochure for more information.

Safety

It is required to wear blaze orange or pink, while hunting, during firearm deer seasons.

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.)

Recreation Use Fees

Entrance and User Fees are required for all vehicles and vessels using the refuge. Annual passes must be affixed directly to the vessel or vehicle to be valid. A complete fee schedule can be obtained at www.fws.gov/refuge/crab_orchard.

Motorized Vehicles

All licensed motor vehicles are restricted to roads and parking areas shown on the map. Parking along the roadway is permitted in accordance with state regulations as long as gates and roads are left unblocked. ATVs and UTVs are prohibited.

Camping

Camping is permitted only in designated campgrounds.

Bicycling

Bicycles and Class 1,2 and 3 e-bikes with an electric motor of 750 watts (1 horsepower) or less are allowed on designated motorized roads and bicycle trails. Operators of e-bikes must follow state age requirements.

Boats

The use of boats is authorized on the refuge. Boats used for hunting may not be left overnight on the refuge. The water from N Wolf Creek Road to the east is closed to boating from October 16 - April 30. Devil's Kitchen Lake has a 10-hp motor limit.

Hunting Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. 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.

Accessibility

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. For more information please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Civil Rights, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eo/public-civil-rights>.

To Report Hunting Violations at:

- 1-844-FWS-TIPS (1- 844-397-8477)
- Turn In a Poacher (TIP) Line: 1-877-236-7529

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Open Hunt Area Permit 2026—2027

Your signature indicates you have read and understand the refuge hunting regulations for the Open Hunt Area. Each hunter is required to sign and carry this brochure with them any time they are hunting within the Open Hunt Area.

Expires August 31, 2027

Signature (permits are not transferable) Date

Refuge Specific Hunting Regulations

- Firearm deer hunting is not allowed in the following locations:
 1. On refuge lands west of Division Street, and east of Bluegill Bay Marina and Campground; and
 2. On all refuge land north of Illinois State Route 13; and
 3. In the area north and west of Crab Orchard Lake spillway.
- Deer hunters may place stands or blinds with owner name or IDNR customer ID # attached in the hunting area 24 hours prior to their hunt. Stands left vacant for over 24 hours or stands without owner identification are subject to removal.
- All archery hunting on the refuge closes during 1st and 2nd firearm seasons.
- The use of dogs for hunting is allowed on the refuge in accordance with state regulations, provided the dogs are always under the immediate control of the hunter.
- Hunters must remove all boats, decoys, blinds, blind materials, platforms and other personal equipment brought onto the refuge at the end of each day's hunt.
- Trail cameras are prohibited on the refuge.

6987 Headquarters Rd
Marion, IL 62959

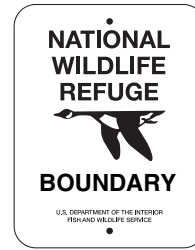
Hearing impaired person may contact Crab Orchard
through the Federal Relay Number at 1 800-877-8339.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1-800-344-WILD (9453)

August 2026

Signs and Boundaries

- Refuge Boundary Sign
Unauthorized entry prohibited: These signs mark the boundary of the refuge. They DO NOT prohibit access, only unauthorized uses.
- Restricted Use Area Sign:
These signs mark the boundary of the restricted use area of the refuge. Areas behind this sign are only open to hunters with a Special Hunt Area permit.
- Area Closed Sign: These signs mark areas that are closed to all members of the public.



Prohibited Activities

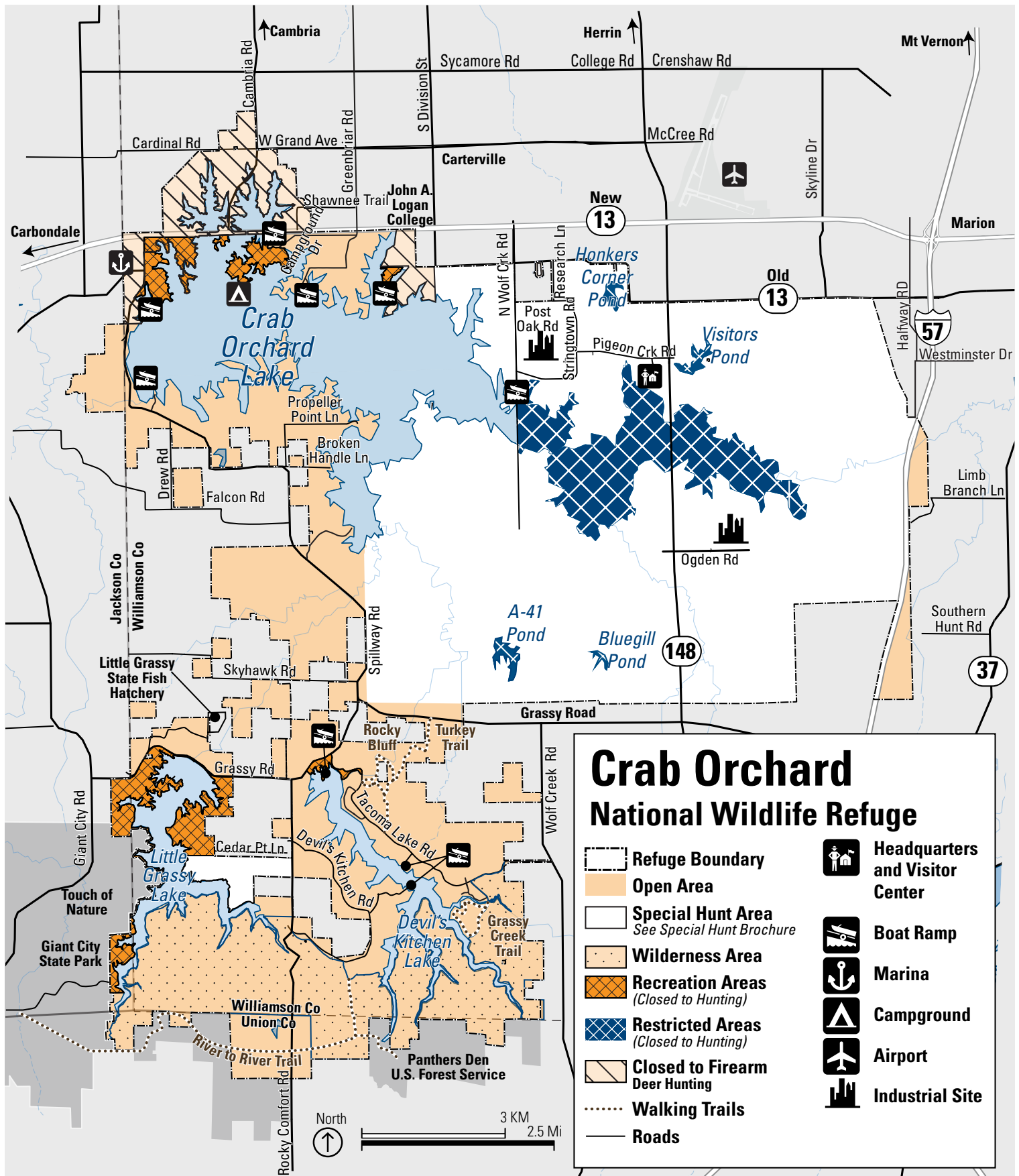
By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted:

- We prohibit hunting within 50 yards (45 meters) of all designated public use facilities, including, but not limited to, parking areas, picnic areas, campgrounds, marinas, boat ramps, public roads, and established hiking trails listed in the refuge trails brochure.
- Possession and use of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances while hunting is prohibited.
- Searching for or removal of any natural items such as plants, historic, and archaeological features is prohibited.
- Marking or flagging any tree or other refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substance is prohibited.
- Game Retrieval/ Transportation carts or any other mechanized device used for retrieving game or transportation, are prohibited in the Wilderness Area portion of the refuge.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree are prohibited.
- Target practice and/or any non-hunting discharge of a weapon is prohibited.
- We prohibit organized deer drives. We define a "deer drive" as an organized or planned effort to pursue, drive, chase, or otherwise frighten or cause deer to move in the direction of any person(s) who is part of the organized or planned hunt and known to be waiting for the deer.



Activity	Season	Special Regulations
Deer (Archery, Firearm, Muzzleloader and Youth Seasons)	**Illinois state season with state bag limits	Archery season closed during 1st and 2nd Firearm deer seasons.
Turkey (Archery, Spring and Fall Shotgun, and Youth Seasons)	**Illinois state season with state bag limits	Approved non-toxic shot required for shot shells.
Teal, Duck, Geese and Youth Waterfowl	**Illinois state season with state bag limits	Waterfowl hunting blinds must be a minimum of 200 yards (180 meters) apart.
Dove, Unprotected Dove, Quail, Crow Pheasant, Pigeon	**Illinois state season with state bag limits	Approved non-toxic shot required for shot shells.
Rabbits, Squirrel, Bobcat, Coyote, Woodchuck/ Groundhog, Opossum, Raccoon, Skunk	**Illinois state season with state bag limits	Approved non-toxic shot required for shot shells. We prohibit the use of rifles or handguns with ammunition larger than .22 caliber rimfire, except the use of black powder firearms up to and including .40 caliber are allowed.
**See Illinois Digest of Hunting Regulations for specific dates at www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting #Hampton Unit is open to Special Hunt Area Deer and Turkey Hunts		





The USFWS makes no warrant for the use of this map and cannot be held liable for actions or decisions based on map content. Boundaries posted in the field supersede all boundaries shown on map.