

Union Slough

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations



Welcome

Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge was established by an Executive Order in 1938, which designated this area as a migratory waterfowl refuge. The refuge encompasses 3,334 acres of marsh and upland habitat. The purpose of Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge is to provide refuge and breeding grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife. The name "Union" refers to the connection of two watersheds, the Blue Earth River and the east fork of the Des Moines River. Native Americans called this area Mini Akapan Kaduza, meaning "water which runs both ways."

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.)

You may only use or possess approved nontoxic shot while in the field, including shot shells used for wild turkey.

Target shooting is prohibited.

Vehicles

Motorized vehicles are permitted in parking areas and in field entrances only. Vehicles and operators must be properly licensed. No off road vehicle use is allowed. Use of All Terrain Vehicles, snowmobiles, etc. is prohibited at all times.

Boats

The Refuge allows boats, canoes or other floating devices in Buffalo Creek Bottoms. Motorized boats are allowed for hunting and fishing. You may not leave boats unattended.

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/eeo/public-civil-rights>.

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting and fishing 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. Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable State of Iowa regulations subject to the conditions stated below. Brochures may be obtained by mail, at the refuge headquarters, or from the refuge website.

Access

The refuge is open from sunrise until sunset unless otherwise posted or stated in hunting regulations. Hunting on road rights-of-way on any portion of the refuge not open to hunting is prohibited. The road right-of-way extends to the center of the road.

Artificial Lights

The use of artificial lights, including auto head lights, for the purpose of locating wildlife is prohibited.

Introduction of Plants and Animals

Plants and animals or their parts taken elsewhere shall not be introduced, liberated, or placed on any parts of the refuge.

Disturbance

Disturbing, injuring, destroying, collecting, or attempting to disturb, injure, destroy, or collect any plant or animal is prohibited. Hunting and fishing are allowed as outlined in this leaflet.

Dogs

All dogs not used for hunting must be confined to a vehicle at all times.

Tree Stands

You may construct and use temporary blinds, stands, platforms, scaffolds, ladders, etc. using man-made materials or natural vegetation found on the refuge. We prohibit bringing plants or their parts onto the refuge. You must remove all stands, decoys, blinds, platforms, ladders, boats, other floating devices, and all other personal property from the refuge at the end of each day; with the exception of stands used for deer hunting. See Special Regulations for Big Game hunting.

Retrieving Downed Game

Entry into any closed area to retrieve downed game is prohibited without written permission from the refuge manager.

Core Area

The Core Area is closed to all hunting except pheasant and gray partridge during the last 5 days of the State established pheasant hunting season, or by special hunts authorized by the refuge manager.

Camping

Camping or other overnight use is prohibited.

Fires

All fires are prohibited.

Trapping

Trapping is an approved use on the refuge by special use permit only.

1710 360th St
Tiptonka, IA 50480

515-928-2523

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

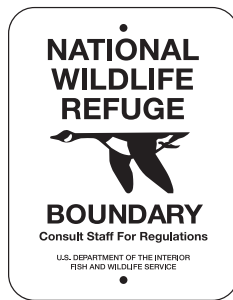
August 2026



Activity	Season	Unit	Access Hours	Special Regulations
Archery Deer	Oct. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 2 hours after sunset	State regulations apply. All State approved archery equipment is allowed.
Muzzleloader Deer	Oct. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 2 hours after sunset	State regulations apply.
Shotgun Deer	December	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 2 hour safter sunset	State regulations apply.
Youth Deer	Sept. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 2 hour safter sunset	State regulations apply.
Migratory Game Bird	Sept. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset	State regulations apply.
Youth Migratory Game Bird	Sept. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset	State regulations apply.
Upland Game	Sept. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset	State regulations apply. The Core Area is open for pheasant and partridge during the last 5 days of the State pheasant season.
Youth Upland Game	Sept. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset	State regulations apply. The Core Area is open for pheasant and partridge during the last 5 days of the State pheasant season.
Wild Turkey	Apr. -May, Oct. - Dec.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	One hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset	State regulations apply except ONLY non-toxic shot may be possessed. All blinds including the tree stands must be removed each day.
Archery Wild Turkey	Apr. -May, Oct. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	One hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset	State regulations apply except all blinds including tree stands must be removed each day.
Youth Wild Turkey	Apr. -May, Oct. - Jan.	Buffalo Creek Bottoms and Schwob Marsh	One hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset	State regulations apply except ONLY non-toxic shot may be possessed all blinds including the tree stands must be removed each day.
State regulations apply for bag limits.				

Signs and Boundaries

- Consult staff for current regulations before entering.
- All public entry is prohibited beyond this sign.
- Area behind this sign is closed to all hunting.
- The area behind this sign is open to all hunting, fishing, and trapping as prescribed by State Law.



Prohibited Activities

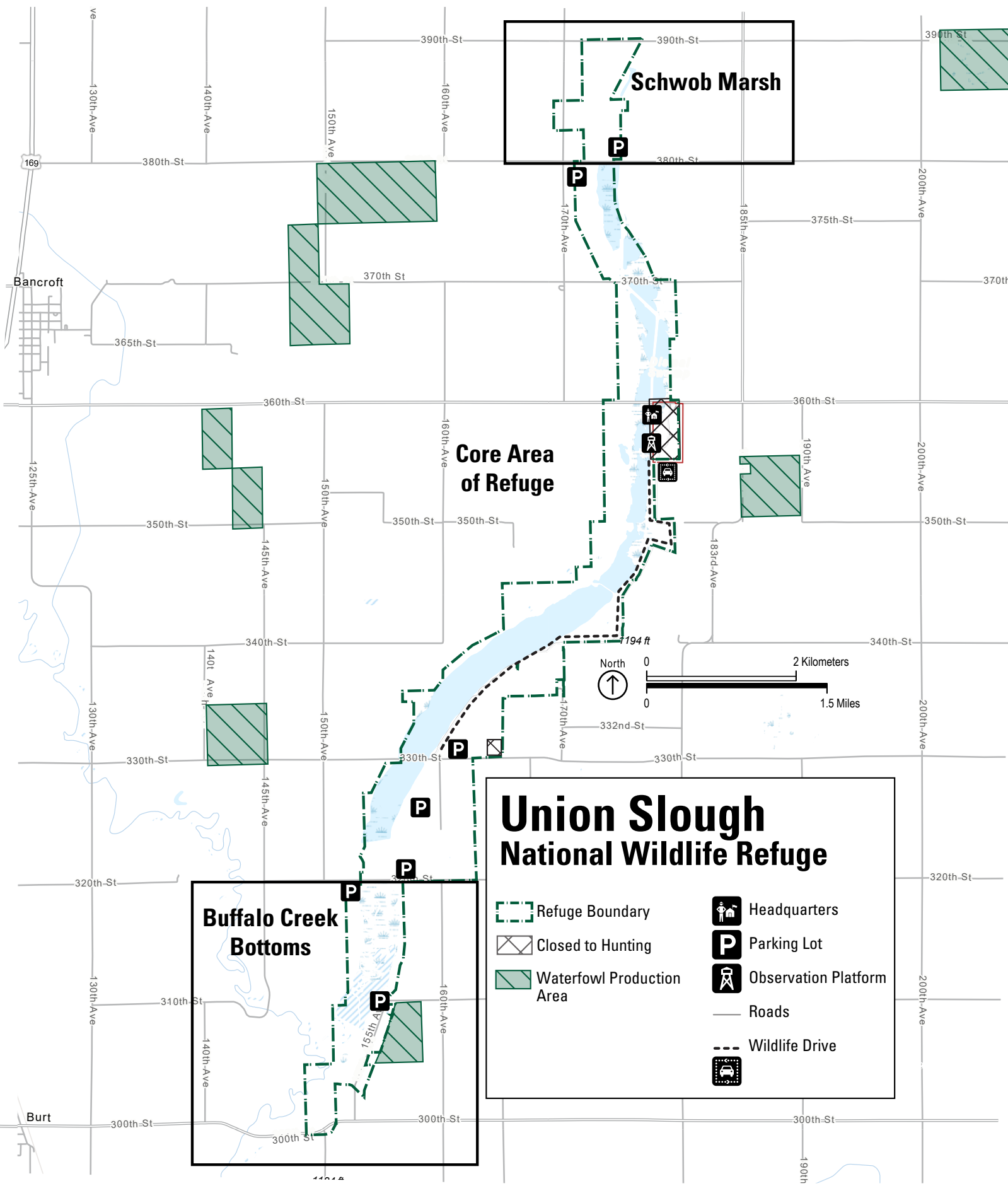
By law, recreational activities on national wildlife refuges are prohibited unless expressly permitted.

- Target Shooting
- Training pets and allowing pets outside of a vehicle except dogs used for hunting during the small game and migratory bird hunting seasons.
- All types of motorized vehicles on all refuge land (to include on frozen bodies of water) except on designated parking areas, public roads and the Auto Tour Route.
- Camping, open fires and overnight parking.
- Abandoning, discarding or otherwise leaving any personal property. All property brought onto a refuge must be removed at the end of each day. This includes all common items like vehicles, boats, decoys, trail cameras, blinds, geocaching items, photography equipment, ice fishing shelters and portable stands/blinds except those used for deer hunting.
- Destructing, defacing, disturbing or unauthorized removal of any natural object, artifact, cultural resource or Government property.
- Introducing, liberating, or placing plants or animals or their parts taken elsewhere on refuge lands or waters.
- Disposing of animal carcasses, trash, refuse, rocks, wood or other debris.
- Cutting, mowing, sawing, digging, collecting, injuring or removing vegetation. However, you may construct temporary hunting blinds using vegetation found on the Refuge.
- Launching, landing or disturbing wildlife by aircraft (drones) on the Refuge. This includes for recreational or commercial purposes.
- Commercial enterprise without a special use permit.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Use or possession of any illegal drug or drug paraphernalia.

- Use and/or possession of toxic shot.
- Use or possession of lead terminal tackle.
- Constructing permanent stands or blinds, including the use of nails, wire, screws or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter.
- Distribution of feed or bait, or hunting over bait. This includes salts and minerals.
- Use of artificial lights including spotlights, headlights, or other artificial light to spot, locate or take any wild animal in the Refuge.

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.





Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Boundary
- Closed to Hunting
- Waterfowl Production Area
- Headquarters
- Parking Lot
- Observation Platform
- Roads
- Wildlife Drive