

Ohio River Islands

National Wildlife Refuge

Free Hunting Permit and Regulations 2026-2027

Established in 1990, the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 570 refuges across the nation administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. With 24 islands and four mainland tracts scattered along 362 miles of the Ohio River in three states, the refuge protects and conserves habitat for native wildlife in one of our nation's busiest inland waterways.

This document provides regulations for hunting on the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge and serves as a Refuge Annual Hunt Permit. Regulations governing hunting on national wildlife refuges can be referenced in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

In addition, all state hunting regulations and seasons apply on the refuge. Hunters please note, the refuge spans across three states. You are responsible for knowing the regulations for the state in which you are hunting.

Twenty refuge islands and two mainland properties are open to hunting. See "Refuge Property Hunt Status" section for more information. A boat is needed to access the islands except for Middle Island.

Permit and License Requirements

While hunting on the refuge, all hunters are required to have in their possession:

- an original valid government issued photo identification (no copies or photos)
- an electronic or printed copy of a valid hunting license and required stamps
- a valid electronic or printed refuge hunting permit (this document)

Waterfowl hunters are additionally required to have in their possession:

- A Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) number
- A signed Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation (Duck) Stamp

Refuge Annual Hunt Permit

Hunters may print a Refuge Annual Hunt Permit from our website: www.fws.gov/refuge/ohio_river_islands, pick up a copy in person at the refuge visitor center (address on back page), or download an electronic permit.

Permitted Species

We allow hunting for all species consistent with state regulations, with the following exceptions: salamanders, sandhill crane, porcupine, elk, and wild boar.

General Hunt Regulations

- All state hunting regulations are in effect.
- The Refuge is open from one hour before legal sunrise until one hour after legal sunset.
- All hunting is closed from May 24 to September 6 of each year
- Deer, turkey, and bear hunting is open to archery only.
- It is unlawful to drive a nail, spike, climbing screws, or other metal object into any tree or to hunt from any tree where such objects have been driven.
- Littering is prohibited. This includes but not limited to leaving shell casings, flagging, reflectors, and paint.

- No motorized vehicles permitted off refuge roads.

- The use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

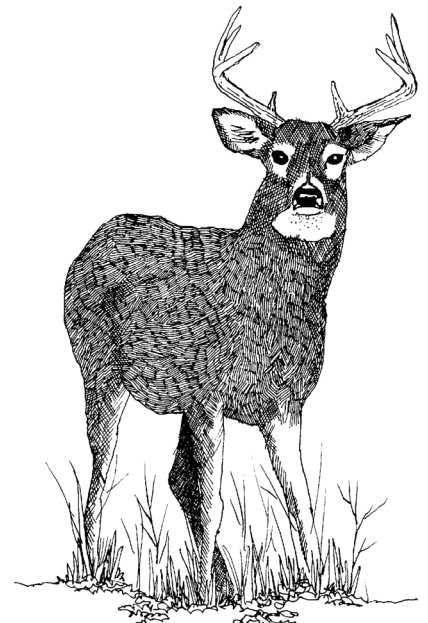
- Organized deer drives are prohibited. A drive is defined as an act of chasing, pursuing, disturbing, or otherwise directing deer so as to make the animals more susceptible to harvest.

- Only 2 temporary tree stands, blinds and/or trail cameras may be left on each tract/island per hunter. Tree stands, blinds and cameras must have current hunting license number, or name and cell phone number clearly printed.

- Tree stands, blinds, and trail cameras may be set up no earlier than 7 days before the start of the season and must be removed by the last day of the season.

- Baiting is prohibited.

- Camping, building fires, mowing, and tree cutting are not permitted.



Refuge Property Hunt Status			
Property (River Mile / Acres Open to Hunting)	Big Game (Archery)	Migratory Birds	Upland Game
✓ = Hunting Allowed			
Pennsylvania			
Phillis Is. (35/39)	✓	✓	✓
Georgetown Is. (38/16)	✓	✓	✓
West Virginia			
Buffalo Creek Tract (75/0)	Closed to all hunting		
Wheeling Is. (89/0)			
Captina Mainland Tract (108/138)	✓	✓	✓
Captina Is. (108/17)	✓	✓	✓
Fish Creek Is. (113/48)	✓	✓	✓
Paden Is. (132/81)	✓	✓	✓
Williamson Is. (134/126)	✓	✓	✓
Witten Towhead (135/8)	✓	✓	✓
Crab Is. (138/0)	Closed to all hunting		
Wells Is. (139/43)	✓	✓	✓
Mill Creek Is. (141/19)	✓	✓	✓
Grandview Is. (143/8)	✓	✓	✓
Grape/Bat Is. (152/45)	✓	✓	✓
Middle Is. (153/160)	*✓	*✓	*✓
Broadback Is. (159/51)	✓	✓	✓
Buckley Is. (169/160)	✓	✓	✓
Buckley Mainland (169/40)	**✓		
Muskingum Is. (175/93)	✓	✓	✓
Muskingum Mainland (175/0)	Closed to all hunting		
Neal Is. (181/104)	✓	✓	✓
Buffington Is. (216/162)	✓	✓	✓
Letart Is. (235/29)	✓	✓	✓
Kentucky			
Manchester #1 Is. (395/20)	✓	✓	✓
Manchester #2 Is. (395/94)	✓	✓	✓

An Important Message

The future of hunting on this refuge requires responsible hunter behavior and compliance with regulations. The Refuge Hunt Permit authorizes hunters to take specified game only. Harming or needlessly disturbing any other wildlife including birds, mammals, turtles, frogs, and snakes is a violation of refuge regulations and is a cause for prosecution.

All accidents or injuries must be reported to the refuge headquarters as soon as possible, tel. 304-375-2923. **In the event of an emergency, call 911 before contacting the refuge.**

To report violations, please contact:
Federal Wildlife Officer
Cell Phone: 304/834 0449
or 304/375 2923 ext. 4

Ohio River Islands
National Wildlife Refuge
3982 Waverly Road
Williamstown, WV 26187
304/375 2923
Email: OhioRiverIslands@fws.gov
Website:
www.fws.gov/refuge/ohio_river_islands

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard of hearing
1 800/877 8339
West Virginia Relay Center
1 800/982 8771 - TDD
1 800/828 1140 - Voice

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD (9453)
www.fws.gov

Refuge islands and mainland properties are marked by refuge boundary signs.

* See maps on island for zoned area where hunting is permitted.

** See maps at trailhead for zoned area where hunting is permitted.



Hunter Please Note - Report Bird Band Numbers -- Call Toll Free 1 800/327 BAND (2263)

By reporting band numbers you will be helping to manage our continental waterfowl resource. When you call the Bird Banding Lab, you will be asked when and where you encountered the bird. You will then be told when and where the bird was banded. A certificate of appreciation with additional information will be mailed to you.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Ohio River Islands

National Wildlife Refuge

- ▲ Refuge Island - Owned
- △ Refuge Island - Partially owned
- △ Non-Refuge Island

