



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Rappahannock River Valley NWR

336 Wilna Road

Warsaw, VA 22572

Phone: 804/333-1470 Fax: 804/333-3396

Dear Hunter:

We are pleased that you are interested in participating in one or more of the 2026/27 hunts at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). Please see Table 2 below for available hunting opportunities. There are **significant changes** to the hunting program at the Refuge this season that expand the number of hunting opportunities. These include: the opening of two properties for hunting, the Kennedy and Wellford Units; adding late-season archery to most hunting units; expanded deer (shotgun) permit periods; and offering shoreline waterfowl hunting opportunities at the Wilna and Toby's Point Units.

Additionally, we are expanding our support of VA Department of Wildlife Resource's Youth & Apprentice Hunting program. We will be offering special hunts on the following days: Deer, September 26; and Turkey, October 10. These will be at the Tayloe Unit. The waterfowl hunt will be February 6 and take place at all three units open to waterfowl this year, (Cat Point Creek, Wilna and Toby's Point Units). This waterfowl hunt will also be open to veterans. Spring Turkey will be April 3, also at the Tayloe Unit. There will be no charge for these hunts, but registration is required by calling the Refuge.

In the past, most hunting at the Refuge was through permits. The Mothershead, Franklin, and Wright units were open to hunting through the check in/out system (no permit required). This will still be the case in 2026/27, but we will be requiring all hunters (except waterfowl hunters) to use the check in/out system. That is, even if you purchase a permit, you will still be required to use the check in/out system. The check in/out system allows us to include a three-question survey to improve both future hunts and the management of species on the Refuge. We estimate that using the check in/out with the three-question survey at the end should take most hunters less than 60 seconds to complete.

Finally, we want to encourage Refuge hunters to take advantage of the Lead-Free Hunting Ammunition Incentive Program whereby you can be reimbursed for a portion of your lead-free hunting ammunition purchase this season. You can find out the details here: <https://www.fws.gov/form/lead-free-incentive>. Thank you for helping us protect wildlife by choosing lead-free ammunition to hunt at the Refuge this season.

For the latest hunt plan, please go to: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/rappahannock-river-valley/visit-us/activities/hunting>

PERMIT AVAILABILITY: As is the case each year, for most fall and winter hunting seasons, permits become available beginning on the first Sunday in August, at noon (this year that date will be **August 2**). Hunters can acquire up to one archery, one muzzleloader, one shotgun, one waterfowl shoreline, and/or

one late season archery permit, during a 2-week, first-come first-served, time period. After this 2-week period, all remaining permits are available on a first-come first-served basis, with no restrictions on how many a hunter can purchase, until all permits are sold (that date will be **August 16**, at noon).

For waterfowl opportunities at Cat Point Creek, a lottery is held in October (this year **October 11**; first waterfowl hunt day this year is November 19). You can apply for the waterfowl lottery drawing beginning on September 1. A waterfowl permit allows you to choose one of two blinds to hunt, up to three additional hunters (total 4) at no extra charge and have up to two retrieval dogs.

Spring turkey (2026) permits become available at noon on the last Sunday of February or first Sunday of March each year (whichever is closest to March 1) and are sold on a first come-first served basis (this year that date will be **February 28**; first general public spring turkey hunt is April 10).

For units offering check-in/out hunting opportunities, you can check-in starting at midnight the day before the hunt date (example: You want to hunt on Oct. 17 you can reserve your spot / check-in starting the first minute of Oct. 16).

Visit the RecAccess site to get permits and check in/out for hunts at:

<https://rappahannock.recaccess.com/>

Please review all Refuge permits (if required) to be sure they are correct. If you believe there is an error, please call the refuge office at (804) 761-0464. You will need to have all applicable permits (Refuge, State, and Federal) with you during the hunt.

Permit hunts are non-transferable (i.e., selected hunters must be present). For hunts that allow guests, the guest can only participate if the permit holder is present.

HUNTABLE SPECIES:

- Large Game- Deer, Coyote, Bobcat
- Turkey
- Small Game- Gray squirrel, Rabbit, Groundhog, Red Fox, Skunk, Raccoon, and Opossum
- Waterfowl- Duck, Merganser, Coot, Brant, Dark and Light Goose

METHODS OF TAKE: Hunters will follow state regulations for the respective species and seasons, unless further Refuge restrictions apply. Archery Equipment, Muzzleloading Firearms, and Shotguns as defined by the VA DWR regulations may be used. Some properties are restricted to only archery for large game species. During VA DWR firearm seasons, the only firearm allowed for hunting on the Refuge is shotguns and muzzleloaders. We prohibit the use of rifles, handguns, and airguns for hunting.

Hunters are required to still hunt for large game species and turkey. Still hunting includes the use of portable hunting blinds, portable tree stands, or stationary ground hunting. No stalking, drives, or roaming are allowed. Hunters must remove their tree stand(s), and/or blind(s) from the refuge each day with the following exception: hunters with a-multi day permit can leave blinds or stands up until the end of their permit period. Stands/blinds left overnight must have owner's contact information affixed to them.

Dogs are only allowed on refuge lands/waters in association with approved waterfowl hunts and use must be consistent with VADWR regulations. Dogs used for waterfowl retrieval must be under direct control at all times. Dogs may not be used to hunt turkey, small or large game.

Waterfowl decoys may be used but must be removed at the end of each day's hunt.

The use of bait, spotlights, electronic calls, or lures made with animal parts or fluids (e.g. urine) is prohibited.

Hunters are encouraged to voluntarily use non-lead ammunition when hunting on the refuge when not already required by the state (e.g. waterfowl).

SCOUTING: Scouting is permitted upon request from 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM on the dates listed below. Please notify the Refuge at least one business day in advance of the day(s) you are requesting to scout. You may make your reservation to scout via email: william_crouch@fws.gov. Please include your name, the unit(s) and date(s) you would like to scout, how many people will be in your party, a description of the vehicle that will be driven to the unit(s), and your best contact number.

Table 1. SCOUT DATES for Deer, Coyote, Turkey, and Small game.

Deer, Turkey, Coyote - Archery	September 26, 27
Deer, Turkey, Coyote - Muzzleloader	October 18, 25
Deer, Turkey, Coyote - Shotgun	November 1, 8
Rabbit/Squirrel	December 13, 20, 27
Late Season Archery	December 6, 13
Spring Gobbler (2027)	April 3, 4

HUNTING HOURS: Refuge units will be open 2 hours before and after legal shooting hours for permitted hunters or those who have used the online check-in system on designated hunt dates. Shooting hours on the refuge are a half hour before sunrise to a half hour after sunset for all species unless state regulations are more restrictive: waterfowl shooting hours end at sunset and spring turkey ends at noon.

There is **no Sunday hunting** on any Refuge unit.

HUNTER REGULATIONS & ETHICS: Please respect the land and other hunters by following these simple rules:

- Hunters must possess the following, on their person at all times, while on refuge property either in print or on mobile device: a valid Virginia hunting license; all required state and federal stamps; and a valid form of government-issued photo identification. Completion of the check-in procedure and proof of a valid refuge hunting permit, where required, must also be presentable.
- Hunters must make a reasonable effort to retrieve all wounded or killed game and include it in their daily bag limit. We prohibit leaving entrails or other waste within 50 feet of any road, parking area, trail, or structures on the refuge.
- No damage to trees will be allowed. No nails, screws, bolts, or screw-in steps may be used.
- We prohibit leaving recording devices (i.e. game cameras) on the refuge unattended.
- We prohibit the use of flagging or markers of any kind (i.e., reflective tacks) to mark trails or for

any other purpose.

- We prohibit the use of ATVs, UTVs, bicycles, drones (UASs), airboats, and amphibious vehicles on the refuge or any mechanized vehicle use off official refuge roads except for persons with permanent disabilities in designated areas as authorized by the refuge manager.
- Hunters must respect property lines and not cross into private lands, or areas of the refuge designated as No Hunting Safety Zones.
- Be considerate of other hunters; do not intrude in their space and minimize vehicle use.
- Take all your trash with you, including food wrappers and spent shells.
- If you witness violations or experience problems, please report them immediately to the Deputy Refuge Manager at 804-313-7574.

YOUTH / APPRENTICE ACCOMPANYING: The Refuge allows permitted hunters to bring youth and those with a VA DWR apprentice license with them on Refuge hunts, provided they first notify the Refuge, and also abide by certain requirements. This also applies to non-hunting adults who accompany permitted hunters. Please contact Deputy Refuge Manager Bill Crouch for further information (william_crouch@fws.gov).

PARKING: Hunters must park in designated parking locations as marked on Refuge hunt maps. On units that do not have designated parking areas, hunters may park along the side of mapped roads. Hunters must be parked in a manner to allow passage by other vehicles along roads and through gates.

REFUGE MAPS and DIRECTIONS: Refuge maps are available at our website: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/rappahannock-river-valley/map> Directions to each of the units can be found here <https://www.fws.gov/media/2022-directions-hunt-units>.

STATE LAWS: If you need information concerning the state laws regarding hunts, please visit the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources web site at: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/> or call (804) 367-1000.

Sincerely,

Refuge Staff
Rappahannock River Valley NWR

Table 2. Hunting Opportunities at Rappahannock River Valley NWR (units in bold are new for 2026/27)

Hunt	Dates	Units
<u>Archery</u> Large Game, Turkey**	Oct. 3 – 30*	Cat Point Creek, Fones Cliffs, Hutchinson, Kennedy , Laurel Grove, Port Royal, Tayloe, Toby's Point, Wilna, Wright
	Oct. 3 – Jan. 2*	Franklin, Mothershead, Thomas, Wellford
<u>Muzzleloader</u> Large Game	Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	Fones Cliffs, Hutchinson, Kennedy , Laurel Grove, Tayloe, Toby's Point, Wilna
	Oct. 31 - Nov. 13*	Wright
<u>Shotgun</u> Large Game, Turkey**	Nov. 14 – Dec. 15*	Fones Cliffs, Hutchinson, Kennedy Laurel Grove, Tayloe, Toby's Point, Wright
	Nov. 14, 20-21, 27- 28, Dec. 4-5, and 11-12, 14-15	Wilna
<u>Late Season Archery</u> Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	Fones Cliffs, Hutchinson, Kennedy , Laurel Grove, Tayloe, Thomas, Toby's Point, Wellford, Wilna, Wright
Small Game	Dec. 16– Feb 28*	Franklin, Kennedy , Mothershead, Wright
Waterfowl	Mid-season: Nov. 19-21 and 26-28 Late season: Dec. 19***, Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31-Jan. 2, Jan 7-9, 14-16, 21-23, & 28-30	Cat Point Creek (two Refuge blinds in Menokin Bay)
Shoreline Waterfowl	Teal: Sept. 19-26* Early season: Oct. 9-10 Mid-season: Nov. 18-28* Late season: Dec. 21-Jan. 2*	Shorelines of Wilna (1 area) and Toby's Point (2 areas)
Spring Gobbler (shotgun)	April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	Fones Cliffs, Franklin, Hutchinson, Kennedy , Laurel Grove, Mothershead, Tayloe, Toby's Point, Wilna, Wright. Thomas and Wellford are archery only.
VA Department of Wildlife Resource's Youth & Apprentice Hunting program	Deer: Sept. 26	Tayloe
	Turkey: Oct. 10	Tayloe
	Waterfowl****: Feb. 6	Cat Point Creek, Toby's Point, and Wilna
	Spring Turkey: Apr. 3	Tayloe

*No Sunday Hunting

**Turkey Season Dates are Oct 3- Nov 14 (Archery only), Nov 25 & 26, Nov 30 to Dec 15

***Due to State seasons this is only a one-day hunt.

****The special waterfowl hunt on Feb. 6 is also open to veterans.

Table 3. Hunting Permits at Rappahannock River Valley NWR

Unit	Hunt Acres	Season / Method	Species	Hunt Permit Period(s)	Permits	Price	Type
Cat Point Creek	90	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	3	\$40	Permit
		Waterfowl Shotgun	Waterfowl	9: Nov. 19-21, 26-28, Dec. 19 (1 day), Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31-Jan. 2, Jan 7-9, 14-16, 21-23, 28-30	1	\$40	Lottery
		Youth, Apprentice, Veteran Shotgun	Waterfowl	Feb. 6	2	Free	Register
Fones Cliffs	251	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	5	\$40	Permit
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	5	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	6	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov 16-21, 23-28, Nov 30- Dec 5, 7-12, 14-15***	5	\$30	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	5	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	2	\$40	Permit
Franklin	104	Archery	Large Game, Turkey**	Daily: Oct. 3- Jan. 2*	4	Free	Check-In
		Small Game Shotgun	Small Game	Daily: Dec. 16- Feb 28*	4	Free	Check-In
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	1	\$40	Permit
Hutchinson	360	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	10	\$40	Permit
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	10	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	12	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov16-21, 23-28, Nov 30- Dec 5, 7-12, 14-15***	10	\$30	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	10	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	3	\$40	Permit

* No Sunday Hunting, ** Turkey Season Dates are only Oct. 3-Nov 14 (Archery only), Nov 25 & 26, Nov 30 to Dec 15, and Dec. 16 to Dec. 26 (Archery only) *** Two Day Large Game Shotgun Hunt Price is \$25

Unit	Hunt Acres	Season / Method	Species	Hunt Dates	Permits	Price	Type
Kennedy	85	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	3	\$40	Permit
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	3	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	4	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov16-21, 23-28, Nov 30- Dec 5, 7-12, 14-15***	3	\$30	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	3	\$40	Permit
		Small Game Shotgun	Small Game	Daily: Dec 16 – Feb 28*	3	Free	Check-In
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	1	\$40	Permit
Laurel Grove	984	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	16	\$40	Permit
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	16	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	18	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov16-21, 23-28, Nov 30- Dec 5, 7-12, 14-15***	16	\$30	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	16	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	3	\$40	Permit
Mothershead	202	Archery	Large Game, Turkey**	Daily: Oct. 3- Jan. 2*	6	Free	Check-In
		Small Game Shotgun	Small Game	Daily: Dec. 16- Feb 28*	6	Free	Check-In
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	1	\$40	Permit
Port Royal	102	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	4	\$40	Permit

* No Sunday Hunting, ** Turkey Season Dates are only Oct. 3-Nov 14 (Archery only), Nov 25 & 26, Nov 30 to Dec 15, and Dec. 16 to Dec. 26 (Archery only) *** Two Day Large Game Shotgun Hunt Price is \$25

Unit	Hunt Acres	Season / Method	Species	Hunt Dates	Permits	Price	Type
Tayloe	822	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	14	\$40	Permit
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	14	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	16	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov16-21, 23-28, Nov 30- Dec 5, 7-12, 14-15***	14	\$30	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	14	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	4	\$40	Permit
		Youth, Apprentice, Shotgun	Deer	Sept. 26	4	Free	Register
		Youth, Apprentice Shotgun	Turkey	Oct. 10	4	Free	Register
		Youth, Apprentice Shotgun	Spring Turkey	Apr. 3	4	Free	Register
Thomas	230	Archery	Large Game, Turkey**	6: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30, Oct. 31-Nov. 13, Nov. 14-27, Nov. 28- Dec. 15, Dec. 16- Jan. 2*	6	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Archery	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	1	\$40	Permit
Toby's Point	351	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	4	\$40	Permit
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	4	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	5	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov.16-21, 23-28, Nov. 30- Dec 5, 7-12, 14-15***	4	\$30	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	4	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	2	\$40	Permit
		Early Teal Shotgun	Teal	Sept. 19-26*	2	\$40	Permit
		Waterfowl Shotgun	Waterfowl	5: Oct 9-10, Nov 18-21, 23-28, Dec. 21-26, Dec. 28-Jan. 2	2	\$40	Permit
		Youth, Apprentice, Veteran Shotgun	Waterfowl	Feb. 6	2	Free	Register

* No Sunday Hunting, ** Turkey Season Dates are only Oct. 3-Nov 14 (Archery only), Nov 25 & 26, Nov 30 to Dec 15, and Dec. 16 to Dec. 26 (Archery only) *** Two Day Large Game Shotgun Hunt Price is \$25

Unit	Hunt Acres	Season / Method	Species	Hunt Dates	Permits	Price	Type
Wellford	111	Archery	Large Game, Turkey**	6: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30, Oct. 31-Nov. 13, Nov. 14-27, Nov. 28- Dec. 15, Dec. 16- Jan. 2*	2	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Archery	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	1	\$40	Permit
Wilna	524	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	2: Oct. 3-16, Oct.17-30	8	\$40	Permit
	888	Muzzleloader	Large Game	4: Oct. 31, Nov. 6, 7, 13	16	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun Opening Day	Large Game	Nov. 14	18	\$25	Permit
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	5: Nov. 20-21, 27- 28, Dec. 4-5, and 11-12, 14-15	16	\$25	Permit
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	8	\$40	Permit
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	3	\$40	Permit
		Early Teal Shotgun	Teal	Sept. 19-26*	1	\$40	Permit
		Waterfowl Shotgun	Waterfowl	5: Oct 9-10, Nov 18-21, 23-28, Dec. 21-26, Dec. 28-Jan. 2	1	\$40	Permit
		Youth, Apprentice, Veteran Shotgun	Waterfowl	Feb. 6	1	Free	Register
Wright	828	Archery	Large Game, Turkey	Daily: Oct. 3-30*	9	Free	Check-In
		Muzzleloader	Large Game	Daily: Oct. 31- Nov.13	9	Free	Check-In
		Shotgun	Large Game, Turkey**	Daily: Nov. 14- Dec 15*	9	Free	Check-In
		Late Season Archery	Deer	Daily: Dec. 16 – Jan. 2*	9	Free	Check-In
		Small Game Shotgun	Small Game	Daily: Dec 16 – Feb 28*	9	Free	Check-In
		Spring Gobbler Shotgun	Turkey	3: April 10, 17, and 24 (½ days)	3	\$40	Permit

* No Sunday Hunting, ** Turkey Season Dates are only Oct. 3-Nov 14 (Archery only), Nov 25 & 26, Nov 30 to Dec 15, and Dec. 16 to Dec. 26 (Archery only) *** Two Day Large Game Shotgun Hunt Price is \$25