

Big Stone

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations



Welcome

Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge was originally purchased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on May 21, 1975. The refuge currently includes 11,586 acres in Big Stone and Lac qui Parle Counties, in Minnesota.

Safety

Hunters must wear an article of blaze orange or pink consistent with state regulations.

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).

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles are permitted only on public use roads and parking lots as shown on the map. Snowmobiles, ATVs and UTVs are prohibited.

Boats

Boats using electric motors are permitted only in the Minnesota River channel. Other non-motorized boats are allowed in the Minnesota River, East Pool, and West Pool. West Pool is closed to all watercraft during the migratory waterfowl hunting season. No other motorized boats are allowed on the Refuge. All boats must be invasive species free.

Accessibility Information

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. Hunters and anglers are required to hold all applicable state and federal licenses, endorsements, and stamps.

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

Access

Refuge hunting hours follow those set by the State of Minnesota hunting regulations, except where noted.

Hunters and anglers must park in designated parking areas, as identified on the map, to access the Refuge for hunting. It is illegal to retrieve game from areas closed to hunting. Access to the Refuge from private property is prohibited.

Waterfowl taken outside the refuge boundary may be retrieved without a firearm, up to 100 yards (90m) inside areas of the refuge that are open to all other hunting. Waterfowl may not be retrieved from areas closed to waterfowl hunting.

Migratory bird hunting is restricted to Hunt Unit B on the map.

Species

Game species include all state-listed migratory game birds (except sandhill cranes), all state-listed fur-bearers, small game including wild turkey, and unprotected animals except coyotes and gophers on designated areas of the refuge. Hunting hours for these species are one-half (½) hour before sunrise to sunset. Refuge is closed to coyote hunting and the conservation goose and March crow.

Hunting and Fishing Structures

We prohibit constructing or occupying permanent stands or blinds. We also prohibit 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. Bringing vegetation onto the refuge is prohibited. Portable hunting stands must be set up and removed each day. Ice fishing shelters and equipment must be removed at the end of each day.

Trapping

Permitted by special use permit only. Contact Refuge Manager for details and information.

To Report Violations

Refuge Law Enforcement Officer: 320-288-3419

Report Wildlife Crimes 1-844-FWS-TIPS (397-8477)
fws_tips@fws.gov

44843 County Road 19
Odessa, MN 56276-2062
320-273-2191
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/big-stone>
TTY Federal Relay System: 1-800-877-8339

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

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Activity	Season Dates	Areas	Regulation
Small Game	Skunk: 1st - last day of Feb.	Units A and B 1/2 hour before legal sunrise to sunset	State species apply.
Small Game	Badger, Fox, Opossum, Raccoon, and Weasels: Sept 1st day of state season - last day of Feb.	Units A and B 1/2 hour before legal sunrise to sunset	Must possess and use only approved nontoxic shot. Hunting dogs must be under the immediate control of the hunter (dog use prohibited for raccoons). State species apply.
Wild Turkey	Spring and fall wild turkey hunting in accordance with Federal and State hunting regulations	Units A and B	Must possess and use only approved nontoxic shot.
Deer	Entry into the refuge is prohibited earlier than two hours before legal shooting hours	Units A and B See State regulations for map and permit requirements	State and Federal regulations apply.
Bear	State Seasons	Units A and B	Hunting dog use prohibited for bears, baiting is prohibited. State and federal regulations apply.
Migratory Bird	State Seasons	Unit B 1 hour before legal sunrise until 1 hour after legal sunset.	Must possess and use only approved nontoxic shot. Hunting dogs must be under the immediate control of the hunter. Closed to sandhill crane hunting, the March crow hunt season and Conservation Light Goose order.
Sport and Ice Fishing	State Seasons - daylight hours only	All refuge waters, daylight hours only	State and Federal Regulations apply. Open for all game species except mussels (clams), crayfish, leech, frog, toad, salamander, snake, lizard, turtle and other non-fish species. Non motorized boats only.
State limits for game species and state creel and length limits for fishing apply.			

Prohibited Activities

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

- Possession of alcoholic beverages or any illegal drug or drug paraphernalia.
- Camping and fires.
- Night hunting activities.
- Overnight parking, parking in front of gates, water access points, water control structures, or on bridges.
- All types of motorized vehicles on all refuge land and closed roads - to include frozen bodies of water - except on designated parking areas and public roads.
- Target shooting, shooting from or over roads, from road right-of ways or parking areas.
- Training pets and allowing pets off leash.
- Destroying or removing any natural items such as antlers, bison skulls, plants, historic, and archaeological features, which are protected by Federal law.
- Marking or flagging any tree or other Refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substance.
- Introducing, liberating or placing plants or animals, or their parts taken elsewhere, on refuge lands or waters.
- Abandoning or disposing of personal property, animal carcasses, trash, refuse, rocks, wood or other debris.
- Cutting, mowing, sawing, digging, collecting, injuring or removing vegetation.
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree.
- Leaving up blinds or ice fishing equipment overnight.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices.
- Use a spotlight, headlight or other artificial light to spot, locate or take any wild animal.
- Use of any aircraft, drones, and other unmanned aerial vehicles on the refuge - for either recreational or commercial purposes.
- Distribution of feed or bait, or hunting over bait.
- Commercial enterprise without a special use permit.
- Access to the Refuge from private property.
- Hunting within 200 yards of any building.

