

Neal Smith

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations



Welcome

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1990 with the purpose to protect, restore and reconstruct and manage native ecosystems of tallgrass prairie, oak savanna and sedge meadow. Today, the refuge protects 6,000 acres of wildlife habitat and provides visitors, students, researchers and local landowners with educational, recreational and volunteer opportunities to learn about and enjoy their native tallgrass prairie heritage.

Safety

Please respect our neighbors. State law prohibits shooting within 200 yards of buildings inhabited by people or livestock. Contact the refuge before hunting for information about upcoming prescribed burns. For emergencies, dial 911.

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). Except for authorized hunting activities, discharge of firearms on refuge land is prohibited.

Vehicles

Parking is allowed at designated areas which are marked with a "P" for parking. Do not park in any field entrance. (Access must be maintained for emergency, fire and patrol vehicles.) Do not drive into fields or grassland areas. Overnight parking is prohibited.

Hunting Dogs

The use of hunting dogs is allowed per DNR regulations for allowed species, during the state approved season, provided the dog is under the immediate control of the hunter at all times.

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 Equal Opportunity, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/public-civil-rights>

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting is 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 will be in accordance with applicable State of Iowa regulations subject to the conditions stated in this publication. Brochures may be obtained by mail, at the refuge visitor center, or from the refuge website.

Refuge lands are open to fishing, year round, 1 hour before legal sunrise to 1 hour after legal sunset, except in bison/elk enclosure. Night fishing, access from private property and entry into closed areas are prohibited. We prohibit the taking of any turtle, frog, snake, lizard, leech, minnow, crayfish, mussel (clam), and any other non-fish species by any method on the refuge.

Access

We allow entry into the refuge 1 hour before legal sunrise and require hunters to leave the refuge no later than 1 hour after legal sunset. All hunting access hours follow Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) state regulations. No night hunting allowed.

Tree Stands

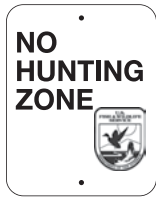
Portable stands may be used, stands may be placed 7 days prior to the season and removed 7 days after the season. Steps, ladders, and stands will be erected in such a way that the trees are not damaged. Spikes, nails and all other items that penetrate the bark of a tree are prohibited.

To Report Violations

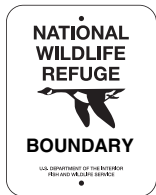
- Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Refuge Staff:
515-994-3400
After Hours and Weekends: IA DNR Conservation
Officer: 641/521-2003 or Federal Wildlife Officer:
815-273-2732
- 1-844-FWS-TIPS (397-8477)

Signs and Boundaries

Please respect the following signs:



- No hunting zone:
Hunting prohibited
- Unauthorized entry
prohibited: Refuge
boundary



- Area beyond this sign
closed: No entry
- End of public use
area: Private property
boundary



- No vehicles: All traffic
prohibited
- Parking area:
Designated areas to
park while hunting

9981 Pacific Street
Prairie City, IA 50228

515-994-3400
TTY Federal Relay System: 1-800-877-8339

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

August 2026



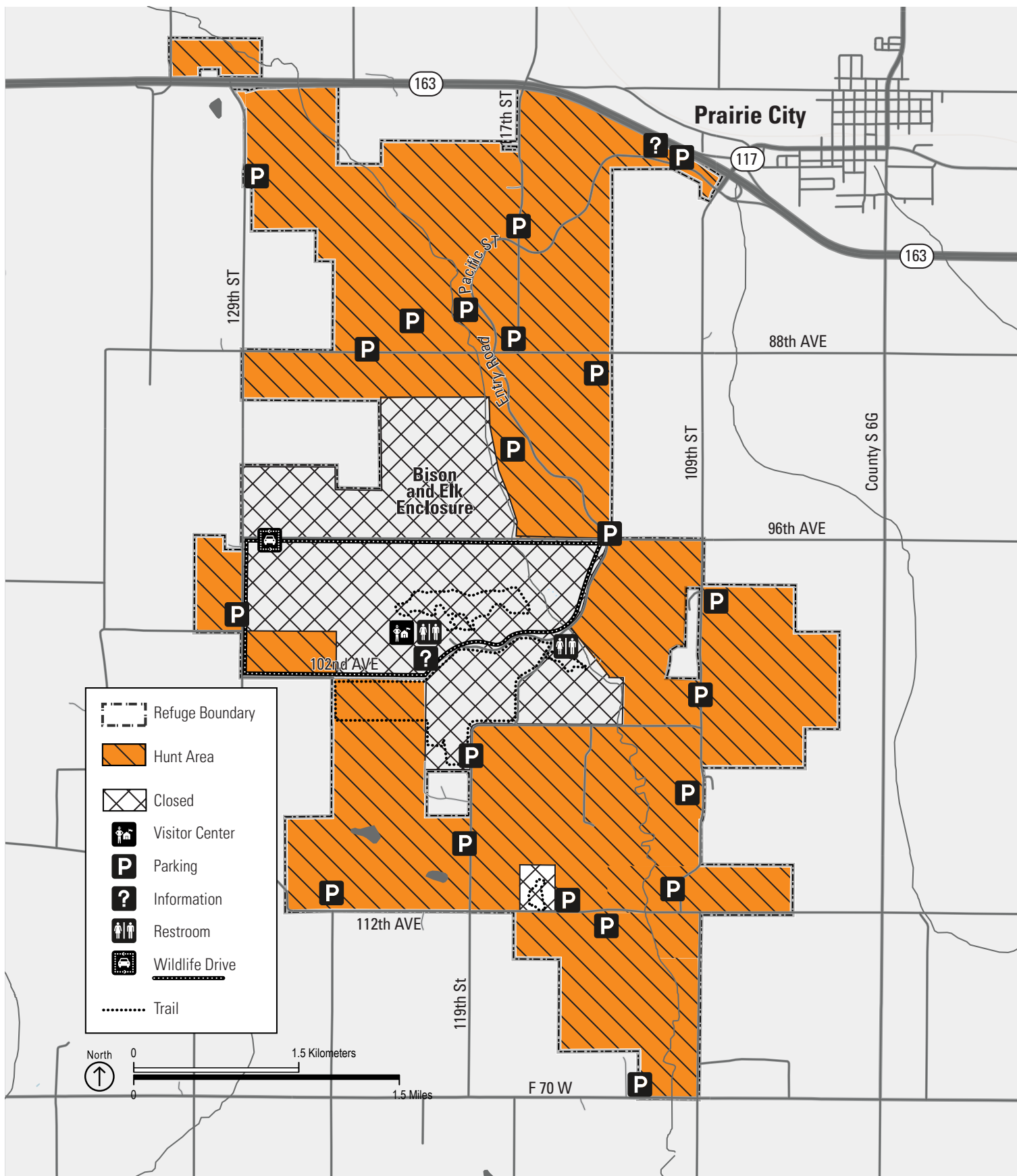
Prohibited Activities

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

- Trapping of fur-bearing animals anywhere on the
refuge, including road ditches
- Possession of alcoholic beverages
- Camping and fires
- Searching for or removal of any natural items
such as antlers, bison skulls, plants, and historic/
archaeological features
- Boats, canoes, kayaks, etc.
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring
devices
- Marking or flagging any tree or other refuge feature
with reflectors, paint, or other substance
- ATVs or any other mechanized device used for
retrieving game or transportation
- Access to the refuge from private property
- Shooting on, from, or over any refuge road within 50
feet of the center line
- The training of dogs on the refuge
- Use of spotlights or other artificial lights to spot,
locate, or take any wildlife within the boundaries of
any Refuge or along the right-of-way on public or
private roads
- Drones (UAVs) taking off, landing and/or flying on or
over refuge lands.
- Fishing in the bison/elk enclosure

Activity	Hunting Hours	Special Regulation
Upland Game: Rooster Pheasant, Rooster Pheasant (Youth), Bobwhite Quail, Rabbit (Cottontail), Squirrel (Gray and Fox), Badger, Beaver, Bobcat, Coyote, Crow, Fox (red and gray), Gray partridge, Mink, Muskrat, Opposum, Otter, Pigeon, Raccoon, Ruffed Grouse, Striped Skunk, Weasel and Woodcock	Open to ½ hour before legal sunrise to ½ hour after legal sunset	Night hunting prohibited We allow take of coyote with shotgun only Non-toxic shot required
Spring Turkey: (Youth Season, Residents Only), (Season 1, 2, 3, 4), (Archery-only, Resident)	State hours	You may only possess approved nontoxic shot when turkey hunting
Fall Turkey: Gun/Bow, Archery Only	State hours	You may only possess approved nontoxic shot when turkey hunting
Migratory Game Birds: Doves (Mourning and Eurasian Collared), September Teal, Ducks, Coots and Mergansers, Youth Waterfowl, Dark and Light Geese (Canada, Brant, White-fronted, white and blue-phase Snow and Ross'), Light Geese (Conservation Order), Rail (Sora and Virginia), Snipe, Woodcock	State hours	You must remove personal property, including but not limited to boats, decoys, blinds, blind materials, stands, and platforms, brought onto the refuge at the end of each day's hunt.
Whitetail Deer: Youth Season, Disabled Hunter Season, Archery Season Early Split, Archery Season Late Split, Early Muzzleloader, Late Muzzleloader, Shotgun Season 1, Shotgun Season 2, Non-resident Holiday	State hours	Deer drivers are permissible in accordance with state regulations.
Fishing	Year round, 1 hour before legal sunrise to 1 hour after legal sunset	Night fishing, access from private property and entry into closed areas are prohibited. We prohibit the taking of any turtle, frog, snake, lizard, leech, minnow, crayfish, mussel (clam), and any other non-fish species by any method on the refuge.
Falconry	State hours	State regulations
State regulations, season dates and bag and possession limits, shooting times apply to ALL hunt activities on 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.