

Lower Klamath, Tule Lake, and Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuges Waterfowl and Upland Game Bird Hunting Plan

August 2026

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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I. Introduction

Each National Wildlife Refuge (NWR or refuge) is guided by the mission and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System), the purposes of an individual refuge, Federal laws and Executive Orders, Service policy, and international treaties. Relevant guidance includes, but is not limited to, the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (Administration Act) of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, (16 U.S.C. 460k-4), and selected portions of the Code of Federal Regulations, and the Service Manual.

Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge (Lower Klamath NWR) was established under authority of Executive Order 924, which was subsequently modified by Executive Order 2200 (May 14, 1915), Executive Order 3187 (December 2, 1919), Executive Order 3422 (March 28, 1921), Executive Order 8475 (July 10, 1940) and the Kuchel Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 695).

According to these authorities, Lower Klamath NWR's purposes are:

"...as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds" (EO 924)

"...protection of native birds" (EO 2200)

"...to preserve intact the necessary existing habitat for migratory waterfowl in this vital area of the Pacific flyway..." (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695k).

"...to prevent depredations of migratory waterfowl on the agricultural crops in the Pacific Coast States" (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695k).

"...dedicated to wildlife conservation...for the major purpose of waterfowl management, but with full consideration to optimum agricultural use that is consistent therewith" (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695l).

"...consistent with proper waterfowl management, continue the present pattern of leasing the reserved lands..." (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695n).

"...for waterfowl purposes, including the growing of agricultural crops by direct plantings and sharecrop agreements with local cooperators where necessary..." (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695n)

Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge (Tule Lake NWR) was established under the authority of the Kuchel Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 695), Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-4-11), Executive Order 4975, and Executive Order 5945.

According to these authorities, Tule Lake NWR's purposes are:

"...as a refuge and breeding ground for birds..." (EO 4975)

“...as a refuge and breeding ground for wild birds and animals” (EO 5945)

“...to preserve intact the necessary existing habitat for migratory waterfowl in this vital area of the Pacific flyway...” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695k).

“...to prevent depredations of migratory waterfowl on the agricultural crops in the Pacific Coast States” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695k).

“...dedicated to wildlife conservation...for the major purpose of waterfowl management, but with full consideration to optimum agricultural use that is consistent therewith” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695l).

“...consistent with proper waterfowl management, continue the present pattern of leasing the reserved lands...” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695n).

“...for waterfowl purposes, including the growing of agricultural crops by direct plantings and sharecrop agreements with local cooperators where necessary...” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695n)

Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge (Upper Klamath NWR) was established by Executive Order 4851 under the authority of The Kuchel Act (16 U.S.C. 695); Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715d); Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1534).

According to these authorities, Upper Klamath NWR’s purposes are:

"... as a refuge and breeding ground for birds and wild animals... subject to the use ... for irrigation and other incidental purposes, and to any other valid existing rights." (Executive Order 4851, dated April 3, 1928)

“...to preserve intact the necessary existing habitat for migratory waterfowl in this vital area of the Pacific flyway...” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695k)

“...to prevent depredations of migratory waterfowl on the agricultural crops in the Pacific Coast states” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695k)

“...dedicated to wildlife conservation...for the major purpose of waterfowl management, but with full consideration to optimum agricultural use that is consistent therewith” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695l)

“...for waterfowl purposes, including the growing of agricultural crops by direct plantings and sharecrop agreements with local cooperators where necessary...” (Kuchel Act, 16 U.S.C. 695n)

“...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds” (Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 715d)

“...to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species... or (B) plants...” (Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1534).

The mission of the Refuge System is:

“... to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.” (U.S.C. 668dd)

The NWRSA (16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(4)) mandates the Secretary of the Interior in administering the System to

- Provide for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats within the NWRs;
- Ensure that the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the NWRs are maintained for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans;
- Ensure that the mission of the NWRs described at 16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(2) and the purposes of each refuge are carried out;
- Ensure effective coordination, interaction, and cooperation with owners of land adjoining refuges and the fish and wildlife agency of the states in which the units of the NWRs are located;
- Assist in the maintenance of adequate water quantity and water quality to fulfill the mission of the NWRs and the purposes of each refuge;
- Recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general public uses of the NWRs through which the American public can develop an appreciation for fish and wildlife;
- Ensure that opportunities are provided within the NWRs for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses; and
- Monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants in each refuge.

Therefore, it is a priority of the Service to provide for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, when those opportunities are compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established and the mission of the NWRs.

A. Location and Background

Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex

There are six refuges in the Klamath Basin NWR Complex located in Klamath County, Oregon; Modoc County, California; and Siskiyou County, California in the Klamath Basin of southern Oregon and northern California near Klamath Falls, Oregon (Figure 1). This Hunt Plan focuses on three of these Refuges, Lower Klamath National Wildlife

Refuge, Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, also referred to as the Covered Refuges.

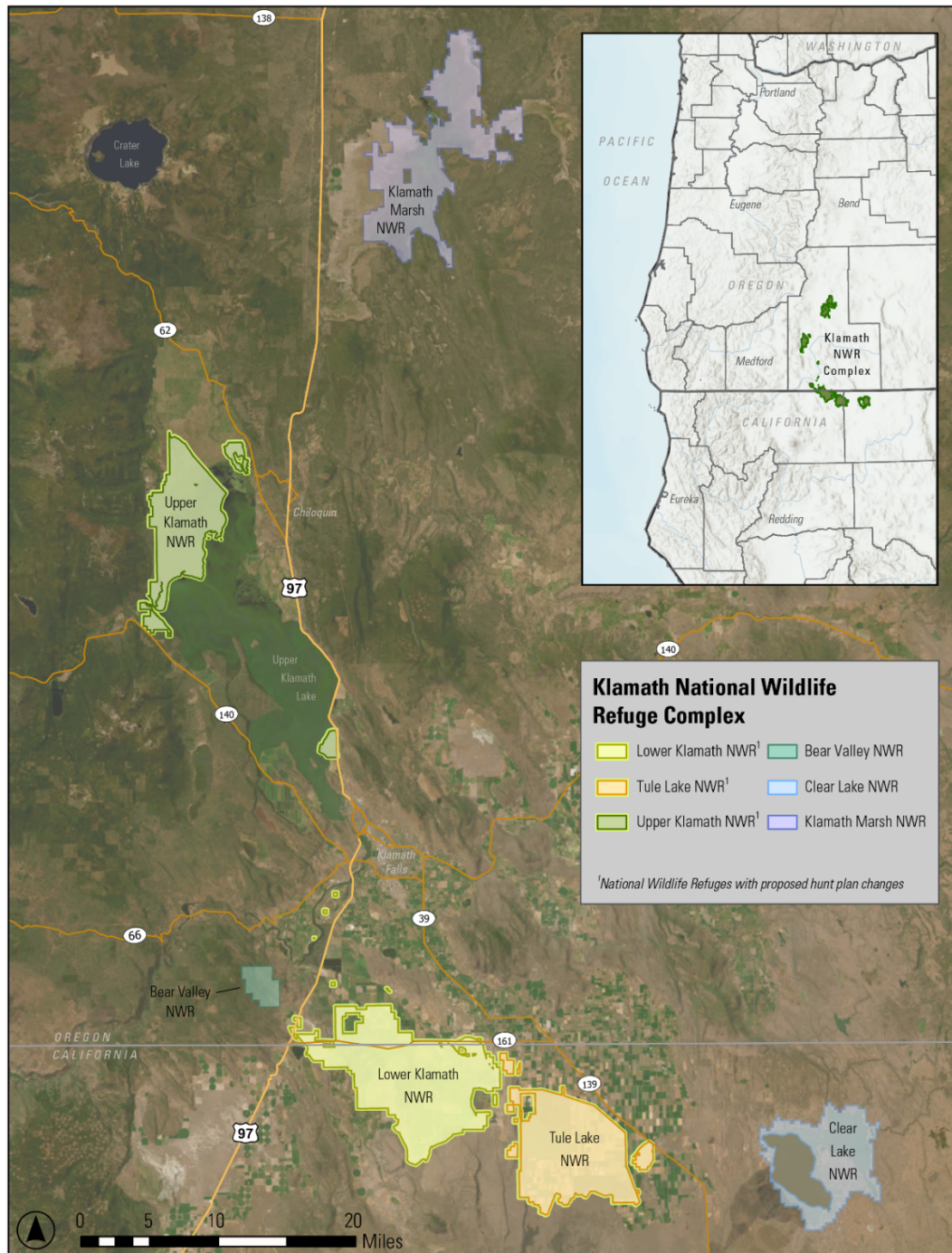


Figure 1. The Covered Refuges in the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex

The Klamath River watershed, which drains to the Pacific Ocean, and the Lost River watershed, of which the entirety is within the Klamath Basin, have long been recognized as important migration staging areas for waterfowl. Early pioneers and ornithological explorations describe huge numbers of waterfowl and waterbirds throughout the extensive lakes and marshes in the region (Abney 1964).

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Klamath Project has altered the land and hydrology of the Klamath Basin. The Klamath Project was authorized in 1905 under provisions of the Reclamation Act of 1902 (32 Stat. 388). The project plan included construction of facilities to divert and distribute water for irrigation of basin lands, including reclamation of Tule and Lower Klamath Lakes, and control of floods in the area. The Upper Klamath Basin has two mainstem dams. Link River Dam regulates the elevation of Upper Klamath Lake, supplies water for irrigation, and can be used to generate hydropower. The Keno Dam serves as the compliance point for regulated flows in the Klamath River, supplies irrigation water, and can be used during flood control operations (USFWS 2016).

However, reclamation projects resulting from early settlement, agriculture, and railroad development greatly reduced wetlands in the Klamath Basin that attracted large numbers of staging and breeding waterfowl (Gilmer et al. 2004). The earliest and most significant development was the 1905 Klamath Reclamation Project that established an era of wetland conversion throughout the basin culminating in the loss or degradation of over 75 percent of wetlands in the area (Rienecker and Anderson 1960; Blake et al. 2000; and Dugger et al. 2008). Today, the extent of semi-permanent and permanent wetlands has been reduced by greater than 95 percent and seasonal wetlands, including wet meadows, by more than 75 percent (John Vradenburg, Pers. Comm. May 2021).

The Klamath Basin NWR Complex once supported approximately 80 percent of the migratory waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway during spring and fall waterfowl staging. Waterfowl populations during peak spring and fall migration approached over two million birds on the Complex (Dugger et al. 2008). Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Lake Refuges were considered the most important wetland migration staging areas in the Klamath Basin (Dugger et al. 2008), and Lower Klamath NWR was considered the most significant waterbird nesting site in California (Ivey and Herziger 2006). The Klamath Basin NWR Complex provided home to many species of resident birds, as well as other wildlife and plant species. This Complex protected the largest wintering population of bald eagles in the conterminous United States, as well as regionally significant populations of shorebirds and colonial waterbirds (Gilmer et al. 2004 and Shuford et al. 2004). The Klamath Basin, along with the Refuges therein, are still considered important waterbird areas and are of continental significance for waterfowl, shorebird, and waterbird populations in North America (Intermountain West Joint Venture 2013). The Service is working to address the reduced water availability and multiple competing

water demands in the Klamath Basin that reduces the capacity of the Covered Refuges to protect and conserve wetland ecosystems.

In addition, current Klamath Basin NWR Complex lands within the Klamath Basin have been utilized by the Klamath Tribes (including Klamath, Modoc, and Yahooskin) for thousands of years, and they continue to utilize some refuge lands to exercise subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering (USFWS 2021).

Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

The Lower Klamath NWR is a mix of intensively managed shallow wetlands, open water, grassy uplands, and croplands that provide feeding, resting, nesting, and brood-rearing habitat for waterfowl and other water birds. Priority resources of concern within this Refuge include perennial wetlands, seasonal wetlands, and open water/lake (USFWS 2021). This Refuge is one of the most biologically productive refuges within the Pacific Flyway, with approximately 80 percent of the flyway's migrating waterfowl passing through the Klamath Basin on both spring and fall migrations and 50 percent of those migrating waterfowl utilizing this Refuge. Peak waterfowl populations used to reach 1.8 million birds, which represented 15 to 45 percent of the total birds wintering in California. The Lower Klamath NWR produces between 30,000 and 60,000 waterfowl annually (USFWS 2026a).

The Refuge is approximately 51,717 acres (Figure 2). Lower Klamath NWR receives water from two sources: 1) direct project diversions from the Klamath River through the Ady Canal and 2) project return flows from Tule Lake sumps via the D Plant (USFWS 2016, p. 5-56). Additionally, Lower Klamath NWR can receive large volumes of water under flood control operations, and these deliveries can come from D-Plant, the Ady canal, or both. Approximately 95,000 acre-feet of water is annually required to fully support wetland and agricultural habitats to meet the 1964 Kuchel Act mandate for proper waterfowl management on Lower Klamath NWR. An additional 19,000 acre-feet of water is annually required to serve the Lower Klamath NWR lease lands in Area K in Oregon which supports the Kuchel Act mandates of both proper waterfowl management and full consideration of optimal agricultural production.

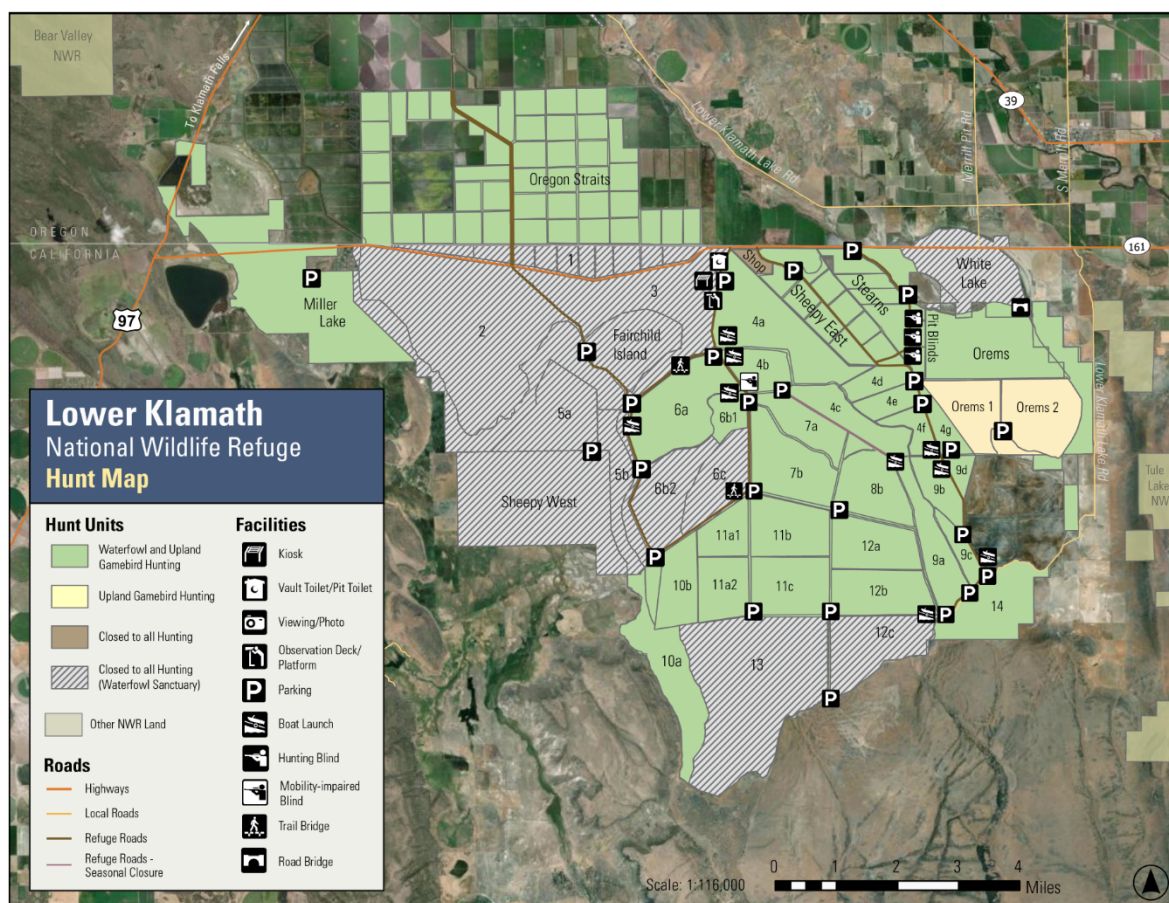


Figure 2. Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Hunt Map

Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Tule Lake NWR is an important nesting and molting area for waterbirds in California and a significant staging area for migrating waterfowl during spring and fall migrations. While today's wetlands within the Refuge represent just a small fraction of the wetlands that existed prior to reclamation, they remain crucial as a critical resource for the 80 percent of the migratory waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway (USFWS 2026b). Priority resources of concern within this Refuge include perennial wetlands, seasonal wetlands, and open water/lakes (USFWS 2021).

The Refuge is approximately 37,702 acres. (Figure 3).

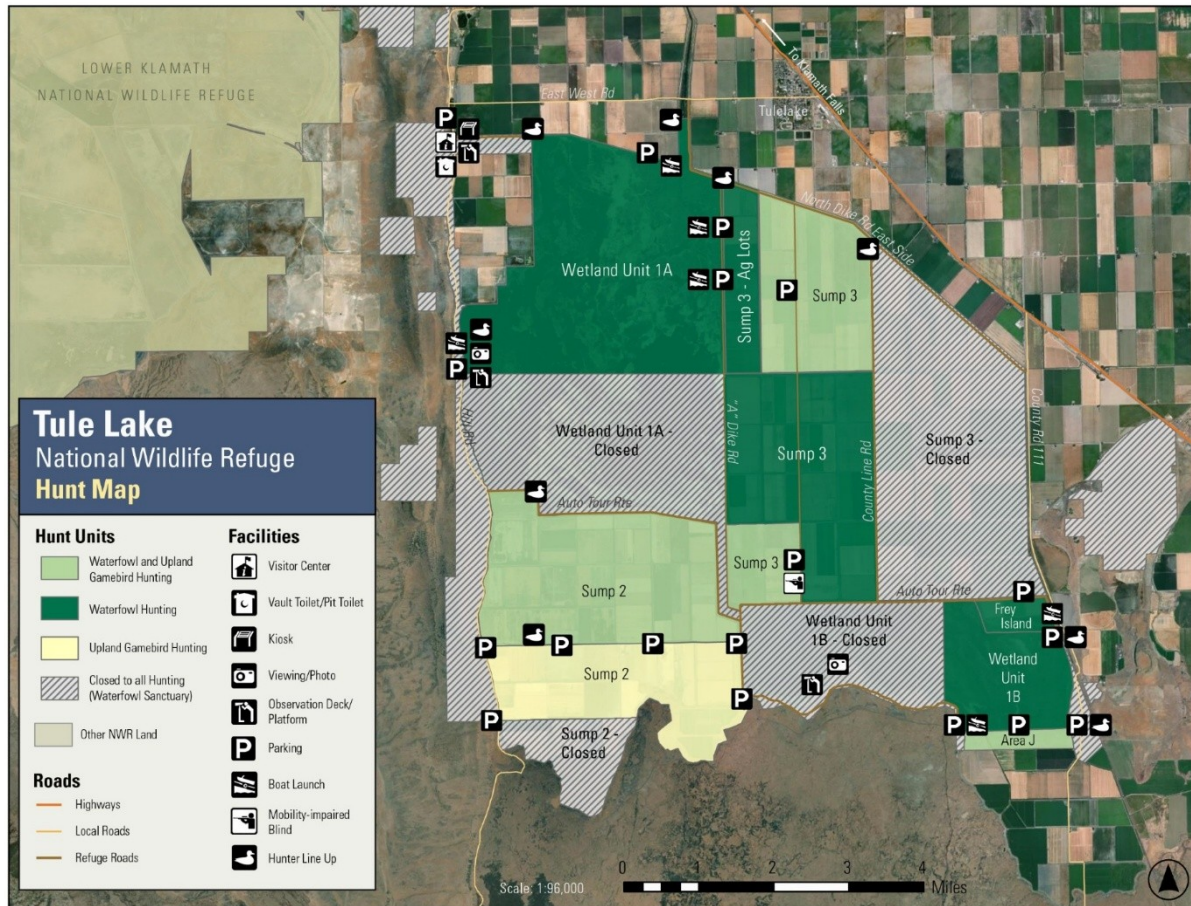


Figure 3. Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge Hunt Map

Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Upper Klamath NWR includes freshwater hardstem-cattail wetland and open water, along with approximately 30 acres of forested uplands. These habitats serve as excellent nesting and brood-rearing areas for waterfowl and colonial nesting birds (USFWS 2026c). Priority resources of concern within this Refuge include perennial wetlands, seasonal wetlands, open water/lakes, and riparian wetlands (USFWS 2021).

The Upper Klamath NWR covers approximately 25,128 acres (Figure 4).

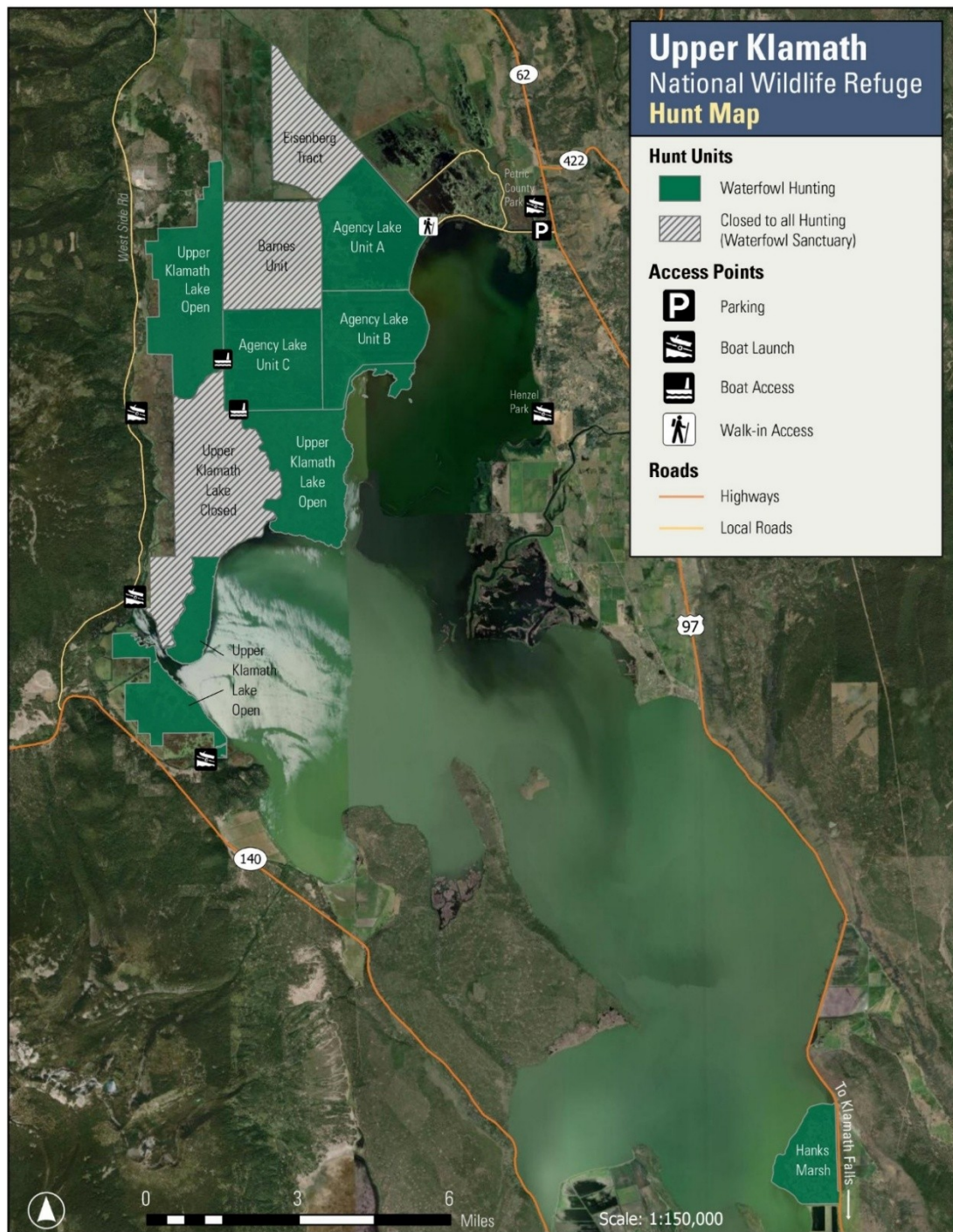


Figure 4. Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Hunt Map

II. Statement of Objectives

The objectives are to update and expand waterfowl hunting and upland game bird hunting opportunities on the Refuges to provide:

- The public with a high-quality hunting program including opportunities for hunting waterfowl, coot, common moorhen, snipe, pheasant and quail (within the CA and OR pheasant seasons).
- Wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.
- Quality habitat for waterfowl that have historically relied on the Klamath Refuges, consistent with the purposes of the refuges.
- Increase opportunities for hunters within the water restrictions of the Klamath Basin.

The objectives of migratory waterfowl and upland game bird hunting on the Covered Refuges are consistent with the mission of the NWRs; and natural resources and visitor service's goals for the Klamath Basin NWR Complex.

Goals of the Lower Klamath NWR

“Provide wetland and agricultural habitats that meet food and cover requirements sufficient to support migratory waterfowl and non-game waterbird population objectives throughout the annual cycle while promoting the highest possible natural biological diversity of refuge habitats.”

“Provide a range of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities that emphasize the natural setting and the functions of the Lower Klamath NWR.”

Goals of the Tule Lake NWR

“Provide wetland and agricultural habitats that meet food and cover requirements sufficient to support migratory waterfowl and non-game waterbird population objectives throughout the annual cycle while promoting the highest possible natural biological diversity of refuge habitats.”

“Provide a range of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities that emphasize the natural setting and the functions of the Tule Lake Refuge.”

Goals of the Upper Klamath NWR

“Restore and maintain the composition and structure of existing and historic wetland communities of Upper Klamath Lake to meet the needs of migratory waterfowl, waterbirds, and sensitive species.”

“Provide a range of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities that emphasize the natural setting and the functions of the Upper Klamath Refuge.”

III. Description of Hunting Program

B. Areas Open to Hunting

Hunting on Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Lower Klamath NWR contains 29,561 acres open to waterfowl and upland bird (pheasant and quail) hunting in California and Oregon. Unless posted otherwise, waterfowl and upland game bird hunting is permitted within the hunt area. However, there are some areas, totaling 1,647 acres, where only upland game bird hunting is permitted (Figure 2).

The total hunt zone comprises approximately 57 percent of the 51,717 acres under Service management jurisdiction. The remainder of the Lower Klamath NWR is closed to waterfowl hunting, and it serves as a sanctuary area for waterfowl and other wildlife during hunting season.

Areas open to waterfowl and upland game bird hunting at Lower Klamath NWR are dependent on availability of water to the refuge and determined using the sliding scale (see description below under *Sliding Scale: Adaptive Approach at Lower Klamath NWR and Tule Lake NWR*).

Waterfowl Hunting at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

The Lower Klamath NWR offers a diversity of waterfowl hunting opportunities including walk-in units, boat-in wetland units (for both motorized and motorless watercraft), agricultural fields (e.g., pasture, grain/field crops), seven pit blinds, and uplands.

Agricultural field hunting is available on both the Oregon and California sides of the refuge and are generally a mix of both flooded and dry field opportunities (water availability dependent). The Oregon portion of Lower Klamath NWR is primarily agricultural land dominated by grain production with some hay forage production. These agricultural resources provide opportunity for both dry field and flooded grain hunting for waterfowl. Flooding is dictated by individual farmer discretion and water availability per BOR discretion. Refuge staff may also work with individual producers to put agricultural units into a wetland rotation which in some years provides both seasonal and perennial wetland habitat within the Oregon hunt areas. Generally, flooding of agricultural units begins in late September and continues through the fall migration period.

Upland Bird Hunting at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Upland game bird hunting is limited to designated hunting units. The areas open to upland game bird hunting total 31,209 acres of Lower Klamath NWR (Figure 2). This area comprises approximately 60 percent of the 50,717 acres. The remainder of the Lower Klamath NWR is closed to upland game bird hunting, and it serves as a sanctuary area for waterfowl and other wildlife during hunting season.

Hunting on Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Tule Lake NWR contains 20,367 acres open to waterfowl and/or upland game bird (pheasant and quail) hunting in California. Most of the hunt area is open to all allowed hunting; however, a few units allow only upland game bird hunting (Figure 3).

The total hunt zone comprises approximately 54 percent of the over 37,702 acres under Service management jurisdiction. The remainder of the Tule Lake NWR is closed to waterfowl hunting, and it serves as a sanctuary area for waterfowl and other wildlife during hunting season.

Areas open to waterfowl and upland game bird hunting at Tule Lake NWR are dependent on availability of water to the refuge and determined using the sliding scale (see description below under *Sliding Scale: Adaptive Approach at Lower Klamath NWR and Tule Lake NWR*).

Waterfowl Hunting at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Tule Lake NWR hunt area includes two large wetlands (1A and 1B) that are accessible by boats or walk-in access, as well as free-roam areas that provide field hunting over harvested crops (grain and row crops) and smaller wetland units. All hunting units operate under free-roam conditions, except for a party-limited draw in Wetland Unit 1B (up to 10 parties) and Frey's Island (up to 6 parties; one party per unit across 6 designated units).

Upland Game bird Hunting at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Upland game bird hunting is limited to the designated units of Tule Lake NWR. The areas open to upland game bird hunting total 8,966 acres of Tule Lake NWR (Figure 3). This area comprises approximately 23 percent of the 37,702 acres of Tule Lake NWR. The remainder of Tule Lake NWR is closed to upland game bird hunting.

Sliding Scale: Adaptive Approach at Lower Klamath NWR and Tule Lake NWR

Waterfowl hunting at Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges is dependent on the availability of water to the Refuges. During the general waterfowl season, 3 hunting scenarios may occur;

1. Dry conditions: the refuge is dry, and waterfowl hunting is closed;
2. Limited Water: specific areas are flooded resulting in limited waterfowl sanctuary habitat. The refuge is open to a restricted level of waterfowl hunting, with reduced wetland and agricultural habitat within the hunt area.
3. Adequate Conditions: the refuge has enough water to provide sanctuary habitat, and waterfowl hunting is fully open within the hunt area. (Figures 5 - 10 are maps of each scenario at Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges.)

Prior to the general waterfowl season in preparation for the hunt season, the Service will assess water and habitat availability (priority on sanctuary habitat per establishing purposes) to establish a baseline for the opening weekend of the general waterfowl hunting season. Following this baseline determination, every two weeks refuge staff will assess water availability and the potential for any increase or decrease in habitat to determine if waterfowl hunting should or can be moved from one scenario to another.

The refuge will provide updated hunt information to the public via its website and Visitor Center. Information will be updated regularly leading up to and during the hunt season with habitat conditions and the most current hunt determination. The refuge will use a sliding scale based on water and habitat availability to share real time conditions with the public. This tool is intended to provide transparency about how these conditions influence hunt determinations. The intent of the sliding scale is to help the public better understand information about their public land and provide a more predictable season for waterfowl hunters given the uncertainty of water availability at Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges.

It is important to note the sliding scale tool accounts for the relationship between water availability and habitat conditions, both of which are fundamental to supporting birds and hunting opportunity. However, some factors can change and may require the refuge to reduce access or implement an emergency closure for public safety. The most likely risk is water quality impairment, including toxic algal blooms, which can pose serious risk to pets, and through prolonged exposure, carry risk to humans.

A less likely, but realistic risk is a wildlife disease outbreak. While botulism is not dangerous to humans, it can create conditions that raise additional concerns for refuge management and public use. In 2024 a major botulism outbreak in Tule Lake NWR wetland 1A resulted in several harmful bacterial communities that were responsible for dog illnesses. Refuge staff aim to keep hunting opportunities available. However, public health and safety will remain the primary consideration when determining if and when a hunt can be opened.

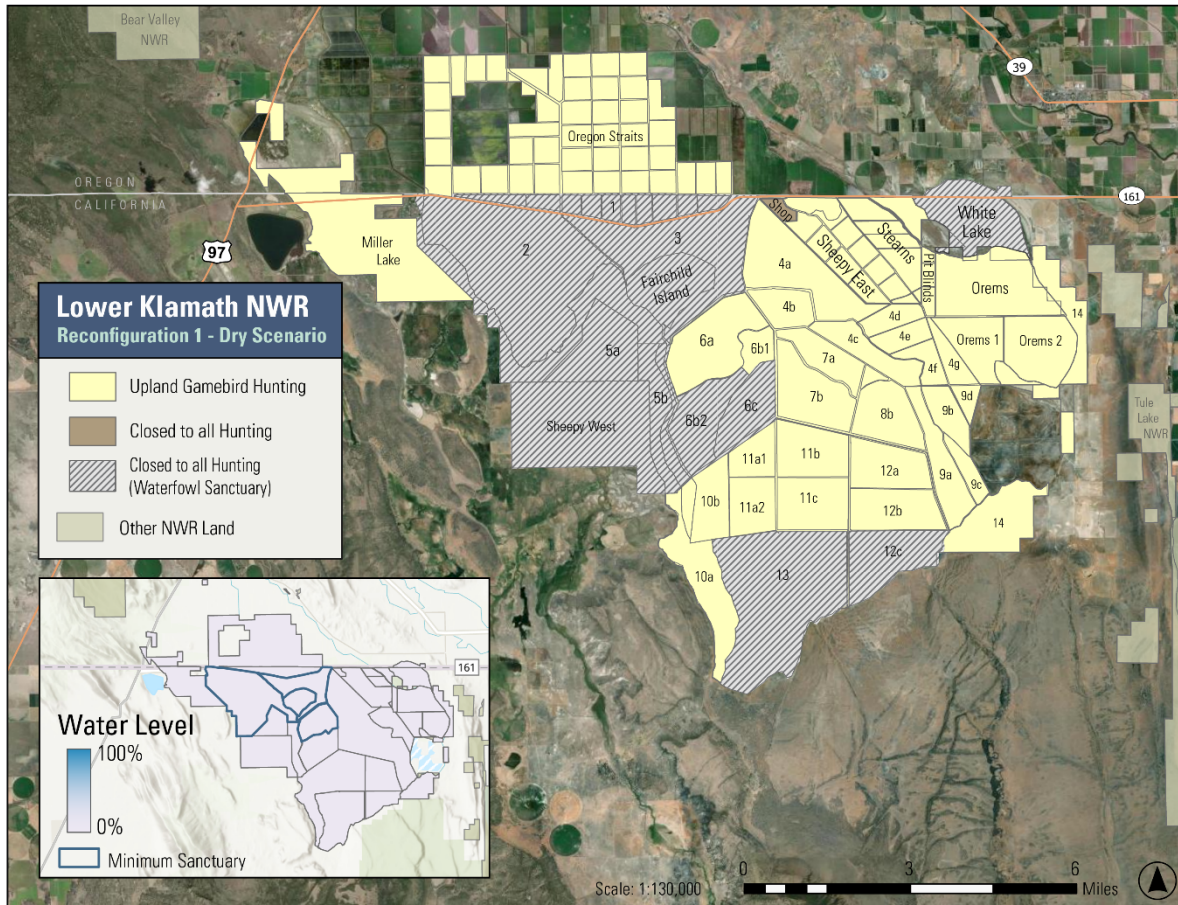


Figure 5: Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Dry Scenario Hunt Map

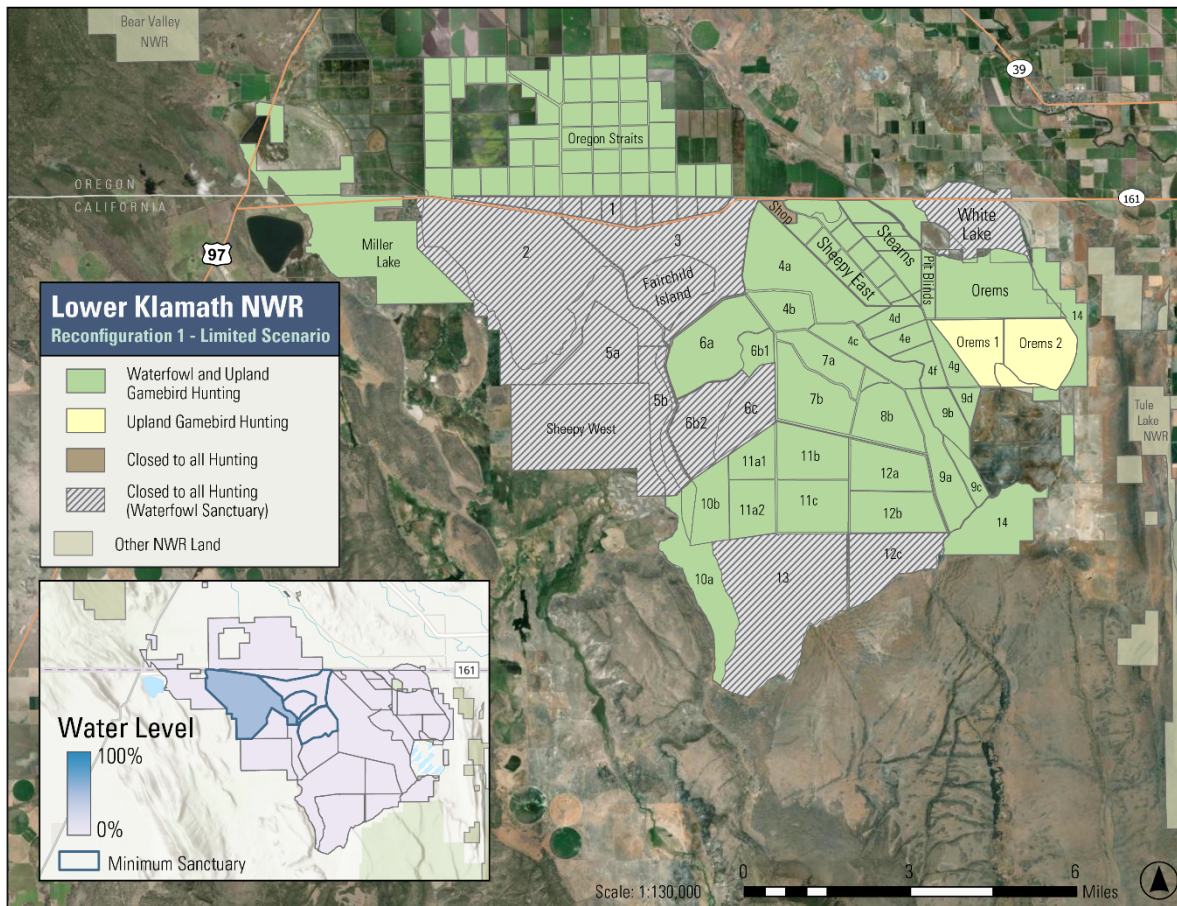


Figure 6: Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Limited Scenario Hunt Map

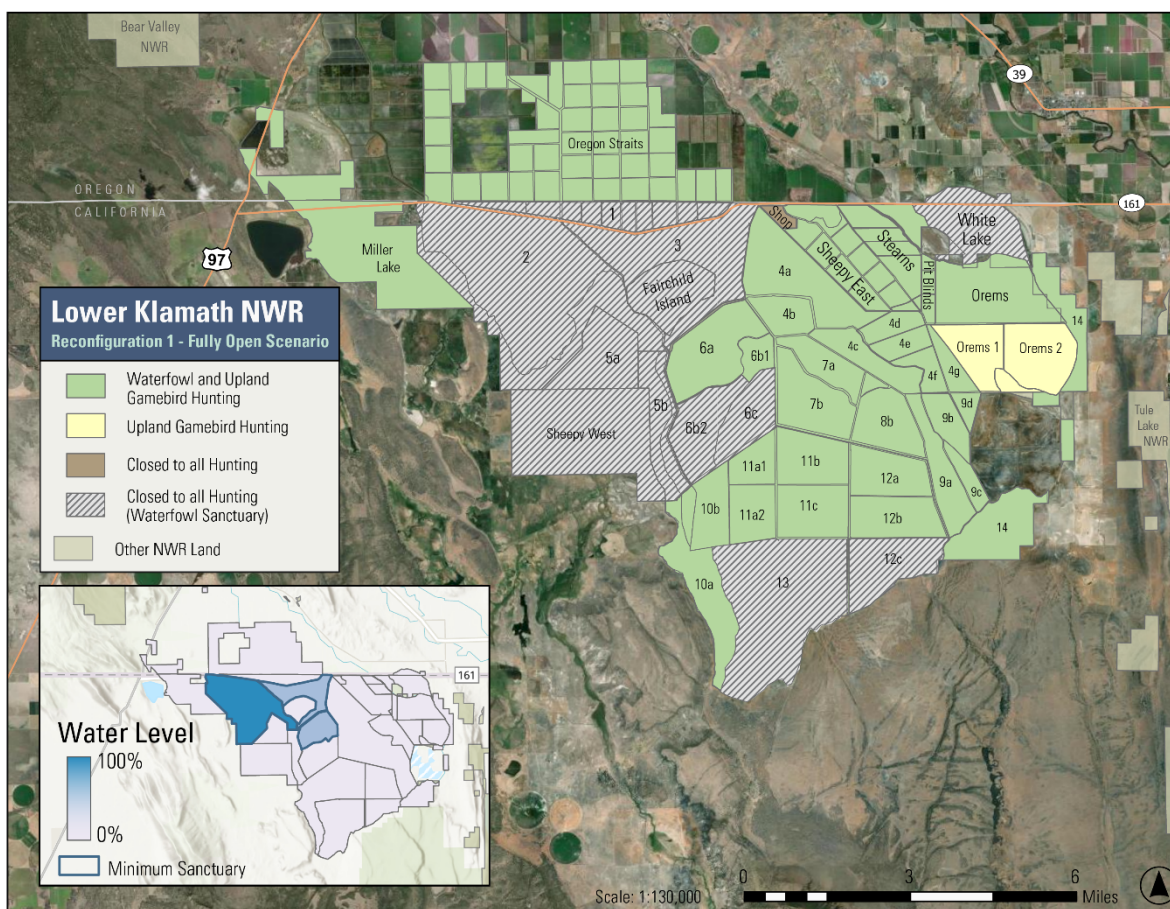


Figure 7: Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Fully Open/Adequate Conditions Scenario Hunt Map

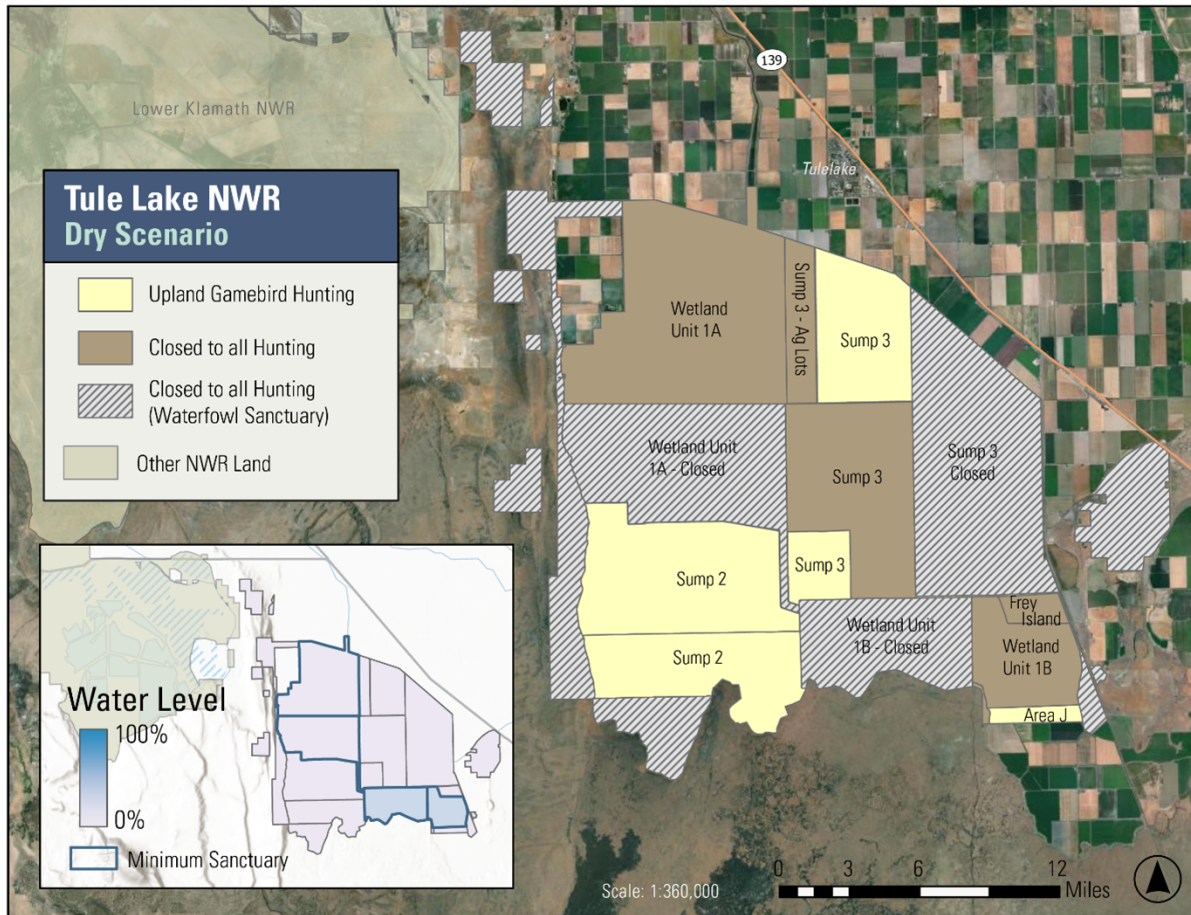


Figure 8: Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge Dry Scenario Hunt Map

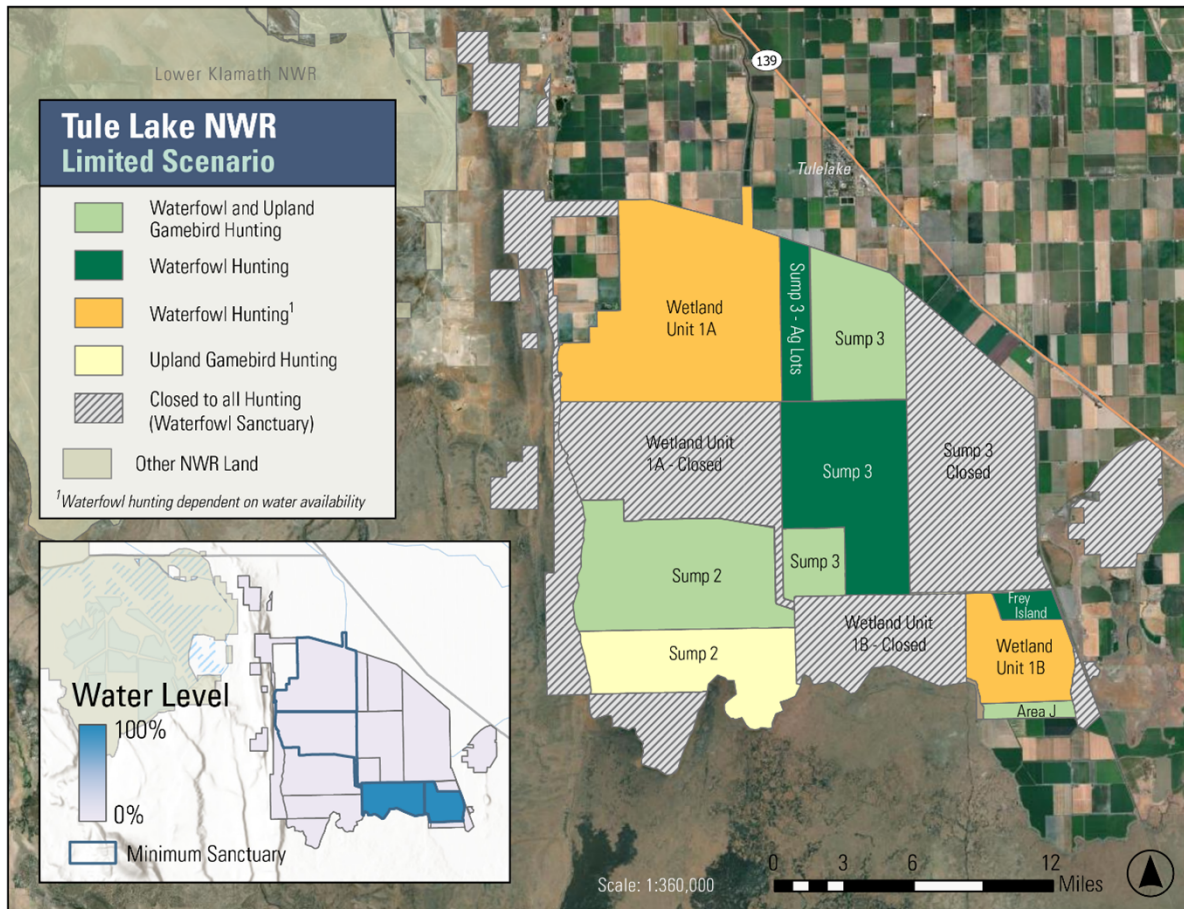


Figure 9: Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge Limited Scenario Hunt Map

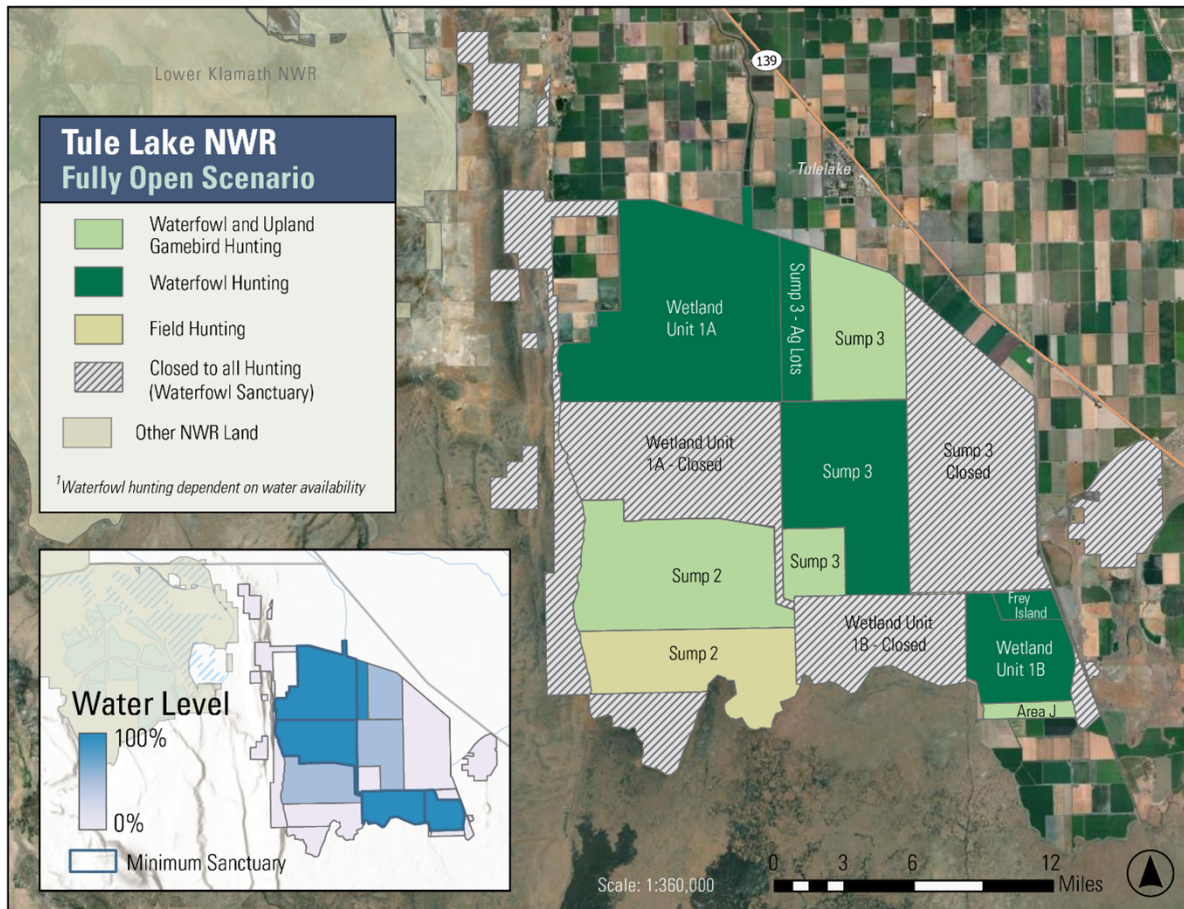


Figure 10: Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge Fully Open/Adequate Conditions Scenario Hunt Map

Mobility-Impaired Hunting Opportunities at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Drive-in areas provide opportunities for mobility-impaired waterfowl hunters.

Mobility-impaired (MI) hunting opportunities are available through designated blinds on Tule Lake and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges. Use of the MI blind is by reservation only, with reservations limited to two days at a time and the option to extend for up to two additional days on the second day if the blind is still available. Each blind can accommodate up to three people total (hunters and non-hunters). Hunters are not restricted to the blind itself; hunting is allowed within a 100-yard radius of the assigned blind.

Hunters must check in at the Visitor Center at least one day before their hunt, present qualifying documentation, and show proof of registration at the time of reservation or when picking up the blind permit. Blinds and any associated equipment must not be moved, modified, or altered. To qualify, hunters must present one of the following: a state DMV-issued disabled license plate, a permanent disabled parking placard identification card, or a mobility-impaired motor vehicle hunting license.

At Tule Lake NWR, the MI blind is a field blind located and determined prior to opening weekend, with signs and a designated parking area provided.

Hunting on Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Upper Klamath NWR contains 16,378 acres open to waterfowl hunting in Oregon (Figure 4). Upper Klamath NWR is dominated by deeper open water and perennial emergent wetland habitat. It is accessible only by boat with the exception of the Agency Lake Unit, which can be accessed by walk- or bike-in via the Wood River Wetland. Waterfowl hunting occurs near Rocky Point, Odessa Springs, north of Malone Springs and the Agency Lake Unit all on the west side of Upper Klamath Lake and the Hank's Marsh Unit on the southeast side of the Upper Klamath Lake. Access and conditions within the hunt areas are dictated by Upper Klamath Lake elevation managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Access may be difficult or impossible at times.

C. Species to be Taken, Hunting Periods, and Hunting Access

Waterfowl and upland game bird hunting are permitted at Lower Klamath NWR and Tule Lake NWR. Waterfowl hunting is permitted at Upper Klamath NWR. As detailed in sections below, some units are only open to upland game bird or waterfowl hunting, which may be dependent on habitat availability.

Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Waterfowl Hunting at Lower Klamath NWR

Huntable waterfowl species on Lower Klamath NWR include dark geese, light geese, ducks, American coot (*Fulica americana*), common moorhen, and Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) on designated areas of Lower Klamath. The Service estimates the following harvest numbers for the huntable species groups at Lower Klamath NWR: ducks: 5,000, geese (cumulative light and dark): 2,000, coot: 100, moorhen: 0-5, and snipe: 50-100.

Seasons, hours, bag limits, and other rules for waterfowl hunting on the Lower Klamath NWR are the same as those annually published by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for hunting of migratory game birds (CDFW 2026 and ODFW 2026).

Lower Klamath NWR is not open to hunting during the special late season White-fronted and white goose hunting seasons. Goose hunting is not allowed at Lower Klamath NWR during the September Canada goose season.

Opening weekend hunts on the California portion of Lower Klamath NWR may be under a draw permit system. Opening of waterfowl hunting at Lower Klamath NWR is dependent on the availability of water at the Refuge. There are 3 possible waterfowl hunting scenarios at Lower Klamath NWR during the regular waterfowl season, 1) the refuge is dry and waterfowl hunting is closed, 2) Unit 2 has limited flooded habitat (greater than 4,500 acres) to support adequate sanctuary habitat to meet refuge establishing purposes and the refuge is restricted to dry field or flooded agricultural waterfowl hunting, 3) the refuge has adequate water and sanctuary habitat for waterfowl and waterfowl hunting is fully open.

Waterfowl hunting is 7 days per week during the normal State season. All waterfowl hunting ends at 1:00 p.m. daily on both the Oregon and California portions of the Lower Klamath NWR. Hunters must pick up and be out of the hunt area by 2:30 p.m. daily. There should be no access or activity within any hunt units after the 2:30 p.m. exit deadline to provide extended opportunity for waterfowl to access the area for evening feeding.

Fields and wetlands are free-roam, and there are no spaced blinds that require hunters to check in. An automated lottery draw system may be implemented in some years at the discretion of the refuge manager to ensure hunter safety during the opening weekend of waterfowl, pheasant, or combined seasons within the California portion of the Lower Klamath NWR.

There are multiple boat launching sites (generally at least one per unit), designated vehicle access routes, and designated parking areas within the California portion of the Lower Klamath NWR. Hunters are not restricted in parking within the Oregon portion of the Lower Klamath NWR. Hunters may operate a street-legal or off-road vehicle off the designated access routes to deploy and retrieve decoys. All vehicles must be removed from the field prior to hunting, and unattended vehicles are not permitted within hunt units during active hunting. There is no hunting allowed during the early Canada goose season. Hunting for White/White-fronted geese ends on the last day of general Canada goose season. Lower Klamath NWR is not open to hunting during the special late season White-fronted and white goose hunting seasons.

Upland Game Bird Hunting at Lower Klamath NWR

Huntable upland game birds on Lower Klamath NWR include ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and California quail (*Callipepla californica*). The Service estimates the following harvest numbers for the huntable species groups at Lower Klamath NWR: pheasant: 500, and quail: 100.

Upland bird hunting is permitted in designated areas of Lower Klamath NWR during the state-regulated upland game bird season. Upland bird hunting begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. There should be no access or activity within any hunt units after the 2:30 p.m. exit deadline to provide extended opportunity for waterfowl to access the area for evening feeding.

Lower Klamath NWR does not allow falconry and does not participate in the two archery-only pheasant hunts. Season dates, daily harvest and possession limits, and other hunting regulations are consistent with CDFW state regulations for upland game.

Parking areas are located throughout Lower Klamath NWR; hunter access is walk-in only.

Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Waterfowl Hunting at Tule Lake NWR

Huntable waterfowl species on Tule Lake NWR include dark geese, light geese, ducks, American coot (*Fulica americana*), common moorhen, and Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) on designated areas of Tule Lake NWR. The Service estimates the following harvest numbers for the huntable species groups at Tule Lake NWR: ducks: 7,000, geese (cumulative light and dark): 2,000, coot: 100, moorhen: 0-10, and snipe: 50-100.

Seasons, hours, bag limits, and other rules for waterfowl hunting on the Tule Lake NWR are the same as those annually published by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for hunting of migratory game birds (CDFW 2026).

Tule Lake NWR is not open to hunting during the special late season white-fronted and white goose hunting seasons. Goose hunting is not allowed at Tule Lake NWR during the September Canada goose season.

Tule Lake NWR offers a diversity of waterfowl hunting opportunities, including two large wetlands units (1A and 1B) that are accessible by boat or walk in free-roam areas with party limits offering field hunts over harvested crops (grain and row crop) and smaller wetland units. There is a lottery draw for up to 10 parties in wetland 1B and up to 6 parties in Frey's island (1 party per unit / 6 units in the designated "Frey's Island"). Implementation of a lottery draw for other designated hunt units at Tule Lake NWR for the waterfowl hunt could change depending on hunter numbers, habitat conditions, or water availability among years. Waterfowl hunters may use boats in wetland units and flooded lots (see further restrictions on watercrafts) and use dogs for the retrieval of downed game.

Tule Lake NWR hunt area includes free-roam hunts in wetland 1A, north of buoys and six boat-launching areas and parking areas across the Tule Lake NWR that provide access to the wetlands (1A, 1B and Frey's Island). Parking areas are located at each of the boat launches and additional parking areas are located elsewhere across Frey's

Island. Hunters can drive a street-legal or off-road vehicle into non-flooded agricultural field units to set out and pick up decoys. These drive-in areas provide opportunities for mobility-impaired waterfowl hunters. Seasons, hours, bag limits, and other rules for waterfowl hunting on the Tule Lake NWR are the same as those annually published by the CDFW for hunting of migratory game birds (CDFW 2026).

Hunting is 7 days per week during the normal State season; however, waterfowl hunting ends at 1:00 p.m. Hunters must pick up and be out of the hunt area by 2:30 p.m. daily. There should be no access or activity within any hunt units after the 2:30 p.m. exit deadline to provide extended opportunity for waterfowl to access the area for evening feeding. There is no hunting allowed during the early Canada goose season. Hunting for white/white-fronted geese ends on the last day of general Canada goose season. Tule Lake NWR is not open to hunting during the special late season white-fronted and white goose hunting seasons.

A lottery may be used to select individuals to participate in waterfowl hunting on opening weekend. Opening of waterfowl hunting at Tule Lake NWR is dependent on the availability of water at the Refuge. There are 3 possible waterfowl hunting scenarios at Tule Lake NWR during the regular waterfowl season: 1) the refuge is dry and waterfowl hunting is closed, 2) Wetland 1A, 1B or both have limited flooded habitat (less than 4,000 acres) to support adequate sanctuary habitat to meet refuge establishing purposes and the refuge is restricted to dry field or flooded agricultural waterfowl hunting, 3) the refuge has adequate water and sanctuary habitat for waterfowl and waterfowl hunting is fully open.

Upland Game bird Hunting at Tule Lake NWR

Huntable upland game birds on Tule Lake NWR include ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and California quail (*Callipepla californica*). Upland game bird hunting is permitted in designated areas of Tule Lake NWR during the state-regulated pheasant season. The Service estimates the following harvest numbers for the huntable species groups at Tule Lake NWR: pheasant: 500, and quail: 100.

Parking areas are located across Tule Lake NWR. Hunter access to individual fields is walk-in only. Upland game bird is permitted daily during the regulated season. Shooting times in designated areas on Tule Lake NWR are from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily. There should be no access or activity within any hunt units after the 2:30 p.m. exit deadline to provide extended opportunity for waterfowl to access the area for evening feeding. Unless otherwise stated, season dates, harvest limits, and other rules for hunting on Tule Lake NWR are the same as those annually published by the CDFW for hunting of upland game.

Upper Klamath NWR

Huntable species on Upper Klamath NWR include dark geese, light geese, ducks, American coots, and Wilson's snipe. The Service estimates the following harvest numbers for the huntable species groups at Upper Klamath NWR: ducks: 2000, geese (cumulative light and dark): 500, coot: 100, and snipe: 50-100.

Seasons, hours, limits, and other rules for waterfowl hunting on the Upper Klamath NWR are the same as those annually published by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for hunting of waterfowl (ODFW 2026).

Public boat ramps to access hunt areas are located at the Odessa Creek Campground off Highway 140, Rocky Point, which is west of Klamath Falls on Highway 140 to westside road (north on westside road ~3.1 miles), Malone Springs, (~6.3 on westside road from highway 140), Hezel Park (~6.78 miles north on Modoc Point road from highway 97), and Petric Park (5.2 miles north OR 62 West, left on Chiloquin Highway .1 miles, left Modoc Point road .8 miles) The Hanks Marsh Unit is accessible from Hwy 97 north of Klamath Falls using the boat launch at Hagelstein County Park with a 5-mile boat ride south. Boats also can be put in at Pelican Marina near Klamath Falls and people can boat approximately 6 miles north to Hanks Marsh Unit.

Upper Klamath Lake is used for irrigation needs of the Klamath Project (BOR) and environmental flows in the Klamath River for anadromous fish. As a result, lake elevations will be low at the beginning of the waterfowl hunt season and slowly increase through late fall and winter. The bottom substrate is variable with some locations having more solid conditions and other locations unconsolidated deep muck. Additionally, water depth is variable throughout the refuge hunt areas and can change rapidly. Hunters are encouraged to exercise extreme caution, have a safety plan, and when possible, do not hunt alone.

Small wetland pothole openings and hunting the wetland edge along the Upper Klamath Lake provide hunting opportunities for mixed duck species and geese. Decoys and hunting dogs are recommended. Boats are the only way to access most areas. Upper Klamath NWR provides a unique opportunity to get away from other hunters and hunt a diversity of lake and wetland habitats.

Hunters should exercise caution and check webpages frequently regarding water quality conditions in Upper Klamath Lake and the surrounding public hunting opportunities. Upper Klamath Lake experiences nearly yearly harmful algal blooms that can produce dangerous cyanotoxins, particularly for pets. These blooms and resulting toxin levels generally decrease with the onset of cold conditions.

Hanks Marsh Unit

The Hanks Marsh Unit on the east side of the Upper Klamath Lake, although small, does provide hunting opportunity, particularly late in the season as access improves. A

surface elevation of 4,140 feet is necessary to access the wetlands. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) tracks [lake levels](#) on their website (USGS 2026).

Barnes and Agency Unit

A portion of the Barnes and Agency Unit has been opened to hunting. This area consists of open water, tall emergent perennial, and seasonally flooded wetlands that are tied to the operational elevations of Upper Klamath Lake. There are numerous deep canals throughout the wetlands that make traversing by foot dangerous. For this reason, it is recommended to hunt from a boat or some type of watercraft. Foot and bike access is available through the Wood River Wetland off Modoc Point Rd (2.23 miles to refuge hunt access).

Upper Klamath NWR allows goose hunting during the September Canada goose season. Upper Klamath NWR is not open to hunting during the special late season white-fronted and white goose hunting seasons.

D. Special Hunts

Guided Hunts at Lower Klamath, Tule Lake and Upper Klamath Refuges

Guides are competitively selected to operate on the covered refuges through a formal process established by regional policy on a five-year cycle. There are expected to be up to four hunting guides operating on Lower Klamath NWR, Tule Lake NWR, and Upper Klamath NWR under Special Use Permits each hunt season. Guides must be qualified and licensed by the State of California and/or the State of Oregon. A guide may guide one party per day. A party may include up to one motorboat with 4 hunters, four walk-in hunters hunting together, or four hunters using non-motorized watercraft (such as kayaks) hunting together. Guides are required to submit in writing their experience, equipment and safety plans, which are evaluated by Service personnel during a competitive selection process. This policy manages commercial guiding activities at a level that is compatible with each of the covered refuges purposes and that ensures high-quality guiding services are available for the public. Guide use areas on the covered refuges are not restricted and include all units open to hunting. Guides are not afforded any special access or opportunities on any of the covered refuges that are not available to the general public.

Youth Hunt

The Covered Refuges participate in the annual youth waterfowl hunt which is generally held two weeks before the regular waterfowl opening weekend. Both CDFW and ODFW schedule this special hunt within their respective state and zone season structures which, specific to the Klamath Basin, is generally the weekend that falls two weeks prior to the opening day of the general waterfowl season. Youth aged 17 years or younger

can participate in this youth hunt provided they are accompanied by an adult (age 18 years or over for the California portion of the Lower Klamath NWR and age 21 years or over for the Oregon portion of the Lower Klamath NWR). For those hunting in the Oregon portion who are over 13 years old, an Oregon hunting license is required. Youth over the age of 14 years hunting in the Oregon portion are required to also have an Oregon Waterfowl Validation or Oregon Duck Stamp. Adults cannot hunt during this special, pre-season hunt. During the youth hunt weekend, participating youth are allowed to hunt all day. Youth 17 years and younger do not need a Recreation Pass. All other state and refuge-specific regulations apply to this special hunt.

Veterans and Active Military Personnel Hunt

The special veteran and active military personnel waterfowl hunt occurs on all Covered Refuges. Both CDFW and ODFW schedule this special hunt within their respective state and zone season structures which, specific to the Klamath Basin, is generally the first weekend after the regular waterfowl season closes. During the veterans and active military special hunt, participating hunters are allowed to hunt all day. All other state and refuge-specific regulations apply to this special hunt.

E. Hunter Permit Requirements

Hunters must comply with all applicable hunting regulations, and they must obtain all the necessary state licenses, tags, or permits for each season.

To be able to hunt on Lower Klamath or Tule Lake Refuges, an annual Recreation Pass is required for hunters 18 years and older, which can be purchased in The Visitor Center or online on the Klamath Basin NWR Complex's lottery and permits webpage by creating an account (USFWS 2026d). No annual Recreation Pass is required for those 17 years old and younger. In addition, all hunters must carry Federal, state, and refuge hunting licenses, stamps, validations, and permits.

F. Consultation and Coordination with the States

Hunting on the Refuges will be conducted consistent with State of California and State of Oregon regulations.

The Service reviewed the operations and regulations for neighboring State wildlife management areas and refuges to find consistency where possible. The Service first reached out to the CDFW on September 25, 2025, and the ODFW on September 25, 2025, to discuss this Hunt Plan. Each State is in agreement with this Hunt Plan, as it would help meet each States' objectives. The Service will continue to ensure safe and enjoyable recreational hunting opportunities. Hunter participation and harvest data are collected by each State.

G. Law Enforcement

Enforcement of refuge violations normally associated with management of a national wildlife refuge is the responsibility of commissioned Federal Wildlife Officers. Other officers, special agents, state game wardens, and local sheriff's departments often assist the Refuges' full-time Federal Wildlife Officers.

The following methods are used to control and enforce hunting regulations:

- Refuges and hunt area boundaries will be clearly posted;
- Refuges will provide a brochure that shows hunt areas; and
- Refuges' law enforcement staff will randomly check hunters for compliance with Federal and state laws.

Federal Wildlife Officers are land management law enforcement officers whose priority enforcement activities are focused on NWRS lands. They are charged with duties related to the mission and objectives of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Federal Wildlife Officer responsibilities include:

- perform the full range of law enforcement duties including patrols, surveillance, investigations, apprehensions, participation in raids, detentions, seizures and arrests, and interaction with the judicial system;
- regularly conduct enforcement operations off of refuge lands in which they must coordinate their activities with other Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction within or adjacent to NWRS lands;
- have cooperative work relationships with other law enforcement agencies; and
- provide an immediately accessible point of public contact to aid and educate visitors about NWRS lands, programs, and resources.

For some refuge visitors, Federal Wildlife Officers are often the only Service employee they contact, and the public relies on them to provide a visible and vigilant deterrent to crime.

H. Funding and Staffing Requirements

Annual hunt administration costs for the Covered Refuges include salary, equipment, law enforcement, brochures, collection of data, maintenance of infrastructure, water management, and analysis of biological information, etc. These costs total approximately \$400,000 a year. Funding and staff specifically for this program have not been allocated. The Klamath Basin NWR Complex accommodates this robust hunt program, despite its limited staffing and funding. The Service is expanding the capacity of the hunt program and the opportunity for hunters despite the Complex budget declining.

Ideally, the Klamath Basin NWR Complex would have 1 full-time and 1 half-time staff dedicated to assist with maintaining required hunting infrastructure, administrative coordination of hunters and hunting information, staffing check stations, performing field checks to interact with hunters, supporting visitor center staff to provide information to visiting hunters, conducting customer satisfaction surveys, etc. Roughly \$300,000 would cover these 2 positions. The additional \$100,000 would cover supplies, equipment and maintenance all related to administering the hunt program at the Covered Refuges.

Annual recreation hunt pass fees and lottery fees (as determined necessary) are collected and spent under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). These funds are reinvested on the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex to support the hunt program through visitor access and safety improvements, maintenance, visitor services, law enforcement, and limited habitat work tied to wildlife-dependent recreation.

IV. Conduct of the Hunt

A. Hunter Permit Application, Selection and/or Registration Procedures

A Refuge Recreation Pass is required for all hunters 18 and older at Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges in addition to the State and Federally required licenses, validations, stamps and permits. Hunting at Upper Klamath NWR only requires State and Federal licenses, validations, stamps and permits.

The Service may use a lottery system as necessary during the hunt seasons (waterfowl and/or upland game bird) season to limit the number of hunters when anticipated demand for a particular hunt may result in pressure on resource, or safety concerns on Lower Klamath and Tule Lake NWRs at the Project Leader's discretion. Information can be found on the Complex's lottery and permits webpage (USFWS 2026d).

B. Refuge-Specific Hunting Regulations

The Refuge System Administration Act, as amended by the NWRS Improvement Act and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460k-4) (Recreation Act) govern the administration and public use of refuges. Additionally, Station-Specific Hunting Regulations (50 CFR § 32 Subpart B) and Public Access and Recreation Regulations (50 CFR § 26.34) are annually published in the U.S. Federal Register.

C. Relevant State Regulations

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) establishes the State seasons within the framework established by the Service. The area is included in California's Northeastern Zone. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) establishes the

State seasons within the framework established by the Service. The area is included in Oregon's Zone 2 Migratory Game Bird area and High Desert and Blue Mountain Zone for Geese.

California and Oregon publish new State hunting information and regulations every year. The California waterfowl and upland game bird hunting regulations are on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website. The Oregon waterfowl and upland game bird hunting information is available on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website. Additionally, both California and Oregon publish a migratory and upland bird hunting proclamation that is available electronically on their website and may be available in print form at most state offices and at local sporting goods outlets.

For more details on the waterfowl season, please visit the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website (CDFW 2026) or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website (ODFW 2026).

D. Other Refuge Rules and Regulations for Hunting

Hunters are required to comply with Refuge System-related and other applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, and policies, in addition to the stipulations listed here.

General Hunting Requirements

- Overnight parking, camping, and building or maintaining fires are prohibited.
- Hunters are required to remove from hunt areas all items they brought with them including boats, decoys, and dogs no later than 1 ½ hours after the end of legal waterfowl shooting time at the end of each hunt day.
- Baiting, feeding, harassing, herding, or any other activity that changes, or attempts to change, normal waterfowl or upland game bird behavior is prohibited.
- Hunters are required to retain the attached head or a fully feathered wing of each bagged bird to allow for identification of species and sex.
- Setting decoys in designated retrieval zones is prohibited.
- Hunters are responsible for removing all trash, including shot shell hulls, upon leaving the hunt areas.
- In California, hunters are required to use approved non-toxic shot in accordance with Federal and State regulations. In Oregon, hunters are required to use approved non-toxic shot in accordance with 50 CFR 32.2(k).
- Possession of any weapon or ammunition in the field that is not legally used for taking of waterfowl or upland game bird is prohibited.
- Only unloaded firearms may be carried on hunter access routes open to motor vehicles or when traveling to and from hunting areas. Firearms must also be unloaded when they are taken through posted retrieving zones. Carrying loaded firearms on access routes or in parking areas is prohibited and illegal.

- To reduce potential hunting-related public safety hazards for all visitors, including those enjoying the auto tour route, hunters are prohibited from target shooting and using pistols or rifles with bullets that travel further than shot from shotguns for waterfowl hunting.
- Hunters are not limited in the total number of shells they may possess while on the covered refuges.
- Upland game bird hunters are required to wear an outer garment, hat or cap, vest, jacket, shirt or coat, above the waist, which is at least 50 percent blaze-orange and visible from both front and back.
- Use or possession of alcohol is prohibited while hunting.
- Dogs
 - Hunters may bring trained hunting dogs.
 - Dogs are required to be leashed, except while used for hunting.
 - Dogs are required to be under their owner's/handler's control at all times and not be allowed to chase, harass, injure, or kill wildlife.
 - Dog training and field trials are prohibited.

Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Requirements

Waterfowl Hunting

- Hunting for ducks and geese will begin one half hour before sunrise and end at 1:00 p.m. each day. Entry to the hunt area begins at 4:30 a.m.
- Lineup may not start before midnight, except on opening weekend when it may begin at 6:00 p.m.
- All hunt areas operate on a first-come, first-served basis with no daily drawing. Hunters may drive into fields to set up, but they must exit fields before shooting time. Hunters are advised to scout ahead of hunting and plan accordingly.
- Hunters may drive into dry fields to set up, but they must exit before shooting time, which follows State shooting schedules. Hunters cannot leave vehicles in fields.

Upland Game bird Hunting

- Upland game bird hunting will be permitted within the established hunt area at Lower Klamath NWR from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily.
- Upland game bird hunting (pheasant and quail) will only be permitted during the California pheasant season (quail hunting is prohibited before or after the state designated pheasant season despite it being opened outside of the Refuge boundaries).

- Upland game bird hunters are required to wear an outer garment, hat or cap, vest, jacket, shirt or coat, above the waist, which is at least 50 percent blaze-orange and visible from both front and back.

Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Requirements

Waterfowl Hunting

- Hunting for ducks and geese will begin one half hour before sunrise and end at 1:00 p.m. each day.
- Hunting season entry begins at 4:30 a.m.
- Lineup may not start before midnight, except on opening weekend when it may begin at 6:00 p.m.
- All designated hunt units (except Wetland unit 1B and Frey's Island) will operate on a first-come, first-served basis with no daily drawing.
- Hunters may drive into fields to set up, but they must exit before shooting time, which follows State shooting schedules. Hunters cannot leave vehicles in fields.

Wetland Unit 1B and Frey's Island (From the start of the regular season to Dec. 1)

- Hunting is available by lottery for up to 10 parties per day with each party limited to 4 hunters. A party may include up to one motorboat with 4 hunters, four walk-in hunters hunting together, or four hunters using non-motorized watercraft (such as kayaks) hunting together.
- Frey's Island Units (from the start of the regular season to Dec. 1)
 - Hunting is available by lottery for up to 6 parties (1 party per lot). A party may include up to one motorboat with 4 hunters, four walk-in hunters hunting together, or four hunters using non-motorized watercraft (such as kayaks) hunting together.
- Wetland Units 1B and Frey's Island (Dec. 2 – end of season)
 - lottery is no longer necessary for hunting Wetland Unit 1B and Frey's Island; all other restrictions remain the same. Wetland Unit 1B is limited to 10 parties per day, and Frey's Island is limited to 6 parties total (one party per unit). Parties are limited to four hunters. A party may include up to one motorboat with four hunters, four walk-in hunters hunting together, or four hunters using non-motorized watercraft (such as kayaks) hunting together.

Wetland Unit 1B and Frey's Island Waterfowl Lottery Process

- Hunt reservations are managed through an authorized contractor using an online lottery system, and details may change from year to year. In general, parties apply as a group under a designated leader who submits all members up front using the account/ID information required by the reservation system. Changes

are typically not allowed after payment, selections apply to the entire group, and application windows and result notifications are usually posted online a few days before the hunt.

Upland Game Bird Hunting

- Upland game bird will be permitted within the established hunt area at Tule Lake NWR from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily.
- Upland game bird hunting (pheasant and quail) will only be permitted during the California pheasant season (quail hunting is prohibited before or after the state designated pheasant season despite it being opened outside of the refuge boundaries).
- Upland game bird hunters are required to wear an outer garment, hat or cap, vest, jacket, shirt or coat, above the waist, which is at least 50 percent blaze-orange and visible from both front and back.

Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Requirements

Waterfowl Hunting

- Hunting for ducks and geese will begin one half hour before sunrise and end at sunset, following the Oregon state regulations.
- Hunting season entry begins at 4:30 a.m.
- All designated hunt units will operate on a first-come, first-served basis with no daily drawing.

Special Equipment and Regulations

Boats at Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges

Permitted motorboats include those powered by electric and solar motors, traditional inboard and outboard motors, mud buddies, go-devils, and other similar mechanical motors. Air-thrust (airboats) and inboard water-thrust (jet) boats are prohibited. The Service may designate certain units where hunters may only be allowed to use motorless boats or those boats powered by electric motors. The construction of boat launches is prohibited. Hunters are prohibited from shooting from a boat under motorized power.

Boats at Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge

Boats with reliable motors should be used as distances to the hunting areas are considerable. Air-thrust and inboard water thrust (jet) boats are prohibited. Non-toxic shot is required. All hunting blinds, decoys, boats, and other personal property must be removed at the end of each day. (See Waterfowl General Regulations for License and Permits requirements [USFWS 2026e].)

V. Public Engagement

A. Outreach for Announcing and Publicizing the Hunting Program

The Klamath Basin NWR Complex has a standard list of local media contacts for news releases that will be notified of upcoming public meetings. The Service will utilize the Klamath Basin NWR Complex's website, kiosks, and brochures to provide current and accurate information regarding the Refuges' hunt program. Hunting announcements will be emailed to interested parties. A Story Map website was created that outlines the proposed changes in detail and maps the preferred alternative. This website will remain active until the changes are finalized. There also will be information available at the Klamath Basin NWR Complex Visitor Center and headquarters located at 4009 Hill Road, Tule Lake, California 96134-9715.

B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunting Program

Hunting, particularly waterfowl hunting, has a long history in the Klamath Basin. The Basin's location in Northern California allows waterfowl hunting to begin several weeks prior to the opening of other portions of California, making the Basin a destination for early season opportunities. Tule Lake and Lower Klamath NWRs support California's largest wild pheasant population. Unlike most other controlled hunting areas throughout Oregon and California, National Wildlife Refuges in the Klamath Basin support a variety of hunting styles, large areas of access, and relatively limited restrictions which provide a freelance style of hunting that many hunters are seeking.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared concurrently with this Hunt Plan to evaluate the proposed alternative hunt program changes and associated impacts to resources (USFWS 2026f). Due to the considerable public interest in the hunting program at the Klamath Basin NWR Complex Refuges, the Service presented the proposed changes at a Public Scoping meeting in December 2025. An early public comment period from December 4, 2025, to January 30, 2026, was held concurrently to get the public's initial reaction to the proposed changes to the hunt program. The public was also be able to comment on official drafts in Spring/Summer 2026.

At that public scoping meeting and in the public comments that have followed, the overall reaction to the proposed changes have been positive. There is general support for the expanded acres and the addition of quail as a huntable species. The sliding scale has been identified by most attendees and commenters as a good idea to increase transparency of hunt determinations and address resource needs.

C. How Hunters Will Be Informed of Relevant Rules and Regulations

General information regarding hunting and other wildlife-dependent public uses can be obtained at the Klamath Basin NWR Complex Visitor Center and headquarters or by calling (530) 667-2231. Dates, forms, hunting unit directions, maps, applications, and permit requirements about hunting can be found on the Covered Refuges websites.

VI. Compatibility Determinations

Hunting and all associated program activities proposed in this Hunt Plan are compatible with the hunting waterfowl and upland game bird purposes described in the Refuges' compatibility determinations that are attached.

VII. References

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