**Hunting Regulations Table**

Hunting is in accordance with State regulations. In addition, Refuge-specific regulations must be followed and are listed in the table below.

| Activity | Season Dates | Hunt Areas | Other Regulations |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Mule deer, white-tailed deer** | State regulations apply. | See map | Hunters can access the Refuge 2 hours prior to sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset.<br><br>Temporary blinds and stands are allowed and must be removed at the end of each day. |
| **Pronghorn** | Archery pronghorn hunting begins September 1. | See map | Hunters can access the Refuge 2 hours prior to sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset.<br><br>Temporary blinds and stands are allowed and must be removed at the end of each day. |
| **Grouse, pheasant** | State regulations apply. | See map | Lead-free shot required. |
| **Migratory Birds (crow, dove, duck, goose, merganser, rail, snipe)** | Open during State-defined open seasons that occur between September 1 through March 15. | See map (one unit only) | State regulations apply. |
| **Cottontail rabbit, jackrabbit** | Open during State-defined open seasons that occur between September 1 through March 15. | See map | State regulations apply. |
| **Coyote and Furbearers** | Open during State-defined open seasons that occur between September 1 through March 15. | See map | Hunters can access the Refuge 2 hours prior to sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset.<br><br>Allowed during daylight hours only.<br><br>Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until sunset.<br><br>Baiting and use of dogs is prohibited.<br><br>If a shotgun is used, lead-free shot is required. |

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Crescent Lake

## National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing



The Blue Goose is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.

## Welcome

Welcome to Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The 45,849-acre Refuge was established in 1931 as a refuge and breeding ground for birds and wild animals. The native prairie landscape, interspersed with wetlands, attracts an abundance of wildlife.

## General Information

Crescent Lake NWR is located in the southwestern portion of the Nebraska Sandhills, approximately 28 miles north of Oshkosh, Nebraska.

The Refuge is open during daylight hours only, with two exceptions: Hunters may enter the Refuge 2 hours before sunrise and remain until 2 hours after sunset; anglers may enter the Refuge 1 hour before sunrise and remain until 1 hour after sunset.

Vehicles and bicycles are allowed only on roads that are open to the public and in parking areas. Most trails require the use of a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

Driving off roads and trails is prohibited, and travel in the wilderness area is by foot or horseback only. Use of wagon, cart, wheelbarrow, bicycle, or any other wheeled vehicle (including "game carts") is prohibited in the wilderness area.

Pets must be leashed, except dogs used for bird hunting during appropriate hunting seasons.

### *Prohibited Activities*

- Off-road vehicle use.
- Vehicles, bicycles, and the use of wheeled game carts in the proposed wilderness area.
- Use of boats with gas-powered motors are prohibited on all Refuge waters except Blue Lake.
- Driving on frozen lakes.
- Possession of alcoholic beverages.
- Commercial guiding or use of a commercial guide to hunt or fish.
- Target shooting.
- Tree stands, tree-climbing spikes, or screw-in steps that penetrate bark and cause damage to the tree.
- Camping.
- Open fires.
- Possession of bait fish and minnows.
- Shooting from vehicle or roadway.
- Use of ATVs and UTVs.
- Use of drones.

### *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).

## Hunting and Fishing Regulations

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.

Hunting and fishing are allowed on the Refuge in accordance with State regulations and the Refuge-specific regulations in this brochure.

Hunters and anglers may hunt or fish only in areas open to those activities as shown on the map.

The Refuge is open to hunting September 1 through March 15 according to State and Refuge regulations.

Lead-free shot is required when hunting with a shotgun.

Island Lake, Crane Lake, Smith Lake, and Blue Lake are open to fishing year-round, during daylight hours, in accordance with State regulations.

Non-motorized boats are allowed on all waters open to hunting and fishing. Boats with electric motors only are allowed on Island Lake, Smith Lake, and Crane Lake. Boats with gas-powered motors are allowed only on Blue Lake (5 mph).

### *Resident and Migratory Game Hunting*

The Refuge is open to hunting from September 1 through March 15 in accordance with State regulations and Refuge-specific regulations. Species include cottontail rabbit, coyote, crow, dove, duck, furbearers, goose, grouse, jackrabbit, merganser, mule deer, pheasant, pronghorn, rail, snipe, and white-tailed deer. Please see the hunting regulations table for more information.

**Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge**
**10630 Road 181**
**Ellsworth, NE 69340**
**308-762-4893**
**crescentlake@fws.gov**
**www.fws.gov/refuge/crescent_lake/**

**For State Transfer Relay Service**
**TTY / Voice: 711**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**
**www.fws.gov**

**For Refuge Information**
**1-800-344-WILD**

**September 2026**

# Crescent Lake
National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge boundary
- Public road
- Auto tour route
- 4WD only *(required)*
- Public trails *(4WD recommended)*
- Historic trail
- Open to hunting
- Open to hunting **except** migratory birds
- Open to hunting (Proposed wilderness area – foot travel or horseback only)
- Closed to all public entry

Refuge headquarters
- Information kiosk
- Accessible restroom
- Hiking trail
- Accessible nature trail

Information kiosk

Lake open to fishing

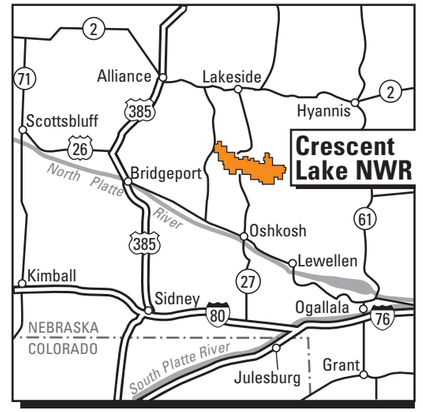
14 Windmill / solar well

Closed fire tower

N

0 Miles 3

0 Kilometers 3




Martin Lake
Ramelli Lake
Lost Lake
Antioch 21 miles
Smith Lake
Rush Lake
Road 108
Road 181
Lakeside 28 miles
Goose Lake
Tree Claim
Barret
Bean Lake
Perrin Lake
Boyd Lake
Redhead Lake
Upper Harrison Lake
Lower Harrison Lake
School Section
Roberts
Roundup Lake
Gimlet Lake
Shafer Lake
Black Steer Lake
Upper East Jones
Lower East Jones
Deer Lake
Christ Lake
Island Lake
Hackberry Lake
Swan Lake
West Jones
Duck Slough
Blue Lake
Crescent Lake
Fishing access only.
Road 181
Oshkosh 28 miles
Crane Lake
Seven Ponds
Meeker Valley
Swede Lake
Lower Red Kate
Upper Red Kate
Phillips Flat
Big Soddy
Little Soddy
Camp Valley

***Accessibility***

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.