

Horicon National Wildlife Refuge Trapping Program Overview (2026-27 Season)

Refuge Trapping Program

Furbearer trapping is a significant management tool at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), supporting the achievement of the refuge's goals and objectives. The management and preservation of wetland habitats, maintenance of dikes, and conservation of migratory birds are closely connected to effective furbearer management. Muskrat and raccoon are the primary species targeted, though other furbearers may also be taken as permitted under State of Wisconsin Trapping laws.

Trapping Auction Details

The Horicon National Wildlife Refuge and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area will host a joint public trapping auction. Details are as follows:

- **Date:** Wednesday, October 14, 2026
- **Location:** WI DNR Horicon Marsh Education & Visitor Center, N7725 Hwy 28, Horicon, WI 53032
- **Schedule:** Doors open at 5 p.m. (Q&A, info review); auction starts at 6 p.m.; permits issued after auction
- **Requirements:** Minimum age 18; must be present to bid; payment by check, money order, debit, or credit (no cash)
- **Bidding:** Minimum \$25, Maximum \$1,500

Refuge Scouting Information

- Scouting permitted on refuge areas open to trapping October 13–14, 2026 (daylight hours only)
- Scouting permit required before entering units
- Permits and maps available at the Horicon NWR Visitor Center, W4279 Headquarters Rd. Mayville, WI. Visitor Center is closed on Wednesdays. Permits will be available outdoors at the main entrance of the Horicon NWR Visitor Center or by phone/email.

Refuge Trapping Units

Wetland Units

- Eleven wetland units auctioned for the 2026–27 season
- One unit per trapper (including helper) allowed on Horicon Marsh
- A trapper may not hold units on both the refuge and state-managed area
- Boats with electric motors and skiffs permitted in all units
- ATVs with flotation devices may be used over the ice

Senior/Disabled Units

- Unit 7/Hiking Trails reserved for seniors (62+) and trappers with disabilities (DNR class A, B, C, or D permit)
- Two trappers randomly drawn at the auction for free permits (participants may enter via email or phone; presence not required)
- Senior trappers may have one helper (helper must also meet age requirements)

Youth Unit

- Youth ages 12–17 may trap Unit 11/Frankfurth
- No drawing held; youth must obtain a free permit
- Adult supervisors may accompany youth but may not physically assist in trapping

Upland

- Upland trapping permits are free with a valid Wisconsin DNR trapping license and are included with wetland permits
- Trappers must stay within designated areas shown on the upland trapping map

Trapping Species and Seasons

Species	Opens	Closes	Notes
Raccoon, fox, coyote, weasel, skunk, opossum	October 17, 2026	February 15, 2027	Non-residents may not trap raccoons until October 31
Mink and muskrat	October 31, 2026 (Central Zone)	March 22, 2027 (Central Zone)	Follows State of Wisconsin Central Zone dates
Beaver and otter	November 7, 2026	March 22, 2027	Closes with mink and muskrat season

***Open marsh trapping of any species is prohibited beyond 25 yards from the shoreline or dike toe until December 1.**

Mentored Trapping

- Must follow State of WI DNR Mentored Trapping Program regulations
- Youth under 16 can trap without a license with a mentor
- Ages 16+ without trapper education must have a valid mentored trapping license and trap with a mentor
- Mentees can be added as sub-permittees on the trapper's special use permit.

Assisting Trappers with Disabilities

- Individuals with a current class A, B, C, or D hunting permit may be assisted by anyone with valid trapping authorization
- Assistance includes trap setting, checking, tagging, and registration if the disabled person has approval
- Accompanying individual must be listed on the permit and comply with all regulations
- Safe access is a priority; alternative accommodations can be discussed with refuge staff

Horicon NWR Trapping Program Contact

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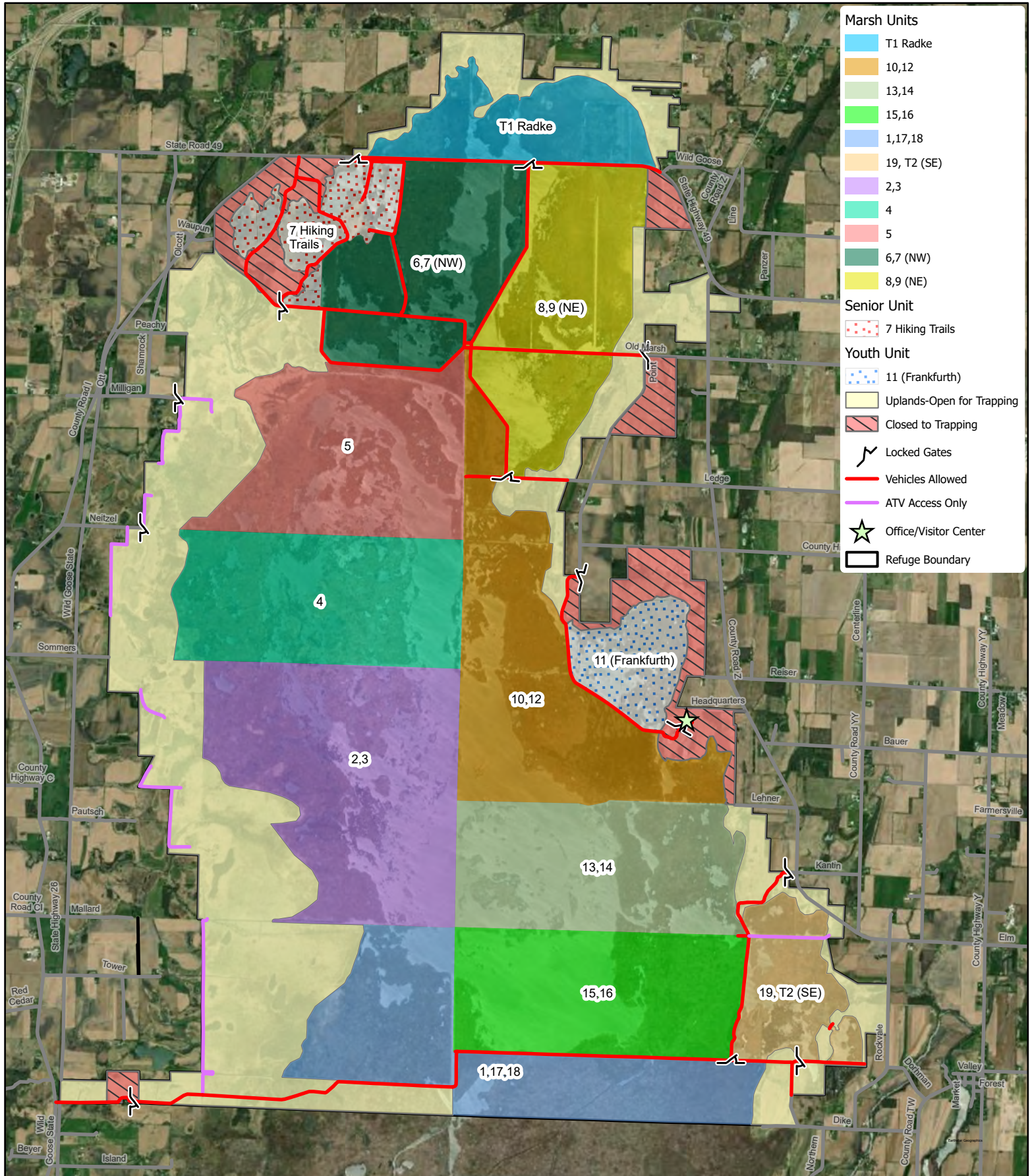
Email: sadie_odell@fws.gov



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Horicon National Wildlife Refuge

Trapping Map

Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties, Wisconsin



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

