U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Hunting 2026–2027

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

About the Refuge

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge was established in 1901 for the "protection of game animals and birds," some of which were nearing extinction. Bison were reintroduced, along with elk and wild turkey. More recent reintroductions include prairie dogs, river otters, and burrowing owls. Encompassing 59,020 acres (about 90 square miles), the refuge manages 22,400 acres for public use, 8,570 acres of Wilderness, and 28,050 acres for special use to protect animals and their habitats from disturbance.

Public hunts have been offered on the refuge since 1969 with the introduction of rifle hunting for Rocky Mountain elk. In 1984, rifle hunting expanded to include white-tailed deer. This rich tradition of wildlife-dependent recreation continues annually and occurs throughout the refuge (10 hunt units; see map) with the exception of areas outside the boundary fence (974 acres), interior working pastures (1,764 acres), and areas with high public use, primarily around buildings, roads, public use facilities, and administrative facilities (2,831 acres).

Public use is important to the mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; however the National Wildlife Refuge System was established to protect ecosystems and the plants and animals contained within refuge boundaries. Plants and animals are protected from hunting unless a specific refuge hunting season allows for the take of animals. Portions of the refuge are open to other uses. It is your responsibility to know the hunting seasons, regulations, boundaries, and open areas. Refuge boundaries are marked with white signs with blue lettering.

Drawn hunters for controlled hunts will receive an official Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) letter stating that they have been drawn to participate in a specific hunt. That letter will serve as their refuge permit. Waterfowl hunters must possess all necessary federal and state required licenses and stamps, along with a signed refuge tearsheet. All individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspection of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by both state and federal wildlife officers.

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge 2026-2027 General Hunt Permit

When signed and carried, this serves as your general hunt permit and acknowledges your understanding of the regulations contained herein.
Expires July 31, 2027

Signature of hunter

Date

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers multiple opportunities for wildlife dependent recreation. Working cooperatively with the state of Oklahoma, Wichita Mountains hosts deer, elk, and turkey controlled hunts in addition to open season waterfowl hunting.

General Regulations

The regulations listed below supplement ODWC hunting regulations and the general regulations governing hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

- All vehicles must remain on existing roads, in designated parking areas, and hardened pullouts.
- No hunting is allowed within 400 feet of any paved road, parking area, or building/dwelling.
- Shooting from or across any designated trail, road, or parking area is prohibited.
- The use of permanent stands and blinds are prohibited.
- The use of motorized decoys, game carts, or other mechanical transportation devices is prohibited on portions of the refuge designated as Wilderness Area.

Firearms and Ammunition

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on national wildlife refuges must comply with all provisions of state and local laws. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32). Firearms used for hunting must be unloaded and either dismantled or encased when transported in vehicles and boats while on the refuge. Loaded is defined as shells or bullets in a gun, a cap on a muzzleloader, or a bow that is at full or partial draw.

Prohibited Activities:

- Littering, including leaving trash, spent or unspent shotgun shells, or debris;
- Baiting or hunting over bait, salt, or any attractant (hunting scents are allowed);
- The use or possession of crossbows, air guns, spears, gigs, and other weapons unless authorized;
- Using spotlights or artificial light to locate wildlife;
- Use of scouting cameras;
- Hunting from a permanent tree stand or from a tree in which a metal object (nails, spikes, screws) has been driven;
- Target practice;
- Any activities that involve searching for, or disturbing artifacts or treasures, or collecting plants (including cutting trees or brush), rocks, animals, bones, minerals, and antlers unless authorized;
- Marking trails with paint or leaving flagging tape, ribbons, or trail tacks;
- ATVs, UTVs, and horses or mules;
- Open fires; fires are allowed only in provided fire rings and grills of picnic/camping areas;
- Possession of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and drug paraphernalia.

For Additional Information Contact

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge
21088 State Highway 115
Cache, OK 73527
(580)215-0188
www.fws.gov/refuge/wichita_mountains

Deer and Elk

Deer and Elk Hunts will be conducted through the ODWC Controlled Hunts Program. The number of permits available varies from year to year. Hunts are 2 ½ days in length with one (1) deer hunt and up to four (4) possible elk hunts per year. Hunters are required to attend a mandatory hunter orientation. Permitted hunters will be assigned to a unit. Hunters may only hunt within their designated unit.

Refuge Regulations

- Big game hunting is restricted to hunters 16 years of age and older for deer hunts and 18 years and older for elk hunts.
- Eligible youth hunters must have passed a state certified hunter education program and all hunters are required to attend a mandatory refuge safety and orientation briefing at the refuge visitor center on the day prior to their drawn hunt.
- All hunters and designated helpers are required to wear blaze orange in accordance with state regulations while in the field during refuge elk and deer hunts.
- Centerfire rifles only; minimum calibers are .243 for deer and .270 for elk.
- Only five (5) rounds of ammunition are allowed per day during controlled elk and white-tailed deer hunts.
- All harvested elk and deer must be checked through the refuge check station and a metal transportation tag must be attached before leaving refuge property.

Youth and Spring Turkey Hunts

Youth and Spring Turkey Hunts will be conducted through the ODWC Controlled Hunts Program. Each hunt will be three (3) days in length. Access to hunt units will be by walk-in only from established parking areas. Hunters must meet state age requirements for eligibility.

Refuge Regulations

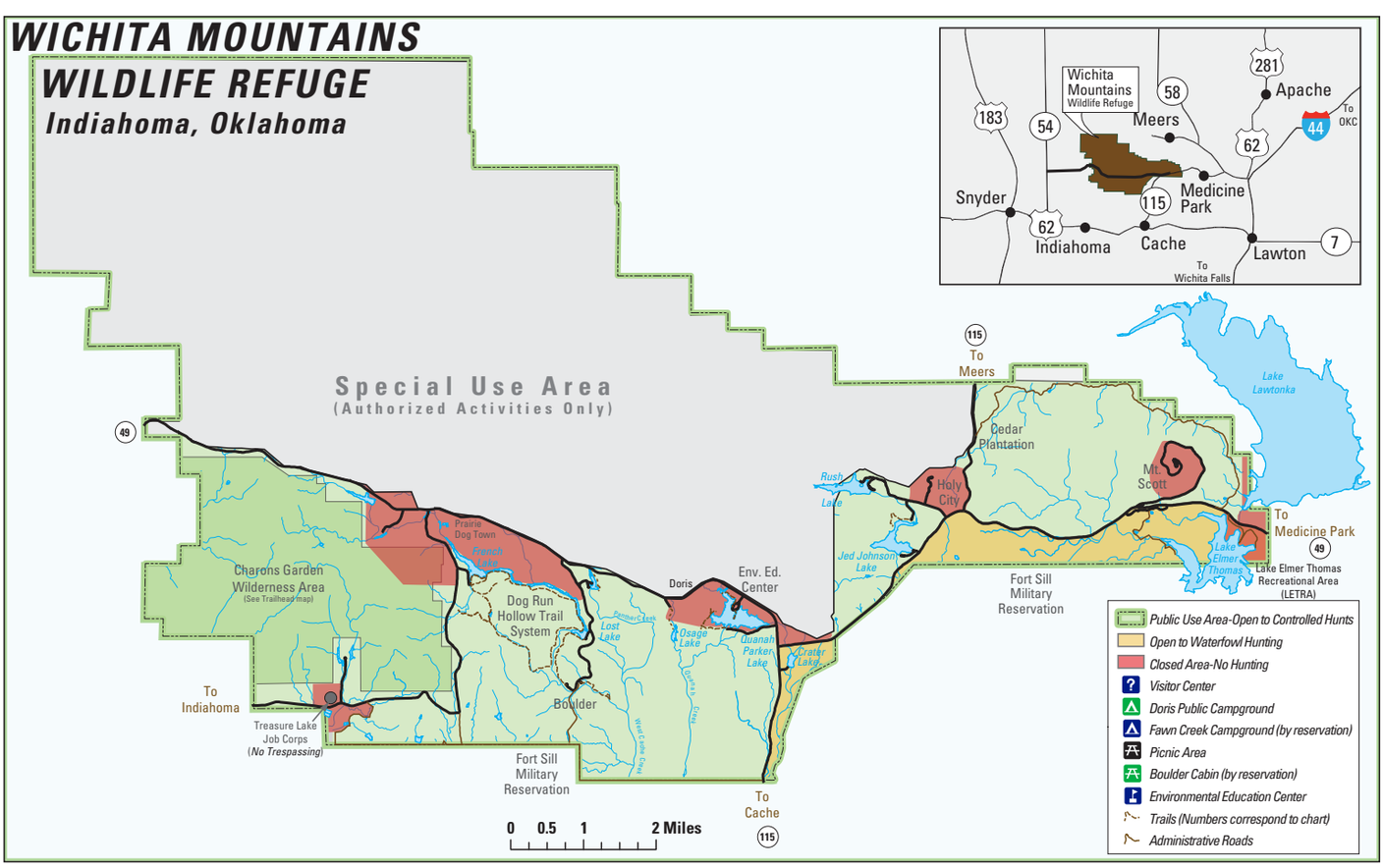
- Youth hunters must be 15 years old or younger on the first day of the hunt. All youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult, 21 years of age or older, who is a non-hunting mentor. Mentors do not need a hunting license.
- Spring turkey hunters must be at least 16 years old by the date of each hunt to qualify.
- Eligible youth hunters must have passed a state certified hunter education program .
- Only archery equipment and shotgun or muzzleloader with a shot size of #2 or smaller are allowed for turkey hunting. Crossbows are prohibited.
- Only federally approved non-toxic shot is allowed while hunting turkey.
- Self-reporting of hunt success and biological information is required as detailed in the controlled hunt permit.

Feral Hogs and Coyotes

Harvest of feral hogs and coyotes will be allowed during any refuge controlled hunt. There is no limit on feral hogs or coyotes. Hunters must use only legal weapons and ammunition allowed for the controlled hunt to harvest feral hogs or coyotes. Non-toxic ammunition must be used if participating in a turkey controlled hunts.

Waterfowl

Hunting of duck, goose, merganser, and coot is allowed on refuge waters (e.g., lakes, pond, creeks) east and south of the paved road between the Cache and Medicine Park entrance gates. Season dates and general hunting regulations follow those established by ODWC for Duck Zone 2 and statewide goose seasons, except closed during elk/deer controlled hunts.

Refuge Regulations

- Hunting hours are from ½ hour before legal sunrise until 1:00 p.m. Waterfowl hunters may hunt on a first come first served basis from the bank or by boat; jump shooting is not allowed.
- Hunters must possess a current signed refuge hunting tearsheet (signed brochure) while hunting on the refuge.
- Hunters must follow all refuge, state and federal laws regarding legal sporting arms. Non-toxic ammunition is required.
- Waterfowl hunting is only allowed on refuge waters (lakes, pond, creeks) within designated areas.
- Use of hunting dogs is allowed only for waterfowl hunting, provided the dogs are under the immediate control of the hunter at all times.
- Blinds may be constructed but must only include natural vegetation materials from the refuge; hunters may not cut trees. Decoys and blinds must be removed at the end of each day's hunt.
- The use of motorized decoys is prohibited in portions of the refuge designated as Wilderness Area.