



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alligator River

National Wildlife Refuge

Hunting Regulations & Permit 2026-2027



This is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System,
a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit
of wildlife and people.

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

P.O. Box 1969

100 Conservation Way

Manteo, NC 27954

252/473 1131

email: alligatorriver@fws.gov

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator-river>

To report wildlife violations, call

1/844 FWS Tips (379 8477)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<https://www.fws.gov>

October 2026

Hunting and fishing opportunities for individuals with disabilities are available on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Persons with disabilities may contact the Refuge office prior to their arrival if special arrangements are needed.

Refuge Hunting Permit Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

Name _____
(please print)

I have read and understand the refuge
hunting regulations contained in this
leaflet.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

This permit must be signed, dated and
carried on your person and is only valid
from September 1, 2026 - May 31, 2027.

General Information

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR/Refuge) contains approximately 160,000 acres, most of which are open to hunting. There are more than 150 miles of old logging roads that provide hunting access, some for vehicles and some on foot. Visitors should use caution, especially when venturing into the more remote areas of the refuge with only a two-wheel drive vehicle. In the center of the refuge is the Dare County Range, a 46,000-acre military practice area owned by the U.S. Air Force and used by both the Air Force and the U.S. Navy. The Range is a part of the North Carolina Game Lands Program and governed by Gamelands rules and regulations (<http://www.ncwildlife.org>). Especially in the areas on or adjacent to the Dare Range, road conditions may be unpredictable.

For newcomers to the Refuge, the impenetrable vegetation and remoteness often catch them unaware. First time users should consult with a Refuge staff member or another hunter before venturing off the beaten path. The majority of waterfowl hunting occurs on the sounds and rivers surrounding the Refuge.

Game Animals

Only the following species may be hunted: waterfowl (ducks, geese, tundra swan), coot, quail, mourning dove, snipe, woodcock, rabbits, squirrel, opossum, raccoon, and white-tailed deer in accordance to Federal, State, and local regulations. See map and table for species restrictions by location.

Hyde County portions of the Refuge are closed to white-tailed deer hunting during open seasons on black bear on adjacent lands.

Regulations

All general Refuge regulations apply, unless specifically addressed in this leaflet. Restrictions and designations on the map in this leaflet also apply. Public hunting is permitted in accordance with all State laws, county codes, Title 50 - Code of Federal Regulations, and the following Refuge regulations:

Permits are required for all hunts. Your permit is on the front of this brochure. You may sign electronically or print and sign. Paper copies are available at the Refuge headquarters at 100 Conservation Way, Manteo, NC 27954 and brochure boxes located at main road intersections.

The Refuge is open daylight hours only. Hunter access is allowed from one hour before until one hour after legal hunting hours. Legal hunting hours for raccoons and opossums are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, unless authorized by Refuge Special Use Permit.

Possession of firearms is permitted in accordance with State law.

When taking any game animal or bird with a shotgun, federally approved, non-toxic shot must be used except buckshot or slugs for white-tailed deer. Possessing lead shot in the field is prohibited, except when engaged in deer hunting. The use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

The taking or possession of bear, turkey, bobcat, any furbearer, or any part thereof, is prohibited, except when transporting same along an NC State road or US highway. Game legally taken on the Dare Range must be transported to U.S. Highway 264 or 64 by the most direct route possible.



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Disturbing, molesting or interfering with any person engaged in the pursuit of an authorized activity on the Refuge is prohibited.

Baiting or feeding wildlife; hunting with the aid of bait; and use of electronic calls to attract wildlife are prohibited.

The use of trail cameras and drones is prohibited.

Construction or use of permanent blinds, platforms, and/or ladders is prohibited. Hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been inserted is prohibited.

Camping, fires, littering, target practice, and commercial guiding are prohibited.

Access

Hunting areas may be accessed by foot, bicycle, boat, and vehicle only. The use of horses for any hunting activity is prohibited. Vehicular access is restricted to licensed vehicles on designated roads. See map for hunt areas and road designations.

Hunting access is subject to change to accomplish management activities. Refer to posted signs and check the refuge website (fws.gov/refuge/alligator-river) for the most current access information.

Hunters must abide by any parking restrictions. In areas where stopping and parking are restricted, designated hunter parking areas may be established.

Farming Area

Farming areas are closed to waterfowl and coot hunting. The farming areas are open to hunting deer, small game, snipe, dove and woodcock, in accordance with State, general Refuge, and these unit-specific regulations.

Use of Dogs

The use of dogs is restricted to designated areas on map and as described in this section. All dogs must be confined or leashed and under owner control when not engaged in hunting.

Hunters may walk on closed roads in the farming area or on the roads in the "no dog hunting" area to retrieve their stray hunting dogs only until 11 pm.

Farming units are open to small game and bird hunting with retrieving dogs in accordance with State and Refuge regulations.

Farming units are open to deer hunting with chase dogs only during October. See map for closed areas within the farming units. Training of chase dogs is permitted only during the modern gun deer season and where use of chase dogs is allowed.

Wildlife Drive

Hunters are reminded that the Refuge Wildlife Drive (see map) is adjacent to several hunting areas and is a popular attraction to many. Please be aware of the Wildlife Drive and be cautious and courteous when hunting in areas shared with other Refuge visitors.

Youth Hunting

Refuge youth hunting regulations align with the State. Remember both State and Federal regulations apply to all refuge hunts. Be sure to check State Regulations at <http://www.ncwildlife.org>

If you have questions as to the advisability or legality of any activity, consult the Refuge Manager before participating in that activity.

Waterfowl and coot hunting are prohibited in the farm units. Hunting access to all units is subject to change.				
Farm Units	Unit Boundary Descriptions	Hunt Dates	Vehicle Access	Non-motorized Access
Laurel Bay Unit	Area east of Pump Rd and west of Buffalo City Rd	September, October, February & May: All areas including impoundments	All roads September, October & February	Foot and bike access permitted all year
		November-January: Hunting allowed only in woodblocks and non-impounded (undiked) fields (see map)	River Rd and Laurel Bay Rd from River Rd to Pump Rd are open all year	
Twiford Unit	Area east of Buffalo City Rd and west of Milltail Rd	September–October, and May	September–October	March - October
		Closed to all entry November 1- February 28		
Upper Creef Unit	Area north of Long Curve and Link Roads between Milltail and Gadwall Roads	September–October and May	September–October	March - October
		Closed to all entry November 1- February 28		
Lower Creef Unit	Area south of Link Rd, east of Bear Rd, north of Grouse Rd and west of Long Curve Rd	September–October, May: all allowed species in season	Gravel roads open to vehicles all year	Foot and bike access permitted all year
		November 1- February 28: no deer hunting		



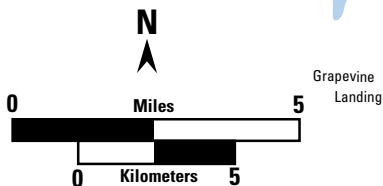
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Legend

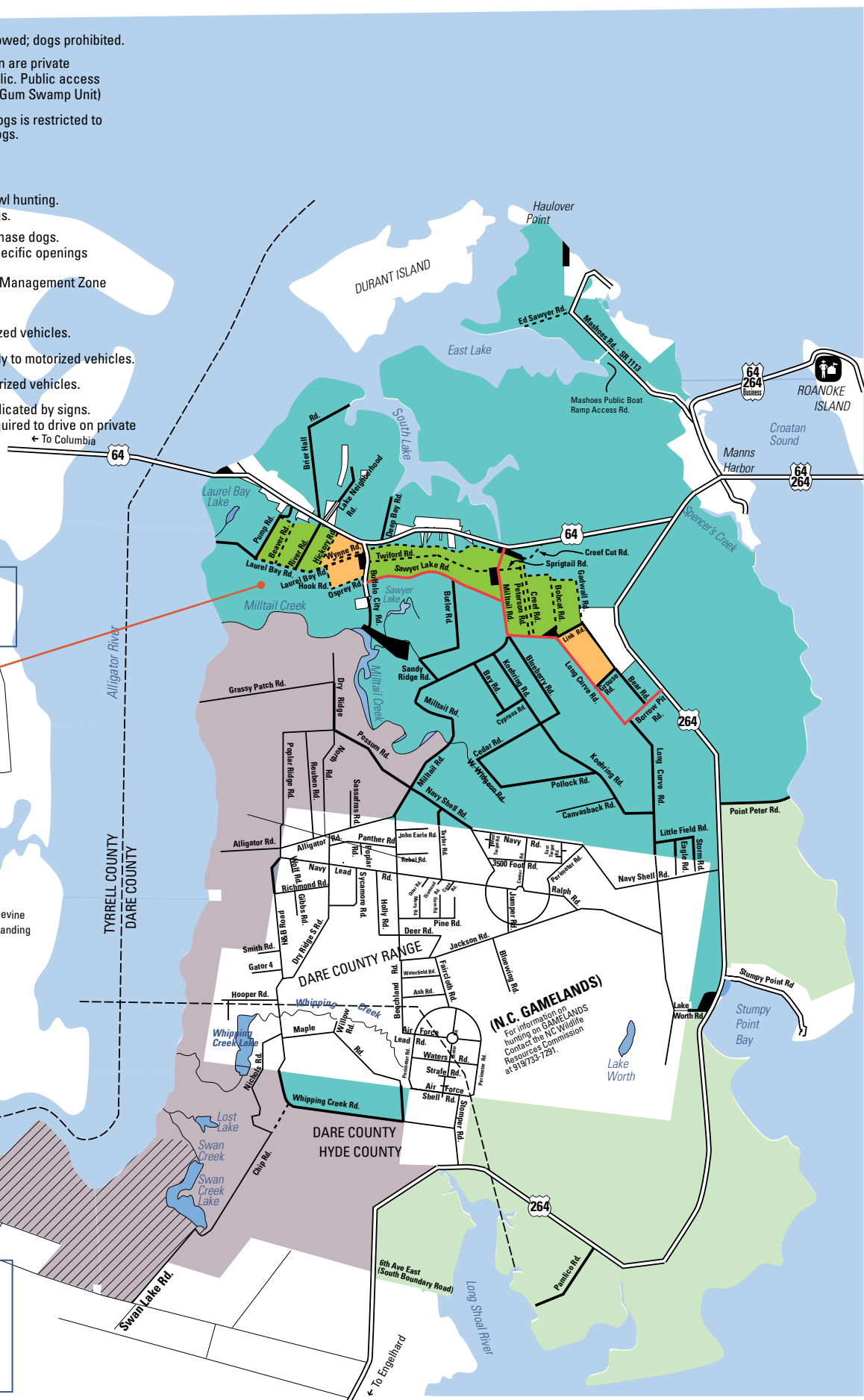
- Gum Swamp Unit-Hunting allowed; dogs prohibited.
- Roads leading into this section are private and closed to the general public. Public access is by water only. (Also part of Gum Swamp Unit)
- Hunting allowed; the use of dogs is restricted to bird hunting with retrieving dogs.
- Hunting with dogs allowed.
- Farming Area
Closed year round to waterfowl hunting. See table for specific openings.
- Closed to hunting deer with chase dogs. See Farming Area table for specific openings
- No Hunting-Safety/Resource Management Zone
- State Roads or U.S. highways
- Refuge Roads open to motorized vehicles.
- Refuge Roads open seasonally to motorized vehicles.
- Refuge Roads closed to motorized vehicles.
- Public or private roads, as indicated by signs. (Landowner permission is required to drive on private roads.)
- Non-Refuge or private lands
- Wildlife Drive
- Visitor Center

Hyde County portions of the Refuge are closed to white-tailed deer hunting during open seasons on black bear on adjacent lands.

See Inset on Pg 4



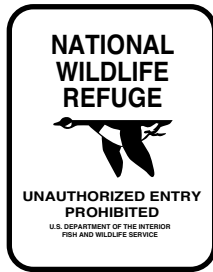
Notice: Red Wolves roam free on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Please report sightings: 252-475-8259. The maximum penalty for harassing, harming, taking, possessing, or attempting to harass, harm, or take a red wolf is 1 year in jail, \$100,000 fine, or both.





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Please respect the following signs:



This sign denotes the boundary of the Refuge.



These signs mean the area behind the sign is closed to all entry either year-round or seasonally. Do not enter the area behind this sign for any reason.



This sign marks areas closed to hunting. Entry for other authorized activities generally is permitted.



The Laurel Bay Unit, located east of Pump Road and west of Buffalo City Road. Hunting in impoundments is restricted during winter season; see table for details.