



## Hunting Guidelines

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Patuxent Research Refuge  
North, Central, and South Tracts



2023-2024 Season



# Have a Safe and Enjoyable Hunting Season!

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# Patuxent Research Refuge Hunting Guidelines

## 2023-2024 Season

Revised 5/18/23

Hunting at Patuxent Research Refuge is a privilege!

### GOALS OF THE HUNTING PROGRAM

- To assist in the management of white-tailed deer and resident Canada goose populations on Patuxent Research Refuge.
- Provide the public with a high-quality recreational experience.
- Improve hunting access and opportunities with an emphasis on under-represented groups such as women, minorities, youth, disabled, and veteran hunters.

### REMEMBER - HUNTERS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- **Read and understand these guidelines prior to hunting.**
- **Obtain a Refuge Hunt Permit in order to hunt or scout on the Refuge.**
- **Close all interior gates upon entering or exiting Refuge roads (that have gates), regardless of the position of the gate when they come to it.**
- **Stay within their designated area and know the hunting seasons.**
- **Report dead deer and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) to Hunting Control Station immediately.**
- **Remove all equipment, flagging, ammunition, and trash when leaving designated hunt zone for any reason.**
- **Avoid cutting any vegetation (see general hunting guidelines regarding blinds).**
- **Avoid spreading invasive species by cleaning clothes and boots before entering and after exiting hunt area.**

### HUNTING GUIDELINE CHANGES THIS YEAR:

- Archery hunters are required to wear fluorescent orange or pink at all times when the Deer Muzzleloader, Deer Firearms, and Junior Deer Hunt are open on the refuge. See Section IV for details.
- Temporary White Tail Deer Bag Limit is 3 deer (**1 Buck / 2 Doe**) for the entire refuge (NT, ST, Schafer, and CT combined) for the entire year. There are **no** separate bag limits for each season type or Refuge hunting area. **You may not shoot 3 does.** If you shoot 3 does you will be in violation of the refuge specific regulation.
- Early scouting will be allowed in August this year (Saturdays from 9AM-3PM while the HCS is open).
- Area W will remain closed to hunting this season due to wavyleaf basket grass eradication and study.
- Mentored Deer Hunt will be December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> on South Tract in Areas A, B, C.
- There are new procedures for Deer and Turkey Lottery hunts. Please read changes in the applicable sections.

## I. GENERAL HUNTING INFORMATION

- A. Adverse Weather or Emergency Closures:** If Patuxent Research Refuge is closed for the day, no hunting will be permitted. If North Tract is closed, then all hunting will be closed on all tracts. If the South Tract, Central Tract, and Schafer Farm are closed but North Tract remains open, hunting will remain open on North Tract; however, hunting will not be permitted on South Tract, Central Tract, and Schafer Farm. **The Refuge Manager or designee can close any section of the Refuge at any time.**
- B. Hunting Permits:** Hunting permits are purchased in person only through the Meade Natural Heritage Association (MNHA) in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Patuxent Research Refuge through a cooperative agreement. Permits will be sold at the USFWS Hunting Control Station (HCS) at Bald Eagle Drive, located on the Refuge's North Tract.

Permit sales begin in August on Saturdays from 9 AM until 3 PM. From September 1 through January 31, permits can be purchased when the HCS is open (excludes Sundays and Federal holidays).

In order to purchase a Patuxent Research Refuge hunting permit, you must complete/bring the following:

1. National Wildlife Refuge System Hunt Application (FWS Form 3-2439, OMB 1018-0140), and Statement of Hunter Ethics (FWS Form 3-2516). **Forms can be found online at the refuge website or can be picked up at HCS.**
2. Current Maryland Hunting License (with disability notation if applicable).
3. Hunting stamps as required by the State of Maryland to hunt specific seasons/species (e.g., muzzleloader, waterfowl)
4. Disabled turkey hunters must present Federal or Maryland State documentation of disabled eligibility when purchasing a permit **if** hunting in the disabled turkey lottery hunt.
5. **Cash or check for fees.** (We do not accept electronic payments.)

For specific hunting information call 301-317-3819 or visit the MNHA website at <http://www.mnha.net/> or the Patuxent Research Refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent/>.

- C. Fees:** A schedule of the fees for hunting permits will be posted at the HCS. Senior and Youth Hunters may hunt at a reduced fee. Golden Age and Golden Eagle Passports or other entrance fee programs are not applicable towards hunting permit fees.
- D. Hunt Control Station Opening Hours:** Hunters may check in at the HCS Monday through Saturday (closed on Sundays and all federal holidays) at 5 AM from September 1 – December 9 and at 6 AM Monday after Firearms Season. **Exceptions:**
1. Hunters may check in at 4:30 AM on the **FIRST** day of Resident Canada goose and the **FIRST** day of Firearms season.
  2. Hunters may arrive at the HCS at 4:30 AM for the remainder of the Early Resident Canada Goose season (**September 1- 25**) however; check in starts at 5 AM.
  3. Hunters must check in from 4:30 – 5:00 AM for the Spring Wild Turkey lottery hunts and can go afield starting at 5 AM. Primary Hunters arriving after 5 AM risk losing their lottery place.

- E. Hunting Closing Hours:** Closing time varies according to sunset. The latest time a hunter may leave the HCS to begin hunting at North Tract is 1 hour before sunset. The latest time a hunter may leave HCS for Schafer Farm and South Tract will be 1½ hours before sunset to allow for travel time to HCS. The HCS will remain open 1½ hours after sunset. **All hunters must return to HCS no later than 1½ hours after sunset.**
- F. Holidays:** Hunting ends at 12:00 PM on Thanksgiving Eve (Nov. 22). HCS will close at 1:00 PM. No hunting on Christmas Eve (Dec. 24), and New Year's Eve (Dec. 31) this season. No hunting will take place on the following holidays: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day or any day the Federal Government or Refuge closes. **Hunting will be allowed on Veterans Day.**
- G. Scouting:** Early scouting will be allowed in August on Saturdays during HCS hours (9-3). Normal scouting is allowed Monday through Saturday, from September 1 through February 3 from sunrise to sunset when the area is open to hunting. Hunters participating in scouting activities must be **unarmed** and must be **checked in** at the HCS as scouting for a specific area of the Refuge. See Section IV for fluorescent orange/pink requirements. Scouting **is not** allowed for spring turkey hunting.
- H. Penalties:** Failure to comply with any Refuge regulation, state or other federal laws may result in the following:
1. Maximum of \$10,000 fine and/or 1-year imprisonment
  2. Arrest, seizure and/or forfeiture of hunting equipment and vehicles
  3. Forfeiture of harvested game
  4. Hunting permits may be revoked by Federal Wildlife Officers and/or Refuge Management's discretion. Maximum revocation of permit is infinite.

## **II. HUNTING GUIDELINES FOR ALL HUNTERS**

- A.** Hunters are required to check in and out at the HCS every time they enter or exit the Refuge, wish to change hunting methods of harvest, or wish to change hunting areas when hunting on North Tract, Central Tract and M-R Lottery Hunts, and Schafer Farm. Hunters leaving their designated hunt zone for any reason must proceed directly to the HCS to check out and must check back in when returning. No hunting spots will be reserved. Hunters must always physically check out at the HCS.
- B. Check-in procedures:**
1. Exchange Refuge hunting permit for daily hunting or scouting pass and vehicle pass. Hunters will NOT be allowed to check in without their Refuge hunting permit. Vehicle pass must be prominently displayed in vehicle.
  2. Select desired hunting area from authorized hunting areas map at HCS. If available, your daily hunting and vehicle pass will be issued to you.
  3. Indicate activity (e.g., scouting, deer, duck, squirrel hunting) and method of harvest to hunt manager on duty at time of check-in.
  4. After checking in, hunters must proceed directly to their selected area.
  5. Hunters are allowed to have no more than two observers with them afield. All observers must sign out, or in the case of a youth, a parent or guardian must sign for them.

**C. While hunting:**

1. Hunters must have in their possession the following items and present these to any Law Enforcement Officer upon request.
  - a. Daily hunting or scouting pass
  - b. Valid Maryland State hunting license
  - c. Special permits for disabled eligibility, if applicable
  - d. Any applicable stamps and permits
  - e. Driver's license or a valid government photo ID
2. Hunters are encouraged to carry a whistle (or other noise making device), compass, cell phone, and/or GPS when hunting all areas.
3. Vehicle pass must be prominently displayed in vehicle.
4. Vehicles must be parked inside the boundaries of their selected area. It is illegal to park vehicles in such a manner to block gates or other vehicle traffic.
5. Hunters must use designated and authorized roads and parking areas only.
6. Hunters must dress deer in the woods and not along the side of the road.

**D. Check-out procedures:**

1. Exchange daily hunting passes for Refuge hunting permit.
2. Notify HCS manager of any game harvested.
3. Bring any game harvested on the Refuge to the weigh-in shed (check station) located next to the HCS for biological data collection.
4. No harvested game, or parts thereof, once removed from the Refuge, may be returned for disposal.
5. Hunters returning to the HCS after the designated checkout hours for that day will be subject to law enforcement actions.

**E. Harvested Deer/Turkey Tagging and Check-in Procedures:**

Hunters must tag their harvested game in accordance with state regulations. Please refer to the Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping (available where hunting licenses are sold, HCS, and online at <https://dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/Pages/default.aspx>).

Anyone found in violation of any of the tagging/check-in requirements will be subject to law enforcement action.

**F. The following areas are closed to all hunting:**

1. The forested area between Range 1 and Range 2 in Area "D" on the North Tract.
2. The area around Wildlife Viewing Area and trail system in Area I. The area is marked with orange carsonite markers and No Hunting Zone signs along the Wildlife Loop and trail.
3. Area W bounded by Bald Eagle Drive, Whip-Poor-Will Way, and Sweetgum Lane.
4. See map posted at the HCS for additional no-hunting zones.

**G. The range impact areas (D, E, F, and G) will remain closed Monday through Thursday throughout the season with the following exceptions: 1) During Deer Muzzleloader and Firearms seasons. 2) During the early goose season (September 1-25) areas D, E, F, and G will be open until 8:00 AM. 3) During the early goose season (September 1-25) Lake Allen and Range 1 will remain open until 12PM.**

- H.** Accommodations may be made for hunters with disabilities in the following locations: Central Tract and M-R Lottery Hunts, South Tract, and other areas approved by the Refuge Manager/Refuge Law Enforcement. Hunters are required to request accommodations prior to checking into a hunting area.
- I.** Hunting is not allowed on, from or across any road (paved, gravel, dirt, opened and/or closed), within 50 yards of any road, within 150 yards of any building or shed, and within 25 yards of any designated “No Hunting” or “Safety Zone” areas, except:
  - 1. You may hunt from the vehicle, at designated areas, if you possess a Maryland State “Universal Disability Pass” and have completed and turned in your NPS Form 10-597. Hunting from the vehicle is not allowed from the Wildlife Loop or Bald Eagle Drive.
  - 2. You may hunt from the road, no less than 50 yards beyond the gate at Blue Heron Pond.
  - 3. You may hunt from the road, no less than 50 yards beyond the barricade at Wood Duck Pond.
  - 4. You may hunt waterfowl (goose/duck) from North Tract Refuge permanent photo/hunt blinds.
- J.** No hunting or scouting is permitted on Sundays and Federal holidays. Hunting will be allowed this season on Veterans Day.
- K.** No hunt-related activities (archery target shooting, tracking, etc.) may take place unless the HCS is open.
- L.** Hunters changing hunting methods of harvest within their checked out area, may call the HCS manager. Hunters, who are checked out for one species, may harvest another species if it is in-season and using the appropriate method of harvest/ammunition. For example, someone hunting doves may harvest a squirrel so long as both are in season.
- M.** The use of all-terrain vehicles and utility vehicles is prohibited on the Refuge, except under special circumstances and with prior approval from the Refuge Manager.
- N.** Baiting of game animals, including the use of any natural or man-made food sources, such as grain, salt, corn, or commercial licks, “Deer Caine”, etc. is prohibited on the Refuge.
- O.** Deer attractants like Buck Bomb, scent pads and cotton balls are allowed but are considered litter and subject to law enforcement action if left behind. Note: Heat-based scents are not allowed.
- P.** Spotlighting or use of artificial light to spot wildlife is prohibited.
- Q.** Any harassment of wildlife is prohibited.
- R.** Hunters who see dogs are instructed to notify the HCS manager as soon as possible. Do not shoot dogs!
- S.** Shooting of any non-target species, which includes but not limited to coyotes and foxes, is prohibited on the Refuge.
- T.** Possession or use of alcohol or drugs and/or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited on the Refuge.
- U.** ALL flagging and any other personal property (i.e. trail cameras) must be removed at the end of EACH hunt visit. The use of reflective pins or nails is prohibited.

- V. The use of nails, wire, screws or bolts to attach a stand or any other equipment to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter is prohibited on National Wildlife Refuges. No screw-in steps or stands will be permitted. Please report any permanent tree stands to the HCS manager; mark the stand so it can be located by law enforcement.
- W. Ground hunting blinds are permitted; however, no natural vegetation, from either on-refuge or off-refuge, may be used to supplement the blind material. During the firearms and muzzleloader seasons, fluorescent orange/pink shall be placed either on or near any ground blind set up. Blinds must be removed at the end of each hunt. Blinds used for the PRR/DNR Mentor Hunt may be left overnight.
- X. Hunters pursuing a wounded animal or bird are expected to make every effort to recover the game and expected to return the next day (except Sundays and federal holidays) to continue searching or risk losing their hunting privileges. See Wounded Deer and Tracking for additional information.
- Y. Report dead deer and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) to the HCS manager immediately.
- Z. Do not touch, move or otherwise disturb any UXO. Take photo and coordinates.
- AA. Interference by any MNHA member or hunter with any law enforcement activity is prohibited.**
- BB. Report violations of state, federal, and PRR regulations and guidelines for your safety and the safety of others.**

### **III. FIREARMS AND BOW GUIDELINES**

- A. Patuxent Research Refuge follows state law for method of harvest (shotgun, bow/crossbows, muzzleloaders, straight-walled rifles, .22 caliber rimfire rifles, and air rifles).
- B. Hunters are required to secure longbows, recurve bows, compound bows, and crossbows in accordance with state regulations.
- C. Hunters are allowed one method of harvest to hunt with in the field. Additional methods of harvest must be secured in the vehicle in accordance with state regulations.
- D. The discharge of any bow or firearm before or after legal shooting hours, which includes the unloading of muzzleloaders, is prohibited.
- E. Possession of buckshot is prohibited.
- F. Use of non-toxic shot is required to hunt ducks, geese, doves, and upland game. Possession or use of lead shot is prohibited on the Refuge.



#### IV. FLUORESCENT ORANGE/PINK

- A. All hunters must wear fluorescent orange/pink when hunting and scouting in accordance with Maryland state regulations and are subject to the **additional Refuge requirements**.
- B. Fluorescent orange/pink must be visible 360 degrees while carrying-in and carrying-out equipment (e.g., portable blinds, portable tree stands, and waterfowl equipment).
- C. Archery hunters must wear fluorescent orange/pink when moving to and from their deer stand/hunting spot, ground hunting, stalking, and while tracking or dragging out their deer.
- D. Archery hunters are not required to wear fluorescent orange/pink when positioned to hunt except during the Deer Muzzleloader, Deer Firearms, and Junior Deer Hunt for Maryland Deer Management Region B. When these seasons are open, archery hunters are required to wear orange/pink at all times.
- E. Migratory game bird hunters are required by PRR to wear fluorescent orange/pink color (a hat or vest) when walking to and from their vehicle, placing decoys, and retrieving waterfowl. "Jump shooters" must wear fluorescent orange/pink color hat or vest while hunting. If you stop and stand, you may remove it.

#### V. YOUTH HUNTING

- A. A Youth Hunter is defined as anyone 16 years of age or younger at the start of the hunting season on September 1, 2023
- B. Youth Hunters must:
  - 1. Have a parent or legal guardian present to countersign/obtain a Refuge Hunting Permit.
  - 2. Be accompanied by a licensed Refuge permitted adult who is at least 21 years of age while hunting on the Refuge and they must maintain visual contact with each other within a 50-yard distance.
- C. Special Youth/Junior Hunting Days:
  - 1. Youths must be accompanied by a licensed, Refuge permitted, unarmed adult aged 21 or older.
  - 2. Youth Hunts:
    - a. Youth FIREARM hunt is November 11, 2023. The lesser weapon rule, as specified by Maryland DNR, is applicable.
    - b. Youth Hunt harvested deer **do not** count towards the refuge bag limit.
  - 3. Youth Turkey Hunt Dates: April 18, 22, 29 and May 6, 13, and 20, 2024.
  - 4. Junior, Veteran and Military Waterfowl Hunt Days: November 4, 2023 and February 3, 2024.

#### VI. MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

Migratory game birds are limited to the following: geese (Canada and Light), certain species of ducks, and mourning dove in accordance with all federal and state regulations and subject to the following conditions:

- A. See Section IV for fluorescent orange/pink requirements.

- B.** No felt-soled boots are permitted in Refuge waters; footwear shall be clean of debris and decontaminated before entering Refuge waters as per Maryland DNR guide.
- C.** Canada Goose Hunting:
1. Refer to Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping for specific hunting hours and regulations.
  2. Those possessing a Refuge Hunt Permit may pre-register for the opening day of the early resident Canada goose season starting at 10 AM on Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The hunter must pre-register in person at the HCS and the hunter is allowed to pre-register two other individuals.
  3. From **September 1 to 25, 2023**, resident Canada goose hunters may hunt in areas D, E, F, and G Monday through Thursday from one-half hour before sunrise until 8:00 AM and on Lake Allen and Range 1 from one-half before sunrise until 12 PM. On Fridays and Saturdays, areas D, E, F, and G will be open all day. **This only applies during the early resident Canada goose season from September 1 to 25, 2023.**
  4. Resident Canada goose hunters may drive on Range 1 in Area “D” interior roads to set-up and retrieve goose decoys. However, vehicles must be parked along the Range 1 exterior roads and not behind the berm.

<b>NORTH TRACT – MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASON &amp; BAG LIMIT</b>	
<b>Species</b>	<b>Open Season</b>
Canada Goose	State Regulations
Light Goose	State Regulations
Mourning Dove	State Regulations
Junior Waterfowl Hunt	State Regulations
Ducks	State Regulations

## **VII. UPLAND GAME HUNTING/ FOREST GAME BIRD**

Upland game is limited to gray squirrels, eastern cottontail rabbits, and woodchuck on the North Tract, South Tract (Areas A, B and D) and Schafer Farm. Wild Turkey (Forest Game Bird) is hunted on North Tract, South Tract (areas A, B, and D), Schafer Farm and the M-R area of Central Tract during the Spring Wild Turkey Lottery Hunt. The Winter Wild Turkey Hunt season is **only** on the North Tract. South Tract Area C is closed to upland game and forest bird hunting. Hunting these species is in accordance with all federal and state regulations and subject to the following conditions:

- A.** Use of non-toxic shot is required to hunt upland game. Method of harvest follows state regulations.
- B.** Spring Wild Turkey Lottery Hunt:
1. The Spring Wild Turkey hunt will follow all guidelines listed in Section II with the exception that turkey hunters are exempt from the fluorescent orange/pink requirements. However, all members of the turkey hunting party should wear a fluorescent orange/pink cap while moving. Successful hunters should also tie an orange/pink ribbon or cloth around the neck of the turkey when carrying it out of the woods, or completely conceal it in a game bag.
  2. Spring Wild Turkey Hunt hours are from ½ hour before sunrise until 12PM. Hunters must leave the field and check out at the HCS by 1PM.
  3. Primary Hunters arriving after 5 AM risk losing their lottery place.

4. Method of harvest must follow state regulations.
5. Hunters are limited to harvest one bearded turkey per season on the Refuge. All turkeys harvested apply toward the Maryland state bag limit.
6. Upon harvesting a turkey, the hunter must tag the bird in accordance with state regulation. All harvested turkeys must be checked in at the Hunting Control Station. Age, sex, weight, beard, spur line, location harvested, and date will be recorded for each bird on a Turkey Harvest Data Sheet.
7. Turkey hunters are encouraged to attend a National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) clinic if they have not attended one in the past.
8. The NWTF and MNHA will offer turkey hunting assistants for those requesting them prior to the date of the hunt.
9. Ground blinds may be used – see guideline II.W for more information.
10. Separate lottery hunts will be available for youth, disabled, and general hunters.
  - a. Youth hunts are on Saturdays at the North Tract; three youth will be drawn per hunt date.
  - b. Disabled hunts are on Mondays at the North Tract; two disabled hunters will be drawn per hunt date.
  - c. General hunts are on Mondays and Saturdays. Monday hunts will be on the North Tract; four general hunters will be drawn per hunt date. Saturday hunts will be on the South Tract (Areas A, B and D) and Schafer Farm; three hunters will be drawn per hunt date.
11. Hunters can only submit their names into one of the following categories:
  - a. Youth Hunters: Individuals that possess a Refuge youth hunting permit.
  - b. Disabled Hunters: Individuals with a physical or intellectual impairment, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, who have met the requirements to hunt on the Refuge may enter the lottery for the zone(s) reserved for hunters with disabilities. The Refuge requires hunters with disabilities to provide NPS Form 10-597. Form can be found at HCS and on Refuge website.
  - c. General Hunters: Individuals who do not qualify as either a Youth or Disabled hunter.
12. Hunters may only be drawn once for the hunt season as a primary hunter (youth, disabled, or general). Once a hunter is selected as a primary hunter, their name will be removed from the lotteries.

If there is an insufficient number of eligible hunters to fill the alternate slots for the disabled hunts, then general hunters not selected in the general hunt lottery will be drawn to fill the remaining alternate slots.

  - a. Alternate hunters will be notified by phone and/or email as soon as possible and no later than five days before the hunt.
  - b. **If a hunter is selected primary and does not show up for their hunt and the hunter did not communicate the no show in advance (24hrs), the hunter will not be allowed to enter/hunt the next spring turkey season.**
13. Alternate and standby hunters will be allowed to wait at the HCS on the mornings of each hunt. If a selected hunter does not show on the day of the hunt, then the vacated spot will be given to another hunter in the following order:
  - a. Alternate hunters on the list in numerical order starting with alternate hunter #1.
  - b. If no alternate hunter is available, then there will be a lottery selection for standby

- hunters conducted at the HCS. Standby hunters must have applied for the lottery.
14. Hunters are allowed to switch zones for which they are drawn on the morning of the hunt, only if both hunters agree to the change prior to going afield. HCS manager and **the Federal Wildlife Officer must be notified of the change prior to hunters going afield.**
  15. If a turkey is harvested before 9 AM on any hunt day:
    - a. The vacated zone may be filled in the following order:
      - i Any hunter in the field may report in person to the HCS to request permission to move to an open zone(s). If they move, then their vacated zone is available.
      - ii Alternate hunters on the list in numerical order starting with alternate hunter #1.
      - iii If no alternate hunter is available, then there will be a lottery selection of the standby hunters conducted at the HCS. Standby hunters must be among those that had applied for the lottery.
    - b. The Federal Wildlife Officer **must be notified of all moves to another zone(s) prior to the move occurring.**
    - c. On Mondays, any hunter (general or disabled) can hunt a vacated zone.
    - d. On Saturdays if the selected youth does not show or is unable to hunt and an alternate cannot fill the spot, a standby hunter will be selected to fill the spot.
  16. The Refuge may authorize one additional weekday morning during the turkey hunt season for a "wounded warrior" hunt, in coordination with MNHA, NWTF, and a vetted wounded warrior organization, specifically for combat wounded veterans.

### C. Winter Wild Turkey Hunt

1. The season is **only** open on North Tract (Jan. 18-20, 2024).
2. The Winter Wild Turkey hunt will follow all rules listed in Section II with the exception that turkey hunters are exempt from the fluorescent orange/pink requirements. However, turkey hunters are highly encouraged to use fluorescent orange/pink while hunting.
3. Turkeys harvested on the Refuge **do** apply to your state bag limit. In accordance with state regulation, the winter bag limit of one bird, either sex, is combined with the fall bag limit.
4. Upon harvesting a turkey, the hunter must tag the bird in accordance with state regulation. All harvested turkeys must be checked in at the Hunting Control Station. Age, sex, weight, beard, spur line, location harvested, and date will be recorded for each bird on a Turkey Harvest Data Sheet.
5. Methods of harvest must be used in accordance with state regulations.

North Tract/South Tract/Schafer Farm Upland Game/Forest Game Bird Season and Bag Limit			
Species	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Gray Squirrel/Woodchuck	State Regulations	See State	
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit	State Regulations	See State	
Winter Wild Turkey	State Regulations	1 Male or Female	
Youth Spring Wild Turkey	April 13, 20, 27 May 4, 11, 18	1 Bearded	Lottery only ½ hr. before sunrise to noon
Adult General and Disabled Spring Wild Turkey (General/Disabled- Mondays on NT, General Hunt ST –Saturdays on ST)	April 18, 20, 22, 27,29, May 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, and 23 (ST only)	1 Bearded	Lottery only ½ hr. before sunrise to noon

## VIII. DEER HUNTING

The taking of mature deer is encouraged for management purposes.

- A. Official Deer Seasons: There are four official deer hunting seasons at Patuxent Research Refuge: Bow, Firearms, Muzzleloader and Primitive.
  - 1. **It is unlawful to hunt any animal other than deer on the first day of Deer Firearms Season.**
  - 2. Deer taken from Patuxent Research Refuge shall not count against the Maryland state bag limits and will not require bonus or additional stamps.
  - 3. The Refuge follows the State of Maryland's antlered deer definition as defined in the "Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping."
  - 4. Antler restrictions follow Maryland State Regulations.
- B. **Temporary White Tail Deer Bag Limit is 3 deer (1 Buck/ 2 Doe) for the entire refuge for the entire year.** There are **no** separate bag limits for each season type or Refuge hunting, i.e., limit is 3 deer for the entire Refuge (NT, ST, Schafer, and CT combined). Three does is not permitted.
- C. **Method of Harvest:**
  - 1. Methods of harvest follow Maryland state regulations.
  - 2. The Refuge recognizes the lesser weapon rule as defined by the State of Maryland, except during the Central Tract lottery hunts.
- D. **Fluorescent Orange/Pink:** See Section IV for fluorescent orange/pink requirements.
- E. **Deer Drives: It is unlawful to drive deer or take part in any deer drive.** A "Deer Drive" is defined as an organized or planned effort to pursue, drive, chase or otherwise frighten or cause deer to move in the direction of any person or persons who are part of the organized or planned hunt and known to be waiting for the deer. Organized deer drives without a standing hunter are also prohibited.
- F. **Disability Pass:** Deer hunters with a Maryland DNR issued "Universal Disability Pass" may hunt from the roadside except on Wildlife Loop and Bald Eagle Drive. They also must have NPS Form 10-597 filled out and handed in to Hunting Control. The vehicle must be stopped, in park, and the keys out of the ignition prior to loading and firing any method of harvest. The Refuge designated two additional locations where deer hunters that possess the Maryland DNR "Universal Disability Pass" may hunt from their vehicle on a first-come, first-serve basis. The areas will be posted "Vehicle Access Only by Hunters with the Universal Disability Pass". Other hunters will be allowed to hunt within the area but will not be allowed to drive where the hunter with the "Universal Disability Pass" is allowed to drive. A map is posted at the HCS of the two locations.
- G. **Deer Donations:** This program will not be active this hunt season.
- H. **Wounded Deer and Tracking:**
  - 1. No hunter shall wound, cripple, or kill a deer without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the animal, even if it includes next day tracking (except Sundays and federal holidays), otherwise they risk losing their hunting privileges.
  - 2. A hunter wounding a deer in the evening must notify the Hunting Control Station Manager immediately.

3. If a deer hunter needs assistance tracking wounded game beyond 1 hour after sunset, they must report in person or call the HCS. **The HCS manager will call a Federal Wildlife Officer or Refuge Manager or designee to gain consent to track.**
4. If permission is granted, the HCS manager will arrange to keep the HCS open. All tracking will end 2 hours after sunset.

NORTH TRACT – WHITE-TAILED DEER SEASON & BAG LIMIT			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow/Crossbow	State Regulations	<b>3 deer per year for entire Refuge</b> regardless of method of harvest. <b>1 Buck and 2 Doe</b> Follow state regulations for antler restrictions.	Harvest in any order.
Muzzleloader	State Regulations		
Primitive	State Regulations		
Shotgun	State Regulations		
Youth Firearms	State Regulations		

#### I. Central Tract (CT) and M-R Lottery Hunts:

1. This is a deer management hunt and the lesser weapon rule does not apply. Muzzleloaders are not permitted for the lottery hunts.
2. There are two separate lottery hunts: **Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>** and **Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>**. (See table below for morning and evening hunt dates).
3. Signup for the lottery hunts at the HCS at least two weeks prior to the hunting date.
4. Hunters may place their names in each lottery (shotgun and bow/crossbow) one time per hunt. If drawn for both, the hunter must choose one; the other will be assigned to an alternate.
5. Selection for participation in the Central Tract and M-R lottery hunts will be by lottery conducted by refuge staff. There are 3 bow/crossbow and 39 shotgun slots. Nine of the shotgun slots are in the M-R area and are not assigned to a specific site. Only two shotgun sites are reserved for disabled hunters.
6. The use of a tree stand, a minimum of 10' off the ground, and a full body harness is mandatory except for the two disabled shotgun sites when used by a disabled hunter.
7. Lists of selected hunters and check-in times will be posted at the HCS at least one week prior to the scheduled hunt. Selected hunter list will also be posted on MNHA website and an email sent to the selected hunter.
8. Selected hunters must check in at the HCS by the time specified on the notification letter. After the specified time, available hunting slots will be issued to alternate hunters and then by standby hunters by random drawing. Drawings will be performed at the HCS.
9. Access for all lottery-selected hunters for Central Tract and MR will be via Gate 1 on American Holly Drive, opposite the intersection of MD Route 197 and Powder Mill Road. All selected hunters are required to attend a pre-hunt orientation provided by a MNHA hunt control manager and Law Enforcement Officer on Central Tract prior to going afield.
10. Shotgun stand sites 1-30 and bow stand sites 31-33 are marked with a reflective band on the assigned tree. Zones of fire are marked with arrows. All firing must be within the zone of fire. Only shotguns with slugs may be used at sites 1-30 and in M-R 1-9. Only bow and arrow/crossbow may be used at sites 31-33.
11. Hunters must leave the field by 12 PM on the morning hunt or by 1 hour after sunset on the evening hunt.

Central Tract & M-R LOTTERY – WHITE-TAILED DEER SEASON & BAG LIMITS			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow/ Crossbow (for sites 31-33)  and  Shotgun	Nov. 18 (12 PM – ½ hr. after sunset)  Dec 16 (5 AM – 12 PM )	<b>3 deer per year for entire Refuge regardless of method of harvest used. 1 Buck and 2 Doe Follow state regulations for antler restrictions.</b>	Harvest in any order.
This is a deer management hunt and no species other than deer can be harvested.			

**I. Schafer Farm Hunt:**

1. Schafer Farm is open to **all** deer seasons.
2. Ground blinds may be used – see guideline II.W for more information.
3. Schafer Farm setback boundaries are marked with orange carsonite signs. Stay within boundaries. All access for Schafer Farm will be through Gate #10 on northbound side of MD Route 197.

SCHAFER FARM – WHITE-TAILED DEER SEASON & BAG LIMITS			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow/Crossbow	State Regulations	<b>3 deer per year for entire Refuge regardless of method of harvest used. 1 Buck and 2 Doe Follow state regulations for antler restrictions.</b>	Harvest in any order.
Muzzleloader	State Regulations		
Primitive	State Regulations		
Shotgun	State Regulations		
Youth Firearms	State Regulations		
Deer, dove, and upland game may be harvested on Schafer Farm. (See Section VII).			

**J. South Tract Hunt:**

1. Ground blinds may be used – see guideline II.W for more information.
2. Access to South Tract hunting areas A, B, and C will be through the former Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Airport. The entrance gate is located off Springfield Road. Designated parking areas include: east and south ends of the old runway, accessible areas of Telegraph Road, and along the tram route (when area C is opened).
3. Access to South Tract hunting area D will be through Gate # 4 off MD Route 197. Parking will be at the designated parking area. Gate access badge must be signed out from HCS.
4. **No driving or parking along the Scarlet Tanager Loop Entrance and Exit Roads to and from the National Wildlife Visitor Center is allowed for any purpose, including the retrieval of game, when checked out to hunt any area.**
5. Setback boundaries are marked with orange carsonite signs, along the National Wildlife Visitor Center Entrance and Exit Roads, and a portion of Telegraph Road, 50 yards from the road. Please stay within boundaries.

SOUTH TRACT – WHITE-TAILED DEER SEASON & BAG LIMITS			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow/ Crossbow	State Regulations	3 deer per year for entire Refuge regardless of method of harvest used. 1 Buck and 2 Doe Follow state regulations for antler restrictions.	Harvest in any order.
Muzzleloader	State Regulations		
Primitive	State Regulations		
Firearms	State Regulations		
Deer, dove, and upland game may be harvested on ST. (See Section VII)			

#### **K. Mentored Deer Hunt**

1. The PRR/DNR Mentored Deer Hunt will be **December 1 and 2, 2023**.
  - a. This is a mentored deer hunt and will be held on the ST in areas A, B and C during Firearms Season.
  - b. Signup for the Mentored hunt by October 22, 2023 at [https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt\\_trap/Mentored-Hunt-Program.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/Mentored-Hunt-Program.aspx)
  - c. Hunters will be chosen by random lottery drawing.
  - d. List of selected hunters, their mentors and check-in times will be posted at the HCS at least one week prior to the scheduled hunt, and the selected hunter will be emailed by the MD DNR and refuge staff.
  - e. Selected hunters and their mentors must check in at Hunt Control on the morning of the Hunt. They will be issued their gate access key at that time.
  - f. Access for all mentored-selected hunters for Areas A, B and C will be via NWVC gate on Scarlet Tanager drive, along Powder mill Road.
  - g. All selected hunters and their mentors are required to attend a pre-hunt orientation provided by Refuge staff/DNR virtually or in person prior to going afield.
  - h. Special marked blinds for the mentored hunt will be allowed to be left in the hunt areas during the entire mentored hunt.



## **IX. SAFETY INFORMATION**

Avoidance of hunting accidents is of primary concern. Strict compliance with the following rules for safety is essential.

- A. If at any time while hunting on the Refuge any ordnance is encountered (hand grenades, artillery simulators, or any other unknown metal object), do not touch or try to move it. Mark the exact location and immediately report the discovery to the HCS manager who will notify Refuge personnel at the Visitor Contact Station.
- B. Hunters must be aware of their safety when hunting around any old building foundations, septic tanks, or former wells.
- C. If you get lost, stay where you are. A search will be conducted. If you are carrying a cell phone, call the HCS at 301-317-3819.
- D. In the event of an accident or injury, initiate appropriate first aid measures and report the incident immediately to the HCS manager. If the HCS is unavailable, call 911, and then notify Refuge law enforcement personnel (Federal Wildlife Officer Ryan Baxter) at 240-786-8283. **If FWO Baxter cannot be reached then call Federal Law Enforcement Communication Center at 1-800-637-9152.**

To ensure rapid response, give the following information:

- WHERE - Location of the emergency; be specific. Give section letter, distance from road, and accessibility to site (ground and air).
- PHONE NUMBER - Provide the phone number you are calling from.
- WHAT HAPPENED - Description of accident or injuries.
- HOW MANY - Provide the number of possible victims needing care.
- WHAT IS BEING DONE - Is first aid, CPR, etc. being performed?
- YOUR NAME - Provide your full legal name.
- STAY ON THE LINE - Provide any additional information requested.
- YOU HANG UP LAST - Let the person you called hang up first.
- ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO MEET THE RESCUE SQUAD AT THE ENTRANCE GATE AND ESCORT THEM TO THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT.

### **Special Notes:**

- The Mentored Deer Hunt will be December 1 and 2, 2023 See Refuge website and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/PatuxentResearchRefuge>) for details.

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE HUNTERS!**

**All State of Maryland and federal hunting regulations are in effect unless otherwise noted here or posted at the North Tract Hunting Control Station.**