

General Refuge Hunt Questions

What do I need in order to hunt at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge?

Hunters are required to possess an electronic or hard copy of a valid Maryland hunting license and all required stamps, an original valid government-issued photo identification (no copies or photos), and a valid hunting permit (signed hard copy) issued by [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) on their person at all times during refuge hunting and scouting days. The corresponding State stamps are required to participate in the archery and muzzleloader hunts. Hunters hunting from a vehicle must possess a MD DNR issued universal disability pass (formally a "hunt from vehicle" permit), as well as a Federal Interagency Access Pass. See the [Blackwater NWR Deer Hunt Regulations](#) for rules specific to Blackwater NWR.

Where can I hunt on the refuge?

Not all hunt units are open for all hunt types. Please refer to the [Deer Hunt Map](#) for information about hunt units, boat launches, road access and hunt parking.

We suggest using a handheld GPS or the "Avenza Maps" app on your smartphone to help navigate the refuge. Cell phone signal is often poor. See [Instructions for using the Avenza app](#).

When can I hunt the Refuge?

The hunt dates change annually. Please refer to the dates on our [Deer Hunt Schedule Table](#).

Are "E-BIKES" allowed on the designated roads?

Yes. See the [Blackwater NWR Deer Hunt Regulations](#) for specifics.

How are the bugs?

If it's hot, it's buggy. If it's warm, it's buggy. If the air is still, it's buggy.

The insects are at their least ferocious when it's cool, crisp and a bit breezy!

Is there anything new this year (2022/23 season)?

- A "Sportsmen's Package" permit is now available which includes archery, open muzzleloader and open shotgun hunts.
- The use of rifles that fire straight-walled cartridges will be allowed on shotgun hunts.
- Hunters may take coyotes during the deer hunt. However, hunters must possess a furbearer permit for the incidental take of coyotes.

Hunt Permit Questions

How do obtain a refuge hunt permit?

The online hunt permitting system is administered by a third party, [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Please note that an email will be required to receive permit(s). Group permit reservations are available in which one person can receive all of your group members' permits (up to 4 people). You may also call the reservation line at (877) 444-6777.

- 1) Create an account with [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). This can be done any time, but you will not be able to buy your permit until the site opens, which is usually sometime in July. See: [Creating Your Account](#).
- 2) Search for Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Deer Permits within [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).
- 3) For step-by-step instructions, see: [Book and Print a Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge Deer Hunting Permit](#).

When can I apply for the hunt?

You can purchase permits for Blackwater at [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) beginning in July. The go-live date is posted on the [refuge's hunting web page](#) before the site opens. Permits are available for purchase up to the date of the hunt, however, the number of permits is limited and may sell out.

What if I have questions or issues about applying for the hunt?

Most questions can be answered at the [Help Center](#). Go to the [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) home page and choose "Help" in the upper right corner.

A call-in number is also available for questions and permit reservations at **(877) 444-6777**.

What if I don't have an email address or internet access?

We know that not everyone has computer access and an email address, so we made it possible to apply for the hunt as a group. You can apply for the hunt in groups of up to four. Your group leader can apply for all four of the group members online and provide your Interagency Access Pass or Interagency Senior Pass numbers, if appropriate. The group leader (the permit holder) will then print out copies of the permit for each group member and each individual will then sign the document in order to validate it.

If I purchase a permit as a group, do I have to hunt in my group?

No, you may hunt solo, but you must have your signed copy of your permit on you at all times.

Can I use my receipt as my permit?

No, your receipt is NOT your permit. Please view your reservations, and print and sign your permit. See: [Book and Print a Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge Deer Hunting Permit](#).

How much does it cost to hunt at Blackwater NWR**?

Archery	\$20
Limited Muzzleloader	\$10
Open Muzzleloader (Early Season)	\$20
Open Muzzleloader (Late Season)	\$20
Limited Shotgun	\$10
Open Shotgun (Early Season)	\$40
Open Shotgun (Late Season)	\$30
Primitive Hunt	\$20
Sportsman Package (Individuals only)	\$110 (Note: \$12 service fee)
Youth Hunt	Free

**For each permit type and each group there will be a \$6 service fee on [Recreation.gov](#).

The hunt dates change annually. Please refer to the dates on our [Deer Hunt Schedule Table](#).

Are there any discounts?

Yes. Holders of “America the Beautiful” Federal Interagency Access or Senior Passes are entitled to one-half off the price of their permit(s), excluding service fees. You will need to enter your pass number during the checkout process.

Purchasing the “Sportsman Package” saves \$38 over purchasing the Archery and Open hunts individually.

Why is there a transaction fee per permit?

Recreation.gov is developed and administered by a third party for multiple Federal participating partners such as Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service. For more information, see [www.recreation.gov/about-us](#).

To save on fees, we recommend using the group permit option. Hunt dates are also grouped into early and late seasons to reduce total fees.

Can I modify my permit after purchase?

No changes can be made to your permit after purchase. Please review your application carefully before purchasing.