

**Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge  
Youth Waterfowl Hunt Plan**

**October 2014**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
19255 SW Pacific Highway  
Sherwood, Oregon 97140**

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## Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. Conformance with Statutory Authority.....	3
III. Statement of Objectives.....	4
IV. Assessment.....	4
A. Are wildlife populations present in numbers sufficient to sustain optimum population levels for priority refuge objectives other than hunting?.....	4
B. Is there competition for habitat between target species and other wildlife?.....	7
C. Are there unacceptable levels of predation by target species on other wildlife forms?.....	7
V. Description of Hunting Program.....	7
A. Areas of refuge that Support Targeted Species.....	7
B. Areas to be opened to hunting.....	8
C. Species to be taken, hunting periods, hunting access.....	8
D. Justification for the permit, if one is required.....	8
E. Consultation and Coordination with the State.....	11
F. Law Enforcement.....	11
G. Funding and staffing requirements .....	11
VI. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with Other Management Objectives.....	12
A. Biological Conflicts.....	12
B. Public Use Conflicts.....	13
C. Administrative Use Conflicts.....	13
VII. Conduct of the Hunt.....	14
A. Refuge Specific Hunting Regulations.....	14

B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunting Program.....	15
C. Hunter Application and Registration Procedures.....	15
D. Description of Hunter Selection Process.....	15
E. Media Selection for Announcing and Publicizing the Hunt.....	16
F. General Requirements.....	16
VIII. Compatibility Determination.....	16
References .....	16

List of Tables

Table 1. Cost to Administer and Manage a Youth Waterfowl Hunt.....	12
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List of Figures

Figure 1. Continental breeding populations for the 5 most common duck species using the refuge during migration and winter from 2005 to 2014 (from Zimpfer et al 2014).....	5
Figure 2. Mid-winter population counts for western Oregon, for the 5 most common duck species using the refuge, 2005-2014 (USFWS 2014).....	6
Figure 3. Average weekly waterfowl population counts (all species included) on the Riverboat Unit, Tualatin River NWR, 2005-2014 (Tualatin River NWR, 2014 unpublished). .....	6
Figure 4. Locations of hunting blinds and parking areas for youth waterfowl hunt at the Riverboat Unit. ....	9
Figure 5. Tualatin River NWR unit map.....	10

# TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WATERFOWL HUNTING PLAN

## **I. Introduction**

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR or Refuge) was established by the Federal Property and Administrative Service Act of 1949 (40 U.S.C. 471-535), as amended; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 661-666c) as amended; Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j Stat. 1119) as amended; the Act of May 19, 1948, Public Law 80-537 (16 U.S.C. 667b-667d; 62 Stat. 240) as amended; The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee), as amended; and Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 [16 U.S.C. § 3901(b)].

In order to meet specific refuge and other broader U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) directives, the following purposes were established for Tualatin River NWR:

The refuge's official purposes are:

"... the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources ..." 16 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) § 742f(a)(4) (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956).

"... the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in performing its activities and services. Such acceptance may be subject to the terms of any restrictive or affirmative covenant, or condition of servitude ..." 16 U.S.C. § 742f(b)(1) (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956).

"... the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions ..." 16 U.S.C. § 3901(b) (Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986).

In addition to the stated purposes of the refuge, the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan identifies 13 goals for the refuge:

- Maintain, enhance, and restore bottomland riparian habitats consistent with the historical range of variability representative of the Willamette Valley ecosystem to support breeding and migratory landbirds and other native species.
- Maintain, enhance, and restore mixed coniferous/deciduous forest habitat to a historical range of variability representative of the Willamette Valley ecosystem to support breeding and migratory landbirds and other native species.
- Maintain, enhance, and restore oak savanna habitat to a historical range of variability representative of the Willamette Valley ecosystem to support breeding and migratory landbirds and other native species.
- Maintain, enhance, and restore native Willamette Valley wet prairie habitat, with an emphasis on management for rare and listed species.
- Maintain, enhance, and restore a diversity of wetlands to support migratory landbirds, waterbirds, and shorebirds with special emphasis on wintering waterfowl.
- Maintain, enhance, and, where feasible, restore streams and off-channel backwater slough habitats to benefit salmonids and other native aquatic species.
- Cultivate and maintain croplands as an interim measure to control non-native invasive species.
- Collect scientific information (surveys, scientific assessments, and research) as necessary to support adaptive management decisions that are associated with the goals of the refuge.
- Protect and manage the refuge's unique cultural resources for their cultural, scientific, and

educational values, while consulting with appropriate Native American groups and preservation organizations and complying with historic preservation legislation.

- Provide visitors, local residents, volunteers, and partners with opportunities to understand and appreciate fish and wildlife conservation as well as the purpose, ecology, and management of the refuge and the Refuge System.
- Provide students and educators from the greater Portland area with compatible and high-quality opportunities to participate in environmental education.
- Provide refuge visitors with diverse, compatible, and high-quality opportunities to participate in wildlife-dependent recreation and interpretation.
- Build a broad-based natural resource conservation constituency with a focus on urban audiences to create a conservation ethic within urban communities; increase relevance of habitat conservation, wildlife heritage, and the Refuge System in the eyes of urban citizens; and instill a sense of empowerment for urban communities to work together to actively support conservation, in both local and global settings.

Located on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon, Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) is one of a handful of urban national wildlife refuges in the country. Situated within the floodplain of the Tualatin River, the refuge comprises less than 1 percent of the 712-square-mile watershed. Yet, due to its richness and diversity of habitats, it supports some of the most abundant and varied wildlife in the watershed. The refuge is home to nearly 200 species of birds, over 28 species of mammals, 14 species of reptiles and amphibians, and a wide variety of invertebrates, fish, and plants. The refuge has also become a place where people can experience and learn about wildlife and the places they call home. It was established in 1992 under the guidelines of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Urban Refuge Policy (341 FW 1) (Smith 1991). The refuge has served nearly 140,000 visitors annually, increasing every year since it opened to the public in 2006. The refuge includes five units: Atfalát'i, Onion Flats, Riverboat, Rock Creek, and Tualatin River, and is located in the northern portion of the Willamette Valley, in Washington County, Oregon. The overall management focus cited in the Land Protection Plan (USFWS 1992) is to "protect, enhance, and manage upland, wetland, and riparian habitats for a variety of migratory birds and resident fish and wildlife, as well as for the enjoyment of people." Currently, the established acquisition boundary of the refuge totals 3,060 acres, with 1,339 acres under management. The refuge's landscape is predominately flat bottomland bordered by uplands. Habitats consist of rivers and streams, herbaceous and scrub-shrub wetlands, riparian forests, wet prairie, oak savanna, and mixed coniferous/deciduous forested uplands.

The refuge has a rich history in community involvement, beginning with the establishment of the refuge itself. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many local residents and leaders recognized that the Tualatin River and its floodplain had been highly modified by both agriculture and urbanization. This recognition fueled a desire by local communities to preserve open green space and create an area where future generations could enjoy outdoor recreation and interpretation, while also leaving an educational legacy for children. This led a small group of citizens and local leaders to approach the Service to request having part of the 100-year floodplain, just north of Sherwood, be set aside as a national wildlife refuge. At the same time, the Service identified a need to protect and enhance floodplains, wetlands, riparian habitats, and upland buffers for a variety of wildlife and for the enjoyment of people. In 1992, grassroots and governmental support coalesced, and the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge became part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Since establishment, the refuge has acquired and restored a number of land parcels to a variety of native habitat types including wetlands. Wildlife response to these restored areas has been positive with tens of thousands of migrating and wintering waterfowl visiting annually.

## **II. Conformance with Statutory Authorities**

The Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460K) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use. The Refuge Recreation Act requires 1) that any recreational use permitted will not interfere with the primary purpose for which the area was established; and 2) that funds are available for the development, operation, and maintenance of the permitted forms of recreation.

Fundamental to the management of lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System (System) is the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-57), an amendment to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 provided a mission for the System and clear standards for its management, use, planning, and growth. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 recognized that wildlife-dependent recreational uses involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation, when determined to be compatible with the mission of the System and purposes of the refuge, are legitimate and appropriate public uses of the System. Compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are the priority general public uses of the System and shall receive priority consideration in planning and management. Hunting as specified in this plan is a wildlife-dependent recreational use and the law states that as such, it “shall receive priority consideration in national wildlife refuge planning and management.” The Secretary of Interior may permit hunting on a refuge if it is determined that the use is compatible, and the hunting program would not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the purposes of the refuge or the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Recreational hunting authorized by the regulations should not interfere with the primary purpose for which Tualatin River NWR was established. This determination was based upon the completion of a Compatibility Determination in the refuge’s Comprehensive Conservation Plan completed in 2013.

## **III. Statement of Objectives**

The refuge completed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) in 2013 (USFWS 2013). The CCP outlines the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for all refuge activities. In the CCP, the Service proposed opening the refuge to a youth waterfowl hunt. A Compatibility Determination was completed for the hunt and the use was found compatible with the purposes of the refuge.

For a complete review of all refuge management goals and objectives, as well as the environmental assessment (EA), see <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning> for Tualatin River’s Final CCP. This hunt plan is considered a “step-down” management plan of the 2013 CCP.

The objective of a waterfowl hunting program on Tualatin River NWR is to provide youths with a high quality recreational opportunity to engage in waterfowl hunting, a priority wildlife-dependent public use, on the refuge. Objective 12.3 of the CCP states:

<b>Objective 12.3 Provide opportunities for youth to participate in high-quality waterfowl hunting on the Riverboat Unit of the refuge</b>
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Waterfowl hunting on the Riverboat Unit should:

- Place a priority on safety (hunters are spaced appropriately, spatial separation exists between hunt areas and areas open to other recreational use, law enforcement presence is adequate, etc.)
- Include clear and concise regulations that are readily available
- Pose minimal conflict with wildlife and habitat objectives
- Pose minimal conflict with other priority public use activities
- Pose minimal conflict with neighboring lands
- Promote stewardship and conservation
- Provide youth with quality hunting experiences that include hunter education and mentorships in coordination with ODFW
- Promote understanding and appreciation of natural resources
- Provide reliable/reasonable opportunity to experience wildlife
- Use accessible facilities that blend into the landscape

#### **IV. Assessment**

##### **A. Are wildlife populations present in numbers sufficient to sustain optimum population levels for priority refuge objectives other than hunting?**

Yes. The refuge has conducted weekly waterfowl surveys during fall and winter since 2000. With continued restoration of wetlands by the Service and others in the vicinity, migrating and wintering waterfowl populations in the Tualatin River Valley have remained strong. Continental breeding populations of the five most common species of ducks encountered at the refuge have remained relatively steady or increasing over the past 10 years (Figure 1), while mid-winter counts in western Oregon have fluctuated or declined over the same period (Figure 2). Restoration of wet prairie, riparian forest, and oak savanna on the Riverboat Unit began in earnest in 2005. Since that time the average number of ducks and geese observed on regular weekly surveys during fall and winter have increased (Figure 3). During 2014, continental breeding populations of waterfowl were the highest ever recorded since surveys began in 1955 (Zimpfer et al 2014), although some species are still below long-term goals. Likewise, mid-winter counts for all waterfowl in western Oregon were the highest on record during 2014 since records began in 1965 (USFWS 2014). Youth waterfowl hunting activities on the refuge should not have a significant effect on either continental or local populations of waterfowl. The average mid-winter waterfowl count for western Oregon for the past ten years was 379,299. Estimates of waterfowl harvest for Oregon during 2012 and 2013 were 389,200 and 276,500, respectively (Raftovich et al 2014). It is estimated that youth hunters on the Riverboat Unit will harvest an annual average of 214 waterfowl based on the number of blinds, youth hunters participating, hunt days offered, and average local harvest (ODFW 2014). This level of harvest represents less than one tenth of one percent of the annual harvest of waterfowl in Oregon, and would be easily supported by populations of waterfowl present on the refuge on an annual basis.

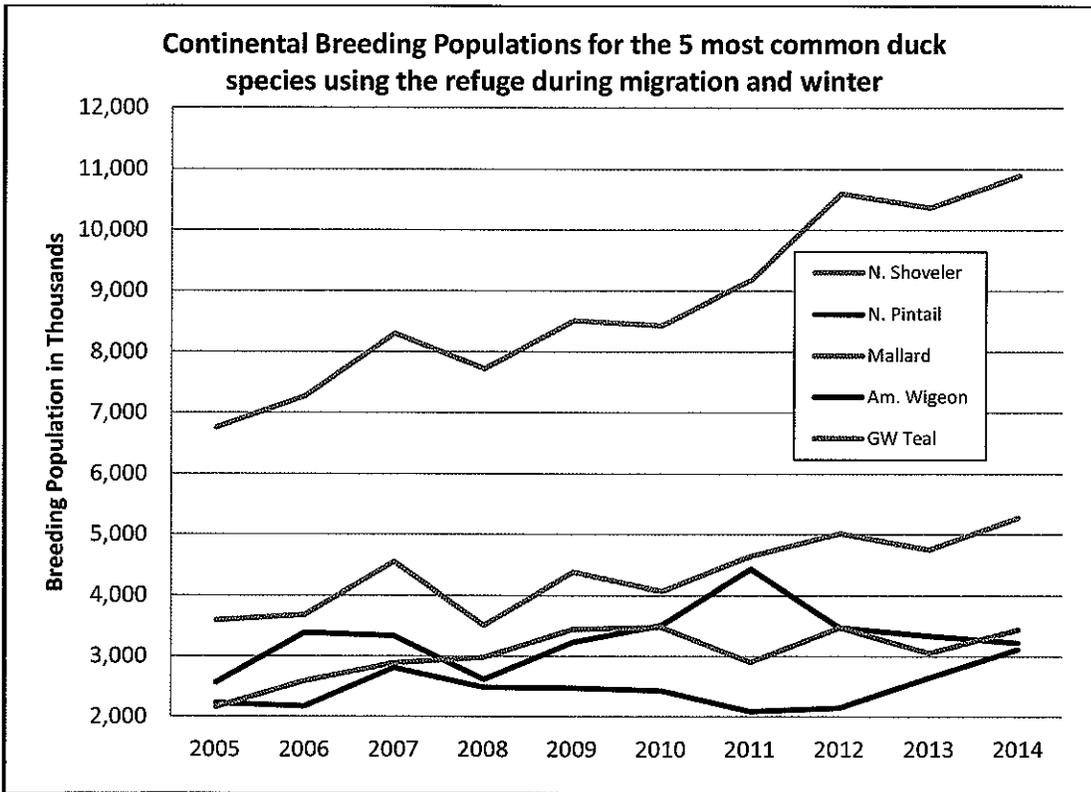


Figure 1. Continental breeding populations for the 5 most common duck species using the refuge during migration and winter from 2005 to 2014 (from Zimpfer et al 2014).

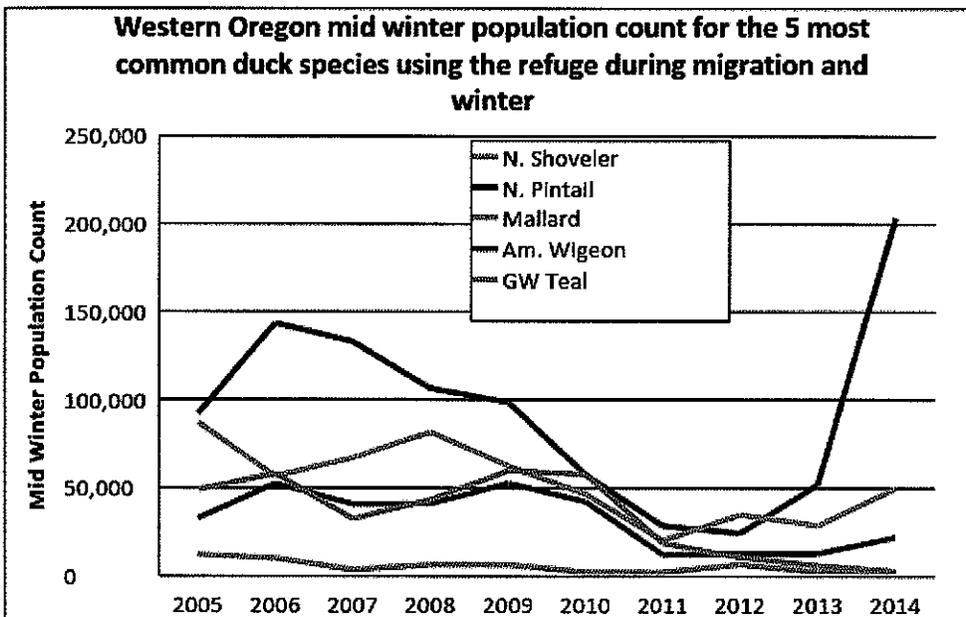


Figure 2. Mid-winter population counts for western Oregon, for the 5 most common duck species using the refuge, 2005-2014 (USFWS 2014).

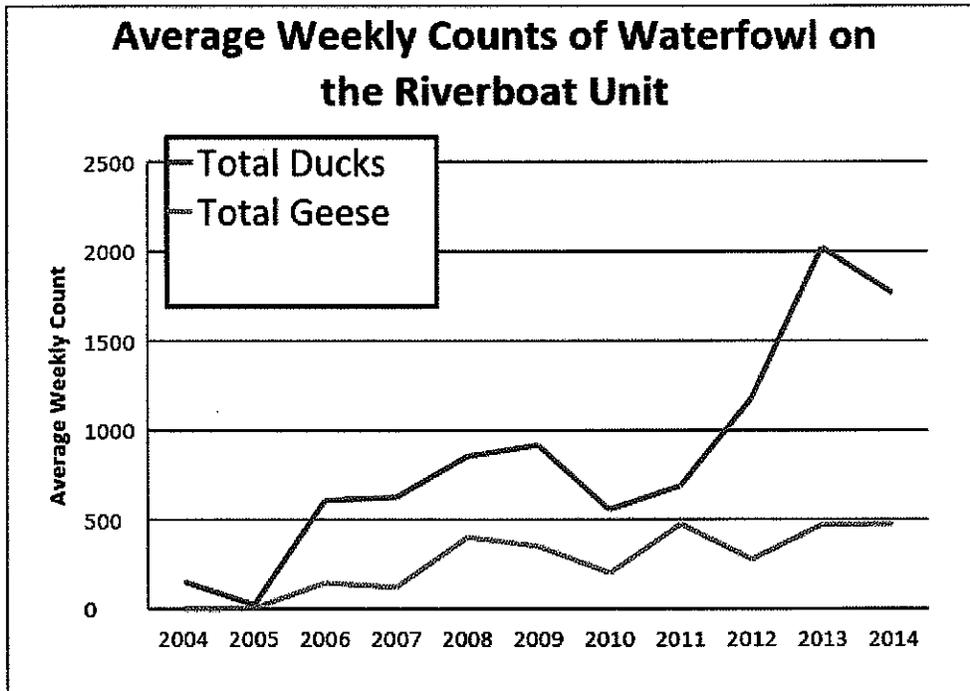


Figure 3. Average weekly waterfowl population counts (all species included) on the Riverboat Unit, Tualatin River NWR, 2005-2014 (Tualatin River NWR, 2014 unpublished).

**B. Is there competition for habitat between target species and other wildlife?**

No. Waterfowl coexist on this refuge unit with other native species.

**C. Are there unacceptable levels of predation by target species on other wildlife?**

No. Waterfowl feed primarily on vegetation and invertebrates and do not normally prey on other species of wildlife.

**V. Description of Hunting Program**

**A. Areas of the Refuge that support populations of the target species.**

The refuge encompasses a rich diversity of habitat types including bottomland riparian forest, mixed coniferous/deciduous forest, oak savanna and oak/pine habitat, wet prairie, herbaceous and scrub shrub wetlands, stream and rivers, and cultivated areas. Most of these habitat types support some life history traits of many species of waterfowl. Bottomland riparian and mixed coniferous/deciduous forest support cavity nesting waterfowl such as wood ducks, hooded mergansers, and buffleheads. Bottomland riparian forest also provides foraging areas for waterfowl during flood events. Oak savanna provides grassland foraging areas for migrating and wintering geese. Wet prairie and wetlands provide year-round habitat for resident, migrant, and wintering waterfowl. These habitat types provide the greatest opportunities for foraging, roosting, escape cover, and brood rearing. Streams and rivers provide some foraging and roosting opportunities for waterfowl. Cultivated areas provide both standing and harvested grain crops, and green pasture for forage during fall, winter, and early spring.

Wetland and wet prairie areas are found throughout the refuge. All five of the Tualatin River NWR's subunits contain these habitat types. Major wetland areas are located within the Atfalut'i, Tualatin River, and Riverboat Units. In addition, many public and private lands around the refuge support migrating and wintering populations of waterfowl on both native and cultivated habitat types. Managed wetlands are typically flooded beginning in early fall and are slowly filled through December and January to constantly supply a fresh source of food resources. Wetlands are managed to produce a variety of moist soil plants and emergent vegetation.

Cultivated areas are managed with cooperative farming agreements with local growers. Growers are allowed to plant wildlife friendly crops such as small grains and pasture. Farmers growing small grain are allowed to harvest 70% of the crop and leave the remaining 30% standing for waterfowl use. Farmers growing pasture grasses are allowed to harvest the entire crop and must mow the fields to less than 4 inches in height prior to fall migration to provide forage primarily for geese.

#### **B. Areas to be opened to hunting.**

Youth waterfowl hunting will be conducted on the north Riverboat Unit of the refuge (Figure 4). Specifically, hunting will be allowed on about 50 acres of wet prairie and herbaceous wetland within this unit. The unit is located about 3.3 miles from Sherwood, Oregon. This unit is currently closed to public use and will be opened only for youth waterfowl hunting. The north portion of the Riverboat Unit is 232 acres and has a mixture of habitat types including bottomland riparian forest, herbaceous and scrub shrub wetland, wet prairie, and oak savanna. Surrounding properties include rural residential and agricultural lands.

#### **C. Species to be taken, hunting periods, hunting access**

Youth waterfowl hunting will be open to ducks, geese, and coots in accordance with all State and Federal regulations only on the 50 acres of wetland/wet prairie at the Riverboat Unit. Hunting will be allowed during the regular State hunting season as habitat conditions allow. During the early season there may not be sufficient water to allow successful hunting, and hunting may be suspended periodically due to flooding. Hunting hours will be from legal shooting hours in the morning (one half hour before sunrise – (see Shooting hours table in the Oregon Game Bird regulations) to 1:00 PM. Hunting days will be a maximum of 4 weekend days per month, alternating Saturdays and Sundays, and an occasional weekday (one day per week) as conditions, resources, and demand allow. It is anticipated that four (4) blinds will be installed and hunters will be required to hunt from these blinds only. One blind will be available for hunters with disabilities using the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Hunting blinds will be accessed by foot only (except for ADAAG) blind users who will be allowed to use appropriate transport means) from designated parking areas. A maximum of two hunting youth will be allowed per hunting blind. At least one non-hunting supervising adult must accompany youth hunters. Additional, non-hunters may also occupy the blind with a hunting youth and non-hunting adult supervisor for a maximum occupancy of 4 persons per blind. Blind assignments will be assigned through a random drawing of applications received during an open application period. The random drawing may be conducted for the entire season or in specified periods throughout the season. Hunters must possess hunting licenses, stamps, and Hunter Information Program validation (HIP) as required by State and Federal regulations. All hunters must check in and out of the hunting area and complete a harvest report.

**D. Justification for the refuge specific permit**

The small size of the youth hunting area creates the need for a permit program to avoid conflicts among hunters and potential safety issues. An established number of permits (described above) would optimize hunter density to maintain safe conditions and to allow for a quality hunting experience. A permit program will be managed through a system involving a random drawing from applications received to ensure fairness and opportunity for all potential youth hunters.

Tualatin River NWR  
Riverboat Unit Youth Hunt Area

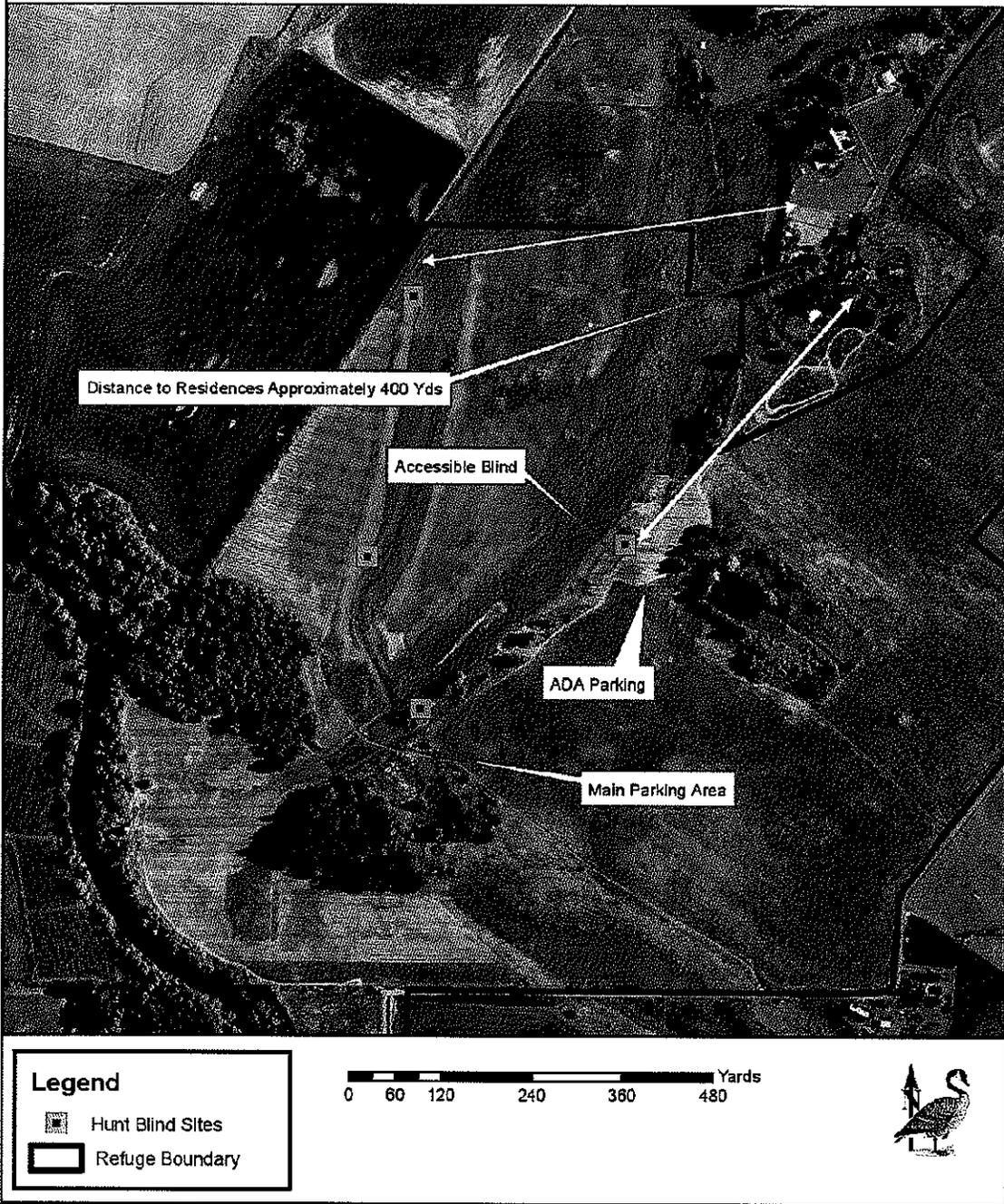


Figure 4. Locations of hunting blinds and parking areas for youth waterfowl hunt at the Riverboat Unit.

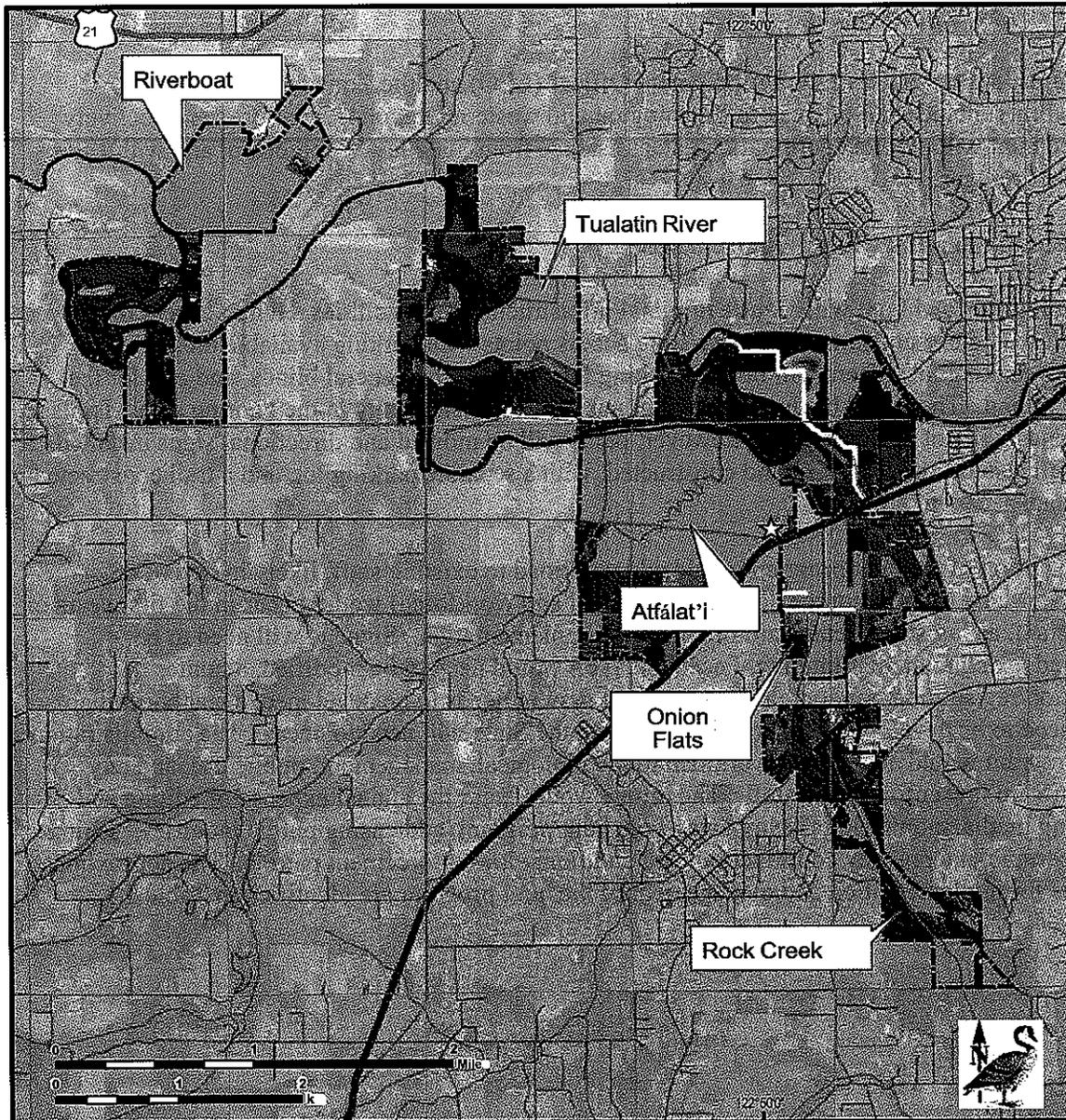


Figure 5. Tualatin River NWR unit location; Affalat'i unit is the location of the Wildlife Center and Administrative offices and the Riverboat unit is the location of the youth hunt.

#### E. Consultation and Coordination with the State.

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Complex and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have consistently worked together to consult on habitat management and public use. ODFW participated in wildlife and habitat reviews, and public use reviews, during the development of the refuge's CCP. More recently in June/July 2014, the refuge and ODFW met twice to review the proposed youth hunt and the State's recommendations and comments have been incorporated, as appropriate, into this plan.

## F. Law Enforcement

The refuge does not have a Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) and the Zone LEO's area of responsibility includes all of western Washington and western Oregon. Therefore, an effectively managed hunt will require coordination and assistance from State law enforcement and with LEO's from other refuges.

## G. Funding and Staffing Requirements

The youth waterfowl hunt will require minimal infrastructure and facilities. Hunter access to the hunt area would be accommodated at existing access points with parking available on a mowed pullout or parking lot. There will be two parking lots; one for the general blinds, and one for the ADAAG blind. There will be three general blinds located strategically in the hunting area. Trails to these blinds will not be constructed, however, paths will be mowed and directional signs installed. There will also be an ADAAG blind constructed, with a separate parking lot, and a trail constructed to facilitate access to the blind.

Administration of the hunt program would add workload to existing staff, likely in lieu of other priorities. Many of the resource demands (financial and workforce) would occur in the first years of the program, as logistical details are finalized for implementation. Signage will need to be developed, existing media (internet, Facebook, etc.) would need to be modified, a hunter application/registration, random draw and permit system needs to be developed, a tear sheet/map would need to be developed, and coordination with the State will need to occur. The administration of the program would add annual workload to the biological, management, public use, and any refuge system law enforcement staff. The refuge would incur the annual expense of editing and producing media, monitoring the impacts of the hunt program, addressing public inquiries, issuing hunter permits, interagency coordination, and additional law enforcement patrols. The approximate expenses for implementation and management of the hunt program are identified in Table 1.

Table 1. Cost to Administer and Manage a Youth Waterfowl Hunt.

<b>Category and Itemization for Waterfowl Hunting Program</b>	<b>One-time Expenses</b>	<b>Annual Expenses</b>
Develop youth hunting program opening package	\$10,000	
Construct youth hunting blinds	\$15,000	
Develop signage and brochures/tear out sheet with maps and regulations	\$2,000	\$500
Construct ADAAG blind, parking lot, and trail	\$10,000	\$500
Administration and management		\$5,000
Maintenance		\$2,000
Law Enforcement staff time		\$5,000
<b>Total one-time expenses for youth waterfowl hunting program</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	
<b>Total annual expenses for youth waterfowl hunting program</b>		<b>\$13,000</b>

## **VI. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with Other Management Objectives**

### **A. Biological Conflicts**

#### **i. Threatened/Endangered Species**

Federally listed species that occur on the Riverboat Unit include only Nelson's checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*). Nelson's checker-mallow was listed as threatened in February 1993 (USFWS 1993) and is a native perennial forb species that thrives in the margins of wetlands, wet prairies, ditches, the sides of levees, and other moist places. It is a hardy plant and will survive short periods of flooding, and the long dry summers typical of the northern Willamette Valley. It typically flowers in June and July, then senesces as summer progresses. It will typically remain dormant until spring, but may produce a few new leaves with the first fall rains (USFWS 2010). Nelson's checker-mallow became threatened by urban and agricultural development, ecological succession that resulted in shrub and tree encroachment of open prairie habitats, and competition with invasive weeds (USFWS 1993). Activities such as placing hunting blinds might have a limited negative effect on this species due to trampling by equipment and staff. Hunting activities should not have a significant impact on this species as activities would be concentrated on areas with winter-long flooding where Nelson's checker-mallow does not typically occur and because hunting will be taking place during a time when the plants have senesced for the season.

#### **ii. Other Species**

Waterfowl, other birds, and mammals will experience disturbance due to hunting activities. The hunting program is designed with a minimum number of hours and days per week to prevent long-term disturbance to wildlife. It is possible that misidentification of target species will result in a small number of non-target wildlife being killed. Education and mentoring programs should keep these occurrences to a minimum. Bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and other raptors are known to use this area for foraging during winter. Disturbance to these species would be expected on days open to waterfowl hunting. This disturbance should not result in significant negative impacts to these species as they are mobile and nearby foraging areas are readily available.

Dusky Canada geese are frequently observed at this refuge unit. Dusky Canada geese have been in decline in recent decades and special hunting regulations are in effect for this region where dusky geese winter. All youth hunters must comply with State regulations for the Northwest Permit Goose Zone and obtain a permit by passing a test in order to hunt geese in this area. It is possible that dusky geese will be taken as allowed by regulations for this area.

### **B. Public Use Conflicts**

No direct public use conflicts with the youth hunt are expected to occur. The youth hunt will occur on the Riverboat Unit of the refuge where no other recreational uses are offered or allowed. Other quality recreational and educational (non-hunting) uses are available on the Atfálat'i Unit of the refuge; these include: environmental education, natural resource interpretation, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography.

### **C. Administrative Conflicts**

Existing staff (administrative, biological, and visitor services) and funding available to administer the hunt is limited but sufficient. Outreach about the new hunting programs will require additional resources or reprogramming of existing resources.

The hunt program has the potential to conflict with some of the normal management, maintenance and biological monitoring activities that will continue despite the hunting activity that might be occurring in the same vicinity. Refuge management activities within the youth waterfowl hunt area are generally avoidable during the waterfowl season. However, there may be occasional management actions required during that time. Safety briefings for staff working in hunt areas will make them aware of hunting times and locations. Hunters will be warned of refuge activities that might be occurring in the hunt area. These measures will ensure the safety of refuge staff and Service authorized agents and allow the completion of refuge management activities as well as other refuge uses. As such there will be no administrative conflicts.

Some of the activities that might occur concurrently with the hunts include:

#### Habitat Restoration

Wetland and riparian restoration activities may be occurring concurrent with hunting seasons. Fall and winter months often provide the best conditions for wetland restoration work and active wet prairie and oak savanna upland restoration is occurring in the waterfowl youth hunt area.

#### Habitat and Wildlife Monitoring

Weekly waterfowl surveys and water level monitoring may occur during hunting seasons.

#### Research Activities

Research activities on the refuge seldom extend into the fall hunting season and those that do will be separated from the hunting areas when possible. Any researcher using the refuge during the hunting season will be directed to use alternate areas, if possible. Any researcher working in the hunt area will be informed of the hunt program in progress.

#### Maintenance Activities

Fall maintenance activities include maintaining fences, gates, signs, water control structures, and roads and clearing downed trees from roads or fences. Maintenance activities will be scheduled for non-hunt days to the extent possible.

### **VII. Conduct of the Hunting Program**

Listed below are refuge-specific regulations that pertain to Tualatin River NWR as of the date of this plan. These regulations may be modified as conditions change or if refuge expansion continues/occurs.

#### **A. Refuge-Specific Youth Waterfowl Hunting Regulations**

- Age: Youth 17 years of age and younger may participate as active hunters. Youth must be accompanied by an adult 21 years of age or older. Supervising adults are not allowed to hunt.
- A maximum of two hunting youth will be allowed per hunting blind. At least one non-hunting supervising adult must accompany youth hunters. Additional non-hunters may also

occupy the blind with a hunting youth and non-hunting adult supervisor for a maximum occupancy of 4 persons per blind.

- Disabled youth hunters must possess an Oregon Disabilities Hunting and Fishing Permit issued by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to qualify for preference in using the ADAAG blind (See <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/disability> for further information).
- Blinds will be assigned by a random drawing of applications.
- Hunting season will begin on the last weekend of October, as conditions permit, and run through the end of the regular state hunting season. The refuge will not be open for the 3<sup>rd</sup> period northwest permit zone goose hunt.
- Hunting hours: Official start times are listed in the shooting hours table in the Oregon Game Bird Regulations. Ending shooting time is 1:00 PM for the entire season.
- The hunt area will be open for access 1 ½ hours before legal shooting hours.
- Decoys, other personal property, and trash must be removed.
- Dogs are allowed for retrieving waterfowl.
- Possession of shot size larger than BB will be prohibited.
- All hunters must hunt from designated blinds except to retrieve downed birds.
- Vehicles are restricted to designated parking areas. No overnight camping or parking.
- All hunters must have visible means of retrieving waterfowl such as a float tube, waders or a dog capable of retrieving. No motorized boats are allowed.
- Hunters must check in and check out at a designated check station. Harvest of ducks must be reported prior to leaving the refuge. Harvest of geese must be checked at an ODFW operated goose check station.
- Possession of alcohol by any person in the hunt area is prohibited.

#### **B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunting Program**

Comments received for the CCP in 2013 both favored and opposed a youth waterfowl hunting program. Comments opposed to the youth hunt expressed concern at the quality of the hunt, disturbance to wildlife on and adjacent to the refuge, and disturbance to other people using the Tualatin River and other trails for wildlife observation. It is anticipated that a similar reaction may occur and the hunting program will mitigate for these concerns, as appropriate.

Comments supporting a youth waterfowl hunt expressed a belief that it would provide a public place for waterfowl hunting and also be a way to teach youth about hunting and hunting ethics. This positive response is also anticipated and can be magnified through engaging ODFW and local organizations in providing education to youth about wildlife, hunting, habitats, and ethical behaviors when hunting.

#### **C. Hunter Application and Registration Procedures**

Youth wishing to hunt would be required to submit an application using the following guidelines:

- Applications will be accepted by US. Postal Service mail, e-mail, or delivered, in person, to the Refuge Administrative Office. The application must be postmarked, e-mailed, or delivered no earlier than September 1<sup>st</sup> and received no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Only one application per youth hunter may be submitted, but up to two youths may apply on one application.
- Applications that are unreadable or do not follow guidelines will be excluded.

The Refuge application and information on registering for the youth waterfowl hunts will be posted on the refuge's website at [www.fws.gov/tualatinriver](http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver).

#### **D. Description of Hunter Selection Process**

Youth hunters will be selected from a random drawing. Other than for accessible blind (for hunters with disabilities), the blind assignments will be random. On days where there are no requests for ADAAG access, the accessible blind will be made available for all hunters.

At a minimum, a letter of confirmation with a blind number and date selected with Youth Waterfowl Permit and a parking permit will be mailed a minimum of 14 days in advance of the first hunt day of the season (on the last weekend of October).

#### **E. Media Selection for Announcing and Publicizing the Hunting Program**

Special announcements and articles may be released in conjunction with hunting program implementation and in future years. The refuge maintains a media contact list for the editors of the weekly/monthly local newspapers that surround the refuge (e.g. Sherwood, Newberg, Tigard-Tualatin, Hillsboro, and Beaverton), and will issue press releases and information as needed. In addition, information about the hunt will be available at the Refuge Administration Building, Wildlife Center, and on the refuge's website. Additionally, the refuge's Friends group, and other interested partners, may publish articles and information on the refuge's behalf.

#### **F. General Requirements**

General information regarding hunting and other wildlife-dependent public uses can be obtained from: Refuge Manager, 19255 SW Pacific Hwy, Sherwood, Oregon, 97140. Visit the refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/>, call 503-625-5944, or e-mail [tualatinriver@fws.gov](mailto:tualatinriver@fws.gov). Dates, forms, hunting unit directions, maps, applications, and permit requirements about the hunt will be available on the station website at: <http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver/>. Hunting regulations are available from ODFW website at [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/licenses\\_regs/](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/licenses_regs/), from sporting goods stores, or wherever fishing and hunting licenses are sold.

#### **VIII. Compatibility Determination**

A youth waterfowl hunt program was found to be compatible with the purposes of the refuge in the 2013 Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

#### **REFERENCES**

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#### Unpublished Data

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. 2014. Unpublished weekly winter waterfowl survey data.

