

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Deer Hunting 2014-2015

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 national wildlife refuges. We offer Archery, Muzzleloader and Shotgun deer hunting opportunities subject to applicable state and federal regulations and the following special conditions:

General Deer Hunt Regulations

- Hunting in violation of any Delaware state law or any other federal wildlife related law is a violation of refuge hunting regulations. Consult Delaware's Division of Fish and Wildlife's publications or website for current hunting regulations.
- Visitors when requested by Federal or State enforcement officers must display for inspection all permits, game, equipment, and ammunition.
- All hunters must obtain a daily permit, before a hunt and have it on their person. Permits are non-transferable. Permits fees must be paid for at time of permit issuance.
- All hunters must be off the refuge and return filled out permits to the Check Station no later than 1 ½ hours after legal shooting hours.
- Hunters less than 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult hunter at least 18 years of age at all times. Non-hunting adults may only accompany a permitted youth hunter or a disabled hunter using an accessible stand.
- Only one antlered buck may be taken on Prime Hook by a hunter during the entire hunting season (September through January).
- Hunters must remove all hunting stands, boats, blinds, decoys, personal property and trash at the end of every hunting day.
- All boats must be launched from authorized launching sites. Visitors must comply with all boating regulations. The maximum permitted boat motor is 30 horsepower.
- All persons in firearms hunting areas must wear in a conspicuous manner on head, chest, and back a minimum of 400 square inches of solid hunter orange clothing consisting of a vest and hat, or jacket and hat. Orange camouflage does not satisfy this requirement.
- Scouting is permitted from sunrise to sunset during the hunt season on designated scouting days and areas.
- All vehicle travel is restricted to designated routes and parking areas.
- Hunt areas may be closed completely or in part, without notice during hazardous conditions like wind, icy roads, etc.
- Hunting in violation of any regulation may result in fines, seizure of property, and the loss of hunting privileges.

Prohibited Activities

- Firearms possession in all federal buildings
- The distribution of bait and/or hunting over bait
- Leaving gut piles on or in view of public use roads, trails or parking areas
- Practice or target shooting
- The use or possession of any shot other than slugs
- Building structures, including blinds and stands
- Camping and fires
- The use of nails, wire, screws or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter
- Cutting or destruction of vegetation on the refuge
- The use of natural vegetation for use as camouflage.
- The use of spotlights, automotive headlights, or other artificial light for the purpose of spotting, locating, or taking any animal
- Driving or pushing of deer
- The use or possession of any drug on any bow hunting arrow
- Dog training
- The use or possession of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances
- Littering

Firearms Deer Hunting

Hunting is one tool we use to manage deer populations at levels compatible with the environment, provide recreational opportunities, and permit the use of a valuable renewable resource. The refuge has hunting seasons for archery, muzzleloader, and shotgun including a special youth hunt, hunts for individuals with disabilities, and party hunts at designated times and locations. We also hold a pre-season drawing before the firearms season.

Your permit can be revoked at any time at the discretion of the Refuge Manager or their representative, so please be safe, use common sense, respect your fellow hunters and maintain good hunter ethics.

- During refuge firearms hunts, hunters must hunt from a government stand.
- Two individuals are only permitted to be in one stand when: (1) accompanying a youth less than 18 years old; or (2) accompanying a hunter with a disability. Individuals assisting youths may hunt except during the special youth hunt. All hunters aged 16 years and above must pay the hunt fee.
- If accompanying a youth during a firearms hunt, both the youth and adult must hunt from the same government stand.
- Hunters may not leave the hunt area and must be on their assigned stand 15 minutes before legal shooting time until 9:00 AM and from 3:00 PM until the end of legal shooting time.
- Hunters may only leave their stand to tag a deer or to pursue a crippled deer. You must return to your stand with your deer until you are allowed to leave the hunt area.

Special Youth Hunt

A deer hunt limited to youth hunters accompanied by a guardian will take place on November 1 in accordance with State of Delaware requirements. Hunting is permitted for all hunting areas except the headquarters area and the party zones. Youth hunters must choose from available stands at the stand-by lottery drawing conducted two hours before shooting time at the check station or by self-service in accordance with refuge lottery and self-service procedures. Only youth hunters with disabilities may hunt in the Island Farm Area.

Headquarters Area

The headquarters area is only open for hunting on November 22 & January 17. Hunters may only enter the hunt area through the entrance gate on Turkle Pond Road. Once hunters exit the headquarters area and are outside the entrance gate or the designated hunt area, they may only reenter the hunt area between 2:00-2:30 P.M. The gate will be manned by a refuge representative. The headquarters area is closed for the Special Youth Hunt.

Hunters with Disabilities

Hunters with disabilities are permitted to hunt in the ground blinds during the firearms seasons in the Island Farm Area. These sites are designed to be accessible by wheelchair. A total of 11 ground blinds are located in the Island Farm Area. Each site has a blind that measures 4' long, 6' wide, and 3' tall. All blinds are grassed.

- Hunting from vehicles is not permitted.
- Disabled hunters may have a non-hunting assistant accompany them. Non-hunting assistants are not charged a fee.
- Only the disabled hunter may possess a hunting weapon in the blind. Assistants are only permitted to use the disabled hunter's weapon to track or recover a wounded deer.
- Hunters must have an Interagency Access Pass to be eligible to participate in the preseason drawing and to receive a permit for Island Farm blinds.

Party Zone Regulations

Party Zones I, II, III, and IV of the Slaughter Canal Area will be open for archery and firearms hunting for 2-10 hunters per zone. All zones are accessible by boat. The zones may only be accessed by boat or from a public road or refuge property.

Only hunters that are listed for the party zone on the application form for the pre-season lottery will receive a permit. No hunter substitutions are allowed. At a stand-by drawing all members of a hunting party must be present. If multiple people from a party enter into the drawing or on the signup sheet for self-service standby, then they all are disqualified from obtaining a permit. The zone that is stated on the permit is the only zone where the party is permitted to hunt.

- Party zone hunters may hunt outside of a stand.
- No loaded weapons are permitted in the Slaughter Beach Community safety zone.
- Portable stands are permitted in the party zones. Hunter provided tree stands must be portable, temporary and completely removed after each use.
- The party zone is closed for the Special Youth Hunt.
- Hunters in party zones are not permitted to hunt within 100 yards of the refuge boundary.
- All other refuge regulations apply to the party zone areas.

Archery Deer Hunting

Archery deer hunting is allowed on Prime Hook North & South Areas, Fowler's North & South Areas, Cods Road Area, and Zones I-IV of Slaughter Canal Area during designated hunt dates within the states archery season. Archery hunting is permitted daily during the month of September. From October 4 to January 31, archery hunting is only allowed on Saturdays. The refuge archery hunt is closed during refuge firearm hunts. The refuge archery season is closed on Nov. 1, 15, 22; Jan. 17.

The refuge does not participate in the crossbow season; however, a crossbow may be used when appropriate as a lesser weapon during a firearm hunt.

- Permits are issued on a first-come, first-serve, self-serve basis at the check station. The fee is \$2.00 per hunter, charged in advance of permit issuance.
- Permits may be picked up from two hours before legal shooting time until 2:00 PM on the day of your hunt.
- On refuge archery hunt dates that take place during a state firearm deer season, hunters must wear hunter orange like a firearm hunter, as required by refuge regulations.
- In the Prime Hook North & South Areas, Fowler's North & South Areas and Cods Road Area hunters must hunt on their selected stand or within 100 yards of their selected stand. Youth hunters accompanied by an adult must be within 40 yards of each other within the 100 yard buffer around their stand including in the Slaughter Canal Area.
- Hunter provided tree stands must be portable, temporary and completely removed after each hunt day.
- All special party zone firearm regulations apply to archery hunting in those areas.

Permit and Fee Regulations

Hunters must be present to obtain permits. Hunters may not reserve stands/zones or obtain permits for other hunters. Permit fees are waived for hunters less than 16 years old. Senior citizens (age 62 and older) may receive a 50% discount with an Interagency Senior Pass. Disabled hunters may receive a 50% discount with an Interagency Access Pass. The Interagency Senior Pass can be purchased for \$10.00 and the Interagency Access Pass is free of charge. Both must be obtained at the refuge headquarters during office hours before your hunt. The fee for each hunter's archery hunt permit is \$2.00 and each firearm hunt permit is \$10.00. The fee for each pre-season application is \$3.00. All permits are issued at the check station to hunters by a pre-season lottery drawing, morning stand-by lottery drawings, and by self-service. Hunters may not be on the refuge any earlier than 3 hours before shooting time.

Preseason Drawing Regulations

A preseason drawing is held for all firearm hunting opportunities on the refuge. Applications for the pre-season drawing are ONLY available in person at the Headquarters Office at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Milton and the Headquarters Office at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Smyrna. Completed applications must be received in person at the Prime Hook headquarters office or postmarked by the deadline date. Each submitted application must be accompanied by a \$3.00 non-refundable application fee and a postcard, which is provided. The postcard must include the hunter's printed name, address and postage stamp.

- Applicants must turn 16 years of age on or before the hunt date for which they applied.
- Only one application per hunt may be submitted by each hunter.
- Pre-selected stand reservations are non-transferable.
- Pre-selected hunters must obtain their permits by self-service on the morning of the day they were selected to hunt, but prior to 2 hours before legal shooting time.
- Any pre-selected hunter that does not claim their permit within this time frame forfeits their pre-selected location and must take part in a stand-by lottery or obtain a permit by self-serve after the lottery is completed.

Application Deadlines

October muzzleloader: September 15, 2014

All other firearms hunts: October 8, 2014

Stand-By Lottery Drawings

Available stands, and party zones, will be awarded by lottery to stand-by hunters at the check station 2 hours before legal shooting time, as posted on the check station, on the morning of that day's hunt. Only adults aged 18 years and above are allowed to put in for the lottery including those accompanying a youth hunter.

Lottery Procedures

On October 10, November 14 & 22, and January 17, refuge staff will conduct the morning standby lottery drawings. On other firearm hunt days, morning stand-by lottery drawings will be conducted by hunters. Hunters may not be on the refuge any earlier than 3 hours before legal shooting time.

- Stand-by lottery drawings are held at two hours before legal shooting time.
- As early as 3 hours before shooting time, hunters may put in their name for the standby lottery drawing.
- Three separate drawings are held, in the following order: party zones, blinds for hunters with disabilities, and able-bodied stands.
- Permits are located in the box labeled "Permits" on the counter at the check station.
- Each hunter will completely fill out a deer hunting permit, fold it in half, and place it in the appropriately labeled bucket.
- Permits with accompanied youths must have the youth's name and whether they are hunting or non-hunting. There is no fee for youths less than 16 years old and non-hunters.
- At the drawing time, permits are picked one at a time out of the appropriate bucket by refuge staff or a willing hunter from the crowd when no staff is present.
- Hunters may select available party zones, blinds, or stands from the tag board in the order the hunter was selected from the bucket.
 - Successful hunters must choose a stand or party zone by turning over the tag from green (available) to red (in use) of the stand or party zone number on the board at the check station and write it on your permit in the "Hunt Location Choices" section.
 - Place the white copy of the permit and fee in a provided envelope, seal, and place in "permit" slot.
 - Keep the yellow copy of the permit on your person and return the permit to the check station at the end of your hunting day.
 - Flip your tag back to green when your hunt is over .

After Lottery Procedures for Self-Service Drawings until 2:00PM

Hunters may sign up on the standby list for vacant stands/zones immediately following the morning drawing on a first-come, first-serve basis until 2:00pm. Hunters must be present at the check station to remain in good standing on the list. A standby hunter on the list has the option to pass up available stands/zones to other hunters on the list until a desirable stand becomes available. Hunters in possession of a permit for a stand must forfeit their stand (i.e. turn in their permit) before signing up on the standby list to select another stand on that day. For headquarters hunt days, procedures will be posted at the check station. See above for permit processing procedures.

HUNT DATES

Archery: Allowed daily from September 1 to September 30
Allowed only on Saturdays from October 4 through January 31
Archery hunting is CLOSED when there is a firearms deer hunt on the refuge (Closed November 1, 15, 22; January 17).

Firearms: Early Muzzleloader (October 10, 14, 16) December Antlerless (December 16, 18)
Youth Deer Hunt (November 1) Late Shotgun (January 17, 22)
Early Shotgun (November 14, 15, 21, 22) Late Muzzleloader (January 29)
Headquarters Area (November 22 & January 17)

SCOUTING DATES: Headquarters Area (November 2, January 11)
Jefferson-Lofland Area Allowed only on Sundays August 31 to October 26
Island Farm Area (September 30, November 4, December 9, January 13)
All other Hunt Areas Allowed only on Sundays August 31 to January 25

HUNT AREAS

Archery & Firearms: Prime Hook North & South Areas, Fowler's North & South Areas, Cods Road Area, & party zones I-IV of Slaughter Canal Area

Additional Areas for Firearms: Graves Area; Jefferson-Lofland Area (closed in January)

Headquarters Hunt: Headquarters Area

Special Youth Hunt: All open areas except Slaughter Canal & Headquarters Area

Hunts for Individuals with Disabilities: Island Farm Area

For further information, contact:

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Federal Relay Service for deaf & hard-of-hearing: 1-800-877-8339
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:
1 800-344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>
Web Page: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Prime_Hook/

