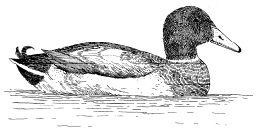
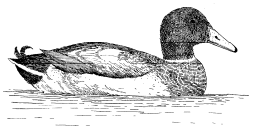


PRIME HOOK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
2014-2015 WATERFOWL HUNTING



GENERAL PROVISIONS: Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 500 National Wildlife Refuges. The primary objective of a refuge is to provide habitat for the conservation and protection of all species of wildlife. Hunting is one tool used to manage wildlife populations, provide recreational opportunities, and permit the use of a valuable renewable resource. Hunting at Prime Hook NWR is through the issuance of a permit. This permit can be revoked at any time at the discretion of the refuge manager or their representative.

PERMITS REQUIRED: Permits are available to hunters of all abilities on designated dates at the check station through a morning standby lottery drawing followed by self-service until 12:00 noon. Permits are non-transferable. Hunters may not be on refuge any earlier than 3 hours before shooting time to begin signing up for the lottery drawing. All lottery drawings will be held 2 hours before legal shooting time on the morning of the hunt. Refuge staff will administer the morning lottery drawings on the first two opening days of all three seasonal splits and, if necessary, on occasion when larger than normal crowds are expected. On all other refuge hunting days, including the youth hunts, the drawings will be conducted by standby hunters.

Procedures for Hunter Facilitated Lottery Drawing: Each hunting party will completely fill out a waterfowl hunting permit, fold it in half, and place it in the provided bucket. Permits are located in the box labeled "Permits" on the counter at the check station. All members of the hunting party must be present at the drawing or at the time of self-service. Hunters may not reserve blinds/sites or obtain permits for other hunting parties. No more than three persons may occupy a blind/site. The names of all occupants of the blind/site and contact information for one hunter must be written on the permit prior to the morning drawing or before hunting if the permit is claimed by first-come, first-serve procedures after the drawing. Only adults 18 years and older are permitted to participate in the standby drawing or receive a permit by self-service. The permit must include any youth's name, indicating him/her as "hunting" or "non-hunting". At two hours before shooting time, permits are picked one at a time out of the bucket by a willing hunter from the crowd. Hunters may select blinds/sites from the tag board in the order that the party was selected from the bucket. Hunters must sign out a blind/site by turning over the appropriate tag from green (available) to red (in use) and write the number on your permit in the "Hunt Location Choices" section. Place white copy of permit and fee in provided envelope, seal, and place in "permit" slot. Keep yellow copy of permit on your person and return the permit to the check station after hunting. Flip your tag back to green when your hunt is over.

Hunters not selected by the morning lottery drawing can obtain permits for vacant blinds/sites on a first-come, self-serve basis until 12:00 noon. Hunters who sign up on the standby list for vacant blinds/sites must remain at the check station until a blind becomes available to remain in good standing. Permits must be turned in at the check station by 4:00 PM. The questionnaire portion on the permit must be filled out after the hunt. The information that you provide from your hunt is essential in evaluating the migratory waterfowl population. When leaving the blind/site unoccupied for any reason, the permit must be turned in and a new permit must be paid for and completely filled out at the check station before hunting again. The permit must be retained with the party at all times while hunting.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Public hunting of only waterfowl and coot is allowed during designated times and on designated areas of Prime Hook NWR. The taking of wildlife other than the permitted species is prohibited. 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. A refuge permit is required to hunt on the refuge. Visitors, when requested by Federal or State enforcement officers, must display for inspection, all permits, game, equipment and ammunition. Failure to follow regulations may result in loss of hunting privileges, seizure of property, and/or a fine.
- HUNTING AREAS: Hunting is permitted only from government blinds and blind sites within the designated hunting area. Eleven permanent blinds (# 1-8, 12, 22, and 25) and 14 blind sites (# 13-21, 23, 26-27, 31-32) are available. Hunters using blind sites must moor to and hunt from the designated post for that blind site location within 10 feet using boat blinds. Shooting outside of an assigned blind is prohibited except in active pursuit of crippled waterfowl. It is unlawful to shoot from a boat in active pursuit of a cripple, unless the motor has been completely shut off, and its progress therefrom has ceased. See Island Farm Area map for the disabled hunting area. Hunt areas may be closed completely or in part, without notice when wind, ice, road conditions, etc. make entry onto hunt areas hazardous.
- SEASON: Open to hunting on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays throughout the state waterfowl (duck) hunting season. The refuge is closed for waterfowl hunting for the resident Canada goose season, early teal season, November 1, January 17, and late snow goose season (conservation order).
    - On January 17, only the state blinds (#1-8) will be open to hunting. Access for duck hunters will be from the boat ramp at the State Area only. Refuge blinds will be closed. Procedures for a self-service hunter facilitated lottery drawing apply.
- SHOOTING TIME: Hunting is permitted ½ hour before sunrise until 3:00 PM.
- BOATS: Access to the hunting area is by boat only and hunters must use designated launching sites to launch their boats (maximum permitted motor -30 horsepower). Push poles are recommended. Boaters must comply with all Federal and State boating regulations.
- FEES: $5.00 per hunter. All fees must be paid at the time of permit issuance or the permit is not valid. Fees are waived for hunters aged 15 years and under. Senior citizens (age 62 and older) receive a 50% discount with an Interagency Senior Pass. Citizens who have been medically determined to be permanently disabled are also entitled to a 50% discount with an Interagency Access Pass (see Disabled Hunting for more info). The Interagency Senior Pass can be purchased in person for $10 and the Interagency Access Pass is free of charge at the Refuge Headquarters during office hours.
- YOUTH HUNTING: For the Youth Waterfowl Hunts on October 4 and February 7, the refuge will follow the criteria established by the State of Delaware for hunter/guardian ages, safety qualifications, Hunter Education requirements, etc (Adults may not hunt). Blinds may not be grassed in time for this hunt. For all refuge waterfowl hunts, a permitted juvenile aged 17 and under must be accompanied by a hunting or non-hunting adult who is 18 years or older. It is strongly recommended that the accompanying adult be licensed to hunt in Delaware.
- DISABLED HUNTING: A wheelchair accessible blind in the Island Farm Area is available for hunters with a record of a certified permanent disability. Hunters with disabilities may have an assistant accompany them; however only one weapon belonging to the disabled hunter is permitted in the blind. The assistant is only permitted to use the disabled hunter's weapon when attempting to track down a wounded bird. Hunters must obtain an Interagency Access Pass in advance to be eligible to receive a permit for this blind.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances is prohibited.
- Firearms possession in all federal buildings is prohibited.
- The use of handguns for waterfowl hunting is prohibited.
- DO NOT LITTER. All shotgun shells, cigarette butts, and other trash must be taken out of the refuge.
- Cutting or destruction of vegetation for any purpose is prohibited. The use of natural vegetation for camouflaging your blind is prohibited. Only synthetic camouflage material is permitted. Damaging blinds including grass cutting is prohibited. All hunters must make a reasonable effort to recover wounded game.
- For further information contact the Refuge Manager, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, 11978 Turkle Pond Road, Milton, Delaware 19968. (302)684-8419. http://www.fws.gov/northeast/primehook/ Office hours are Mon.-Fri., 7:30am to 4:00pm.

Revised July 2014