



This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

National Elk Refuge

2015 Bison Hunting

Information and Regulations

Background

Bison hunt management on the National Elk Refuge is designed to achieve optimum herd size as determined through a cooperative effort between National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park, and Wyoming Game & Fish Department managers.

New Enforcement for Taking of Wrong Sex

Starting in the 2015-2016 hunt season, misidentification of sex or age when killing a bison will result in the seizure of the animal in addition to a criminal fine.

Cow/calf (type 4) hunters must ensure they harvest a female bison or bison calf per Wyoming Game & Fish Department regulations.

A bison identification exam is available online at <http://gf.state.wy.us/bisonid/default.aspx> and is a suggested tool to help hunters differentiate between bulls and cows.

General Hunting Information

Hunting of bison on the National Elk Refuge is permitted from August 15, 2015, through January 15, 2016. Individuals who have not already applied and been selected for a 2015 Wyoming bison license are not eligible to hunt bison this year.

Twenty-five hunt periods will be available to hunters. Hunt periods vary in length and may have overlapping dates:

- *Period 1: August 15 – 25*
- *Period 2: August 26 – September 8*
- *Period 3: September 9 – 22*
- *Period 4: September 23 – October 6*
- *Period 5: October 7 – 20*
- *Period 6: October 21 – November 3*
- *Period 7: November 3 – 13*
- *Period 8: November 14 – 17*
- *Period 9: November 17 – 20*
- *Period 10: November 21 – 24*
- *Period 11: November 24 – 27*
- *Period 12: November 28 – December 1*
- *Period 13: December 1 – 4*
- *Period 14: December 5 – 8*
- *Period 15: December 8 – 11*
- *Period 16: December 12 – 15*
- *Period 17: December 15 – 18*

- *Period 18: December 19 – 22*
- *Period 19: December 22 – 25*
- *Period 20: December 26 – 29*
- *Period 21: December 29 – January 1*
- *Period 22: January 2 – 5*
- *Period 23: January 5 – 8*
- *Period 24: January 9 – 12*
- *Period 25: January 12 – 15*

Online Permit Application Process

The application process for National Elk Refuge bison hunting permits is conducted in cooperation with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department's Private Lands Public Wildlife Access Program. You must already have a Wyoming state bison license to apply for a Refuge bison permit. Applications are available at <http://bit.ly/1jipFQL>.

A direct link to the permit application web site is also provided on the bison hunting page of the National Elk Refuge's web site at <http://1.usa.gov/1gnsi21>.

Application Information

There are three options for obtaining a Refuge bison hunting permit. Each of the options is described below.

Option 1: Initial Draw

To apply for a bison hunting permit to hunt on the National Elk Refuge, hunters must complete an application online (see Online Permit Application Process) between July 13 – July 31, initially applying for only one hunt period. The results of the computerized random draw will be posted on the application web site by 11:00 am on August 5.

Option 2: Leftover Permits

After 11:00 am on August 4, the online system will continue to be active to allow access to any permits that were not issued during the initial random draw. Any unissued (leftover) permits will be available on a first-come, first-served basis, limited to one leftover permit per person regardless of whether or not they were successful in the initial August 4 drawing.

Option 3: Alternate Permits

Alternate permits differ from leftover permits; alternate permits do not become available until after the season has begun. Alternate permits will be issued each Monday from November 9, 2015 – January 11, 2016. To disperse hunters over the hunt period, half of the alternate permits issued will be valid for Tuesday – Friday of the upcoming hunt period, and the remaining half will be valid for Saturday – Tuesday.

Alternate permits will be issued online each week through a lottery system that uses a computerized random draw. Applicants will use the same online system outlined above (see Online Permit Application Process). Hunters must apply for an alternate permit between Friday at 9:00 am and Sunday at 11:59 pm MST for the upcoming hunt period. Hunters will designate during the application process if they want to be considered for a Tuesday – Friday or a Saturday - Tuesday alternate permit for the upcoming hunt period. The results of the weekly computerized random draw for alternate permits will be posted on the application web site by 11:00 am each Monday morning.

The number of alternate permits issued will vary, depending on hunter harvest rates and participation. Alternate permits will be issued on:

- November 9, 2015
- November 16, 2015
- November 23, 2015
- November 30, 2015
- December 7, 2015
- December 14, 2015
- December 21, 2015
- December 28, 2015
- January 4, 2016
- January 11, 2016

Individuals who were already successful in obtaining any bison permit for another hunt period may still apply for an alternate permit.

Special Regulations

All State of Wyoming hunting regulations (available online at <http://bit.ly/R.UJbqf>) are in effect and will be enforced. Hunters must review all regulations and maps prior to hunting on the Refuge. Refuge hunting permits may be revoked in the event of improper hunter conduct or violation of regulations, and future Refuge hunting privileges could be denied.

Bison hunting is allowed in both the North and South Units of the Refuge, but each unit has distinct weapons restrictions. Hunters are responsible for knowing which weapons can be used in the hunt unit they are accessing.

Hunters are responsible for knowing and observing hunt boundaries (*see map*). Much of the North and South Unit hunt boundaries are identified on the ground by signs and posts. The North Unit hunt area is bounded on the west by the Highway 26/89 fence line and on the north by the south bank of the Gros Ventre River main channel.

The following items must be in the hunter's possession while bison hunting on the Refuge:

1. Refuge bison hunting permit
2. Valid State of Wyoming bison hunting license
3. Hunter Safety Card if required by State law.
4. Wyoming Conservation Stamp

The Wyoming Hunter Mentor Program is valid on the National Elk Refuge. Contact the Wyoming Game & Fish Department for further information on the program or apply at <http://bit.ly/1jjE4M1>.

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).

South Unit

- Hunters present in the South Unit limited range weapons area must carry and are restricted to limited range weapons, including handguns, muzzleloading rifles, shotguns with slugs, and archery equipment as defined by the Wyoming Game & Fish Department.
- All handguns must meet the Wyoming Game & Fish Department's definition of a legal firearm for the taking of bison, and must use straight-walled cartridges with a barrel length no longer than 12 inches.

North Unit

North Unit bison hunters may hunt with any legal weapon as defined by the Wyoming Game & Fish Department for the taking of wild bison, including rifles, handguns, black powder firearms, and archery equipment.

Prohibited activities while bison hunting on the Refuge include:

- Parking along Refuge roads.
- Intentional herding, harassment, or moving of animals.
- Overnight camping or parking, including in the parking lots or hunt areas.
- Shooting from within parking areas or Refuge roads.
- Shooting wildlife other than bison.
- Target or practice shooting.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting.
- Collection of specimens, including but not limited to antlers, skulls, and artifacts.

A fluorescent orange exterior garment as defined by State regulations must be worn by anyone in a hunt area. Hunters need to ensure anyone accompanying them is compliant with this regulation.

Any person(s) accompanying a bison hunter must stay within 50 yards of the permitted hunter at all times except during retrieval activities.

Certified weed-free livestock feed is required on the Refuge.

Regulations for Archery Hunting on the Refuge

- Archery hunters on the Refuge must wear a fluorescent orange exterior garment as defined by State regulations.
- Archery hunters are exempt from the hunter safety certificate requirement.
- Hunters within the archery only hunt area (*see map*) must maintain a minimum distance of 200 yards from residences.

Refuge Access and Travel

The main access to and from Refuge bison hunt areas is through the main Refuge entrance at the end of East Broadway Avenue in Jackson.

- Vehicles parked on the Refuge must be in a designated hunt parking area.
- Special access is permitted at the Highway 89 parking location and on the designated locations on the Gros Ventre Road. However, retrieval will not be permitted back to the Gros Ventre Road parking areas.
- Hunters may not exit vehicles or be dropped off on roads between hunt parking areas.
- Driving off designated roads is prohibited.
- Horses and bicycles are permitted in a hunt area, but bicycles must remain on designated retrieval roads.
- ATVs must be registered, insured, and operated by a licensed driver. ATVs may only be driven on Refuge roads to one of the hunter parking areas. They are not allowed on Refuge retrieval roads.
- Prior to the start date of the hunt, hunters may only access Refuge areas open to the general public. Hunters are only allowed into hunt areas on the dates listed on their valid permit.
- During periods of very high or extreme fire danger, a water source or fire extinguisher combined with a shovel is recommended for each vehicle.
- Bear spray is recommended for all persons participating in the Refuge hunt program.

Temporary No-hunting Safety Zone

A temporary no-hunting safety zone exists in the area around Grand Teton National Park's Gros Ventre Campground. This area is closed to hunting and hunter entry until October 12, 2015.

Retrieval of Harvested Animals

The following information will assist successful hunters in retrieval of bison from a hunt area:

- Hunters are encouraged to make prior arrangements for retrieving and field dressing carcasses in order to expedite the process, thus reducing spoilage of meat. This is critical during periods of warm weather.
- Commercial retrieval services may be available for a fee. Current businesses authorized to operate on the Refuge are Double Diamond Tag-n-Drag (307 / 413 7226) and Treferen Outfitters (307 / 883 3400).
- Vehicles used for retrieval are restricted to designated retrieval roads.
- Bison should be dragged to the nearest retrieval road location (*see map*). Hunters must return by the most direct route to the parking lot. Driving off designated roads is prohibited.
- Bison hunters may retrieve animals any time during the day. Note that elk hunters utilizing Refuge hunt areas cannot retrieve elk until after 10:00 am. Consideration should be given to elk hunters utilizing the same or adjoining hunt areas prior to 10:00 am.
- Hunters may not leave animal parts (gut piles and carcasses) within 100 feet of parking areas.
- Designated retrieval roads will only be open to vehicle traffic to retrieve bison until dark.
- No game retrieval will be permitted through Grand Teton National Park. This includes retrieval to Gros Ventre Road parking areas at Milepost 1.1 and 2.3.
- If a hunter's animal crosses from the National Forest onto the Refuge, or if retrieval would be more efficient through the Refuge, hunters should call the National Elk Refuge hunt line at 307 / 201 5437 and leave a message detailing their situation and plan for recovery. Following that, the hunter may move the animal with consideration to limiting resource damage.
- Successful hunters may not transport other hunters into a hunt area. Only the successful hunter and helper(s) may be in the vehicle.

- The Refuge will not maintain wheeled carts and sleds to assist hunters. Any available equipment will be at the Miller Barn for use on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Refuge roads or parking areas may be temporarily closed due to inclement weather or management considerations.

Biological Surveillance

Hunters must submit tooth samples and a harvest information card for harvested animals. Instructions are provided by State wildlife managers. For further information, contact the Wyoming Game & Fish Department.

Hunters should take personal safety precautions to reduce the risk of infection with brucellosis by wearing rubber / latex gloves while field dressing bison.

Hunters with Disabilities

The National Elk Refuge encourages hunters with disabilities to participate in the bison hunt program and seeks to afford them reasonable accommodation for the activity.

Hunters who have both a Wyoming Game & Fish Department Permanently Disabled Hunter Permit and a National Elk Refuge permit are eligible to reserve a designated accessible hunt site. Reservations must be made at the Refuge Administrative Offices at 675 E. Broadway in Jackson. The reservation will be valid for the length of the permit.

The Wyoming Game & Fish Department disabled hunter companion permit is valid on the Refuge.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 711 for a free connection to the State relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 307 / 733 9212, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Contact Information

Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center
 532 North Cache Street
 Jackson, WY 83001
 307 / 734 9378

National Elk Refuge Administrative Office
 PO Box 510
 675 E. Broadway Avenue
 Jackson, WY 83001
 307 / 733 9212
www.fws.gov/refuge/national_elk_refuge/

Wyoming Game & Fish Department
 PO Box 67
 420 North Cache Street
 Jackson, WY 83001
 307 / 733 2321

Teton Interagency Dispatch
 307 / 739 3301

Stop Poaching Hotline
 1 877 / 943 3847

Double Diamond Tag-n-Drag
 307 / 413 7226

Treferen Outfitters
 307 / 883 3400

In an emergency, dial 911

For State relay service
 TTY / Voice: 711

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

For Refuge Information
 1 800 / 344 WILD

May 2015



Refuge Signs
Know Their Meaning

<p><i>Refuge boundary sign entry by permission only.</i></p>	<p><i>Area off limits to the public unless otherwise specified.</i></p>	<p><i>Area open to hunting at specific times.</i></p>