

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
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News Release



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INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE OFFERS NEW HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN – Effective immediately, portions of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge will be open to hunting. Hunters will now find expanded hunting opportunities in southeast Michigan due to the implementation of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge’s hunt program on select tracts of the refuge.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a diverse network of lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that includes 556 national wildlife refuges and more than 150 million acres of public lands and waters set aside for the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants. The Refuge System works to foster public awareness and appreciation of the natural world through wildlife-oriented recreation, including wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation, fishing and hunting.

As one of the oldest, most traditional recreational uses of renewable natural resources, hunting has been a popular activity within the National Wildlife Refuge System since its creation over a century ago. Refuges often depend on hunting as a beneficial tool to assist in the management of wildlife populations on our public lands. Today, more than 300 of our nation’s refuges provide hunting opportunities to their visitors.

Staff at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge have been working over the past several years to prepare a Hunt Plan and accompanying environmental assessment that will allow recreational hunting on select lands owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the Refuge acquisition boundary in Wayne and Monroe Counties.

The objectives of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge hunting program include:

- Provide the public with safe and enjoyable hunts that are compatible with the Refuge purpose;
- Provide quality hunting opportunities that minimize conflict with other public use activities;
- Provide the public with opportunities to hunt wildlife species consistent with the laws and regulations of the State of Michigan, that do not adversely affect local wildlife populations, and are consistent with the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act; and
- Provide hunting opportunities for youth, disabled persons and other underserved populations.

Upon implementation of this plan, the following Refuge areas will be open to big game, small game and migratory bird hunting: Humbug Island, Calf Island, Sugar Island, the Strong Unit, and the Fix Unit. Portions of the Plum Creek Bay Unit that are only accessible by boat will be opened to waterfowl hunting only. The Brancheau Unit will be open solely to waterfowl hunting by special permit assigned through lottery, and managed in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Open water areas such as Humbug Marsh, Mama Juda Shoal, and waters surrounding Mud Island, Grassy Island, Humbug Island, Calf Island, and Brancheau are currently open to waterfowl hunting below the ordinary high watermark in accordance with State laws and Regulations. Hunting from shore and entry onto uplands of Mud Island and Grassy Island or the mainland portion of the Humbug Marsh Unit above the ordinary high watermark are prohibited.

The approval to open the Refuge to hunting is well-timed. In fact, hunters all over southeastern Michigan will find additional opportunities to hunt in areas once closed to the public in time for the start of the state's small game and waterfowl seasons. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff hope one group in particular will enjoy hunting on Refuge lands this year. This Saturday marks the beginning of the state's annual youth waterfowl weekend and the renowned Youth Waterfowl Hunt. Sponsored by the Gibraltar Duck Hunters Association and Waterfowl USA, this hunt introduces a new generation of hunters to the wonderful world of

waterfowl hunting, educates the youth about the importance of conservation and wetland management, and provides young individuals from every walk of life the opportunity to experience the thrill and excitement of Mallards and Blue-winged teal zipping through a decoy spread at sunrise.

Assistant Refuge Manager, Steve Dushane, notes “We are thrilled to finally be able to provide hunting opportunities on Refuge owned lands. With this being the kickoff year of the Michigan Waterfowl Legacy and ‘The Year of the Duck,’ we hope that opening areas of the refuge to hunting will excite and energize young hunters and seasoned veteran hunters to ‘Honor Yesterday, Engage Today, and Build for Tomorrow’.

Not all refuge units will be opened for hunter recreation. For more information regarding the hunt program at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, please see the Hunting Plan and Environmental Assessment which will be uploaded on the refuge website: www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river within the next week.

2012-13 Refuge-Specific legislation may be located in the Federal Register at: <http://go.usa.gov/rAPW>

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge includes more than 5,700 acres along 48 miles of the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie. The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, over 100 species of fish, and over 300 species of birds. It is the first international refuge in North America and one of a few urban refuges in the nation. Unique habitats being managed within the Refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and waterfront lands.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service is both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation. Visit www.fws.gov to learn more.

For additional information, contact Assistant Refuge Manager Steve Dushane at 734-692-7604 or Visitor Services Manager Jamie Lanier at 734-692-7649.

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