

Lee Metcalf

*National Wildlife
Refuge*

*Hunting and Fishing
Regulations*



Welcome



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

Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located along the Bitterroot River in western Montana's scenic and historic Bitterroot Valley. Surrounded by the Bitterroot and Sapphire Mountain Ranges, the Refuge offers spectacular viewing opportunities of both landscapes and wildlife.

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lee Metcalf NWR is one of over 550 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a system of lands set aside to conserve wildlife for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. Established in 1963 to provide habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, the Refuge's 2,800 acres are home to 235 species of birds, 37 species of mammals, and 17 species of reptiles and amphibians.

Lee Metcalf NWR provides visitors with many opportunities to enjoy recreational activities compatible with its conservation mission and the National Wildlife Refuge System priority public uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. All public use activities on Lee Metcalf NWR are governed by Federal and State law. Refuge visitors are responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to public use and resource management.

This brochure details regulations for hunting and fishing on the Refuge. These regulations are enforced in addition to regulations promulgated under the Refuge Administration Act (16 USC§668dd-668ee), Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and other applicable wildlife and public use statutes.

General Information and Regulations

- The Refuge office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The office is closed on Federal holidays.
- An accessible restroom is available in the Refuge office during operating hours. An accessible outhouse is available in the Wildlife Viewing Area during Refuge visitation hours of dawn to dusk.
- The Refuge is open to waterfowl hunting, archery white-tailed deer hunting, and fishing.
- Hunting is permitted on designated Refuge lands only. Areas open and closed to hunting are shown on the Refuge hunting map.
- The area surrounding the Refuge headquarters and areas marked with "Area Closed" signs are closed to hunting.
- Current Federal and State hunting regulations apply. Consult the Montana State Hunting Regulations for a complete list of State regulations (available on-line at <http://fwp.mt.gov>).
- All hunters and anglers on Lee Metcalf NWR must follow Federal and State of Montana licensing guidelines to hunt and fish on the Refuge. Hunters and anglers must possess their hunting or fishing license(s) and photo identification at all times while on the Refuge.
- Overnight parking, camping, and open fires are not allowed on the Refuge.
- All trash, including food products, animal parts, spent shotgun shell casings, and paper and plastic products, must be removed from the Refuge.
- Hunters and anglers must enter the refuge at designated parking areas.
- See the Refuge general information brochure for other recreational opportunities and regulations.

Fishing Regulations

Fishing is allowed along the slough and the river in the Refuge's Wildlife Viewing Area in accordance with State of Montana regulations in effect on the Bitterroot River from Tucker Crossing to the Florence Bridge. No boat launching or take out of any kind is allowed on Refuge land.

Waterfowl Hunting Regulations

Ducks, geese, and coots may be hunted only from established numbered blinds in designated areas of the Refuge (*see map*). Hunting for ring-necked pheasants, swans, or any other wildlife species (except white-tailed deer as described here) is prohibited. In addition to current Federal regulations and State hunting regulations, Refuge-specific hunting regulations detailed in this publication and on Refuge signs must be followed.

- Wildlife observation, scouting, and loitering during waterfowl hunting season are prohibited at the waterfowl hunting access parking area and on the Refuge road leading to the waterfowl hunting access parking area.
- All hunters must have visible means of retrieving waterfowl such as a float tube, waders, or a dog capable of retrieving.
- Dogs must be on leash in the parking area, while traveling to your designated hunting blind, and when returning to your vehicle from the blind.
- Hunters must enter and exit the waterfowl hunting area via hunter access parking areas only.
- The use of mechanical decoys powered by battery or solar power is prohibited.

Seasons/Hours

- Consult the State Migratory Game Bird hunting regulations for season dates.
- A youth waterfowl hunt is traditionally held the weekend before the opener; check State hunting regulations for exact dates.
- The waterfowl hunting area is closed to waterfowl hunting on Mondays and Thursdays.
- Legal shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset daily. Sunrise/sunset tables are posted at the registration (hunter sign-in/sign-out) box.
- Legal entry time into a hunting area is no earlier than 2 hours before legal shooting hours. It is strictly prohibited to remain in the parking or hunting areas any longer than 2 hours after sunset.

Blinds

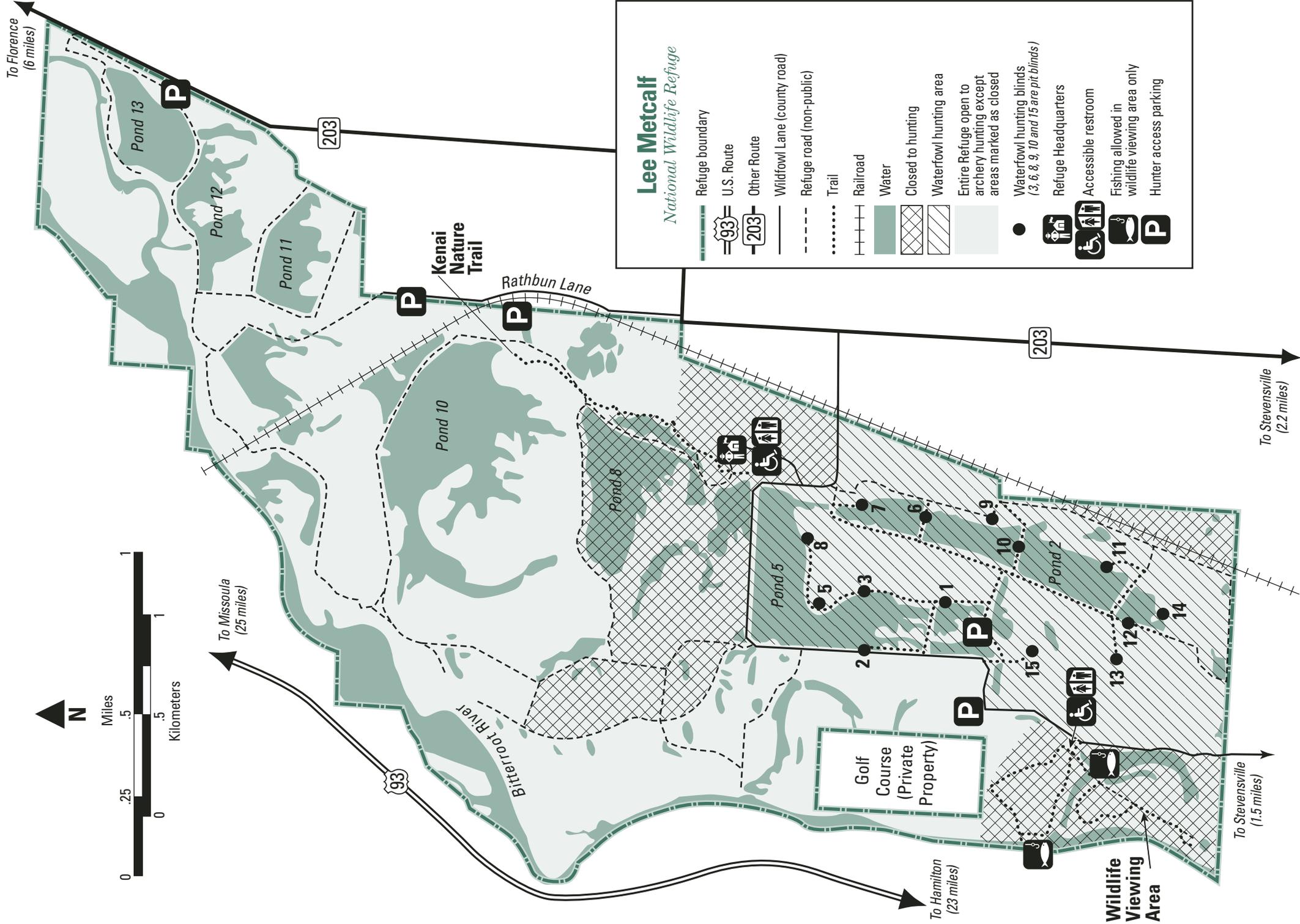
- Established numbered blinds for waterfowl hunting are available on a first-come, first-served basis except for the opening weekend of waterfowl hunting season when blind use will be determined by a public drawing.
- No more than four people may use a blind at any one time.
- Reserving blinds during any part of the waterfowl hunting season is restricted to hunters with disabilities.
- Hunters must sign-in/sign-out at the registration box.
- All hunting must be conducted from within the blind.
- Blinds 1, 2, 7, 14, and 15 do not have a decoy requirement; however, a minimum of six decoys are required for all other blinds.
- For blind 13, hunters may either use the blind or position a portable blind in the mowed area adjacent to the established blind.

Accessible Waterfowl Hunting

Hunters with disabilities may reserve blinds 2 or 7, which are accessible, in advance of hunting by contacting a Refuge Law Enforcement Officer (406 / 777 5552 ext. 206). To qualify as a hunter with a disability, you must have a current year Resident with a Disability Conservation License issued by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP).

Firearms

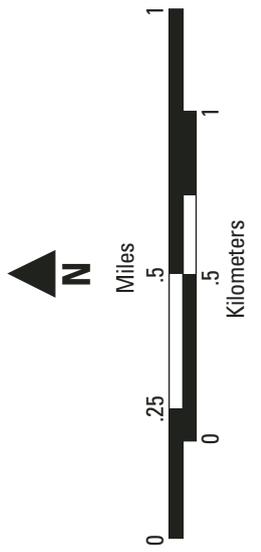
- Waterfowl hunting with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells is prohibited.
- There is a limit of 25 shotgun shells per hunter per day. Non-toxic shot is required.
- Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions 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).



Lee Metcalf

National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge boundary
- U.S. Route (93)
- Other Route (203)
- Wildfowl Lane (county road)
- Refuge road (non-public)
- Trail
- Railroad
- Water
- Closed to hunting
- Waterfowl hunting area
- Entire Refuge open to archery hunting except areas marked as closed
- Waterfowl hunting blinds (3, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 15 are pit blinds)
- Refuge Headquarters
- Accessible restroom
- Fishing allowed in wildlife viewing area only
- Hunter access parking



To Missoula
(25 miles)

To Hamilton
(23 miles)

To Stevensville
(1.5 miles)

To Stevensville
(2.2 miles)

To Florence
(6 miles)

Kenai Nature Trail

Rathbun Lane

Pond 10

Pond 8

Pond 5

Pond 2

Pond 11

Pond 13

Pond 12

Pond 11

Golf Course
(Private Property)

Wildlife Viewing Area

P

P

P

P

P

P

203

203

93

Bitterroot River

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Archery Deer Hunting Regulations

Archery hunting for white-tailed deer only is permitted in designated areas of the Refuge (*see map*). In addition to current Federal and State of Montana hunting regulations, Refuge-specific hunting regulations detailed in this publication and on Refuge signs must be followed.

- Archery deer hunters are prohibited from using firearms (rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders, crossbows, and handguns) during the archery hunt. Hunters may use only bows and arrows, in accordance with State law.
- Mechanized vehicles (including bicycles) are not allowed in the archery deer hunting area.
- Scouting for deer is not allowed on the Refuge.
- The use of electronic means of tracking, and the installation and use of game cameras is prohibited.
- Attempting to surround or drive deer is prohibited.

Seasons/Hours

- Season dates are specified each year by MFWP. Consult State Hunting Regulations.
- Legal hunting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.
- Hunters may enter the hunting area 2 hours prior to legal hunting hours and shall exit no later than 2 hours after legal hunting hours.
- During the waterfowl hunting season, the waterfowl hunting area will be open to archery deer hunting on Mondays and Thursdays with the following exception — the area will be closed to archery hunting during the September Youth Waterfowl Hunt.

Hunting Areas

- The archery hunting area is defined by Refuge signs and the map in this brochure.
- Hunters must enter and exit the Refuge through designated archery hunting access points (*i.e., parking area – see map for parking/access points*).
- Hunters must obtain consent from Whitetail Golf Course staff before entering golf course property.

Hunter Registration

Hunters must register at an archery hunting access point (*see map*).

Tree Stands and Blinds

- Only portable tree stands and portable ground blinds are permitted on the Refuge for archery hunting.
- All tree stands and ground blinds must be identified with a tag containing the owner's name and ALS number (Montana archery license number).
- If a tree stand will be left unoccupied for more than 72 hours, it must be removed. Hunters are encouraged to report tree stands left unused for longer than 72 hours.
- The following are prohibited: use of screw-in tree steps or climbing spikes; cutting live trees, including branches or limbs; use of nails, wire, screws, or bolts to attach a stand to a tree; hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter; or marking any tree or other Refuge feature with flagging, paint, or other substance.
- Hunters must obtain prior permission from the owner to use a tree stand or blind that does not belong to them.

Game Retrieval

Hunters may not enter or retrieve downed deer from closed areas of the Refuge without approval from a Refuge Law Enforcement Officer or the Refuge Manager.

Accessible Archery Deer Hunting

Hunters with disabilities will be directed to specific locations in the hunting area to hunt from ground blinds. To access these areas, hunters must contact the Refuge Manager at the Refuge headquarters because locations may vary from one season to the next. To qualify as a hunter with a disability, you must have a current year Resident with a Disability Conservation License issued by MFWP.

Respect Other Visitors

The Kenai Nature Trail extends northward from the Refuge headquarters for 1¼ miles to a turn-around point on the bench directly west of the South Rathbun hunter access point. The trail is open to visitors from dawn to dusk. Visitors must stay on the trail. Please exercise caution when hunting in this trail area.

Important Message

The future of hunting on national wildlife refuges requires responsible hunter behavior and compliance with regulations. Harming or needlessly disturbing any wildlife including birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and plants is a violation of Refuge regulations.

Accessibility Information

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 406 / 777 5552, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge
4567 Wildfowl Lane
Stevensville, MT 59870
406 / 777 5552
406 / 777 2498 fax
leemetcalf@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/leemetcalf>

Please report all Refuge violations to the Refuge Law Enforcement Officer at 406/777 5552, or turn in a poacher at 1-800-TIP-MONT.

For State relay service
TTY / Voice: 711

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

For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD

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