



## Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge 2014 Deer Hunt Program



**PURPOSE:** To maintain the deer herd at a healthy level compatible with planned habitat goals and objectives while minimizing impacts to wildlife and visitors.

**HUNT DATES:** Monday - December 8 and Wednesday - December 10, 2014.

If staff determines the hunt has yet to reach desired management goals, an additional hunt day for STANDBY hunters only may be added on Friday, January 9, 2015. Staff will accept calls for hunters unable to obtain a hunt permit for the first two hunt days on Monday, January 5 at 8:00am at 703-490-4979 ext. 2015. Twenty-three hunt stands will be filled on a first-call first-served basis.

**PERMITS:** Hunt permits are assigned by lottery and valid for one assigned hunting day. Selected hunters have until the end of the last orientation session on October 18, 2014 to purchase permits, after which the permits will be offered to qualified standbys. Permits are \$20.00 for the general public and \$10.00 for Senior and Access Pass holders. Passes must be presented at purchase for discount. Permit fees are nonrefundable.

**FIREARM QUALIFICATION:** Selected hunters are required to qualify their firearm BEFORE the scheduled hunt dates. All applicants must qualify on an approved range. Firearms and ammo may be added to the qualification card any time before the hunt. Only firearms and ammunition listed on qualification cards may be used or possessed for the hunt. Qualification cards are valid for three years. *Cards from 2012 & 2013 remain valid this year.* Persons without a qualification card from an approved range will not hunt.

**Buckshot Only:** Applicants are limited to shotgun(s) 20 gauge or larger and #1 or larger buckshot (20 gauge may use #2 or #3 buck). Qualification consists of firing from an off-hand position, one shot at a 14" square target at 25 yards, with a passing scores of at least 3 pellets for 000, 4 for 00 or 0, 5 for #1, 6 for #2, and 7 for #3. Each hunter will be allowed 2 attempts per firearm.

### **NEW in 2014:**

- Staff will not track, drag, or dress deer. Hunters without this ability must have an aide.
- No earn-a-buck rule this season.
- Limit one antlered deer per permit purchased.

**ORIENTATION:** Selected hunters must attend an orientation session. Staff provides two options for completing hunt orientation requirements. (1) Attend an orientation session in person on October 18, 2014 or (2) View the Occoquan Bay Hunt Orientation on-line, complete a 20 question test, and have the answers verified by staff. **If selected to hunt, time and location for in-person orientations and on-line orientation test checks will be provided on the hunt lottery notice.** Attending orientation sessions from a previous year, for another hunt, or at another agency's session cannot be counted towards this orientation requirement.

**SWAPS:** Hunters may trade amongst themselves or for unclaimed permits. Swaps may occur during the standby and extra permit sale session following the last orientation session on October 18, 2014. All permit trades must be approved and registered with hunt staff by the end of the standby and extra permit sale session. To swap, each hunter must have already purchased a permit. No one may hold a permit for a person who has not completed all requirements and purchased their own permit.

**STANDBYS:** Occasionally selected hunters fail to complete the requirements and cannot claim a permit. Unclaimed permits are made available to lottery selected standby hunters. Standby hunters will have the letter “SB” and numbers on their notification letter indicating their lottery status. Standbys may claim a permit only if they have completed orientation before the swap and extra permit sales. Standby sales will occur following the last orientation sessions on Saturday, October 18, 2014. Spaces not filled by selected hunters on the morning of a hunt day, will be offered to standby hunters with a valid firearms qualification card and completed orientation.

**SCOUTING:** Scouting is NOT permitted for the Occoquan Bay NWR hunt.

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** All hunters must bring a cell phone and tree stand harness. Cell phones are used to communicate with refuge staff during the hunt. A staff member will man a hunt hotline at all times during the hunt hours. The hotline number will be provided the morning of the hunt.

**HUNTER CHECK IN:** All hunters must check in at the Occoquan Bay NWR front gate. Selected hunters will be admitted to check in at 5.45 am. Selected hunters not through the gate by 6:15 am will lose their spot to hunt. Spaces not filled will be offered to stand-bys. Stand-by hunters may form a separate line at 5:45 am and will be admitted if space is available at 6:15 am. Standby permits will be \$20.00 upon entry. The front gate will close to **ALL** hunters at 6:30 am. There will be no admittance to hunt after 6:30 am.

**HUNTING:** All hunting occurs from provided stands. Occoquan Bay NWR provides 22 treestands and tripods plus an additional mobility impaired stand. Each hunter’s permit corresponds to a designated tree stand for safety and dispersion over the one square mile refuge.

Following check-in, hunters proceed to the main parking lot. Staff will escort hunters to their selected hunt stand via shuttle. Once in the field, hunters may not switch stands. Hunters must remain in their assigned stand area until noon. Shooting ends at 5:00 pm.

**CHECK-OUT:** Hunters must remain in their assigned stand area until noon. If a hunter wishes to vacate the area after noon, they must contact staff via phone. A staff member will escort the hunter from the stand to the main parking area via shuttle. Do not walk to the parking lot. Once a hunter leaves their assigned hunt area, the hunter may not return and is finished hunting. All hunters must check out with a staff member at the main parking lot before exiting the refuge.

**MOBILITY IMPAIRED (MI) AREA:** Mobility Impaired hunters must meet state requirements (permanently unable to walk) and hunt from the mobility impaired treestand. All MI hunters are required to have an aide while hunting.

**HUNTER AIDES:** Aides may assist hunters with the inability to track, drag or dress a deer. Staff will not track, drag, or dress deer. Aides must be authorized by staff and noted on the hunter’s permit at time of purchase. Aides may set up, retrieve deer, and remain with the hunter. Aides who have completed orientation and possess a valid hunting permit for the day may hunt, but must assist the hunter as needed. Aides may not drive deer to the hunter.

**YOUTH HUNTERS:** Hunters under 18 must be accompanied by a licensed adult in visual and verbal contact at all times. The adult may not be armed to hunt unless in possession of a hunt permit for the same day. Adults may only supervise one youth at a time. Youths may not be left alone in a vehicle while the adult hunts.

**2014 SEASON HARVEST LIMITS:**

1. White-tailed deer are the only legal species to be hunted.
2. Antlered and antlerless deer may be harvested in any order. An antlerless deer does NOT need to be harvested prior to antlered deer
3. No antler restrictions
4. Limit of one buck per permit.
5. Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) tags are for antlerless deer only and do not count against daily or annual bag. Hunters will have access to as many DMAP tags as needed.
6. Hunters must make a reasonable effort to retrieve a wounded deer and must report wounded deer to staff.
7. All deer must be field dressed and presented at the check station.
8. Deer may not be processed (cut up) in the field. Entrails (guts) must be buried or removed if near a public trail or road.
9. January 9, 2015 special rule: Hunting on this date is antlerless only, in accordance with Commonwealth of Virginia late-season hunt policy.

**TAGGING and DEER CHECK STATION:** All harvested deer must be reported to the check station staff via cell phone immediately. Once contact is made with staff, hunters may continue hunting for the remainder of the day. Notch tags in the field for harvested antlered deer. Hunters will receive DMAP tags for harvested antlerless deer at the check station. Virginia check cards are issued by staff for all harvested deer.

**ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS:**

1. Virginia State hunting regulations along with refuge and park special regulations apply.
2. Hunters must possess a valid Virginia hunting license, big game tags, refuge permit, and qualification card. Refuge permits must be visible in the windshield or driver's window on hunt days. Licenses and qualification cards must be carried in the field.
3. Hunters must wear at least 400 square inches of solid blaze orange visible 360° on head, chest, and back in a conspicuous manner at all times in the field, including when in a stand, plus an orange hat. Camouflaged orange is not acceptable.
4. Hunters may only use or possess firearms and ammunition listed on their qualification card. Firearms must be unloaded and cased or broken down except when in the assigned hunt area.
5. No unauthorized persons will be permitted onto the refuge.
6. Hunter aides must be listed on permits prior to the hunt for safety reasons. Hunter aides may assist in setup or deer retrieval. Aides should remain at hunt stand or parking lot when not providing assistance. Aides who have completed orientation and possess a valid hunting permit for the day may hunt, but must assist the hunter as needed.
7. Hunters under 18 must be accompanied by a licensed adult in visual and verbal contact at all times. The adult may not be armed to hunt unless in possession of a hunt permit for the same day.
8. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages and illegal substances during the hunt is prohibited.
9. Fires are prohibited.
10. Any violation of the permit will result in administrative cancellation and/or criminal charges.