



Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge 2015-2016 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: Thursday-Dec. 10 and Thursday-Dec. 17, 2015; Monday-Jan. 11, 2016. If staff determines the hunt has yet to reach desired management goals, an additional hunt day for STANDBY hunters only may be added in March 21, 2016. Staff will accept calls for hunters unable to obtain a hunt permit for the first three hunt days on Monday, March 14, 2016 at 9:00am at 703-490-4979 ext. 2015. Twenty-three hunt stands will be filled on a first-call first-served basis.

NEW in 2015:

- Hunter check-in begins at 5:30 am and shooting ends at 12:00 pm (noon).
- Slugs permitted
- Report aide names to staff two weeks prior to your hunt date. Aides must be 16 years or older.
- Hunters must inform staff during orientation on October 24 if help is needed to find an aide.
- Hunters may harvest more than one deer at a time.

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 24, 2015 to purchase permits, after which the permits will be offered to qualified standbys. Permits remaining after the standby session will be available to hunters who wish to purchase additional permits to guarantee additional hunt days. Permits are \$20.00 for the general public and \$10.00 for federal Senior and Access Pass holders. Federal 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 ammunition may be added to the qualification card any time prior to 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 2013 & 2014 remain valid this year. Persons without a qualification card from an approved range will not hunt.

Buckshot: 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.

Slug: There is no shotgun gauge limitation. Qualification consists of firing from an off-hand position to a 14" circle target at 50 yards. Each hunter is allowed 2 attempts per firearm.

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 24, 2015 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 24, 2015. 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 24, 2015. 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 5:30 am. Selected hunters not through the gate by 6:00 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 5:30 am and will be admitted if space is available at 6:00 am. Standby permits will be \$20.00 upon entry. The front gate will close to **ALL** hunters at 6:15 am. There will be no admittance to hunt after 6:15 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 12:00 p.m. (noon).

CHECK-OUT: Shooting ends at 12:00 pm at which time staff will begin to escort hunters from their stands to the main parking area via shuttle. Do not walk to the parking lot. Hunters must check out with a staff member at the main parking lot by 1:00 pm.

MOBILITY IMPAIRED (MI) AREA: Mobility Impaired hunters must meet state requirements and hunt from the MI treestand. All MI hunters are required to have an aide while hunting as staff is unable track, drag, or dress deer.

HUNTER AIDES: Aides assist hunters with the inability to track, drag or dress a deer and must be a minimum of 16 years old. Aides may set up, retrieve deer, and remain in a vehicle or 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.

Aides' names must be reported to staff two weeks prior to hunt date for administrative purposes. Please inform staff if you will need assistance finding a hunter aide by the close of the hunter orientation on Saturday October 24. Staff will work to secure a volunteer aide for your hunt date.

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.

2015 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. Antlerless deer do not need to be harvested prior to antlered deer.
3. Hunters may harvest more than one deer at a time.
4. No antler restrictions
5. Limit of one antlered per permit purchased.
6. 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.
7. Hunters must make reasonable effort to retrieve wounded deer and report unrecovered deer to staff.
8. All deer must be field dressed and presented at the check station.
9. Deer may not be processed (cut up) in the field. Entrails (guts) must be buried or removed if near a public trail or road.
10. January and March 2016 special rule: Hunting during these months 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. Commonwealth of Virginia hunting regulations and 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, 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 or at the deer check station. All persons on the refuge during hunts must possess a valid hunt permit or be a pre-authorized aide.
6. Hunter aides must be at least 16 years of age and reported to staff two weeks prior to hunt date for administrative and safety purposes. 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.