

**Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Established 2012**  
**Compatibility Determination**

**Use:** Hunting migratory birds, big game, and small game animals

**Refuge Name:** Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge)

**Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies):**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an Environmental Assessment, Land Protection Plan, and Conceptual Management Plan on July 10, 2012, for the establishment of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was established under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929, the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 and the Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986.

**Refuge Purpose(s):**

*“for any other management purpose, for migratory birds....” 16 U.S.C. §715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)*

*and “the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions ...” 16 U.S.C. §3901(b), 100 Stat. 3583 (Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986)*

*and “for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources” 16 U.S.C. 742a et seq. (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956)*

*and “land, or interests therein, which are suitable for-- (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources,(3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species listed by the Secretary pursuant to section 1533 of this title, or (4) carrying out two or more of the purposes set forth in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this section...” 16 U.S.C. §460(k), (Refuge Recreation Act, as amended).*

**National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:**

“The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

**Description of Use:**

Allow public hunting for migratory birds (ducks, geese, rails, moorhen, snipe, mergansers, coots, sandhill cranes, woodcock, dove and crow), big-game (white-tailed deer and wild turkey), upland game (ring-necked pheasant, partridge, grouse, bobwhite quail, grey and fox squirrel, rabbit, and groundhog), and small game animal hunting (coyote, fox, bobcat, skunk, bear, badger, and raccoon). Season dates, bag limits, and

harvest methods are generally consistent with state regulations, with a few Refuge-specific regulations.

### **Availability of Resources:**

The designated areas open to public hunting are open in accordance with state and Refuge regulations and do not require preparation and administration of special hunts. Because all lands of the Refuge to be opened were previously hunted by the landowner, hunting pressure was limited. Crowding has not been an issue as sufficient resources appear to exist to accommodate the current level of participation and provide a quality hunting experience.

Hunters currently use existing roads to access areas open to hunting. Existing parking areas are used by hunters. Hunters residing next to the Refuge boundary are often able to access open hunting areas from their property. Refuge law enforcement officers, Service special agents, and state conservation officers/wardens are authorized to enforce state and Refuge hunting regulations.

Because hunting is allowed only on parcels that currently are hunted, few resources are necessary to manage a hunting program at the current level of participation. However, funding for law enforcement staff time and printing of the Refuge Hunting Regulations brochure is lacking some years, calling for a redirection of existing Refuge funding. This redirection is often at the expense of other Refuge programs such as monitoring, maintenance, and other public use programs. Proposals in any future Refuge CCP should help address these funding concerns.

### **Anticipated Impacts of the Use:**

Accommodating this wildlife-dependant use is expected to result in minimal impacts. Although hunting causes mortality to wildlife, season dates and bag limits are set with the long-term health of populations in mind. Populations of certain species, for example white-tailed deer, are monitored by state agencies. Survey information indicates that a limited harvest will not adversely affect the overall deer population level. Without harvest, deer will quickly overpopulate an area causing degradation to the quality and quantity of vegetation. Therefore, deer hunting promotes a healthier, more robust, and diverse Refuge plant community. Deer hunting may also reduce the number of deer/car collisions on adjacent highways.

Disturbance to wildlife may also result from hunting activity. This disturbance is expected to be limited in scope and duration. Because hunting is not permitted in Refuge closed areas during the duck hunting season, this use is not a source of disturbance to waterbirds concentrated in these areas. All motor vehicle use is restricted to existing roads and parking areas which reduces disturbance to wildlife. Disturbance to habitat is minimal given the nature of this hunting and restriction of vehicle use.

Hunters occasionally violate regulations, such as exceeding the daily bag limit, using permanent tree stands, or hunting in the wrong area. However, these incidents usually have only minor impacts to wildlife populations or Refuge resources.

**Public Review and Comment:**

A draft version of this Compatibility Determination will be available for a 14-day comment period. Public notification will include sending to local media outlets and posting on the Refuge website.

**Determination:**

\_\_\_ Use is Not Compatible

\_\_\_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

**Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:**

To ensure compatibility with Refuge purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, migratory bird, big game, and small game animal hunting can occur on the Refuge if the following stipulations are met:

1. This use must be conducted in accordance with state and Federal regulations, and special Refuge regulations published in the Refuge Hunting Regulations and Public Use Regulations brochures.
2. The Refuge maintains the ability to use Administrative Closed Areas to reduce conflicts between hunting and non-hunting users groups or for other management purposes.
3. This use is subject to modification if on-site monitoring by Refuge personnel or other authorized personnel results in unanticipated negative impacts to natural communities, wildlife species, or their habitats.
4. Changes outlined in any future CCP dealing with hunting regulations, when approved, could have some effect on hunting covered in this determination. Changes will be incorporated in a new Refuge Hunt Plan. A new compatibility determination will be prepared at that time.

