

# News Release

## *Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex*

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Offers Hunting Opportunities At Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce white-tailed deer hunting opportunities during the 2016/2017 hunting season. All hunting is allowed by refuge permit only. The Lewis Tract Unit will be open for the November and December 2016 regular seasons. The Kettle Pond and Salt Pond Units will be open to archery only hunting, beginning January 1 to January 31, 2017.

We are also holding our annual youth hunt at the Salt Pond Unit from December 3 to December 23, 2016, which is open to all licensed hunters between the ages of 12 and 17. All youth hunters (12-17 yrs. old) selected are required to attend a hunt orientation prior to participating in the refuge hunt. The orientation will be held November 12, 2016 at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Charlestown, Rhode Island. The Ninigret NWR Youth Deer Hunt is a mentorship event, utilizing the experiences of adults to assist and introduce youth to the outdoors and the use of hunting as a big game management tool. The adult mentor must accompany all youth hunters during the hunt and at the hunt orientation.

For information on how to apply for any of the hunts at the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge please visit [www.ninigretpermits.com](http://www.ninigretpermits.com).

Refuge-specific hunting regulations will be implemented to facilitate a safe and quality hunt that incorporates the safety and concerns of the general public as well as refuge neighbors. The refuge's hunting program follows strategies identified to help meet multiple objectives:

- Deer hunting will provide the public an opportunity to safely enjoy an American pastime, which is a priority recreational use of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and provide a means to control deer populations in cooperation with State objectives and regulations.
- Reducing deer densities may reduce the abundance of deer ticks that harbor diseases, such as Lyme disease, which can affect public health.
- Reducing the adverse effects deer can have on native plant communities. This is particularly important because of the very high use migrating songbirds make of the national wildlife refuges during the fall migration.

Some people are surprised to learn that hunting is allowed on a national wildlife refuge, but these lands have been established not only to preserve wild places, but also to promote wildlife-dependent recreation when compatible with the purposes for which the refuges were established. 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.

The Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a diverse network of lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that includes over 560 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-dependent recreation, including wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation, fishing and hunting.

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](http://www.fws.gov) to learn more.

Again, hunting permit information for the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuges is available at <http://www.ninigretpermits.com>. For further information and questions on the Rhode Island NWR Complex hunting program, please contact the refuge office at 401-364-9124, or visit the website at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/ninigret/>.

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