

News Release

Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Block Island NWR □ John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove □ Ninigret NWR □ Sachuest Point NWR □ Trustum Pond NWR

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For Immediate Release

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Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Changes to the Hunt Plan at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge, Seeking Public Comment

Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge offers opportunities to hunt white-tailed deer in three refuge units; Salt Pond, Lewis Tract, and Kettle Pond. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing two minor changes in the current hunt plan and is seeking public comments through July 25, 2016.

The Service proposes to allow archery hunting for white-tailed deer in the Salt Pond Unit, which is currently open only to special firearm deer hunting opportunities, including a lottery youth deer hunt and a military veteran deer hunt. The approximately four miles of trails will remain open for public access during the archery only hunt. Signs will be posted alerting hikers of the hunt in progress and encourage all users to wear orange clothing.

Secondly, the Service proposes to open the Kettle Pond Trail system to the public for hiking and wildlife observation during the archery only hunt at the Kettle Pond Unit. January 2016 was the first time hunters were permitted to hunt the Kettle Pond Unit. The refuge took precautionary measures and closed all refuge trails at the unit to avoid multiuse conflicts. We received comments from the public describing their concerns for the trail closures. Upon further review, Service staff feel confident that a safe and effective hunt may be administered without the need to close the refuge trails. Signs will be posted alerting hikers of the hunt in progress and encourage all users to wear orange clothing.

The proposed changes, if approved, will go into effect beginning January 1, 2017 at both the Salt Pond Unit and the Kettle Pond Unit. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please email karrie_schwaab@fws.gov, call 401-364-9124 extension 4402 or write to the address listed in the letterhead by July 25, 2016.

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