

Upper Mississippi River

National Wildlife & Fish Refuge

Hunting Regulations



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge Headquarters
51 East Fourth Street, Room 101
Winona, MN 55987

fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River/
Email: UpperMississippiRiver@fws.gov
507/452 4232

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
www.fws.gov/

People with hearing impairments may contact the refuge through the Federal Relay Number at 1 800/877 8339.



Winona District (Pools 4-6)
507/454 7351

La Crosse District (Pools 7-8)
608 779 2399

McGregor District (Pools 9-11)
563/873 3423

Savanna District (Pools 12-14)
815/273 2732

The Bertom-McCartney Closed Area in Pool 11 has no avoidance provision. The “no motor use” designation means the use of motors on watercraft is prohibited from October 15 through the end of the regular state duck hunting season, although possession of motors is allowed.

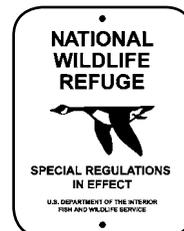


Electric Motor Areas
These signs identify an area which is closed year-round to all motorized vehicles and watercraft except watercraft powered by electric motors or non-motorized means. The possession of other watercraft motors is not prohibited, only their use.

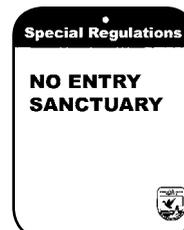


Slow, No-Wake Areas
In areas marked by these signs, watercraft must travel at slow, no-wake speed and no airboats or hovercraft are allowed from March 16 through October 31. Respective state definitions for what constitutes “slow, no-wake” speed or operation apply.

Refuge Signs
Look for these signs on the refuge. Buoys are also used for some areas.



These signs mark the refuge boundary or let you know you are in the refuge.



In addition to being closed to all migratory bird hunting, these areas are closed to all public entry as specified.



The area marked by these signs is closed to all migratory bird hunting. Other hunting and trapping is allowed beginning the day after the close of the state duck hunting season, until season closure or March 15, whichever occurs first, except spring turkey hunting is allowed during state seasons. Please avoid entering the area from October 15 to end of regular state duck hunting season to allow waterfowl to rest and feed. On Lake Onalaska, this avoidance provision is marked by buoys and ends in mid-November.

a manner creating a safety hazard, or endangering any person, property, or environmental feature, is prohibited. Any vehicles left parked in violation may be impounded at the owner’s expense.

All refuge lands must be kept clean during the period of use or occupancy. You must keep all refuse, trash, and litter contained in bags or other suitable containers, and not left scattered on the ground or in the water at any time. You must remove all personal property, refuse, trash, and litter immediately upon vacating a site. Animal carcasses and spent shells are considered litter.

This is a listing of the most commonly referenced regulations. Additional regulations are published in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 50, Subchapter C, The National Wildlife Refuge System, and available at refuge offices or the refuge website.

Special Regulation Areas

Areas throughout the refuge are designated as closed or restricted use areas, usually autumn to spring, to protect migrating waterfowl or for public safety. These areas are marked with orange topped “special regulation” signs (see next page) and list the restrictions and effective dates or seasons. Please read and heed these signs. Maps of these areas are available at refuge offices or the refuge website.

Littering

Additional Regulations

Hunting and trapping have a deep history and tradition on the refuge. Most hunting opportunities are in wetlands, on islands, and in floodplain forest accessible mainly by boat.

Portions of the refuge are open to hunting and trapping in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations with the most restrictive regulation applying on the refuge. All regulations should be checked before hunting. Local ordinances may restrict hunting near populated areas. Contact one of the refuge offices for information regarding special regulations that apply in your area of interest. Please be aware that individuals involved in other recreation on the refuge may not be aware of on-going hunting seasons.

General Hunting Regulations

Hunting is not allowed on the refuge from March 16 through August 31, except for wild turkey during the spring season and fox squirrel on the Illinois portion of the refuge.

Bag Limit

Only one bag limit of migratory game birds may be taken by a hunter in one day's time, even if the hunter hunts in two different states.

Blinds

The construction of permanent hunting blinds is prohibited.

Natural material may be used for seasonal blinds, with restrictions: You may gather grasses and marsh vegetation from the refuge for blind-building materials; however Phragmites (giant cane) may not be cut or brought onto the refuge. Tree or other plant parts, including dead wood on the ground, greater than 2 inches in diameter may not be gathered or brought onto or used for blind-building. Constructing hunting blinds from rocks placed for shoreline protection (rip rap) is prohibited. You are allowed to leave only seasonal blinds, made entirely of natural vegetation, and biodegradable

twine, on the refuge. All such blinds are considered public property and open to use by any person on a first-come basis.

Manmade material may be used for temporary blinds, with restrictions: No lumber, pipe, posts or timbers greater than 2 inches in diameter. At the end of each day's hunt, you must remove all manmade blind materials, including boat blinds. Any blinds containing manmade materials left on the refuge are subject to immediate removal and disposal. Manmade materials include, but are not limited to, wooden pallets, metal fence posts, wire, nails, staples, netting or tarps.

Invasive plants should not be brought onto the refuge or used for blind-building.

In the Illinois portion of Pools 12-14, waterfowl hunting parties must maintain a 200-yard spacing distance.

Game Retrieval



You must immediately make a reasonable attempt to retrieve downed waterfowl unless the bird lies in plain sight of you, is clearly dead, and there is no risk of the bird drifting off due to wind or current. Retrieving dead or wounded game birds from a Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area or a No Hunting Zone is allowed provided the hunter does not attempt to chase birds from the area. In areas also marked No Motor Use, you may not use a motor to retrieve game. Hunters may not retrieve birds or other game from No Entry Sanctuaries.

Pool 11 Open-water Hunting

Special open-water hunting regulations are in effect for a portion of Pool 11 (Grant County, Wisconsin) in accordance with general Wisconsin open-water hunting definitions. Refer to Pool Maps available at refuge offices or on refuge website.

Firearms

We prohibit the discharge of firearms (including dog training pistols and dummy launchers), air guns, or any other weapons on the refuge, except by licensed hunters or trappers engaged in authorized activities during established seasons, in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. Target practice is prohibited.

Hunting Equipment (decoys, tree stands, boats, etc.)

Hunting equipment can only be set up the day of the hunt, and must be removed at the end of each day. Hunting equipment and decoys may be placed and left on the refuge only during the time 1 hour before the start of legal shooting hours until ½ hour after the close of legal shooting hours. The use of nails, wire, screws, or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven or screwed to support a hunter, is prohibited.

Hunt Methods

Shining a light to locate any animal is prohibited on the refuge except at the point of kill for species specified in respective state night or artificial light hunting regulations. Lights may also be used to find your way. The distribution of bait or feed and the hunting over bait or feed is prohibited. The use or possession of any drug on any arrow for bow hunting is prohibited. All other hunt method regulations of the respective state are in effect on the refuge.

License/Permits

Hunters must possess a hunting license valid in the state in which they are hunting. They must be in compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations and requirements. Hunting areas can not be reserved, except at Potter's Marsh Managed Hunt Area, Pool 13, near Thomson, IL.

Non-toxic Shot

Hunters may only use or possess approved non-toxic shot shells while in the field, including shot shells used for hunting wild turkey.

State Boundary

The main channel of the Mississippi River is not the state boundary line in all areas. For verification of the state boundary line, contact any one of the refuge District Offices, state Department of Natural Resource offices, or refer to Pool Maps available at refuge offices or on refuge website.

Furbearer Harvest

Portions of the refuge are open to trapping. State-licensed trappers must obtain a refuge Special Use Permit and refuge trap tags. Refuge trapping seasons may differ from state seasons. You may cut willow up to 2 inches in diameter for trap stakes. All trappers must submit a Fur Catch Report following the season. The Special Use Permit contains additional regulations.

Other Regulations

Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

Alcohol

Dogs



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Dogs may be used for hunting in accordance with State regulations. When dogs are not actively engaged in authorized hunting activities, the following conditions apply. No dogs are allowed to disturb or endanger wildlife or people while on the refuge. All dogs while on the refuge must be under the control of their owners/handlers at all times or on a leash. No dogs are allowed to roam. All dogs must be on a leash when on hiking trails, or other areas so posted. Working a dog in refuge waters by tossing a retrieval dummy or other object for out-and-back exercise is allowed. Owners/handlers of dogs are also responsible for disposal of dog droppings on refuge public use concentration areas such as trails, sandbars, and boat landings. Field trials or commercial/professional dog training are prohibited.

Camping

Camping is prohibited during waterfowl hunting seasons within areas posted Waterfowl Hunting Closed Area, No Hunting Zone, No Entry Sanctuary, or on any sites not clearly visible from the main commercial navigation channel. Claimed campsites must be occupied each night. Camping is defined as erecting a tent or shelter of natural or synthetic material, preparing a sleeping bag or other bedding material for use, parking of a motor vehicle or mooring or anchoring of a vessel, for the apparent purpose of overnight occupancy, or, occupying or leaving personal property, including boats or other craft, at a site anytime between the hours of 11 p.m. and 3 a.m. on any given day.

Campfires

Campfires are allowed only in conjunction with camping, day use activities on beaches, or on the ice while ice fishing using only dead wood on the ground, or materials brought onto the refuge such as charcoal or firewood. Any unused firewood brought onto the refuge must be removed upon departure due to threat of invasive insects. See Public Use Regulations brochure for further regulations.

Warming Fires

The building or use of warming fires while hunting is prohibited.

Vegetation

Cutting, removing or damaging any tree or other vegetation except as allowed for blinds or by written permit is prohibited. For example, clearing shooting lanes or limbing trees for trees stands is prohibited.

Vehicles

All vehicles are prohibited on or across refuge lands at anytime, except on designated routes of travel, or on the ice over navigable waters accessed from boat landings. Parking beyond vehicle control barriers, or on grass or other vegetation is prohibited. Vehicles are not allowed to obstruct or impede any road, trail, fire lane, boat ramp, access gate, or other facility. Parking in