

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2007-2008 Hunt Regulations and Information



Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge *Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge* *Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge*

Welcome to the Assabet River, Great Meadows and Oxbow National Wildlife Refuges. These refuges are part of the Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex and are three of the more than 545 national wildlife refuges in the country. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers these refuges and is responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the people.

In response to hunter feedback and to streamline the hunt program, some refuge regulations and procedures have changed. Hunters are encouraged to read all hunt materials provided herein.

It is imperative that you conduct yourself with the highest level of consideration for the safety and enjoyment of others. Please respect and observe refuge regulations, boundaries and safety zones. A lack of hunter ethics on your part could result in a reduction or closure of refuge hunting opportunities in the future.

Hunt Seasons

Assabet River NWR is open for the hunting of white-tailed deer (archery, muzzleloader, shotgun), spring turkey, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, Eastern cottontail rabbit, and gray squirrel. Great Meadows NWR is open for white-tailed deer (archery only) and waterfowl (ducks and geese). Oxbow NWR is open for white-tailed deer (archery, muzzleloader, shotgun), spring and fall turkey, waterfowl (ducks and geese), snipe, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, Eastern cottontail rabbit, and gray squirrel. NOT ALL PARTS OF EACH REFUGE ARE OPEN FOR EACH HUNT SEASON. Be familiar with the hunt maps and regulations to ensure you are hunting in an open area.

Refuge Permits

All hunters are required to have a refuge-issued permit in their possession to scout or hunt on each refuge. Information about the application process is provided in a separate handout.

Refuge Regulations and Information

The information provided below outlines refuge specific hunt regulations. These regulations are a supplement to the general regulations governing hunting on national wildlife refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Please refer to 50 CFR 32.40 for refuge specific regulations. Please contact us if you are confused about any of our special regulations.

Closed Areas

Not all parts of the three refuges are open for hunting. Please ensure that you are hunting on land or along rivers where hunting is allowed. Maps will be included with your hunt permit to aid you

in understanding where you may and may not hunt. Please also comply with the 500-foot safety zone around occupied buildings and 150-foot safety zone from public roads.

The maps for waterfowl hunting at Great Meadows NWR indicate 8 buoys on the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. These buoys have been installed to indicate where hunting is allowed. Waterfowl hunting on the rivers is allowed only between buoys 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, and 7 and 8. There are no buoys on the Nashua River as waterfowl hunting there is only allowed south of Route 2 to the Still River Depot Road boat launch.

Nature Trails

Nature trails are located at all refuges in areas where hunting is allowed. Other outdoor enthusiasts may be using the Nashua River, Sudbury River or Concord Rivers during the hunting season. Please exercise caution when hunting on or near the rivers or near nature trails. It is your responsibility to know where trails are located. Also realize that some people may wander off trails (even though they are not supposed to!). Please be aware that non-hunters may not know that hunting is allowed on some parts of the refuges.

Refuge Management Activities

Refuge staff, volunteers, and contractors may be working at any time on any of the refuges during hunting season. Our management activities for wildlife and habitat management are important, and will continue to be conducted during the hunt season. We apologize if our activities disturb your hunt, but some disturbance will be unavoidable.

Maps

Maps are available that correspond to the hunt seasons and refuges. These are available online in both high and low resolution to suit your computer's capabilities. To learn about available hunting areas, appropriate seasons, and permissible weapons, please carefully view these maps. Some parts of all three refuges are open to archery hunting only.

Parking

You will receive a parking pass with your refuge permit. The number on this pass will correspond with your permit number. The pass must be visible on your dash at all times while parked in a designated parking lot.

We ask hunters to park in designated refuge hunt parking areas only as shown on the hunt maps. You may be fined or towed if your vehicle blocks gates, roads and buildings. We will continue to work on opening parking areas this fall. Also please realize that some hunt areas have limited or no parking access – we encourage carpooling or being dropped off and picked up.

Some parking areas are on non-Refuge lands (Rt. 225 in Bedford, Lake George Street in Devens) or are commonly used by the general public to access the Sudbury River. Please be courteous of others if parking in these areas. Also, ensure you are on refuge property before you begin hunting.

At Great Meadows NWR, hunters **MUST NOT** access the refuge from Town of Carlisle conservation lands. Parking is available off the driveway at 342 Maple Street, Carlisle. Please be courteous as this is a private residence.

Scouting

Scouting may only be done on the 4 Sundays prior to opening day of the permitted season.

Hours

Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than one and one-half hours before legal hunting hours and leave no later than one and one-half hours after legal sunset.

Tree stands

We are changing our policy this year on tree stands. Refuge hunters will be allowed to keep **one** tree stand within the refuge during the white-tailed deer archery, shotgun and muzzleloader seasons. Tree stands must be marked with the hunters permit number in such a fashion that it can be visible from the ground. Tree stands may be put up as soon as the 1st eligible scouting day of the permitted season and **must** be removed by January 15, 2007. Any tree stand remaining on the refuge after January 15 may be confiscated. Tree stands must be climbing or ladder type; no nails, spikes, screws or other objects may be driven into any tree in order to access the stand or secure the stand.

Having a “permanent” tree stand does not claim your right to a specific area of the refuge. Hunters must rely on good judgment and hunter ethics to avoid conflict. Tree stands left up are done so at the sole risk of the hunter. It is recommended that stands left on the Refuge are secured with a lock. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged property.

Non-hunting Companion

We no longer issue companion hunt permits. However, we will allow each permitted hunter to be accompanied by one non-hunting companion. Non-hunting companions cannot engage in the act of hunting but they can help retrieve and carry downed game. All non-hunting companions must carry personal identification with them and be willing to show it to any law enforcement official.

Non-hunting companions must be close enough to the hunter to speak to them without raising their voice. If they use a tree stand, it must be removed at the end of each day.

Hunter Orange

During any season in which it is legal to hunt deer with a shotgun or muzzleloader, we require all hunters to wear a minimum of **500** square inches of **solid-orange** clothing or material on your **chest, back and head (except if hunting waterfowl from a blind or boat)**. During all other times, if you are engaged in woodcock, ruffed grouse, squirrel, or cottontail rabbit hunting at Assabet River or Oxbow NWRs, as well as snipe hunting at Oxbow NWR, we require you to wear at least a solid-orange hat. Camouflage orange alone is NOT permitted. This is not only a safety consideration, but it is also respectful of refuge visitors, staff or contractors who may be in the area. During turkey season, hunters must wear an orange cap when moving to and between their hunt location.

Refuge Boundaries

We have attempted to ensure that refuge boundaries are marked and clearly visible. However, not all refuge areas are completely signed. Please refer to your refuge maps and call the refuge office if you need clarification on a refuge boundary.

Approved Shot

You may possess only approved nontoxic shot when hunting upland game (grouse, rabbit, squirrel) and migratory birds.

Dogs

Dogs are not allowed on any of the refuges while you are scouting. For seasons where State regulations allow the use of dogs, we allow no more than two dogs per hunting party.

Decoys

Decoys can only be used while hunting waterfowl and/or turkey.

Trail markers

We do not permit the marking of any tree, trail, or other refuge feature with flagging or paint. Hunters may use reflective tacks and other small reflective markers, which need to be removed at the end of the season. We encourage the use of a GPS to avoid putting up markers.

Law enforcement

Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by federal or state law enforcement officers. Any member of the refuge staff may ask to see your refuge permit.

Prohibited Activities

- Driving of deer by any means
- Littering
- Use of a spotlight or other artificial light to locate wildlife
- Baiting or hunting over bait, salt, or any attractant
- Use of electronic calls
- Driving or screwing a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree or hunting from any tree in which such an object has been driven
- Trimming or cutting vegetation greater than the diameter of a quarter
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages
- Use of ATVs, dirt bikes, and/or other motorized vehicles
- Target practice
- Camping and campfires
- Overnight parking
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles
- Dog training

An Important Message

Our wildlife is a valuable resource. Laws and regulations are intended to protect them, while allowing for some consumptive use. Hunters are encouraged to report any violations they may encounter to a State or Federal employee.

The future of hunting on the refuge requires responsible hunter behavior and compliance with regulations. You can help us by complying with these regulations, reporting unethical hunter behavior, and providing us with feedback.

Thank you. Have a safe and enjoyable hunting experience.