

Upper Mississippi River

*National Wildlife
& Fish Refuge*

Hunting Regulations





Hunting Information

Hunting has a deep history and tradition on the refuge with most hunting opportunities on islands and in flood plain forest, accessible mainly by boat. Over the years, hunters and hunting groups, have been very active in contributing to the refuge through voluntary support and conservation efforts.

Portions of the refuge are open to hunting and trapping in accordance with federal, state and local regulations. All regulations should be checked before hunting with the most restrictive regulation applying. 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. Hunters must be aware that individuals involved in other types of recreational activities may also be using the refuge and may not be aware of the hunting season.

Alcohol

Use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.

Campfires

Campfires are allowed using only dead wood on the ground, or materials brought onto the refuge such as charcoal or firewood. Burying live fires or hot coals is prohibited.

Camping

During waterfowl hunting seasons, camping is prohibited within areas posted Area Closed, No Hunting Zone, or on any sites not clearly visible from the main commercial navigation channel.

Closed Areas

The posted areas are designated on Refuge Pool Maps which can be obtained at any of the District Offices.

Firearms

Carrying, possessing, or discharging firearms or any other weapons on the refuge is prohibited, 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.

<i>License/Permits</i>	Hunters must possess a valid hunting license or firearms safety permit for the state in which they are hunting. There is no entrance fee and hunting areas can not be reserved.
<i>Non-toxic shot</i>	Shotgun hunters may only use or possess approved non-toxic shot while in the field, with the exception of turkey hunting.
<i>Protected Wildlife</i>	Only those species listed in the state hunting regulations with established open hunting seasons may be taken on the refuge. All other wildlife and plants on the refuge are protected at all times.
<i>State Boundary</i>	The main channel of the Mississippi River is not the state boundary line in all areas. For verification of the state boundary line, contact the Refuge Office, Department of Natural Resources, or refer to Pool Maps.
<i>Vegetation</i>	Cutting, removing or damaging any tree or other vegetation, standing or down, live or dead, is prohibited, without a written permit, except that willow may be used for trap stakes, commercial fishing gear, and hunting blinds. Dead wood on the ground may be cut and used for campfires.
<i>Vehicles</i>	All off-road vehicles are prohibited, including snowmobiles and wheeled or tracked all-terrain vehicles, on or across refuge lands at anytime, except on designated routes of travel, or on the ice over navigable waters accessed from boat landings.
<i>Weather</i>	Be alert to changing weather conditions. Shallow open water areas and the main river channel can become extremely dangerous in windy weather and visibility can be reduced to near zero in snow and fog. Carry extra warm clothes and emergency supplies when heading out in a boat.
	Additional regulations are published in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 50, Subchapter C, The National Wildlife Refuge System.

Voluntary Avoidance Area

The public is asked to refrain from boating through the portion of Lake Onalaska marked as a "Voluntary Avoidance Area" to allow waterfowl to rest and feed without being disturbed. This Avoidance Area is in effect from mid-October to mid-November.

Spring Lake Unit in Illinois - Waterfowl Sanctuary

In addition to being closed to all migratory bird hunting, the area is closed to all entry from October 1 to the end of the Illinois duck season each year. Other hunting, trapping and fishing are allowed beginning the day after the close of the Illinois duck hunting season until season closure or March 15, whichever occurs first. Visitors are allowed to use the parking lot, trail to the observation deck, and the observation deck during the Illinois duck hunting season.

Deer and Small Game Hunting

Locations posted as Area Closed are closed to all hunting until the day after the close of the duck hunting season.

Area Closed

Hunt Methods

Shining to locate game is prohibited on the refuge. You may use lights and dogs to hunt raccoons, and other specifically authorized small mammals, in accordance with state regulations. You may only use lights on the refuge at the point of kill. All other uses of lights for hunting on the refuge are prohibited. The use or possession of any drug on any arrow for bow hunting is prohibited on the refuge. The distribution of bait and the hunting over bait is prohibited.

Tree Stands

The construction or use of permanent platforms or ladders is prohibited. All stands must be removed from the refuge at the end of each day of hunting. No stand should damage a tree. Spikes, nails or screws may not be used for ladders or to attach a stand to a tree.

Migratory Game Bird Hunting

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

This regulations applies to Pools 4 through 11 only. The construction of permanent hunting blinds using manmade materials is prohibited. At the end of each day's hunt, you must remove all manmade blind materials you brought onto the refuge. 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, lumber, railroad ties, fence posts (wooden or metal), wire, nails, staples, netting or tarps. You are allowed to leave only seasonal blinds, made entirely of natural vegetation, and biodegradable twines, on the refuge. All such blinds are considered public property and open to use by any person on a first-come basis. You are allowed to gather only willow, grasses, marsh vegetation, and dead wood on the ground from the refuge for blind-building materials. Cutting or removing any other refuge trees or vegetation is prohibited. Constructing hunting blinds from rocks placed for shoreline protection is prohibited.

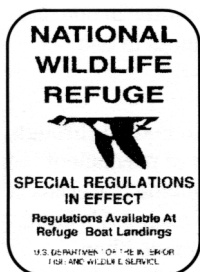
Decoys

On Pools 4 through 11, you may not place or leave decoys on the refuge during the time from 1/2 hour after the close of legal shooting hours, until 1 hour before the start of legal shooting hours.

Game Retrieval

Retrieving dead or wounded game birds from an Area Closed or a No Hunting Zone is allowed provided the hunter does not take a gun into the area and does not attempt to chase birds from the area. Controlled hunting and retrieving dogs may be used while engaged in authorized hunting activities during hunting season.

Refuge Signs - Look for these signs on the refuge



Boundary Signs

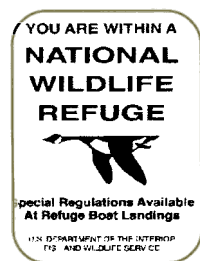
These signs mark the refuge boundary.



The area posted by these signs is closed to all migratory bird hunting. Other hunting and trapping is only 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. During waterfowl hunting season firearms must be unloaded while traveling through an Area Closed.



The area posted by these signs is closed to all hunting. Trapping is only allowed beginning the day after the close of the state duck hunting season, until season closure or March 15, whichever occurs first. Firearms must be unloaded and in a case while in a No Hunting Zone.



Interior Refuge Signs

These reminder signs are posted on some lands located inside the refuge boundary. (They do not mark the actual boundary line)



These reminder signs are posted on some lands located inside the Area Closed boundary. (They do not mark the actual boundary line)



*Waterfowl
Band Reporting*

Hunters can report waterfowl bands by mail to 12100 Beech Forest Road, Waterfowl Bands Laurel, MD 20708-4037 or by calling 1-800-327-2263 (BAND) or on the internet at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/recwbnd.htm

Turn in Poachers

Iowa 1-800-532-2020

Illinois 1-877-236-7529

Minnesota 1-800-652-9093

Wisconsin 1-800-847-9367

**Upper Mississippi River National
Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Headquarters
51 East Fourth Street, Room 101
Winona, MN 55987 (507/452 4232)**

Refuge Website

www.umesc.usgs.gov/umr_refuge.html



**Winona District (Pools 4-6)
51 East Fourth Street, Room 203
Winona, MN 55987 (507/454 7351)**

**La Crosse District (Pools 7-8)
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650 (608/783 8405)**

**McGregor District (Pools 9-11)
P.O. Box 460
McGregor, IA 52157 (563/873 3423)**

**Savanna District (Pools 12-14)
7071 Riverview Road
Thomson, IL 61285 (815/273 2732)**

**Deaf or hard of hearing persons may contact
the refuge through the Federal Relay
Number at 1 800/877 8339.**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov/>**