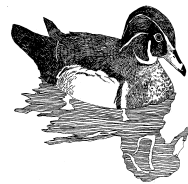




Hunting Regulations

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patuxent Research Refuge
North, Central, and South Tracts



2008 - 2009 Season



Have a Safe and Enjoyable Hunting Season!

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Patuxent Research Refuge Hunting Regulations 2008-2009 Season

Revised 07-31-08

Hunting at Patuxent Research Refuge is a privilege!

NOTE: All State of Maryland and federal hunting regulations are in effect unless otherwise noted here or posted at the Fish and Wildlife Service Hunting Control Station.

REMEMBER - HUNTERS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Read and understand these regulations prior to hunting.
- Wear solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange at all required times, unless otherwise noted.
- Unload all weapons while on any roadway, other than the exceptions listed in Section III.F. Firearms must be unloaded and cased while in the vehicle. Muzzleloaders may not have cap in place. Longbows and recurve bows must be unstrung. Compound and crossbows must be locked in such a way to render them inoperable and/or cased, with no arrows nocked, while in the vehicle.
- Keep a valid government photo ID and Maryland hunting license with them at all times.
- Stay within their designated area and know the hunting seasons.
- When hunting on Central Tract Headquarters/MR Lottery Hunts and Schafer Farm you must take an antlerless deer first.
- After taking any deer, properly complete and attach the field tag immediately.
- When authorized, all bucks harvested must have an outside antler spread of 15" or greater.
- Not engage in any law enforcement activity, but are encouraged to report violations.

HUNTING REGULATION CHANGES THIS YEAR:

- The refuge defines a Youth Hunter as anyone 17 years old or younger.
- Youth, 17 years old or younger, may harvest any deer with no restrictions on the November 15 North Tract (NT) Youth Deer Firearms Hunt.
- Hunters are only allowed to harvest bucks with an outside antler spread of 15" or greater. The refuge has adopted the Quality Deer Management philosophy/practice for the hunt season 2008-2009. Antler development increases rapidly with age if bucks are allowed to reach the age of 4 ½ years old. Requiring an outside antler spread of 15" or greater will produce a healthier deer herd, it will protect the younger bucks, and it will allow the bucks to reach an older age. Quality Deer Management will require every hunter to understand the philosophy and then embrace the concept while hunting. Remember, points are irrelevant, 15" spread is the new standard. See posters displayed at the HCS.
- Use of ground blinds are prohibited on the refuge except for Turkey Hunting and for all NT Deer Hunting Seasons.
- Crossbows may be used anytime on Schafer Farm when that area is open to hunting.

I. GOALS OF THE HUNTING PROGRAM

- A. To assist in the management of white-tailed deer and resident Canada goose populations on Patuxent Research Refuge.
- B. To provide wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities.

II. GENERAL HUNTING INFORMATION

- A. **Adverse Weather or Emergency Closures:** Call 301-725-0416, the weather closure line, for information regarding refuge closures. If Patuxent Research Refuge is closed for the day, no hunting will be permitted. If the South Tract, Central Tract, and Schafer Farm are closed but North Tract remains open, hunting will remain open on North Tract; however, hunting will not be permitted on South Tract, Central Tract, and Schafer Farm. If North Tract is closed, then all hunting will be closed. The Refuge Manager or designee can close any section of the refuge at any time.
- B. **Hunting Permits:** Hunting permits are purchased through the Meade Natural Heritage Association (MNHA) in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Patuxent Research Refuge through a cooperative agreement. Permits will be sold at the USFWS Hunting Control Station (HCS) at Bald Eagle Drive, located on the refuge’s North Tract starting in August on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 – 2 PM and on Wednesdays from 6 PM to sunset. Permits will be sold daily, September 2 through January 31, except for Sundays and federal holidays. For specific hunting information call 301-317-3825 or visit MNHA website at <http://www.mnha.net/> or Patuxent Research Refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/patuxent/MNHA.html>. In order to purchase a MNHA hunting permit and hunt specific species, you must have the following documents:
 - 1. Current Maryland Hunting License
 - 2. Hunter Safety Card (U.S., Germany, Great Britain, or Canada)
 - 3. Additional information required for specific activities may include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Bow Stamp for Bow Deer Hunters
 - b. Muzzleloader Stamp for Muzzleloader Deer Hunters
 - c. Properly signed State and Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamps for Migratory Bird Hunters
 - d. Original Maryland DNR-issued “Hunt from a Vehicle Permit” to document mobility impairment (if applicable) to be given to the HCS manager at time of permit purchase.
 - e. Original Maryland DNR-issued “Crossbow Permit” to document physical disability (if applicable) to be given to the HCS manager at time of permit purchase.
- C. **Fees:** A schedule of the fees for hunting permits will be posted at the HCS and included in announcements on the Hunter Information Line (301-317-3825). Senior and Junior Hunters may hunt at a reduced fee. Golden Age and Golden Eagle Passports or other entrance fee

programs are not applicable towards hunting permit fees.

- D. Hunting Operating Hours:** Hunters may check in at the HCS Monday through Saturday (closed on Sundays and all federal holidays) beginning at 5 AM during the hunting season (September 2 – January 31), except for early resident Canada goose (Sept. 2-15) where hunters may check in at 4:30 AM. Closing time varies according to sunset. The latest time a hunter may leave the HCS to begin hunting at North Tract is 1 hour before sunset. The latest time a hunter may leave HCS for Schafer Farm and South Tract will be 1½ hours before sunset to allow for travel time. The HCS will remain open 1½ hours after sunset. All hunters must check out by that time. During times when the Visitor Contact Station is closed, Bald Eagle Drive will be closed to non-hunting refuge visitors.
- E. Refuge Entry:** Entry to the refuge prior to 5 AM is prohibited except for on-duty HCS managers and MNHA Board of Directors to conduct official duties, except during the early resident Canada goose (Sept. 2 - 15) season when hunters may check in at 4:30 AM.
- F. Holidays:** Hunting ends at 12 PM on Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve and the HCS will close at 1 PM. No hunting will take place on the following holidays: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day or any other day the Federal Government closes.
- G. Scouting:** Scouting is allowed Monday through Saturday, from September 2 through September 15, after 12 PM until sunset. Scouting is allowed during legal hunting hours after September 16. Hunters participating in scouting activities must be unarmed and must be checked out at the HCS as scouting for a specific area of the refuge. Individuals scouting must wear, in a visible manner and at all times, a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange on your head, chest, and back.
- H. Penalties:** Failure to comply with any refuge regulation, state or other federal laws may result in the following:
1. Maximum of \$100,000 fine and/or 1-year imprisonment
 2. Arrest and/or forfeiture of hunting equipment and vehicles
 3. Forfeiture of harvested game
 4. Revocation of hunting permit and privileges
 - a. 1st offense up to 1 year from the date of the violation;
 - b. 2nd offense up to 2 years from the date of the violation;
 - c. 3rd offense a minimum of 5 years from the date of the violation;
 5. Permits may be revoked at refuge officer's discretion.

III. HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR ALL HUNTERS

- A.** Hunters are required to check in and out at the HCS every time they enter or exit the refuge including North Tract, Central Tract (CT) Headquarters and M-R Lottery Hunts, Schafer Farm, and South Tract hunting areas. Hunters leaving their designated hunt zone for any reason must proceed directly to the HCS to check out. Hunters must check back in when

returning. No hunting spots will be reserved.

- B.** The forested area between Range 1 and Range 2 is closed to all hunting. See map posted at the HCS.
- C.** Hunters will be restricted to the selected area and specified activity until they check out at the HCS.
- D.** Check-in procedures:
 - 1. Select hunting area. (Authorized hunting areas are indicated on a map displayed in the HCS.)
 - 2. Exchange MNHA permit for daily hunting or scouting pass and vehicle pass.
 - 3. Indicate activity (i.e. scouting, deer hunting, duck hunting, squirrel hunting, etc.)
- E.** While hunting:
 - 1. The hunter must have in their possession the following items and must be able to present these to any Law Enforcement Officer upon request.
 - a. Daily hunting or scouting pass
 - b. Valid Maryland State hunting license
 - c. Special permits for mobility impaired and physically disabled hunters, where applicable
 - d. Any other applicable stamps and permits
 - e. Drivers license or a valid government photo ID
 - 2. Daily vehicle pass shall be prominently displayed on vehicle dashboard.
 - 3. Wildlife Loop is closed to all vehicular access from Bailey Bridge to Charlie Gate. U.S. Government vehicles will be patrolling those areas. Parking will be permitted at the Bailey Bridge Parking Lot for areas between Bailey Bridge and Charlie Gate.
 - 4. Vehicles shall be parked inside the boundaries of their selected area except for those areas along the Wildlife Loop that are closed.
 - 5. Hunters will not park their vehicles in such a manner to block gates or other vehicle traffic and will not park in tall grass.
- F.** Check-out procedures:
 - 1. Exchange daily passes for MNHA permit.
 - 2. Notify HCS manager of any game harvested.
 - 3. Bring any animal harvested on the refuge to the weigh-in shed located next to the HCS for biological data collection. Jaws from all harvested deer will be extracted and tagged properly by HCS and/or refuge personnel.
 - 4. No harvested game, or parts thereof, once removed from the refuge, may be returned for disposal.
- G.** Hunting is not allowed on or across any road (paved, gravel, dirt, opened and/or closed), or within 50 yards of any road, 150 yards of any building or shed, or within any designated “No Hunting” or “Safety Zone” areas. Weapons must be unloaded in the described areas except:
 - 1. You may hunt from the road, 50 yards beyond the gate at Blue Heron Pond;

2. You may hunt from the road, 50 yards beyond the barricade at Wood Duck Pond;
 3. You may hunt from any permanent photo/hunt blind.
- H.** Driving of vehicles is restricted to established roads except noted otherwise.
- I.** Use of all-terrain and utility vehicles are prohibited on the refuge.
- J.** Baiting of game animals, including the use of any natural or man-made food sources, such as grain, salt, or commercial licks, “Deer Caine”, etc. is prohibited on the refuge. Scent lures and non-recorded calls are permitted, with the exception of incendiary or smoke lures. Scented pads and/or cotton balls are highly discouraged, however, if used, must be removed at the end of each hunting visit.
- K.** Spotlighting or use of headlights to spot wildlife is prohibited.
- L.** Any harassment of wildlife is prohibited.
- M.** It is unlawful to drive deer or take part in any deer drive. A DEER DRIVE is defined as an organized or planned effort to pursue, drive, chase or otherwise frighten or cause deer to move in the direction of any person or persons who are part of the organized or planned hunt and known to be waiting for the deer. Organized deer drives without a standing hunter are also prohibited.
- N.** Engagement of any MNHA member or permittee in any law enforcement activity is prohibited. Be a good witness and report violations.
- O. Possession or use of drugs and/or alcohol is prohibited on the refuge.**
- P. The use of biodegradable flagging is encouraged;** however, all flagging must be removed at the end of each hunting visit. The use of reflective pins or nails is prohibited.
- Q.** Every hunter pursuing a wounded animal or bird is expected to make every effort to recover the game, except for Sundays and federal holidays.
- R.** No hunting or scouting is permitted on Sundays or federal holidays. No hunt-related activities (archery target shooting, tracking, etc.) may take place unless the HCS is open.
- S.** Hunters who see dogs are instructed to notify refuge officers and the HCS manager as soon as possible. Do not shoot dogs!
- T.** Shooting of any non-target species, which includes but not limited to coyotes and foxes, is prohibited on the refuge.
- U.** The impact areas (D, E, F, and G) will remain closed Monday through Thursday throughout the season with the exception of the firearms and muzzleloader seasons.

- V. Area Z, formally known as Little K, is open to waterfowl hunters only.
- W. 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 to support a hunter is prohibited on National Wildlife Refuges. No screw-in steps or stands will be permitted. Report any permanent tree stands to the refuge officers and the HCS manager; mark the stand so it can be relocated.
- X. All hunters are encouraged to carry a flashlight, whistle (or other noise making device), compass, cell phone, and/or GPS when hunting all areas.
- Y. Accommodations may be made for physically disabled hunters in the following locations: CT Headquarters and M-R Lottery Hunts, Schafer Farm, South Tract, and other areas approved by the refuge manager.

IV. FIREARMS AND BOW REGULATIONS

- A. Shotguns, bow and arrows, crossbows (with DNR special permit otherwise only on Schafer Farm) and muzzleloaders (approved black powder rifles as stated in the current "Guide to Hunting and Trapping in Maryland") are the only weapons allowed to hunt wildlife on the refuge. Black powder handguns are prohibited. No other types of weapons are permitted on the refuge.
- B. All weapons must be unloaded while on any roadway, except areas identified in Section III.F. Firearms must be unloaded and cased while in the vehicle. Muzzleloaders may not have cap in place. Longbows and recurve bows must be unstrung. Compound and crossbows must be locked in such a way to render them inoperable and/or cased, with no arrows nocked, while in the vehicle.
- C. No discharge of weapons after legal shooting hours which includes unloading of muzzleloaders.
- D. Possession of buckshot is strictly prohibited.
- E. Use of approved non-toxic shot is required to hunt ducks, geese, doves and upland game. Gun size must be 20 gauge or larger. Possession or use of lead shot is prohibited on the refuge except for deer hunting with slugs and muzzleloaders.

V. HUNTER ORANGE

All hunters must wear, in a visible manner and at all times, a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange on your head, chest, and back except

noted otherwise. While carrying-in and carrying-out equipment (e.g. deer stands) solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange must be visible 360 degrees.

VI. YOUTH HUNTING

- A.** Definitions (per Refuge Regulations):
 1. Youth Hunter is anyone 17 years of age or younger.
 2. Junior (Waterfowl) Hunter is anyone 15 years of age or younger.
- B.** Youth Hunters must:
 1. Have a parent or legal guardian present to countersign/obtain a MNHA Hunting Permit;
 2. Be accompanied by a licensed MNHA permitted adult who is at least 21 years of age while hunting on the refuge and they must maintain visual contact with each other within a 50 yard distance.
- C.** Special Youth/Junior Hunting Days:
 1. Special youth and junior hunting days are applicable on the NT of the refuge only.
 2. Youth must be accompanied by a licensed MNHA permitted unarmed adult age 21 or older.
 3. Youth Deer Hunt - November 15, 2008
 - a. Youth may use shotguns, muzzleloaders, bow and arrow, or crossbow as specified by Maryland DNR.
 - b. Youth may harvest any deer without restrictions (3 maximum for NT).
 4. Youth Turkey Hunt - April 11, 2009
 5. Junior Waterfowl Hunt: Date to be announced.

VII. MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

Migratory game birds include and are limited to the following: geese, ducks, and mourning doves on the North Tract in accordance with all federal and state regulations and subject to the following conditions:

- A.** Use of approved non-toxic shot is required to hunt ducks, geese and doves. Gun size must be 20 gauge or larger. Possession or use of lead shot is prohibited.
- B.** Hunters are allowed one shotgun in the field. Additional shotguns are not allowed.
- C.** "Pass shooting" is highly discouraged on the refuge, due to higher crippling loss from this type of hunting. The use of decoys, calls and dogs is the preferred hunting method for ducks and geese.
- D.** Migratory game bird hunters are required to wear at least a solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange hat or cap when walking from their vehicle to their hunting site. "Jump shooters" must wear at least a solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange hat or cap while hunting. If they stop and stand, they may replace the solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange hat or cap with a camouflage one.
- E.** Goose, duck and dove hunting is suspended during the Youth Deer Hunt, deer firearms seasons and the early deer muzzleloader season. These species can be harvested during the late muzzleloader season.
- F.** Use of retrieving dogs is mandatory when hunting ducks and geese within 50 yards of the

following impounded waters, Bailey Bridge Marsh, Blue Heron Pond, Lake Allen, New Marsh, and Wood Duck Pond. Dogs are required to be under the control of their owner at all times. Dogs running loose or unattended can be seized by law enforcement officers.

- G.** Duck and goose hunters who are hunting impounded waters with another person who is in possession of the required retrieving dog must check in at the HCS with the person in possession of the retriever.
- H.** Area M will be opened to waterfowl hunting until 11 AM daily during the 2008-2009 season.
- I.** Area Z, formally known as Little K, is open to waterfowl hunters only during the refuge waterfowl seasons.
- J. Resident Canada Goose Hunting:**
 - 1. Hunters may take Canada geese only during the established early resident Canada goose season. A late resident Canada goose season will be announced later.
 - 2. Those possessing a hunting permit may pre-register for the opening day of the early resident Canada goose season starting at 10 AM on Sunday, August 24. You must pre-register in person at the HCS and you are allowed to pre-register two other individuals.
 - 3. On opening day of early resident Canada goose season, all pre-registered cardholders will be honored only until one hour before sunrise. Remaining areas will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis by means of the drive-up window only.
 - 4. Resident Canada goose hunters may hunt on Range 1 from September 2-15, Monday through Thursday, from one-half hour before sunrise to 12 PM. They may hunt other areas of the refuge that are opened until one-half hour after sunset. Fridays and Saturdays, areas D, E, F and G will be opened all day. Resident Canada goose legal hunting hours, during the September seasons, is from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset as stated in the Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping.
 - 5. Resident Canada goose hunters may drive on Range 1 interior roads to set-up and retrieve goose decoys. However, vehicles must be parked along the Range 1 exterior roads and not behind the berm.
 - 6. Wading is prohibited in all impounded waters except for the placement and retrieval of decoys.
 - 7. Canada goose hunting parties will arrive at the sites in groups to reduce disturbance to the birds and other hunters. Canada goose hunting ends at official sunset as stated in the Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping.
- K. Mourning Dove Hunting:**
 - 1. Dove hunters are not allowed to check in prior to 12 PM from September 2 – October 11.
 - 2. Dove hunters are allowed to hunt within the areas D, E, F and G, on Fridays and Saturdays in accordance to refuge hunt dates.
- L. Duck Hunting:**
 - 1. Wading is prohibited in all impounded waters except for the placement and retrieval of decoys.

2. Duck hunting parties will arrive at the sites in groups to reduce disturbance to the birds and other hunters. Duck hunting ends at official sunset as stated in the Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping.
3. Wood Duck Pond Road will be blocked with a barricade. Hunters are allowed to hunt from the road 50 yards beyond the barricade.
4. Late duck season to be announced later along with information on pre-registration and opening day procedures.

NORTH TRACT – MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING			
Species	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Early Resident Canada Goose	Sept. 2 – Sept. 15	8 per day	
Mourning Dove	Sept. 2 – Oct. 11 (12 PM to sunset only) Nov. 17 – Nov. 28 Dec. 20 – Jan. 3	12 per day	
Junior Waterfowl Hunt	To be announced later		
Ducks & Late Resident Canada Goose	To be announced later		

VIII. UPLAND GAME HUNTING

Upland game is limited to gray squirrels, eastern cottontail rabbits, and woodchuck on the North Tract, and wild turkey on North Tract and the MR area of Central Tract in accordance with all federal and state regulations and subject to the following conditions:

- A.** Use of approved non-toxic shot is required to hunt upland game. Gun size must be 20 gauge or larger. Possession or use of lead shot is prohibited.
- B.** All small game hunters must wear, in a visible manner and at all times, a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange on your head, chest, and back except as noted otherwise.
- C.** All small game hunting is suspended during the Youth Deer Firearms Hunt and all deer muzzleloader and firearms hunting seasons.

D. Spring Wild Turkey Hunt

1. The Spring 2009 Wild Turkey hunt will follow all rules and regulations listed in Section II with the exception that turkey hunters are exempt from the required 400 square inches of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange. However, turkey hunters are highly encouraged to use fluorescent orange while hunting.
2. Separate lottery hunts will be available for youth, disabled, mobility-impaired, and general hunters. Hunters must decide which category to insert their name. The four hunting categories are:
 - a. Youth Hunters: All individuals who are 17 years of age or younger on the date of the hunt.
 - b. Disabled Hunters: Individuals who are physically or mentally impaired as

defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. They must show written verification of their disability at the time of entry into the lottery. This written verification may take the form of a certification from a State or Federal agency authorized to give such certifications: (disabled motor vehicle tags will not be accepted) or a letter and/or "Disabled Eligibility Certification" form from a medical doctor with original physician's signature and physician's license number, verifying the individual's disability. A blank certification form will be provided by the refuge to individuals upon request.

- c. **Mobility-Impaired Hunters:** The refuge defines "mobility-impaired" as a physical condition that severely impairs a person's mobility, which requires the assistance of a wheelchair, braces, crutches, or other similar aids. This includes paraplegics, hemiplegics, and quadriplegics; persons dependent upon a wheelchair for ambulation; persons required to use assisting aids to walk; persons required to use braces or prostheses on both legs; and complete single-leg amputees. They must show written verification of their mobility-impairment at the time of entry into the lottery. This written verification may take the form of a certification from a State or Federal agency authorized to give such certifications; or a letter and/or "Mobility-Impaired Eligibility Certification" form from a medical doctor with an original physician's signature and physician's license number, verifying the individual's permanent mobility-impairment. A blank certification form will be provided by the refuge to the individual upon request.
 - d. **General Hunters:** Individuals who do not qualify as a Youth, Disabled, or Mobility-Impaired hunter are considered a general hunter and may enter the lottery for the general hunters.
3. Turkey hunters must attend a National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) clinic if they have not attended one in the past. Each hunter must also pattern their shotgun or qualify with their bow and arrow prior to hunting turkey on the refuge.
 4. Turkey hunters must use shotguns loaded with #4, #5, or #6 non-toxic shot or vertical bows. Crossbows may be used in accordance with state regulations.
 5. Only mature male wild turkeys with a beard over three inches may be harvested. Hunters are limited to one turkey per year. No more than 12 turkeys total may be harvested from the refuge for the 2009 spring season.
 6. Turkey decoys may be used in accordance with state regulations, and must be removed from the refuge at the end of hunting visit.
 7. Ground blinds may be used; however, no natural vegetation, from either on-refuge or off-refuge, may be used to supplement the blind material. Blinds must be removed from the refuge at the end of hunting visit.
 8. The NWTf and MNHA will offer turkey hunting assistants for those requesting them prior to the date of the hunt.
 9. All members of the turkey hunting party should wear a solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange cap while moving. Successful hunters should also tie an orange ribbon or cloth around the neck of the turkey when carrying it out of the woods, or completely conceal it in a game bag.

NORTH TRACT – UPLAND GAME HUNTING			
Species	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc
Gray Squirrel	Oct. 1 – Jan. 31	6 per day	Excluding the Youth Deer Hunt, and all deer firearms and muzzleloader seasons.
Woodchuck	Oct. 1 – Jan. 31	unlimited	
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit	Nov. 1 – Jan. 31	4 per day	
Youth Spring Wild Turkey	April 11	1 per year	Youth 17 years old and younger.
Spring Wild Turkey	April 18 – May 23	1 per year	Saturdays and Mondays only

IX. DEER HUNTING

The taking of mature does is encouraged for management purposes.

- A. Official Deer Seasons:** There are three official deer hunting seasons at Patuxent Research Refuge: Bow, Firearms, and Muzzleloader.
- Deer taken from Patuxent Research Refuge shall not count against the Maryland state bag limits and will not require BONUS stamps.
 - The State of Maryland defines an antlerless deer as a deer that is not antlered, for example, a deer that has two antlers each, but only two inches tall are considered antlerless.
 - The State of Maryland defines an antlered deer as a deer with 2 or more points to one antler, or a deer with one antler 3 or more inches long, **HOWEVER, the point system is out and the refuge only allows the harvesting of mature bucks with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater.**
 - Hunters are only allowed to harvest bucks with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater. The refuge has adopted the Quality Deer Management philosophy/practice for the hunt season 2008-2009. Antler development increases rapidly with age if bucks are allowed to reach the age of 4 ½ years old. Requiring an outside antler spread of 15” or greater will produce a healthier deer herd, it will protect the younger bucks, and it will allow the bucks to reach an older age. Quality Deer Management will require every hunter to understand the philosophy and then embrace the concept while hunting. Remember, points are irrelevant, 15” spread is the new standard.
- B. Weapons:**
- The hunter must pass a proficiency test with each weapon prior to hunting deer on the refuge.
 - Only shotguns, 20 gauge or larger, loaded with slugs, and muzzleloaders, .40 caliber or larger, with not less than 60 grains of black powder or a black powder equivalent shall be used for hunting deer during the Firearms and Muzzleloader seasons.
 - The refuge prohibits the use of bow and arrow during the early muzzleloader seasons (Oct. 16 – 18 and Oct. 20 – 25) as well as the deer firearms seasons (Nov. 29 – Dec. 13 and Jan. 9 – 10) with the exception of Schafer Farm where only bow hunting is allowed. Muzzleloaders may be used during the deer firearms seasons. Bow hunting is allowed on North and South Tracts during the late muzzleloader season (December 20 – Jan. 3).

C. Hunter Orange:

1. All hunters must wear, in a visible manner and at all times, a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange on your head, chest, and back.
2. Bow hunters must follow this requirement when moving to and from the deer stand or their hunting spot and while tracking or dragging out their deer. We do not require bow hunters to wear solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange when positioned to hunt except during the North Tract Youth Deer Hunt (November 15) and the late muzzleloader season (December 20 through January 3) when they must wear it at all times.

D. Only portable tree stands with Full Body Safety Harnesses are permitted on the refuge. Portable tree stands must be a minimum of 10 feet off the ground and must be removed daily from the refuge. 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 to support a hunter is prohibited on National Wildlife Refuges. No screw-in steps or stands will be permitted.

E. Ground hunting blinds are allowed on NT during all deer hunting seasons; however, no natural vegetation, from either on-refuge or off-refuge, may be used to supplement the blind material. Ground hunting blinds must display 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange on the top of the blind and be visible 360 degrees. Hunters must also wear the required 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange unless otherwise noted. Blinds must be removed from the refuge at the end of hunting visit.

F. The field tag must be filled out completely and immediately attached on all harvested deer.

G. Deer hunters with a State "Hunt from a Vehicle Permit" may hunt from the roadside. The vehicle must be stopped and parked prior to loading any weapon.

H. All deer harvested will have their jaws extracted before leaving the refuge by HCS and/or refuge personnel.

I. Pre-registration and Opening Day of Firearms:

1. Those possessing a hunting permit may pre-register for the opening day of Deer Firearms season starting at 10 AM on Sunday, November 16. You must pre-register in person at the HCS and you are allowed to pre-register two other individuals.
2. On opening day of the Deer Firearms Season, all pre-registered cardholders will be honored only until one hour before sunrise. Remaining areas will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis by means of the drive-up window only.

J. Wounded Deer and Tracking:

1. A hunter wounding a deer in the evening will be expected to return the next day (except Sundays and federal holidays) to continue searching or risk losing their hunting privileges. They must notify a refuge law enforcement officer immediately.
2. If deer hunters need assistance tracking wounded game beyond 1½ hours after sunset,

they must report in person to the HCS or if they are hunting on the refuge’s Central Tract Headquarters/M-R, Schafer, or South Tract area, they must call the HCS. The HCS manager will call a refuge law enforcement officer to gain consent to track.

3. If permission is granted, the HCS manager will arrange for “trackers” to assist the hunter and keep the HCS open. “Trackers” must be from the official tracking team list approved by the refuge. All tracking will end 2 ½ hours after sunset. No person shall kill or cripple deer without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the animal, even if it includes next day tracking, otherwise they risk losing their hunting privileges.
4. There will be no tracking on Sundays and federal holidays.

K. North Tract Hunt:

NORTH TRACT – WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow	Sept. 15 – Oct. 15 Oct. 27 – Nov. 28 Dec. 15 – Dec. 19 Jan. 5 – Jan. 8 Jan. 12 – Jan. 31	2 must be antlerless and Only one antlered deer with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater can be harvested.	3 deer per year no matter what weapon used.
Muzzleloader	Oct. 16 – Oct. 18 Oct. 20 – Oct. 25 (antlerless only) Dec. 20 – Jan. 3		Harvest can be in any order.
Firearms	Nov. 29 – Dec. 13 Jan. 9 – Jan. 10		
Youth Firearms	Nov. 15 (17 years old or younger)	Any deer without restrictions	
<p>Youth, 17 years old or younger, may harvest any deer without restrictions on Nov. 15 in NT. Tree stands are not mandatory. Ground hunting blinds are allowed on NT during all deer hunting seasons. Each blinds must display 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored fluorescent hunter orange on the top of the blind and be visible 360 degrees.</p>			

K. Central Tract (CT) Headquarters and M-R Lottery Hunts:

1. There are two separate lottery hunts, one for shotgun and one for bow.
2. Signup for the lottery hunts at the HCS at least two weeks prior to the hunting date.
3. An individual may place their name in each lottery (shotgun and bow) one time per hunt. If pulled for both, must choose one; the other will be assigned to an alternate.
4. Selection for participation in the Central Tract Headquarters and M-R lottery hunts will be by computer lottery. There are 3 bow and 39 shotgun slots. Nine of the shotguns slots are in the M-R area and are not assigned to a specific site.
5. Lists of selected hunters and check-in times will be posted at the HCS at least one week prior to the scheduled hunt.
6. Selected hunters must check in by the specified time. After specified time, permits will be issued to other hunters by random drawing, until specified cut-off time. Drawing will be performed at the HCS.
7. Hunters selected for stand sites 1-33 will access Central Tract off MD Route 197 at the

intersection of Powder Mill Road. They will be briefed by refuge staff. Shotgun stand sites 1-30 and bow stand sites 31-33 are marked with a reflective band on the assigned tree. Zones of fire are marked with arrows. All firing must be within the zone of fire.

8. Shotguns with slugs may be used only at sites 1-30 and in M-R 1-9. Bow and arrow may be used only at sites 31-33. No muzzleloaders may be used.
9. Hunters selected for the M-R 1-9 will be briefed at the HCS by the Hunting Control Manager. They will access the M-R area via Duvall Bridge gate.
10. Hunters must leave the field by 12 PM on morning hunts or by ½ hour after sunset on evening hunts.
11. There are two assigned spots for the firearms lottery hunt for physically disabled or mobility impaired hunters. Accommodations at other locations may be made and must be coordinated with refuge staff

CT HEADQUARTERS & M-R LOTTERY – WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow and/or Shotgun	Oct. 4 (5 AM – 12 PM) Oct. 18 (12 PM – ½ hour after sunset) Nov. 8 (12 PM – ½ hour after sunset) Dec. 13 (5 AM – 12 PM) Jan. 10 (5 AM – 12 PM) Jan. 24 (12 PM – ½ hour after sunset)	First deer harvested for the year must be antlerless. Only one antlered deer with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater can be harvested. Four (4) deer per day can be harvested.	
This is a deer management hunt and no species other than deer can be harvested. The use of a tree stand and Full Body Safety Harness is mandatory.			

L. Schafer Farm Hunt:

1. Only bow and arrow/crossbow may be used at Schafer Farm. No shotguns or muzzleloaders may be used.
2. The use of a tree stand and Full Body Safety Harness is mandatory.
3. Schafer Farm setback boundaries are marked with orange signs. Stay within boundaries.
All access for Schafer Farm will be through Gate # 11 off of MD Route 197.

SCHAFER FARM – WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow & Crossbow	Oct. 18 – Oct. 25 Nov. 1 – Nov. 8 Nov. 29 – Dec. 13 Jan. 3 – Jan. 10 Jan. 17 – Jan. 24	First deer harvested for the year must be antlerless. Only one antlered deer with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater can be harvested. 4 deer per day can be harvested.	
This is a deer management hunt and no species other than deer can be harvested. The use of a tree stand and Full Body Safety Harness is mandatory.			

M. South Tract Hunt:

1. The use of a tree stand and Full Body Safety Harness is mandatory.

2. All access to South Tract hunting areas A, B, and C will be through the Old Beltsville Airport. The entrance gate is located off Springfield Road. Designated parking areas include: east and south ends of the old runway, accessible areas of Telegraph Road, and along the tram route.
3. Access to South Tract hunting area D will be through Gate # 4 off MD Rt. 197. Parking will be at the boat barn or along the designated parking area.
4. No driving or parking along the Entrance and Exit Roads to and from the National Wildlife Visitor Center is allowed for any purpose, including the retrieval of game, when checked out to hunt any area.
5. Setback boundaries are marked with orange and yellow flags on white poles along the National Wildlife Visitor Center Entrance and Exit Roads and a portion of Telegraph Road, at 200 feet. Please stay within boundaries.
6. No shooting is permitted into any open meadow or field area. These areas may have active research or management activity ongoing throughout the hunting season.

SOUTH TRACT – WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING			
Season	Open Season	Bag Limit	Misc.
Bow	Sept. 20 – Sept. 27 (Areas A, B, and D) Oct. 4 – Oct. 11 (Areas A, B, and D) Oct. 25 – Nov. 1 (Areas A, B, and D) Nov. 8 – Nov. 15 (Areas A, B, and D) Jan. 5 – Jan. 8 (Areas A, B, C, and D) Jan. 17 – Jan. 24 (Areas A, B, C, and D)	Four (4) deer per season; Only one antlered deer with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater can be harvested.	Harvest in any order.
Muzzleloader	Dec. 20 – Jan. 3 (Areas A, B, C, and D)	Four (4) deer per season; Only one antlered deer with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater can be harvested.	Harvest in any order.
Firearms	Nov. 29 – Dec. 13 (Areas A, B, C, and D) Jan. 9 – Jan. 10 (Areas A, B, C, and D)	Four (4) deer per season; Only one antlered deer with an outside antler spread of 15” or greater can be harvested.	Harvest in any order.
This is a deer management hunt and no species other than deer can be harvested. The use of a tree stand and Full Body Safety Harness is mandatory.			

X. SAFETY INFORMATION

Avoidance of hunting accidents is of primary concern. Strict compliance with the following rules for safety is essential.

- A. If at any time while hunting on the refuge any ordnance is encountered (hand grenades, artillery simulators, or any other unknown metal object), do not touch or try to move it. Mark the exact location and immediately report the discovery to the HCS manager who will notify refuge personnel at the Visitor Contact Station.
- B. Hunters must be aware of their safety when hunting around any old building foundations.
- C. If you get lost, stay where you are. A search will be conducted. If you are carrying a personal two-way radio and you are lost or need assistance, set your radio to Channel 1 for MNHA. If you are carrying a cell phone, call the HCS at 301-317-3825.
- D. In the event of an accident or injury, initiate appropriate first aid measures and report the incident immediately to the HCS manager. If the HCS is unstaffed, call 911, and then notify refuge law enforcement personnel at 240-882-9078. To ensure rapid response give the following information:
- WHERE - Location of the emergency; be specific. Give section letter, distance from road, and accessibility to site (ground and air).
 - PHONE NUMBER - Provide the phone number you are calling from.
 - WHAT HAPPENED - Description of accident or injuries.
 - HOW MANY - Provide the number of possible victims needing care.
 - WHAT IS BEING DONE - Is first aid, CPR, etc. being performed?
 - YOUR NAME - Provide your full legal name.
 - STAY ON THE LINE - Provide any additional information requested.
 - YOU HANG UP LAST - Let the person you called hang up first.
 - ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO MEET THE RESCUE SQUAD AT THE ENTRANCE GATE AND ESCORT THEM TO THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL THE HUNTERS!