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Century
of Conservation!*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



News Release

**Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge
Charlie Marshall, Refuge Park Ranger
P.O. Box 158
Mound City, Missouri 64470**

**660/442-3187, ext. 4, FAX: 660/442-5248
Email: Charlie_Marshall@fws.gov
Date: April 3, 2009**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Charles Marshall (Refuge Park Ranger)

SQUAW CREEK REFUGE

MUSHROOM HUNTING DATES

Mound City, Missouri - - Spring mushroom hunting season will open on the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge on April 10 and end May 20. No permits are required to enter designated areas for mushroom hunting. Refuge officials are concerned with the number of visitors entering unauthorized areas for mushroom hunting. Any violations for trespassing by visitors in the bottomlands or other unauthorized Squaw Creek Refuge property will be subject to citations and penalties.

Mushroom hunting is permitted only on the east side of Highway 159 in the Loess Bluffs within Refuge boundaries. The rest of the Refuge is closed for mushroom hunting. Refuge boundaries are identified by “Blue Goose Boundary Signs.” Detailed maps showing the designated mushroom hunting areas can be obtained at the Squaw Creek Refuge headquarters or viewed on signage in Refuge parking areas. The bottomland areas are home to special protected wildlife species such as nesting bald eagles, rattlesnakes and delicate spring flowers. Visitors must be aware that any disturbance in these areas can be detrimental to the floral, fauna, within refuge wildlife habitats.

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Mushrooms are actually the fruits of a fungus. The mushroom produces spores which are the seeds of the fungus. The common name for the mushroom collected by hunters on the refuge is morel. Morels are easy to recognize by the trained hunter and delicious to eat, therefore making it a popular edible wild mushroom in Missouri. Morels are found in a variety of habitats, including moist woodlands and river bottoms. Caution is required for collecting wild mushrooms because a few are deadly and many more are mildly poisonous. All of the edible mushrooms are distinctive in some obvious way. The publication "Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms" by Barbara Bassett is an excellent reference to help identify mushrooms. You can obtain a copy from the Squaw Creek Refuge headquarters or from the Missouri Department of Conservation. Further information on mushroom picking can be obtained by calling the Squaw Creek Refuge at (660) 442-3187. **Only mushroom hunting is permitted on open refuge lands.**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 100-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitats such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

For further information about programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region, please visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/squawcreek>.

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