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The following refuge units have been opened for hunting and/or fishing, and are listed in alphabetical order with applicable refuge-specific regulations.

BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting. We allow hunting of goose and duck on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:

1. We require refuge permits for all hunters regardless of age. We require that hunters possess a valid State hunting license, any required stamps, and a photo identification. Permits are nontransferable.

2. All refuge hunters must abide by the terms and conditions of the refuge permit.

B. Upland Game Hunting. We allow hunting of eastern wild turkey on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions: Conditions A1 and A2 apply.

C. Big Game Hunting. We allow hunting of deer on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:

1. We require refuge permits for all hunters regardless of age. We require that permits must be in the hunter’s possession along with a valid Maryland State hunting license, any required stamps, and a photo identification. Permits are nontransferable.

2. We require that hunters obtain deer hunt permits only through the mail, by mailing an application and administration fee to the refuge after applications are available in July. To obtain an application and regulations leaflet (including designated areas and map, dates of hunts, bag limits, and permit fees) for archery, youth, muzzleloader, and shotgun hunts, we require hunters to contact the refuge hunting coordinator or refuge Visitor Center, which is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

3. We allow archery hunters to obtain a permit; permits are available at the Visitor Center, after the first week of September until the end of the archery season.

4. We allow walk-in youth hunters to obtain a permit at the check station on the day of the hunt.

5. A licensed or exempt-from-licensed unarmored adult, age 21 or older, must accompany youth hunters (at least age 12 but less than age 16) at all times in the field.

6. We require a physician to certify “wheelchair-bound” permanently disabled hunters; and an assistant, who must not use a firearm, must accompany these hunters. We require the permanently disabled certification to accompany the hunters’ permit application.

7. We only allow participants possessing authorized permits to enter the hunt areas.

8. Beginning at 5 a.m., we require check-in for the youth hunts, muzzleloader hunts, and shotgun hunts.

9. At the refuge check station on the day of the kill for all firearm hunts, we require...
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A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting.

1. We require hunters to carry a signed refuge permit with them at all times while hunting.

2. We restrict hunting to the designated hunting areas of the refuge, as listed in the regulations leaflet (obtained with application by mail or at the Visitor Center) (see §27.31 of this chapter).

3. We prohibit possession of a loaded weapon (see §27.42(b) of this chapter) on or within 50 feet (15 m) of any graveled, dirt, or paved refuge road or any designated parking area.

4. We require anglers to attend all fish and crab sales.

B. Upland Game Hunting.

1. We require all hunters to register harvested deer at the refuge for the archery hunt, but we require hunters to properly tag and present for examination all deer killed.

2. We require hunters to seek refuge employee assistance to retrieve deer from closed areas.

3. We do not require check-in or check out at the refuge for the archery hunt, but we require hunters to register harvested deer at one of the State check stations designated by the refuge.

4. We only allow weapons that meet State regulations (bows and arrows for archery, shotguns with slugs and/or No. 1 buckshot or larger for youth hunts and shotgun hunts, and muzzleloading rifles and muzzleloading shotguns only for muzzleloader hunts). We prohibit handguns and breech-loading rifles.

5. We prohibit the use of air boats on refuge waters.

C. Big Game Hunting.

1. We only allow access to hunt areas on designated roads and parking areas indicated on hunt maps in the regulations leaflet (obtained with application by mail or at the Visitor Center) (see §27.31 of this chapter).

2. We require adult hunters, age 21 or older, to accompany permitted youth hunters while scouting.

3. We require a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid hunter-orange clothing to be worn on the head, chest, and back of all hunters during the youth, muzzleloader, and shotgun hunts.

4. We require the use of a tree stand that elevates the hunter a minimum of 8 feet (240 cm) above the ground for hunting Area B2 (except disabled hunters). We allow temporary, removable, ladder, fixed, and climbing-type tree stands that do not damage trees in all other areas (see §§32.2(1)).

5. We prohibit screw-in steps, spikes, or other objects that may damage trees.

6. We prohibit hunting from a permanently constructed tree stand.

7. We allow hunters to preinstall tree stands during the scouting days for use during selected hunts and to leave the tree stands in the hunting area at the hunter’s discretion. We require hunters to remove all stands the last day of the refuge hunting season (we are not responsible for damage, theft, or other hunter occupancy) (see §27.93 of this chapter).

8. We prohibit dogs in hunt areas.

9. We prohibit driving deer during youth hunts.

10. We require hunters to seek refuge employee assistance to retrieve deer from closed areas.

11. We do not require check-in or check out at the refuge for the archery hunt, but we require hunters to register harvested deer at one of the State check stations designated by the refuge.

12. We only allow weapons that meet State regulations (bows and arrows for archery, shotguns with slugs and/or No. 1 buckshot or larger for youth hunts and shotgun hunts, and muzzleloading rifles and muzzleloading shotguns only for muzzleloader hunts). We prohibit handguns and breech-loading rifles.

13. We only allow access to hunt areas on designated roads and parking areas indicated on hunt maps in the regulations leaflet (obtained with application by mail or at the Visitor Center) (see §27.31 of this chapter).

14. We only allow scouting on designated days listed in the regulations for permitted hunters.

15. We do not require check-in or check out for scouting.

16. We prohibit firearms or other weapons on the refuge when scouting.

17. We require adult hunters, age 21 or older, to accompany permitted youth hunters while scouting.

18. We require a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid-colored daylight fluorescent-orange clothing to be worn on the head, chest, and back of all hunters during the youth, muzzleloader, and shotgun hunts.

19. We require the use of a tree stand that elevates the hunter a minimum of 8 feet (240 cm) above the ground for hunting Area B2 (except disabled hunters). We allow temporary, removable, ladder, fixed, and climbing-type tree stands that do not damage trees in all other areas (see §§32.2(1)).

20. We prohibit screw-in steps, spikes, or other objects that may damage trees.

21. We prohibit hunting from a permanently constructed tree stand.

22. We allow hunters to preinstall tree stands during the scouting days for use during selected hunts and to leave the tree stands in the hunting area at the hunter’s discretion. We require hunters to remove all stands the last day of the refuge hunting season (we are not responsible for damage, theft, or other hunter occupancy) (see §27.93 of this chapter).

23. We prohibit dogs in hunt areas.

24. We prohibit hunting from or shooting across a roadway where we allow vehicle traffic.

25. We prohibit driving deer during youth hunts.

26. We prohibit commercialized guiding.

D. Sport Fishing.

1. We allow fishing and crabbing on designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:

2. We restrict fishing and crabbing to boats and the Key Wallace roadway across the Little Blackwater River.

3. We require a valid State sport fishing license. We do not require a refuge permit.

4. We require anglers to attend all fish and crab sales.

5. We prohibit boat launching from refuge lands except for canoes/kayaks at the canoe/kayak ramp located near the Blackwater River Bridge on Route 335. A public launching ramp is available at Shorter’s Wharf.

6. We prohibit the use of air boats on refuge waters.

EASTERN NECK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting.

[Reserved]

B. Upland Game Hunting.

[Reserved]

C. Big Game Hunting.

1. We require hunters to carry a signed refuge permit when scouting on the designated scouting days and when hunting. Hunters must turn in their hunt permit at the refuge headquarters at the end of the hunt day or when leaving the refuge during the hunt day at the check-in station.

2. We only allow use of bow and arrows, shotguns, and muzzleloaders for deer hunting and shotguns for turkey hunting.

3. We prohibit possession of a loaded weapon (see §27.42(b) of this chapter) on or within 50 feet (15 m) of any graveled, dirt, or paved refuge road or any designated parking area.

4. We require a minimum of 400 square inches (2,600 cm²) of solid hunter-orange clothing or material as the outermost layer of clothing on the head, chest, and back when deer hunting.

5. You must wear a hunter-orange cap or hat when moving to or from your blind or stand when turkey hunting.

6. Each youth hunter (age 15 or under) must remain within sight and normal voice contact of an adult age 18 or older. Children must be at least age 10 to hunt on the refuge.

7. We only allow parking in designated parking areas.

8. We prohibit hunting in the No Hunting Zones; however, you may walk through these areas with an unloaded weapon (see §27.42(b) of this chapter) (no shells in the chamber or magazine cap off of the muzzleloader).

9. For deer hunting, the legal shooting hours are from legal sunrise to legal sunset.
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10. For turkey hunting, the legal shooting hours are from 1½ hour before legal sunrise to 12 p.m. (noon).
11. We prohibit entry to the refuge by boats during refuge hunts.
12. We only allow persons possessing a refuge hunt permit to be on the refuge during hunting.
13. We prohibit the use of ATVs during refuge hunts (see §27.31(f) of this chapter).
14. We allow the use of marking tape, reflective pins, or other removable materials to mark trails to and from stands. You must remove the marking material (see §27.93 of this chapter) at the end of your hunt day. We prohibit paint or any other permanent marking on any mark trails.

D. Sport Fishing.

We allow fishing and crabbing in designated areas of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:
1. We allow fishing and crabbing from Eastern Neck Island bridge.
2. We only allow fishing and crabbing from April 1—September 30 during daylight hours at the Ingleisle Recreation Area.
3. We only allow fishing from the Boxes Point and Duck Inn Trails during daylight hours.
4. We allow fishing and crabbing from boardwalk located adjacent to the Eastern Neck Island bridge.

PATUXENT RESEARCH REFUGE

A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting. We allow hunting of goose, duck, and dove on the North Tract in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:
1. We require a hunting permit. We issue permits through our Cooperating Association Meade Natural Heritage Association (MNHA) at the refuge Hunting Control Station (HCS). MNHA charges a fee for each permit. Contact refuge headquarters for more information.
2. We publish the Refuge Hunting Regulations, which includes the daily and yearly bag limits and hunting dates, in late summer. We provide you with a copy of the regulations with your fee permit, and we require you to know the specific hunt seasons and regulations.
3. We require hunters, age 17 or younger, to have a parent or guardian designee to receive a hunting permit.
4. We require hunters, age 17 or younger, to be accompanied in the field by an adult possessing a refuge hunting permit, age 21 or older.
5. You must check-in and out at the HCS and exchange your hunting permit for a daily hunting pass and a vehicle pass every time you enter or exit the refuge. This includes breakfast, lunch, dinner, and other breaks if you leave your designated hunting area.
6. You must use designated and maintained roads for vehicular traffic.
7. You must park within the selected area specified and not block traffic or gates (see §27.31(b) of this chapter).
8. We restrict you to the selected area and activity until you check out at the HCS.
9. We prohibit hunting on or across any road (paved, gravel, opened, and/or closed), within 50 yards (45 m) of a road (paved, gravel, dirt, opened and/or closed), within 150 yards (135 m) of any building or shed, and within 25 yards (22.5 m) from any designated “No Hunting” or “Safety Zone” areas, except:
   1. You may hunt from the road, 50 yards (135 m) beyond the gate at Blue Heron Pond;
   2. You may hunt from the road, 50 yards (135 m) beyond the barricade at Wood Duck Pond;
   3. You may hunt from any refuge permanent photo/hunt blind.
   iv. You may hunt from the roadside, at designated areas, if you possess a Maryland State “Hunt from a Vehicle Permit.”
10. You 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 when noted otherwise. Your solid-colored, fluorescent hunter orange must be visible 360° while carrying-in and carrying-out equipment (e.g., portable blinds). “Jump shooters” must wear at least a solid-colored, fluorescent hunter-orange hat or cap while hunting. If you stop and stand, you may remove it.
11. We allow the taking of only Canada goose during the early and late resident Canada goose seasons.
12. We prohibit hunting of goose, duck, and dove during the early deer muzzleloader seasons that occur in October and all deer firearms seasons including the Junior Deer Hunt.
13. We require waterfowl hunters to use retrieving dogs while hunting duck and goose within 50 yards (45 m) of the following impounded waters: Bailey Bridge Marsh, Blue Heron Pond, Lake Allen, New Marsh, and Wood Duck Pond.
14. We require dogs to be under the immediate control of their owner at all times (see §28.21(b) of this chapter). Law enforcement officers may seize or dispatch dogs running loose or unattended (see §28.43 of this chapter).

B. Upland Game Hunting. We allow hunting of turkey, gray squirrel, eastern cottontail rabbit, and woodchuck on the North Tract and turkey on the Central Tract in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:
2. Hunters may only possess approved nontoxic shot while in the field (see §32.20(k)).
3. We prohibit hunting of upland game during the deer muzzleloader and firearms seasons, including the Junior Deer Hunt.

4. You 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. Spring turkey hunters are exempt from wearing the safety harness. We allow the use of a bow and arrow for turkey hunting.

5. We require turkey hunters to use #4, #5, or #6 nontoxic shot or vertical bows.

6. We require turkey hunters to show proof they have attended a turkey clinic sponsored by the National Turkey Federation.

7. We select turkey hunters by a computerized lottery for youth, disabled, mobility-impaired, and general public hunts. We require documentation for disabled and mobility-impaired hunters.

8. We require turkey hunters to show proof they have attended a turkey clinic sponsored by the National Turkey Federation.

9. We require turkey hunters to pattern their weapons prior to hunting. Contact refuge headquarters for more information.

C. Big Game Hunting. We allow hunting of white-tailed deer on the North, Central, and South Tracts in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:


2. Prior to issuing a hunting permit, we require you to pass a yearly proficiency test with each weapon used.

3. We only allow the use of a shotgun, muzzleloader, or bow and arrow according to Refuge Hunting Regulations.

4. We require muzzleloaders to be .40 caliber or larger with not less than 60 grains of black powder or a black powder equivalent.

5. We prohibit the discharge of weapons after legal shooting hours, including the unloading of muzzleloaders.

6. We require (when transporting or storing) longbows and recurve bows to be unstrung; and compound and crossbows must be locked in such a way to render them inoperable and/or cased, with no arrows nocked.

7. We prohibit possession or use of buckshot.

8. You 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 when noted otherwise. Your solid-colored, fluorescent hunter orange must be visible 360 degrees while carrying-in and carrying-out equipment (e.g., portable tree stands). Bow hunters must follow this requirement when walking from their vehicle to their hunting location and while tracking. We do not require bow hunters to wear the solid-colored, fluorescent hunter orange when positioned to hunt except during the North Tract Junior Deer Hunt and the late deer Muzzleloader Season when they must wear it at all times.

9. All bucks harvested must have a 15-inch (37.5-cm) minimum outside antler spread. All deer harvested will have a jaw extracted at the HCS before leaving the refuge.

10. We allow the use of portable tree stands equipped with a full-body safety harness. You must wear the full-body safety harness while in the tree stand. The stand must be at least 10 feet (3 m) off the ground. You must remove tree stands from the refuge. You must use tree stands when hunting South and Central Tracts. We will make limited accommodations for disabled hunters for Central Tract lottery hunts.

11. We prohibit the use of dogs to hunt or track wounded deer.

12. We prohibit deer drives or anyone taking part in any deer drive. We define a “deer drive” 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. We also prohibit organized deer drives without a standing hunter.

13. North Tract: We allow shotgun, muzzleloader, and bow hunting in accordance with the following regulations: Conditions C1 through C13 apply.

14. Central Tract:

a. Headquarters/MR Lottery Hunt: We only allow shotgun and bow hunting in accordance with the following regulations:

i. Conditions C1, C2, and C4 through C13 apply.

ii. We select Central Tract shotgun and bow hunters by a computerized lottery. We will assign you a specific hunting location.

iii. We prohibit driving or parking along the entrance and exit roads, to and from the National Wildlife Visitor Center, and parking in the visitor center parking lot when checked in to hunt any area.

D. Sport Fishing. We allow sport fishing in accordance with Maryland State hook and line fishing regulations subject to the following conditions:

11. If you wish to track wounded deer, beyond 1½ hours after legal sunset, you must gain consent from a refuge law enforcement officer. We prohibit tracking 2½ hours after legal sunset. You must make a reasonable effort to retrieve the wounded deer. This may include next-day tracking except Sundays and Federal holidays.

12. We prohibit deer drives or anyone taking part in any deer drive. We define a “deer drive” 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. We also prohibit organized deer drives without a standing hunter.

13. North Tract: We allow shotgun, muzzleloader, and bow hunting in accordance with the following regulations: Conditions C1 through C13 apply.

14. Central Tract:

1. Headquarters/MR Lottery Hunt: We only allow shotgun and bow hunting in accordance with the following regulations:

a. Conditions C1, C2, and C4 through C13 apply.

b. We select Central Tract shotgun and bow hunters by a computerized lottery. We will assign you a specific hunting location.

ii. Schafer Farm Hunt: We only allow bow hunting in accordance with the following regulations: Conditions C1, C2, and C4 through C13 apply.

15. South Tract: We allow shotgun, muzzleloader, and bow hunting in accordance with the following regulations:

i. Conditions C1 through C13 apply.

ii. You must access South Tract hunting areas A, B, and C off Springfield Road through the Old Beltsville Airport: and South Tract hunting area D from MD Rt. 197 through Gate #4. You must park in designated parking areas.

iii. We prohibit driving or parking along the entrance and exit roads, to and from the National Wildlife Visitor Center, and parking in the visitor center parking lot when checked in to hunt any area.
1. We require all anglers, age 16 and older, to obtain a free refuge fishing permit as well as a Maryland State fishing license, which must be carried with them at all times while fishing. Organized groups may request a group permit. The group leader must carry a copy of the permit and stay with the group at all times while fishing.

2. We publish the Refuge Fishing Regulations, which includes the daily and yearly creel limits and fishing dates, in early January. We provide a copy of the regulations with your free refuge fishing permit, and we require you to know the specific fishing regulations.

3. Anglers must carry a copy of the refuge fishing permit and their Maryland State fishing license in the field.

4. Anglers must display a copy of the refuge fishing permit in the vehicle windshield.

5. We require anglers, age 17 or younger, to have a parent or guardian cosign to receive a fishing permit.

6. We require anglers, age 17 or younger, to be accompanied in the field by an adult possessing a fishing permit, age 21 or older, and they must maintain visual contact with each other within a 50-yard (45-m) distance.

7. We prohibit the use or possession of lead sinkers.

8. We prohibit the use or possession of alcoholic beverages (see §27.81 of this chapter and §32.2(j)).

9. Anglers may take three youths, age 15 or younger, to fish under their permit and in their presence and control.

10. We allow the use of earthworms as the only source of live bait. We prohibit bloodworms, fish, or other animals or parts of animals to be used as bait.

11. We prohibit harvesting bait on the refuge.

12. Anglers must attend all fishing lines.

13. Anglers may take the following species: chain pickerel, catfish, golden shiner, eel, and sunfish (includes bluegill, black crappie, warmouth, and pumpkinseed). Maryland State daily harvest limits apply unless otherwise noted.

14. We require all bluegill taken to be 6 inches (15 cm) or larger.

15. We allow take of one chain pickerel per day.

16. Anglers must release all bass that are caught.

17. We prohibit fishing from all bridges except the downstream side of Bailey Bridge.

18. North Tract: We allow sport fishing in accordance with the following regulations:

i. Conditions D1 through D16 apply.

ii. We allow sport fishing at Lake Allen, Blue Heron Pond, Rieve’s Pond, New Marsh, Cattail Pond, Bailey Bridge (downstream side) and Little Patuxent River (downstream only from Bailey Bridge) except Monday through Saturday from September 1 through January 31 during the hunting season. We also reserve the right to close Lake Allen at any time.

iii. We allow wading, for fishing purposes only, downstream from Bailey Bridge on the Little Patuxent River. We prohibit wading in all other bodies of water.

iv. We prohibit the use of any type of watercraft.

19. South Tract: We allow sport fishing in accordance with the following regulations:

i. Conditions D1 through D16 apply.

ii. Anglers must park their vehicles in the parking lot located behind Refuge Gate #8 off MD Rt. 197. Anglers may not access Cash Lake from the National Wildlife Visitor Center (NWVC).

iii. We allow sport fishing at the pier and designated shorelines at Cash Lake. See Refuge Fishing Regulations for areas opened to fishing. We post other areas with “No fishing beyond this point” signs.

iv. Anglers may fish from mid-June until mid-October, as posted.

v. We allow fishing between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. June through August and between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. September and October.

vi. Anglers may use watercraft for fishing in accordance with the Maryland State boating laws subject to the additional following conditions:

a. You may use car-top boats 14 feet (4.2 m) or less, and canoes.

b. You may only use electric motors, 4 HP or less.

c. We prohibit sailboats, kayaks, and inflatable boats.

d. Maryland State law requires personal flotation devices (PFDs).

vii. We prohibit boat trailers except by individuals possessing a refuge handicapped permit.