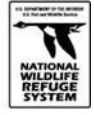


2023-2024 White-tailed Deer Hunting

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge



The 2023-2024 white-tailed deer hunt at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) is accepting applications! Wertheim is a 2,688-acre wildlife refuge located on Long Island's south shore that hosts a variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands, ponds, tidal marshes and bays. Established in 1947, Wertheim provides fish and wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities, protects natural resources, conserves migratory birds and their habitats, and manages threatened and endangered species.

General Information

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge is located entirely within Suffolk County and the Town of Brookhaven. Approximately 1,600 acres of the refuge provide habitat for white-tailed deer, while the remainder is primarily open water, salt marsh, buildings and roads. At high densities, deer can over browse the available vegetation degrading habitat for other species, deer-car collisions and deer browsing in adjacent residential areas become more serious problems. The refuge goal is to maintain a deer population of 20 to 30 deer per square mile and the ratio of antlerless to antlered deer at 3:1. Refuge staff encourage hunters to target does and mature bucks as identified in the DEC's "let them go and watch them grow" initiative found here <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27663.html>.

The Carmans River, refuge trails and Wertheim Visitor Center will remain **open to the non-hunting public during archery season**. Hunters should take extreme caution when hunting near the river or refuge trails. Refuge trails and the Visitor Center will be closed to non-hunters during the shotgun season. The refuge does not offer scouting days.

If you need to contact the refuge office or report a hunting violation, call the hunt phone at **631-291-5860**. The number is on your refuge permit.

NEW Limited Hunting Access

The Wertheim refuge has embarked on landscape level projects to improve wildlife habitat. Unit 3 will be open for deer hunting on Saturdays and Sundays in December and January. Parking lots 3 North and 3 South will be closed during project work. If the contractor is not working, unit 3 and all the parking lots will be open. All other units, 4, 5 and 6 will be accessible to refuge permitted hunters Monday through Sunday. Please check the dates on your permit for your hunt dates. The refuge received funding to reduce and manage wildland fire fuels such as downed trees and forest debris damaged by southern pine beetle infestations. We appreciate your patience and understanding while we improve the refuge for the benefit of the American people.

Contractors are permitted to park equipment on the refuge over weekends while they work during the week. All visitors are not permitted to climb on or approach equipment.

Access

Refuge parking lots are located off of (see map):

Unit 3 North: Smith Road and Probst Drive;

Unit 3 South: Smith Road and Ranch Drive;

Unit 3A: north of Havenwood Drive West off of Smith Road;

Unit 5: along Montauk Highway;

Unit 4 and Unit 6: access through 360 Smith Road maintenance gate; hunters will drive cautiously through a second gate. Unit 4 parking is to the left and unit 6 parking is at the end of the road on a circle with two closed gates.

Hunt unit 4 has access for disabled hunters. If you qualify for NY DEC handicap access and are requesting handicap access at the refuge, you must contact the refuge office for details, 631-286-0485 ext. 2111.

During the refuge shotgun sessions, Units 3A and 5 will be available to archery hunting only, as seen on the hunt map.

All parking lots are labeled on the attached hunt map. Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than one hour before the beginning of legal shooting hours and must exit the refuge no later than one hour after the end of legal shooting hours. If you have a deer down and are not able to get it out of the woods before sunset, you must call the hunt phone at 631-291-5860.

Parking

Although hunters are not assigned a hunt unit, hunters will not exceed the number of vehicles allowed in each designated hunter parking location. As each unit is managed for a specific number of hunters, each hunter must retrieve a "block" from the "rail" and place the block on the vehicle dashboard. Once all blocks have been removed from the rail, the parking area is closed. Refuge parking permits must also be displayed face up on the dashboard of your vehicle. At the end of the hunt day, every hunter must return their block to the rail.

Hunters may not block access roads, Smith Road or the entrance gates. Please limit parking and congregating at the Wertheim Visitor Center, this area is for temporary parking for restroom use only.

Hunters must drive on roads (including shared use roads and "vehicle access by permit only") and obey speed limits. Hunters entering the refuge at 360 Smith Road should also take note of the shared use/pedestrian road to Units 4 and 6. Please drive carefully and obey the posted speed limit. No overnight parking.

Additional Regulations

Distribution of bait and hunting over bait, salt, or any edible attractant is prohibited on the refuge. Hunters may NOT push or drive deer.

Hunters may not have loaded weapons, including nocked arrows, in the no hunt buffer zone. Only barbless broadheads are permitted during the archery season. Please refer to the current New York State Hunting and Trapping Regulations handbook for more details. Only shotguns firing a single projectile (slugs only, no buckshot) are permitted during firearms season. Muzzleloaders and crossbows are not permitted on the refuge.

Permitted hunters are not allowed to bring friends or relatives with them during hunt days. However, a non-hunting adult with a valid New York State hunting license must accompany a youth hunter, under age 16, during hunting.

Stands and Blinds

The refuge encourages hunting from tree stands because it provides a safer shooting angle and better visibility. The refuge encourages hunters hunting from a tree stand to fasten their safety harness. Hunters must remove their tree stand at the end of their assigned hunt session. The refuge encourages hunters to demonstrate courtesy by not setting up close to another hunter.

The refuge does not permit the marking of any tree, trail or other refuge feature with flagging, paint, reflective material or any other substance. The refuge prohibits 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. Hunters may trim branches up to the diameter of a quarter to place tree stands.

Each hunter may only use one portable deer tree stand or ground blind and it may be left on the refuge during your designated hunt session at your own risk. Hunters may use a game camera. Hunters must attach clearly legible identification on their property with their name, address, and phone number. The refuge will not be responsible for any stolen property. Game cameras, ground blinds and/or tree stands must be removed from the hunt unit at the end of the assigned hunt session.

Hunters who choose to hunt in Unit 5 MUST hunt from a portable tree stand. Unit 5 is for archery hunters only. If you are unwilling or unable to hunt from a tree stand, please consider this when submitting your hunt application..

Harvesting a Deer

If a hunter shoots a deer, he/she must make every effort to locate it and reduce it to possession. The refuge encourages hunters to be respectful of the non-hunting public and to be good ambassadors of their sport. Hunters must not field dress harvested deer in refuge parking lots or along refuge trails. Transporting harvested deer uncovered may affect the public perception of ethical hunting. Please be respectful of the non-hunting public.

The refuge bag limit is three deer per hunter. Upon kill, hunters must complete a New York State carcass tag for each deer. Hunters must attach tags to deer immediately after reaching their vehicle. If a hunter fails to follow these procedures, he/she will be in violation of both Federal and State hunting laws. Hunters must report all deer harvested from the refuge according to NYS harvest requirements within seven (7) days by: phone 1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778); online <https://decals.licensing.east.kalkomey.com>; or through the NY Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife app.

Important Signs

This is a sign with the National Wildlife Refuge System's blue goose symbol. This sign marks the refuge boundaries. Hunters are responsible for knowing where they are at all times in relation to hunting zones and refuge boundaries.



The "Area Beyond This Sign Closed," is a refuge sign that applies to all visitors who do not hold a refuge permit. Refer to the attached hunt map for approximate locations.

Additional Prohibited Activities

- Littering
- Use of a spotlight or other artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages
- Use of ATVs and/or dirt bikes, or other non-licensed vehicles
- Target practice
- Camping and campfires
- Searching or removing objects of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other items
- Searching for or removing plants or animals other than deer from the refuge
- Pets are not permitted on the refuge at any time

While hunting on the refuge, hunters are responsible for knowing and abiding by all state, federal and refuge regulations. Know your location at all times and respect private property.

Hunt Dates

Archery Hunt Weeks:

11/06/2023 - 11/12/2023

11/20/2023 - 11/26/2023

12/04/2023 - 12/10/2023

12/18/2023 - 12/24/2023

Concurrent Shotgun and Archery Hunt Weeks (Archery in units 3A and 5):

1/08/2024 - 1/14/2024

1/22/2024 - 1/28/2024

Application and Permits

All hunt application materials and permits are available through RecAccess:

<https://longisland.recaccess.com>. All hunters must complete the online application with a \$5 processing fee for each application. Hunters must submit the application(s) on or before September 9, 2023. No applications will be received after **September 9, 2023** for the 2023 - 2024 refuge deer hunt season.

On September 12, 2023 email notifications will be sent to those hunters selected in the random drawing. **Selected hunters must secure their refuge hunt permit with payment** by September 27, 2023. Unclaimed permits will be returned to the pool of available permits.

Refuge permits will be issued for alternating 1-week sessions starting on November 6, 2023. A single hunt session is defined as beginning on Monday and concluding on the following Sunday.

In addition to the NYS hunting license, all participating hunters must obtain a refuge permit. Refuge permits are not transferable. The refuge does not provide NYS carcass tags. Hunters must supply their own NYS tags for the deer they harvest.

Schedule of Hunt Application and Permit Process

July 21 – Applications available online through <https://longisland.recaccess.com>

September 9 – Deadline for applications

September 12 – Lottery notifications sent to applicants

September 27 – Deadline for applicants to purchase winning permit

September 29 @ 12pm - Release of remaining inventory to public