

Kootenai

National Wildlife Refuge Hunting and Fishing Regulations



Welcome

Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1964 as a migratory waterfowl refuge. This 2,774-acre Refuge is nestled within a glacial valley in northern Idaho. The majestic Selkirk Mountains flank the refuge's western border. Rivers and streams provide habitat for more than 20 species of fish. The Kootenai River runs along the northern and eastern boundaries, and Deep Creek lies to the east. Wetlands, meadows, and cultivated agricultural fields are interspersed in the valley providing prime habitat for many species of migratory waterfowl. Riparian and coniferous forests provide home for numerous songbird species, big game and other wildlife.

Safety

The Refuge has designated hunting areas separated spatially from hiking trails and the Auto Tour Route, except for the Ole Humpback Trail which is located inside the Turkey, Grouse and Big Game hunting Unit. A non-shooting retrieval zone has been established along the west side of the Auto Tour Route (ATR) and the Deep Creek Trail to provide for safety. All hunting firearms must be unloaded when in the posted retrieval zone for purposes of retrieving downed birds or when traveling to and from the hunting area. Hunters with disabilities should have a helper if necessary, to assist with retrieving downed game. Hypothermia can happen quickly in cold, wet weather and in minutes if you fall in cold water. Wear clothes suitable for these outdoor activities. Beware of deep water in ditches usually adjacent to dikes.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32.)

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles, including ATVs and UTVs, and bicycles are allowed only on County roads and the Auto Tour Route as shown on the map.

Boats

Boats are prohibited from entering the mouth of Myrtle Creek. Boats may not land on the banks of Deep Creek. Waterfowl hunters can use non-motorized boats launched from the Center Ditch at the Center Parking Lot to access the waterfowl hunt areas.

Accessibility Information

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. For more information please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eoo/public-civil-rights>.

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

Hunting and fishing regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Hunting and fishing will be in accordance with applicable State of Idaho regulations subject to the conditions stated below. Brochures may be obtained by mail, at the refuge headquarters, or from the refuge website.

Hunters and anglers are asked to clean aquatic vegetation and organisms off boats, decoys, and other equipment before entering the refuge to limit the spread of invasive species.

Access

When: Fishing areas will be open to anglers in accordance with State regulations and seasons. Duck, goose, coot, and snipe hunting is allowed on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday during the State seasons. Night fishing access is permitted on the banks of Deep Creek only. Entry to the waterfowl hunts units is allowed from 3:00 am until 1 hour after legal sunset on hunting days. The waterfowl hunt units are closed to all entry on non-hunt days. Waterfowl hunting hours correspond to State regulations. Big game and upland bird hunting seasons and shooting hours are in accordance with State regulations.

Where: Visitors hunting and fishing on the Refuge must use designated parking areas as identified on the map. Access to the Refuge from private property is prohibited.

Fishing on the Refuge is only allowed from the banks of both Myrtle and Deep Creek. Anglers may access fishing on Deep Creek via the 2.2-mile Deep Creek Trail. Parking areas and pullouts on the west side of the Refuge are available for use by big game and upland game hunters.

Migratory Bird Hunting: Both free-roam and fixed-blind hunting occur in the same areas.

Dogs

Dogs may be used to hunt during the migratory bird, forest grouse and fall turkey seasons. Hunting dogs must always be under the control of the hunter.

Accessible Blinds

Migratory Bird Hunt: Three special access migratory bird hunt blinds are available by reservation. Hunters must provide proof (Idaho disabled license or doctor's letter) prior to making reservations. Accessible blinds have designated parking areas.

Deer Hunt: Special Access Permits to hunt from an Accessible Deer Hunt Blind are available to hunters with disabilities through a lottery drawing. Multiple, 7-day white-tailed/mule deer permits are available annually. Possession of a State of Idaho issued disabled hunter license is required to be eligible for the random drawing. Please contact the Refuge Office by August 1 to participate.

State hunting and fishing regulations, seasons, methods of take, bag limits, and license requirements apply to all hunting on the Refuge with the following exceptions.

Hunt Type	Season Dates	Harvest	Hunt Areas	Other Regulations
Migratory Bird Hunting <i>Ducks, Geese, Coots, and Snipe</i>	Hunt days are 4 days per week (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday) during the State duck and goose seasons.	Daily bag and possession limit coincide with limits established by the State.	Within Designated waterfowl hunt units. (See map on reverse side.)	The use of dogs is allowed for migratory bird hunting.
Upland Bird Hunting <i>Forest Grouse (Ruffed, Spruce & Dusky Grouse) and Wild Turkey</i>	In accordance with Idaho State regulations and seasons.	Daily bag and possession limit coincide with limits established by the State.	Limited to the 173-acre forested upland portion of the Refuge which lies west of Lion's Den Road. (See map reverse side.)	Non-toxic shot shells are required. The use of hunting dogs is allowed during the forest grouse and Fall turkey seasons.
Big Game Hunting <i>White-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, black bear, and mountain lion</i>	In accordance with Idaho State regulations and seasons.	In accordance with Idaho State regulations.	Limited to the 173-acre unit west of Lion's Den Road. All hunting for the special lottery deer hunt will be conducted from a blind located in the northwest corner of the Refuge where the Myrtle Creek and Kootenai River dikes merge. (See map on reverse side.)	The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is prohibited.
Special Access-Accessible Deer Blind	In accordance with Idaho State regulations and seasons.	In accordance with Idaho State regulations.	Deer Blind is located in the northwest corner of the Refuge where the Myrtle Creek and Kootenai River dikes merge. (See map reverse side.)	A Refuge Special Use Permit is required in addition to a State of Idaho issued disabled hunter license and deer tag. Short-range weapons as defined by State regulations, only. Only archery equipment or a crossbow is allowed during the archery hunt season. The use of non-toxic ammunition is required for all firearm hunting.
Sport Fishing	In accordance with Idaho State regulations and seasons.	Daily bag and possession limit coincide with limits established by the State.	Myrtle Creek and Deep Creek only.	Fishing from boats, float tubes, or other personal flotation devices is prohibited on Myrtle Creek. Landing of boats on the banks of Deep Creek within the Refuge is prohibited.



Signs and Boundaries

Please respect the following signs:

- REFUGE PERMIT Hunting Parking Only
- NO HUNTING ZONE Beyond this Sign
- AREA BEYOND THIS SIGN CLOSED All public entry prohibited
- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE Unauthorized Entry Prohibited (boundary sign)
- RETRIEVING ZONE ONLY
- WATERFOWL HUNTING ONLY

Applies to the area located behind the sign

- Refuge Boundary: The entire Refuge perimeter is posted with the Blue Goose National Wildlife Refuge Unauthorized Entry Prohibited. Entry permitted in accordance with Refuge regulations. Area posted Beyond this Sign Closed are closed to all entry.
- Closed Area: All entry prohibited.
- No Hunting Zone: Hunting, weapons, and game retrieval prohibited.
- Retrieving zone only: access through an area to get to hunt units or to retrieve downed birds.
- Waterfowl hunting only: hunting for waterfowl only as permitted by Refuge regulations.

Prohibited Activities

- Overnight parking
- Camping, fires, horseback riding, snowmobiles and unlicensed ATV/UTVs
- The use of remotely piloted/controlled devices
- Possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting
- Trapping or falconry
- Possession of loaded firearms or a bow with the arrow notched within any safety zone or Refuge Closed Area
- Searching for or removal of any natural items including, but not limited to, antlers; skulls; plants; firewood; and historic and archaeological features protected by Federal law
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices
- Marking or flagging any tree or other Refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substance
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree
- Access to the Refuge from private property
- Littering

Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge
287 Westside Road
Bonners Ferry, ID 83805

208-267-3888
For State relay service TTY/ Voice: 711

[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/kootenai/
fw1KootenaiNWR@fws.gov](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/kootenai/fw1KootenaiNWR@fws.gov)

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

August 2024

This is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife and people.



Kootenai

National Wildlife Refuge

- Fishing
- Accessible Hunt Blind (Reservations Required)
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Refuge Office
- Restrooms
- Wildlife Observation
- Interpretive Trail

- Migratory Bird Game Hunting (Tu, Th, Sat, Sun)
- Turkey, Grouse, and Big Game Hunting

- Retrieval Zone

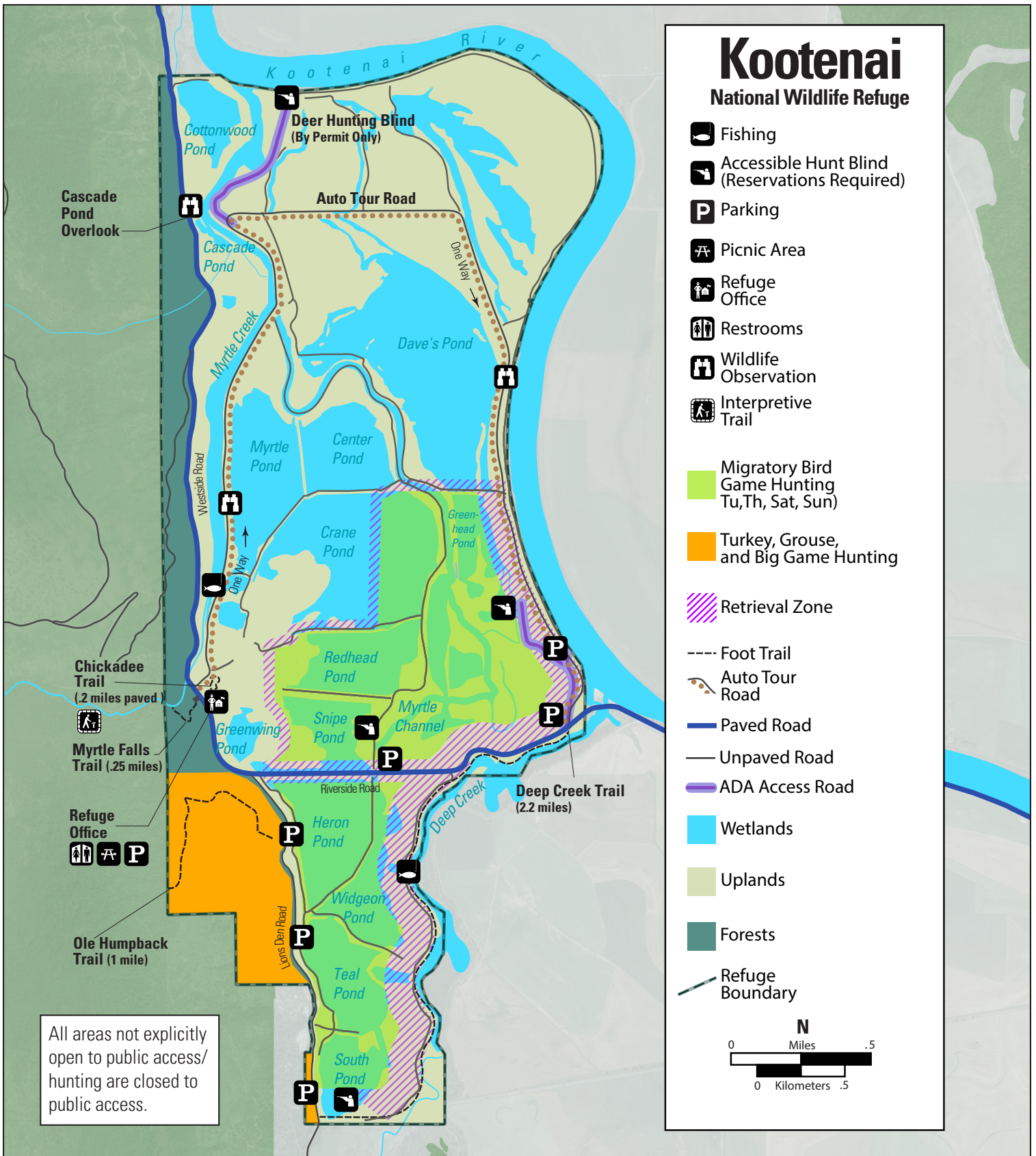
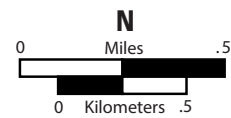
- Foot Trail
- Auto Tour Road
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- ADA Access Road

- Wetlands

- Uplands

- Forests

- Refuge Boundary



All areas not explicitly open to public access/hunting are closed to public access.