

BUFFALO LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

PUBLIC HUNT INFORMATION

Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge allows hunting of deer and feral hogs through an annual big game hunt for youth. This hunt will offer a quality outdoor hunting experience to youth hunters as well as maintain a healthy mule and white-tailed deer populations, while reducing feral hog numbers. Three youth hunts will be conducted this year.

2023-24 Youth Deer Hunts:

November 4-5th (one hunter)

1 Buck (Mule or White-tailed) and 3 white-tailed antlerless or spike

December 2-3th (one hunter)

1 Buck (Mule or White-tailed) and 3 antlerless or spike White-tailed Deer

January 6-7th (one hunter)

1 Buck (Mule or White-tailed) and 3 antlerless or spike White-tailed Deer

The hunter and their sponsor(s) must participate in hunter orientation. Orientations will be held at Refuge Headquarters prior to hunt.

Youth Deer Hunt

Youth hunters between the ages of 9 and 16 may apply through the Texas Parks and Wildlife online drawing system. Each youth must be supervised during the hunt by a licensed sponsor age 18 or older that has successfully completed a Hunter Education Certification Course. During the youth hunt, feral hogs, and deer may be taken with firearms of .243/6mm caliber or greater.

Hunters with Disabilities Call the refuge for information regarding options for hunters with a disability. A valid proof of disability as defined by Texas Parks and Wildlife hunting regulations is required

Permit Process

After hunters are selected by TPWD, the refuge will issue a hunting brochure with regulations. A State of Texas hunting license will also be required. Be sure to check the Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge for details. This hunt season, permits will be issued through a partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

All applications and payment must be made online here:

https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/public_hunt_drawing/

When searching for Buffalo Lake NWR hunts, select Browse Hunt Catalog, then select the Area tab. Drawings and award notifications for each hunt will be conducted at different times. Please consult Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hunt application web page.

Hunt Regulations

Youth Deer Hunts

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on national wildlife refuges 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). Youth deer hunters are assigned a compartment to hunt. In some cases, hunters must park at a specific location but are allowed to walk around within their assigned unit. Areas closed to hunting will be designated on maps and marked with signs and/or barricades.

The refuge prohibits the use of tree stands or any devices such as driving nails, spikes, or other metal objects into trees or hunting from trees in which any objects have been driven into a tree is prohibited. Pop-up blinds are allowed. The hunter's permit number must be located on the outside of the blind. The use or possession of all bait (commercial food pellets, mineral blocks, etc.) is prohibited. Dogs may not be used for scouting or big game hunting. The use of all-terrain vehicles (ATV) is prohibited. Hunters should not shoot at a target that is not completely identified. The refuge prohibits the use of silencers or any like device that alters the noise of a firearm. A sponsor 18 years of age must be within normal voice control of the youth hunter at all times. The hunter may have two sponsors, 18 years or older accompany them for the hunt.

Only youth deer hunters will be allowed to carry a firearm. Access to designated hunt units will be on roads only. All hunters and their sponsors must visibly wear a orange hat and 144 square inches of hunter orange above the waist while hunting or scouting. Only the youth hunter sponsors will not be allowed to hunt. Please do not block gates or roads. Hunters must check in and out of the refuge daily. All deer harvested must be checked at the designated check point.

Scouting

Permitted hunters may scout any time during normal refuge hours from public roads and areas opened to the public prior to the hunt weekend. On scouting days, hunters do not check in and out at Refuge Headquarters. The refuge manager may close all or part of the refuge—including roads—without notice to safeguard resources or for safety reasons. Also, prescribed burns may be conducted in portions of hunting units during non-scouting and nonhunting dates to improve habitat.

For Additional Information Contact:
Buffalo Lake NWR P.O.
Box 179 Umbarger, Texas 79042
806/674-6369

