

RYDELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Deer Hunt for Persons with Disabilities

2026 Fact Sheet

- The accessible hunt will be conducted at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) from October 15th - 17th, 2026. Hunting hours are from 12:00 P.M. through the end of legal hunting time each day (1/2 day each).
- The Rydell National Wildlife Refuge is a 2,039-acre refuge located in Polk County near the communities of Erskine and Mentor, Minnesota (see map on back). Excluding the lakes and building sites, approximately 1,400 acres of the Refuge are huntable.
- A maximum of 20 people will be allowed to hunt on the Refuge at one time with applications disseminated starting Aug. 4, 2026. Applications must be postmarked or dropped off at Options by 5:00 P.M., Sept. 9th, 2026, to be considered. Options reserve the ability to extend the acceptance period if spots are available.
- If more than 20 eligible people apply, the hunt participants will be chosen through a selection process/drawing with those not chosen placed on an alternate list in case of cancellations.
- Each hunter may take one deer of either sex.
- Hunters must possess a permanent disability severe enough to qualify for disability-related programs/services such as Hunt from a Vehicle Permit, Permanent Accessible Parking Placard, Waivered Home Services, any of the disability-related fishing, hunting, or park access permits issued by the MN DNR based on one's disability, Federal Park Access Pass issued due to disability, SSI, SSDAC, and/or SSDI. If a person possesses a disability without fulfilling any of the aforementioned at the time of application the definition of disability used by the Social Security Administration will be used as guidance when assessing one's eligibility to participate in the hunt.
- Hunters must possess a valid Minnesota Firearms Deer License (or Archery License if hunting with a bow or crossbow) to hunt on the Refuge.
- Participation in this hunt does not prevent a Minnesota hunter from party hunting during the regular season (off-refuge) if a deer is bagged, or hunting with an unfilled tag in the season of their choice during the regular season. Licenses should be purchased by choosing the season of choice for the regular season, no matter if it includes the zone Rydell NWR is located within. Hunters are asked to refer to the big game regulations outlined in the 2026 Minnesota Hunting and Trapping Regulations booklet for further detail on the laws about licensing and to ensure nothing has changed between the date this is written and the date of the hunt. It may be possible the area has management or bonus deer tags available that may save a hunter from using a Regular Deer Hunting Tag, though these tags must be for area 257.
- An assistant may accompany each person with a disability on the hunt, as the hunter deems necessary. The unlicensed assistant may discharge a firearm to dispatch a wounded deer if needed. If a hunter does not have an assistant available and would like one, Options can coordinate a volunteer to assist upon request. Hunt organizers reserve the ability to assign a volunteer to a hunter.
- The hunt will be coordinated by Options: Interstate Resource Center for Independent Living in partnership with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- For more information, contact Heather at Options (218) 791-3442 / (218) 773-6100 / (800) 726-3692 or Gregg Knutsen at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge (218) 687-2229.

Map of Rydell NWR

