

# Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie

## Hunting FAQs

### 1. GENERAL:

You are required to have a Midwin Pass to hunt on Midwin land. Refer to the information below under “Getting Started” to learn how to receive a Pass.

#### **Midwin Welcome Center Hours:**

Monday- Saturday 8 am – 4:30 pm (April –October)

Monday – Friday 8 am- 4:30 (November-March)

Trail system is open daily 4 am -10 pm all year

Midwin follows all Illinois State Regulations for hunting.

#### **Hunting Seasons at Midwin:**

Deer – Fall Only

Turkey – Spring Only

No other wildlife are allowed to be hunted. Midwin is a Special Hunt Area, per State regulations.

No special hunt seasons (Youth Deer, Antlerless or CWD seasons)

#### **Types of hunting allowed:**

**Archery for deer**

**Shotgun and Muzzleloader for deer** - Permits for those are issued through the IDNR lottery.

**Crossbow** – Refer to the IL Hunting regulations for details on the use of crossbow, who and when allowed.

**No handguns allowed.**

**Concealed Carry rules apply per the IL State regulations. Refer to IL State regulations for details**

### 2. GETTING STARTED (Obtaining a Midwin Pass):

#### **What do I need to do to obtain a hunting pass at Midwin?**

To get your pass, stop in at the Midwin Welcome Center during normal business hours (noted in General Info section) after September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **You will need the following information:**

- A picture ID
- your hunting license with a habitat stamp
- the vehicle license plate number(s) of the vehicle(s) you will be driving

#### **You will then:**

- Complete a contact card
- Watch a video specific to hunting at Midwin
- Receive your pass, map of area and a copy of the rules

**How much does the pass cost?**

No charge. It's free.

**When do you start giving out the passes?**

September 1 or after. If you're coming from a distance, call first to make sure we have them ready before you come.

**How many passes are issued?**

We do not limit the number of passes for archery deer hunting. These are issued through the last day of the season.

Shotgun, muzzleloader for deer and turkey permits are drawn by lottery by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The numbers can change from year to year as determined by the lottery.

**I have a permit from IDNR for shotgun or muzzleloader. Do I still need a Midewin pass?**

Yes. You will need to bring the following with you to receive a pass:

- Hunting license with a habitat stamp
- Vehicle license numbers
- Letter from IDNR

**Can I get a pass by mail?**

First time hunters at Midewin MUST be issued a pass in person at our Welcome Center and meet the requirements for watching a video, amongst a few other requirements that will be reviewed in person. See above for outline of requirements.

If you have hunted with us in the past, have seen the video and gave us your mailing address or email, we'll send you a letter via mail or email to receive the pass via mail after September 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

**Last year I received a letter informing me of how to receive a pass by mail. Will I get a letter again this year?**

Yes, if you registered with us last year, we will send you a letter again after September 1<sup>st</sup>. Please follow the directions per the letter to receive your pass via mail. Passes will not be issued until all requirements are met.

**Can I give an email address rather than a mailing address to get a pass?**

Yes, email addresses work as well. We will send the same letter via email as through U.S. mail. You will be required to adhere to all requirements the same as if by mail. The contact card will not be sent to you via email, so we ask that you email back with your contact information below:

- Full name
- Home and/or cell phone number
- License Plate Number of the vehicle(s) you will be driving when hunting

You are responsible for ensuring that we have your updated mailing address in order to receive a letter or email for the following hunting season. We will only send you a letter if you hunted the season prior.

**Can I use the same Pass every year I want to hunt?**

No, passes are only good for one hunting season. You will get a new pass every year once you complete the proper requirements to hunt on our land.

**Can I get a pass for someone else?**

No, each person who receives a pass, MUST complete the steps outlined above to hunt on Midewin property.

**I'd like to bring a non-hunter with me when I hunt. Do they need a pass if they're not going to hunt?**

If they are not going to hunt, they do not need a pass. It is important that the non-hunter follows all IL state regulations regarding a non-hunting companion.

**I'd like to scout out the hunting areas before hunting season. Do I need a pass for that?**

No. All Midewin Public Access areas are open to the general public. As long as you are not hunting, you do not need a pass.

### **3. HUNTING AREAS AND BLINDS:**

**How many acres of Midewin are available for hunting?**

All lands open to the general public are open to hunters. As of August 2016, the total area open to the public is about 13,000 acres. We do not close any areas to the public who want to recreate during hunting season.

Pedestrian users are able to utilize public areas and go off trail if desired. Bikers and equestrian users must stay on the trails. It is important that all hunters are aware of this.

**How can I get a map of the hunting area at Midewin?**

Maps are available in several locations. They are given out when you receive your pass when in person at the Welcome Center, posted on the parking lot bulletin boards, available at the Midewin Welcome Center and on the Midewin website in the hunting section.

**Are there any new areas open this year?**

There are no new areas open for the upcoming season.

**What time is Midewin open for hunting?**

The property is open 7 days a week from 4 am to 10 pm for all visitors. Actual hunting times follow the State IDNR regulations.

**Do I have to sign in at the area I wish to hunt?**

Yes, you **must** sign in and out at the parking lot trailhead associated with the area you hunt. State your pass number, zone or site # and time in and out. **If you decide to move to a different area, you must sign out from the original location and re-sign in at the new area.**

**East side** – Zone Areas – you can hunt anywhere within that zone. Be mindful of zone hunter capacity when signing in.

**West side** – Limited zone areas and Site numbered post areas. In zones, you are free to hunt anywhere within that zone. In Site numbered posts areas – you must stay within 50 yards of the post.

**Are there restrictions to when and where I can hunt in zones or in the numbered sites?**

**ODD** numbered designated sites are to be hunted **ONLY** on **ODD** numbered days.

**EVEN** numbered designated sites are to be hunted **ONLY** on **EVEN** numbered days.

This **DOES NOT** pertain to Zones. Zones can be hunted on any day during deer season. During turkey season, zones on east side may be hunted only on even-numbered days, west side zones on odd numbered days.

**Can hunters drive on site?**

No. Midewin is not open to motorized access by any recreationists.

**Do I have to park in the designated parking lots to hunt?**

Although we encourage parking at our trailhead lots, it is not illegal to park on the side of any public road as long as you park with the flow of traffic, are not on private property, nor blocking access of the road for other users or emergency vehicles.

**Can hunters get permission to drive on site to retrieve a deer?**

No.

**Can we hunt from any side of the bunkers, including the top?**

Yes.

**Can I hunt near a trail or road at Midewin?**

No. You **MUST** not hunt within 150 yards of a trail or road. This includes any roads that are for administrative uses of Midewin staff or contractors.

**How frequent are the boundary sign markers?**

The average distance between signs is 200 feet, depending on vegetation and visibility.

**Are tree stands allowed?**

Yes, however we do **NOT** allow any type of drilling or screwing into the trees, or any other method that would do harm to the tree.

**Can I leave my tree stand up overnight?**

No, they must be removed daily.

**Can I leave my tree stand and other equipment at a hunting site when I leave the parking area ( i.e., go home for lunch)?**

No.

**Can I leave my tree stand and other equipment at a hunting site if I am having lunch at the parking area and plan to return to the site?**

Yes.

**Are game carts allowed?**

Yes, non-motorized carts with wheels are permitted.

**What if I wound a deer and it goes into a closed area?**

You can call one of the numbers on the back of your hunting pass. If circumstances allow it, you may be given permission to track the deer into the closed area.

**Can I carry my bow or firearm with me when I am tracking a wounded deer?**

Yes.

**Will non-hunting visitors wear blaze orange?**

Midewin staff will wear blaze orange throughout the hunting season and will strongly recommend that all visitors do the same, especially during gun season.

**What about interference from non-hunters in our hunt?**

Illinois prohibits deliberate interference with or disturbing another person engaged in legal hunting activities. This information will be included in Midewin public access publications. However, inadvertent interference is possible on public lands and is a potential part of any hunter's experience at Midewin.

**Does Midewin have a check station?**

No, however we do appreciate receiving photos of successful hunts.

**Are the site numbered posts visible on the West Side?**

Not all of the site number posts are still visible. Some posts have been destroyed during brush cutting, other activities or due to vegetation growth. Until new posts are placed, each site can be located via GPS coordinates.

**Where do I find the GPS coordinates for the hunting sites?**

The lists are available in the Midewin Welcome Center and can also be found in the hunting section of the Midewin website.

**Will the bison have any effect on hunting at Midewin?**

The bison area has no effect on hunting at Midewin. This is a closed area to the public and hunters.

**ACCESSIBLE HUNTING BLINDS:**

**What is the accessible hunting blind like?**

We currently have one accessible blind located near the P1 parking area. The blind is a wooden platform with a ramp and roof.

**How do I reserve an accessible hunting blind?**

Qualified hunters (see below) must call the Midewin Welcome Center at (815) 423-6370 during business hours to make their reservation in advance. Additionally, they may stop in the Welcome Center on the day of their hunt to check on the availability of the blind.

**Who qualifies to reserve an accessible hunting blind?**

Hunters who carry an Illinois P1A or P2A disability card may show this card at the time they acquire their Midewin Hunting Pass. The "A" portion of the disability category refers to the individual's difficulty walking.

**Can disabled hunters drive to the accessible hunting blinds?**

No. Midewin is not open to motorized access by any recreationists. The hunting blind is located a short distance from the trailhead parking lot and is accessible by wheelchair.

**Can a disabled hunter use a motorized scooter to get to the accessible hunting blinds?**

Forest Service policy is to allow a device, including one that is battery-powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area. A person whose disability requires use of a wheelchair or mobility device may use a wheelchair or mobility device that meets this definition anywhere foot travel is permitted. (Forest Service Manual 2353.05 and ADA Title V Section 507c.) "Designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person" means that the original design and manufacture of the wheelchair was only for the purpose of mobility for a person who has a disability. This does not include after-market retrofit of a motorized unit to make it useable by a person who has a disability.

## **4. FIREARMS – SHOTGUN AND MUZZLELOADER**

**Is Shotgun and Muzzleloader hunting allowed at Midewin?**

Yes, we follow the same season dates and regulations as the IDNR. Permits are issued through the IDNR lottery.

You must register for the IDNR lottery on their website, and select Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie as a Federal Lands Special Hunt Area. Lottery dates are available on the IDNR website.

**I have a permit from IDNR for shotgun or muzzleloader. Do I still need a Midewin pass?**

Yes, you need to stop into the Midewin Welcome Center to obtain a pass.

You will need:

- Picture ID
- IDNR letter assigning Midewin for hunt – Will County permits do NOT apply to Midewin
- Hunting license with habitat stamp

**Is bow hunting permitted during the shotgun and muzzleloader seasons?**

No, as per IDNR regulations.

**Can I use a handgun at Midewin during firearm season, per the IDNR regulations change in 2003?**

No. The Special Hunt Area Rules for Midewin do not provide for firearms other than shotgun and muzzleloader.