



# Deer and Turkey Special Hunt Area Rules

## Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Annual Deer Hunting Rules

Day Use Area Open 4:00 AM to 10:00 PM  
You Must have a Midewin Permit  
One Permit Per Hunter  
You Must Display Permit In Vehicle  
You Must Carry Your Pass While Hunting  
You Must Sign-in and Out At Trailheads

Welcome to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The U.S. Forest Service is pleased to offer lands open to the general public. Any lands open to the public are open to deer hunting, unless otherwise posted.

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and is a federal facility. State hunting laws as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations are enforced at Midewin with the following additions:

Special Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Hunt Area rules have been developed for all hunting at Midewin consistent with U.S. Forest Service policies and guidelines for recreation and public access. Special Orders have been developed because the Prairie is undergoing restoration to native habitats. All of these conditions combine to provide a unique recreational experience at Midewin for all visitors.

### GENERAL RULES & PROCEDURES

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	<p>Questions regarding the Midewin hunting program should be directed to:</p> <p>U.S. Forest Service  Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie  30239 S. State Route 53  Wilmington, IL 60481  (815) 423-6370  Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 – 4:30</p> <p><a href="http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin">www.fs.usda.gov/midewin</a></p>
<b>HUNTING SEASONS</b>	<p>Midewin is open for Deer and Turkey Hunting Season as per the Illinois Department of Natural Resources</p> <p>Deer hunting beginning October 1.</p>

	<p>Turkey hunting – Spring Only</p> <p>Hunting with handguns is not permitted at Midewin.</p> <p>Taking any game or nongame species other than deer and turkey at Midewin is prohibited.</p> <p>No hunting is allowed on private inholdings within Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.</p>
<p><b>AREAS OPEN TO HUNTING</b></p>	<p>All areas open to the general public are also open to deer and turkey hunting.</p> <p>It is very important to consult the provided maps for detailed information on the boundaries of the open areas. Lands outside these boundaries are not open to public access and trespassers may be cited and fined. Some lands outside these boundaries may present hazards to trespassers.</p> <p><u>If a wounded deer crosses into a closed area of Midewin, the hunter must contact the Forest Service office at (815) 423-6370 between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Monday through Friday to obtain permission to track it. Outside those hours, call (815)263-4060 to obtain permission.</u></p> <p>In addition to Forest Service boundary maps, USGS topographic maps for lands within the Midewin boundaries are available for sale at the Midewin Welcome Center.</p>
<p><b>PERMITS &amp; PASSES</b></p>	<p>All hunting permits and licenses are issued by Illinois DNR. Deer and turkey firearm permits for Midewin are issued through the Illinois DNR lottery system for Special Hunt Areas.</p> <p>In addition, all hunters must obtain an annual hunting pass from the Midewin Welcome Center. There is no charge for this pass. <u>Hunters must show their state-issued hunting license and habitat stamp in order to get a Midewin hunting pass.</u></p> <p><b>The pocket portion of the pass must be carried at all times while hunting at Midewin. The larger portion of the pass must be placed so it is clearly visible through the front windshield.</b> If you wish to be eligible to receive next years' permit in the mail, at the end of the season this pass must be completed and returned to Midewin. Any violation of any rules and regulations may result in the forfeiture of hunting privileges at Midewin and issuance of a citation.</p>
<p><b>TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT CLOSURES</b></p>	<p>Management activities, volunteer workdays, and public programs will occur periodically throughout the deer and turkey hunting seasons. The Forest Service may temporarily or permanently close areas to hunting. Refer to the bulletin boards in the parking lots or call the Midewin Welcome Center for the most up-to-date information at (815) 423-6370, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.</p> <p>Midewin makes every effort to inform hunters of closures and activities ahead of time. Sometimes this is not possible but the management activity will go on.</p>
<p><b>PUBLIC ACCESS &amp; TRAILS</b></p>	<p>All hunting areas are open to the general public. The following guidelines must be observed and will be enforced to ensure a safe and enjoyable recreational experience for all visitors.</p> <p>Access to public lands at Midewin is by non-motorized means only – such as hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snow shoeing, or cross country skiing. Bicycles, game carts and horses are restricted to designated multiple use trails and must stay on trail. Trails are not</p>

	<p>snow plowed in the winter.</p> <p>There are designated trails available for recreational access for shared use by hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians and 12 miles for hikers only. Up to date trail maps are available online and at the Midewin Office.</p> <p>Equestrians and bicyclists are required to stay on these designated trails at all times of the year. <b>You may only sign yourself in.</b> Hunters should be aware that non-hunters will be using the trails and the land during their hunt and locate accordingly.</p> <p>The Forest Service prohibits shooting in or within 150 yards of any building, developed recreation site, or occupied area. At Midewin, this particularly means <u>no shooting when people or property are within 150 yards</u>. Shooting across roads, bodies of water, cemeteries or in any way prohibited by state law and/or federal laws is also prohibited.</p> <p>Hunters using bicycles or horses to get part way to their hunting sites must obey state laws regarding transportation of firearms. <u>Firearms must be unloaded and completely cased while being transported.</u> All firearms and bows must comply with state firearm transportation laws.</p> <p>There is no camping at Midewin, including the parking lots. <b>Hunters must sign themselves in on the day of the hunt</b> at parking lots which may be accessed from 4:00 AM until 10:00 PM.</p>
<p><b>HUNTING STANDS</b></p>	<p>Construction or use of permanent deer stands is not permitted at Midewin. This includes tree pegs and climbing spikes. Only portable stands that do no permanent damage to trees are permitted. Do not cut tree limbs. Hunting stands may <u>not</u> be left in place overnight at Midewin; hunting stands in violation of these rules may be confiscated.</p>
<p><b>ACCESSIBLE HUNTING BLINDS</b></p>	<p>Accessible hunting blinds may be reserved for hunters with a valid Illinois state Disability Hunting card. Reservations must be made at the Midewin Welcome Center. Permitted hunters must also sign in and out of the accessible blind at the parking lot trailhead on the day of their hunt.</p> <p>Only permitted hunters with a reservation may use an accessible blind. No other hunters may hunt within 50 yards of an accessible blind when it is occupied. The only exception is the companion assisting the hunter reserving the accessible blind. This companion is also not counted in the number of hunters limited to any zone on the east side.</p> <p>Restrictions on motorized access at Midewin apply to hunters with disabilities, with the exception of a motorized device designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, <u>and</u> that is suitable for use in an <u>indoor</u> pedestrian area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “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.</li> <li>• “Suitable for indoor pedestrian use” means useable inside a home, mall, courthouse, etc. (Forest Service Manual 2353.05 and ADA Title V Section 507c)</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUCCESSFUL HUNT</b></p>	<p>The public is not allowed into closed areas on Midewin’s east side.</p>
<p><b>RESTORATION</b></p>	<p>The Forest Service, together with the support of hundreds of volunteers and partner</p>

	<p>agencies, businesses, and organizations, is working to restore the prairie to the Prairie State.</p> <p>You can watch this process in action over the years during your visits to Midewin. It may look more like a construction site in some areas, but the activities you will see are actually important steps in rebuilding the natural habitats, biodiversity, and landscape. A variety of activities are part of the restoration process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• demolition of abandoned buildings,</li><li>• cutting of non-native or invasive trees and brush,</li><li>• application of herbicide to non-native or invasive plants,</li><li>• earthmoving equipment restoring the shape of the land,</li><li>• cattle grazing to maintain grassland bird habitat,</li><li>• farm equipment planting, mowing, spraying herbicide, and harvesting to restore desired vegetation or keep out unwanted plant species.</li></ul> <p>Visitors may observe equipment, supplies, flagging, or structures placed to support these restoration activities or research. Please respect private property and ongoing work by not disturbing these materials.</p> <p>Some hunters are concerned that vegetation changes will reduce the deer, turkey and other wildlife habitat and population. While short-term disturbance may drive wildlife to less busy areas, the long-term restoration is not expected to significantly affect the size of the wildlife population at Midewin.</p>
<b>OTHER RULES</b>	<p>No motorized vehicles may be used for recreation at Midewin. Visitors may, however, see administrative and contractor vehicles being used for ongoing work.</p> <p>Some activities are not allowed at Midewin, including camping, building fires, fishing, trapping, swimming, collecting National Forest Service products, and pursuits that may disturb the soil, such as metal detection. If you have a question about whether an activity is permitted at Midewin, please ask at the Welcome Center.</p> <p><u>Heritage Resources:</u> Disturbing or removing any prehistoric, historic, or archaeological resource, site, artifact, property, or structure is prohibited.</p> <p><u>Dogs:</u> Dogs are currently welcome at Midewin as long as they are on a leash no longer than 6 feet and stay on trail.</p> <p><u>Non-game Animals, Fences &amp; Gates:</u> Cattle are helping maintain grassland bird habitat by keeping grass at the height preferred by different bird species for nesting and feeding. Please <u>keep pasture gates closed</u> and do not harass livestock or non-game animals.</p> <p><u>Traffic:</u> Operators of heavy equipment on the roads and in the fields may not be able to see or hear visitors. Stay well away from this equipment. Some areas may be posted closed during project work.</p> <p><u>Open Hours:</u> Midewin is a Day Use facility and may only be accessed during the hours of 4 am until 10 pm. Hunters are not allowed to enter the parking lots until 4 am and must leave no later than 10 pm.</p> <p><u>Hunter Sign-in:</u> Hunters must sign-in during open hours on the day of their hunt.</p>

<b>IN CASE OF EMERGENCY</b>	<b>Call 911 for emergencies.</b>
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## WEST SIDE RULES & PROCEDURES

<b>PARKING</b>	<p>There are 3 parking lots available for public use on the west side:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explosives Road Trailhead (P5) at old Gate 10 west of State Route 53; and</li> <li>• P1 and P3 north of River Road between I-55 and State Route 53.</li> <li>• P3: An 8-foot-tall game fence surrounds the River Road native seed production garden, including the parking lot at P3. This fence was installed to reduce damage to prairie plants and seeds by browsing deer. Walk-through gates are available at the west and east ends of the enclosure and to either side of the north gate on Boathouse Road. Please keep these gates closed.</li> </ul>								
<b>DEER: POSTED HUNTING SITES</b>	<p>The west side of Midewin has two types of hunting areas, hunting sites and hunting zones. Hunters must sign in and out of designated hunting sites. Hunting sites are managed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunters must hunt within 50 yards of the posted site number.</li> <li>• Moving from one hunting site to another requires signing out and back into the new location.</li> <li>• ODD-numbered hunting sites may be used <u>only</u> on ODD-numbered calendar days.</li> <li>• EVEN-numbered sites may be used <u>only</u> on EVEN-numbered calendar days.</li> <li>• GPS coordinates for posted hunting sites are available at the Midewin Welcome Center or online at the Midewin website at <a href="http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin">http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin</a></li> <li>• Within hunting zones, hunters may hunt anywhere within designated zone.</li> <li>• Changing zones requires returning to the sign in/out list to sign out and back into the new zone.</li> <li>• Each zone has an optimum recommended number of hunters that may be signed in at any one time.</li> </ul>								
<b>WEST SIDE HUNTING ZONES</b>	<p>Hunters must sign in and out of designated hunting zones. Each zone has a maximum number of hunters. Exceeding this number of hunters reduces the quality of the hunting experience for all.</p> <p>Maximum number of hunters per zone at one time:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="781 1713 1341 1854"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>P3 Parking Area</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 811 South</td> <td>5 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>P5 Explosives Road TH</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 811 North</td> <td>8 Hunters</td> </tr> </table>	<i>P3 Parking Area</i>		Zone 811 South	5 Hunters	<i>P5 Explosives Road TH</i>		Zone 811 North	8 Hunters
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## EAST SIDE RULES & PROCEDURES

<p><b>PARKING</b></p>	<p>There are two parking lots available for public use on the east side of Midewin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hoff Road Trailhead is located on Hoff Road two miles east of State Route 53. Hunting zones 3 through 7 may be accessed from this parking lot.</li> <li>• The Iron Bridge Trailhead is located on the east side of State Route 53, about 2.5 miles north of the Welcome Center and just north of the iron railroad overpass. Zones 1 and 2 may be accessed from this parking lot.</li> <li>• In addition, entry into Midewin is available from the Wauponsee Trail at Road 1 North or Offner Road on Midewin's eastern boundary; however, there is no parking available at this access point and the Forest Preserve District of Will County currently prohibits carrying weapons on the Wauponsee Trail (General Use Regulation Ordinance No. 124, Ch. V, Sec. 5).</li> </ul>																														
<p><b>HUNTING ZONES</b></p>	<p>Hunters on the east side of Midewin must sign in and out of designated hunting zones. <b>Hunters may only sign themselves in on the day of the hunt.</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="589 919 1149 1171"> <thead> <tr> <th>Iron Bridge Sign In &amp; Out</th> <th>Hoff Road Sign In &amp; Out</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Zone 1</td> <td>Zone 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 2</td> <td>Zone 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Zone 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Zone 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Zone 7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunters may enter the parking lot no earlier than 4 AM. Hunters may sign in for their hunting zone upon entering the parking lot on the day of the hunt. All hunters must sign out only themselves no later than 10 PM.</li> <li>• Hunters may hunt anywhere within their designated zone.</li> <li>• Hunters changing zones requires returning to the sign in/out list to sign out and back into the new zone.</li> <li>• Each zone has an maximum number of hunters that may be signed in at any one time.</li> </ul> <p>Maximum number of hunters per zone:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="764 1528 1325 1843"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Iron Bridge Trailhead</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Zone 1</td> <td>12 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 2</td> <td>10 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">Hoff Road Trailhead</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 3</td> <td>10 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 4</td> <td>12 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 5</td> <td>12 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 6</td> <td>8 Hunters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 7</td> <td>12 Hunters</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Iron Bridge Sign In & Out	Hoff Road Sign In & Out	Zone 1	Zone 3	Zone 2	Zone 4		Zone 5		Zone 6		Zone 7	Iron Bridge Trailhead		Zone 1	12 Hunters	Zone 2	10 Hunters	Hoff Road Trailhead		Zone 3	10 Hunters	Zone 4	12 Hunters	Zone 5	12 Hunters	Zone 6	8 Hunters	Zone 7	12 Hunters
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<p><b>PROJECT CLOSURES</b></p>	<p><b>Temporary closures</b> may occur for project work throughout the season. We will post closure areas on bulletin boards as soon as possible</p>																														

We expect interest in hunting at Midewin to continue to grow. Successful management of this program will depend on all recreationists – hunters, hikers, bicyclists, birdwatchers, and equestrians – understanding the laws, orders, regulations and rules and being considerate of each other. Please protect the quality of your and others' recreation experience by packing out trash to parking lot receptacles and leaving gut piles away from visitor areas.

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