

SAUVIE ISLAND WILDLIFE AREA

Some of the best duck hunting in the country takes place on Oregon's Sauvie Island Wildlife Area (SIWA) just 10 miles from downtown Portland.

At 15 miles long and 4 miles wide, Sauvie Island is the largest island in the Columbia River and a main stopping point for migratory birds as they travel

along the Pacific Flyway between Alaska and South America. In the winter months the island hosts more than 150,000 waterfowl, including several species of ducks, geese and swans.

Almost half of the island's 26,000 acres are owned by the State of Oregon, which purchased the land in the 1940s, largely through funding from a federal tax on arms and ammunition. These lands were subsequently designated as a state wildlife area by the Oregon Legislature and placed under management of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Today, ODFW manages the wildlife area to provide habitat for waterfowl, conserve important natural resource values and to create recreational opportunities for hunters, anglers and wildlife viewers. An important component of ODFW's management plan is a waterfowl hunting program that provides unparalleled recreational opportunities to tens of thousands of hunters each fall and winter. This program is designed with the dual goals of maximizing quality hunting experiences for sportsmen while protecting migratory birds.

The waterfowl hunting program is multi-faceted to accommodate a wide variety of hunting styles



and abilities. The possibilities include hunting from bench-style blinds in a corn field or from makeshift blinds next to the shores of one of the island's many lakes. There are special blinds for people with disabilities. And there are hunts for those who want to roam wide open fields or even hunt from a boat.

Naturally, managing a hunting program of this magnitude and diversity necessitates policies and procedures that ensure a system that is fair, safe and enjoyable for everyone. To the beginner, understanding how the various hunts work can be a challenge. Fortunately, the system has evolved over decades of trial and error and is now hailed as one of the premier duck hunting opportunities in the nation that is available to hunters in close proximity to a major metropolitan area. Like any other sport, individuals who put in the time and effort to understand the regulations and lay of the land are the ones who will enjoy the greatest success. So, please, take time to read the regulations, study the maps, visit the wildlife area and ask questions of more experienced hunters and helpful ODFW staff and you will be rewarded with a unique hunting experience that will provide many years of enjoyment.

If you are new to waterfowl hunting on Sauvie Island, this guide was specifically designed for you. It contains a general overview of License Requirements, Seasons, Access, Hunting Units, Maps, Phone Numbers, Web links, Hunter Safety and Ethics. It is not intended to be a definitive explanation but, rather, an introduction to this unique public resource. Most of the discussion in this guide revolves around duck hunting, since that is by far the most extensive hunting opportunity on the wildlife area. There is also a short section at the end, providing a brief overview of goose hunting.



License Requirements

- Valid hunting license
- State waterfowl validation
 Hunter Information
- Program (HIP) validation Federal waterfowl stamp
- Sauvie Island Wildlife Area Parking Permit
- Sauvie Island Wildlife Area Hunting Unit Permit
- Goose hunters need a Northwest Goose Permit, except during the September season

Note: Hunting licenses and state game bird validations can be purchased from ODFW offices and license agents. HIP validations are obtained free of charge at ODFW offices or license agents after answering several questions related to the harvest of game birds. Federal waterfowl stamps can be purchased at ODFW offices and U.S. Postal Service offices. SIWA parking permits can be purchased from ODFW offices and license agents. SIWA hunting unit permits are issued on hunt days at one of the Sauvie Island hunter check stations. Northwest Zone goose permits can be purchased for a nominal fee after passing a test demonstrating the ability to correctly identify different goose species.

Seasons

Duck Hunting

Mid-October through January, varies slightly year to year

Eastside Unit – Every other day (for exact dates, refer to the Sauvie Island Reservation Hunt tables, which are printed in the back of the Oregon Game Bird Regulations)

Westside Unit – Every other day (same dates as Eastside Units)

North Unit – Every day

Goose Hunting

September Canada Goose Hunt – Early to mid-September

Northwest Permit Goose Hunt – Mid-October through January

Shooting times

Eastside and Westside units – Beginning times change each week throughout the season depending on when sunrise takes place. Official start times are listed in the shooting hours table in the Oregon Game Bird Regulations. Ending shooting times on these two units is 4 p.m. for the entire season.

North Unit – Both beginning and ending shooting times are the same as official times listed in the Game Bird Shooting Hours Table in the Oregon Game Bird Regulations. In other words, North Unit both beginning and ending shooting hours change every week according to when dawn and dusk take place. This unit is closed to goose hunting except during the September goose season.

Access

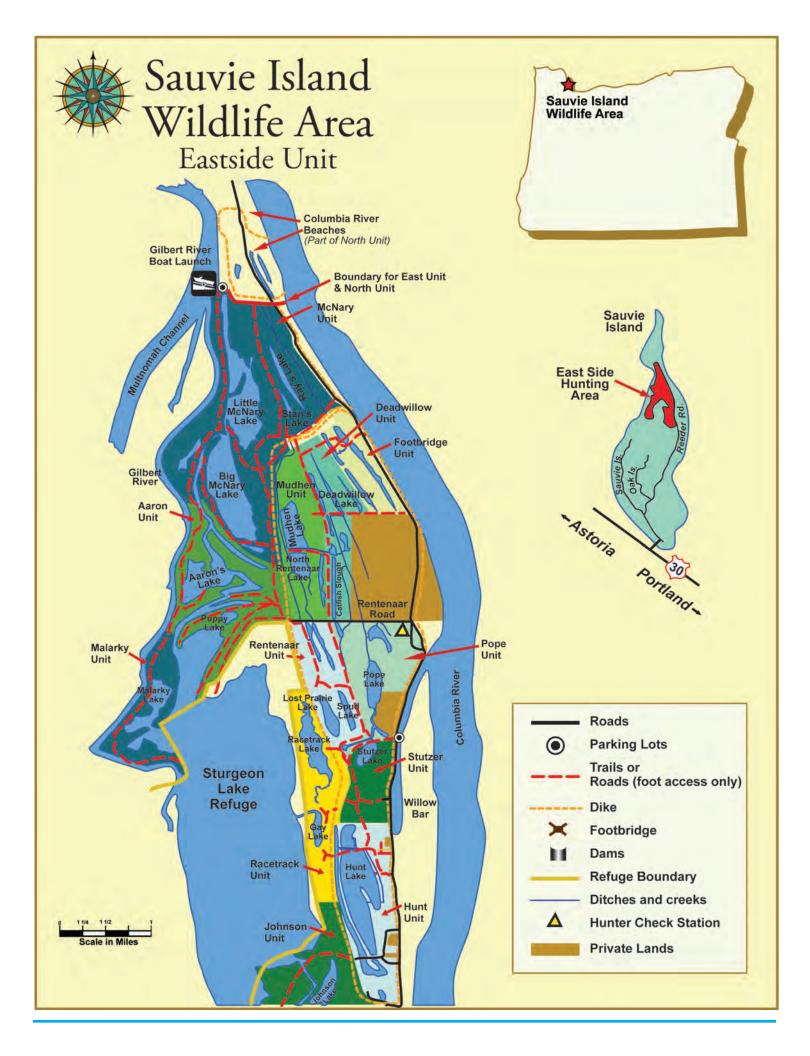
For the purposes of duck hunting, the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area is divided into three general areas – the Eastside Unit, Westside Unit, and North Unit. The Eastside and Westside units are divided into a total of 20 smaller hunting subunits. Hunters must obtain a SIWA hunting permit to hunt in any of these areas and this permit must be in their possession while they are hunting. Due to differences in the number of and types of blinds, topography, hunter demand, waterfowl distribution and other factors, each area has its own system for allocating permits. These systems are designed to give everybody an equal chance to "draw" a permit as quickly and efficiently as possible.

How to Hunt the Eastside Unit

Getting there – The Eastside is comprised of 14 individual hunting subunits. Access to all Eastside subunits is permitted only after obtaining a SIWA hunting permit at ODFW's Eastside check station, which is located approximately 11 miles from the Sauvie Island Bridge, at the intersection of Reeder and Rentenaar roads. To get to the check station, from Hwy. 30, cross the Sauvie Island Bridge and stay straight on Sauvie Island Road. Follow Sauvie Island Road for 2 miles until it forks. At the fork, bear right and stay on Reeder Road for 9 miles. The check station is a small light gray building on the left.

Getting a SIWA Eastside hunting permit – The Eastside or "food crop" area has the greatest number of individual hunting units and is the most popular among hunters. These are lands managed to provide abundant natural foods or are planted with corn, millet, buckwheat and alfalfa to provide food and habitat for the birds and to reduce their impact on surrounding private lands. On weekends especially, there is often more demand for hunting than the area can meet. That is why years ago ODFW adopted a reservation system for allocating hunting permits for Eastside subunits. Under this system, hunters have two possible ways of obtaining a permit. Those methods are as follows:

Option #1 – The first method is to apply for a reservation through ODFW's computerized controlled hunt system. Using this method, the hunter pays a small fee to participate in a random drawing that can be entered at ODFW offices, license agents or by sending in an application





HUNT BLIND UNIT



MUDHEN BLIND UNIT



JOHNSON BLIND UNIT



RACETRACK BLIND UNIT



printed in the back of the Oregon Game Bird Regulations. The hunter can choose up to five Eastside subunits in each of seven drawings conducted about every two weeks from September through December. Those who are successful in a drawing will be assigned a random check-in sequence number along with their reservation. This number will correspond to the order in which they will pick a blind or check-in for a roam unit. For example, there are 5 available blinds in the Racetrack Unit and each successful applicant for the Racetrack Unit would receive a random number from 1 to 5. The hunter with #1 will have first choice of blinds, the hunter with #2 will have second choice of blinds, and so on and so forth. Hunters will see this check-in sequence number when they check their controlled hunt results and this same number will also print on their controlled hunt reservation permit. Reservation hunters must be in line at least two hours before shooting time and will be called via AM Radio Station 1580 to the check station by the check-in sequence number. Successful applicants must purchase their reservation permit before arriving at the wildlife area. License documents are not available at the check stations. Hunters must park in the right lane of the reservation check-in road and use the left lane to proceed to the check station when called forward. Beginning shooting times vary throughout the season, depending on when the sun comes up in the morning. Shooting times are listed chronologically in a table published in the Oregon Game Bird Regulations.

Option #2 – Unfilled reservations are available to hunters without reservations on a first-come, firstserved basis at the check station beginning 1 hour before shooting time. Separate vehicle lines are designated for reservation and non-reservation hunters.

Note: With both options, anybody who receives a SIWA hunting permit for a blind is permitted to invite up to three other persons to sit in the blind. Likewise, those who receive roam permits may be accompanied by one other person, but that person may not hunt.

What's available in the Eastside Unit

If you are lucky enough to get a SIWA hunting permit, one of the things you'll want to know is something about the types of hunting positions that are available. Basically, your choices are to hunt from a fixed location in blinds built and maintained by ODFW staff and volunteers or to hunt in a "roam" unit where hunters are free to walk around or build their own makeshift blind with a camouflage net and/or natural materials. The Eastside is comprised of 14 individual hunting subunits. The number of hunters allowed in each of these units varies through the season. Five of the 14 are "blind" subunits and the other nine are "roam" subunits, as follows:

Eastside Blind Subunits

- Hunt (8 regular blinds, 1 ADA accessible blind)
- Johnson (5 slotted tree/vegetation blinds & 2 lakeside blinds)
- Mudhen (12 regular blinds, 1 ADA accessible blind)
- Oak Island (6 seasonal blinds, best for ducks when water is high)
- Racetrack (5 regular blinds)

Eastside Roam Subunits

- Aaron (up to 10 hunters)
- Deadwillow (up to 10 hunters)
- Footbridge (up to 8 hunters)
- Malarky (up to 10 hunters)
- McNary (up to 20 hunters)
- Pope Lake (up to 8 hunters)
- Reeder (1 party of up to four hunters)
- Rentenaar (up to 10 hunters)
- Stutzer (up to 8 hunters)

All Eastside subunits except Hunt, Johnson, Oak Island, Mudhen and Racetrack are "roam" areas in which hunters are free to set up at any location so long as they do not interfere with hunters already in place. In the five "blind" units, hunters are required to shoot from fixed locations where there are bench style hunting blinds that have been camouflaged with corn stalks, branches and other materials. Two of these subunits have blinds reserved for individuals with disabled hunter permits.

Hunters who enjoy hunting from a boat should consider Aaron, McNary or Malarky subunits. Hunters are also allowed to check into the Crane subunit through the Eastside check station, although the subunit is located in the Westside Unit. This is only allowed if hunt locations remain after the random drawing on the Westside Unit has been completed.



One of two waterfowl hunting blinds reserved for individuals with disabled hunter permits.

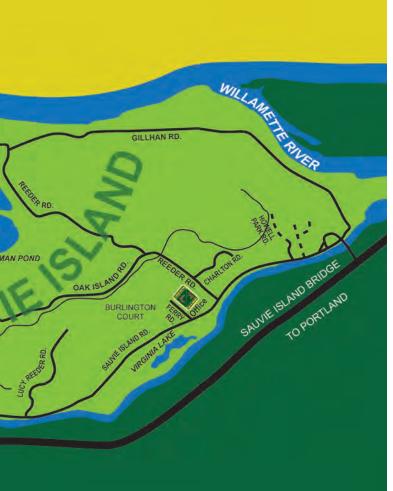


How to hunt the Westside Units

Getting there - The Westside is comprised of six individual hunting units. Access to all Westside units is through written SIWA hunting permits issued on hunt days at ODFW's Westside check station, which is located 9 miles from the Sauvie Island Bridge. To get to the check station from Hwy. 30, cross the Sauvie Island Bridge stay straight on Sauvie Island Road. Follow Sauvie Island Road for 2 miles and stay left when the road forks. At the fork, continue on Sauvie Island Road an additional 7 miles to where it dead-ends at a gravel parking lot with a gate. The check station is a small white trailer just beyond the gate. All six hunting units are accessed from that point. Two of these units, Crane and North Crane, can also be entered by boat via the Multhomah Channel and Gilbert River, but only after first obtaining a SIWA hunting permit at the check station.

Getting a SIWA Westside hunting permit – Access to the Westside units is by "luck of the draw" at the beginning of each hunting day. Hunters who are in line on the road leading to the check station no later than 1^{1/2} hours before shooting time are eligible to participate in a drawing that determines who gets to pick the available hunting units first. Each person who is in line on time is given the opportunity to draw a numbered poker chip from a bag full of chips carried by ODFW staff. The person with the lowest number gets first pick of all available hunting positions. The person with the second lowest number gets second pick, and so forth, until all of the hunting positions are assigned. Hunters who do not draw a low enough number to pick one of the available positions have three choices: 1) They can go home and try another day, 2) they can wait around and get in line for a position once it is vacated by the winner, or 3) if they know one of the winners they can hope for an invitation because hunters who draw blinds can take up to three other people along on their hunt.

Once hunters have drawn poker chips they are called to the check station for permits over a low power radio signal that can be heard by tuning in to Channel 1580 on their AM radio dial.



What's available on the Westside

The Westside is comprised of six subunits, four of which contain blinds and two that are roam subunits.

Westside Blind Subunits

- Holman Point (6 blinds)
- Mud Lake (14 blinds)
- Seal (6 blinds)
- Steelman (10 blinds)

Westside Roam Subunits

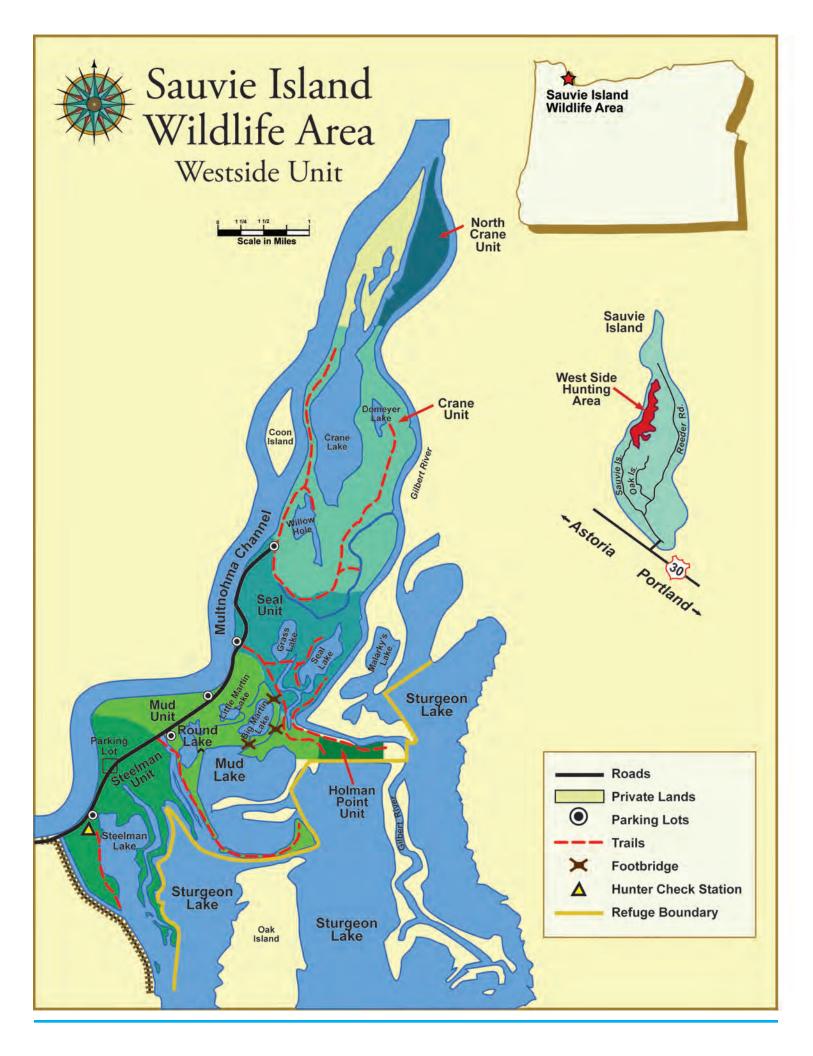
- Crane (5 parties of up to four hunters each)
- North Crane (1 party of up to four hunters)

The Seal, Steelman and Mud Lake subunits contain "designated shooting sites" marked by posts while Crane and North Crane are roam areas. Holman Point is an area containing designated shooting sites. The sites are "slots" where the vegetation has been trimmed to allow pass shooting as birds move between the Sturgeon Lake Refuge and the Eastside unit. These slots are bordered by the Gilbert River on the north, Sturgeon Lake Refuge on the south and large ash trees on either side. This generally means no water in which to set decoys, except during periods of extremely high water. Hunters must take care to avoid shooting into or setting decoys in the Sturgeon Lake Refuge when hunting Holman Point. While Holman Point is generally not a steady producer it can be red hot on stormy days when the birds are constantly moving and poor visibility keeps them low.



Hunters put out decoys at Mud Lake and wait for ducks at their blind next to the shore.

Decoys can be very effective at attracting ducks but should be placed no farther than 35 yards from the blind to prevent shots that are too long that could result in wounded or lost waterfowl.

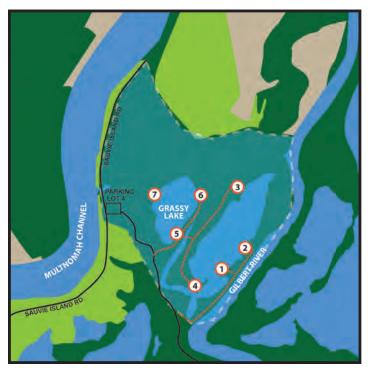




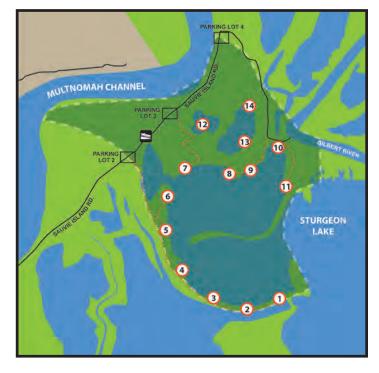
HOLMAN POINT BLIND UNIT



SEAL LAKE BLIND UNIT



MUD LAKE BLIND UNIT



STEELMAN BLIND UNIT



How to hunt the North Unit

The North Unit is one large unit that has no blinds. The entire unit is considered a roam unit. It is located at the north end of the island and can be accessed by driving 12 miles from the Sauvie Island Bridge to the end of Reeder Road. It can also be accessed by boat via Multhomah Channel and Cunningham Slough. The mouth of Cunningham Slough is located just across the Multhomah Channel from the entrance of Scappoose Bay. Choices are to set up on either the slough itself or tie up and walk to any of several lakes that can be found along the way. Launch facilities are available at the public boat ramp on Scappoose Bay or the Gilbert River boat ramp on Sauvie Island. Remember, most lakes and waterways in the North Unit are influenced by tides, so water depths are constantly changing.

North Unit permit process – The North Unit is the only place on the wildlife area where hunters do not need a SIWA hunting permit (permits are voluntary). Access is open to anyone who wants to hunt, seven days a week throughout the Zone 1 waterfowl season, which runs generally from about mid-October through the end of January. Before entering the North Unit, hunters may pick up a selfissue hunting permit at an ODFW kiosk at the end of Reeder Road. Fill out the top part of the permit, and put it in the drop box at the kiosk. When exiting the unit, record any harvest information on the bottom half of the permit and deposit it in the drop box. The purpose of these permits is twofold: 1) to ensure the hunters' safety by letting ODFW staff know who is in the unit, and 2) to monitor harvest information so staff can better manage bird populations.

General waterfowl hunting tips

Ammunition – Only federally approved nontoxic shot is allowed for hunting on the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area.

Boats – Hunting by boat is possible in the North Unit, Eastside Unit (Aaron, McNary and Malarky subunits) and on the Westside Unit (Crane and North Crane subunits). When hunting from a boat, make sure to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs) and consult tide tables, since the waters on the island are tidally influenced. Some hunters also carry in canoes that they can use to retrieve birds shot down over water.

Clothing – Many areas of the wildlife area are accessible with hip waders but chest waders are best. Good camouflage rain gear, including coat, hat, gloves and face mask, is very popular. Many waterfowl hunters bring a 5-gallon plastic bucket to carry gear, plus it makes an excellent chair.

Decoys – Many duck hunters use decoys to attract birds. Decoys should not be placed more than 35 yards from blinds to prevent "skybusting," which is the unethical practices of shooting birds that are too far away. Skybusting can lead to lost and injured birds.

Dogs – A good bird dog can be a big help when it comes to retrieving ducks. Sauvie Island Wildlife Area has a lot of lakes and wetland areas. Failure to retrieve a game animal, if possible, after it has been shot is unlawful.

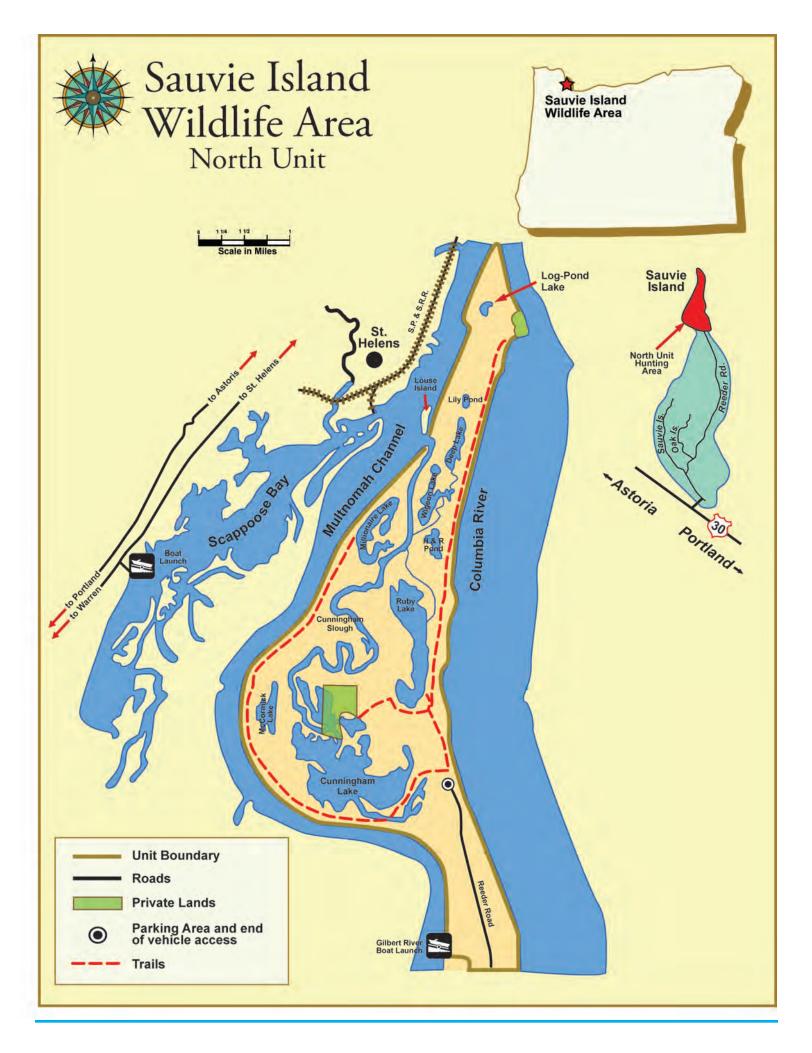
Duck calls – Calls can be an effective way to attract ducks. There are many educational materials that can help hunters become proficient duck callers. The best teacher is experience and watching and listening to more experienced hunters.

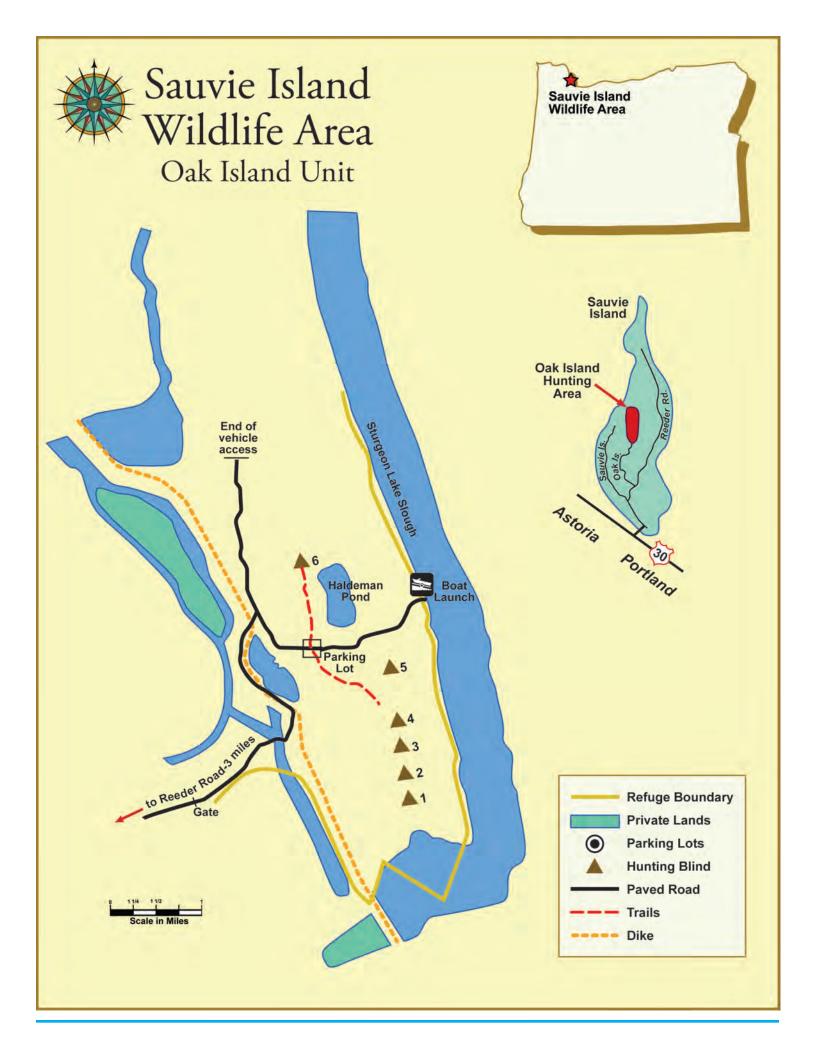
Game bird regulations – Study the Oregon Game Bird Regulations so you are familiar with the rules of the road. These regulations are designed to protect the wildlife and to ensure your safety and the safety of the people around you!

Vehicles – All vehicles entering the wildlife area are required to display a valid Sauvie Island Wildlife Area parking permit. Parking permits can be purchased online, from any point of sale license agent as well as many island businesses. Portions of Sauvie Island Wildlife Area are closed to entry during the waterfowl season, except with a daily hunting permit, from Oct. 1 through April 15. Many of these areas remain closed to all public access through April 30.

Wildlife identification – It is a good idea to learn about the types of waterfowl that you may encounter out in the field. Common duck species harvested on SIWA include mallard, wigeon, greenwinged teal, pintail, shoveler, ring-necked duck and common merganser. In the case of geese, hunters must take a test demonstrating that they can identify the various species of geese.









A flock of cackling and Taverner's geese browse the tender shoots of wheat emerging from a field on the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area.

Goose hunting on the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area

There is some excellent goose hunting to be found on the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area. However, goose hunting is highly regulated to help reduce goose damage to surrounding private farmlands and because management is subject to international treaties. In addition, some species of geese are struggling and need protection while other species are flourishing. As a result, areas that are open to hunting can change and so can season dates. As a goose hunter, it is your responsibility to know when and where you can hunt and what species you are targeting.

Goose Hunting Seasons

September Canada Goose Season – early to mid-September

Northwest Permit Zone Goose Season – mid-October to January, depending on harvest and other factors (check current Game Bird Regulations for exact dates and open areas). To participate in this season, in addition to all the license requirements for duck hunting, hunters must also pass a test demonstrating their ability to identify different species of geese. This test is required to protect certain species from being over-harvested and is available on-line at the ODFW Web site or can be taken in writing by appointment at ODFW offices.

Goose Hunting Areas

September Canada Goose Season – The entire wildlife area, except for designated refuge areas, is open for hunting during the September Canada Goose Hunt. Hunters must check in and out daily at self service check stations located at the wildlife area headquarters, located two miles from the Sauvie Island Bridge at 18330 NW Sauvie Island Road, and at the Willow Bar Parking lot, located just north of the Multnomah/Columbia County line on Reeder Road. The North Unit has proved to be the most productive during this early season but other areas also provide success. Other areas which may be productive are the Crane subunit in the Westside Unit and some of the agricultural areas in the Eastside Unit.

Northwest Permit Zone Goose Season – The dates, open areas and quotas for the Northwest Oregon Permit Goose season change from year to year, so hunters are advised to consult annual regulations for the most up-to-date information. Hunting during this period generally is limited to the Oak Island subunit of the Eastside Unit and the Reeder Tract. Designated shooting sites in this area are pit blinds placed in the middle of large grass seed or alfalfa fields. Check-in and check-out for this hunt takes place at the Eastside Unit check station. All goose hunters must possess a valid NW Goose Permit in addition to all other required licenses, validations and permits.



Common Sauvie Island Duck Species



Mallard



Shoveler



Widgeon



Green-winged teal



Pintail



Ring-necked Duck



Gadwall



Common Merganser



For more information

ODFW's Sauvie Island Wildlife Area office 503-621-3488

ODFW Headquarters 503-947-6000

ODFW NW Region Office 971-673-6000

ODFW Web site www.dfw.state.or.us

Waterfowl regulations, statistics, shooting hours www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/waterfowl

> **ODFW Recreation Report** www.dfw.state.or.us/RR/index.asp

> > Email odfw.info@state.or.us