

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three Bowfishing Tournaments Permitted on Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Refuge) has been notified of the issuance of fishing tournament permits to bowfishing groups in Wisconsin and Iowa. The Wisconsin Bowfishing Association (WBA) will host a night-time bowfishing tournament in Upper Mississippi River Pools 4, 5, and 5A on June 11, 2016 and in Pools 8, 9, and 10 on July 30, 2016. Both tournaments hosted by the WBA have been permitted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR).

The Bowfishing Association of Iowa (BAI) has received a permit from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to host a night-time bowfishing tournament in Pool 10 on July 23, 2016. WBA President Jeb Verhalen and BAI President Zac Miller both spoke with Refuge Manager Sabrina Chandler to discuss tournament “red zones” which are areas to be avoided by tournament participants. They also discussed concerns that were raised in response to a large scale bowfishing tournament held in July 2015 on Pools 9, 10, and 11. Mr. Verhalen and Mr. Miller have taken appropriate measures to ensure that tournament participants are aware of the red zones, Refuge and State regulations, and that participants are considerate to other recreational users of the Refuge.

Bowfishing is allowed on Refuge lands in accordance with State law. Currently, fishing tournaments are regulated through the respective State DNRs and in compliance with a compatibility determination completed through the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan in 2006.

Any concerns or observations of violations should be reported to the proper authorities. Refuge specific violations can be reported to the National Wildlife Refuge System Tip line at 1-844-NWR-TIPS (697-8477) or email NWR_TIPS@fws.gov 24 hours a day. You'll be asked for the type of incident as well as the date, place (refuge name or county/state) and approximate time of the incident. You may leave your name and contact information, which will aid law enforcement in the response and investigation, or you may remain anonymous. Any contact information provided will be used for official purposes only.

In addition to being the most visited refuge in the country, the “Upper Miss” Refuge has the added complexity of a major navigation system, including 11 locks and dams, within its boundary. It is also a world-class fish and

wildlife area which harbors 306 species of birds; 119 species of fish; more than 200 active bald eagle nests; thousands of heron and egret nests; spectacular concentrations of canvasback ducks, tundra swans, and white pelicans; and several threatened or endangered species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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