

Ravenswood Hunting FAQs

Q: What are the specifics of the new hunting program at Ravenswood?

A: Controlled archery hunting for deer only will be allowed at Ravenswood by permission only as part of The Trustees statewide deer management program. Hunting is restricted to bow hunting and requires permission by The Trustees property and ecology teams. A small group of local, licensed hunters will be granted permission to hunt on the property after passing a proficiency test, confirming the good standing of their state hunting licenses, and acknowledging all strict state laws and Trustees policies.

Q: Why allow hunting at Ravenswood (or any other Trustees properties)?

A: As a landowner and conservation organization, The Trustees has recognized the value of hunting as an effective way to steward our natural resources and ecosystems, gardens, and agricultural crops as well as an active recreational activity. Hunting is generally considered a traditional Massachusetts pastime and an active way to spend time outdoors. Providing access to open space for public use and enjoyment is a core value of The Trustees' mission and allowing hunting supports this value. The Trustees hunting [policy](#) guides the designation of hunting access based on our mission values by considering safety, recreational and visitor experience, and resource protection in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Hunting access is allowed on certain properties, some with specific Trustees' restrictions.

Q: Why allow Controlled hunting at Ravenswood (or any other Trustees properties)?

A: Deer populations are overabundant throughout much of the eastern United States, including Massachusetts. This overabundance is a direct effect of human influence that eliminated their natural predators, created ideal habitat through suburban development, and today fewer people hunt with less land to hunt on, and we regulate how harvest can occur. Excessive browse from overabundant deer populations poses a great threat to natural and cultural landscape resiliency/integrity, biodiversity, rare species preservation, and exacerbates the negative impacts of climate change. Currently, hunting is the only practical and permissible means to control deer populations in Massachusetts and has proven over time to be an effective way to manage deer populations and resilient ecosystems. The Trustees monitors vegetation on many properties to assess the impacts deer are having on the landscape and the impact of the deer management program.

Q: How have deer negatively impacted Ravenswood specifically?

A: Deer browse surveys across the reservation have indicated that deer are impacting vegetation at Ravenswood. Multiple plant species that we monitor are declining in height and are unable to put on sustained growth because of deer browse. While impacts are only moderate at the time, the lack of natural population control in conjunction with areas that are not hunted raises the risk that deer population will become progressively more abundant, and impacts will increase.

Ravenswood is botanically diverse and supports a variety of endangered or uncommon wildlife including the northernmost native population of sweet bay magnolia (*M. virginiana*), which is a significant ecological feature at this property, and likely the namesake for the nearby Village of Gloucester – Magnolia, MA. Listed as Endangered in Massachusetts, the magnolia has been a focus of stewardship

throughout the Park's history and is the most viable known population in Massachusetts. In the 2000's the population was nearly eradicated because of damage due to white-tail deer.

Q: Why didn't you allow hunting at Ravenswood before?

A: The Trustees has been monitoring the overpopulation of deer both locally and regionally for several years and has included controlled hunting for consideration to steward the health of our natural resources. After several years of systematically implementing deer hunting regionally, Ravenswood was identified as a priority in 2024 to implement a controlled archery hunting program. Almost every other property on the North Shore is incorporated into our deer management program as a means to manage deer populations.

Q: How do I inquire about hunting at Ravenswood?

A: Contact James Kamins at jkamins@thetrustees.org

Q: Who is permitted to hunt at Ravenswood?

A: Only licensed hunters who have been given permission by The Trustees' Property and Ecology teams who have passed a proficiency test.

Q: Do you allow hunting on other Trustees' properties?

A: Yes. Roughly half of our 122 properties allow hunting.

Q: How do I inquire about hunting on those properties?

A: Please visit the website at thetrustees.org/content/hunting-on-trustees-properties/ to learn more. To find out if a specific property is open to hunting, please visit the website at thetrustees.org and search for a particular reservation. Details about hunting regulations are on each reservation's devoted page under "Regulations & Advisories."

Q: When is deer hunting season at Ravenswood?

A: The archery season for deer hunting runs from the first Monday in October through the month of December.

Q: What are the hunting hours at Ravenswood?

A: Authorized hunting is permitted from 30 minutes before sunrise all day until 30 minutes after sunset. No hunting is allowed on Sundays.

Q: How do you promote visitor safety at Ravenswood during hunting season?

A: Our goal is to promote public safety on our properties at all times. The Trustees manages public safety where hunting occurs through a variety of approaches, including the following: on-site and website property advisories; property or trail closures; distance requirements for hunting activity from trails, and state regulated safety setbacks from residencies and roadways; and limits on the types of hunting allowed. Signage is posted on and around the property notifying guests that hunting is taking place.

Controlled archery hunting programs have been implemented safely for more than a decade at nearly all Trustees properties on the North Shore, including The Monoliths, Crane Estate and Appleton Farms, and Long Hill. These controlled hunting programs place restrictions on how hunting can occur to balance both deer management needs with our visitors experience and safety.

Q: Where the specific safety rules and regulations for bow hunters at Ravenswood?

A: Here is a list of safety requirements:

- All hunters must provide a copy of their hunting license, license plate number, and contact information to The Trustees.
- All hunters must pass a proficiency test before being approved to hunt at Ravenswood.
- Written permission from The Trustees must be carried at all times while hunting at Ravenswood and produced upon request from Trustees staff.
- All hunting will take place a minimum of 75 feet from any trail, 500 feet from a residence and 150 feet from a roadway.
- Hunters must report any deer taken to The Trustees within 24 hours. Those numbers are recorded annually by The Trustees using an Annual Hunting Log.
- Care and discretion for other property users should be undertaken when field dressing and removing deer from property.
- Tree stands will be removed within 30 days of the close of hunting season.
- Hunters must be courteous to all property users and make a genuine effort to inform others about the hunting program when encountered. The Trustees must be notified of negative encounters with visitors as soon as possible.
- The Trustees must be immediately informed about any injured deer that are not relocated.

Q: Is it safe for me and my family to hike at Ravenswood?

A: Yes. Ravenswood consists of 600 acres of beautiful woodlands and bow hunters are not allowed to hunt within 75 feet of marked trails. Furthermore, there has never been an archery hunting accident where non-hunters have been injured by a bow hunter since archery hunting for deer was allowed in Massachusetts. The best advice is to be alert when visiting reservations during hunting season. On reservations where hunting is *permitted*, observe signs that are posted, wear bright orange clothing, and hike only on clearly marked trails.

Q: Can I still bring my dog to Ravenswood?

A: Yes, but an orange vest for your dog is recommended.