

## Time to Fish and Hunt Mushrooms at Squaw Creek NWR

( SQUAW CREEK NWR)-- Mound City, Missouri – To Squaw Creek NWR has two recreational opportunities for visitors to experience the refuge. Over the next several weeks visitors will have the opportunities to fish and harvest mushrooms on specific portions of the refuge. Visitors look forward to the opportunity to spend days fishing and walking the loess hills hunting mushrooms.

To meet wetland management goals water level are being reduced to provide bird habitat during the late spring migration and stimulate vegetation response. Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge plans to open water control gates April 10th on Eagle pool. Opening water control gates will provide fish snagging opportunities during the state wide season, running from March 15th to May 15th, 2015. The water level in Eagle Pool will be lowered beginning April 10th and end when target water levels are reached likely in mid-May. The majority of excess water is being released through the water control structure located on the south end of Eagle Pool.

Other areas open to public access to fishing are located along the auto tour route. There are no special federal permits required to fish at Squaw Creek Refuge only a valid Missouri State Fishing License. Only non-game fish as stated in the Missouri Fishing Regulations may be snagged on the refuge during the regulation season. Only pole and line fishing method is permitted on the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Longbows, crossbows (archery equipment), and gigs are not permitted on the Refuge.

Spring mushroom hunting season is open on Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge from April 10 to May 20. No permits are required for visitors to enter authorized areas of the Loess Hills east of Highway 159 for mushroom hunting. Recent rains and warm temperature are creating the spring time conditions that encourage morel mushroom fruiting. Refuge officials are concerned with the number of visitors entering unauthorized areas for mushroom hunting. Any trespassing by visitors in closed areas west of Highway 159 is unauthorized and will be subject to citations and penalties. Mushroom hunting is permitted only on the east side of Highway 159 in the Loess Hills within Refuge boundaries. The rest of the Refuge is closed for mushroom hunting. Refuge boundaries are identified by "Blue Goose Boundary Signs." Detailed maps showing the designated mushroom hunting areas can be obtained at the Squaw Creek Refuge headquarters or viewed on signage in Refuge parking areas. The bottomland areas are home to state endangered species such as the Prairie Massasauga Rattlesnake and species of concern such as nesting Bald Eagles. Visitors must be aware that any disturbance in these areas can be detrimental to the flora, fauna, and wildlife habitats.

Mushrooms are actually the fruits of a fungus. The mushroom produces spores which are the fungus seeds. The most common mushrooms collected by visitors on the Refuge are called "Morels." Morels are easy to recognize by the trained hunter and are delicious to eat, therefore making them a popular edible wild mushroom in Missouri. Caution is required when collecting wild mushrooms because a few species are mildly poisonous to deadly. All of the edible mushrooms are distinctive in some obvious way. The publication "Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms," by Barbara Bassett, is an excellent reference to help identify mushrooms. You can obtain a copy from the Squaw Creek Refuge headquarters or from the Missouri Department of Conservation in St. Joseph. Further information on mushroom picking can be obtained by calling the Squaw Creek Refuge at (660) 442-3187. Only mushroom hunting is permitted.

For more information visit the refuge headquarters open 7 days a week through April 26th 2015. Squaw Creek Refuge headquarters' visitor contact station weekend hours are from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and weekdays 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The ten-mile auto tour route is open from sunrise

to sunset. Please call (660) 442-3187 to obtain further information. Squaw Creek Refuge is located 5 miles south of Mound City and 30 miles north of St. Joseph, Missouri. To reach the refuge, take I-29 to exit 79, then two and ½ miles west on Highway 159.

Many Signals Communications