

AGENDA

Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
Wildlife, Boat, and Law Enforcement Committee
7870 Villa Park Drive – Board Room
Henrico, Virginia 23228

April 11, 2018
10:00 am

Committee Members: Mr. Watkins Abbitt, Chairman, Ms. Nicole Butterworth, Mr. Ryan Brown and Mr. Douglas Dear

DGIF Staff Liaisons: Dr. Gray Anderson & Dr. Mike Bednarski

1. Call to Order and Welcome
Mr. Abbitt
2. Approval of January 16, 2018 Committee Meeting Minutes **Action**
Mr. Abbitt
3. Public Comments – Non Agenda Items
Mr. Abbitt
4. Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons – Federal Frameworks **Action**
Dr. Gary Costanzo
5. CWD Resolution **Action**
Mr. Ryan Brown
6. Aquatic Wildlife – Staff Recommendations **Action**
Dr. Mike Bednarski
7. Law Update
Major Scott Naff and Major Bryan Young
8. Division Update
Dr. Anderson and Dr. Bednarski

9. Director's Report
Mr. Bob Duncan

10. Chairman's Report
Mr. Abbitt

11. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 30, 2018 at 10:00 am
Mr. Abbitt

12. Additional Business/Comments
Mr. Abbitt

13. Adjournment
Mr. Abbitt

Draft Meeting Minutes

Wildlife, Boat, and Law Enforcement Committee
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
7870 Villa Park Drive – Board Room
Henrico, VA 23228

January 16, 2018
10:00 am

Present: Mr. Ryan Brown, Acting Chairman, Ms. Nicole Butterworth, Mr. Douglas Dear.
Absent: Mr. Watkins Abbitt; **Board Members:** Ms. Catherine Claiborne, Mr. Leon Boyd;
Executive Director: Mr. Robert W. “Bob” Duncan; **Senior Leadership Team:** Mr. Gary Martel, Mr. David Whitehurst, Mr. Lee Walker, Mr. Tom Guess, Dr. Gray Anderson, Mr. Darin Moore, Major Scott Naff, Major Bryan Young, Dr. Mike Bednarski.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and noted for the record that there was a quorum for today’s meeting. The Chairman welcomed staff and public in attendance to the meeting.

Approval of the August 22, 2017 and October 18, 2017 Committee Meeting Minutes:

The Chairman called for a motion to approve the August 22, 2017 and the October 18, 2017 meeting minutes. Mr. Dear made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2017 and the October 18, 2017 committee meeting. Ms. Butterworth seconded the motion. Ayes: Brown, Butterworth, Dear.

Public Comments- Non Agenda Items: The Chairman called for Public Comments, hearing none, he moved on with the Agenda.

Director Bob Duncan welcomed Mr. Danny Smedley from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to the meeting today.

Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons – Federal Frameworks and Staff

Recommendations: The Chairman called on Dr. Gary Costanzo for a presentation.

Dr. Gary Costanzo presented the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons – Federal Frameworks and Staff Recommendations.

After discussion and comments, the Chairman thanked Dr. Costanzo for his presentation.

The Chairman called for a motion, Ms. Butterworth made a motion, Mr. Chairman, I hereby move the Wildlife, Boat & Law Committee approve to the Board the 2018-2019 Migratory Game Bird season and bag limit recommendations, and the Falconry season and bag limit recommendations as presented by staff, and further authorize staff to modify seasons and

bag limits, if necessary, to comply with the final Federal Frameworks. It was seconded by Mr. Dear. Ayes: Brown, Butterworth, Dear.

Preliminary Review – Aquatic Wildlife Issues: The Chairman called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for a presentation.

Dr. Mike Bednarski presented the Preliminary Review – Aquatic Wildlife Issues.

After discussion and comments, the Chairman thanked Dr. Bednarski for his presentation.

Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647): The Chairman called on Mr. David Whitehurst for a presentation.

Mr. Whitehurst presented the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (H. R. 4647) with a Draft Resolution Supporting the Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife for the Wildlife, Boat, and Law Enforcement committee to consider.

After discussion and comments, the Chairman thanked Mr. Whitehurst for his presentation.

Law Update:

Major Bryan Young reported:

- 42,000 Cad Calls
- New Trainer and Recruitment - Travis Murray
- New Basic Academy starting March 10, 2018
- MOU with DCR in progress
- Professional Standards, Internal Affairs unit in Training

Major Scott Naff reported:

- 3 new Lieutenants and 1 new Captain have been hired
- Boat, Fraud, Threat Success Rate is good
- Successful Hunting Season
- Compliments on CPO going to the Director’s office

After discussion and comments, the Chairman thanked Major Young and Major Naff for their Law Updates.

Bureau Update: The Chairman called on Mr. David Whitehurst for the Bureau Update.

Mr. Whitehurst reported:

- His report included an update on Elk (125-150) in Buchanan County that were mostly staying within 5 to 10 miles of the original release site, with another 25-50 elk scattered across Southwest Virginia. He provided a quick update regarding the status of the elk management plan and the elk conflict resolution plan. He reported on the steps required, including public meetings to finalize the plan and present it to the Board for endorsement at the May meeting.

After discussion and comments, the Chairman thanked Mr. Whitehurst for his presentation.

Director's Report:

The Chairman called on Mr. Bob Duncan for his Director's Report.

Mr. Duncan reported on:

- Snow forecast for Wednesday, 1/17 for Board meeting, The Chairman, Ms. Claiborne offered a motion that the Board meet at 10:00 am instead of 9:00 am. On Wednesday, January 17, 2018 Board meeting, it was seconded and passed.
- Short update on CWD and Deer checking for this year season.

Mr. Brown asked if there was any additional business or comments.

Ms. Butterworth had a question about Game Check Cards, since it is automatic checking she would like to have a Check Card to keep. Mr. Lee Walker advised her how to print out a check card from the Go Outdoors System.

The Chairman announced the next Wildlife, Boat, and Law Enforcement committee meeting would be Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 10:00 am and adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Boswell
/s/

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

2018-2019 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS – FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS



Prepared by Bureau of Wildlife Resources
April 2018

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

PRELIMINARY FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAFF PROPOSALS FOR 2018-19
MIGRATORY GAMEBIRD SEASON DATES AND BAG LIMITS

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Doves

Mourning Dove Background Information and Population Status

There are three dove management units (or flyways) across the country, including the Eastern (EMU), Central (CMU) and Western (WMU) Management Units. Virginia is in the EMU.

- Population trends in the EMU based on the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS):
10-yr (2008-2017): stable population trend.
Long term (1966-2017): increasing trend.
- Dove Banding Study – Annual program (since 2003) to leg-band over 500 doves annually in VA, and 33,000 nationwide. Data provides estimates of movements, survival and harvest rates that are used to develop hunting regulations.
- Harvest Strategy: New Harvest Strategy adopted in 2014 allowed an increase from 70 to 90 days of hunting for doves. Daily bag limit remains at 15 birds (up from 12 in 2009).
- Data from HIP (past 3-yr avg.): Hunters = 16,100 Harvest = 195,100

Recent Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days until extended to 90 days in 2014-15)</u>		
2017-2018	Sept. 2 – Oct. 29	Nov. 22 – Nov. 29	Dec. 23 – Jan. 15
2016-2017	Sept. 3 – Oct. 30	Nov. 19 – Nov. 27	Dec. 24 – Jan. 15
2015-2016	Sept. 5 – Nov. 1	Nov. 21 – Nov. 29	Dec. 24 – Jan. 15
2014-2015	Sept. 1 – Oct. 31	Nov. 22 – Nov. 30	Dec. 27 – Jan. 15
2013-2014	Sept. 2 – Oct. 14	Oct. 19 – Nov. 2	Dec. 31 – Jan. 11
2012-2013	Sept. 1 – Oct. 13	Oct. 17 – Oct. 27	Dec. 28 – Jan. 12
2011-2012	Sept. 3 – Oct. 10	Oct. 25 – Nov. 5	Dec. 26 - Jan. 14
2010-2011	Sept. 4 – Oct. 11	Oct. 20 – Nov. 6	Dec. 27 – Jan. 8
2009-2010	Sept. 5 - 26	Oct. 7 – Nov. 7	Dec. 25 – Jan. 9
2008-2009	Sept. 1 - 27	Oct. 4 – Oct. 31	Dec. 27 – Jan. 10
2007-2008	Sept. 1 – 29	Oct. 5 – Oct 27	Dec. 26 – Jan. 12
2006-2007	Sept. 2 – 23	Oct. 7 – Nov. 4	Dec. 28 – Jan. 15
2005-2006	Sept. 3 – 24	Oct. 8 – Nov. 5	Dec. 27 – Jan. 14
2004-2005	Sept. 4 – 25	Oct. 9 – Nov. 6	Dec. 28 – Jan. 15
2003-2004	Sept. 1 – 27	Oct. 8 – Nov. 8	Dec. 31 – Jan. 10
2002-2003	Sept. 2- 28	Oct. 9 – Nov. 9	Jan. 1 – Jan. 11
2001-2002	Sept. 1 - 29	Oct 13 – Nov. 10	Dec. 29 – Jan. 9
2000-2001	Sept. 2 – 30	Oct 7 – Nov. 4	Dec. 30 – Jan. 10
1999-2000	Sept. 4 – 25	Oct. 2 – Nov. 6	Dec. 25 – Jan. 5
1998-1999	Sept. 5 - 26	Oct. 3 – Nov. 3	Dec. 25 – Jan. 9
1997-1998	Sept. 1 – 27	Oct. 4 – Nov. 1	Dec. 24 – Jan. 6
1996-1997	Sept. 2 - 28	Oct. 4 - Nov. 2	Dec. 23 - Jan. 4
1995-1996	Sept. 2 - 30	Oct. 2 - Oct. 31	Dec. 23 - Jan. 2
1994-1995	Sept. 3 - 30	Oct. 1 - Oct. 29	Dec. 26 - Jan. 7

DOVE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2018 - **January 31, 2019**
Hunting dates may run consecutively or be split into no more than three (3) segments.

SEASON LENGTH: Not more than 90 days.

BAG LIMIT: 15 daily and 45 in possession. Daily bag limit can be composed of mourning doves and white-winged doves, singly or in combination

SHOOTING HOURS: Between ½ hour before sunrise and sunset daily (State may select ½ day shooting in any segment).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: September 1 - October 28 (58 days)
November 21 - November 28 (8 days)
December 22 - January 14 (24 days)

SHOOTING HOURS: September 1 – September 7 Noon until sunset
September 8 – October 28 ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.
November 21 - November 28 ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.
December 22 - January 14 ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.

BAG LIMIT: 15 daily and 45 in possession. Composed of mourning doves and white-winged doves, singly or in combination

Rails

Background Information and Population Status

- **Harvest** – Comprised predominantly of clapper rails (85%), some sora (14%), and small number of Virginia rails taken. Clappers are mostly local VA birds, some are migrants from NJ, NY, and other salt marsh areas.
- **Nesting** - Clapper rails nest from May through June, with re-nesting in July/August. Late nesting rails have broods that do not reach flight stage until August or September. This occurs in years when 1st nests are flooded by spring storms/tides and re-nests contribute significantly to production. Therefore, we generally wait until the second week of September to open the rail hunting season. The key to setting the season is to bracket the greatest number of high tides possible.
- **Harvest Data** - Avg. No. hunters = 490, Avg. Harvest = 4,300 (HIP, past 10-yr avg.)

Past Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days)</u>	
2017	Sept. 9 – Nov. 17	
2016	Sept. 10 - Nov. 18	
2015	Sept. 8 - Nov. 16	
2014	Sept. 8 – Nov. 16	
2013	Sept. 7 - 28	Sept. 30 – Nov. 16
2012	Sept. 8 – 29	Oct. 1 – Nov. 17
2011	Sept. 10 – Oct. 1	Oct. 3 – Nov. 19
2010	Sept. 8 – Oct. 2	Oct. 4 – Nov. 17
2009	Sept. 8 – Oct. 3	Oct. 5 – Nov. 17
2008	Sept. 10 – Nov. 18	
2007	Sept. 10 – Nov. 17	
2006	Sept. 8 – Nov. 16	
2005	Sept. 12 – Nov. 19	
2004	Sept. 13 – Nov. 20	
2003	Sept. 10 – Nov. 18	
2002	Sept. 9 - Nov. 16	
2001	Sept. 11 – Nov. 19	
2000	Sept. 13 – Oct. 2	Oct. 11 – Nov. 29
1999	Sept. 10 – Oct. 12	Oct. 22 – Nov. 27
1998	Sept. 9 – Oct. 24	Nov. 2 – Nov. 25
1997	Sept. 15 - 27	Oct. 8 - Dec. 3
1996	Sept. 16 – Oct. 17	Oct. 24 - Nov. 30
1995	Sept. 11 – Oct. 14	Oct. 21 – Nov.25

RAILS (Clapper, King, Sora, Virginia)

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019

SEASON LENGTH: 70 days, straight or 2 segments.

BAG LIMIT: Clapper/King 15 daily, 45 possession
Sora/Virginia 25 daily, 75 possession

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset daily

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: September 8 - November 16 (70 days)

BAG LIMIT: Clapper/King: 15 - counted together daily, 45 poss.
Sora/Virginia: 25 - counted together daily, 75 poss.

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset

NOTES: - This recommendation provides 30 days of 3-ft or greater lunar tides.
- Non-Toxic shot is required for Rail and Snipe hunting in Virginia.

GALLINULE AND MOORHEN

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019

SEASON LENGTH: 70 days, straight or 2 segments.

BAG LIMIT: 15 daily, 45 in possession (singly or in the aggregate)

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset daily

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: September 8 – November 16 (70 days).

BAG LIMIT: 15 daily, 45 in possession (singly or in the aggregate)

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset

Woodcock

Background Information and Population Status

- Harvest Strategy revised in 2011, established 3 regulatory options (Liberal, Moderate and Restrictive). Annual regulation based on the 3-year mean of the singing ground survey index. For 2018-19, Harvest Strategy calls for Moderate Regulation (45 days/3 birds).
- Singing-ground survey (SGS) in Eastern Management Region:
 - 1 year trend (2016-2017): downward trend.
 - 10 year trend (2008-2017): 0.89% decline per year.
 - Long-term (1966-2017): 1.05 % decline per year.
- The 2016 recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Eastern Region (1.42 jv/ad female) was 2.9% above the 2015 index and 12.4% below than the long-term index.
- Research suggests that hunting has little effect on population trend, but habitat is limiting.
- In Virginia, season split into two segments to provide some opportunity for early hunting in western areas, and later hunting in central and eastern areas.
Avg. No. hunters = 1,430 Avg. Harvest = 2,337 (HIP, past 10-year avg.)

Recent Seasons (bag limit has been 3 birds)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates</u>		<u>Days</u>
2017-2018	Nov. 20 – Dec. 8	Dec. 21 – Jan. 15	45
2016-2017	Oct. 29 – Nov. 4	Dec. 9 – Jan. 15	45
2015-2016	Nov. 23 – Dec. 5	Dec. 15 – Jan. 15	45
2014-2015	Nov. 24 – Dec. 6	Dec. 15 – Jan. 15	45
2013-2014	Oct. 26 – Nov. 1	Dec. 5 – Jan. 11	45
2012-2013	Oct. 27 – Nov. 2	Dec. 6 – Jan. 12	45
2011-2012	Oct. 29 – Nov. 12	Dec. 16 – Jan. 14	45
2010-2011	Oct. 30 - Nov. 13	Dec. 27 – Jan. 10	30
2009-2010	Nov. 7 – 21	Dec. 26 – Jan. 9	30
2008-2009	Nov. 8 – 22	Dec. 20 – Jan 3	30
2007-2008	Oct. 27 – Nov. 10	Dec. 22 – Jan. 5	30
2006-2007	Nov. 4 – 18	Dec. 23 – Jan. 6	30
2005-2006	Nov. 12 – 26	Dec.17 – Dec 31	30
2004-2005	Oct. 30 – Nov. 13	Dec.18 – Jan. 1	30
2003-2004	Nov. 1 – 15	Dec. 20 – Jan. 3	30
2002-2003	Nov. 2 – 16	Dec. 21 - Jan. 4	30
2001-2002	Nov. 3 - 17	Dec. 22 - Jan. 5	30
2000-2001	Nov. 4 - 18	Dec. 23 - Jan. 6	30
1999-2000	Oct. 30 - Nov. 13	Dec. 18 - Jan. 1	30
1998-1999	Oct. 31 - Nov. 14	Dec. 19 - Jan. 2	30
1997-1998	Nov. 1 - Nov. 15	Dec. 20 - Jan. 3	30
1996-1997	Oct. 28 - Nov. 23	Dec. 18 - Jan. 4	45
1995-1996	Oct. 30 - Nov. 25	Dec. 20 - Jan. 6	45

WOODCOCK

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: October 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019

SEASON LENGTH: 45 days, straight or 2 segments.

BAG LIMIT: 3 daily, 9 in possession.

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset daily.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: October 27 – November 2 (7 days)
December 8 – January 14 (38 days)

BAG LIMIT: 3 daily, 9 in possession

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset

Snipe

Background Information

- Season generally set to overlap duck season. There are relatively few snipe hunters in VA and most snipe are taken opportunistically by other migratory bird hunters.
- Harvest Data (HIP, past 10-yr avg.): No. hunters = 470, Harvest = 810

Recent Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 107 days)</u>	
2017-2018	Oct. 6 – Oct. 9	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2016-2017	Oct. 7 – Oct. 10	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2015-2016	Oct. 9 – Oct. 12	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2014-2015	Oct. 10 – Oct. 13	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2013-2014	Oct. 10 – Oct. 14	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31
2012-2013	Oct. 4 – Oct. 8	Oct. 22 - Jan. 31
2011-2012	Oct. 6 – Oct. 10	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31
2010-2011	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31
2009-2010	Oct. 8 – Oct. 12	Oct. 21 – Jan. 30
2008-2009	Oct. 9 – Oct. 13	Oct. 22 – Jan.31
2007-2008	Oct 4 – Oct. 8	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31
2006-2007	Oct 4 – Oct. 9	Oct. 23 – Jan. 31
2005-2006	Oct 5 – Oct.10	Oct. 24 – Jan. 31
2004-2005	Oct 7 – Oct 11	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31
2003-2004	Oct. 8 – Oct 11	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2002-2003	Oct 9 – Oct 12	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2001-2002	Oct. 10 - Oct. 13	Oct. 22 - Jan. 31
2000-2001	Oct. 11 - Oct. 14	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31
1999-2000	Oct. 6 - Oct. 9	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31
1998-1999	Oct. 7 - Oct. 10	Oct. 20 - Jan. 30
1997-1998	Oct. 8 - Oct. 11	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31
1996-1997	Oct. 9 - Oct. 12	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31
1995-1996	Oct. 11 - Oct. 14	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31

SNIPE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019

SEASON LENGTH: 107 days, straight or 2 segments

BAG LIMIT: 8 daily, 24 possession

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: October 5 - October 8 (4 days)
October 21 - January 31 (103 days)

BAG LIMIT: 8 daily, 24 in possession

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset

SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON FACT SHEET

- Special teal seasons were initiated in late 1960's to provide harvest opportunities on blue-winged and green-winged teal. When the blue-winged teal breeding population (BPOP) is above 3.3 million, a 9-day season can be offered. If the BPOP exceeds 4.7 million, a 16-day season can be offered.
- Blue-winged teal are one of the earliest migrants. Many pass through Virginia from late August through October, prior to the opening of the late duck season.
- Green-winged teal are also early migrants and arrive in September and October. However, some Green-wings remain through the winter depending on weather conditions.
- Virginia has held a special September teal season since 1999 (see dates listed below). The season was initially held only in the area east of I-95 because there are greater numbers of teal and teal hunters in the coastal plain. Even in the coastal plain, there are not large numbers of teal, and the harvest has been relatively small. The season was expanded in 2011 to provide some teal hunting opportunity in the area west of I-95.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates</u> <u>East of I-95</u>	<u>Season Dates</u> <u>West of I-95</u>
2017	Sept. 16 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2016	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2015	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2014	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 22 - 30
2013	Sept. 16 – 30	Sept. 23 - 30
2012	Sept. 17 – 29	Sept. 24 - 29
2011	Sept. 19 – 30	Sept. 26 - 30
2010	Sept. 20 – 30	na
2009	Sept. 21 – 30	na
2008	Sept. 20 – 30	na
2007	Sept. 17 – 26	na
2006	Sept. 15 – 25	na
2005	Sept. 16 – 24	na
2004	Sept. 16 – 25	na
2003	Sept. 13 – 23	na
2002	Sept. 14 – 24	na
2001	Sept. 15 – 25	na
2000	Sept. 14 – 23	na
1999	Sept. 16 – 25	na

Average Annual Harvest: 860 teal

SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 – September 30, 2018

SEASON LENGTH: Up to 16 days

BAG LIMIT: 6 daily, 18 in possession (Blue-winged and Green-winged teal only)

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: September 17 – September 30 (14 days)
HUNT AREA: East of I – 95

September 21 – September 30 (10 days)
HUNT AREA: West of I – 95

BAG LIMIT: 6 daily, 18 in possession (Blue-winged and Green-winged teal only).

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

FACT SHEET - Waterfowl Hunters and Harvests - 2018

- Liberal duck seasons (60 days, 6 bird bag limit) and resident goose seasons have resulted in high waterfowl harvests in Virginia during the past ten years. Harvest has averaged ~133,800 ducks and ~55,800 Canada geese from 2012-2016, compared to 114,770 ducks and 25,000 geese during the 1990's. The long season length and liberal bags offer greater opportunity and a greater cumulative harvest over the course of the season.
- Waterfowl hunter numbers in Virginia have been generally stable since the late 1990's. Since 1999, the Harvest Information Program (HIP) has been used to estimate hunter effort and harvest. The average number of duck and goose hunters over the past 3 years, as measured by HIP, was 16,100 and 12,333 respectively.
- Conditions during the 2016-2017 season were rather mild compared to the past five years but slightly better than the 2015-2016 season. This resulted in a slight increase in duck harvest, but still below the 5 year average. Estimated Canada goose harvest on the other hand was well above the previous year and the five year average.
- The total estimated duck harvest during the 2016-2017 season in Virginia (126,800) was 6% higher than the previous year (119,800) but still 5% below the past 5-year average (133,800).
- During the 2016-2017 season mallards were the most commonly harvested duck in Virginia, followed by wood ducks, gadwall, bufflehead and ring-neck duck, which compromised the top 5 harvested species. The mallard harvest in Virginia in 2016-2017 (39,272) increased by 6% from 2015-2016, and was 11% higher than the past 5-year average (35,250).
- The Canada goose harvest in Virginia in 2016-2017 (87,500) was more than double the previous season (40,027) and 57% higher than the past 5-year average (55,800).

FACT SHEET - The Status of Ducks - 2018

Mid-Continent Areas: Annual precipitation is the most important factor influencing the quantity and quality of nesting and brood rearing habitat for prairie-nesting birds. The number of ponds counted during the USFWS May breeding waterfowl survey is used as an index for assessing waterfowl nesting habitat. In 2017, the May pond count (6.1 million) was 22% above last year's count (5 million), and 17% above the long-term average (5.2 million).

The total duck breeding population (BPOP) estimate for the mid-continent area was 47.3 million ducks in 2017, similar to the 2016 estimate of 48.4 million and 34% higher than the long-term average (1955-2016). The Breeding population estimates (BPOP), along with the percent change from last year and the long-term average, are presented below for the 10 most common species.

Species	2017 BPOP	% Change from 2016	% Change from Long-Term Avg.
Mallard	10.5 million	-11%	+34%
Blue-winged Teal	7.9 million	+18%	+57%
Green-winged Teal	3.6 million	-16%	+70%
Gadwall	4.2 million	+13%	+111%
Northern Shoveler	4.3 million	+10%	+69%
Northern Pintail	2.9 million	+10%	-27%
American Wigeon	2.8 million	-19%	+6%
Redhead	1.1 million	-13%	+55%
Scaup	4.4 million	-12%	-13%
Canvasback	733,000	-1%	+25%
Total Ducks	47.3 million	-2%	+34%

Eastern Breeding Areas: Habitat conditions throughout the eastern breeding area were generally wetter in 2017 than 2016, with most areas experiencing above average rainfall, but limited flooding. Spring phenology was later in some areas raising concerns about early season productivity, but late season production should be better. Overall, duck production is expected to be good in eastern breeding areas.

- Breeding population estimates for the 6 most common species surveyed were generally similar to or higher than last year except for Black ducks (12% below average) and ring-necked ducks (19% below 2016, but near average). Mallards (445,000), Goldeneyes (401,000) and Green-winged teal (239,000) were similar to their long term averages.

Virginia: Habitat conditions in Virginia during the spring of 2017 started off rather poor with dry conditions, but significant precipitation later in the spring filled many wetlands and provided good nesting habitat. Cooler late spring temperatures may have delayed some nest initiation and may have inhibited some re-nesting efforts. Local duck and goose production is expected to be slightly below average.

- The breeding pair estimate for Mallards (19,131) decreased 10% from the previous year's estimate. Wood duck breeding pair estimates (15,167) decreased 21% from 2016. Canada goose breeding pair estimates (36,233) were 15% below the previous year's estimate.

YOUTH WATERFOWL DAY

Guidelines for the proposed Youth Days include:

1. States may select 2 days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to their regular duck seasons.
2. The 2 days (no longer required to be consecutive) must be held outside of any regular duck season on a weekend, holidays, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate.
3. The days could be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season.
4. The daily bag limit is the same as that allowed in the regular season and includes ducks, mergansers, coots, moorhens, gallinules, 2 Canada geese (except in Canada Goose Zones where the bag limit is higher), and 1 tundra swan (if the youth possesses a tundra swan permit). Flyway species restrictions remain in effect.
5. Youth hunters must be 15 years of age or younger. Youth 12 years of age and older will need a valid Virginia state hunting license.
6. A licensed adult at least 18 years of age or older must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt, but may participate in other open seasons

DUCKS

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Outside Dates: September 22, 2018 - January 27, 2019

Season Length: 60 hunting days; plus 2 Youth Waterfowl Hunt Days, can be non-consecutive.

Bag Limit: Daily Bag limit: 6 ducks of any species except for the following restrictions: can include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 hens), 4 scoters, 4 long-tailed ducks, 4 eiders, 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks, 2 canvasback, 2 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 **pintail**, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck. Closed season on harlequin duck. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

NOTE: There is an option to include mergansers in the general duck bag or leave them as a separate bag (see Merganser framework page 10). If included in the general duck bag, the restriction on 2 hooded mergansers would apply.

Split Season Options: 3-way split season, no zones

Shooting Hours: 1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Season Length: 60 hunting days; plus 2 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day

Season Dates: October 5 - 8 (Black Duck closed) (4 days)
November 21 – December 2 (12 days)
December 15 – January 27 (44 days)
(60 days)

October 20, February 2 - Youth Waterfowl Days

Bag Limit: Daily Bag limit: 6 ducks of any species except for the following restrictions: can include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 hens), 4 scoters, 4 long-tailed ducks, 4 eiders, 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks (except closed Oct. 5 – 8), 2 canvasback, 2 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 **pintail**, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck,. Closed season on harlequin duck. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

Shooting Hours: 1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

MERGANSER AND COOT

MERGANSER

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Option A

Season Length: 60 hunting days
Outside Date: September 22, 2018 - January 27, 2019
Bag Limit: 5 birds daily, of which only 2 birds may be a hooded merganser
(15 in possession, only 6 of which may be hooded mergansers)

Option B

To be included into the general duck bag. If included in the general duck bag, the restriction on 2 hooded mergansers would apply.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Option A

Season Dates: To coincide with general duck season
Bag Limit: 5 birds daily, of which only 2 birds may be a hooded merganser
(15 in possession, only 6 of which may be hooded mergansers)

AMERICAN COOT

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Season Length: 60 hunting days
Outside Date: September 22, 2018 - January 27, 2019
Bag Limit: 15 birds daily (45 in possession)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Season Dates: To coincide with general duck season.
Bag Limit: 15 daily (45 in possession)

SPECIAL SEA DUCK SEASON IN SEA DUCK ZONE*

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

SEA DUCKS (SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, AND EIDER)

<u>Season Length:</u>	60 hunting days, run consecutively
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	September 15, 2018 - January 31, 2019
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	5 birds per day (15 in possession), may include no more than 4 scoters, 4 eiders or 4 long-tailed ducks.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEA DUCKS (SCOTER, LONG-TAILED DUCK, AND EIDER)

<u>Season Dates:</u>	November 10 – January 8 (60 days) In the Sea Duck Zone delineated below
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	5 birds per day (15 in possession), may include no more than 4 scoters, 4 eiders or 4 long-tailed ducks.

*** Sea Duck Zone:** Those waters at a distance greater than 800 yards from any shore, island or emergent vegetation in the following area: the ocean waters of Virginia, the tidal waters of Northampton and Accomack Counties, and the Chesapeake Bay and each of its tributaries up to the first highway bridge. Back Bay and its tributaries are not included in the Sea Duck Zone.

Note - Sea ducks can be taken during the regular duck season (Oct. 5-8, Nov. 21–Dec. 2 and Dec. 15–Jan. 27) in areas outside the sea duck zone, and if taken outside the sea duck zone must be counted as part of the regular duck season bag limits.

FACT SHEET - The Status of Resident Canada Geese - 2018

- The resident Canada goose population increased significantly in Virginia during the 1980's and 1990's, and peaked at 264,000 geese in the late 1990's. This population caused significant conflicts with human and wildlife populations, and management actions were taken to reduce their numbers. The current population estimate is 142,167 (+/- 30,000) in Virginia and near 1 million in the Atlantic Flyway.
- Special resident goose hunting seasons were initiated in 1993 to help manage this population and to provide recreational opportunities for hunters. These seasons occur prior to the arrival of most migrant geese (~Sept. 25 in Virginia), or in areas where there are fewer migrant geese. The Federal Framework allows Virginia to conduct a statewide September Resident Goose season from September 1-25.
- There are fewer migrant geese in the western portions of Virginia, and special "Goose Hunting Zones" has been established that allow more liberal seasons in areas with more resident Canada goose.
- Special resident goose hunting seasons have been very popular, and have increased hunter participation and resident goose harvests. These seasons have been very effective in managing resident goose populations and helping to meet our statewide population objectives.
- In areas where hunting is not feasible, other options including Airport, Agricultural, and Nest and Egg Depredation Orders have been implemented to help manage resident goose conflicts.

Year	Population Estimate *	September Harvest
2017	142,167 +/- 21%	Na
2016	158,200 +/- 19%	Na
2015	150,651 +/- 22%	6,100
2014	130,503 +/- 26%	7,500
2013	144,910 +/- 26%	10,700
2012	158,267 +/- 28%	9,700
2011	165,022 +/- 28%	14,700
2010	147,313 +/- 29%	15,600
2009	145,019 +/- 29%	16,800
2008	157,560 +/- 29%	17,500
2007	154,030 +/- 27%	13,600
2006	136,700 +/- 27%	11,100
2005	129,486 +/- 26%	10,100
2004	143,741 +/- 25%	17,000
2003	186,753 +/- 23%	14,800
2002	218,719 +/- 24%	14,300
2001	218,384 +/- 27%	11,800
2000	227,164 +/- 32%	10,800
1999	261,554 +/- 34%	11,400
1998	264,867 +/- 35%	12,200
1997	249,612 +/- 34%	10,500
1996	181,813 +/- 36%	10,000
1995	151,043 +/- 39%	5,500

*3-year running average

SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 – September 25, 2018

BAG LIMIT: 15 daily, 45 in possession

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise to sunset (except as provided for in special hunting options *)

* **SPECIAL HUNTING OPTIONS:** Allows the use of electronic calls, unplugged shotguns and extended shooting hours (1/2 hr after sunset) when **no other** waterfowl seasons are open.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: September 1 – September 25 (25 days)

BAG LIMIT: 10 daily, 30 in possession

HUNT AREA: Statewide

SHOOTING HOURS:

East of I-95

September 1 – 16: ½ hr before sunrise **to ½ hr after sunset.**

September 17 – 25: ½ hr before sunrise **to sunset.**

West of I-95

September 1 – 20: ½ hr before sunrise **to ½ hr after sunset.**

September 21 - 25: ½ hr before sunrise **to sunset.**

NOTE: Staff is not recommending the options of using electronic calls or unplugged shotguns for hunting geese in the September season.

FACT SHEET- The Status of Migrant Canada Geese - 2018

- Migrant Canada geese from the Atlantic Population declined significantly from 1985-1995. The hunting season was closed in 1995 to allow the population to recover as quickly as possible. Goose numbers rebounded quickly and a limited season (6 days with a 1-bird bag) was held in both 1999 and 2000.
- As the population increased, hunting regulations were liberalized. The season was extended to 30 days in 2001, then 45 days in 2002, and 50 days in 2012. The bag limit was increased to 2 per day in 2004 and has remain at 2/day since then.
- The breeding population estimate for 2017 (161,200) was 16% lower than the 2016 estimate.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PAIRS</u>	
1988	118,031	
1993	91,307	
1994	40,086	
1995	29,302	(season closed)
1996	46,058	“ “
1997	63,216	“ “
1998	42,166	(season closed, incomplete survey)
1999	77,451	(season reopened, 6 days/1 bird)
2000	93,230	
2001	146,662	
2002	164,840	
2003	156,937	
2004	174,793	
2005	162,395	
2006	160,020	
2007	195,709	
2008	169,699	
2009	176,118	
2010	154,028	
2011	194,900	
2012	190,300	
2013	N/A	(survey not completed)
2014	191,234	
2015	161,302	
2016	191,526	
2017	161,200	

- Spring phenology was earlier than normal on the central and northern Quebec breeding grounds resulting in good habitat conditions. Production for 2017 was better than in 2016 and above the past several years.

Canada Goose Populations and Hunt Zones

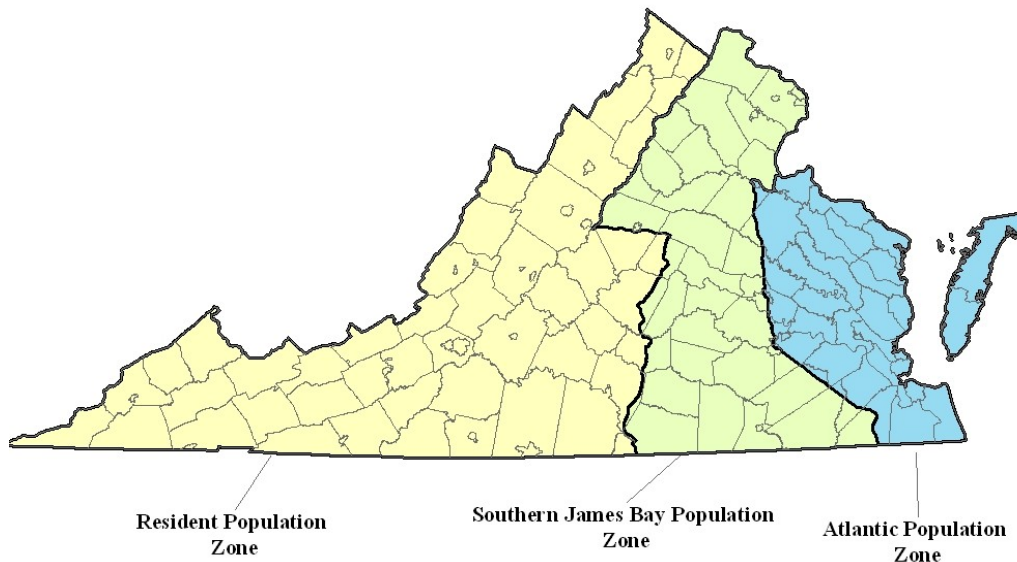
- There are 4 subpopulations of Canada geese in Virginia. These include the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population (RP) along with three migrant goose populations, the North Atlantic Population (NAP), the Southern James Bay Population (SJBP), and the Atlantic Population (AP). The majority of our migrant geese (~82%) are from the AP, about 18% are from the SJBP, and <1% are from the NAP.
- Recent research and banding analyses have enabled us to better delineate the distribution and migration corridors used by these different subpopulations, and to establish separate hunting zones based on the percentage of migrant geese in each zone. These zones include the:

Atlantic Population (AP) Hunt Zone – The area east of the Stafford/King George County line from the Potomac River south to the Rappahannock River, then west along the Stafford County line to Interstate 95, then south along I-95 to Route 460 in Petersburg, then southeast along Route 460 to Route 32 in the City of Suffolk, then south to the North Carolina border.

Southern James Bay Population (SJBP) Hunt Zone – The area to the west of the AP Hunt Zone boundary and east of the following line: the “Blue Ridge” (Loudoun County-Clarke County line) at the West Virginia-Virginia Border, south to Interstate 64 (the Blue Ridge line follows county borders along the western edge of Loudoun-Fauquier-Rappahannock-Madison-Greene-Albemarle and into Nelson Counties), then east along Interstate Rt. 64 to Route 15, then south along Rt. 15 to the North Carolina line.

Resident Population (RP) Hunt Zone – The portion of the state west of the SJBP Hunt Zone.

Virginia's Canada Goose Hunt Zones



CANADA GOOSE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

ATLANTIC POPULATION ZONE (AP):

<u>Season Length:</u>	50 hunting days
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	November 15 – February 5
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	2 birds daily (6 in possession)

SOUTHERN JAMES BAY POPULATION ZONE (SJBP)

<u>Outside Dates and Season Length:</u>	
Regular Season:	November 15 – January 14 (up to 40 hunting days)
Extended Season:	January 15 – February 15
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	3/day (9 in possession) through January 14 5/day (15 in possession), January 15 to February 15

RESIDENT POPULATION ZONE (RP):

<u>Outside Dates:</u>	November 15 – March 10
<u>Season Length:</u>	80 hunting days
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	5 birds daily (15 in possession)

NOTE – All seasons also include White-fronted geese along with Canada geese.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

ATLANTIC POPULATION ZONE: (AP)

<u>Season Dates:</u>	November 21 – December 2 (12 days)
	December 21 – January 27 (38 days)
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	2 geese per day (6 in possession)
<u>Shooting Hours:</u>	1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

SOUTHERN JAMES BAY POPULATION ZONE (SJBP)

<u>Season Dates:</u>	
Regular Season:	November 21 – December 2 3/day (12 days)
	December 18 – January 14 3/day (28 days)
Extended Season:	January 15 - February 15 5/day (32 days)
<u>Shooting Hours:</u>	1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

RESIDENT POPULATION ZONE: (RP)

<u>Season Dates:</u>	November 21 – December 2 (12 days)
	December 15 - February 20 (68 days)
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	5 birds daily (15 in possession)
<u>Shooting Hours:</u>	1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

NOTE – All seasons also include White-fronted geese along with Canada geese.

FACT SHEET - Status of Light Geese (Greater and Lesser Snow Geese, and Ross's Geese) - 2018

- The Greater Snow Goose population is monitored on spring staging areas along the St. Lawrence Valley in Quebec. The 2017 population estimate was 747,000 geese (+/- 11%), which is 18% lower than last year and similar to the long term average.
- The principal nesting areas for greater snow geese are on Bylot, Axel Heiberg, Ellesmere, and Baffin Islands, and on Greenland. These geese winter along the Atlantic Coast from New Jersey to North Carolina.
- Nesting phenology of greater snow geese at Bylot Island in 2017 was near average, despite later than average spring phenology due to thick winter snow pack and cool weather in June. Mean nest initiation and mean hatch dates were similar to the prior 20 year averages, however colony density and clutch size were lower than average. Predation levels were high during egg laying due to decreased lemming numbers.
- Over the last 30 years, snow goose populations have increased almost ten-fold. A shift from feeding almost exclusively in marshes to feeding more on agricultural grains has allowed them to expand their range and habitat use. This shift has also allowed them to return to their breeding habitats in better physical condition, which has led to increased productivity.
- This population boom has resulted in ecological degradation on their breeding, migration and wintering areas. It has also led to conflicts with agricultural interest. Snow geese can cause damage to these habitats by pulling up plant roots and denuding marshes of vegetation.
- Current hunting regulations for snow geese are as liberal as Federal Frameworks will allow and include a 107-day season that runs from October to January, and a bag limit that was increased from 15 to 25 in 2010. Liberal seasons have helped increase the harvest, however, the population is still quite large and concerns remain about detrimental impacts these birds are having on breeding and wintering habitats.
- A Conservation Order (CO) season was established in 2009, and authorizes the use of alternative management strategies (unplugged shotguns, electronic calls, shooting to ½ hour after sunset, no daily bag limit) to further increase the harvest of snow geese in the Atlantic Flyway. The number of hunters participating in this season in Virginia has averaged 292 per year and the harvest has averaged 652 snow geese per year.

LIGHT GOOSE SEASONS

REGULAR LIGHT GOOSE SEASON

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

<u>Season Length:</u>	107 hunting days
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	October 1, 2018 - March 10, 2019
<u>Split Season Option:</u>	3-way split season
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	25 birds daily (no possession limit)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Season Dates:</u>	October 17 – January 31	(107 days)
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	25 birds daily (no possession limit)	

LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

- Outside Dates:** When no other waterfowl seasons are open
- Bag Limit:** No daily or possession limit
- Special Hunting Methods:** Electronic calls, unplugged shotguns and extended shooting hours to one-half hour after sunset **only in areas and at times when other waterfowl seasons are closed.**
- Special Requirements:** States participating in the Conservation Order are required to monitor hunter participation, effort, and success.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Conservation Order Zone: The same as the AP Canada Goose Zone - The area east of the Stafford/King George County line from the Potomac River south to the Rappahannock River, then west along the Stafford County line to Interstate 95, then south along I-95 to Route 460 in Petersburg, then southeast along Route 460 to Route 32 in the City of Suffolk, then south to the North Carolina border.

- Season Dates:** February 1 – April 5, 2019 (65 days)
- Bag Limit:** No daily or possession limit
- Special Hunting Methods:** Electronic calls, unplugged shotguns and extended shooting hours to one-half hour after sunset.
- Special Requirements:** Hunters participating in the Conservation Order **must register**, keep a record of their harvest and participation, and return a harvest report form within two weeks following the close of the season.

FACT SHEET - Status of Atlantic Brant and Tundra Swan - 2018

- **BRANT.** The main breeding areas for Atlantic Brant are in the Eastern Canadian Arctic on Baffin, Southampton, and Ellesmere Islands. Most brant winter along the Atlantic Coast from Massachusetts to North Carolina.
- Breeding habitat conditions were variable in 2017 with good breeding success in some areas like Southampton Island, but not as good in other areas.
- The 2018 Mid-Winter Survey count of brant in the Atlantic Flyway (169,749) was 5% higher than the 2017 estimate and 25% higher than the 5-year average (135,344). There were 9,330 counted in Virginia, a slight decrease from 2017 (9,805). The juvenile recruitment index in 2017 (18%) was higher than in 2016, but still lower than the long-term average (25%).
- The brant hunting season framework for 2018-19 is based on the 2018 mid-winter count, which allows for the liberal harvest strategy, similar to last year, and there are no changes for this year.
- **TUNDRA SWANS.** The Eastern Population of tundra swans nest in arctic tundra areas from Alaska, east to Hudson Bay and Baffin Island. These birds winter in coastal areas from Maryland to North Carolina. Productivity in 2017 was expected to be similar to 2016.
- There were 111,614 eastern population tundra swans counted on the 2018 Mid-Winter Survey, which is 3% lower than the 2017 count (115,425), but above the long term-average. The three-year running average is 115,389 and frameworks for the tundra swan hunting season will be the same as last year.
- Eight states in the U.S. hunt tundra swans including Alaska, Utah, Montana and Nevada in the Pacific Flyway, North Dakota and South Dakota in the Central Flyway, and North Carolina and Virginia in the Atlantic Flyway.
- In the Atlantic Flyway, the allocation of hunt permits is split between the 2 states in approximate proportion to the number of swans in each state. Virginia winters ~6,000 swans. North Carolina winters ~70,000 swans (~65% of the population) and therefore is allowed a higher percentage of the swan hunting permits.
- For the 2018-19 hunting season, the number of permits available to hunters will remain the same as last year, 750 in Virginia, and 6,250 in North Carolina.
- The tundra swan hunting season in Virginia is authorized and conducted as specified in the Atlantic Flyway Tundra Swan Management Plan and Hunt Plan, with limits and guidelines as specified under an MOU with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

ATLANTIC BRANT

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

<u>Season Length:</u>	60 hunting days
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	September 22, 2018 - January 31, 2019
<u>Split Season Option:</u>	2-way split season
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	2 bird daily (6 in possession)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Season Dates:</u>	November 21– December 2 December 15 - January 31
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	2 birds daily (6 in possession)

TUNDRA SWAN

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Season Length: 90 hunting days

Outside Dates: October 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019

Virginia may issue up to 750 permits and must obtain harvest and hunter participation data. Each permittee is authorized to take one (1) tundra swan per season.

Bag Limit: One per permittee per season

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Season Dates: November 21 - January 31

Bag Limit: One per permittee per season

Hunt Area: All counties and portions of counties east of U.S. Route I- 95 and south of the Prince William/Stafford county line in Chopawamsic Creek at Quantico Marine Corps Base.

NOTE: VDGIF will issue no more than 750 swan hunting permits to holders of a valid Virginia hunting license. Only hunters with a valid 2018-2019 tundra swan hunting permit issued by VDGIF shall be authorized to hunt tundra swans. Each permittee will be authorized to take one tundra swan during the season. Swan hunting permits are non-transferable and are valid for use only by the person to whom issued. Permits must be in the immediate possession of the permittee while swan hunting. Immediately at the time and place of kill, successful hunters must permanently record the month and day of kill on their permit and attach it to their swan. The VDGIF is required to obtain hunter participation and harvest information to offer this Tundra Swan hunting season. **Hunters are required to complete the tundra swan hunt questionnaire (survey) and submit their results to the Department by February 15, 2019.** Those who fail to submit their results are ineligible for future drawings.

FALCONRY

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

<u>Season Length:</u>	No more than 107 on any species (Gun and Falconry combined)
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	September 1 - March 10
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	3 daily (9 in possession)
<u>Hawking Hours:</u>	½ hour before sunrise until sunset.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Dove:</u>	September 1 – October 28 November 21 – November 28 December 22 – January 31
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<u>Rail, Gallinule, Moorhen:</u>	September 8 – December 31
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<u>Woodcock:</u>	October 17 – January 31
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<u>Snipe:</u>	October 5 - 8 October 21 – January 31
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<u>Canada Goose:</u>	September 1 - September 25 November 21 – December 2 December 15 - February 20
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<u>September Teal:</u>	September 17 - September 30
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<u>Ducks, Mergansers, Coot:</u>	October 5- 8 November 21 – February 15
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<u>Brant and Snow Goose:</u>	October 17 – January 31
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NOTE: Recommended dates based on adoption of preceding gun season proposals; if amended, staff requests permission to calculate permissible dates for each species within the allowable federal framework.

Number of comments	Public Comments received on the 2018-19 Migratory Game Bird Season and Bag Limit Recommendations
	<u>DUCKS - REGULAR SEASONS</u>
1	Reduce the duck bag limit to 5 daily, end the season 1 week earlier than currently recommended and put that week in mid-December so the season split is shorter.
2	Consider splitting the state into zones for duck hunting.
2	Start duck season earlier in November, delay the last split a week later in December
1	Move Youth Day later, into November or during the November-December split.
	<u>DUCKS - OTHER ISSUES</u>
1	Increase the number of days waterfowl hunting is allowed on Mattaponi WMA (it is currently open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays).
	SEA DUCKS
2	Start the sea duck season later and extend it to the end of January.
	RESIDENT CANADA GEESE
1	Allow extended shooting hours for entire September Canada goose season.
1	Remove the plug and electronic call restrictions from the Sept Resident Goose season, increase the special September goose limit to 15
1	Increase daily bag limit to 12 during September goose season, allow unplugged guns.
1	Extend goose season from September to February, prohibit the removal of nuisance geese during summer, allow use of unplugged guns to get your limit faster.
	MIGRANT CANADA GEESE
1	Change Canada goose zone boundaries, and increase daily limit above 2
	TUNDRA SWANS
1	Extend the swan season into mid-February.
	CROW
2	Remove all restrictions on the hunting of crows.
	WOODCOCK
1	Supports woodcock season as proposed.
4	Split the state into zones for woodcock hunting to allow an early season in the west and a later season in the east. This also allows more hunting days after the close of the deer season for bird dog hunting.
1	Run the woodcock season later in January so it will run with and coincide with the ending of quail season.
1	Make second split of woodcock season overlap with quail and end on January 31 (Dec 25 – Jan. 31)
1	Split woodcock season into three segments and allow last segment to run to January 31, to allow more days after close of deer season to avoid interference with deer hunter and deer hounds.
1	Allow Sunday hunting on Department land for woodcock and small game hunting.
	OTHER
4	Comments opposed to migratory game bird hunting or hunting in general.

VDGIF BOARD RESOLUTION:

Preventing the Spread of CWD in Virginia

WHEREAS, the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries is empowered to direct the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) with a mission that includes conserving and managing wildlife populations and habitats for the benefit of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, free-ranging native species of deer, specifically the Commonwealth's white-tailed deer and elk, are important wildlife resources held in public trust by the Board; and

WHEREAS, white-tailed deer generate more public interest than any other wildlife species in Virginia for hunting and wildlife watching, with hunting producing an annual economic impact of over \$500 million; and

WHEREAS, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious and 100% fatal disease that attacks the nervous systems of deer species, including white-tailed deer and elk; and

WHEREAS, CWD was first identified in a captive deer research facility in Colorado in 1967, and has since been detected, monitored, studied, and managed in 24 states and three Canadian provinces; and

WHEREAS, increased mortality rates of deer may result in significant, long-term population declines in CWD-infected deer populations; and

WHEREAS, CWD transmission to humans or commercial livestock has not been shown to naturally occur, but the chance of transmission remains a future threat and potential transmission to other species is and has been explored by scientific studies; and

WHEREAS, the infectious agent that causes CWD may persist for many years on the landscape (and documented to cause disease for at least 16 years) with no known way to decontaminate an environment once CWD has been introduced; and

WHEREAS, there is no known treatment, cure, or vaccination for animals infected with CWD, nor any method for testing live animals; and

WHEREAS, controlling CWD in infected free-ranging deer populations is extremely difficult, may require drastic reductions in deer populations, and is minimally effective; and

WHEREAS, transmission rates of CWD are increased through activities that unnaturally concentrate deer, such as feeding and the use of deer urine-based lures and attractants; and

WHEREAS, commercial trade and movements of captive deer have been consistent factors in the geographic spread of CWD to previously uninfected areas throughout North America; and

WHEREAS, a possible mode of transmission for spreading CWD is the transportation of infected deer carcasses and deer parts from areas known to be CWD positive; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Deer Management Plan (2015-2024) establishes the DGIF deer mission to “sustainably manage white-tailed deer as a wild, free-roaming public resource to serve the needs and interests of all citizens of the Commonwealth” and identifies a strategy to “manage diseases, with an emphasis on prevention, that can impact deer populations;” and

WHEREAS, DGIF has tested over 12,500 deer since CWD surveillance began in 2002, detected the first Virginia case of CWD in Frederick County in 2009, and confirmed a total of 38 positive cases of CWD from both Frederick and Shenandoah Counties through 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Virginia General Assembly have already taken actions to prevent the spread and additional introductions of CWD by:

1. Opposing and banning hunting over bait,
2. Limiting feeding of deer,
3. Eliminating the feeding of deer and elk in the CWD containment area and in the elk restoration counties,
4. Strictly regulating commercial deer farming,
5. Prohibiting deer enclosures,
6. Restricting movement of live deer into or within Virginia,
7. Restricting movements of deer carcasses and high-risk carcass parts, and
8. Banning the use of deer urine products;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED on this 12th day of April, 2018, that the Board of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries recognizes CWD as a serious threat to the health of Virginia’s deer resource, to our hunting heritage, and to the cultural, social, and economic benefits that deer provide to all Virginians; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board supports prevention as the most effective approach to managing CWD, and supports current measures in place that serve to prevent the spread and additional introductions of CWD in the Commonwealth; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board, desiring to support additional reasonable and practical preventive measures, charges the Executive Director with directing staff to continually consider current and potential future protective guidance measures provided by the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies - Fish and Wildlife Health Committee, and other peer-reviewed CWD research and management information sources to guide management actions and regulatory recommendations.

**DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND
FISHERIES**



**REGULATION RECOMMENDATIONS
AQUATIC WILDLIFE RESOURCES
DIVISION**

April 2018

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Appendix A. Creel and Length Limit Table

4 VAC 15-320-25. Creel and length Limits.

Note: All recommended language of amendment for this portion presented in in Appendix A.

AMERICAN SHAD

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to modify creel limit for American shad to no possession statewide. This change eliminates the current 10 fish per day limit on possession in certain rivers draining into North Carolina – possession already being prohibited elsewhere in the state. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has required states prohibit harvest of American shad unless an acceptable sustainable fisheries management plan supports same.

RATIONALE: American shad is an anadromous fish species that inhabits coastal rivers in eastern Virginia. Even though individuals of the species may be found in inland rivers they are federally regulated because their life cycle requires them to utilize coastal bays and ocean waters. Given the species traditional importance in fisheries and its current depleted status, American shad has garnered a lot of attention from federal fisheries regulators. The ASMFC Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American shad requires states to limit harvest, prohibiting harvest where no sustainable fisheries management plan can be implemented.

4 VAC 15-320-25. Creel and length Limits. (continued)

BLACK BASS (LARGEMOUTH, SMALLMOUTH, SPOTTED)

SUMMARY: The recommendation for Claytor Lake is to remove the minimum size on spotted and largemouth bass, increase the minimum size of smallmouth bass to 14", and increase the creel limit on spotted bass to 15 fish per day.

RATIONALE: There is a need to change the creel and length limits for smallmouth and spotted bass on Claytor Lake due to the high abundance of spotted bass, which is causing population level impacts on smallmouth bass and potentially on largemouth bass through interspecific competition.

During angler surveys on Claytor Lake from March to November 2017 and during informal conversations with anglers who fish Claytor Lake, a majority of anglers want the Department to reduce the densities of spotted bass in the lake. Based on long-term trends in electrofishing bass catch per hour at fixed sites on Claytor Lake, spotted bass populations have increased relative to largemouth and smallmouth bass populations, confirming angler observations. Based on the same electrofishing dataset, smallmouth bass populations have declined relative to spotted bass populations over the same period, while largemouth bass populations have remained relatively stable. Predator diet studies on Claytor Lake demonstrated significant dietary overlap primarily between spotted and smallmouth bass, with less significant overlap with largemouth bass. This regulation is intended to decrease the abundance of the spotted bass population, in order to protect the integrity of the smallmouth bass population and avoid potential impacts to the largemouth bass population, which are both preferred bass fisheries on Claytor Lake.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add a 20" minimum size and a 1 fish per day creel limit for smallmouth bass in the Levisa Fork River.

RATIONALE: Staff has been contacted by interested anglers about the possibility of developing a trophy smallmouth bass regulation on the Levisa Fork River in Buchanan County. Anecdotal evidence indicates relatively heavy fishing pressure at times for smallmouth bass, particularly in the vicinity of Grundy and downstream to the Virginia/Kentucky state line. Documented catches of smallmouth suggest the possibility of developing a trophy fishery is certainly feasible. Unfortunately, staff has virtually no data on the Levisa Fork River that could inform this regulation change due to poor access for boat electrofishing. However, there is a fish consumption prohibition in effect on a portion of the Levisa Fork River from Grundy downstream to the Virginia/Kentucky state line for all species. In addition, a fish consumption advisory is in effect for all species upstream for a majority of the mainstem Levisa Fork River in Buchanan County. Since the consumption of fish is so restricted on the Levisa Fork River as a result of PCB contamination, the opportunity presents itself to develop the best smallmouth bass fishery possible.

4 VAC 15-320-25. Creel and length Limits. (continued)

CATFISH

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add a limit of only 1 blue catfish per day, over 32", in Lake Gaston and the North Carolina portion of Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir.

RATIONALE: The Blue Catfish fishery has become very popular in Kerr Reservoir and Lake Gaston. Blue Catfish on the Virginia side of Kerr Reservoir are currently managed with a 20 fish/day, only one fish greater than 32 inches regulation. The North Carolina side of Kerr Reservoir and Lake Gaston were not managed with the same regulation.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission will now manage Lake Gaston and the North Carolina side of Kerr Reservoir with a similar regulation as VDGIF. DGIF will need to adopt the regulation for Lake Gaston and the NC portion of Kerr Reservoir.

Add the regulation that only one Blue Catfish greater than 32 inches may be harvested from Lake Gaston and the NC portion of Kerr Reservoir. There will still be no creel limit restricting harvest.

4 VAC 15-320-25. Creel and length Limits. (continued)

CRAPPIE

SUMMARY:

The recommendation is to add a 9” minimum size to all crappie harvested from Briery Creek and Sandy River reservoirs.

RATIONALE:

Results from 2016 creel survey indicated over 60% of crappie harvested from Sandy were 7” or less which is not sustainable. Consequently, overall population abundance and angler yield has declined significantly from Sandy River Reservoir and Briery Creek Reservoir.

Based on the results from creel surveys and age data, a Yield-Per-Recruit (YPR) was conducted to evaluate the effect of increasing the minimum length limit from 0”. The YPR model was simulated with 8”, 9”, and 10” minimums. Results from the YPR suggested that the 9” minimum would maximize the angler yield of the fishery and handle increased fishing pressure. A 9” minimum and 25/day creel limit is necessary to increase the adult spawning stock, overall size structure and angler yield. The current statewide regulation does not utilize the full potential of the crappie fisheries at either reservoir and are being growth-overfished. Increasing the minimum size to 9” will increase the longevity of fish in the system by an average of 1.5 years, thus giving crappie enough time to spawn and replenish the stock.

SUMMARY:

The recommendation is to add a 9” minimum size and 25 fish creel limit for crappie in Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir.

RATIONALE:

The crappie fishery at J.H. Kerr Reservoir has historically been the best crappie fishery in Virginia and one of the best in the southeastern U.S. Recent declines in abundance have anglers and biologists concerned about the overall health of the population in the reservoir. Currently, there is no regulation on the size or number of crappie that can be harvested in Kerr. The crappie fishery is consistently one of the most popular fisheries in Kerr Reservoir and harvest rates are very high (49% in 2012). Numerous anglers have contacted the Department about their concerns for the decline in the fishery.

With high harvest and reduced density of crappie in the Kerr population, protection is warranted to help the population recover and improve angler satisfaction levels. Crappie densities in Department trap net samples have fallen from a high of 36.8 fish/net in 2002 to 4.1 fish/net in 2016. Crappie caught by anglers declined significantly (60% reduction from the 2007 creel to the 2012 creel) in this time period as well. With a reduction in overall system productivity, increasing predator numbers leading to competition for forage, and consistently high fishing pressure there is a need for protective regulations.

4 VAC 15-320-25. Creel and length Limits. (continued)

ROCK AND ROANOKE BASS

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add the Blackwater, Falling, and Smith rivers and their tributaries to the list of geographic exceptions for Roanoke bass. This will also impose a creel limit of 5 (in aggregate with rock bass) and a minimum size of 8”.

RATIONALE: Rock bass and Roanoke bass are the only members of genus *Ambloplites* in Virginia. The former is native to the Tennessee drainage while the latter occurs in the Roanoke and Chowan systems. Rockbass stocking into the Roanoke drainage has resulted severe impacts to Roanoke bass populations. In many of these rivers, rockbass has extensively hybridized or totally replaced Roanoke bass. In a recent agency-funded study, researchers found the only genetically pure Roanoke bass populations are in the Nottoway and Meherin rivers and tributaries of the Chowan system, and in three Roanoke drainage tributaries; Blackwater River (Franklin Co.), Falling River (Appomattox and Campbell Co.) and Smith River (Henry, Franklin and Patrick Co.).

Currently there is no statewide daily or length limit for Roanoke bass except in the Nottoway and Meherin rivers and tributaries. In these systems, the daily limit is 5 in aggregate with rockbass. Additionally, the minimum length limit is 8 inches.

The reason for the change is to protect the remaining genetically pure populations of Roanoke bass in the Roanoke drainage. The change will also align with the current limits of Roanoke bass in the Nottoway and Meherin rivers.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to modify the existing statewide creel limit of Roanoke and rock bass to be considered in aggregate at 25 per day.

RATIONALE: Rock and Roanoke bass are the only members of genus *Ambloplites* in Virginia. The former is native to the Tennessee drainage while the latter is in the Roanoke and Chowan systems. Rock bass are in most streams containing Roanoke bass due to public and private stocking.

Currently there is no statewide daily or length limit for Roanoke Bass except in the Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and tributaries where the daily limit is 5 in aggregate with Rock Bass.

Regulations allow for 25 Rock bass per day statewide with no length limit.

Because both species appear very similar, the current regulation could pose an angler and enforcement issue.

The reason for the change is to make it easier for anglers to follow and law enforcement to enforce creel limits for Rocks and Roanoke bass.

4 VAC 15-320-25. Creel and length Limits. (continued)

STRIPED BASS, WHITE BASS, AND THEIR HYBRIDS

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to adjust the size and bag limits for striped bass and hybrid striped bass in Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir, including the Staunton River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River to Union Street Dam in Danville, to a 20” minimum size and 2 fish per day creel limit from October 1 to May 31 and no minimum size and a 4 fish per day creel limit from June 1 to September 30.

RATIONALE: Currently, striped bass and striped bass hybrids in Kerr Reservoir are regulated with a 24-inch minimum length limit from October 1 to May 31 and no length limit from June 1 to September 30. The daily creel limit is two striped bass per day from October 1 to May 31 and four fish per day from June 1 to September 30. Anglers complain that they catch very few fish over 24 inches at any time in Kerr Reservoir and few fish that size are captured in annual fall gill nets.

Unfortunately, growth rates have declined in the past 10 years due to a number of potential causes. Decreased productivity of the system, copepod infestation, and competition with other apex predators are likely causes of the decline. As a result, few fish are reaching 24 inches and anglers are becoming frustrated with the regulation.

Reducing the length limit during the cool season will increase angler success and provide more fish for harvest in the reservoir. The new regulation will be a 20-inch minimum length limit from October 1 to May 31 and no length limit from June 1 to September 30. The daily creel limit will remain two striped bass per day from October 1 to May 31 and four fish per day from June 1 to September 30. This regulation will also increase angler satisfaction for Staunton River anglers during the spring, spawning run up the Staunton River.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to impose a 14” minimum size and a 10 fish per day creel limit on white bass in Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir, including the Staunton River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River to Union Street Dam in Danville.

RATIONALE: The White Bass population was historically very healthy in the Staunton River drainage. Changes in flow regime over time have resulted in severe declines throughout Virginia and the Staunton was no exception. Recovery of the species is of great interest for biologists and anglers in the region. Recovery through stocking and protection by regulation to limit harvest are tools we plan to use to hopefully re-establish a fishable population in Kerr Reservoir, Staunton River, and the Dan River.

The White Bass fishery was once very popular in the Staunton River drainage. If we can recover the fishery through stocking, it will be necessary to protect the establishing fishery through regulation (creel and/or length limits). A regulation change will also be necessary to match a statewide regulation already imposed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (14” minimum length limit, 10 fish/day creel limit). VDGIF and NCWRC try to enforce the same regulations on shared waters like Kerr Reservoir, Lake Gaston, and the Dan River.

Imposing a 14 inch minimum length limit and a 10 fish /day creel limit on Kerr Reservoir, Staunton River, and Dan River to help recover the population to a level which will increase angler satisfaction. Age and growth information shows that White Bass in the system grow quickly and should reach the minimum size limit in just two to three years.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to adjust the size and bag limits for striped bass and hybrid striped bass in Claytor Lake and its tributaries to a 20” minimum size and 2 fish per day creel limit from September 16 to June 30 and to no minimum size and a 4 fish per day creel limit from July 1 to September 15.

RATIONALE: There is a need to change the creel and length limits for striped bass and striped bass hybrids on Claytor Lake due to reduced striped bass angler catch rates and angler interest in striped bass conservation. Since striped bass and striped bass hybrids are difficult for anglers to distinguish, they will be treated as functional equivalents under this regulation change.

During the summer season, striped bass ‘hole up’ from the Claytor Dam area to the Claytor Lake State Park area at depths of 50 to 60 feet. Under these conditions, they are subject to diminished oxygen levels at the temperature levels they prefer, leading to die-offs of larger striped bass in some years due to physiological stress and angler catch and release behavior, while smaller striped bass are less impacted. Recent years when this phenomenon occurred include 2002, 2007, 2010, and 2016. Striped bass hybrids, which are more tolerant of higher temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen conditions, are largely unaffected by either the physiological stress or angler catch and release behavior. During angler surveys on Claytor Lake from March to November 2017, targeted interviews were conducted with anglers who indicated they were fishing for striped bass or striped bass hybrids. In those surveys, 25% of these anglers cull striped bass and striped bass hybrids, behavior which adds to catch and release mortality. In addition, 75% of striped bass and striped bass hybrid anglers indicated that they either rarely or never catch their daily limit of 4 striped bass and striped bass hybrids combined.

TROUT

4VAC15-20-190. Definitions; "Designated Stocked Trout Waters."

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add "Delayed Harvest" in the definition of "Designated Stocked Trout Waters."

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

1 **4VAC15-20-190. Definitions; "Designated Stocked Trout Waters."**
2 When used in regulations of the board, "designated stocked trout waters" will include those
3 waters that are stocked with harvestable-sized trout and are listed by the director in the annual
4 Trout Stocking Plan. These waters will only be considered designated stocked trout waters from
5 October 1 through June 15, both dates inclusive, except for fee fishing waters covered by
6 4VAC15-320-10 et seq., **delayed harvest waters covered by 4VAC15-330-10 et seq.**, and urban
7 fishing waters covered by 4VAC15-330-20 et seq. Designated stocked trout waters are either
8 posted by the department with appropriate "stocked trout waters" signs or are posted as fee
9 fishing areas under 4VAC15-320-10 et seq. or **delayed harvest waters under 4VAC15-330-10 et**
10 **seq.**

RATIONALE: The Law Enforcement Division has requested that Delayed Harvest be included in the definition of "designated stocked trout waters" so that regulatory authority will be established in order to require a trout license to fish in these (Delayed Harvest) waters. Currently, a trout license is required (in the regulation pamphlet) to fish in Delayed Harvest waters from October 1 – June 15. However, this requirement has no regulatory authority.

A need exists to provide this regulatory authority in order to successfully convict individuals of fishing in Delayed Harvest waters without a trout license.

To provide regulatory authority to require a trout license in order to fish in Delayed Harvest waters. This will be accomplished by adding Delayed Harvest waters to the definitions included under "Designated Stocked Trout Waters" in 4VAC15-20-190.

TROUT (Continued)

4VAC15-330-10. Season; General Open Season.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add language restricting adults from fishing in areas stocked for kid's fishing days from noon the day before the event to the end of the event.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

- 1 **4VAC15-330-10. Season; General Open Season.**
- 2 Except as otherwise specifically provided in the sections appearing in this chapter, there shall be
- 3 a year-round season for taking trout. However, angling in designated stocked trout waters shall
- 4 only be permitted from 5 a.m. until one hour after sunset, except for waters designated by the
- 5 director as Trout Heritage Waters and listed in the annual trout stocking plan (as referenced in
- 6 4VAC15-20-190). Trout Heritage Waters will be closed to fishing on the Friday prior to the first
- 7 Saturday in April and will reopen to fishing at 9 a.m. on the first Saturday in April. Kids fishing
- 8 events that are sponsored by the Department and held on designated stocked trout waters shall be
- 9 posted on site with a closure to adults (anglers over 15 years of age) from noon the day before
- 10 the event, during the specified time of the event including post-stocking and the hours of the
- 11 special event. Any person over the age of 15 and accompanying a child who is incapable of
- 12 hooking and landing a fish unassisted, shall be properly licensed to fish in designated stocked
- 13 trout waters.

RATIONALE: DGIF staff has been involved in Kid's Fishing Events for decades. Some of the most popular events are geared around the catchable trout program and are one day events. Unfortunately, problems are rampant around the state with adults fishing the events when advertised as only open to youth (generally 15 and under). Many of these adults show no "shame" and displace youth trying to fish, which has caused problems between parents and adults only at the site to fish for freshly stocked trout. Law enforcement staff has requested a regulation change to address this issue and provide them flexibility in dealing with problems.

TROUT (Continued)

4VAC15-330-150. Special Provision Applicable to Stewarts Creek Trout Management Area; Certain Portions of the Dan, Rapidan, South Fork Holston and Staunton Rivers, the Brumley Creek, East Fork of Chestnut Creek, Little Stony Creek, Little Tumbling Creek, Big Tumbling Creek, North Creek, Roaring Fork, Spring Run, Stony Creek, Venrick Run, South River, and Their Tributaries.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add sections of Wolf and Beaver Creek to the list of trout waters that require anglers to use artificial lures with single hooks.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

1 **4VAC15-330-150. Special Provision Applicable to Stewarts Creek Trout Management**
2 **Area; Certain Portions of the Dan, Rapidan, South Fork Holston and Staunton Rivers, ~~the~~**
3 **Brumley Creek, East Fork of Chestnut Creek, Little Stony Creek, Little Tumbling Creek,**
4 **Big Tumbling Creek, North Creek, Roaring Fork, Spring Run, Stony Creek, Venrick Run,**
5 **South River, **Wolf Creek, Beaver Creek,** and Their Tributaries.**

6 It shall be lawful year around to fish for trout using only artificial lures with single hooks within:

7 1. The Stewarts Creek Trout Management Area in Carroll County.

8 2. The Rapidan and Staunton rivers and their tributaries upstream from a sign at the Lower
9 Shenandoah National Park boundary in Madison County.

10 3. The Dan River and its tributaries between the Townes Dam and the Pinnacles Hydroelectric
11 Project powerhouse in Patrick County.

12 4. The East Fork of Chestnut Creek (Farmers Creek) and its tributaries upstream from the Blue
13 Ridge Parkway in Grayson and Carroll Counties.

14 5. Roaring Fork and its tributaries upstream from the southwest boundary of Beartown
15 Wilderness Area in Tazewell County.

16 6. That section of the South Fork Holston River and its tributaries from the concrete dam at
17 Buller Fish Culture Station downstream to the lower boundary of the Buller Fish Culture
18 Station in Smyth County.

19 7. North Creek and its tributaries upstream from a sign at the George Washington National
20 Forest North Creek Campground in Botetourt County.

21 8. Spring Run from it confluence with Cowpasture River upstream to a posted sign at the
22 discharge for Coursey Springs Hatchery in Bath County.

23 9. Venrick Run and its tributaries within the Big Survey Wildlife Management Area and Town
24 of Wytheville property in Wythe County.

25 10. Brumley Creek and its tributaries from the Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area
26 boundary upstream to the Hidden Valley Lake Dam in Washington County.

27 11. Stony Creek (Mountain Fork) and its tributaries within the Jefferson National Forest in
28 Wise and Scott Counties from the outlet of High Knob Lake downstream to the confluence of
29 Chimney Rock Fork and Stony Creek.

30 12. Little Stony Creek and its tributaries within the Jefferson National Forest in Scott County
31 from the Falls of Little Stony Creek downstream to a posted sign at the Hanging Rock
32 Recreation Area.

33 13. Little Tumbling Creek and its tributaries within the Clinch Mountain Wildlife
34 Management Area in Smyth and Tazewell Counties downstream to the concrete bridge.

35 14. Effective January 1, 2018, Big Tumbling Creek and its tributaries within the Clinch
36 Mountain Wildlife Management Area in Smyth County from a sign starting at the foot of the
37 mountain and extending upstream seasonally from October 1 until five days prior to the first
38 Saturday in April.

39 15. South River in the City of Waynesboro from the Arch Avenue Bridge downstream 2.2
40 miles to the Second Street Bridge.

41 16. Wolf Creek and its tributaries within the Abingdon Muster Grounds in the Town of
42 Abingdon from Colonial Avenue downstream to Stone Mill Road.

43

44 17. Beaver Creek and its tributaries within the boundaries of Sugar Hollow Park in the City of
45 Bristol, Virginia.

46

47 All trout caught in these waters must be immediately returned to the water. No trout or bait may
48 be in possession at any time in these areas.

RATIONALE:

DGIF staff has been working on the feasibility of developing an urban trout fishery located on the Abingdon Muster Grounds property located in the Town of Abingdon. Fingerling trout have been experimentally introduced to monitor survival and growth within this highly productive spring creek. Trout have survived in this urban setting and need regulatory protection as public interest and use has increased.

DGIF staff has been working on the feasibility of developing an urban trout fishery located at Sugar Hollow Park in Washington County near the City of Bristol. Fingerling trout have been experimentally introduced to monitor survival and growth within this highly productive spring creek. Trout have survived in this urban setting and need regulatory protection as public interest and use has increased. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Health has a fish consumption advisory in place within Currently, Wolf Creek falls under the statewide general trout regulations of 6 fish/day with a minimum 7" size limit. This unique fishery cannot develop into a high quality fishery without special regulations which would restrict gear and harvest. The proposed change would place Wolf Creek within the Town of Abingdon property from Colonial Road downstream to Stone Mill Road under catch and release regulations with single hook artificial lures only allowed.

Beaver Creek also falls under the statewide general trout regulations of 6 fish/day with a minimum 7" size limit. This unique fishery cannot develop into a high quality fishery without special regulations which would restrict gear and harvest. Additionally, the VDH has a fish consumption advisory in place and DGIF should enact regulations to restrict harvest at this site. The proposed change would place Beaver Creek located within the boundaries of Sugar Hollow Park under catch and release regulations with single hook artificial lures only allowed.

BAIT RESTRICTIONS

4VAC15-320-50. Fish Used As Bait Prohibited in Certain Waters.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to prohibit the use of fish as bait in Big Stony Creek in Giles County, Dismal Creek in Bland and Giles Counties, Laurel Creek in Bland County and Cripple Creek in Smyth and Wythe Counties to aid in candy darter conservation efforts.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

- 1 **4VAC15-320-50. Fish Used As Bait Prohibited in Certain Waters.**
- 2 It shall be unlawful to use any species of fish as bait in the waters and tributaries of Lick Creek
- 3 in Smyth and Bland counties, Bear Creek in Smyth County, ~~and~~ Laurel Creek in Tazewell and
- 4 Bland counties, **Big Stony Creek in Giles County, Dismal Creek in Bland and Giles Counties,**
- 5 **Laurel Creek in Bland County and Cripple Creek in Smyth and Wythe Counties.**

RATIONALE: The candy darter is endemic to the New River drainage of Virginia and West Virginia. The species has recently been proposed federally threatened mainly due to the impacts from the introduction of the non-native variegate darter into its native range. In many candy darter streams in West Virginia, the species has disappeared or hybridized with variegate darters. Bluestone Reservoir at the border of West Virginia and Virginia acts as a barrier preventing the variegate darter from invading into the upper New River. Therefore, the most likely introduction pathway is by anglers using variegate darters as bait. If variegate darters were to make their way into Virginia, we could lose one of the last candy darter strongholds. Because all candy darter streams are also stocked trout waters, the potential for bait fish introduction is increased. Virginia's candy darter streams include Big Stony Creek (Giles Co.), Dismal Creek (Bland and Giles Co.), Laurel Creek (Bland Co.) and Cripple Creek (Smyth and Wythe Co.).

PERMITTING

4VAC15-320-140. Permits required for striped bass fishing rodeos; etc.

SUMMARY: The staff recommendation is to eliminate 4VAC15-320-50 because it is no longer necessary given the current characteristics of striped bass tournaments.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

1 ~~4 VAC 15-320-140. Permits required for striped bass fishing rodeos; etc.~~
2 ~~No person shall organize, conduct, supervise or solicit entries for striped bass fishing~~
3 ~~tournaments, rodeos, or other striped bass fishing events on the inland waters of the~~
4 ~~Commonwealth, for which prizes are offered, awarded, or accepted, either in money or other~~
5 ~~valuable considerations, without having applied for and obtained a permit from the department to~~
6 ~~do so. Exercising a due regard for the distribution, local abundance, economic value, breeding~~
7 ~~habits, and natural growth potential of striped bass in the affected public water, the director is~~
8 ~~authorized on behalf of the board to issue or deny permits pursuant to this section, and to~~
9 ~~establish such special rules for each tournament as may be deemed necessary, after consulting~~
10 ~~with the state fish biologist and with the approval of the board's fish committee as designated~~
11 ~~from time to time by the chairman. Failure to comply with all special rules and other provisions~~
12 ~~of any permit issued pursuant to this section may be deemed grounds for denying the permittee a~~
13 ~~permit for a similar event to be held within three years from the date of such failure of~~
14 ~~compliance.~~

RATIONALE: Historically, data collected from striped bass tournament results were utilized in management of this species for waters where tournaments were popular. However, there are fewer of these tournaments being conducted and their formats have changed enough that data collected is no longer adequate or consistent enough to justify the continued requirement of the permit. Current tournament frequency is also low enough that there are no longer concerns to fisheries or overcrowded public ramps. In addition, some striped bass tournaments have converted to catch and release formats further reducing the concern for tournament overfishing.

FISHING METHODS

4VAC15-340-60. Seines, Traps, and Nets Prohibited in Certain Areas.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to add language to 4VAC15-340-60 to clarify that this section of regulation does not intend to limit the use of cast or throw nets for the taking of bait fish in the Roanoke and Dan Rivers.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

- 1 **4VAC15-340-60. Seines, Traps, and Nets Prohibited in Certain Areas.**
- 2 It shall be unlawful to use seines and nets of any kind for the taking of fish from the public
- 3 waters of the Roanoke (Staunton) and Dan Rivers in Campbell, Charlotte, Halifax, and
- 4 Pittsylvania Counties, and in the City of Danville, provided, however, this section shall not
- 5 prohibit the use of hand-landing nets for the landing of fish legally hooked or the taking of fish
- 6 from these waters pursuant to the provisions of 4VAC15-360. **In addition, this section shall not**
- 7 **be construed to prohibit the use of cast nets, also known as throw nets, for the taking of bait fish.**

RATIONALE: Language in the Virginia Game, Inland Fish and Boat Regulations and the Freshwater Fishing & Boating Digest prohibits the use of nets except for hand-landing nets. It was not the intention of this regulation to prohibit the use of cast nets for capturing live bait in the Dan and Staunton Rivers.

Anglers have historically been able to collect Gizzard Shad with cast nets in the Dan and Staunton Rivers for angling purposes. The language, as it is written, prohibits this use. There is no biological justification to prohibit this use.

FISHING METHODS (Continued)

4VAC15-350-70. Taking Common Carp, Grass Carp, Northern Snakehead, Bowfin, Catfish, and Gar with Bow and Arrow or Crossbow.

SUMMARY: The recommendation is to allow the taking of goldfish with bow and arrow or crossbow.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

1 **4VAC15-350-70. Taking Common Carp, Grass Carp, Northern Snakehead, Bowfin,**
2 **Catfish, Goldfish, and Gar with Bow and Arrow or Crossbow.**

3 A. Season. Except as otherwise provided by local legislation or as posted, it shall be lawful to
4 take common carp, northern snakehead, goldfish, and gar from the public inland waters of the
5 Commonwealth, grass carp from public inland waters of the Commonwealth except department-
6 owned or department-controlled lakes, and bowfin and catfish from below the fall line in tidal
7 rivers of the Chesapeake Bay, except waters stocked with trout, by means of bow and arrow or
8 crossbow.

9
10 B. Poison arrows or explosive-head arrows prohibited. It shall be unlawful to use poison arrows
11 or arrows with explosive heads at any time for the purpose of taking common carp, grass carp,
12 northern snakehead, bowfin, catfish, goldfish, or gar in the public inland waters of the
13 Commonwealth.

14
15 C. Fishing license required. All persons taking fish in the manner mentioned in this section shall
16 be required to have a regular fishing license.

17
18 D. Creel limits. Common carp, grass carp, northern snakehead, goldfish, and catfish— unlimited,
19 provided that any angler taking northern snakehead immediately kill such fish and notify the
20 department, as soon as practicable, of such actions and provided that any angler taking grass carp
21 ensure that harvested fish are dead. The creel limit for bowfin and longnose gar shall be 5 fish
22 per day.

RATIONALE: Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) are an exotic fish species from Asia and Eastern Europe that is used in North American within the aquaculture and baitfish industries. There are known populations of goldfish in the Potomac River, and the species has been observed in other drainages by biological staff with VDGIF. This species has potential to negatively affect the native ecosystems they inhabit especially if their populations get too large. At this time, goldfish are omitted from the bow and arrow or crossbow (bowfishing) list of species, which are mostly exotic species, and it is illegal to harvest them with archery gear in Virginia. The use of angler harvest with archery gear could be a useful tool to control populations of goldfish especially with the growing popularity of the bowfishing sport. Additionally, neighboring states such as Maryland allow the use of archery gear for goldfish, and anglers fishing waters that are partially managed by both states are often confused by the difference in regulations between the states.

Type of fish	Subtype or location	Creel and length limits	Geographic exceptions	Creel or length limits for exceptions
		5 per day in the aggregate (combined); No statewide length limits	Lakes	
			Briery Creek Lake	No bass 16 to 24 inches, only 1 per day longer than 24 inches
			Buggs Island (Kerr)	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Claytor Lake	No bass less than 12 inches No smallmouth less than 14 inches; 15 spotted bass per day
			Flannagan Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches
			Lake Gaston	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Leesville Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Lake Moomaw	No bass less than 12 inches
			Philpott Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches
			Quantico Marine Base waters	No bass 12 to 15 inches
			Smith Mt. Lake and its tributaries below Niagara Dam	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Rivers	
			Clinch River – within the boundaries of Scott, Wise, Russell, or Tazewell counties	No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 bass per day longer than 20 inches
			Levisa Fork River – within the boundaries of Buchanan County	No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 bass per day longer than 20 inches
			Dan River and tributaries downstream from the Union Street Dam, Danville	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			James River – Confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers (Botetourt County) downstream to the 14th Street Bridge in Richmond	No bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches

largemouth bass,
smallmouth bass,
spotted bass

<p>New River – Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA - WV state line and its tributaries Little River downstream from Little River Dam in Montgomery County, Big Walker Creek from the Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge downstream to the New River, and Wolf Creek from the Narrows dam downstream to the New River in Giles County (This does not include Claytor Lake, which is delineated as: The upper end of the island at Allisonia downstream to the dam)</p>	<p>No bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches</p>
<p>North Fork Holston River - Rt. 91 bridge upstream of Saltville, VA downstream to the VA - TN state line</p>	<p>No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches</p>
<p>North Fork Shenandoah River – Rt. 42 bridge, Rockingham Co. downstream to the confluence with S. Fork Shenandoah at Front Royal</p>	<p>No bass 11 to 14 inches</p>
<p>Potomac River - Virginia tidal tributaries above Rt. 301 bridge</p>	<p>No bass less than 15 inches from March 1 through June 15</p>
<p>Roanoke (Staunton) River - and its tributaries below Difficult Creek, Charlotte Co.</p>	<p>Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches</p>
<p>Shenandoah River – Confluence of South Fork and North Fork rivers, Front Royal, downstream, to the Warren Dam, near Front Royal Base of Warren Dam, near Front Royal downstream to Rt. 17/50 bridge Rt. 17/50 bridge downstream to VA - WV state line</p>	<p>No bass 11 to 14 inches No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches No bass 11 to 14 inches</p>
<p>South Fork Shenandoah River - Confluence of North and South rivers, below Port Republic, downstream to Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah Base of Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah, downstream to Luray Dam, near Luray</p>	<p>No bass 11 to 14 inches No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches</p>

			Base of Luray Dam, near Luray, downstream to the confluence with North Fork of Shenandoah, Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			Staunton River - Leesville Dam (Campbell County) downstream to the mouth of Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	No smallmouth bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches
striped bass	landlocked striped bass and landlocked striped bass x white bass hybrids	4 per day in the aggregate; No fish less than 20 inches	Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoir including the Staunton River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River to Union Street Dam (Danville)	October 1 - May 31: 2 per day in the aggregate; No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches; June 1 - September 30: 4 per day in the aggregate; No length limit
			Claytor Lake and its tributaries	September 16 – June 30: 2 per day in the aggregate, no fish less than 20 inches; July 1 – September 15: 4 per day in the aggregate; No length limit
			Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries, including the Roanoke River upstream to Niagara Dam	2 per day in the aggregate; November 1 - May 31: No striped bass 30 to 40 inches; June 1 - October 31: No length limit
			Lake Gaston	4 per day in the aggregate October 1 - May 31: No striped bass or hybrid striped bass less than 20 inches June 1 - September 30: No length limit
	anadromous (coastal) striped bass above the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for recreational fishing in tidal waters		
	anadromous (coastal) in the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest Rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay	2 per day;		

		No striped bass less than 18 inches		
white bass		5 per day; No statewide length limits	Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir, including the Satunton River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River	10 per day; no white bass less than 14 inches.
walleye		5 per day in the aggregate; No walleye or saugeye less than 18 inches	New River upstream of Buck Dam in Carroll County	No walleye less than 20 inches
			Claytor Lake and the New River upstream of Claytor Lake Dam to Buck Dam in Carroll County	February 1 - May 31: 2 walleye per day; no walleye 19 to 28 inches; June 1 - January 31: 5 walleye per day; no walleye less than 20 inches
sauger		2 per day; No statewide length limits		
yellow perch		No statewide daily limit; No statewide length limits	Lake Moomaw	10 per day
chain pickerel		5 per day; No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs	No daily limit
northern pike		2 per day; No pike less than 20 inches		
muskellunge		2 per day; No muskellunge less than 30 inches	New River - Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to Claytor Dam, including Claytor Lake	1 per day No muskellunge less than 42 inches
			New River - Claytor Dam downstream to the VA - WV state line	1 per day June 1 - last day of February: No muskellunge 40 to 48 inches; March 1 - May 31: No muskellunge less than 48 inches
bluegill (bream) and other sunfish excluding crappie, rock bass (redeye) and Roanoke bass		50 per day in the aggregate;	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA - NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit

		No statewide length limits		
crappie (black or white)		25 per day in the aggregate;	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA - NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir	No crappie less than 9 inches
			Briery Creek and Sandy River Reservoirs	No crappie less than 9 inches
		No statewide length limits	Flannagan and South Holston reservoirs	No crappie less than 10 inches
rock bass (redeye)		25 per day in the aggregate with Roanoke bass;	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA - NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Grayson County.	No daily limit
		No statewide length limits	Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with Roanoke bass; No rock bass less than 8 inches
Roanoke bass		No statewide daily limit; 25 per day in the aggregate with rock bass; No statewide length limits	Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries, and Blackwater, Falling and Smith rivers and their tributaries.	5 per day in the aggregate with rock bass; No Roanoke bass less than 8 inches
trout	See 4VAC15-330. Fish: Trout Fishing.			
catfish	channel, white, and flathead catfish	20 per day; No length limits	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit
		20 per day;	Lake Gaston and the North Carolina portions of Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	No statewide length limits		Kerr Reservoir	20 per day, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
blue catfish			James River and its tributaries below the fall line and York River and its tributaries (including the Pamunkey River and Mattaponi River) below the fall line	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches

			All rivers below the fall line other than the James River and its tributaries and the York River and its tributaries	No daily limit
	yellow, brown, and black bullheads	No daily limit; No length limits		
American shad and hickory shad	Virginia waters of Lake Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir and tributaries to include the Dan and Staunton rivers	No possession (catch and release only)		
	Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for these species in tidal rivers		
	Meherrin River below Emporia Dam Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay	10 per day in the aggregate No length limits		
American shad		No possession		
anadromous (coastal) alewife and blueback herring	Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be the same as those set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for these species in tidal rivers		
	Meherrin River, Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay	No possession		
red drum	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and the North Landing River and its tributaries	1 per day; No drum less than 18 inches or greater than 27 inches		

spotted sea trout (speckled trout)	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and the North Landing River and its tributaries	4 per day; No sea trout less than 14 inches		
grey trout (weakfish)	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and North Landing River and its tributaries	1 per day; No grey trout less than 12 inches		
southern flounder	Back Bay and tributaries including Lake Tecumseh and the North Landing River and its tributaries	6 per day; No flounder less than 15 inches		
northern snakehead		Anglers may possess snakeheads taken from Virginia waters if they immediately kill the fish and notify the headquarters or a regional office of the department; notification may be made by telephoning (804) 367-2925 No statewide daily limit No statewide length limits		
longnose gar		5 per day; No statewide length limits		
bowfin		5 per day; No statewide length limits		
American eel		25 per day; No eel less than 9 inches	Back Bay and North Landing River	No possession limit for those individuals possessing a permit obtained under 4VAC15-340-80
other native or naturalized nongame fish	See 4VAC15-360-10. Fish: Aquatic Invertebrates, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Nongame Fish. Taking aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and nongame fish for private use.			

endangered or threatened fish	See 4VAC15-20-130. Definitions and Miscellaneous: In General. Endangered and threatened species; adoption of federal list; additional species enumerated.
nonnative (exotic) fish	See 4VAC15-30-40. Definitions and Miscellaneous: Importation, Possession, Sale, Etc., of Animals. Importation requirements, possession and sale of nonnative (exotic) animals.