

AGENDA

Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive
Henrico, Virginia 23228

January 23, 2025
9:00 am

Call to Order and Welcome –

1. Recognition of Employees and Others
2. Approval of the October 24, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes
3. Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items
4. Committee Meeting Reports:

Final Action

Wildlife and Boat Committee:

- Proposals regarding Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits **Action**

Finance, Audit & Compliance Committee:

Law Enforcement Committee:

Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee:

5. Director's Report
6. Chairman's Report

7. Additional Business/Comments
8. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025
9. Closed Session
10. Adjournment

Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive
Henrico, VA 23228

October 24, 2024
9:00 am

Present: Mr. Jon Cooper, **Chair:** **Board Members:** Ms. Laura Walters, Mr. Lynwood Broaddus, Mr. Woody Woodall, Mr. Will Wampler, Mr. James Edmunds, Mr. Michael Formica, (virtual), Mr. Brian Vincent, Mr. John Daniel; **Absent:** Mr. George Terwilliger, Dr. Mamie Parker; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan J. Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Stacey Brown, Ms. Rebecca Lane, Colonel John Cobb.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair noted for the record that a quorum was present.

Ms. Kelci Block, Assistant Attorney General attended the Board meeting virtually.

The Chair led the Pledge to the Flag.

Ms. Laura Walters read the Mission Statement.

Proposed Hound Hunting Regulations: The Chair called on Mr. Cale Godfrey for a staff presentation.

Mr. Godfrey gave an update on implementation of the Board's Non-Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals as well as a summary of public comment received and recommendations for final action on the Board's Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals. The two regulatory proposals included a new regulation that would require GPS tracking devices to be affixed to all dogs used for hunting bear and deer (Proposal #6) and a new regulation that would require hunters using dogs to make reasonable efforts to prevent their dogs from entering property for which the hunter had received notification that their dog was not wanted on the property (Proposal #7).

Speakers:

Ann Morse spoke regarding Hound Hunting
James Hudson spoke regarding Hound Hunting

Jim Medeiros spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Johnny Kendrick spoke regarding Hound Hunting
William Easter spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Gary Kimberlin spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Hunter Thrasher spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Thomas Preston spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Robert Bishop spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Bryson Lipscomb spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Kelly Kendrick spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Richard Tetterton spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Steven Nicely spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Tim Goodba spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Lee McLaughlin spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Judge Charlton spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Jacob Levy spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Raymond Carter regarding Hound Hunting
Kirby Burch spoke regarding Hound Hunting
David Hart spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Reg Cook spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Todd Grubbs spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Taylor Britt spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Glenda Grubbs spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Todd Watson spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Matt Gutman spoke regarding Hound Hunting
Ronald Stidham spoke regarding Hound Hunting

The Chair thanked all speakers for attending today and speaking.

The Chair spoke concerning the Hound Hunting and called on everyone in the room to help and be part of the solution called for a motion...

Mr. Daniel offered a motion to approve both of the Board's Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals (Proposal #6 and Proposal #7). This motion was not voted upon due to lack of a second.

Mr. Edmunds offered a substitute motion to table the Board's Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals (Proposal #6 and Proposal #7) and revisit the proposals after the upcoming hunting season. This motion was not voted upon due to lack of a second.

Mr. Wampler offered a motion to pass by indefinitely both of the Board's Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals (Proposal #6 and Proposal #7). Mr. Woodall seconded the motion.

Mr. Cooper called for discussion on the motion. Several Board members spoke to the motion.

Prior to a vote on Mr. Wampler's motion, Mr. Daniel offered a substitute motion to vote on each of the Board's Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals (Proposal #6 and Proposal #7) separately rather than as a single unit. Mr. Edmunds seconded the motion.

Ayes: Daniel, Edmunds, Vincent

Nays: Cooper, Woodall, Walters, Wampler, Formica (virtual), Broaddus

Returning to Mr. Wampler's motion to pass by definitely the Board's Regulatory Hound Hunting Proposals, the vote was:

Ayes: Cooper, Woodall, Walters, Wampler, Formica (virtual), Broaddus

Nays: Daniel, Edmunds, Vincent

The Chair called for a 15-minute break at 11:00 am

The Chair resumed the meeting at 11:15 am

Approval of the August 22, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the August 22, 2024, Board meeting minutes have been distributed and posted to the website for review. The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Walters made a motion to approve the August 22, 2024, Board meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Woodall.

Ayes: Woodall, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Walters, Wampler, Broaddus, Daniel, Formica. (virtual)

Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items:

The Chair called for Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items:

Hearing none, he continued with the agenda.

Committee Reports:

Wildlife and Boat Committee:

The Chair called on Mr. James Edmunds for an update of the Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting.

Mr. Edmunds gave a report on the Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting from October 23, 2024.

Mr. Edmunds presented the Aquatic, Boating, and Non-Game Regulations for Final Adoption.

➤ Proposed Aquatic Regulations:

Mr. Edmunds gave summary of the Aquatic Regulations, and made a motion, I move that the Board of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources adopt the amendments to the general aquatic regulations as presented by staff for implementation on January 1, 2025. It was seconded by Ms. Walters.
Ayes: Woodall, Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Walters, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica (virtual)

➤ Proposed Boating Regulations:

Mr. Edmunds gave a summary of the Boating Regulations, and made a motion, I move that the Board of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources adopt the amendments to the general boating regulations as present by staff for implementation on January 1, 2025. It was seconded by Ms. Walters
Ayes: Woodall, Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Walters, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica (virtual)

➤ Proposed Non-Game Regulations:

Mr. Edmunds gave a summary of the Non-Game Regulations, and made a motion, I move that the Board of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources adopt the amendments to the general nongame regulations as presented by staff for implementation on January 1, 2025. It was seconded by Mr. Woodall.

Ayes: Woodall, Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Walters, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica (virtual)

Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee: The Chair called on Mr. Brian Vincent for a report. (Mr. Vincent chaired the meeting for Mr. Terwilliger)

Mr. Vincent gave a report of the Finance, Audit, & Compliance Committee meeting from October 23, 2024, which included:

- FY24 Financial Report
- Update on License Certification and Data Analytics Review
- 1st Quarter FY25 Financial Report

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Vincent for his report.

Law Enforcement Committee: Mr. Cooper (chaired Law meeting for Mr. Formica) gave a report from the October 23, 2024
(There was not a quorum at this meeting).

Mr. Cooper's report on Law Enforcement Committee included:

- POST Plan Presentation

Mr. Cooper called for any comments or questions.

Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Report: The Chair called on Mr. Will Wampler for a report on the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee meeting.

Mr. Wampler gave a report of the EPO Committee meeting which included:

- Intern Accomplishments 2024
- Train the Trainer
- Deer Processing Workshops

After questions and comments, The Chair thanked Mr. Wampler for his report.

Director's Report: The Chair called on Mr. Ryan Brown for his report.

Mr. Brown reported on:

- Recognized staff who received awards during the Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting on Wednesday Committee meetings.
 - Megan Thomas received the AFWA's Mark J. Reeff Award
 - John Odenkirk received the Biologist of the Year Award
 - Brad Mawyer received the SOBA Award
- Reported and thanked Staff on the work they diligently worked during and after Hurricane Helene, on DWR department property and other areas to get all areas open as soon as possible. He appreciated all the hours they put in to accomplish this.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman thanked staff for all the work and thanked the Board for their support during the last year with the Hound Hunting.

Additional Business/Comments: The Chair asked if any additional business or comments.

Mr. Edmunds reminded everyone that Public Comments for 2024-2025 Hunting Regulations will end on December 6, 2024.

Next Meeting Date: The Chair announced that the next meeting date will be Thursday, January 23, 2025

Closed Session: The Chair announced the Board would go into Close Session at 12:15 pm. Mr. Vincent read the Close Session Motion; it was seconded by Mr. Wampler.
Ayes: Woodall, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Walters, Daniel, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica (virtual)

Closed Meeting Motion, October 24, 2024

Mr. Chairman,

I move that the Board go into a closed meeting:

First, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.3 of the Code of Virginia, for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically regarding real estate located in King William County.

And secondly, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia for discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the Department of Wildlife Resources, specifically regarding the performance of the Director.

This closed meeting will be attended only by members of the Board. However, pursuant to Section 2.2-3712(F), the Board requests the Department Director, Deputy Director, and the Real Property Manager to also attend this meeting, as it believes their presence will reasonably aid the Board in its consideration of topics that are the subject of the meeting.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 1:00 pm

The Chair called on Mr. Broaddus to read the Certification of Closed Meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Woodall.

Certification of Closed Meeting

October 24, 2024

WHEREAS, the Board of Wildlife Resources conducted a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Wildlife Resources hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board.

The Board Secretary took a Roll call vote: Ayes: Woodall, Edmunds, Coopers, Vincent, Walters, Wampler, Broaddus, Daniel, Formica (virtual)

Vote from Close Session:

Received a conservation easement in King William County for public access and preservation of wetland wildlife habitat.

Mr. Woodall made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Board of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources authorize the Director to accept a donation of a conservation easement which includes (+/-) 479 acres in the County of King William, VA including the procurement of certain due diligence items.

It was seconded by Mr. Vincent.

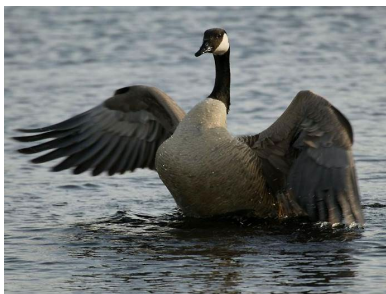
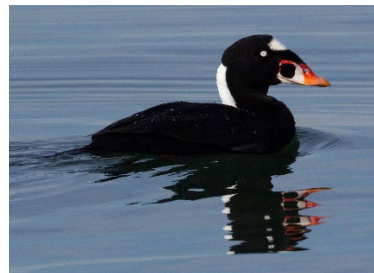
The Board Secretary took a roll call vote. Ayes: Woodall, Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Walters, Wampler, Daniel, Broaddus,

The Chair asked if anyone had any further comments, hearing none, he adjourned the Board meeting at 1:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Frances Boswell

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

2025-26 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS – FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS



Prepared by Wildlife Division
January 2025

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

PRELIMINARY FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAFF PROPOSALS FOR 2025-26
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:
 - 10-yr (2015-2024): gradually declining population trend.
 - Long term (1966-2024): gradually declining population trend.
- Dove Banding Project – Annual program since 2003 to leg-band over 500 doves annually in VA, and 33,000 nationwide. Data used to provide estimates of movements, survival and harvest rates, and is the main monitoring program used to develop annual hunting regulations.
- Harvest Strategy: Revised Harvest Strategy adopted in 2014 allows for a standard dove hunting season of 90 days with a bag limit of 15 birds/day when appropriate.
- Data from HIP (past 3-yr avg.): Hunters = 15,000 Harvest = 219,300

Recent Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days until extended to 90 days in 2014-15)</u>		
2024-2025	Sept. 2 – Oct. 20	Nov. 23 – Dec. 01	Dec. 20 – Jan. 20
2023-2024	Sept. 2 – Oct. 22	Nov. 18 – Nov. 26	Dec. 22 – Jan. 20
2022-2023	Sept. 3 – Oct. 23	Nov. 19 – Nov. 27	Dec. 23 – Jan. 21
2021-2022	Sept. 4 – Oct. 27	Nov. 20 – Nov. 28	Dec. 22 – Jan. 17
2020-2021	Sept. 5 – Oct. 28	Nov. 21 – Nov. 29	Dec. 24 – Jan. 19
2019-2020	Sept. 2 – Oct. 27	Nov. 27 – Dec. 4	Dec. 24 – Jan. 18
2018-2019	Sept. 1 – Oct. 28	Nov. 21 – Nov. 28	Dec. 22 – Jan. 14
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

DOVE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2025 - January 31, 2026
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 19 (49 days)
November 22 - November 30 (9 days)
December 19 - January 19 (32 days)

SHOOTING HOURS: September 1 Noon until sunset
September 2 – October 19 ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.
November 22 – November 30 ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.
December 19 - January 19 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 NY, NJ, and other coastal states.
- **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 hunting season. The key to setting the season is to bracket the greatest number of high tides possible.
- **Harvest Data** - Avg. No. hunters = 290, Avg. Harvest = 3,300 (HIP, past 5-yr avg.)

Past Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days)</u>	
2024	Sept. 14 – Nov. 3	Nov. 13 – Dec. 1
2023	Sept. 11 – Nov. 5	Nov. 13 – Nov. 26
2022	Sept. 9 – Nov. 17	
2021	Sept. 7 – Nov. 15	
2020	Sept. 9 – Nov. 17	
2019	Sept. 7 – Nov. 15	
2018	Sept. 8 - Nov. 16	
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

RAILS (Clapper, King, Sora, Virginia) & Gallinules (Common, Purple)

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2025 - January 31, 2026

SEASON LENGTH: 70 days, straight or 2 segments.

DAILY BAG LIMIT: Clapper/King - 15, in aggregate.
Sora/Virginia - 25, in aggregate.
Gallinules - 15, in aggregate.

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset daily

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SEASON DATES: September 6 – October 25 (50 days)
November 11 – November 30 (20 days)

DAILY BAG LIMIT: Clapper/King: 15 - in aggregate, only 1 can be a King Rail.
Sora/Virginia: 25 - in aggregate.
Gallinules: 15 - in aggregate.

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, Snipe and Gallinule hunting in Virginia.

Woodcock

Background Information and Population Status

- Harvest Strategy includes 3 regulatory options (Liberal, Moderate and Restrictive). Annual regulation based on the 3-year mean of the call count survey. For 2025-26, Harvest Strategy calls for Moderate Regulations (45 days/3 birds).
- Singing-ground survey (SGS) in Eastern Management Region from most recent survey:
 - 1 year trend (2021-2023): 6.03% increase
 - 10 year trend (2013-2023): 0.11% decline per year.
 - Long-term (1966-2023): 0.70% decline per year.
- The 2023 recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Eastern Region (1.53 jv/ad female) was 21% above the 2022 index and slightly below the long-term index 1.61.
- Research suggests that habitat loss is the major factor of the long-term population decline.
- Virginia participated in a Flyway-wide study of woodcock movements and habitat use for the past several years. GPS transmitters are tracking woodcock migration routes and chronology, and this data is being used to better inform woodcock management strategies and hunting seasons.
- Federal regulations prohibit zones for woodcock hunting, however, we are permitted to split the season into two segments. In Virginia, this allows us to provide both early and late opportunities for hunters across the state.

Recent Seasons (bag limit has been 3 birds)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates</u>		<u>Days</u>
2024-2025	Nov. 11 – Nov. 30	Dec. 27 – Jan. 20	45
2023-2024	Nov. 10 – Nov. 27	Dec. 26 – Jan. 21	45
2022-2023	Nov. 11 – Dec. 3	Dec. 27 – Jan. 17	45
2021-2022	Nov. 11 – Dec. 8	Dec. 27 – Jan. 12	45
2020-2021	Nov. 7 – Nov. 30	Dec. 24 – Jan. 13	45
2019-2020	Nov. 20 – Dec. 8	Dec. 21 – Jan. 15	45
2018-2019	Oct. 27 – Nov. 2	Dec. 8 – Jan. 14	45
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

Avg. No. hunters = 1,620. Avg. Harvest = 2,860 (Data from HIP, past 5-year avg.)

WOODCOCK

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 13, 2025 - January 31, 2026

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: November 11 – November 30 (20 days)
December 26 – January 19 (25 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 5-yr avg.): No. hunters = 225, Harvest = 550

Recent Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 107 days)</u>	
2024-2025	Sept. 30 – Dec. 1	Dec. 19 – Jan. 31
2023-2024	Sept. 25 – Nov. 26	Dec. 19 – Jan. 31
2022-2023	Sept. 26 – Nov. 27	Dec. 17 – Jan. 29
2021-2022	Oct. 8 – Oct. 11	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2020-2021	Oct. 9 – Oct. 12	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2019-2020	Oct. 11 – Oct. 14	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
2018-2019	Oct. 5 – Oct. 8	Oct. 21 – Jan. 31
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. 11 – 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

SNIFE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2025 - January 31, 2026

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: September 29 – November 30 (63 days)
December 19 – January 31 (44 days)

BAG LIMIT: 8 daily, 24 in possession

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise until sunset

SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON FACT SHEET - 2025

- 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. If the BPOP estimate is between 3.3 and 4.7 million birds a 9-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, teal are not widespread, 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>
2024	Sept. 16 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2023	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2022	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2021	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2020	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2019	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2018	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
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: 600 teal

SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 – September 30, 2025

SEASON LENGTH: Up to 9 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 20 – September 28
HUNT AREA: East of I – 95

September 23 – September 28
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 – 2025

- 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 ~125,540 ducks and ~42,450 Canada geese from 2013-2022, 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 15,500 and 9,600 respectively.
- Conditions during the 2023-2024 season were mild for most of the season but puddle duck harvest was higher than the previous year. Mallards were the most commonly harvested duck in Virginia, followed by buffleheads, wood ducks, green-winged teal and black ducks.

FACT SHEET - The Status of Ducks - 2025

- Waterfowl harvest in the Atlantic flyway is managed by the stocks of four different species of eastern waterfowl populations (wood ducks, American green-winged teal, ring-necked ducks and goldeneyes). In 2024 estimated breeding population size for wood ducks was 0.87 million (SE = 0.12 million), 0.47 million (SE = 0.10 million) for American green-winged teal, 0.73 million (SE = 0.12 million) for ring-necked ducks and 1.20 million (SE = 0.32 million) for goldeneyes.
- The total 2023 mid-continent mallard breeding population is predicted to be 6.10 million (SE = 0.25 million)

Virginia: Habitat conditions in Virginia during the spring of 2024 were average with slightly drier conditions towards the end of the breeding season that could have potentially impacted brood rearing habitat.

- The 2024 Virginia breeding pair estimate for mallards (15,100) was lower than last year (21,033). Estimated black duck pairs (64) decreased from last year (629). The number of Wood duck pairs (6,245) was lower than last year (9,259). The breeding pair estimate for Canada geese (25,230) was also lower than the 2023 estimate (44,516).

Mallard Bag Limit in the Atlantic Flyway

The mallard has been one of the most abundant duck species in eastern North America. However, mallard numbers in the Northeastern U.S. declined about 40% from the late 1990's through around 2019. About 60% of the mallards harvested in Atlantic Flyway states, and around 80% of those harvested in Virginia, are derived from the Northeastern U.S. Mallard numbers in Eastern Canada were stable or slightly increasing during this same time period, but overall, the breeding mallard population in eastern North America had declined. This decline prompted waterfowl managers to enact harvest restriction on mallards in the Atlantic Flyway in 2019. The bag limit was reduced from 4 to 2 mallards daily, with a limit of 1 hen mallard. Those restrictions were in place for the past 4 hunting seasons.

Since 2019, Eastern Mallard numbers have increase 15%. In addition, a new Eastern Mallard Harvest Strategy and Population Model was developed based on recent population dynamics. This Strategy was put in place for 2023-2024 hunting season regulation process, and allows for a return to a 4-mallard bag limit (2 hens). Projections from the new harvest strategy indicate that under current conditions, Atlantic Flyway regulations should allow for a liberal mallard bag limit (4 mallards total, only 2 hens) around 80% of the time.

YOUTH and VETERANS WATERFOWL DAYS

Guidelines for the Youth Days and Veterans 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. States may also select 2 days per duck-hunting zone designated as "Veterans Waterfowl Hunting Days" in addition to their regular duck seasons. The Youth and Veterans days could be combined and held on the same day or could be held separately.
2. Youth Days 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. Youth and Veterans 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, 1 Canada geese (except in Canada Goose Zones where the bag limit is higher), and 1 tundra swan (if the hunter 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. A licensed adult at least 18 years of age or older must accompany youth hunters into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other open seasons.
6. Those allowed to participate in the special **Veterans Days** include Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training).

DUCKS

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Outside Dates: September 27, 2025 - January 31, 2026

Season Length: 60 hunting days; plus 2 Youth/Veterans Waterfowl Hunt Days.

Bag Limits: **Daily Bag limit of 6 ducks, with the following restrictions:**
Can include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks, 2 canvasbacks, scaup: 1/day for 40 days and 2/day for 20 days, 2 redheads, **3 pintails**, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck, 4 total sea ducks (no more than 3 scoters, 3 eider (only 1 hen), 3 long-tailed ducks). Closed season on harlequin duck. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

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/Veterans Waterfowl Hunting Day

Season Dates: October 10 - 13 (Black Duck closed)
November 19 – November 30
December 19 – January 31
October 25, February 7 – Youth/Veterans Waterfowl Days

Bag Limit: **Daily Bag limit of 6 ducks, with the following restrictions:** can include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks (except closed Oct. 11–14), 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, **3 pintails**, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck, scaup: 1/day from October 10-13, November 19- November 30, December 19 - January 11, and 2/day from January 12-31. Sea Ducks: 4 total sea ducks to include no more than 3 scoters, 3 eiders (only 1 hen), 3 long-tailed ducks. Closed season on harlequin ducks. 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 27, 2025 - January 31, 2026.
Bag Limit: 5 birds daily.
15 in possession.

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, 15 in possession.

AMERICAN COOT

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Season Length: 60 hunting days
Outside Date: September 27, 2025 - January 31, 2026
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)

FACT SHEET - The Status of Resident Canada Geese - 2025

- The resident Canada goose population increased significantly in Virginia during the 1980's and 1990's, and peaked at 260,000 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 122,400 (+/- 49,000) in Virginia and over 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 portion of Virginia, and special “Goose Hunting Zones” have been established that allow more liberal seasons in areas with a greater percentage of resident geese.
- 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 special Depredation Orders for Airports, Agricultural areas, and Nest and Egg removal have been implemented to help manage resident goose conflicts.

Year	Population Estimate *	September Harvest
2024	143,529 +/- 29%	n/a
2023	161,747 +/- 24%	n/a
2022	170,540 +/-26%	3,300
2021	177,056 +/-29%	6,300
2020	163,198 +/- 24%	13,000
2019	125,966 +/-20%	6,300
2018	132,633 +/- 24%	5,600
2017	142,167 +/- 21%	5,500
2016	158,200 +/- 19%	900
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

*3-year running average

SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 – September 25, 2025

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 – 19: ½ hr before sunrise to ½ hr after sunset.

September 20 – 25: ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.

West of I-95

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

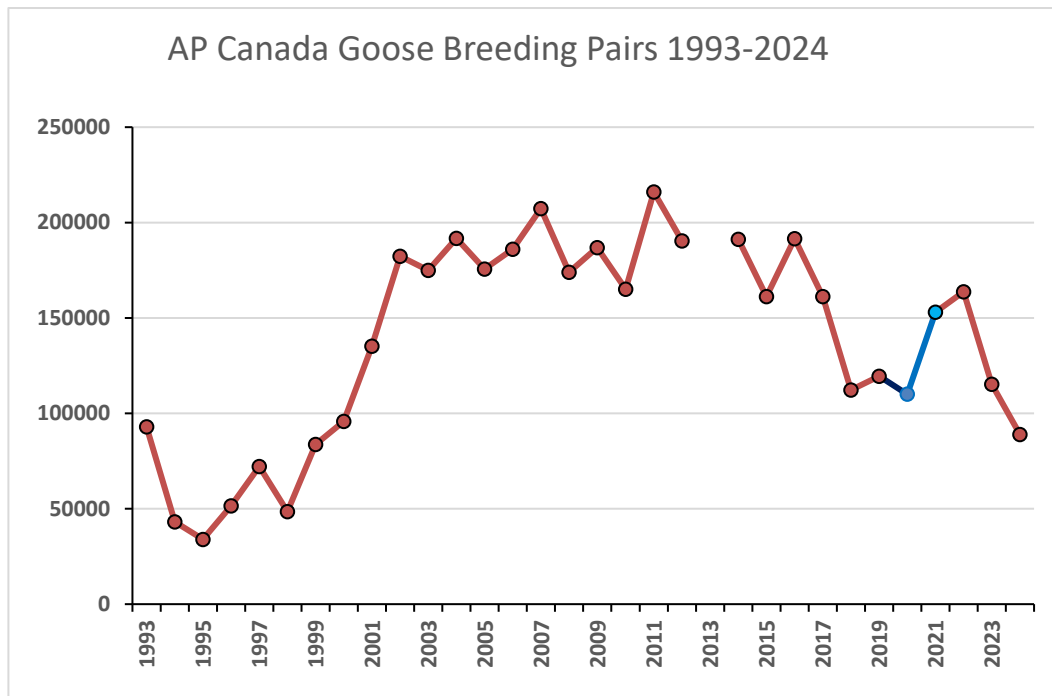
September 22 - 25: ½ hr before sunrise to sunset.

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

FACT SHEET- History and Status of Migrant Canada Geese - 2025

- Migrant Canada geese from the Atlantic Population (AP) declined significantly from 1985-1995. The hunting season was closed in 1995 to allow the population to recover. 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, the season was extended to 30 days in 2001, then 45 days in 2002, and 50 days from 2012-2018.
- 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 AP bag limit was increased to 2 per day in 2004. In 2019 the AP bag limit was reduced to 1 per day with a 30-day season. This was the result of several years of poor conditions on the arctic breeding grounds.
- After several years of below average productivity, two concurrent above average breeding seasons led to an increase in AP Canada goose production. This led to liberal harvest regulations for the 2022-2023 hunting season. Unfortunately, this was followed by a poor production year in 2023 and 2024 where the observed pair estimates (115,300 in 2023) and (89,000 in 2024) were down significantly from 2022 (164,000). The 2024 predicted number of breeding pairs based on the integrated population model was 133,500 which falls within the range (125,000 to 160,000 pairs) under which moderate harvest regulations are recommended in the AP Canada goose Harvest Strategy. However, due to a significant discrepancy between the integrated population model result and the observed breeding pair estimate in 2024, the Atlantic Flyway Council voted to go with the restrictive harvest regulation for the 2025-2026 season which is a 30 day season with a 1 goose daily limit.

Figure 1. Atlantic Population Canada Goose Breeding Pair survey estimates 1993-2024. Blue dots/lines are population model estimates for surveys that were not conducted in 2020 and 2021.

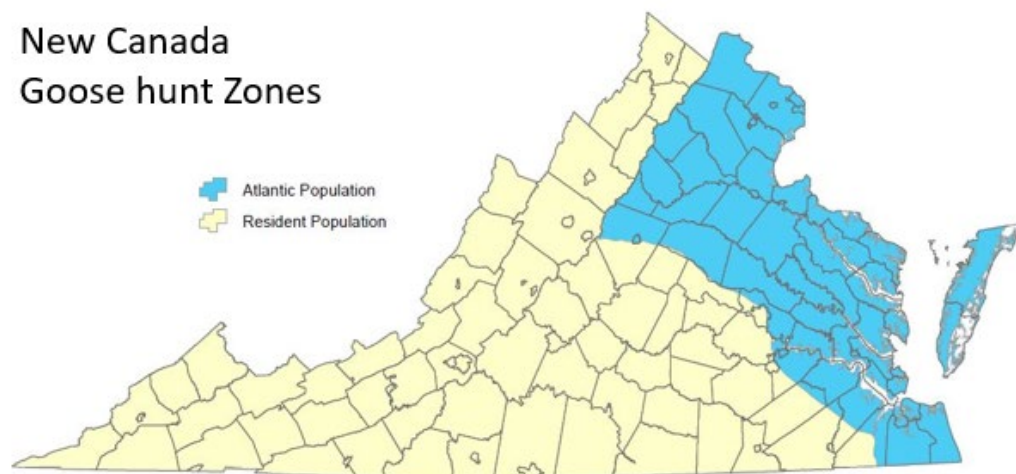


Canada Goose Populations and Hunt Zones

- In 2020 there was a change in the way the Atlantic Flyway, the Mississippi Flyway and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are defining and managing the different “Migrant” Canada goose populations in the Eastern United States. The Southern James Bay Population (SJBP) is no longer recognized as a separate population, and the eastern portion of this population is now considered part of the Atlantic Population (AP). The Atlantic Population along with the North Atlantic Population (NAP) are now the only recognized subpopulations of “migrant” Canada geese in the Atlantic Flyway. Nearly all the migrant geese that winter in Virginia are from the Atlantic Population, with only ~1% from the NAP.
- Due to this change, during the 2023-2024 season Virginia had to eliminate the SJBP Hunting Zone in Virginia. Some of this former zone (predominantly the northern portion) has been placed in the AP Zone, while the remainder of the area, where fewer migrant geese are located, has been included in the Resident Population Zone (RP).
- The hunting regulations for those areas that are now part of a different zone have changed significantly, so hunters need to make sure they are aware of the new zone boundaries. The description and map of these new Canada geese hunt zones is shown below.

Atlantic Population (AP) Hunt Zone – The area to the east of the following line: the “Blue Ridge” (Loudoun County-Clarke County border) 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 Interstate 95 in Richmond, 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.

Resident Population (RP) Hunt Zone – The portion of the state west of the above AP Zone boundary.



CANADA GOOSE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

ATLANTIC POPULATION ZONE (AP):

Outside Dates: November 15, 2025 – February 5, 2026
Season Length: 30 hunting days
Bag Limit: 1 bird daily (3 in possession)

RESIDENT POPULATION ZONE (RP):

Outside Dates: November 15, 2025 – March 10, 2026
Season Length: 80 hunting days
Bag Limit: 5 birds daily (15 in possession)

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

ATLANTIC POPULATION ZONE: (AP)

Season Dates: December 19 – January 1 (14 days)
January 16 – January 31 (16 days)
Bag Limit: 1 goose per day (3 in possession)
Shooting Hours: 1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

RESIDENT POPULATION ZONE: (RP)

Season Dates: November 19 – November 30
December 19 - February 22
Bag Limit: 5 geese daily (15 in possession)
Shooting Hours: 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) - 2025

- The majority (95%) of the “Light” geese found in the Atlantic Flyway are Greater Snow Geese, while less than 5% are Lesser Snow Geese, with even smaller numbers of Ross’s Geese.
- The principal nesting areas for greater snow geese are on Bylot, Axel Heiberg, Ellesmere, and Baffin Islands, and on Greenland. They winter along the Atlantic Coast from New Jersey to North Carolina.
- The Greater Snow Goose population is monitored on spring staging areas along the St. Lawrence Valley in Quebec. The 2024 population estimate was 628,000 geese.
- Banding crews at the major snow goose breeding colony on Bylot Island reported above average nest densities and low levels of nest predation.
- Over the last 30 years, snow goose populations increased nearly 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 has generally stabilized over the past 5 year, however concerns about habitat degradation on their breeding, migration and wintering areas still remain. Snow geese can cause damage to these habitats by pulling up plant roots and denuding marshes of vegetation. Snow geese can also cause conflicts with agricultural interest by pulling up green grains including wheat and barley.
- 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.
- In addition to the regular hunting season, a Conservation Order (CO) was established in 2009 that authorizes additional snow goose hunting after the end of the regular season frameworks. The CO allows 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. The snow goose harvest in Virginia has averaged around 300 birds during the regular season and 600 birds during the Conservation Order over the past 5 years.

LIGHT GOOSE SEASONS

REGULAR LIGHT GOOSE SEASON

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

<u>Season Length:</u>	107 hunting days
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	October 1, 2025 - March 10, 2026
<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 new AP Canada Goose Zone - The area to the east of the following line: the “Blue Ridge” (Loudoun County-Clarke County border) 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 Interstate 95 in Richmond, 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, 2026 – April 5, 2026

Bag Limit:

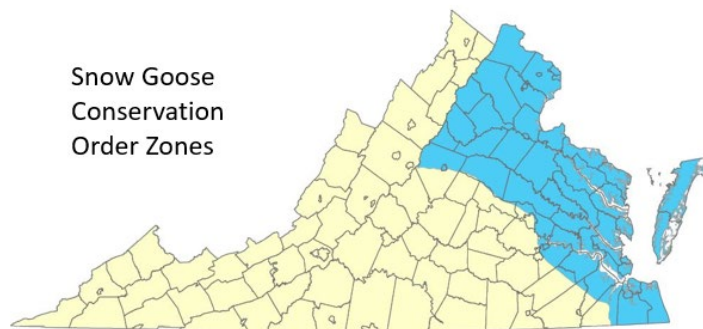
No daily or possession limit

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 with DWR**, 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 - 2025

- **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 MA to NC.
- The 2023 mid-winter survey count for brant was 121,000, which was higher than the previous year's count (109,000) but still lower than the previous 5-year average (132,000). The Atlantic brant productivity estimate was 8.6%. Which was higher than the previous year estimate (7.4) but still 41% lower than the long-term average.
- The annual brant hunting regulation is now based on the Atlantic Brant Integrated Population Model (IPM) that was adopted by the Atlantic Flyway in 2021 and provides an index to the brant population. The model prediction for this year is 107,000 birds. As per the Brant Harvest Strategy, this estimate calls for a 2024-2025 harvest regulation of 30 days with a 1-bird daily limit. This is a restriction from the past several years when the harvest regulation was 50 days with a 2-bird daily limit.
- **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.
- Estimated productivity of eastern population tundra swans in 2022 was 12% immature birds. This estimate is higher than the 2021 estimate (9%) but slightly lower than the long-term average (13%).
- There were 138,000 eastern population tundra swans counted in the Atlantic Flyway on the 2023 Mid-Winter Survey. This count was 31% higher than last year, but still below the past 10-year average (2014-2023: 105,817)
- Nine 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 Delaware, Virginia and North Carolina in the Atlantic Flyway.
- There are no changes in the total number of hunting permits allowed for EP tundra swans this year (9,600 across the U.S., with 5,600 of those in the Atlantic Flyway) as the population estimate is still within the 70,000 to 110,000 range. In the Atlantic Flyway, the allocation of hunt permits is split between the 3 states in approximate proportion to the number of swans in each state. The 5,600 permits available in the Atlantic Flyway for the 2023-2024 season will be distributed as follows: NC– 4,721, VA-532, and DE-347.
- 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>	30 hunting days
<u>Outside Dates:</u>	September 23, 2025 - January 31, 2026
<u>Split Season Option:</u>	2-way split season
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	1 bird daily (3 in possession)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Season Dates:</u>	December 22 – December 31 (10 days)
	January 12 – January 31 (20 days)
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	1 bird daily (3 in possession)

TUNDRA SWAN

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Season Length: 90 hunting days

Outside Dates: October 1, 2025 - January 31, 2026

Virginia may issue up to 475 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 15 - 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: VDWR will issue no more than 475 swan-hunting permits to holders of a valid Virginia hunting license. Only hunters with a valid 2025-2026 tundra swan-hunting permit issued by VDWR 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 VDWR 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, 2026.** 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 19 November 22 – November 30 December 19 – January 31
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<u>Rail, Gallinule, Moorhen:</u>	September 6 – December 21
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<u>Woodcock:</u>	October 17 – January 31
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<u>Snipe:</u>	October 1 – December 2 December 19 – January 31
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<u>Canada Goose:</u>	September 1 - September 25 November 19 – November 30 December 19 - February 22
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<u>September Teal:</u>	September 16 - September 30
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<u>Ducks, Mergansers, Coot:</u>	October 10 - 13 November 19 – February 8
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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.