

AGENDA

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

March 21, 2024
9:00 am

Call to Order and Welcome –

1. Recognition of Employees and Others
2. Approval of the January 18, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes
3. Public Comments – Non - Agenda Items
4. Committee Meeting Reports:

Final Action

Wildlife and Boat Committee:

- Migratory Game Bird Seasons & Bag Limits

Final 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, May 23, 2024
9. Closed Session
10. Adjournment

Draft Board Meeting Minutes

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

January 18, 2024
9:00 am

Present: Mr. Tom Sadler, **Chair**, Mr. Jon Cooper, **Vice Chair**; **Board Members:** Mr. John Daniel, Mr. Leon Boyd, (virtual), Mr. George Terwilliger, (virtual) Mr. Woody Woodall, Mr. Will Wampler, Mr. James Edmunds, Mr. Michael Formica (virtual) and Mr. Brian Vincent; **Absent:** 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. Mike Bednarski, Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. Rob Lewis, Mr. Paul Kugelman, Ms. Rebecca Lane(virtual), 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.

Mr. Ross Phillips, Assistant Attorney General attended the Board meeting.

The Chair called on Mr. Will Wampler to read the Mission Statement.

The Board Secretary had a Roll Call Vote for attendance: **Present:** Tom Sadler, Jon Cooper, John Daniel, Woody Woodall, Michael Formica (virtual), George Terwilliger, (virtual), Will Wampler, Brian Vincent, Leon Boyd (virtual), James Edmunds, **Absent: Mamie Parker**

Recognitions of Employees and Others: The Chair called on Director Ryan Brown for Recognitions of Employees.

The Director recognized 2 new board members in attendance, Mr. James Edmunds of Halifax, VA, and Mr. Will Wampler of Abingdon, VA and welcomed them to the Board. He welcomed former board member Ms. Catherine Claiborne attending today.

The Director recognized Mrs. Catherine Claiborne with her outgoing Board Member Plaque and thanked her for her service to the Board and to the agency.

The Director recognized Ms. Tammy Franklin (virtual) with her outgoing Board Member Plaque and thanked her for her service to the Board and to the agency.

The Director called on Mr. Gray Anderson who recognized Mr. Joe Collins and presented him with the Lands & Access Specialist of the year award.

The Director called on Colonel John Cobb who recognized Major Frank Spuchesi as the new Major in Law Enforcement.

Approval of the October 25, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the October 25, 2023, Board meeting minutes have been distributed and posted to the website for review. The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Cooper made a motion to approve the October 25, 2023, Board meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Daniel.

The board secretary called the roll. Ayes: Tom Sadler, Jon Cooper, John Daniel, Woody Woodall, Michael Formica (virtual), George Terwilliger (virtual), Will Wampler, Brian Vincent, Leon Boyd (virtual), James Edmunds.

Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items:

The Chair called for Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items: The Chair hearing none, moved on with the meeting.

Establishing the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to Facilitate Collaborative Solutions for Hound-Hunters and Private Landowner Stakeholders:

The Director gave an update and overview of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting on January 12, 2024, including all the time and money that the Department has spent to work with the Ad Hoc Committee. He commented that these 2 groups had come to table in 2008, 2016 and now in 2024 and have been unable to come together with solutions.

The Chair called on Ms. Kelly Altizer and Mr. Mike Foreman, who provided a report and update on the Collaborative Solutions for Hound-Hunters and Private Landowners from the January 12, 2024, meeting.

The Chair, Mr. Sadler addressed the Ad Hoc Committee group attending and virtual from the Landowners and the Dog Hunters concerning the Ad Hoc Committee and what was expected to come from the Ad Hoc Committee and his disappointment that there were no solutions to come forward from either group and recommended that the Board would make those decisions that they have the legal authority to do.

Board Member George Terwilliger addressed Ad Hoc Committee as the Board member who made the motion a year ago to create this group and has supported the Ad Hoc Committee and was disappointed that no solutions had come forth from either side and would join with his fellow Board members to find reasonable solutions by this Board.

Board Member Brian Vincent commented that he was disappointed there were no solutions by either of the groups after a year of meeting on the Ad Hoc Committee and was highly motivated to have the Board come forth with reasonable decisions.

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Jon Cooper made a motion, Mr. Chair, I moved for the Board of Wildlife Resources to hold a special called meeting to consider the report from the Hound-Hunter & Private Landowners Stakeholder Advisory Committee and to consider and act on recommendations for a solution of the conflicts between hound-hunters and private landowners. Such a meeting should take place as soon as practical following the receipt of the report from the Hound-Hunters & Private Landowners Stakeholder Advisory Committee and such meeting should take place before the regular board meeting on March 21, 2024.

It was seconded by Mr. Vincent.

The Board Secretary took a Roll Call Vote. Ayes: Daniel, Wampler, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd, Edmunds, Sadler, Terwilliger, Formica Nay: Woodall

Speakers (in person)

- Mr. John Morse spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Judge Charlton spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Matthew Meares spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Ms. Sink Wydner spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Ms. Amanda Savignano spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Chris Patton spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Ms. Cheryl waltz spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Michael McGrady spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Raymond Carter spoke regarding the dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Robert Shackelford spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Jim Medeiros spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Lonnie Peterson spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Keith Johnson spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Mike Hicks spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Alan Caldwell spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Clay Dingleline spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Jennifer Hensley spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Michael Hayes, Jr. spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Todd Grubbs spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Ms. Kathleen Gutmann spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Matthew Gutmann spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. David Hart spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. James Hackett spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Thomas Preston spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Lee McLaughlin spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Granville Maitland spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)

- Mr. Mike Abell spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. John Lynch spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Todd Watson spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Richard Tetterton spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Robert Bishop spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Bill Youmans spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)
- Mr. Carlos Davis spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)

The Chair thanked all the “in person” speakers for taking their time and coming to the meeting to speak.

The Chair called for break at 11:50 am

The Chair resumed the meeting at 12:00 noon.

The meeting continued with the Virtual Speakers.

- Mr. Gary Kimberlin spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Mr. Don Wright spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Mr. James Hudson spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Mr. Donald Hutson spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Mr. Eric Spade spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Mr. Jeff Butts spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Mr. Copeland Casati spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)
- Ms. Kendall Griffin spoke regarding dog hunting (virtual)

After questions and comments, the Chair thanked Ms. Kelly Altizer and Mr. Mike Foreman for their update on the January 12, 2024 Ad Hoc meeting and all the speakers who took their time to come speak in person and to call in virtually.

- Mr. Daniel departed at 11:40 am

The Chair called for a Close Session at 12:30 pm

The Chair called on Mr. Edmunds to read the Close Session Motion. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper.

The board secretary called the roll: Ayes: Woodall, Wampler, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd (virtual), Edmunds, Sadler, Terwilliger,(virtual) Formica (virtual)

Closed Meeting Motion, January 18, 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 Accomack and Bath Counties.

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, the 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 1:50 pm.

The Chair called on Mr. Will Wampler to read the Certification of Closed Meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper.

Certification of Closed Meeting

January 18, 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 called the roll. Ayes: Woodall, Wampler, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd,(virtual), Edmunds, Sadler

Committee Reports:

Wildlife and Boat Committee:

The Chair called on Mr. Jon Cooper for a report of the January 17, 2024, Wildlife and Boat Committee Meeting.

Mr. Cooper gave an update of the Wildlife and Boat Committee Meeting on January 17, 2024, reporting that Mr. Ben Lewis presented on the Migratory Game Bird seasons & bag limits and Dr. Tracey gave a Wildlife Disease Update Dr. Mike Bednarski gave a 2024-2025 Regulations Process update, Ms. Becky Gwynn gave a Wildlife Division and Nongame Program Update, Dr. Bednarski gave a Fish Division Update and Ms. Stacey Brown gave a Boating Division Report.

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

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Cooper made a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that Board of Department of Wildlife Resources adopt the 2024-2025 Migratory Game Bird Season and Bag Limit recommendations as presented by staff, to be advertised for public comments. It was seconded by Mr. Woodall. The Board secretary called a roll call vote:
Ayes: Woodall, Wampler, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd, Edmunds, Sadler

Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee Report:

The Chair called on Mr. Jon Cooper for an update on the January 17, 2024, Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee meeting.

Mr. Cooper who chaired for Mr. Terwilliger gave an update on the January 17, 2024, Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee, Mr. Rob Lewis gave the FY-24 Semi-annual Finance Report and Mr. Lewis and Mr. Trollinger gave the Update on Planning and Finance Division Policy and Review, Mr. Lewis gave an Update on the State Budget and how it will affect our agency and he also introduced Ms. Stephanie Adams as the new Procurement Manager. Mr. John Kirk gave an

update on the FY24 Capital Projects including New Constructions and Major Renovation and Capital Programs and Dam Safety.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Mr. Cooper for filling in for Mr. Terwilliger and for his update.

The Chair called on Mr. Woodall for motions from Closed Session.

The Chair called on Mr. Woody Woodall for a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that the Board of Wildlife Resources authorize the Director to purchase +395 acres in fee-simple in Accomack County, including the procurement of certain due diligence items. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper. The secretary called a roll call vote. Ayes: Woodall, Wampler, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd (virtual) Edmunds, Sadler, Terwilliger(virtual)

The Chair called on Mr. Woody Woodall for a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that the Board of Wildlife Resources authorize the Director to purchase 2.7 acres in Bath County, VA including the procurement of certain due diligence items. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper. The secretary called a roll call vote: Ayes: Woodall, Wampler, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd (virtual) Edmunds, Sadler, Terwilliger(virtual)

Law Enforcement Committee: Mr. Sadler gave January 17, 2024, Law Enforcement Committee's report for Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Sadler reported on the January 17, 2024, Law Enforcement Committee meeting reporting that Colonel Cobb gave an overview of the CPO Recruitment and Major Ryan Shuler gave an update on the Illicit Reptile Trade in Virginia and Colonel Cobb gave a presentation on CPO Retention Challenges and Proactive Viable Solutions.

Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Report: The Chair called on Mr. Bob Smet for the January 17, 2024, Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Report, Mr. Smet reported that the EPO Committee reported on How to Become a VA Hunter by Mr. David Hennamann and on the Hunter Education Report for 2023 by Mr. Jimmy Mootz reporting on all the Volunteers that work with Hunter Education. He reported that Mr. George Braxton reported on Developing Firearm Ownership and Sport Shooting R3 Communications for Black Americans. Mr. Bob Smet in his Director's report introduced new employees, talked about

Creative Services and Education will be the focused on providing more workshops for the public and increased presence on You-Tube.

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

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

- Thanked all the staff who put today's meeting together, there is a lot of work behind the scenes for a meeting like today.
- Shared a video, Leading the Way for Wildlife Conservation – A Year in Review

Chair's Report:

The Chair thanked everyone and remarked it was a long and tough day.

Mr. Wampler and Mr. Edmunds commented they appreciated the welcome they received at their first meeting, and they were excited to be on the DWR Board.

Additional Business: The Chair asked if there was any other business, hearing none, he continued with the agenda.

Next Meeting Date: The Chair announced the next meeting date is Thursday, March 21, 2024.

The Chair asked if anyone had any questions or comments and announced that the next meeting will be Thursday, March 21, 2024. He adjourned the meeting at 2:15 pm.

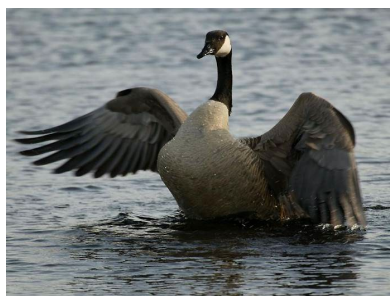
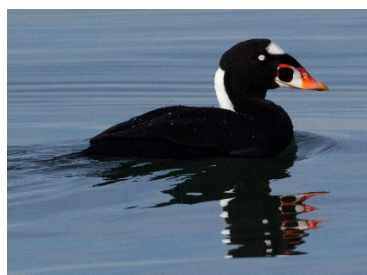
Respectfully submitted,

Frances Boswell

/s/

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

2024-25 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS – FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS



Prepared by Wildlife Division
March 2024

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

**PRELIMINARY FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS AND STAFF PROPOSALS FOR 2024-25
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 (2013-2022): gradually declining population trend.
Long term (1966-2022): 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 = 16,200 Harvest = 218,600

Recent Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days until extended to 90 days in 2014-15)</u>		
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, 2024 - January 31, 2025
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

<u>SEASON DATES:</u>	September 2 - October 20	(49 days)
	November 23 - December 1	(9 days)
	December 20 - January 20	(32 days)

<u>SHOOTING HOURS:</u>	September 2	Noon until sunset
	September 3 – October 20	½ hr before sunrise to sunset.
	November 23 – December 1	½ hr before sunrise to sunset.
	December 20 - January 20	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>	
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, 2024 - January 31, 2025

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 13 – November 3 (52 days)
November 14 – December 1 (18 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 2024-25, 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 (2021-2022): stable
 - 10 year trend (2013-2022): 1.07% decline per year.
 - Long-term (1966-2022): 0.84% decline per year.
- The 2022 recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Eastern Region (1.21 jv/ad female) was 12.3% below the 2021 index and 24.9% below the long-term index.
- 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>
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
2002-2003	Nov. 2 – 16	Dec. 21 – Jan. 4	30

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

WOODCOCK

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 13, 2024 - January 31, 2025

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 27 – January 20 (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>	
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

SNIPE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1, 2024 - January 31, 2025

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 30 – December 1 (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 - 2024

- 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, 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>Season Dates</u>
	<u>East of I-95</u>	<u>West of I-95</u>
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, 2024

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 16 – September 30
HUNT AREA: East of I – 95

September 21 – September 30
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 - 2024

- 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 ~132,400 ducks and ~47,400 Canada geese from 2016-2020, 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 16,700 and 13,800 respectively.
- Conditions during the 2022-2023 season were mild for most of the season but puddle duck harvest was slightly higher than the previous years. The total estimated duck harvest during the 2022-2023 season in Virginia (88,900) was 20% lower than the previous year (110,900) and lower than the previous 5-year average (132,400). The majority of the lower duck harvest during the 2022-2023 season was from lower harvests of sea ducks a species which had a reduction in season length.
- During the 2022-2023 season, mallards were the most commonly harvested duck in Virginia, followed by buffleheads, wood ducks, black ducks and gadwall. The mallard harvest in Virginia in 2022-2023 (24,248) was similar to the 2021-2022 harvest (23,221) but still lower than the past 5-year average (36,500).
- The Canada goose harvest in Virginia in 2022-2023 (23,583) was similar to the 2021-2022 season (20,770) but still lower than the previous 5-year average (47,400).

FACT SHEET - The Status of Ducks - 2024

- 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 2023 estimated breeding population size for wood ducks was 0.97 million (SE = 0.13 million), 0.39 million (SE = 0.12 million) for American green-winged teal, 0.66 million (SE = 0.13 million) for ring-necked ducks and 0.85 million (SE = 0.22 million) for goldeneyes.
- The total 2023 mid-continent mallard breeding population is predicted to be 6.22 million (SE = 0.21 million)

Virginia: Habitat conditions in Virginia during the spring of 2023 were average with slightly drier conditions towards the end of the breeding season that could have potentially impacted brood rearing habitat.

- The 2023 Virginia breeding pair estimate for mallards (21,033) was similar to the previous year (21,630). Estimated black duck pairs (629) increased from 2022 (319). The number of Wood duck pairs (9,259) was similar to the previous year (9,675). The breeding pair estimate for Canada geese (44,516) was slightly higher than the 2022 estimate (40,966).

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 restrictions 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 21, 2024 - January 31, 2025

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 canvasback, scaup: 1/day for 40 days and 2/day for 20 days, 2 redheads, 1 pintail, 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 11 - 14 (Black Duck closed)
November 20 – December 1
December 19 – January 31
October 26, February 8 – 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 canvasback, 1 pintail, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck, scaup: 1/day from October 11-14, November 20-December 1, 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

<u>Season Length:</u>	60 hunting days.
<u>Outside Date:</u>	September 21, 2024 - January 31, 2025.
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	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

<u>Season Dates:</u>	To coincide with general duck season
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	5 birds daily, 15 in possession.

AMERICAN COOT

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

<u>Season Length:</u>	60 hunting days
<u>Outside Date:</u>	September 21, 2024 - January 31, 2025
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	15 birds daily (45 in possession)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

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

FACT SHEET - The Status of Resident Canada Geese - 2024

- 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 population estimate is 180,000 (+/- 77,000) 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 portions of Virginia, and special “Goose Hunting Zones” have 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
2023	161,747 +/- 24%	n/a
2022	170,540 +/-26%	n/a
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
1998	264,867 +/- 35%	12,200

*3-year running average

SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE

FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS

OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 – September 25, 2024

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 – 15: ½ hr before sunrise to ½ hr **after** sunset.
September 16 – 25: ½ hr before sunrise **to sunset.**

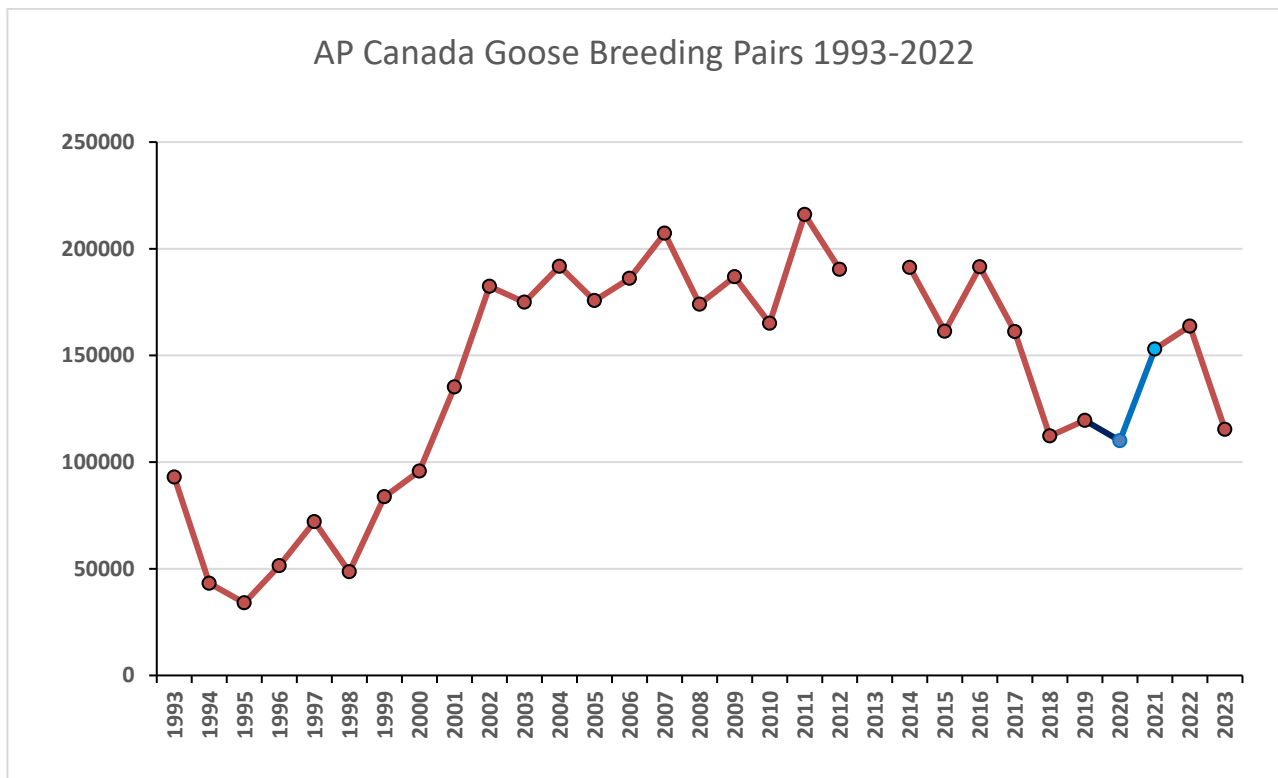
West of I-95
September 1 – 20: ½ hr before sunrise to ½ hr **after** sunset.
September 21 - 25: ½ hr before sunrise **to sunset.**

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

FACT SHEET- History and Status of Migrant Canada Geese - 2023

- 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 where the pair estimate (115,300) was down 30% from 2022 (164,000). The predicted (2024) number of breeding pairs based on the integrated population model was 147,500 and falls within the range (125,000 to 160,000 pairs) under which moderate harvest regulations are recommended in the AP Canada goose Harvest Strategy. For the 2024-2025 season moderate harvest regulations of a 30-day season with a 2 goose daily limit will be implemented.

Figure 1. Atlantic Population Canada Goose Breeding Pair survey estimates 1993-2022. Blue dots/lines are population model estimates for surveys that were not conducted in 2020 and 2021.

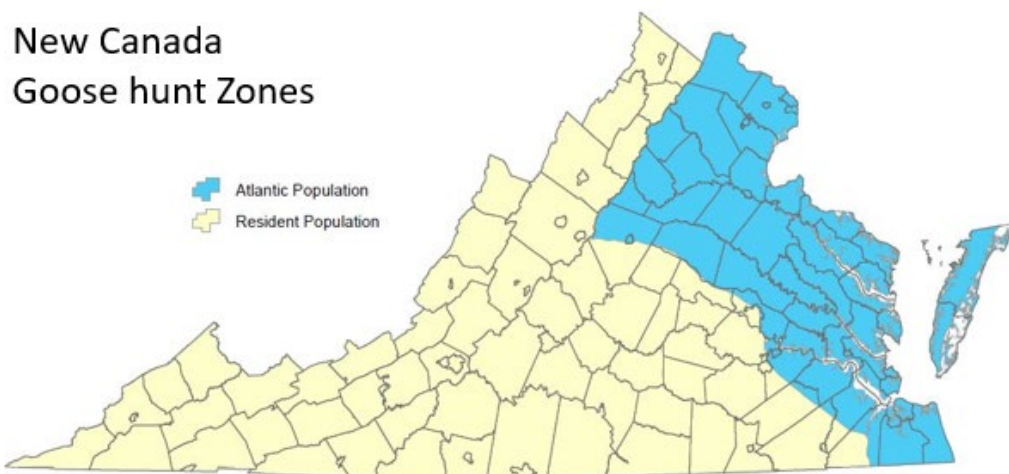


Canada Goose Populations and Hunt Zones

- There has been a change in how 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 (SJB) 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 SJB 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):

Season Length:

30 hunting days

Outside Dates:

November 15 – February 5

Bag Limit:

2 birds daily (6 in possession)

RESIDENT POPULATION ZONE (RP):

Outside Dates:

November 15 – March 10

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:

2 geese per day (6 in possession)

Shooting Hours:

1/2-hour before sunrise until sunset daily

RESIDENT POPULATION ZONE: (RP)

Season Dates:

November 20 – December 1

December 19 - February 23

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) - 2024

- 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 2022 population estimate was 753,000 geese.
- Banding crews at the major snow goose breeding colony on Bylot Island reported that spring condition and nest initiation were very late this year. In addition, nest predation by foxes was high due to low number of lemmings. Therefore, production is expected to be very poor this season and will likely result in a reduced fall flight.
- 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 years, 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, 2024 - March 10, 2025
<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, 2024 – April 5, 2025

Bag Limit:

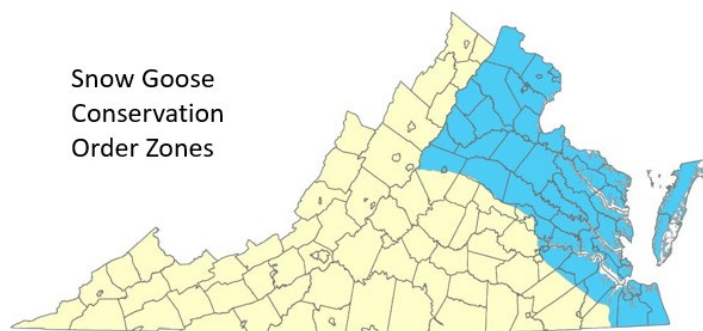
No daily or possession limit

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 - 2024

- **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 in place now is 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 2024-2025 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, 2024 - January 31, 2025
<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 23 – December 31 (9 days)
	January 11 – January 31 (21 days)
<u>Bag Limit:</u>	1 bird daily (3 in possession)

TUNDRA SWAN

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Season Length: 90 hunting days

Outside Dates: October 1, 2024 - January 31, 2025

Virginia may issue up to 532 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 532 swan-hunting permits to holders of a valid Virginia hunting license. Only hunters with a valid 2024-2025 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, 2025.** 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 2 – October 20 November 23 – December 1 December 20 – January 31
<u>Rail, Gallinule, Moorhen:</u>	September 13 – December 26
<u>Woodcock:</u>	October 17 – January 31
<u>Snipe:</u>	October 1 – December 1 December 19 – January 31
<u>Canada Goose:</u>	September 1 - September 25 November 20 – December 1 December 19 - February 23
<u>September Teal:</u>	September 16 - September 30
<u>Ducks, Mergansers, Coot:</u>	October 11 - 14 November 20 – February 9
<u>Brant and Snow Goose:</u>	October 17 – January 31

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.

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

WILDLIFE AND BOAT COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA ITEM

COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: March 20th, 2024 (Original plan, changed)

DIVISION: Aquatics, Boating, and the Non-Game Section

PRESENTER: Written Report

DATE SUBMITTED: March 15th, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Mike Bednarski, Stacey Brown, Amy Martin

SUBJECT:

Comments – Scoping period for sportfishing, boating, and non-game regulations.

BACKGROUND:

The regulatory scoping period ran from January 11th to February 25th. During this period, DWR solicited comments from the general public on regulatory recommendations for sport fishing, boating, and non game. The reports follow this cover sheet.

RECOMMEDATION:

This briefing is informational only; no action is required by the committee.

SPORTFISH

To: Jon Cooper, Chair-Wildlife and Boat Committee, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

From: Mike Bednarski, Chief of Fisheries, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resource

Date: March 15th, 2024

Topic: Aquatic Wildlife Regulation Cycle

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources is in the midst of its biannual aquatic regulation cycle. The first part of the cycle, the scoping period, ran from January 11th to February 25th. The scoping period is where we solicit comments from the general public on any issues that concern them. We received a total of 143 comments (Table below).

Area of Concern	Number of Comments
Shad	4
Catfish	4
Crappie	8
Black Bass	22
Multiple Species	15
Musky	2
Nongame	4
Other	11
Trout	74
Striped Bass	3
Total	147

The remainder of this document contains a brief summary of the comments received in each resource area, as well as the specific regulatory change proposed by the commenter.

Shad – We received 4 comments about shad. Most commented that shad recovery is of critical importance. Specific comments are listed below.

Where are the shad? No one knows. Let us save them by no fishing, netting, no foreign trawlers outside our limits and ENFORCE it. And of course education as our idiots have spread Snakeheads as well as Blue Catfish. In an effort to jump start the "new" American Shad restoration effort I would like to see a new reg. that would implement the use of barbless hooks only during peak spring Shad run (or some portion of it). This peak period would be established by the Shad restoration biologists who would be familiar with these runs and their timing.

Since this would be such a change in angler behaviour perhaps a smaller test area might be a better approach. In this case the James River would be a good fit and the barbless only zone could be established upstream of the I-95 James River Bridge and all shad fishing using non weighted tackle such a darts, spoons, fly's and similar rigs should have their barbs mashed.

I would like to see only a catch and release fishery for hickory shad in the state of VA just like American shad. We are still in the rebuilding stage of this fishery and need to protect them.
10 per day limit

Catfish – We received 3 comments specific to catfish, with a focus on flathead and blue catfish. Specific comments are below.

This isn't really a regulation change recommendation, but a recreational fisheries enhancement suggestion. Specifically, I would like to see the DWR explore the possibility and feasibility of stocking flathead catfish into the Dismal Swamp Canal, and perhaps, Lake Drummond as well. These bodies of water are devoid of any real "large gamefish" fishing opportunities, but the total size of these bodies of water might make them a good fit for a flathead catfish stocking program. Both the lake and manmade canal are inundated with stunted bullhead catfish. Introduction of flathead catfish would help keep the bullheads in check by offering plenty of forage for flathead catfish and establish a new recreational sport fishing opportunity on these two bodies of water. The current diversity of sport fish in Lake Drummond and Dismal Swamp Canal is severely lacking, and I believe introducing flathead catfish would be a great fit and enhance that diversity. Both bodies of water cover vast areas and have extensive underwater shoreline cover which flathead catfish favor. This would also expand the availability of flathead catfish to fishermen in the Hampton Roads area in addition to area waters Lakes Smith and Whitehurst. It is noted that these bodies of water are acidic in nature which makes it unsuitable for most other gamefish such as largemouth bass. Perhaps flathead catfish could tolerate it and thrive in these bodies of water.

This is more of an appreciative shout out to DWR. Thanks for all the thoughtful management going into the trophy blue catfish in Virginia. I am fully onboard with the current regulations, but am concerned about the potential for over commercial harvest.

My only recommendation on this subject is to make sure the new commercial electrofishing is kept in check, and can grow at a reasonable pace, and not the (potential overfished) pace that some politicians and college biologists are pushing for. I realize the VMRC is the group that oversees the commercial harvest, but DWR certainly plays a role in the collaboration of information and management. Thank you for all you do. Time has shown that the state record flathead caught from a reservoir will never be broken from a river. 50s for a flathead in Va's rivers are very rare much less 70+. The same could apply for blue cats also. Maybe even break the state records down into districts?

I'd love to be able to bow fish/ spear fish for flathead catfish.

Crappie – We received 8 comments about crappie, focusing on size limits, bag limits, and the use of technology. Comments are listed below.

I would like to see a 10 inch minimum size on crappie in Smith Mountain Lake.

Need to impose size limit and bag limit

I'd would like to see the size limit for both black and white crappie increased to 12" and the creel limit decreased to 20. Im aware crappie can stunt in small impoundments. The pressure from angling and those humongous catfish are putting a hurting on them. Buggs could easily be a trophy crappie destination for people all over the country, as so many anglers travel to Mississippi for. Why not bring them to good ole Virginia

Minimum size needs to be set and creel lit lowered to 10 fish per person

Permit the cleaning of crappie while continuing to fish

I would like to see a 10" minimum size limit and a 20 per person creel limit on crappie

I would like to see the size of our Crappie increase. The biologists know the proper lengths and quantities. I think with Livescope we can hurt the fisheries which already are pressured. I think a 15 per day creel limit is a lot of fish for anyone to keep. Along with releasing any 14" or over.

Recommend that DWR's fisheries management team re-examine potential impact of current Crappie Creel Limit of 25 per day in the aggregate (4VAC15-320-025) given the introduction of technologies such as Livescope.

Technologies such as Livescope are awesome. I use this all the time to eliminate unproductive water. However, given the predictable patterns of fish like the Crappie (and the behavior of humans to take all they can when given the choice/chance), will this technology significantly alter Crappie populations in conjunction with other environmental factors? You can witness the use of this technology first hand on Social Media like YouTube. For example, anglers easily locate Crappie habitat (that is difficult to locate without technology) and can even count the number of fish present. It's so exciting! Unfortunately, we can't help ourselves and catch/keep every fish within the limit thereby potentially impacting that particular piece of structure Crappie have previously used for protection and to gather/socialize/spawn. Not to be too dramatic, but there are very little places to hide where Livescope can't find you. Not hard to imagine what the future of Crappie fishing may be considering the number of boats going out every day to catch Crappie with Livescope Technology and getting their legal limit; do the math. Verify how many anglers get limit?

Therefore, it is recommended to initiate research/studies now to determine if the current Crappie Creel Limit of 25 per day is still relevant considering the introduction of technologies such as Livescope. Adjust if needed.

Black Bass – We received 22 comments on black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, and Alabama bass). Comments focused on declines in smallmouth bass, changes to size, bag and slot limits, and the potential impact of tournaments on this resource. Comments are listed below.

I strongly recommend greatly reducing the amount of organized bass fishing tournaments on the Chickahominy River and lake.

Local fisherman have limited access and this river at local launches, and the river receives excessive tournament pressure during tournament seasons. Local counties should not be making money by collecting fees related to organized tournaments at the cost of the fishery degradation and impact to local sportmen who buy seasonal launch passes, and pay local taxes to enjoy these resources. The boat traffic is excessive, and also contributes to bank erosion, which further degrades the water and land quality.

This has gone on from far to long and needs to be addressed.

More boat ramps and better management of largemouth bass population in all lakes and reservoirs. It's sad with the limited access and sorry population of largemouth bass in Virginia lakes and reservoirs.

Largemouth Bass numbers in Lake Gaston are worse and worse each year.

I would like to see more restrictions on bass tournaments.

I would like you to lower the number of bass a fisherman can remove from a lake per day.

Alarming decline in SMB population in the new river along the NC border. Change to catch and release regardless of size

My small bass clubs use to have bass tournament on the upper James. Since the size limit change we were unable to have tournament because all we could weigh in was smallmouth under 12 inches or over 22 inches

We think we should be able to purchase a permit to have tournament and weigh in fish that is over 14 inches

The weigh in would be at a VWR boat ramp and the fish would immediately be released back in the river

The permit would have the date of the tournament, weigh in location and time the weigh in would be held that

way a conversation officer could show up at will to make sure the rules are being followed
Thanks for your time.

Make catch and release for about 4 years to improve smallmouth numbers and size.

I think its time for you folks to change the New River smallmouth slot limit back to 11" - 14". I lived in Radford all my life (46 years) and when the New river had the 11"-14" slot limit the New was a consistent trophy smallmouth fishery. The 14" - 20" and now 14" - 22" slot have been tried for long enough. I fished so many fun catch and release tournaments back in the 90's and early 2000's where we would have 5 or 6 citation smallmouth weighed in and released healthy. It was so much fun and the New river was talked about as one of the best smallmouth fisheries on the east coast.

Would like less fish kept per day. Also need more officers citing people who keep illegal fish.

I would like to see the length limit return to the old 11 -14 inch slot that we had when the new river was a top trophy smallmouth fishery on the east coast.

Change the slot limit back to 11-14 inch. Very few people keep smallmouth bass to eat.

Rotate each year between 14 and under with 11-14 slot release!!!!

Varies the pressure from year to year and allows tournaments to have great year to keep the sport growing!!!

I would like to see the slot limit for the New River go back to the 11-14" criteria. The fishery was at it's best for trophy fish during that time. With the increase in guides and recreational fishermen and women, this would give them the opportunity to continue to catch a trophy smallmouth.

Fish caught during any tournament should be caught, weighed and then released. No hauling bass around for hours to be weighed later.

I feel very strongly that the bass fishing tournaments are over running our waters.

I feel very strongly that the bass fishing tournaments are over running our waters.

Oakley big bass tour smith mountain spring event. Currently they schedule two events yearly on smith mountain, spring and fall. Historically the spring event hits during prime spawning window at smith. This type of tournament targets your larger female bass at their most vulnerable time of year. Mortality rates rise considerably in around the spawn when these bigger females have went thru the rigors of the spawning process and the stresses of being caught and hauled around in a livewell all day.

To many tournaments on lakes like Smith Mt. Highly pressured for just guys want to fish

I would like someone to look into the impact of fishing tournaments on fish populations and fishing satisfaction of non tournament fisherman. Study the movements of fish caught and brought back to a weigh in location. Do they "repopulate" the lake or hang out near the weigh in locations. Not looking to ban them outright but request changes to the rules. No live weigh ins (maybe a digital option), require a permit to hold a tournament and use that money for stocking.

I would like to see an exemption to slot limits for bass fishing tournaments. All fish are released after weigh-in, so no fish in the slot are kept. Even if the Department has to be notified prior to the tournament and anglers have to display a card or ribbon to show they are in fact in a tournament, it would be great for smaller lakes and sections of rivers that currently have a slot limit but offer fantastic fishing opportunities.

Please consider changing the Largemouth/Smallmouth Bass Size Limit on the entire Shenandoah River System. The current 11-14 inch Slot Limit does nothing to protect Any Bass over 14 inches and eliminates the harvest of Eating size Bass between 11 and 14 inches. As you are aware there is very little harvesting of Bass on the Shenandoah for eating, so why legally protect the eating size fish while encouraging the harvest of the more Preferable and Trophy Size Bass. This is the Only River system in Virginia that still has this antiquated regulation, as the New and James Rivers have the much more preferable 14-22 inch slot regulation. The 14-22 inch slot size actually protects the more Preferable size bass, encourages the harvest of the much more numerous under 14 inch Eating size Bass, while also allowing the harvest of a Trophy Bass over 22 inches (Win, Win, Win).

Multiple Species – We received 15 comments that pertained to multiple species. These comments included input on tournaments, fishing during spawning periods, access, invasive species, technology, and regulatory simplification. These comments are listed below.

I would like the consideration of airbows used as a legal tool for bowfishing I have worked with a major airgun manufacturer for several years to develop a production model. The arrowgun is lightweight and uses fiberglass arrows just like the ones used in bowfishing we have shot many species of legal fish including stingrays down in Florida over the past few years of testing. The production model released at shot show this year is made by Umarex airguns and is called the javelin pro fishr

Elimination of Blue Catfish size/bag limits and full recognition and promotion of their invasive species status by VA DWR

I would like to legally use 2 rods while fishing trout waters. This would allow me to fish for 2 species at the same time when the bite is slow or fish for trout with a bottom bait like worms or power bait while also casting a spinner for trout and/or other species. All fishing would have to stop once a limit of trout is kept.

clean up regulations. county to county, pond to pond, lake to lake, some roads, some not, this type of sinker, that type of sinker, but all state or county owned. Have to carry the regulation book in my back pocket.

i choose not to fish publically for this complexity of understanding the law of fishing regulations depending on where you fish. Needs to be streamlined with sportmans liscence that cover everything so i can get out of the truck and grab the gear and go fishing. not worry about parking fees, trout stocking fees, can i park here, should i not etc.

Money isn't typically a problem for most people so adding parking fees, trout stock fees, etc and covering it all will make more people fish and buy liscences. Needs to be simple for mom & dad to take their children without violating the complex laws.

Please open bow fishing opportunities to these invasive species that are destroying our local Bass and other sport fishing species that are suffering in the Virginia fisheries.

Keep the lakes and river levels more stable during the spawn, if the lakes were kept at winter pool until May 1st instead of raising and lowering every 2 weeks I think all fish would have better chance to spawn I would like to see more regulation and control of the volume of fishing tournaments allowed on all state bodies of water. The increased volume of tournaments on a lot of the lakes across the state has greatly impacted the opportunities for recreational fishing. Folks that work all week and then are able to go fishing on Friday evening or the weekend are finding it difficult to fish safely due to the volume of traffic and often it is very congested at the boat ramps due to all of the tournament folks launching and sitting around ramp areas. This is continually increasing and becoming a problem. I think there needs to be some specific limits as to how many tournaments one league or group can have in a given year per their permit. E.g. 8 per year.

I would like to see regulations for releasing fish from March 15 until June 1 and eliminating tournament fishing during this time. There are so many bass tournaments going on now during the spawn and the fish are being moved from spawning locations, placed in a livewell and stressed out, then released where it would be unlikely for them to have a successful spawn. And after the spawn they are taken easily from protecting the offspring as they are easy to catch at this time. Once removed from them, predators are able to cash in on that bass being removed as there is now no protection for the offspring. These

tournament anglers are targeting fish by sight fishing them and taking them from the bed to some weigh in location on another part of the waterway. This cannot be good for the resource. The new live image electronics are harming the fisheries as well. fish that are not ordinarily caught are being found with the live target electronics and the fisherman can see the fish reacting to a lure and keep adjusting until the fish reacts. This has been really tragic to the target size crappie populations, and you will see numbers decreasing in the near future for this species because anglers are targeting them and finding them easier than ever. I have been noticing this often over the past couple years. Most large crappie are not released because people like to eat them so much. I like them also. I saw a guy in open water just chasing and wearing out a school of largemouths in open water last August. He said he don't even fish until he sees them on the screen.

They are able to bypass a lot of water they would normally fish without the technology. You see this happening with all of these record-breaking weights of fish now. I would like for the DWR to be cognizant of the potential impact that the new livescopes could cause to fish (particular game species) populations.

I'd like Lake Anna, if not already, to have a minimum size limit on all game fish.

Like the size limits

Catch and immediately release all largemouth, smallmouth, walleye, Muskie until after their spawning period.

reopen the leesville dam fishing platform.

Please update the statewide stocking totals of warmwater fish species.

The last data is from 2014

I would like for the Richlands part of the Clinch to be stocked with trout or any other kind of fish.

Regulations that more clearly define public accessibility on small rivers and streams. Are these bodies of water considered public resources? Are rivers and streams that typically contain water year round open and accessible to the public for walking/wading for let's say trout fishing? If for example, entering a river or stream via a publicly accessible location or by permission from a landlord then walking/wading up or downstream whereby it becomes private property on both sides of the river or stream considered lawful? Can a landlord whose property borders a river or stream restrict walking/wading (or other activities) in that river or stream when that specific landowners property was not trespassed upon? If there are any exclusions, what are they? Are there any specific water rights or property owner rights on a particular river or stream? Is so where?

Musky – Two comments were received regarding muskellunge. These comments are below.

I would like to see the musky stopped being stocked in the New River just to please the musky fisherman Except for the New River below Claytor Lake (which has special regulations) I would like to see all other public waters in Virginia have a 1 fish per day limit for muskellunge with a 42" minimum size limit.

This would standardize most Virginia musky waters and provide quality fishing except keep the special limits below Claytor Lake on the New River.

Nongame – Four comments were received pertaining to non game species. The majority focused on northern snakehead, and are listed below.

Do not put any restrictions or limit on northern snakehead.

A lot of Spanish/Asian cultures keeping bluegill/sunfish from 2" to 4" in length, last year at lake brittle saw multiple times large family groups leaving with 5 gal buckets full of these small fish to eat,

I would like to end the villainizing of snakeheads. It's pretty well documented that they don't have any negative environmental or economic impact. They are a fantastic gamefish that's accessible to most anglers and is great tableware. I would like it to be illegal to shoot them with arrows especially with lights at night. It's really disappointing to pull up to a boat ramp and see dozens of the fish I came to fly fish for dead in the bottom of a boat or in a trash can or on the ground. I'd like to see a daily limit of them for anglers too.

Thanks for considering my opinion.

Adding more resources to the VA freshwater fishing regulations on so-called "Nongame" fish. I would like to see other species I can catch on hook and line in places like the where-to fish sections and to have a list of all fish you can catch on hook and line.

Other/Miscellaneous – We received ten comments about miscellaneous issues. These comments were varied and pertained to fee changes, northern snakehead, horsepower limits, the trophy fish program, an error in our regulation guide, and identification of gear. These comments are listed below.

Charging citizens to fish is obscene. Our forefathers would roll around in their graves to learn that we let a money hungry tyrannical government control our right to catch food or even recreationally cast a line in the water and risk jail sentencing because we didn't pay them to do so. This government is garbage and so are the agencies affiliated with it. An absolute disgrace of our unrepresented tax dollars.

The DWR citations previously had a professional look with a picture of the species. The current citation is nothing to get excited about, can someone please revamp the appearance.

9.9 HP limit lakes changed to idle speed only

Stop stocking hybrid striped bass in ALL bodies of water within the watershed. Ban the private stocking of hybrid striped bass statewide

There is a need for licensing guides in the commonwealth, to make sure professional guides have training in navigation, CPR and basic first aid skills, as well as boat safety and handling skills.

I would like to see a bag limit of 5 Northern Snakeheads a day imposed on the Rappahannock River, Potomac River, Burke Lake and other waterways where Northern Snakeheads are well established and there is a large recreational presence for them.

1. On page 38 of the regulations book, under smallmouth bass it lists as a recommended live bait "spring lizards" (salamanders). This is in conflict with the live bait possession limit listed on page 20 for salamanders as zero - no possession allowed. I think this bait recommendation should be removed as it is confusing and potentially has legal consequences for folks taking the recommendations of the Dept. If I am interpreting this wrong let me know, but if I am confused by this, others probably are as well.

2. I moved back to my hometown from Richmond three years ago and began fishing the upper Rappahannock river again. In three years of fishing (approx. 12-15, 4-hour wet-wading trips per year) I have caught 8 Rock Bass. In that same timespan I have caught 1 Northern hogsucker, 1 Northern snakehead, 2 Green sunfish, 3 Bluegill, 3 Striped bass, 4 Largemouth bass, 20 Fallfish, 215 Redbreast and 300 Smallmouth (I keep detailed notes on every trip). Growing up I remember having high catch rates of Rock Bass at my then primary fishing location of Freeman's Ford (6 miles upstream of Remington). This area is very sandy in terms of bottom structure, I assume unideal habitat for Rock Bass, but I still experienced high catch rates despite of that back then. I now solely fish areas that I know have some hard bottom and therefore more likely habitat for Smallmouth Bass, so theoretically good habitat for

Rock Bass too, but the catch rates have been very poor. I know the Rappahannock can be a temperamental system to sample, but I think population data on Rock Bass in the Rappahannock are worth the biologists keeping an eye on, from my own anecdotal data collection.
4VAC15-350-60(c) Trotline, juglines, limblines, or set poles

Amend subsection "C" to add DWR Customer ID Number as being sufficient means of identification markings on juglines.

C. Additional jugline requirements. Jugline sets (except as exempt under subsection A of this section) shall be restricted to 20 per angler and must be attended (within sight) by anglers at all times. Also, in addition to being labeled with the angler's name, address, and telephone number, jugs shall also be labeled with a reflective marker that encircles the jugs to allow for visibility at night. [Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Customer Identification Number may be used in lieu of an angler's name, address, and telephone number to label juglines, as long as the angler's customer account has the required information.]

I would like to see an out of state Senior fishing license fee. I fish with my 4 year old grandson from Marshal Va. 6 + times per year. I am a 72 year old resident of Florida on a fixed income and a senior pricing would help. Thank you for your consideration.

I am a disabled senior. i purchased lifetime trout, and lifetime freshwater licenses as soon as eligible. i did this primarily due to memory (to avoid potential lapses in license). however, the last i checked, there is no such "Lifetime" national forest access available for purchase.

I would like to suggest that a lifetime national forest access permit be made available to those persons who have other lifetime licenses.

I'm not sure i ever fish in areas where it (national forest permit) is required. However, it is something that i bought each year with my annual licenses. now that i don't do this annually, i forget the national forest stamp.

Trout – We received 73 comments about trout. This resource area received the most comments, which is typical for the scoping period. These comments focused on how information is released, size and bag limits, stocking practices, gear restrictions, requests for more variety, and wild trout concerns. These comments are listed below.

No tiger trout in native streams

Changing back creek to a Class A stocked stream. It was once one of the biggest and best trout streams in the county. It has the holes, springs, and temperatures to holdover trout

All stockings should be pre announced to make it fair. to many leaks in the system there is always a pile of people that know where the truck is going everyday

stock streams without being announced. There are too many “truck chasers” that clear out streams in one weekend. I’m Va there is a got to get your limit of trout mentality. This leads to streams being stripped clean. Also you may not want to hear this but after announced stockings in my area Hispanic populations hit the streams with cast nets and get an easy haul.

I would like to see more public stocked trout waters in franklin County for example Gillys pond behind middle school and blackwater river near Callaway and magodee creek near Boones mill again

I would like to see more stringent regulations protecting Brook Trout fisheries, and all Brook Trout streams designated Catch and Release Only

Modify the procedure for posting the information online and by phone of stocking fish in streams during the months of October-June. I think that it would benefit everyone if the stocking could be given a minimum 72 hour window before the public is notified that the streams have been stocked.

I would like to see DWR cease stocking non-native trout in locations where wild brook trout might use those areas for seasonal habitat (e.g. migration downstream over winter/spring).

I would like to see DWR restore Whitetop Laurel as a brook trout fishery in the special regulation section.

I would also like to see greater oversight of the Bath County pump storage releases into Little Back Creek. It appears that low flows may have impacted the species composition there. It is now mostly rainbows. Try and stock different breeds of trout in other places. There is a trout slam award out there but for the most part to catch all three you have to fish like Douthat to achieve this which for many is a long drive. The idea of putting the same thing like rainbows in some places each stocking is not exactly fair to those who can't drive miles to fish for another breed. Maybe just mix in a few of all trout each stocking to keep it interesting despite the biologists objecting as doing this won't hurt anything except maybe the Roanoke River!

Also would like to see the stocking at Poverty Creek discontinued allowing more fish to be put elsewhere as like 3 holes get stocked while the fish are caught almost right away.

Would like to see more of pre-announced stockings as even though it creates a Heritage Day like crowd in spots it allows for those that don't follow the truck get a better chance rather than having to wait until the next day after things have been worked over.

South fork must be patrolled and checked more often. It's an outstanding fishery but in recent years I have noticed a decline and people illegally harvesting fish.

Catch and release on all native brook trout.

Stocking trout only in systems that don't have a wild/native population.

Stricter bag limits and more law enforcement on bowfishing for carp (common/mirror)

I have enjoyed fishing for stocked trout since I was a small child when my dad introduced me and my brother to fishing. Once introduced and up through my younger years, stockings were sometimes pre-announced in the newspaper. For years now stockings have been posted at 4 pm after the stocking has taken place. Periodically I would get to go fishing, but a lot of times my work schedule would prohibit going on that short of notice. I would like to see at least some of the stockings announced at least a week beforehand so a person may be able to adjust their work schedule to go fishing. I have introduced several people to stocked trout fishing over the years, but it's very rare both schedules could be adjusted on extremely short notice. Thank you for your time and considerations.

Stop posting the stocking schedule day of. For the common man who works Monday- Friday. If it is posted at 2PM it's fished almost out the same day. Possibly chance to a weekly release schedule. (Week of Jan 1 the state stocked x,y,x) or a monthly schedule (in January the state will stock x,y,z)

I would like to see more locations added in prince William or city of Manassas locations for the stocked trout program

Increase the stocking of trout, we buy our license the same as everyone else. Seems some places get stocked weekly. If Scott County was stocked more, probably sell more licenses. This year I am going to Tennessee. More stocked waters.

Reinstate "trout area" groupings.

Would like to use more than one pole at a time when fishing lakes for trout. Limit of 6 fish regardless of whether or not two poles are used.

I would like to see DWR not post the date and location of every trout stocking online. I think it would be ok to post maybe 50% of stockings.

Lower the creel limit on stocked trout. Spread stock trout out in a more efficient manner.

I would like to see the trout streams and lakes closed on the day of stocking, and reopen the following day at one half hour before sunrise, no more truck chasers! Give the working man a chance to take the next day off to take his grandchildren fishing to catch fish.

Each trout above the legal size that is landed should be retained and count towards the limit of 6.

Stop posting online where and when trout are stocked in public rivers.

I would recommend no harvesting of native or wild fish. Also, stocking should not occur in sections of waterways that can support native and/or wild fish.

I am a big fan of the Delayed Harvest program, but believe that VA's DH program is far inferior to NCs. I have several suggestions to improve the DH program:

1. Increase the # of stockings from 3 to 4 (or even more, for example many of the NC streams receive 5 stockings per season - Oct/Nov/Mar/Apr/May)

2. If stockings remain at 3, I would suggest moving the later stockings earlier such that they occur in October (water levels permitting), Dec, and Feb with no stockings later than February. This is primarily because wild trout opportunities in the state freestones start improving significantly in March, and by late March/early April, there is plenty of wild trout water that is in excellent condition. I think the DH waters primarily allow winter fishing (this helps anglers stay out of wild trout streams where they would be potentially trampling redds) as well as fishing in urban areas.

Unrelated to the DH program, I am strongly opposed to stocking over wild fish, whether it is over wild brook trout (e.g. upper Piney River in the national forest, Dry River in Harrisonburg is a prime example), or by putting stocked fish into a tailwater with naturally reproducing wild trout (e.g. dumping excess stocked rainbows into the Jackson tailwater as what happened this past fall). I believe there is reasonable evidence that stocking over wild fish (especially brook trout in a small freestone stream) is detrimental to the wild population, not to mention it often leads to the area being trashed / not respected.

The trout stocking season begin as scheduled on October 1st, however, stocking would take place according to water conditions.

Change the trout stocking location announcement to 1:00 pm

I would like to see the designated trout stocked sections of Fox Creek, Hurricane Creek, and Comers Creek on National Forest reduced or eliminated and changed to special regulation to enhance and conserve the wild trout populations already present in these streams.

Stock some tiger trout in Southwest Virginia (and Southwest Virginia doesn't end at Roanoke)

I would like for the delayed harvest season to be changed from catch and release to Keep with a size limit.. Due to most trout die when caught and that's not excitable as an angler.

To stock all trout in IrishCreek, have it change from a B stream to a A stream.

By regulation, one can only trout fish with one pole at a time. I have not been able to determine why this regulation is in effect, as in most waters, one is limited to six fish, so what difference does it make if they are caught by way of two lines in the water or one. I've asked two different conservation officers why this regulation is on the books and neither knew or had a good answer. The best answer I got is when the state had a closed trout season and anglers lined up along the stream banks waiting for the

opening bell and there just was not room for multiple lines in the waters as the anglers were elbow to elbow. I have observed many anglers using multiple lines, either not knowing the regulation or ignoring it, so why not make it legal for all?

There should be no size limit on brown or rainbow trout as they are a nonnative species.

I would like to see the use of both artificial and real salmon eggs be banned from use to catch trout. Also the use of dough power bait being outlawed.

I would like to see the notification of stocking delayed for one week to allow time for the fish to spread out and get used to their environment before the masses of people devastate their population. I would also like to see that the trout be stocked at night so as to keep individuals from following the stocking truck and devastating the populations before anyone else has a chance to catch any

Stop posting the stocking schedule.

I would like to see atleast a 3 day period of catch and release only after a section of water has been stocked before put and take.

Change from 1 fishing rod to 2 fishing rods for stocked trout .

More fish

These are class A streams yet we only received 7 stockings last year. Never heard a reason why? This year the trout stocking numbers are even worse. We pay for a trout stamp and the stockings are horrible. I know about the whirling disease this year but if there is a fee for us to trout fish there needs to be a way for DWR to access trout from other areas to stock these waters. The number of trout that are being stocked in these waters is not acceptable. Size does not matter. More trout stocked is whats needed.

I believe the trout stockings should be announced in advance. This will give fisherman opportunities to plan vacation days or vacation trips with family to a trout stream. The current process is not giving all licensed fisherman the same opportunities . This would also encourage families to bring younger fisherman or those that have not fished before.

If this regulation is not approved then I think a additional Heritage Day needs to be added during the year. On Heritage Day I see more young fisherman then any other times. Maybe stock different a different stream on Heritage Day.

A trout license should be required anytime and anywhere you fish for or are in possession of trout. The only exception to this would be waters such as south Holston lake where there is an agreement between states.

The creel limit for trout should be reduced to 4 per day state wide.

The number of trout allocated for each river, stream or lake should be included with the stocking information for that body of water for the current stocking year.

I do not want trout unlimited 308 to have anything to do with the virginia dwr trout stockings or the regulations

Pre announce the entire schedule so that all license holders have the ability to adjust their schedules and be available the day a stream is stocked. I help stock and it's amazing how often someone arrives at the hatchery and follows the truck to the stream alerting their friends along the way. I have friends that camp on the Jackson annually and they have missed the stockings for the last three years. Announcing would allow them to be there at the right time. It's nice that trout fishing provides a great opportunity for retirees and others that don't work during the day but should be available to all license holders. Most streams don't get fished out on the stock day but the percentage of fish that are removed on the first day is significant. I believe more people would buy licenses and fish if that knew they would have that

first day opportunity. More people means more license fees and more money to improve the program. You should already have information on the attendance on pre announced days. If it's significantly more than unannounced days, why not provide that opportunity on all stockings. You already have the system showing when streams are stocked after the event so it could be used to announce delays on a preannounced day if weather or other factors require a day to change. If you are wondering about the statewide desire to fish for trout, check out the private pay streams. The next available weekend day at Cedar Springs is July 13. People that work and go to school like to trout fish too.

Stock more trout and better size! Not 6-8" barely legal trout as being done....

Due to cell phones, people who are friends of the staff working the stocking know that morning. The rest of Virginia has to wait until the stocking notice is posted. If the schedule is posted six months before the schedule stocking then everyone would have the opportunity to fish the day of or a couple days later if they chose to. This would provide enough notice to plan a day off from work if needed.

I think that Virginia on the west of the Blue Ridge could benefit greatly from opening another state hatchery to the area.

I would like limit to be less from 4 to 3. As a catch and release angler - the stocked trout are fished out so quickly bc of how many ppl keep. And I've seen some keep more than the limit.

Somehow prohibit people from following stocking trucks to stocking location. Maybe a 2 day moratorium on fishing after stocking other than heritage day.

Stop posting when stocking for trout, just go do it no one needs to know

Smith River Dam should be a class A trout water. It would provide more opportunities close to my home.

I am disabled.

Stop stocking 100 maybe 7 inch trout in these creeks

It makes no sense

Me and a TON of other trout fisherman of Virginia are tired of these stockings

It's not fun anymore traveling an hour to see a half ass stocking with 7 inch trout

This needs to change

Whoever is in management for Virginia stockings and hatchery management needs to be fired he is doing a horrible job And don't bring up that fish kill

No excuse to you can buy fish from other states

Generally speaking, I would like to have more fish thru the duration of the season.

Creel limit reduced to 4 or 5.

Harvest size bumped up (catching small ones are still fun IMO)

The current way of stocking is pretty disappointing for most fishermen. It seems that fewer fish are stocked and those that are stocked get caught by fishermen the day of stocking when most anglers, such as myself, can't enjoy the fish. My suggestion is for no fishing the day of stocking with fishing starting 30mins before daylight the following day. This will give fish a chance to spread out through the creek and give those of us that have restrictive work schedules a chance to catch some trout. Thanks!

I would like to see tomahawk pond stocked with trout more then fives times

I would like to see lake Laura be add to the trout stocking list and at least be stocked three to fives a trout season.

I would like to change from catch & release to catchable trout during the non-fee period. (From October to March with trout license required)

I would like to see under size trout stocked, I used to love to trout fish and it seems anymore they all get caught out within a short period of time, if we stocked undersize fish there would still be fish in the creeks to catch for a length of time.

I would like to see an increase in numbers of fish per stocking.

Would like to see more trout stocked in my county.

This trout season has been the worst I've experienced in VA.. I get that 40k trout had to be killed off due to some bacterial outbreak, but if you're not going to lower the price of the trout stamp, at least outsource some trout from other hatcheries out of state. I truly wish I didn't buy a trout stamp this year. In addition the trout have seemed to be significantly lower in size this year and most are barely legal at around 8 inches

We need to stock more fish and exotic fish to draw license buyers from other states like West Virginia does every year because of golden trout. We have tiger trout and I'm excited but our hatchery managers aren't aware that tiger trout eggs must be heat shocked at 85 degrees to allow extra sets of chromosomes through....Virginia needs to stock Blue Rainbow trout which is much more rare in the states to catch than even the golden of West Virginia I will buy the blue trout eggs myself and give them to y'all to raise n breed. That would draw license sales from all states surrounding us and all trout fishing states period.

I would like to see the limit on stocked trout dropped from 6 to 4. I often quit with 4 trout. I think it would allow trout to holdover longer, would limit the number taken by the truck followers and give working folks more opportunity to catch trout. I realize some will complain about the price of the trout license and then a reduced bag limit. The reduced bag limit might allow fewer but larger trout to be stocked. Just a thought, I plan to continue trout fishing regardless and think the program overall is well done.

I would like DWR to stop stocking trout in native brook trout streams, especially in the upstream areas where native trout are living and spawning.

There needs to be a drastic change in the trout stockings around the state. For the past 4 years there have been fewer and fewer fish and or fishing opportunities. Why are selling our trout to other states like North Carolina? We pay for these licenses each year and it is just not worth it anymore. Either do it right or don't do it at all. Hardly any fish get stocked and I have personally seen trout that aren't even legal size being stocked. All of the government funding and of course license fees should equate to a much better program than this. This has become a huge concern with commonwealth anglers over the past 5 years or more in some areas. Most people think this program is a joke now.

I would like to see big stony creek moved up to a class "A" stream. We only have Bark Camp Lake as a class "A" in the County. This would bring in more fishermen. Some of my friends have quit buying a licenses because not enough fish is stocked. They bring one load to stock big and little stony and by the time we find out big stony is fished out. It's published after 4:00 PM the day of stocking but by the next day the fish are almost gone. I know the flow is a little low in the fall but there is enough good stocking holes to handle a truck load since the area stocked is so big. They would be caught before any harm would come to the fish anyway. Thank you for allowing me to express my concern.

Roanoke River

Add new section of Delayed Harvest (DH) downstream from existing DH at Green Hill Park in western Roanoke County. New section would extend from Route 760, Duiguide Lane bridge over Roanoke River, to Route 636, Mill Lane bridge.

I would like to see Delayed Harvest (DH) waters stocked at least 5 times.

Publicly post online stocking schedule each Sunday for following week listing stocked location or stream closure for one week or reduced bag limits or require catch and release on day of stocking or first week following stocking to reduce public presence and increase stocking effort safety and encourage more shared use of our natural resources of Virginia.

I have been an active trout fisherman in Virginia for over 10 years, and have always valued native Brook Trout. After experiencing the quality of other native fisheries elsewhere in the country, I would like to see more catch and release only designations to native Brook trout streams in Virginia. This is due to the fact that fishing quality in Shenandoah national park, for example, where catch and release only fishing exists, the fishery is much higher quality. I have seen my home streams, such as Fridely Run near Fridely Gap trail, be overfished and poached due to no clear regulations existing for the stream. I would really encourage your department to make more catch and release fishing available to those who do not wish to participate in stocked trout or put and take fishing, which has problems such as overcrowding. Thank you.

Apply single hook regulations along with no harvest or slot limits on more small native brooke trout streams such as south prong of barbours creek above the stocked section.

Protect wild and native trout. End harvesting for native brook trout and wild brown/rainbow trout.

Designate all wild and native trout waters as "Special Regulation - catch and release only". Wild and native trout numbers are low in many of our waters in GWNF and JNF. Promote stocked trout harvest only, hell let them fish the hatchery tanks! Lastly, please stop stocking over wild/native trout, the practice does not work nor protect wild trout. In fact recent evidence suggests the practice harms native/wild habitat.

Thank you.

I think that the tailwater below Gathright dam should be catch & release w only barbless hooks allowed . if that doesn't work it should be C & R single hook only ! thank you

Jackson Tailwater should be artificial lures only, catch and release.

I need a 300-400 cubic feet per second flow to take a boat down the Jackson River. Why can't the Gathright dam consistently release approximately 350 cubic feet per second every day.

The minimum keeper size needs to be upped to 18 on all wild trout".

Striped Bass – We received two comments about striped bass. Both pertained to Smith Mountain Lake and are listed below.

I would like to see some substantial effort to eliminate the catch and release of Striped Bass in Smith Mountain Lake during the summer months. Repeated research results clearly indicate that a high percentage of Stripers released in warmer months die when released. It is imperative to the Striped Bass fishery that this be addressed.
We should have a 4 fish creel limit.

Catch and release only. I am 77 years old and I have fished this river my entire life and there are are only a few other people my age that Have witnessed the destruction of the stripe bass fishery and the destruction of the river. I caught fish in the late 60's and early 70's in the 20 # pounds. You should have records of stripers in the hatchery reaching 25 #. My goal is not to catch big fish, but to work toward a return of natural reproduction in the river. I know that millions of stripers have been hatched in

the hatchery and used to build many programs in our fishery and game programs by trading with other states.

I have sit in my boat and had stripers in process of spawning hitting my boat. You could see large schools spawning. I am afraid the original genes of the stripers that made that original trip up this great river have been diluted to endangered species status.

I am not afraid to say that I hold hold Appalachian Power Co and their pump back program for the destruction of our river, but I believe your mission is to protect our habitat. in this case the Staunton River. I do not believe the government can allow any agency to control the flow of a river to the destruction of the river bed and banks and possibly wipe out species living in the water

The Staunton River from Leesville Dam to Buggs Island is a scenic river. We have a lot of work to do but with the help of people looking for new areas outdoors to explore I believe we will have partners in this challenge. The biggest challenge we will face at first is lack of access to the river. We lost a great landing at Clarkton Bridge Rd, it was gone

before anyone even new we did not own the property. I am told out of state money bought this entire location.

For those of you that have not floated the Staunton River from Long Island to Brooknal find someone in your dept and take a breath taking float.

NONGAME

2024 Nongame Regulatory Cycle

Public comments as of March 6, 2024

Area of Concern	Number of Comments
Mammals	2
Reptiles	6
Birds	4
Fishes	0
Amphibians	1
Freshwater Invertebrates	1
Multiple taxa	2
Total	16

Mammals:

- Request for an ID – ACTION: will send her email address to our Mammalogist

- Reintroduce mountain lions.

Reptiles:

- Make the incidental take/killing of diamondback terrapins recreationally and commercially illegal without a terrapin excluder device (TED).
- I would like to see Box Turtles protected from collection in our state, as is true in some surrounding states where they have some protection.
- If you're not going to eat it don't kill it. This goes for all species natural to virginia
- Red-eared Slider regulations rework.
- 1) Add "non-native type" Cornsnakes (and Eastern Kingsnakes) to the list of "Domesticated Animals" as in code: 4VAC15-20-50 to allow free possession of "domestic-types" of Cornsnakes; 2) Use sales records (with existing sales permits), and allow possession of native-type Cornsnakes (and Eastern Kingsnakes) as long as the person in possession has proof of sale paperwork and a month and year hatch date; 3) Strike the maximum sale size for all Cornsnakes (and Eastern Kingsnakes).
- I would like the one month possession limit for reptiles not on the Species of Greatest Conservation Concern list to be increased from one to three.

Birds:

- Increase removal of dead animals on a more frequent basis by State or local means.
- dead hawks
- I suggest removing protection status on cormorants. They are voracious consumers of both game and non-game fishes in our lakes, ponds, and streams and I am not sure that are indigenous to our area. They might be considered an invasive species and compete with native species for food.
- Specifically to the clinch mountain wma. We need a banding and relocation project implemented for the resident eagle population. Bald and golden alike have overtaken the skies. I've witnessed up to 19 individuals chase what few migratory waterfowl we get in the area.

Amphibians:

- There should not be a limit on frogs

Freshwater Invertebrates (snails, mussels, crayfishes):

- I appreciate the recent efforts in trying to reestablish freshwater mussel populations, and other work on nongame and endangered species. A lot of this goes under the public radar, but we do notice it. I would encourage you to keep at it, and keep releasing updates on your work.

Multiple taxa:

- Statement that no endangered species should be hunted.
- Allow landowners to shoot birds of prey to protect livestock and small game. Landowners can also give permission to others to shoot on their property.

BOATING

To: Jon Cooper, Chair-Wildlife and Boat Committee, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

From: Stacey Brown, Boating Division Director, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resource

Date: March 11th, 2024

Topic: Boating Regulation Cycle and Division Report, March 2024

Public Scoping Period – Boating Regulations

The public scoping period for Boating Regulations ended on February 25. Twenty-six comments were received. Of these, nine were complaints rather than suggestions to be addressed through regulation. Another nine of these comments refer to matters that are addressed in the Code of Virginia (legislation) rather than the administrative code, and therefore cannot be addressed by regulation. These comments related either to boat registrations (register all boats including paddlecraft or do not require boats with trolling motors to be registered) or expanding the current “50’ rule” referring to no wake operations, to up to 1,000 feet. Two other suggestions provided through this process will likely be included as staff recommendations, regarding child life jacket wear and amending the wording related to bow riding. The remaining comments were either suggestions for the agency or included restrictions of boat operations that staff have other ways to address (through regulatory markers) or would be impractical to enforce

(such as speed limits). For your reference and information, specific comments are included in the accompanying pages.

Boating Division Report

Our customer service team is gearing up for the influx of boat registrations and renewals we typically see from March until July. Several team members participated in a virtual training session on Hull Identification Refresh and Policy updates provided by the International Association of Marine Investigators. The Boating Director and Waterways Manager attended the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Spring Workshop and received updates on USCG Boating Issues as well as boating issues impacting other states. The Recreational Boating Safety Manager and Region 1 Coordinator attended the NASBLA Education Seminar and received the Paddlesports Facilitator endorsement from the American Canoe Association.

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
Inclusion of PWC for fishing to be permitted on water at night with use of navigation lights.	Believe states that permit PWC on water with navigation lights have not caused negative impact or been found to have any impact on safety or being a Hazzard to others.	Code of Virginia
I never reported this, but last April on Lake Chesdin boat launch near the dam I was fishing in the shallows with my new kayak. Two boats launched with difficulty and a lot of anger. They gunned their boats running very fast in a large circle throwing lots of water. Then they each came into the shallow area where I was creating some large waves and laughing at me. I did and said nothing; just tried to point my kayak into the oncoming waves. I have never been back. I have both lifetime fresh and saltwater licenses. Since then I have only gone saltwater fishing.	Do you have a number like the VSP? Who else can I call?	Complaint
Rather than having horsepower limits (example, fountainhead park 9.9 hp limit) have speed limits so those with bigger gas motors can still fish them and just keep their boat at appropriate speeds.	Rather than having horsepower limits (example, fountainhead park 9.9 hp limit) have speed limits so those with bigger gas motors can still fish them and just keep their boat at appropriate speeds.	Restricted Boat Operations (Speed limit)
Registration of all watercraft	Kayaks and paddle boards use public waters that fishermen and boaters have contributed to for years and they do it free of charge. This is a slap to the face of sportsmen who have for years contributed.	Code of Virginia
Restricted areas prohibiting wake boating.	Shoreline erosion, personal property damage. Overall safety in congested areas.	Restricted Boat Operations (activity prohibition)
Allow small craft to register for usage of electric motors without a title. Registration could be handled in a similar manner to purchasing an annual fishing license.	Requiring the titling of small craft such as canoes and inflatable rafts creates an unnecessary personal property tax burden on sportsmen.	Code of Virginia

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
<p>I cannot understand the need to lower the water levels in Douthat Lake and Lake Robertson during the winter fishing season. I asked several local state employees why the lakes are drained and have not received a definite answer. This has become standard procedure for the past five years . At first we were told it was to perform maintenance projects. Then we heard it was to allow for habitat enhancements. Next I was told it was to control non native vegetation spread by waterfowl.</p> <p>Whatever the reason, the results have failed to benefit the anglers like me. We fished Douthat Lake today after we learned that the valve had been opened to take the lake to the winter level. What is the reason this time?</p> <p>Why do we need a winter drainage at all?</p>	<p>Drainage of some Lakes during winter months.</p>	<p>Complaint</p>
<p>Trolling (electric) motors. Any vessel regardless of length that is powered by electric motors shall not require registration.</p>	<p>Many anglers drift or paddle from point A to point B on unregistered canoes and kayaks. Some folks don't feel comfortable in such small crafts and prefer flat bottom John boats. Many of such folks are not physically able to paddle all day and require an electric motor to enjoy the experience, and such folks may not be financially able to pay for such registration</p>	<p>Code of Virginia</p>
<p>please just make sure the folks that are driving boats on our waterways have the lic. they should have There sure are alot that don't .</p>	<p>more checks on boating safety !!!</p>	<p>Complaint</p>
<p>Speed limits need to be reduced on inland rivers with narrow channels and bends. A "no wake" rule should be in effect for motor boat and PWC traffic within 100 yards of piers and within 0.5 miles of marshes.</p>	<p>Bass boats and PWC speeders are ruining recreational boating on the Rappahannock.</p>	<p>Code of Virginia</p>

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
Due to increased paddle craft activity and subsequent increase in accidents and injuries in Virginia and the nation due to power craft related activity near paddle craft, I request and recommend that the area 1000 yards around a kayak/paddle craft launch be deemed by law to be a "No Wake Zone".	Dangerous activity by power boaters.	Code of Virginia
Speeding regulations enforced in on wake zones. Extreme erosion washing soil over oysters and muscles.	Land owners on the water are under strict regulations and the control of erosion is expensive and home owners problem!	Complaint
There should be a requirement to have a launch on each side of a river or tributary to make boating more accessible for everyone	Handicap accessibility	Complaint
4VAC15-430-30; Add requirement for children under 13 years old to wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD), in accordance with USCG Regulation. 33 CFR 175.15(c) provides that no person may operate a recreational vessel underway with any child under 13 years old aboard unless each such child is either wearing an appropriate PFD approved by the Coast Guard or below decks or in an enclosed cabin. If the child is observed above deck without a PFD, then a violation has occurred. If the child was below decks with no PFD, then no violation has occurred.	Safety of children, potentially saving lives.	Under consideration
PWC increase idle speed distance from 50 to 100 feet when passing docks, swimmers , etc.	Safety, unnecessary disturbance to others,etc, erosion, effects on spawning fish...	Code of Virginia
Quit draining Douthat lake in the winter so it can't be fished from a boat.	Fishing access and it's causing a drop in fish numbers in the lake.	Complaint

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
<p>4VAC15-390-140 Riding on decks and gunwales; Recommend amending the regulation to add presumption. Judges are dismissing charges based on the current wording. It shall be unlawful for the operator of a motorboat to [presumably] allow any person to ride or sit on the bow, gunwales, transom, or on the decking over the bow of the vessel while under power unless such motorboat is provided with adequate guards or railing to prevent passengers from falls overboard. Nothing in this section shall be construed to mean that passengers or other persons aboard a watercraft cannot occupy these areas of the vessel to moor or anchor the watercraft, to cast off, or for any other necessary purpose. Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor as provided by § 29.1-738 of the Code of Virginia.</p>	<p>Riding on bows and gunwales are very dangerous, and a widespread problem. The regulation needs to be updated to show a presumption that the operator should have known about a passenger riding on the bow or gunwale. With the current wording, judges are dismissing charges.</p>	<p>Under consideration</p>
<p>A few years ago, a rule was implemented requiring permits/licenses to use boat ramps. This was later rescinded. During that time, I purchased a Restore the Wild membership, granting me access. While I agree with that law being revoked, I did appreciate what it was trying to accomplish. And so I have maintained my membership ever since. This is not a formal recommendation for a particular regulation. I would just like to see more outreach encouraging voluntary support of river access and conservation. I think many recreational boaters would support this as long as it is not done in a regulatory fashion. Thank you.</p>	<p>.</p>	<p>Suggestion</p>
<p>Wake boat hours/ zones on Sml</p>	<p>Environmental erosion, boat safety for smaller craft, property damage</p>	<p>Restricted Boat Operations</p>

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
<p>I am a mariner that drives tugboats on Virginia waters. For the most part Virginia recreational boaters are very good, however they do need to be informed that these tugs weather pushing or towing a barge cannot just stop, and they need to be more mindful of their wake.</p> <p>The Henrico county fire and police boats running up and down the James River at 20 and 30 knots past these tugs running or moored is absolutely uncalled for unless an actual emergency exists.</p>	<p>Please be mindful of your surroundings and MINDFUL of your wake.</p> <p>Your wake has more affect on these tugs than many think.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	<p>Complaint</p>
<p>Signs need updated and replaced frequently! After we had storms, signs are blown away, and everyone points fingers at someone else as to whose responsibility it is to put the sign back up. It would be helpful in the training if voters had to identify certain areas were certain rules, pertain, such as around military vessels, the waterside area, which is a huge spectator area and you see the most accidents due to an experience. One last thing, let's talk about what to do when you see a tugboat, pushing a barge. There needs to be proper safety discussed and reinforced. Some of the most hideous almost accidents I've ever seen have been involving a narrow waterway and someone trying to zip around a barge. Last summer we saw about fly up into the trees. One last thing, construction zones, such as the new high-rise bridge. Changed there are no signs and voters are driving recklessly throughout that area. You also need to talk about when it's OK to go underneath a bridge that raises and when you are not OK to go underneath that bridge.</p>	<p>I think a great deal of the issues that we see out on the water could be minimized by being proactive with proper signage and replacing that signage after a storm. Sometimes it takes more than one sign you needed it on both port and starboard sides of a waterway.</p>	<p>In regulation already</p>

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
<p>Do to the increase of the large surf boats that create large wakes I propose that the legal distance from shore when creating a wake be changed from 50ft to 100ft from shore as I believe is the rule in NC. The shore erosion created by wakes has really been a problem. thanks</p>	<p>shore erosion and swimmer safety</p>	<p>Code of Virginia</p>
<p>recommend allowing the addition of completion of the Virginia Boating Course to the lifetime licenses cards.</p>	<p>this would mean one less card the individual would have to carry and permit online checks of course completion by LEO's.</p>	<p>Suggestion</p>
<p>I have been floating and fishing the Shenandoah River above Bentonville for more times than I can remember! This location is just above Front Royal Va. We went through a place many times called Compton Rapides. In fact, my wife and I went through these rapids many times. We then camped out along the shore and had a such a wonderful time! I had a Coleman Scanoë with an electric motor on board to get us through the many (none current and dead spots) in the river. To make a long story short: I'm now retired, and have bought A Colman Canoe from a friend at where used to work. It is my desire to float the many places that I've floated in the past with my recently acquired Coleman Canoe. Back in the 90's, there was no requirement to have numbers on a Canoe unless it was powered by a gas powered motor. I have attempted numerous times to register this Colman Canoe through your website. You wanted a bill of sale. So I sent you a copy of my friends bill of sale via the internet. So my opinion on regulation changes would be that there should NOT BE A REGULATION THAT SAYS YOU NEED LETTERS AND REGISTRATION FOR A BOAT THAT IS POWERED BY AN ELECTRIC MOTOR!!</p>	<p>I need to register my canoe! If I have to pay a fee to put an electric motor on canoe, then that's fine! I just need to figure out how to do this! Maybe someone could give me a call?? 540-539-0163 or reach out to me at this email?</p>	<p>Staff contacted constituent to help</p>

Describe your specific recommendation change:	What is the primary concern or issue you want your recommendation to correct?	Staff Comments
<p>Rogers Ford Ramp at Phelps. Tons of money spent building a road/ramp and now the management is closing it for the 2 months it can actually be used!! Rappahannock River seldom has enough water in it in the Summer months to kayak/canoe. Look at the water level data if you don't believe me. You need 3.50 -5ft ft of water to run that river safely. I understand closing it from end of September to January 1st here. But April and May? Thats the only time the river has water in it and the weather is warm enough!!</p>	<p>Open the ramp April - October 1. At least it can be used for what it was actually intended for!! All that money and donations from the 4 groups...what do they think about this btw?? The organizations that donated?? Should I contact them and ask??</p>	<p>Complaint</p>
<p>Any boat including kayaks with a motor need to be registered and are taxed.</p>	<p>I believe kayaks that us small electric motors (1/4 HP) should be exempt. It makes no sense to tax these small crafts like full size boats with outboard motors.</p>	<p>Code of Virginia</p>

Board of Wildlife Resources Finance, Audit, & Compliance Committee Report

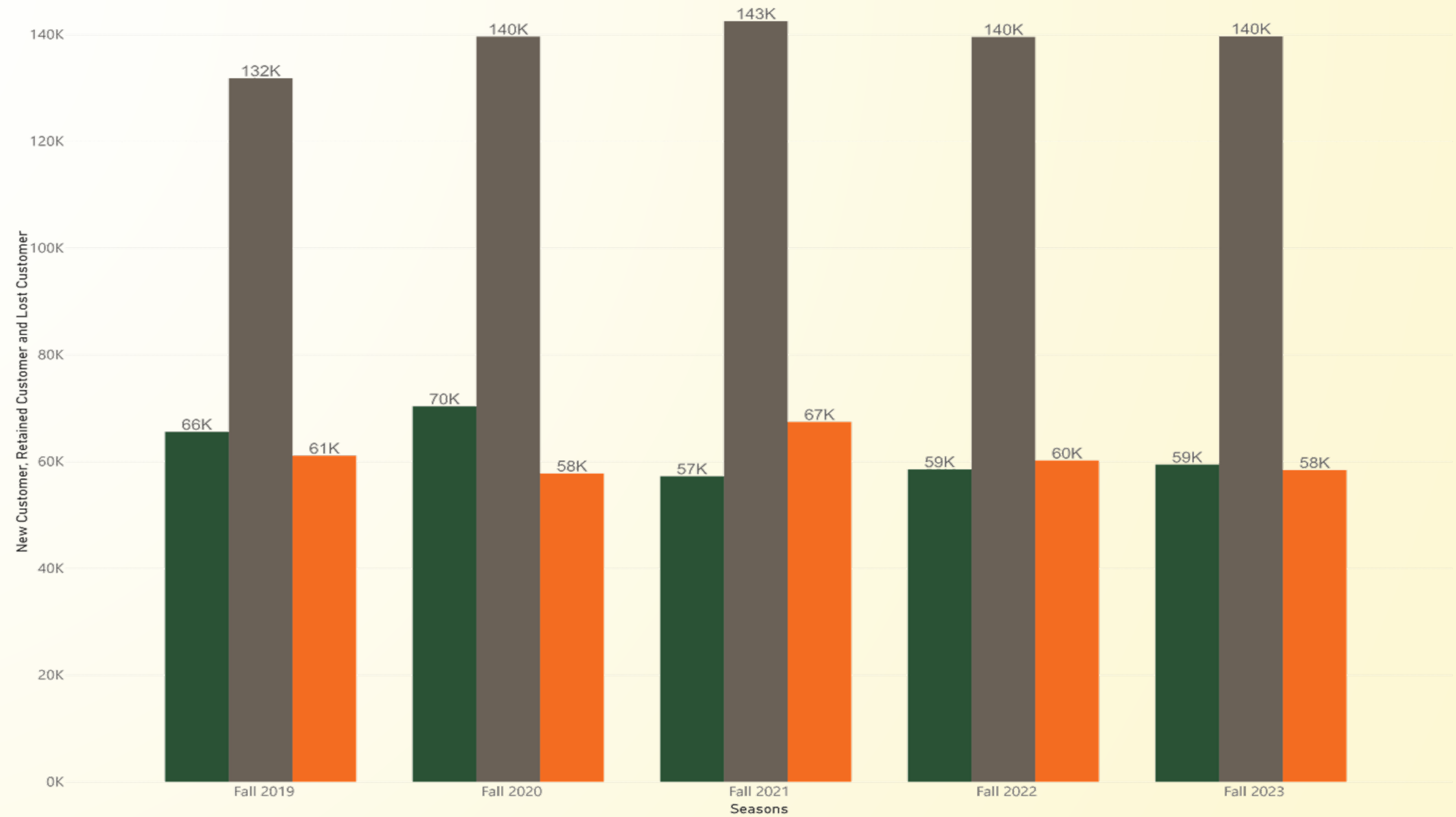


March 21, 2024



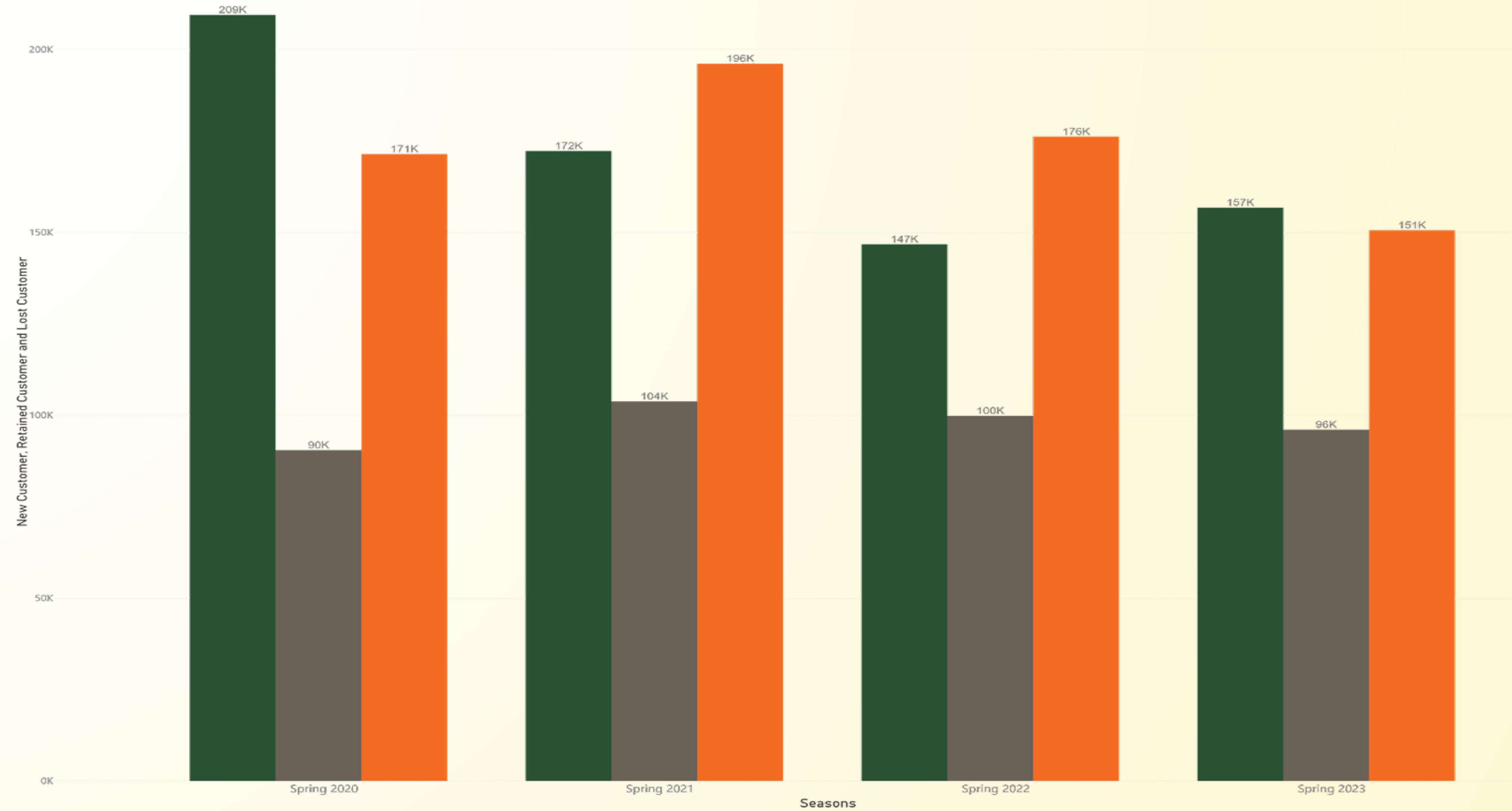
New/Retained/Lost Hunting Customer by Seasons

● New Customer ● Retained Customer ● Lost Customer

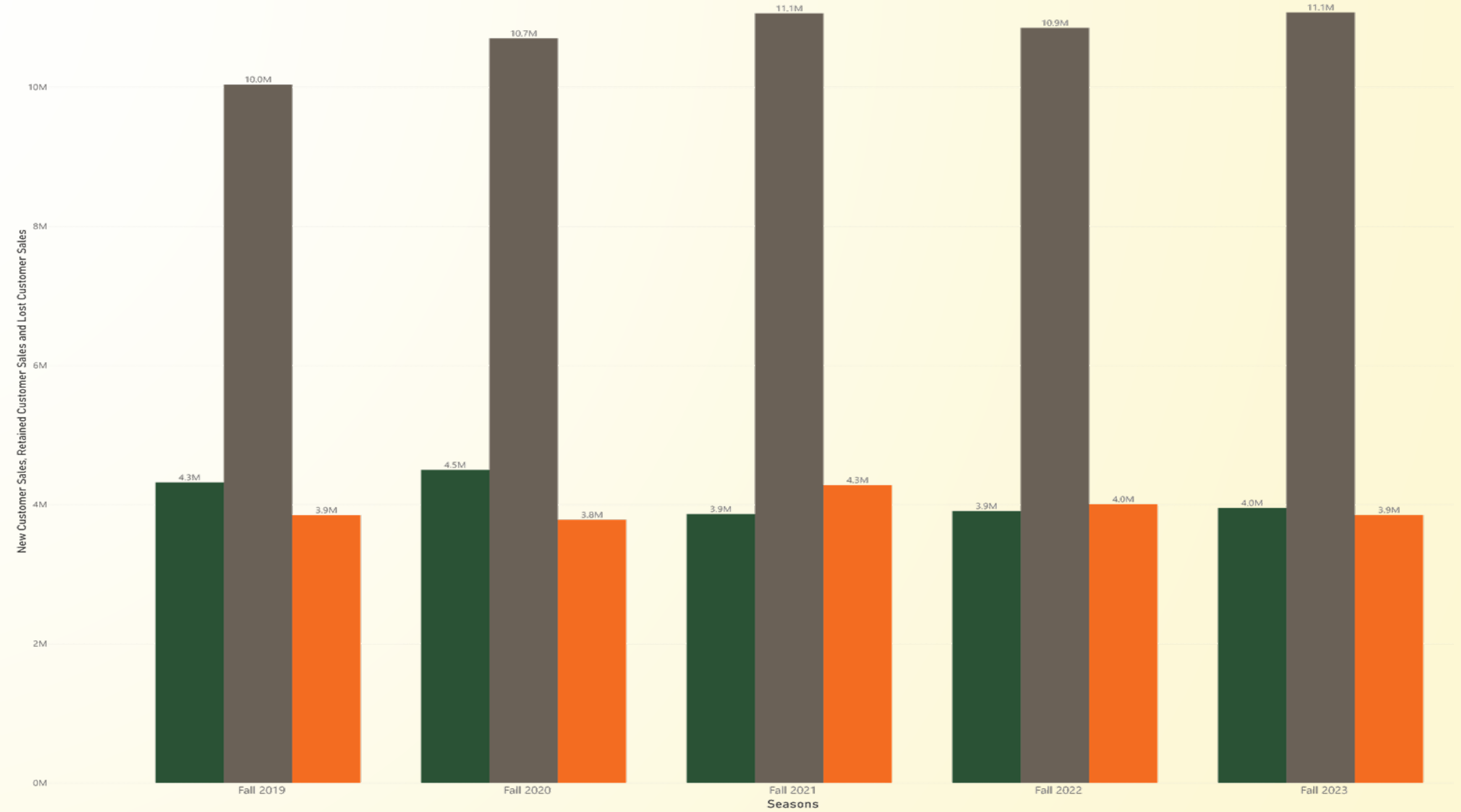


New/Retained/Lost Fishing Customer by Seasons

● New Customer ● Retained Customer ● Lost Customer

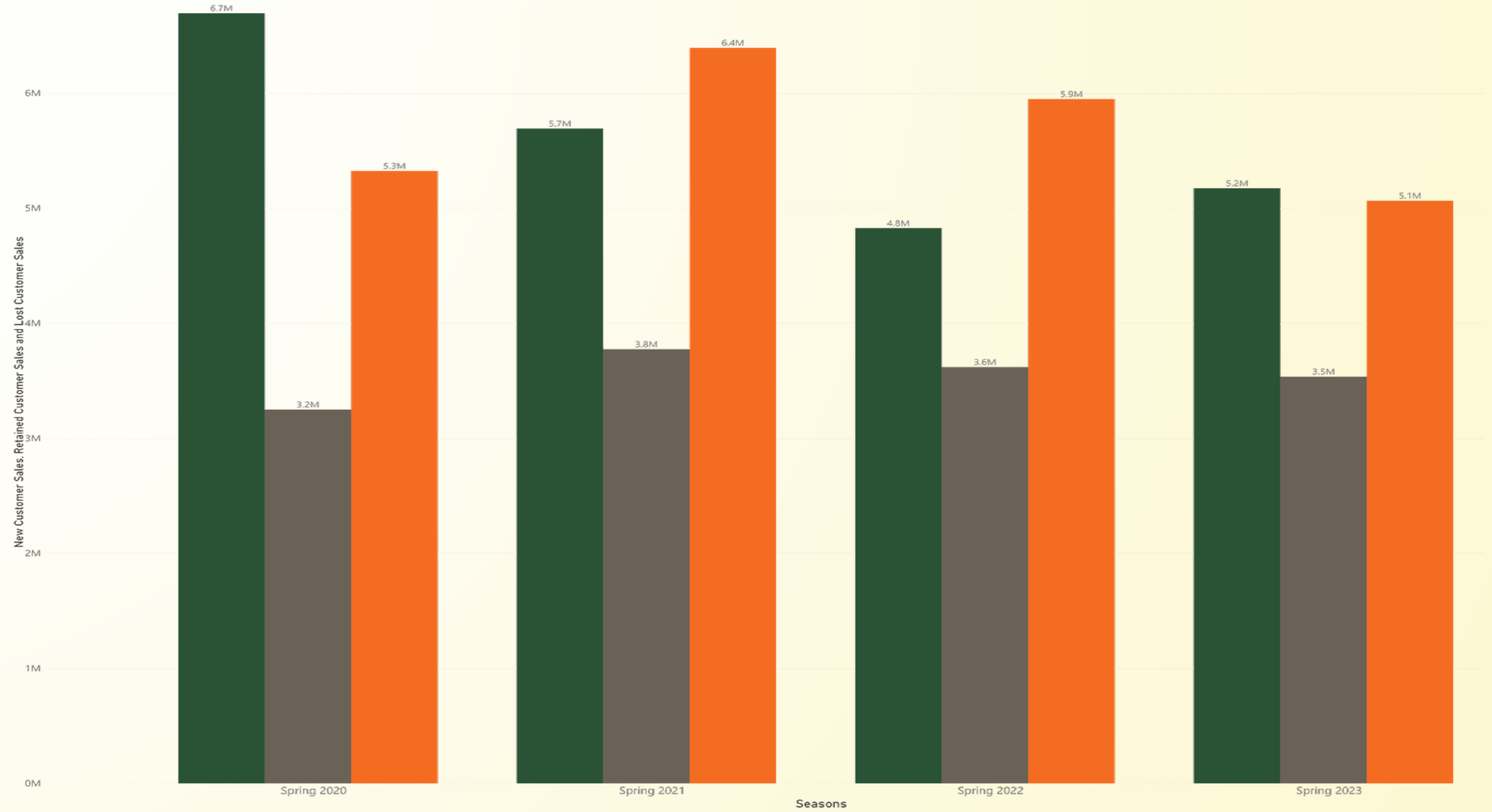


New/Retained/Lost Hunt Customer Sales by Seasons
 ● New Customer Sales ● Retained Customer Sales ● Lost Customer Sales



New/Retained/Lost Fish Customer Sales by Seasons

● New Customer Sales ● Retained Customer Sales ● Lost Customer Sales



Questions?



Seasonswise Fish Customer Analysis

Retained Customers

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
Male	75248	84527	81809	79346
Female	14515	18419	17212	15945
Age Groups				
0-16	95	78	109	131
17-29	18195	20475	18242	17711
30-39	16901	19232	18407	17739
40-49	18361	21551	20280	19410
50-59	20179	23061	22208	20621
60+	16730	19393	20617	20453
City				
Virginia Beach	3363	4294	3944	3695
Fredericksburg	2085	2322	2211	2108
Richmond	1887	2161	2067	2017
Chesapeake	1828	2345	2206	2041
Roanoke	1512	1696	1545	1493
Ethnicity				
White	66938	75761	72570	69285
Undisclosed	11524	14311	14766	14636
Black	6479	7332	6320	5707
Hispanic	2489	2812	2765	3095
Asian	1428	1700	1691	1577
Other	1351	1586	1487	1497
Native American	252	288	264	268

New Customers

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
Male	153101	128968	112008	120107
Female	55194	42210	33810	35706
Age Groups				
0-16	5573	4307	3919	4161
17-29	60346	43310	39078	43666
30-39	44180	35493	29778	31905
40-49	39548	31177	25791	27142
50-59	34009	29511	24234	24652
60+	25825	28471	23967	25248
City				

Virginia Beach	8995	5324	4697	4799
Chesapeake	5064	3291	2728	2751
Fredericksburg	4603	3511	2877	3070
Richmond	4519	3428	2941	3134
Roanoke	3568	2866	2347	2593
Ethnicity				
White	127543	104524	87790	95104
Undisclosed	46006	43314	37396	37174
Black	18415	12355	10009	11103
Hispanic	8986	5836	6268	7684
Asian	4049	2987	2484	2683
Other	3890	2795	2392	2577
Native American	592	458	428	449

Lost Customers

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
Male	132815	143822	131686	114471
Female	37537	51290	43417	35077
Age Groups				
0-16	787	494	682	635
17-29	45119	57025	43928	38211
30-39	34378	41893	36006	30235
40-49	30604	36332	32626	26958
50-59	29626	32265	30660	25789
60+	30902	28143	32294	28737
City				
Virginia Beach	5129	8064	5674	4946
Fredericksburg	3465	4366	3622	2980
Richmond	3340	4245	3522	2991
Roanoke	2963	3384	3017	2399
Chesapeake	2842	4547	3430	2893
Ethnicity				
White	110646	118720	107715	91075
Undisclosed	34983	43219	42859	37526
Black	12538	17562	13367	10622
Hispanic	6793	8663	5883	5938
Other	3451	3655	2894	2382
Asian	2602	3777	2996	2598
Native American	403	556	482	424

Seasonswise Hunt Customer Analysis

Retained Customers					
	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Male	124394	131057	133164	130280	130198
Female	6894	7973	8736	8656	8882
Age Groups					
0-16	5020	5350	5524	5128	4946
17-29	25833	27620	28336	27455	28226
30-39	20873	22499	23493	23247	23335
40-49	23302	23798	23648	22849	22525
50-59	28002	29098	28901	27927	26972
60+	28813	31256	32633	32956	33690
City					
Virginia Beach	2478	2807	2998	2932	2969
Chesapeake	2058	2220	2254	2169	2233
Mechanicsville	1713	1789	1887	1853	1826
Fredericksburg	1687	1888	1914	1859	1849
Richmond	1567	1709	1737	1719	1739
Ethnicity					
White	113771	119432	120940	117975	117718
Undisclosed	9888	11686	12742	12940	13356
Black	5890	5998	6102	5937	5786
Other	985	1014	1076	1090	1102
Hispanic	695	800	908	880	969
Asian	317	357	398	392	399
Native American	297	334	369	348	364
New Customers					
	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Male	57963	60876	49730	50944	51273
Female	7256	9091	7214	7298	7525
Age Groups					
0-16	6039	6840	5510	5556	5671
17-29	16339	18427	14347	15372	16137
30-39	11165	12731	10323	10627	10825
40-49	10043	10493	8495	8295	8272
50-59	10603	10675	8761	8707	8057
60+	11376	11184	9806	10001	10141
City					

Virginia Beach	1648	1986	1534	1557	1582
Chesapeake	1149	1254	969	984	940
Fredericksburg	998	1022	827	828	911
Richmond	968	1034	780	814	833
Roanoke	819	932	707	751	791
Ethnicity					
White	51227	54547	44004	45003	45864
Undisclosed	9909	10839	9052	9316	8877
Black	2090	2408	2024	1866	2050
Other	924	958	818	919	1003
Hispanic	813	937	770	842	666
Asian	404	433	378	391	425
Native American	198	228	196	221	218

Lost Customers

	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Male	54348	51300	58769	52614	51026
Female	6404	6177	8328	7294	7072
Age Groups					
0-16	3062	2992	3664	3192	3019
17-29	15095	13874	17073	14525	13988
30-39	10480	9858	12058	10761	10609
40-49	9408	8579	10029	8994	8659
50-59	10182	9826	10848	9543	9107
60+	12878	12658	13764	13200	13044
City					
Virginia Beach	1561	1319	1795	1600	1520
Chesapeake	1060	987	1220	1054	920
Richmond	885	826	1006	798	794
Fredericksburg	850	797	996	882	838
Roanoke	749	759	884	788	687
Ethnicity					
White	51066	45566	53039	46969	45260
Undisclosed	5742	8111	9783	8854	8900
Black	2266	1982	2304	2189	2017
Other	826	895	896	846	830
Hispanic	675	708	829	756	830
Asian	342	364	392	384	384
Native American	188	161	193	217	205