

# MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING IN VIRGINIA

July 2025–June 2026

## ***INCLUDING***

- Dove
- Woodcock
- Snipe
- Rail
- Gallinule/Moorhen
- All Waterfowl



Virginia Department of  
Wildlife Resources

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# MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

## IN VIRGINIA

July 2025–June 2026



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Stefanie K. Taillon

### Department of Wildlife Resources

Ryan J. Brown, *Executive Director*

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### Mission Statement

Conserve and manage wildlife populations and habitat for the benefit of present and future generations. Connect people to Virginia's outdoors through boating, education, fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and other wildlife-related activities. Protect people and property by promoting safe outdoor experiences and managing human-wildlife conflicts.

The Department of Wildlife Resources shall afford to all persons an equal access to Department programs and facilities without regard to race, color, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or veteran's status. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please write to: Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Attn: Executive Director's Office, 7870 Villa Park Dr, Suite 400, P.O. Box 90778, Henrico, VA 23228.

### On the Cover:

Ready for a morning hunt.

Photó by Meghan Marchetti/DWR



Meghan Marchetti/DWR

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This publication is to be used as a supplement to *Hunting and Trapping in Virginia, 2025–2026* booklet and is for general use and contains information regarding programs, policies, regulations, rules, or fees of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) current at the time of printing. Information may change after printing and any changes will supersede the information in this publication. DWR's programs, policies, regulations, rules, or fees can be found at [www.virginiawildlife.gov](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov). Specific laws are found in the Code of Virginia (<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode>) or the Wildlife Resource Department Regulation Manual (<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15>). For answers to specific questions about hunting and fishing, contact the Department of Wildlife Resources office nearest you or visit [www.virginiawildlife.gov](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov).

Caution: More restrictive regulations may apply to National Wildlife Refuges open to public hunting. For additional information on federal regulations, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, 5721 South Laburnum Ave., Richmond, VA 23231; phone (804) 771-2883, 771-2280; FAX (804) 222-8421.

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Lynda Richardson / DWR



Time goes by fast—as I write this, spring turkey season has just ended, and for the first time in a few weeks, my alarm clock was set to a somewhat reasonable time. Several new treestands that I bought at the end of last deer season still sit in boxes in my shed, despite my urgency when I bought them to get them situated before the woods leafed out, and I can already picture myself rushing to get them in place sometime in late September. And a coworker remarked to me that the year is almost halfway over, which seems impossible, but is, in fact, true.

For all of the pressures that time moving on may cause, it does come with an upside—we are already at the time of year when we begin looking forward to the fall hunting seasons. Whether your passion leads you to

the fields, woods, marshes, or mountains, Virginia is blessed to offer an all-encompassing variety of opportunities for sportsmen and women, with perhaps the only limitation being our own time to experience it all. Included in the *Hunting & Trapping in Virginia* and *Migratory Game Bird Hunting in Virginia* books you will find seasons, bag limits, and rules and regulations intended to help responsibly manage our populations and provide safe sporting opportunities for the public, but I'd also invite you to review them from the standpoint of references to the large number of experiences that are available in the Commonwealth. You can find out more about each of these pursuits on our website at [dwr.virginia.gov](http://dwr.virginia.gov) and look for places to experience them on our Explore the Wild app, which can be found either on our GoOutdoorsVA app that you may already use for licensing and tagging purposes, or on the internet at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/explore/>.

This year's season offerings will be very familiar, but with some notable adjustments due to completion of a biennial wildlife regulations review cycle and, for our migratory game bird hunters, the annual effort to establish seasons and bag limits consistent with what is permitted by the federal guidelines that oversee those species. Whether you are a first-time hunter or this fall will mark several decades in the field for you, take a moment to review information relevant to you ahead of time, so that you won't find yourself wondering the night before your hunt (or, as sometimes happens to one of my friends, scrambling to look it up when the target of your pursuit happens to be standing in front of you!).

Thanks to all of you for your support of our wildlife and our hunting opportunities here in Virginia. If you are a longtime hunter, remember this year to give a little back and take someone new into the field; you'll find the experience to quickly become among your favorite memories. And most of all, remember to set aside the time to get away from life's daily pressures and get out there and enjoy all that this state has to offer! I wish all of you a safe and rewarding season.

Ryan Brown, Executive Director, DWR

## VIRGINIA'S WILDLIFE RESTORATION PROGRAM AND YOU



Hunters and trappers create many opportunities for Virginians to enjoy exceptional hunting, trapping, and wildlife watching. In addition to directly funding these opportunities through your purchase of hunting and trapping licenses and permits, you also help the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources make wildlife-related outdoor recreation even better each time you buy a firearm, ammunition, or archery equipment. When you make these purchases, a portion of the excise tax levied on the manufacturer goes to the Federal Assistance in Wildlife Restoration program. For more than 80 years, the Wildlife Restoration Program has served as a model of conservation partnership among industry, states and territories, and the federal government, protecting and restoring wildlife and the lands they depend on for current and future generations. Virginia received \$15.3 million from this program in 2025, which also is used to fund a large portion of the Department's hunter education and outreach efforts, Wildlife Management Area habitat work, and recreational shooting opportunities.



Photo by Meghan Marchetti / DWR



## About This Guide

This high-quality guide is brought to you by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources through a partnership with Kalkomey, a trusted leader in outdoor safety education since 1995. In addition to producing this guide, Kalkomey also offers a suite of educational courses to help people enjoy the outdoors safely.

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## Headquarters

7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400  
Henrico, VA 23228  
(804) 367-1000; (804) 367-1278 V/TDD

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 90778  
Henrico, VA 23228-0778

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**Note:** The Headquarters Office is the only Department location where visitors may title/register a boat. These services are not available at the Regional Offices.

## Regional Offices

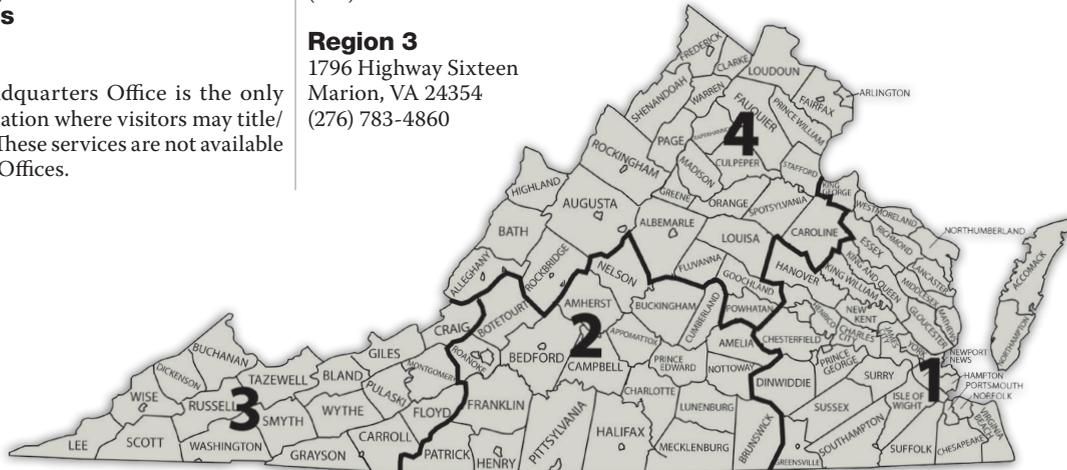
**Region 1**  
3801 John Tyler Memorial Hwy.  
Charles City, VA 23030  
(804) 829-6580

**Region 2**  
1132 Thomas Jefferson Road  
Forest, VA 24551-9223  
(434) 525-7522

**Region 3**  
1796 Highway Sixteen  
Marion, VA 24354  
(276) 783-4860

**Region 4**  
P.O. Box 996, 517 Lee Highway  
Verona, VA 24482  
(540) 248-9360

1320 Belman Road  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
(540) 899-4169



## Additional Contacts

**Report Wildlife Violations Only**  
(800) 237-5712  
Email: [wildlifecrime@viriniawildlife.gov](mailto:wildlifecrime@viriniawildlife.gov)  
Text DWRTIP plus your tip to 847411

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**Quota Hunts**  
[www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com)

**Virginia Department of Forestry**  
Headquarters: (434) 977-6555  
State Forests: (804) 492-4121  
<https://dof.virginia.gov/education-and-recreation/state-forests/recreation-and-hunting/>

**Department of Conservation and  
Recreation Reservation Center**  
[www.dcr.virginia.gov](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov)  
(800) 933-7275

**USDA Wildlife Services**  
(804) 739-7739

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### Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Guidelines for Waterfowl Hunters

A highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (HPAI) has been circulating in wild birds in North America since late 2021, causing sporadic mortality events in wild birds and mammalian scavengers, infections in domestic poultry and dairy cattle, and even several human cases in

agricultural workers. Waterfowl are the main “reservoir” for avian influenza viruses and may carry them without exhibiting clinical signs of illness. Although no infections have yet been documented in waterfowl hunters in North America, safe handling guidelines have been developed. See precautions for waterfowl hunters on page 18 and see [dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/avian-influenza/](http://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/avian-influenza/) for more information.

### New Bag Limits

- The daily bag limit for Northern pintails has increased from 1 per day to 3 per day.
- The daily bag limit for Canada geese in the Atlantic Population Zone has decreased from 2 per day to 1 per day.

## General Information

### Shooting Hours

No person shall take migratory game birds except during the hours open to shooting as prescribed. Shooting hours for all waterfowl, all seasons is one half-hour before sunrise until sunset, (except when otherwise permitted in the September Canada Goose season and the Light Goose Conservation Order season). See sunrise-sunset timetable on page 29. **Non-toxic shot is required for all waterfowl hunting and for rail and snipe hunting.**

### Possession Limits

The possession limit for migratory game birds is 3 times the daily bag limit (except for light geese and tundra swans), but no one is allowed

to have more than one daily bag limit of game in his possession while in the forests, fields, or waters of this state. Wounded birds reduced to possession shall be immediately killed and included in the daily bag limit.

### Migratory Game Birds

Migratory game birds means species of waterfowl (ducks, geese, brant, swans, and mergansers) and webless species (coots, doves, gallinules, moorhens, rails, snipe, and woodcock).

### Non-toxic Shot

Non-toxic shot approved by the Department [steel, bismuth-tin, Iron-tungsten, Iron-tungsten-nickel (HEVISHOT), copper-clad iron, tungsten-bronze, tungsten-iron-copper-nickel, tungsten matrix, tungsten-polymer, tungsten-tin-iron, tungsten-tin-bismuth,

tungsten-tin-iron-nickel, and tungsten-iron-polymer] is required for hunting all waterfowl, mergansers, coots, moorhens, gallinules, snipe, and rails. Lead shot is **not allowed** for hunting these species and **cannot be in possession** in the field while hunting these species. Shot size should be no larger than “T”.

### Blaze Color Requirements

The term “blaze colored” in reference to clothing or other items required for specific safe hunting practices shall be one of two colors: 1) traditional blaze orange or 2) bright pink or fluorescent pink which will be known as blaze pink.

When hunting any species during a firearms deer season and on youth apprentice deer hunting weekend:

- Every hunter (see exceptions below), or persons accompanying a hunter, shall wear a solid blaze colored (blaze orange or blaze pink) hat or solid blaze colored upper body clothing that is visible from 360 degrees or display at least 100 square inches of solid blaze colored material at shoulder level within body reach and visible from 360 degrees.
- Hats may have a bill or brim color or design other than solid blaze color. Hats shall not be in “camo” style, since the latter is designed to prevent visibility. A logo, which does not detract from visibility, may be worn on a blaze colored hat.
- Hunters using an enclosed ground (pop-up, chair, box, etc.) that conceals them from view shall display at least 100 square inches of solid blaze colored material, visible from 360 degrees attached to or immediately above the blind. This blaze color is in addition to any worn on the hunter’s person.

### Exceptions

- Blaze colored clothing is not required of waterfowl hunters, dove hunters, individuals participating in hunting dog field trials, and fox hunters on horseback without firearms.
- Hunters hunting with archery tackle during an open firearms deer season in areas where the discharge of firearms is prohibited by state law or local ordinance, are exempt from the blaze color requirement.
- Other than muzzleloader deer hunters, blaze colored clothing is not required of any hunters hunting during the muzzleloader deer seasons.

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## DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER WITH HIP

All hunters (whether licensed or license-exempt) who plan to hunt migratory game birds including dove, waterfowl, rail, woodcock, snipe, coots, gallinules, or moorhens, must be registered with the Virginia Harvest Information Program (HIP). **A new HIP registration is required on July 1 of each year.** Hunters are no longer given a separate HIP number, but confirmation of your HIP registration will be printed on your license, or issued separately for license-exempt hunters. Information obtained from HIP is vital for the management of migratory birds in Virginia. Register for HIP online at [www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com) or call 844-802-4193.

If you DO NOT hunt the migratory birds noted above, you DO NOT need to register for HIP.

## FEDERAL ELECTRONIC OR "E-STAMP" DUCK STAMP PROGRAM

A Federal Duck Stamp is required for all persons 16 years and older in order to hunt waterfowl. A convenient online option is available whereby hunters can obtain an E-stamp. The electronic Federal Duck Stamp is valid through June 30, 2026. Your physical stamp will be sent to your designated mailing address after March 10, 2026. Waterfowl hunters can still purchase their Federal Duck Stamp at some U.S. Post Offices.



The 2025–2026 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp artwork is an acrylic painting of a pair of spectacled eiders by Adam Grimm.

© Adam Grimm, used by USFWS with permission

To obtain the Federal Migratory Duck E-Stamp go to the Department's website ([www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com)) and click on hunting and fishing licenses or visit one of over 800 license agents throughout the Commonwealth.

## It's a lot more than just a hat ...

When you make a purchase at [VirginiaWildlife.gov/Shop](http://VirginiaWildlife.gov/Shop), you are getting a lot more than just quality gear crafted by RVA's finest makers ... You are contributing to the **Virginia Wildlife Grant**, which uses its revenue to fund programs at local non-profits, schools, and government agencies with a common mission to connect underserved communities to the outdoors. **THANK YOU!**



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(Issuance fee is included in all prices.)

Resident and nonresident licenses are valid for one year from the date of purchase except the bear license, deer/turkey license, and the Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (which are valid July 1–June 30), the apprentice hunting license (valid for 2 years from date of purchase), and lifetime licenses. Bear license and deer/turkey license that are part of a package (e.g. Sportsman’s License or combo licenses) are also valid July 1–June 30. For information on Hunter Education requirements see page 8 in the hunting and trapping digest or go to [www.virginiawildlife.gov/hunting/education](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/hunting/education). It is unlawful to alter, change, borrow, or lend a hunting license or permit. All licenses are sold not subject to exchange or refund.

For Legacy, Lifetime, and Veterans Lifetime Licenses and information please see page 8.

## Resident Hunting Licenses

LICENSES	FEE
<b>Resident Sportsman’s License</b> (age 16 and older)	\$100.00
The Sportsman’s License isn’t all inclusive but offers a hunting license, bear license, deer/turkey license, archery license, muzzleloading license, freshwater fishing license, and trout license. Other licenses/stamps may be required. Purchaser should also ensure that the bear and deer/turkey license tags are valid for intended hunting season.	
<b>Resident Junior Hunting License*</b> (age 12 to 15; optional for under 12 years old)	\$8.50
<b>Resident Youth Combination Hunting License</b> (age 12 to 15)	\$16.00
Includes hunting license, bear license, deer/turkey license, archery license, and muzzleloading license.	
<b>Resident Hunting License*</b> (age 16 and older)	
1-year license	\$23.00
2-year license	\$44.00
3-year license	\$65.00
4-year license	\$86.00
3-day license (must be three consecutive days)	\$12.00
<b>Resident County or City Hunting License*</b> (age 16 and older)	\$16.00
For county or city of residence only.	
<b>Resident Apprentice Hunting License*</b>	\$11.00
Valid for 2 years from date of purchase.	
<b>Resident 65 and Older Citizen Hunting License*</b> (age 65 and over)	\$9.00

\* Annual bear license, deer/turkey license and all applicable licenses, stamps, or permits are required in addition to this license.

## Nonresident Hunting Licenses

LICENSES	FEE
<b>Nonresident Junior Hunting License*</b> (under age 12)	\$13.00
<b>Nonresident Junior Hunting License*</b> (age 12 to 15)	\$16.00
<b>Nonresident Youth Combination Hunting License</b> (under age 16)	\$31.00
Includes hunting license, bear license, deer/turkey license, archery license, and muzzleloading license.	
<b>Nonresident Hunting License*</b> (age 16 and older)	\$111.00
<b>Nonresident 3-Day Hunt License*</b> (age 16 and older)	\$60.00
Must be 3 consecutive days	
<b>Nonresident Apprentice Hunting License*</b>	\$21.00
Valid for 2 years from date of purchase.	

### Nonresident Annual Hunting License for 70% or Greater Service-Connected Partially Disabled Veterans and Service-Connected Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans

Nonresident Veterans rated 70% or greater or as Total and Permanent Service-Connected by the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs Administrative Office may apply for a discounted annual hunting license by application only. Please note this license does not include bear, deer/turkey, archery, muzzleloading or other applicable licenses, stamp, and/or permits.

Please visit [www.virginiawildlife.gov](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov) for applications listed above, instructions, and prices. Applications may be mailed or brought into our Henrico office location.

\* Annual bear license, deer/turkey license and all applicable licenses, stamps, or permits are required in addition to this license.

## WHAT LICENSES DO I NEED?

### To Hunt Dove, Woodcock, Snipe, Gallinules, or Rails

A hunting license (unless license exempt), and a HIP registration is required. A National Forest Permit or State Forest Use Permit may also be required.

### To Hunt Waterfowl

A hunting license (unless license exempt), a HIP registration, a Federal Duck stamp (16 years and older), and a Virginia Duck Stamp (16 years and older, unless license exempt) are required. A National Forest Permit or State Forest Use Permit may also be required.

## WHERE TO OBTAIN A LICENSE

### Online

[www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com).

- **Create Your Customer Account:** The new Go Outdoors Virginia site allows you to create a unique customer account to access licenses and products that apply to you based on age and residency.
- **Existing Customers:** Log in using your date of birth and either your DWR Customer ID or your previous year’s DWR license number and license year. Select the license(s) you want, pay with your credit card and print your license if needed.

### In Person

Sold by some clerks of the Circuit Court, at license agents across Virginia, and DWR headquarters. Not sold at DWR regional offices. To find a license agent visit: <https://license.gooutdoorsvirginia.com/Licensing/LocateAgent.aspx>

### By Phone /Mobile Phone

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For Legacy, Lifetime, and Veterans Lifetime Licenses and information please see below.

## Miscellaneous Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

One or more of the following may be required in addition to a resident or nonresident hunting license.

LICENSES	FEE
All blind licenses are available for purchase online at <a href="http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com">www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com</a> or through any number of DWR license agents throughout the state. There is an option to select if a metal plate is needed (new or replacement). If purchased online or through a license agent you will receive a license showing your blind information; the decal and metal plate (if requested) will be mailed separately within 5 to 7 business days.	
<b>Stationary Blind</b>	\$23.50
When purchasing a stationary blind license you must provide GPS coordinates along with a description of where the blind is located. These coordinates are needed to help evaluate whether blinds are within the required distances, and they will help in future improvements of the blind licensing process. Coordinates must be reported as latitude and longitude in <b>decimal degree format</b> .	
<b>Floating Blind</b>	\$41.00
<b>Offshore Blind Stake</b> (limit 4 per licensee)	\$6.00
<b>Nonresident Hunting Preserve</b>	\$23.00
To hunt within the boundaries of a licensed shooting preserve, in lieu of other required licenses.	

PERMITS	FEE
<b>National Forest Permit</b>	\$4.00
To hunt and trap within National Forest. Not required of residents under the age of 16 to trap; residents who have an annual senior citizen hunting license (\$9.00).	
<b>Virginia State Forest Use Permit</b> (age 16 or older)	\$16.00
Allows hunting, trapping, fishing, mountain biking, and horse riding. No motorized vehicles on gated roads/trails (open or closed). Sold in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Forestry.	
<b>Access Permit</b>	\$4.00 per day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The permit fee is \$4 for a daily permit or \$23 for an annual permit. The access permit may be purchased online or at any license agent.</li> <li>An access permit is not required of any person, 17 years of age or older, accessing a wildlife management area or DWR fishing lake, if they have in their possession a valid hunting, freshwater fishing, or trapping license or current boat registration.</li> <li>The access permit requirement does not apply to Department-owned boat ramps or segments of the Appalachian Trail on Department-owned land.</li> <li>Daily group rates are available. For more information go to <a href="http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/access-permit/">www.virginiawildlife.gov/access-permit/</a>.</li> </ul>	

STAMPS	FEE
<b>Federal Migratory Duck E-Stamp</b>	
To take migratory waterfowl; required of persons 16 years of age and over in addition to hunting license. Valid July 1 through June 30. See page 5.	
<b>Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp</b>	\$10.00
Required of persons 16 years of age and older, unless license exempt. Valid July 1 through June 30.	

## LIFETIME LICENSES

### Legacy Lifetime

- Available to Virginia residents and non-residents under the age of 2 years upon date of application receipt to Department of Wildlife Resources.
- The legacy hunting lifetime license is valid until the individual's 12th birthday at which time they must complete an approved hunter education course or equivalent, then transfer the legacy to a regular hunting lifetime at no additional charge.

### Lifetime

- Virginia resident and non-resident lifetime licenses available.
- Virginia residents may purchase their lifetime licenses online through [www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com) provided their Virginia residency status can be verified through Virginia DMV.
- The lifetime hunting license equals the state hunting licenses; all other applicable licenses, stamps, or permits are required in addition to this license.
- Resident Junior Lifetime Hunting license is available to Virginia residents under the age of 12. This license will expire on their 12th birthday, and is transferable when they complete and submit the Youth Hunter Education Compliance form and a copy of their Hunter Safety or equivalent completed certificate.

### Senior Combo Lifetime

- Available to Virginia residents 80 years of age and older.
- All other licenses, stamps, and permits (except the bear license and deer/turkey license) are required in addition to this license.

### Resident Service-Connected Disability Veteran Lifetime

- Virginia residents who are disabled due to a service-connected disability rated 30% or greater by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs office may apply for a lifetime license to hunt.
- Discounted fees for the licenses are based upon the individual's current U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs disability rating.
- The veteran's lifetime hunting license includes small game, deer, turkey, bear, and privilege to hunt during the special archery and muzzleloading hunting seasons.

Please visit [www.virginiawildlife.gov](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov) for applications, prices, and further instructions when applying for a lifetime license.

*As a purchaser of a lifetime license, you will be entitled to hunt, fish, or trap for your lifetime, even if you move out of state. Please note that lifetime license holders may still need to purchase annual licenses for bear, deer or turkey, archery, muzzleloader, or other permits as required.*

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## Dove



## Statewide Dove Hunting Seasons

## First Segment

September 1–October 19

## Hours

September 1

- 12:00 noon until sunset.

September 2–October 19

- One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

## Second Segment

November 22–November 30

## Third Segment

December 19–January 19

## Hours for Second and Third Segments:

One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

## Bag Limit

15 per day, 45 in possession. Composed of mourning doves and white-winged doves, singly or in combination.

## Dove Hunting On Wildlife Management Areas

Dove hunting is permitted within the boundaries of the following wildlife management areas: Amelia, Big Survey, Briery Creek, Cavalier, Chickahominy, Clinch Mountain, Crooked Creek, Dick Cross, Fairstone, Featherfin, Gathright, Goshen, Hardware River, Hidden Valley, Highland, Horsepen, James River, Little North Mountain, Mattaponi, Mattaponi Bluffs, Oakley Forest, Pettigrew, C.F. Phelps, Powhatan, Rapidan, Robert W. Duncan, Stewarts Creek, Thompson, Ware Creek, and White Oak Mountain. Additional information on specific Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) can be found at [www.dwr.virginia.gov/wma/](http://www.dwr.virginia.gov/wma/), and the Managed Dove Fields section of our website [www.dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/dove-fields/](http://www.dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/dove-fields/) provides a summary of WMAs that have actively managed dove fields for this year.

## First Segment

September 1–October 19

## Hours:

September 1

- 12:00 noon until sunset.

September 2–October 19

- One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.
- Hunting permitted only on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Labor Day.

## Second Segment

November 22–November 30

## Third Segment

December 19–January 19

## Hours for Second and Third Segments:

One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.  
Hunting permitted daily.

## Bag Limit

15 per day, 45 in possession. Composed of mourning doves and white-winged doves, singly or in combination.

## Rails



## Gallinules



## Season

September 6–October 25

November 11–November 30

## Hours

One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

## Bag Limit

Clapper/King Rails — 15 counted together daily, only one of which may be a king rail. Possession limit 45, only three of which can be king rails.

Sora/Virginia — 25 counted together daily, 75 in possession.

Gallinules (including Common and Purple Gallinule) — 15 per day counted together, 45 in possession.

## Attention Rail and Snipe Hunters

In Virginia, non-toxic shot is required for hunting rails, gallinules, and snipe, in addition to all waterfowl, mergansers, and coots.

## Woodcock



### Season

November 11–November 30  
December 26–January 19

### Hours

One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

### Bag Limit

3 per day, 9 in possession.

## Snipe



### Season

September 29–November 30  
December 19–January 31

### Hours

One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

### Bag Limit

8 per day, 24 in possession.

### Attention Rail and Snipe Hunters

In Virginia, non-toxic shot is required for hunting rails, gallinules, and snipe, in addition to all waterfowl, mergansers, and coots.



## THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE OFFICER

*Protectors of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources*

The badge of the Conservation Police Officer (CPO) represents those who have dedicated their lives to the protection of wildlife and natural resources, as well as promoting a safe environment for anglers, hunters, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts. To earn it requires comprehensive training and highly specialized skills, along with a passion for the outdoors and its wildlife.

Conservation Police Officers are fully certified sworn officers through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with the authority to enforce all of the laws of Virginia. However, due to the unique nature of this profession, those who wear the badge of the CPO are unlike any other police officer.

Each CPO must be able to take on many different roles — from educator and ambassador to outdoor enthusiast; from evidence technician to boat collision reconstructionist; and from crime analyst to wildlife crime detective responsible for managing informants. CPOs also provide public safety and emergency response, sometimes during severe weather conditions, requiring that they put their lives on the line to rescue others.

CPOs frequently conduct patrols in remote areas on foot, ATV, and boat — usually without back-up and often under the cover of darkness. In these types of stressful situations, CPOs must “...maintain calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; demonstrate self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others.” (CONSERVATION POLICE OFFICER'S CODE OF ETHICS)



### CITIZEN FEEDBACK:

Your feedback, whether positive or negative, is important.

Visit [dwr.virginia.gov/ops](http://dwr.virginia.gov/ops) to see how you can file an Officer Commendation or Complaint, or express a Law Enforcement Division Praise or Dissatisfaction.

# REGULATIONS

## BY SPECIES

### September Teal



**Season: East of I-95**  
September 20–28

**Season: West of I-95**  
September 23–28

**Hours**  
One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

**Bag Limit**  
6 per day, 18 in possession.\*  
(any combination of blue-winged and green-winged teal only)

**\*Note:** Hunters are reminded to **positively identify** their ducks before shooting, since other species, such as wood ducks, may be in the area.

#### Special Requirements

In addition to a HIP registration, a federal migratory duck stamp and a Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (unless license exempt) are also required to hunt teal during this season.

### Mergansers



**Seasons**  
October 10–13  
November 19–30  
December 19–January 31

**Bag Limit**  
5 birds daily, 15 in possession. The restriction on hooded mergansers has been removed. The daily bag limit for mergansers is still 5 total, and can include any combination of hooded, red-breasted and common mergansers.

## Waterfowl Hunting On Wildlife Management Areas

For information about quota or managed hunts for waterfowl and dove on Department WMAs, see page 19 or go online at [www.virginiawildlife.gov](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov).

Waterfowl hunting on the James River WMA is permitted only on the opening day, Wednesdays, and Saturdays of the duck and goose seasons.

Waterfowl hunting on the Mattaponi Wildlife Management Area is permitted only on October 10–13, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays of the duck and goose seasons.

Game Farm Marsh WMA is open for hunting on Friday, Saturday, and Monday of the October segment of the duck season (Oct. 10, 11, and 13), and on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays during the November (Nov. 19–30), and December–January (Dec. 19–Jan. 31) segments of the duck season. Hunters may not occupy the area before 5:00 a.m. and must vacate the area by 1:00 p.m. Hunting on Friday and Saturday of the October segment (Oct. 10 and 11) and on the opening day of the November segment (Nov. 19) and the December–January segment (Dec. 19) will be by Quota hunt only—see page 20. Outside of the duck season segments listed above, waterfowl hunting on Game Farm Marsh is open with no restrictions on hunt days, times, or hunter numbers.

Waterfowl hunting on and within 500 yards of the Ware Creek WMA is permitted (except portions of Philbates Creek) on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays of the duck and

goose seasons. Hunters may not occupy their hunting location until 5 a.m. and hunting must end by 1 p.m.

Waterfowl hunting at Doe Creek WMA is open to walk-in hunting on Saturdays only for half days during the last two segments of the general waterfowl season. Hunters may hunt until 1:00 p.m. and must have all decoys up and be away from the impoundments by 2:00 p.m. The area is open on Sundays for scouting and wildlife viewing.

Waterfowl hunting on the Robert W. Duncan WMA is permitted only on October 10–13, on

Youth/Veteran Days (October 25, 2025 & February 7, 2026), and on Thursdays and Sundays of the duck and goose seasons.

Waterfowl hunting on Mattaponi Bluffs WMA is permitted only on October 10–13, at any time during the multi-species quota hunt period by the selected individuals and guests, on Youth/Veteran Days (October 25, 2025 & February 7, 2026), and on Wednesdays and Saturdays after the quota hunt period (January 6–31, 2026).

For information about waterfowl hunting on other WMAs see our website at [www.virginiawildlife.gov/wma](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/wma).



Meghan Marchetti/DWR

# Ducks



## Seasons

October 10–13 (Black duck closed)  
 November 19–30  
 December 19–January 31  
 October 25 & February 7 - Youth and Veterans Waterfowl Hunting Days

## Bag Limit

**Daily Bag Limit:** 6 ducks of any species except for the following restrictions: can include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks (except closed Oct. 10–13), scaup: 1/day for 40 days (October 10–13, November 19–30, December 19–January 11), and 2/day for 20 days (January 12–31), 2 redheads, 2 canvasback, 3 pintails, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck, 4 total sea ducks (no more than 3 scoters, 3 eiders [only 1 hen], 3 long-tailed ducks).

## Hours

One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

**Closed season on harlequin ducks.**

The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit. No person may take more than one daily bag limit in any one day.

**Change in area where crippled waterfowl can be pursued while under power.** There is no longer a Special Sea Duck Season, and the former “Special Sea Duck Season Zone” has been changed this year. We have renamed this zone as the new “Special Sea Duck Area,” and have changed the boundaries to eliminate the 800-yard buffer area that was in the previous zone. The boundary of this new Special Sea Duck Area is defined as “**The ocean waters of Virginia, the tidal waters of Northampton and Accomack counties up to the first highway bridge, and the Chesapeake Bay and each of its tributaries up to the first highway bridge. Back Bay and its tributaries are not included in the special sea duck hunting area.**” This change allows hunters to pursue **any crippled waterfowl species**, not just sea ducks, while under power in this new Special Sea Duck Area. This change has been made as a conservation measure to help recover any crippled waterfowl, and to better clarify where retrieving crippled waterfowl under power is legal.

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# YOUTH & VETERANS WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

**October 25, 2025 and February 7, 2026**

**Statewide.** Open to Youth 15 years of age and under, Military 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). Participants may harvest the allowed daily bag limit of ducks (see page 13), and other waterfowl, including Atlantic brant, coots, mergansers, gallinules, moorhens, light geese, 1 Canada goose in the Atlantic Population Zone and 5 Canada geese in the Resident Population Zone, and 1 tundra swan (if in possession of a tundra swan permit) on the designated days. Resident youth aged 12–15, nonresident youth age 15 or under, and Veterans need a valid Virginia hunting license, unless license exempt. All hunters participating must be Virginia HIP registered ([www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com)). All youth must be accompanied and directly supervised by an adult at least 18 years of age or older who has a valid Virginia hunting license (unless license exempt). The accompanying adult cannot hunt ducks (unless they are a Veteran), but may hunt for those species for which there is an open season.

Meghan Marchetti/DWR

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### Coots



#### Seasons

October 10–13  
November 19–30  
December 19–January 31

#### Bag Limit

15 per day, 45 in possession.

### Canada Goose

(Includes White-fronted Geese)



#### Atlantic Population Zone (AP) Seasons

December 24–31  
January 10–31

#### Resident Population Zone (RP) Seasons

November 19–30  
December 19–February 22

#### Bag Limit

1 goose per day (3 in possession).

#### Bag Limit

5 geese per day (15 in possession).

#### Shooting Hours - All Zones

One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

**Note:** All seasons also include White-fronted geese along with Canada geese.

#### Canada Goose Zones

**NOTE:** The Southern James Bay Population Zone (SJBZ) has been eliminated, leaving only two Canada Goose hunt zones in Virginia. The northern portion of the former SJBZ (north of I-64) is now included in the Atlantic Population Zone, and the southern portion of the former SJBZ (south of I-64) is included in the Resident Population Zone. Therefore, the hunting regulations for these former SJBZ areas have changed, so be sure to check the current regulations in the area you are hunting.

#### Atlantic Population (AP) Hunt Zone

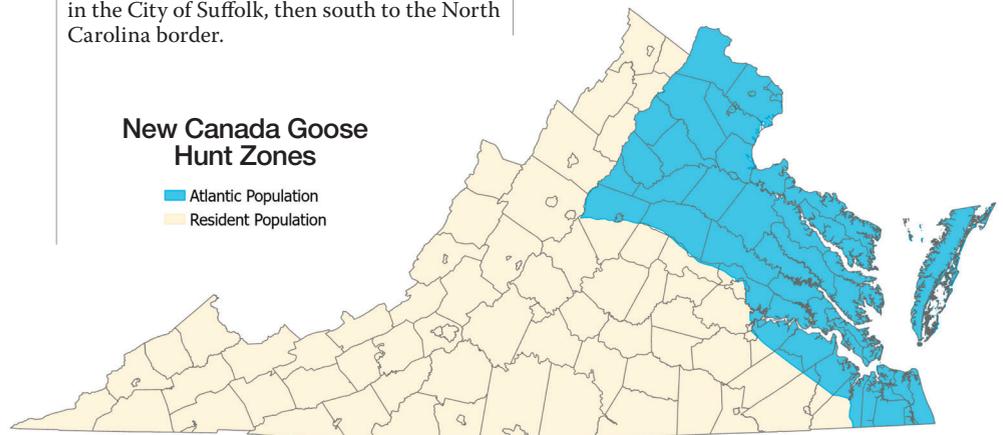
The area east of the “Blue Ridge” (Loudoun County-Clarke County border) at the West Virginia-Virginia border, south to Interstate 64 (the Blue Ridge line follows county borders along the western edge of Loudoun-Fauquier-Rappahannock-Madison-Greene-Albemarle and into Nelson counties), then east along 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.

#### New Canada Goose Hunt Zones

- Atlantic Population
- Resident Population



# September Canada Goose

## Season

September 1–25

## Hunt Zone

Statewide.

## Hours: East of I-95

September 1–19

- One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

September 20–25

- One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

## Hours: West of I-95

September 1–22

- One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

September 23–25

- One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

## Bag Limit

10 per day, 30 in possession.

September Canada goose hunting is not permitted within the boundaries of the Amelia and Dick Cross Wildlife Management Areas.

## Special Requirements

In addition to a HIP registration, a federal migratory duck stamp and a Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (unless license exempt) are also required to hunt geese during this season.

# Light Goose

(Greater and Lesser Snow Geese and Ross's Geese)



## Regular Season

October 18–January 31: statewide

## Bag Limit

25 per day, no possession limit.

## Shooting Hours

One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

## Light Goose Conservation Order

(Conservation Order Zone - see new zone boundary below)

February 1, 2026–April 5, 2026

## Bag Limit

No daily or possession limit.

**Special Hunting Methods:** Electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, and extended shooting hours are allowed.

**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

**Registration Required.** All hunters who plan to participate in the Light Goose Conservation Order **must register** either online ([www.virginiawildlife.gov/lightgoose](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/lightgoose)) or by

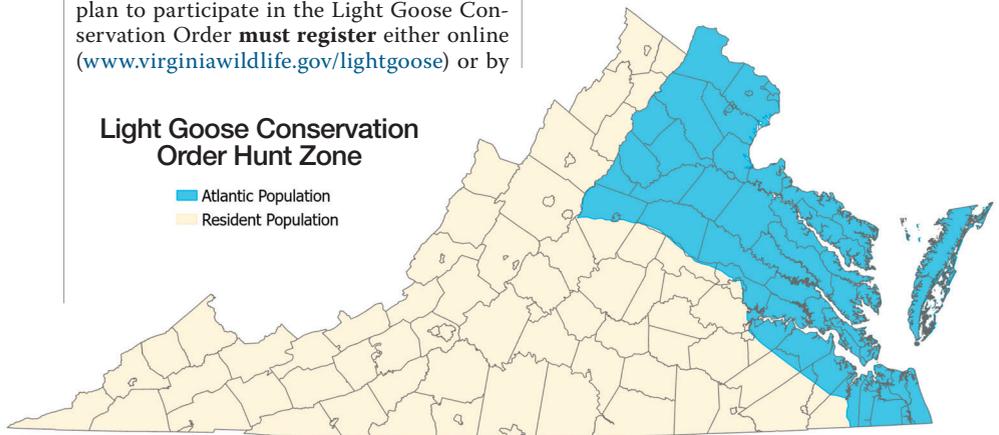
phone (866-721-6911), and obtain a Hunter Activity Report prior to hunting. **The Hunter Activity Report must be submitted to the Department within two weeks following the close of the season**, either through the agency website (above) or by mail (Light Goose Conservation Order, 3801 John Tyler Memorial Highway, Charles City, VA 23030). Registration will begin December 4, 2025.

## Conservation Order Zone

**NOTE:** Same as the new AP Canada Goose Zone identified in blue on the map below — the area east of 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.

## Light Goose Conservation Order Hunt Zone

- Atlantic Population
- Resident Population



# REGULATIONS

## BY SPECIES

### Atlantic Brant



**Seasons**  
December 24–31  
January 10–31

**Bag Limit**  
1 per day, 3 in possession.

### Tundra Swan



**Seasons**  
November 15–January 31

**Bag Limit**  
1 per permittee per season.

**Tundra Swan Hunt Area**  
Hunting will be permitted in all counties and portions of counties lying east of I-95 and south of the Prince William/Stafford County line in Chopawamsic Creek at Quantico Marine Corps Base.

**Tundra Swan Permit**  
Before any person may hunt tundra swans in Virginia, he or she must first apply for and receive a tundra swan hunt permit. Permits are issued through a special drawing. The deadline to submit applications for this drawing is September 26, 2025. The Department will issue no more than 475 swan hunting permits. Permit

holders must also possess a valid Virginia hunting license before hunting. **A hunter may only apply for a swan permit online through the Department's website at [www.gooutdoors-virginia.com](http://www.gooutdoors-virginia.com).**

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 permit holder while swan hunting. Immediately at the time and place of kill successful permittees must cancel their swan hunting permit by permanently recording the month and day of kill and by attaching the permit to the swan as instructed. The DWR is required to obtain hunter participation and harvest information to offer this tundra swan hunting season. **Hunters are required to complete the tundra swan hunt questionnaire (survey) and submit their results to the Department by February 15, 2026.** Those who fail to submit their results are ineligible for future drawings.

## SPORTSMEN: BOAT SMART, WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET

Wearing a life jacket may save your life. It is estimated that 80 percent of boating-related drownings could have been prevented had the victim been wearing a life jacket.

The newest type of life jacket, the manual or automatic inflatable, is lightweight and comfortable. They are versatile enough to be worn at any time of the year, and fit easily over a hunting coat or sweater.

### Safety Tips

- Check the weather before leaving.
- Wear a life jacket or float coat.
- Remain seated and keep weight evenly distributed.
- Anchor from the bow, never from the stern.
- Properly load your boat.
- Stay with your boat if it should capsize.
- Dress for the water temperature—guard against hypothermia.
- Leave the alcohol at home.

For more information, contact Boating Education at: [BoatSafety@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:BoatSafety@dwr.virginia.gov).



Virginia

## WATERFOWL INFORMATION

The web is a wonderful tool for waterfowlers. Information on season dates and bag limits can be found along with information on waterfowl population status, habitat conditions, as well as current waterfowl research being conducted in Virginia. Sites we recommend include:

**Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Waterfowl Homepage**  
[www.virginiawildlife.gov/wildlife/waterfowl](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/wildlife/waterfowl)

**USFWS and Flyway Council website**  
[www.flyways.us](http://www.flyways.us)

**Federal Register Documents**  
[www.fws.gov/policy/](http://www.fws.gov/policy/)

# What Terms Do I Need to Understand?

Migratory birds are birds protected by federal law as a result of treaties signed with other countries. Protected migratory birds are listed in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 10.13. This list includes almost all birds found in the United States with the exception of the house sparrow, feral pigeon (commonly called rock dove), European starling, Eurasian collared-dove, mute swan, and upland game birds (which are protected by state laws).

All migratory birds are protected. However, a subset of migratory birds classified as migratory game birds may be hunted in accordance with state and federal regulations. The list of migratory game birds includes species of ducks, geese (including brant), swans, mergansers, doves, rails, coots, gallinules and moorhens, woodcock, and snipe.

**Daily bag limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds of a single species or combination (aggregate) of species permitted to be taken by one person in any one day during the open season in any one specified geographic area for which a daily bag limit is prescribed.

**Aggregate daily bag limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds permitted to be taken by one person in any one day during the open season when such person hunts in more than one specified geographic area and/or for more than one species for which a combined daily bag limit is prescribed. The aggregate daily bag limit is equal to, but shall

not exceed, the largest daily bag limit prescribed for any one species or for any one specified geographic area in which taking occurs.

**Possession limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds of a single species or a combination of species permitted to be possessed by any one person when lawfully taken in the United States in any one specified geographic area for which a possession limit is prescribed.

**Aggregate possession limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds of a single species or combination of species taken in the United States permitted to be possessed by any one person when taking and possession occurs in more than one specified geographic area for which a possession limit is prescribed. The aggregate possession limit is equal to, but shall not exceed, the largest possession limit prescribed for any one of the species or specified geographic areas in which taking and possession occurs.

**Personal abode** means one's principal or ordinary home or dwelling place, as distinguished from one's temporary or transient place of abode or dwelling such as a hunting club, or any club house, cabin, tent or trailer house used as a hunting club, or any hotel, motel, or rooming house used during a hunting, pleasure, or business trip.

**Migratory bird preservation facility** means:

1. Any person who, at their residence or place of business and for hire or other consideration; or
2. Any taxidermist, cold-storage facility or locker plant which, for hire or other consideration; or
3. Any hunting club which, in the normal course of operations, receives, possesses, or has in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person for purposes of picking, cleaning, freezing, processing, storage, or shipment.

**Normal agricultural planting, harvesting, or post-harvest manipulation** means a planting or harvesting undertaken for the purpose of producing and gathering a crop, or manipulation after such harvest and removal of grain. In Virginia, this also applies to food plots that are planted for the purpose of hunting migratory game birds. Relevant factors include recommended planting dates, proper seed distribution, seed bed preparation, application rate, and seed viability. These practices are to be conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative Extension

Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For official recommendations visit [https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/424/424-100/424-100\\_pdf.pdf](https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/424/424-100/424-100_pdf.pdf).

- Official recommendations state the guidelines for planting wheat in Virginia are one week before to one week after the first killing frost, October 15–November 15 in eastern Virginia; October 1–November 1 in the Piedmont; October 1–October 25 west of the Blue Ridge. Plant 120–150 lbs. per acre (36 seeds per sq. ft. or 20 seeds per drill ft. in 7" rows). Plant in 6–8" rows or solid seeded.
- Wheat planted or scattered outside of these guidelines does not satisfy the definition of **normal agricultural planting**. Therefore, it is **unlawful** to hunt migratory game birds over such areas.

**Normal agricultural operation** means a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation, or agricultural practice that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of state Extension Specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**Normal soil stabilization practice** means a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation conducted in accordance with official recommendations of state Extension Specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for agricultural soil erosion control.

**Baited area** means any area on which salt, grain, or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, if that salt, grain, or other feed could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over areas where hunters are attempting to take them. Any such area will remain a baited area for ten days following the complete removal of all such salt, grain, or other feed.

**Baiting** means the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them.

**Manipulation** means the alteration of natural vegetation or agricultural crops by activities that include but are not limited to mowing, shredding, dicing, rolling, chopping, trampling, flattening, burning, or herbicide treatments. The term manipulation does not include the distributing or scattering of grain, seed, or other feed after removal from or storage on the field where grown.

**Natural vegetation** means any non-agricultural, native, or naturalized plant species that grows at a site in response to planting or from existing seeds or other propagules. The term natural vegetation does not include planted millet. However, planted millet that grows on its own in subsequent years after the year of planting is considered natural vegetation.



©Spike Knuth

### Waterfowl Hunting Safety Tips

Cold water combined with foul weather can create hazardous conditions for waterfowl hunters. Because these conditions can be dangerous, some safety tips are provided (below) so hunters can be better prepared before heading out on the water.

#### Weather

To stay warm and avoid the risks of hypothermia or cold water immersion:

- Control wind and wetness by using waterproof jackets, waders, and boots.
- Wear a belt around your waders to prevent water from entering.
- Wear wool clothing or clothing that stays warm when wet, like some fleece products. Bring extras in a waterproof bag.
- Wear a hat. Most warmth escapes through your head.
- Bring a variety of high energy/sugar content food bars for quick energy and calories.
- Your extremities are very important. It's no fun to hunt with cold feet, hands, or head. Bring waterproof gloves and footwear, and chemical hand and foot warmers that you can put inside your gloves or boots.
- If you fall in — go home! Or, take a break and change into warm, dry clothes.

#### Duck Boat Safety

When planning a hunt, check to be sure the boat is in good working condition and includes enough gas for the trip, all necessary safety gear, and boat lights and flashlights in good working order. Hunters must follow all boating rules, and everyone on board should wear a properly fitted U.S.C.G. approved life jacket, vest, or flotation coat anytime while on the water. Cell phones and radios are important communication devices and should be properly charged and kept in a waterproof bag. A GPS unit is helpful in finding your way but don't depend solely on it as a means of navigation, as reception varies and units can fail.

- Check the weather before leaving.
- Choose a route close to shore and avoid crossing large expanses of open water, especially in bad weather.
- Anchor from the bow, never from the stern.
- Don't overload your boat. Check the capacity plate and keep the amount of gear, dogs, and people within your weight limits. Also, be sure the load is properly balanced and try to keep movements and weight shifts (dogs and people) to a minimum. Overloading, sudden shifts in weight, or excessive weather conditions are the most common causes of boats capsizing or swamping.
- If your boat does capsize or swamp, stay with it. Even when filled with water it will

provide some floatation and is easier to see by potential rescuers.

- Firearms should be unloaded and properly secured in a case while being transported in a boat. Floating gun cases earn their keep if one happens to go overboard.
- Be extra careful when shooting from a boat. Small boats often have little room to swing a shotgun, so be aware of where dogs and other partners are, and only shoot when all is clear. Never stand in an unsecured boat to shoot.
- Leave a float plan with a responsible person that includes the names of all persons in your party, type and registration number of your boat, time and location of your hunt, and when you expect to return.

Waterfowl hunting can be safer and more enjoyable if you plan ahead and make safe practices part of your water-based hunt. Safety is always the first and most important measure of a successful hunt.

*Duck boat safety tips contributed by the Virginia Waterfowlers Association*

[www.vawfa.org](http://www.vawfa.org)

#### Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Guidelines for Waterfowl Hunters

- Do not handle, harvest, or consume birds that appear sick. Be aware that some birds may appear healthy and still be infected with HPAI.



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- Always wear rubber or disposable gloves when handling, field dressing and butchering game birds. Consider wearing facial protection if splashes are expected.
- Do not eat, drink, or put anything in your mouth while handling game birds.
- If possible, dress game birds in the field and thoroughly bury any unused carcass parts near harvest site. Note that a wing must be retained to ID species.
- If unable to dress birds in the field, do so in a well-ventilated area and bury unused parts or double-bag and dispose of them in a secure trash can or landfill.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after handling birds.
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces and equipment thoroughly after transporting or butchering birds.
- Cook game meat thoroughly—an internal temperature of 165° kills influenza viruses and other disease-causing organisms.
- Change clothes and wash your hands before handling any birds you have at home.
- If you develop any flu-like symptoms after handling waterfowl (fever, body aches, red or itchy eyes, etc.), contact your state or local health department.

## 2025–2026 Waterfowl Quota Hunts

### General Information/Application

Quota hunts provide hunters opportunities to access public lands that otherwise may be closed to hunting. Hunters can participate in random drawings to hunt waterfowl, white-tailed deer, black bear, quail, rabbits and turkeys. To participate, hunters must apply pre-season and submit a non-refundable application fee. Applicants should be aware there is no guarantee that you will be selected for the hunt or hunt dates. Your application fee(s) will not be returned.

Your application fee(s) are used to process the application, conduct computer random hunter selections and post online hunter notifications. Application fees are \$7.50 for each hunt.

**A hunter may only apply through the Department's website at [www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com).** Applicants will be notified of their status via email. Successful applicants can find their hunt materials online by logging into their GoOutdoorsVirginia account and navigating to the Quota Hunts landing page. Hunters will not receive hunt materials by mail.

### Quota Hunts Having Early Application Deadlines

- Princess Anne WMA Early Season Waterfowl Hunt #112 — Applications must be received on or before July 25, 2025.

- Hog Island WMA September Goose and Teal Hunt #114 — Applications must be received on or before July 25, 2025.

### Waterfowl

#### Hog Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) - #101

Hunt waterfowl at Hog Island WMA in Surry County. For every hunt day, eight hunters will be randomly selected and assigned a hunting zone. Hunting parties may hunt anywhere within their randomly assigned zone and each hunter may bring three guests. Blinds and boats are no longer provided. Dogs are allowed and recommended. Walking in can be up to 1.5 miles, one way. There will be no stand-by hunter draws for “no show” vacancies this year. Beginning September 1, scouting is allowed on Sundays only.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025.

#### Princess Anne WMA Waterfowl Hunts - #102

Hunt waterfowl on managed impoundments at Princess Anne WMA in Virginia Beach. Hunt includes half day hunting each Saturday during the general duck season. Four hunters will be randomly selected for each day of hunting and selected hunters are allowed three guests. Hunter check-in is from 4:15–4:45 a.m. Stand-by drawings will be held promptly at 4:45 to replace “no show” vacancies; individuals with a current “unsuccessful draw notification letter”



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# WATERFOWL QUOTA HUNTS

will be given priority. Draw notification letters must be shown at the time of check-in. Dogs are allowed and recommended. All hunters are required to stop hunting at 1:00 p.m. and have all decoys retrieved and be away from the impoundments by 2:00 p.m. Note: No decoys or blinds provided.

- **Applications due:** August 29, 2025.

## Dutch Gap Conservation Area Waterfowl Hunts - #103

Hunt waterfowl on the Dutch Gap Conservation Area in Chesterfield County. Hunt days are Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday during the last two segments of the general duck season. The last day of the season will be a single-day hunt. Three hunters will be randomly selected for each set of hunting dates and selected hunters may bring two guests. Hunting is from floating blinds at designated blind stakes only.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025.

## Tundra Swan Permit - #104

Tundra Swan hunting is by permit only. Each permit holder will be authorized to take one tundra swan. The hunt area is limited to east of U.S. Route I-95 and south of Chopawamsic Creek on the Prince William / Stafford County line. Hunters who did not return the previous year's survey will be ineligible to be awarded this year's permit.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025.

## Lake Orange Waterfowl Hunts - #105

Hunt waterfowl on Lake Orange in Orange County. Hunt days are Wednesday and Saturday during the last two segments of the general duck season. One hunter will be randomly selected for each hunt date and selected hunters may bring two guests. Hunting will only be allowed on a designated section(s) of Lake Orange. Only floating blinds, anchored within 50 feet of shore, or portable blinds along the designated shoreline will be allowed.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025.

## Dick Cross WMA Waterfowl Hunts - #106

Hunt waterfowl on designated impoundments at Dick Cross WMA in Mecklenburg County. Hunt days are every Wednesday during the last two segments of the general duck season. Two hunters will be randomly selected for each hunt date and selected hunters may bring two guests. Hunts begin one half hour before sunrise and end at 3:00 p.m. Hunters must provide decoys. Dogs are allowed. There are no boat landings or direct vehicular access provided. Small boats or canoes may be used but must be transported on foot.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025.

## Princess Anne WMA Floating Blind Stake Waterfowl Hunts - #107

Hunt waterfowl for half days on the waters of Back Bay in Virginia Beach on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday and opening day during the last two segments of the general duck season. There are 43 floating blind stakes available for hunting. Each hunter will be randomly assigned a number prior to the season for each day that they apply. Each hunt day, hunters present will select their blind based on their assigned number for that day, starting with the lowest number until all the hunters present have selected or all stakes have been drawn. Drawings start promptly at 5:00 a.m. Hunters who are late or without a draw number can participate in a standby drawing that will take place immediately after the quota drawing. Selected hunters may bring as many guests as their boat can legally hold as determined by Coast Guard capacity placard. Limited water access to the area requires that all hunting parties have a boat/ float blind and float blind license. All hunters are required to stop hunting at 1:00 p.m. and have all decoys retrieved and be away from the blind stakes by 2:00 p.m. It is recommended that each hunting party visit the hunting area prior to the season to locate boat access, blind stakes, and scout the area in general. You must be familiar with the area to locate the blind stakes before shooting time! See Princess Anne WMA web page for maps.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025.
- Christmas Day and New Year's Day will be first-come, first-served. No check-in required on those dates.

## Princess Anne WMA Early Season Floating Blind Stake Waterfowl Hunt - #112

Hunt September Canada geese/teal (during the September teal season) and waterfowl (during the October waterfowl season) on the waters of Back Bay in Virginia Beach on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, and opening day. Resident goose season prior to the teal season is open on a first-come, first-served basis. Quota hunting begins with the opening of teal season. There are 43 floating blind stakes available for hunting. Each hunter will be randomly assigned a number prior to the season for each day that they apply. Each hunt day, hunters present will select their blind based on their assigned number for that day, starting with the lowest number until all the hunters present have selected or all stakes have been drawn. Drawings start promptly at 5:00 a.m. Hunters who are late or without a draw number can participate in a standby drawing that will take place immediately after the quota drawing. Selected hunters may bring as many guests as their boat can legally hold as determined by Coast Guard capacity placard. Limited water access to the area requires that all hunting parties have a boat/ float blind and float blind license. All hunters are required to stop hunting at 1:00 p.m. and have all decoys retrieved and be away from the blind stakes by 2:00 p.m. It is recommended that each hunting party visit the hunting area prior to the season to locate boat access, blind stakes, and scout the area in general. You must be familiar with the area to locate the blind stakes before shooting time. See the Princess Anne WMA web page for maps.

- **Applications due:** July 25, 2025.

## Game Farm Marsh (WMA) - #113

Hunting at Game Farm Marsh WMA in New Kent County is by Quota Hunt drawing on the first two dates of the October segment and the opening day of the November and December segments. Seven parties will be randomly selected to hunt the area on these days. Each successful applicant will be allowed two guests. There is no standby for this hunt.

Hunt locations will be on a first-come, first-served basis and hunting parties are asked to maintain a respectful distance from each other. A limited number of DWR-licensed stationary blinds are available on the area. Hunters may use these blinds. Hunters may also hunt from floating blinds or while standing on Game Farm Marsh property. Hunting out of floating blinds is not permitted within 500 yards of any privately licensed stationary blinds. Hunters may not occupy the area before 5:00 a.m. and must vacate the area by 1:00 p.m. No other equipment is provided. You will need a boat to access the WMA – access is not allowed through the adjacent New Kent Forestry Center. Dogs are allowed and recommended.

For the remainder of the October, November, and December/January segments of the duck season, Game Farm Marsh WMA is open for hunting on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays,



Meaghan Marchetti/DWR

with no restrictions on the number of hunters. Hunters may not occupy the area before 5:00 a.m. and must vacate the area by 1:00 p.m.

- **Applications Due:** August 29, 2025.

### Hog Island WMA September Goose and Teal Hunt - #114

Hunt geese and/or teal at Hog Island WMA in Surry County. Hunt days include September 1 and each Saturday in the month. For every hunt day, five hunters will be randomly selected, and each may bring three guests. Dogs are allowed and recommended. There will be no stand-by hunter draws for “no show” vacancies this year.

- **Applications due:** July 25, 2025

### Hog Island WMA Waterfowl Youth/Apprentice Hunt - #115

This hunt allows youth and apprentice hunters exclusive access to pursue waterfowl at Hog Island WMA in Surry County. For both hunt days, eight youth (15 years of age or younger) or licensed apprentice hunters will be randomly selected and assigned a hunting zone. Hunting parties may hunt anywhere within their randomly assigned zone. At least one licensed hunter (18 years of age or older) must attend as a guest mentor – up to two mentors are allowed. Only the youth or licensed apprentice hunter may harvest. Blinds and boats are no longer provided. Individuals aged 16 years and older must present a government-issued ID to Dominion security the day of the hunt. Dogs are allowed and recommended. Walking in can be up to 1.5 miles, one. There will be no stand-by hunter draws for “no show” vacancies this year. Beginning September 1, scouting is allowed on Sundays only.

- **Applications due:** September 26, 2025

**The Department of Wildlife Resources reserves the right to manage hunter access and hunter use on Department-owned and controlled lands as deemed appropriate.**

## 2025–2026 Managed Hunts

### Note to Managed Hunt Applicants

Managed Hunts are generally by on-site random drawings or by application through the local Resource Office. Hunting opportunities are provided on various Department Wildlife Management Areas and National Wildlife Refuges.

### Managed Waterfowl Hunts

#### Princess Anne WMA Impoundments September Canada Goose/Teal Hunts

This is an opportunity to hunt September Canada geese/teal on the Princess Anne WMA in Virginia Beach. The area’s impoundment system

will be open on a first-come, first-served basis for half-day hunting on Saturdays only. Due to ongoing habitat management, the impoundments might not be flooded at this time. All hunters are required to stop hunting at 1:00 p.m. and have all decoys retrieved and be away from the impoundments by 2:00 p.m. Hunters are required to park in the designated parking areas off Munden Road. There are no blinds or decoys provided for these hunts.

- Hunters may not occupy area before 5:00 a.m.

#### Princess Anne WMA Light Goose Conservation Order Season (Snow and Ross’ Geese)

This is an opportunity for hunters to hunt snow geese (light geese) at the Princess Anne WMA after the general duck season. The Princess Anne float blind stakes and impoundments at Back Bay are available for snow goose hunting after the general duck season. These hunts will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Daily hunting times will be one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. The impoundments are open for late snow goose hunting on Wednesdays, Saturdays and state holidays only. The blind stakes may be hunted Mondays–Saturdays. A boat is required to hunt the float blind stakes.

#### Princess Anne WMA - Youth/Veteran Hunter Waterfowl Days

Float blind stakes and the impoundments will be open on a first-come, first-served basis to youth (15 years or younger) when accompanied

by an adult, and veteran hunters, during Youth/Veteran Waterfowl Hunting days. The impoundments will be open on Saturday only. Only youth or veterans may hunt and carry a firearm. Youth hunters must be accompanied by a licensed adult. There are no blinds or decoys provided for these hunts. Note: During the October hunt date there may also be deer hunters using the area around the impoundments.

- **Hunt day:** October and February Youth/Veteran Waterfowl Hunt Days
- Hunters may not occupy area before 5:00 a.m.

**The Department of Wildlife Resources reserves the right to manage hunter access and hunter use on Department-owned and controlled lands as deemed appropriate.**

This program received federal financial assistance in Sport Fish and/or Wildlife Restoration. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to the Office for Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 300, Arlington, VA 22203.

## VIRGINIA MIGRATORY WATERFOWL CONSERVATION STAMP

Raymond J. Easton of New York painted this pair of Northern pintails. Easton is a noted nature artist who has been named New York State’s Wildlife Artists of the Year four times. His art has also been chosen for the 2024 Ohio Duck Stamp, the 1997 New York Duck Stamp, and the National Duck Stamp Collectors Society’s 15th annual waterfowl stamp in 2023.



2025 Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp artwork.

©Raymond J. Easton

For information on ordering the 2025 Virginia Duck Stamp print contact [vaduckstamps@gmail.com](mailto:vaduckstamps@gmail.com)

# WATERFOWL HUNTING AND BAITING

## What is Legal?

You can hunt waterfowl on or over or from the following areas that are not otherwise baited:

- Standing crops or flooded standing crops, including aquatic plants.
- Standing, flooded, or manipulated natural vegetation.
- Flooded harvested croplands.
- Lands or areas where grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, or post-harvest manipulation.
- Lands or areas where top-sown seeds have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, or a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation.
- A blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation.
- A blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with vegetation from agricultural crops, provided your use of such vegetation does not expose, deposit, distribute or scatter grain or other feed.
- Standing or flooded standing crops where grain is inadvertently scattered solely as the result of hunters entering or leaving the area, placing decoys, or retrieving downed birds. Hunters are cautioned that while conducting these activities, any intentional scattering of grain will create a baited area.

## What is Illegal?

Some examples of areas where you cannot hunt waterfowl include:

- Areas where grain or seed has been top-sown and the Cooperative Extension Service does not recommend the practice of top sowing (see section on wildlife food plots).
- Crops that have been harvested outside of the recommended harvest dates established by

the Cooperative Extension Service (including any subsequent post-harvest manipulations).

- Unharvested crops that have been trampled by livestock or subjected to other types of manipulations that distribute, scatter, or expose grain.
- Areas where grain is present and stored, such as grain elevators and grain bins.
- Areas where grain is present for the purpose of feeding livestock.
- Freshly planted wildlife food plots that contain exposed grain.
- Croplands where a crop has been harvested and the removed grain is redistributed or “added back” onto the area where grown.

These examples do not represent an all-inclusive list of waterfowl baiting violations. More specific information on the baiting regulations for waterfowl can be found on the following U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website (<https://www.fws.gov/le/waterfowl-hunting-and-baiting.html>). See page 17 for the definition of a Normal Agricultural Operation.

**Dove Hunting and Baiting.** Baiting regulations for doves, and migratory game birds other than waterfowl and coots, are somewhat different than those for waterfowl and can be found here: <https://www.fws.gov/le/dove-hunting-and-baiting.html>

## It is Unlawful to Take Migratory Game Birds:

- With a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive, or stupefying substance;
- With a shotgun of any description capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler, incapable of removal without disassembling the gun, so its total capacity does not exceed three shells.

This restriction does not apply to crows and during dates states have selected under the Light Goose Conservation Order (i.e., greater and lesser snow geese and Ross’s geese);

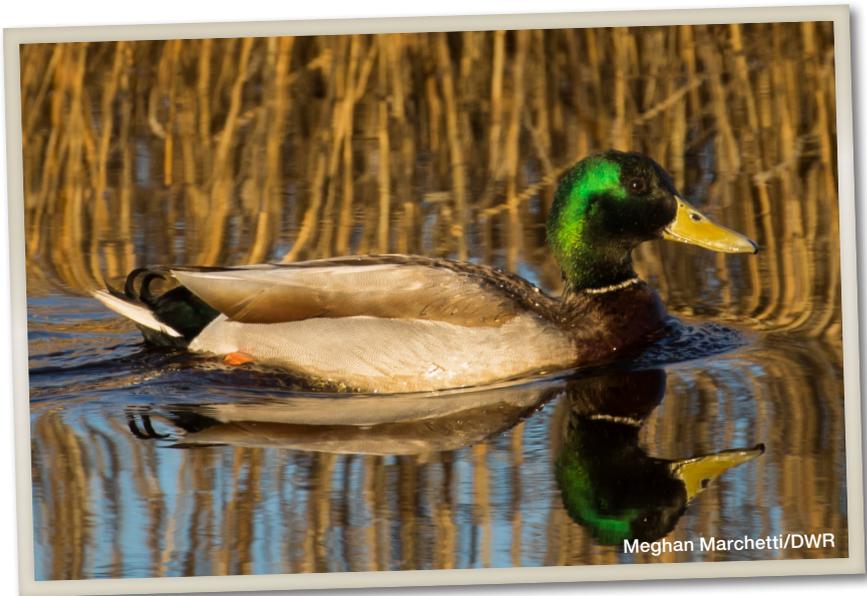
- From or by means, aid, or use of a sinkbox or any other type of low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water;
- From or by means, aid, or use of any motor vehicle, motor-driven land conveyance, or aircraft of any kind, except that paraplegics and persons missing one or both legs may take from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance;
- From or by means of any motorboat or other craft having a motor attached, or any sailboat, unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sails furled, and its progress therefrom has ceased;
- By the use or aid of live birds as decoys; although not limited to, it shall be a violation of this paragraph for any person to take migratory waterfowl on an area where tame or captive live ducks or geese are present unless such birds are and have been for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to such taking, confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such birds from the sight of wild migratory waterfowl;
- By the use or aid of recorded or electrically amplified bird calls or sounds, or recorded or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls or sounds. This restriction does not apply to crows or during dates states have selected under the Light Goose Conservation Order (i.e., greater and lesser snow geese and Ross’s geese);
- By means or aid of any motor-driven land, water, or air conveyance, or any sailboat used for the purpose of or resulting in the concentrating, driving, rallying, or stirring up of any migratory bird;
- By the aid of baiting, or on or over any baited area, where a person knows or reasonably should know that the area is or has been baited.

## Sunday Hunting

Hunting is allowed on Sundays except under the following circumstances:

- within 200 yards of a house of worship or any accessory structure thereof.
- to hunt or kill any deer or bear with a gun, firearm, or other weapon with the aid or assistance of dogs.

**Note:** The General Assembly passed a new law that now allows Sunday hunting on public land for all game species. Many public landowners are taking advantage of this new hunting opportunity and opening their public lands for hunting on Sundays. For details on how public landowners will implement Sunday hunting on their lands please contact the public landowner or visit [virginiawildlife.gov/SundayHunting](http://virginiawildlife.gov/SundayHunting).



## Wanton Waste of Migratory Game Birds

No person shall kill or cripple any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird, and retain it in his actual custody, at the place where taken or between that place and either (a) his automobile or principal means of land transportation; or (b) his personal abode or temporary or transient place of lodging; or (c) a migratory bird preservation facility; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility.

## Non-toxic Shot

No person may take ducks, geese (including brant), swans, coots, mergansers, gallinules, rails or snipe while possessing shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for muzzleloading) other than approved non-toxic shot. For a list of approved non-toxic shot, see page 4 or [www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdissues/nontoxic.htm](http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdissues/nontoxic.htm).

## Opening Day of a Season

No person on the opening day of the season shall possess any freshly killed migratory game birds in excess of the daily bag limit, or aggregate daily bag limit, whichever applies.

## Field Possession Limit

No person shall possess, have in custody, or transport more than the daily bag limit or aggregate daily bag limit, whichever applies, of migratory game birds, tagged or not tagged, at or between the place where taken and either (a) his automobile or principal means of land transportation; or (b) his personal abode or temporary or transient place of lodging; or (c) a migratory bird preservation facility; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility.

## Tagging Requirement

No person shall put or leave any migratory game birds at any place (other than at his personal abode), or in the custody of another person for picking, cleaning, processing, shipping, transportation, or storage (including temporary storage), or for the purpose of having taxidermy services performed, unless such birds have a tag attached, signed by the hunter, stating his address, the total number and species of birds, and the date such birds were killed. Migratory game birds being transported in any vehicle as the personal baggage of the possessor shall not be considered as being in storage or temporary storage.

## Custody of Birds of Another

No person shall receive or have in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person unless such birds are properly tagged.

## Termination of Possession

Subject to all other requirements of this part, the possession of birds taken by any hunter shall be deemed to have ceased when such birds have been delivered by him to another person as a gift; or have been delivered by him to a post office, a common carrier, or a migratory

bird preservation facility and consigned for transport by the Postal Service or a common carrier to some person other than the hunter.

## Gift of Migratory Game Birds

No person may receive, possess, or give to another, any freshly killed migratory game birds as a gift, except at the personal abodes of the donor or donee, unless such birds have a tag attached, signed by the hunter who took the birds, stating such hunter's address, the total number and species of birds and the date such birds were taken.

## Transportation of Birds of Another

No person shall transport migratory game birds belonging to another person unless such birds are properly tagged.

## Species Identification Requirement

No person shall transport within the United States any migratory game birds, except doves

and band-tailed pigeons, unless the head or one fully feathered wing remains attached to each such bird at all times while being transported from the place where taken until they have arrived at the personal abode of the possessor or a migratory bird preservation facility.

## Marking Package or Container

No person shall transport by the Postal Service or a common carrier migratory game birds unless the package or container in which such birds are transported has the name and address of the shipper and the consignee and an accurate statement of the numbers of each species of birds therein contained clearly and conspicuously marked on the outside thereof.

More restrictive regulations may apply to National Wildlife Refuges opened to public hunting. For additional information on refuge specific regulations see [www.fws.gov/refuges/](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/).

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# Waterfowl Blind Laws

### General

The laws governing the licensing and location of waterfowl blinds are included in the Code of Virginia, promulgated by the General Assembly. These are implemented by regulations adopted by the Department of Wildlife Resources.

### Blinds Generally

Blinds located west of I-95 are not subject to these laws and regulations, nor do they apply to blinds located in Accomack and Northampton counties. It is unlawful for any person, without the written consent of the owner, to shoot from any duck blind belonging to another in the jurisdiction of Northampton and Accomack. No new blind licenses will be issued for additional stationary blinds in the city of Virginia Beach. It is unlawful for any person to go on the lands, waters, ponds, boats or blinds of another to hunt, fish or trap without the consent of the landowner or his agent. Waterfowl hunting is not permitted on the public waters within 150 yards of a residence without the consent of the landowner, or on the public waters within 500 yards of a legally licensed blind without the consent of the blind licensee.

### Stationary Blind

Is a structure erected at a fixed location either on the shores of the public waters or in the public waters for the purpose of hunting and shooting waterfowl. A stationary blind shall be (1) of such size and strength that it can be occupied by and conceal one or more hunters, or (2) large enough to accommodate and conceal a boat or skiff from which one or more hunters intend to hunt or shoot waterfowl.

### Floating Blind

Is a floating device, whether in motion or anchored, that can be occupied by and conceal one or more hunters, uses a means of concealment other than the device's paint or coloration, and is used in the public waters for the purpose of hunting and shooting waterfowl.

### Offshore Blind Stake Site

Is a specific location in the public waters where a stake is licensed for the purpose of hunting and shooting waterfowl from a licensed floating blind. Valid only in the counties of Caroline, King George, Essex, Westmoreland, and Richmond.

### Waterfowl Blind License

Stationary, floating blind, and offshore blind stake licenses are available during the time periods listed below from any license agent through the Department's point of sale system, or online at [www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com).

Hunters have the option of requesting a blind plate be sent to them if they do not have one. The blind plate, if requested, and a decal for the plate will be mailed within 5 to 7 business days. Hunters who purchase a blind license online will be able to print out a copy of their application information. A license for their blind will be emailed immediately after the sale is complete. The license plate furnished must be affixed to the blind at a location where it can be easily seen.

### Number of Blinds

- Licenses for floating blinds shall be limited to two in any one season, to any one applicant.
- Clubs or individuals who do not own riparian rights shall be permitted to license no more than two stationary blinds in the public waters in any one season.
- There are no restrictions for the number of riparian blinds for those with riparian rights.

### Spacing of Blinds Generally

Except for adjacent landowners, licensed stationary blinds may be placed no closer than 500 yards to each other, except they may be placed closer together with the mutual consent of the licensees involved. Except for county exceptions, listed on page 25–26, floating blinds may be positioned no closer than 500 yards to any licensed stationary blind, whether it is occupied or not, without consent of the owner of the neighboring blind.

## WHEN BLIND LICENSES ARE SOLD

Any person applying to license a stationary blind in public waters must also have a season license to hunt, a State Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (unless license exempt), and a Federal Duck Stamp.

**Riparian landowners or their lessees or permittees licensing a stationary blind that was not licensed the previous year** by the riparian owner, lessee, or permittee may purchase a stationary blind license from February 1 through June 15. A stake or a stationary blind shall be erected on the site, and a license plate supplied with the license for that season shall be affixed thereto, by June 30. If a stake has been erected on the site of a stationary blind, such stake shall be replaced by a blind by November 1.

**Riparian owners or their lessees or permittees licensing a stationary blind that was licensed the previous year** by the riparian owner, lessee, or permittee may purchase a stationary blind license from February 1 through August 15. A stake or a stationary blind shall be erected on the site, and a license plate supplied with the license for that season shall be affixed thereto, by August 31. If a stake has been erected on the site of a stationary blind, such stake shall be replaced by a blind by November 1.

**A nonriparian license for a stationary blind in the public waters that was licensed the previous year** as a nonriparian stationary blind may be obtained by the previous year's

licensee beginning July 1 through August 15, provided that a new riparian license has not been staked within 500 yards of that location. A stake or blind shall be erected on the site, and a license plate supplied with the license for that season shall be affixed thereto, by August 31. If a stake has been erected on the site of a stationary blind, such stake shall be replaced by a blind by November 1.

**A stationary blind or a site in the public waters that is not licensed and posted by August 31** can be licensed as a nonriparian blind beginning September 1 through October 15. A stake or blind shall be erected on the site, and a license plate supplied with the license for that season must be affixed thereto. If a stake has been erected on the site of a stationary blind, such stake must be replaced by a blind by November 1.

**Floating Blind licenses:** on or after July 1.

**Offshore Blind Stake Site license** for nonriparian owner who has not already licensed and erected a stationary blind in counties where floating blinds are prohibited: November 1–10.

**Offshore Blind Stake Site license** for riparian owner who has already licensed and erected a stationary blind in counties where floating blinds are prohibited: November 11–15.

## Rights of Riparian Landowner

The owners of riparian rights or their invitees shall not be required to obtain a stationary blind license when hunting waterfowl from such a blind located on the riparian owner's property. However, a stationary blind license shall be required in order to afford the riparian owners the protections provided by Virginia law. The owner of riparian rights, his lessee or permittee has exclusive privileges of licensing blinds on his shoreline and prior rights of licensing and erecting blinds in the public waters in front of such shoreline. These blinds shall not be located in water deeper than eight feet at mean high tide, nor shall they be farther than halfway across the body of water from the riparian owner's shoreline, except on the shores and waters of Back Bay in the city of Virginia Beach where such blinds are limited to (i) the riparian owner's shoreline at the mean low water mark or (ii) blinds erected and licensed by the riparian owner in 2011. No other blind may be located within 500 yards of this stake or blind without consent of the owner, permittee, or lessee. The stake must be replaced by an erected stationary blind as specified by Code by November 1 to be a licensed blind under the law. Where the lands of two property owners adjoin, each may place blinds on his property or in the public waters in front of his property without regard to the placement of blinds on his neighbor's property.

## Rights of Nonriparian Owner

Although the law states that a riparian owner who does not license a blind on his shore by August 31 forfeits the privilege for that season, it does not mean a nonriparian owner can erect or license a blind on the property of another without permission. If a landowner has not licensed a stake or a blind by August 31, a nonriparian owner may license a location in the public waters in front of such land, providing no other location within 500 yards has been so licensed. Such blind shall not be located in a marked navigation channel. A nonriparian license for a blind that was licensed the previous year as a nonriparian blind can be purchased from July 1 through August 15, provided that a new riparian license has not been staked within 500 yards of that location, and a plate with current decal must be affixed to a stake or blind by August 31. A nonriparian license for a blind or blind site not previously licensed the year before can be purchased from September 1 through October 15, and a plate and current decal must be affixed to it by November 1.

Of course, if a location is secured through agreement with a riparian landowner having control of the near shoreline, the site may be licensed as applies to a permittee or lessee of a landowner. A nonriparian owner, having licensed a blind in a given location, has first option to license such blind each year unless the riparian landowner having claim to that location exercises his right to license it.

## Riparian Owner's Rights Renewed Annually

If a riparian owner fails to exercise his options, he may elect to do so the following year, thus preempting any rights of nonriparian owners who have erected blinds in the public waters in front of his shoreline.

## Penalty for Violations

Any person who hunts or shoots migratory waterfowl in the public waters of this Commonwealth within 500 yards of any legally licensed erected stationary blind of another without the written permission of the licensee shall be guilty of a criminal offense that is punishable as a Class 2 misdemeanor. This provision shall not apply to any person when in active pursuit of a visible crippled waterfowl which was legally shot by the person.

Additionally, any person who erects a stationary blind within 500 yards of another licensed blind without permission of the licensee is guilty of a trespass, and the owner of the blind so encroached upon may maintain an action for damages. It should also be noted that by November 1 a stationary blind must be erected; therefore, a stake with a stationary license affixed thereto cannot be considered to be a stationary blind after November 1.

## Loss of Blind License

The violation of any of the provisions of law or regulations as to hunting migratory waterfowl

from licensed blinds shall constitute a Class 2 misdemeanor and, in addition to other authorized penalties, the trial court shall immediately revoke the license of the blind owner who will have the same privileges as a new applicant to apply for a blind license the following year. Any blind for which the license has been revoked shall be destroyed by the former licensee.

## Accidental Destruction of Blind

If a blind is destroyed in any manner beyond the control of the owner, it may be replaced within 30 days without losing the position it formerly occupied.

## Floating Blinds, Where Prohibited

The use of floating blinds is prohibited in the counties of Caroline, King George, Essex, Westmoreland, and Richmond in any of the public marshes, guts, streams, branches, creeks, or bays, including among others, Green Bay and Port Tobacco Bay, flowing into the Rappahannock River or in any of its tributaries, or in Buckner's Creek, Nomini Creek and Nomini Bay, flowing into the Potomac River or any of its tributaries, **except from a licensed Offshore Blind Stake Site.** (See below for details.)

## Offshore Blind Stake Sites

A nonriparian owner who has not already licensed and erected a stationary blind for year in the 5-county area identified above and

## ATTENTION HUNTERS: MIGRATORY BIRD BANDING PROJECTS

Wildlife agencies around the country, including the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, capture and leg-band a number of migratory game bird species, including ducks, geese, brant, swans, and doves as part of our annual monitoring programs. Analysis from the recoveries of banded birds provides biologists with important information on bird distribution, harvest rates, and survival. Hunters recovering any banded migratory game bird can keep the band, but remember to report the recovery information. **Please note that the toll-free band reporting phone number has been discontinued** (even though some bands you recover may still be inscribed with that number). You must now report all bands online at the USGS website, [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov) or by sending your information by mail to: Bird Banding Lab, 12100 Beach Forest Road, Laurel, MD 20708. People that call the toll-free number will be directed to report their bird bands using the REPORTBAND website or by mail. After reporting the band you will receive a "Certificate of Appreciation" that includes information about where and when the bird was banded. For more information on the banding projects or other Department migratory bird programs, visit our website at [www.virginiawildlife.gov](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov).

**Please help us help you manage migratory game birds in Virginia by reporting banded birds.**

**Please report ONLY USFWS bands. Private bands cannot be reported on this website.**

who holds a valid hunting license, may apply for a license for offshore blind stake sites. The license for an offshore blind stake site may be obtained from November 1 through November 10 of each year. Up to 4 offshore blind stake site licenses may be purchased per licensee. Once obtained, a stake shall be erected on the site and a license plate supplied with the license for that season shall be affixed thereto by November 10.

From November 11 through November 15 of each year, any riparian owner and any other person who has already licensed and erected a stationary blind for the year in the areas noted above, and who holds a valid hunting license, may apply for a license for any remaining offshore blind stake sites. Up to 4 offshore blind stake site licenses may be purchased per licensee. Once obtained, a stake shall be erected on the site, and a license plate supplied with the license for that season shall be affixed thereto by November 15.

Offshore blind stakes shall be removed from the public waters within 15 days of the close of the waterfowl season.

### Placement of Blinds in Fairfax, Prince William, and Stafford Counties

No stationary blind shall be more than 300 yards from shore, except in waters less than 600 yards wide, in which case the blind may be no more than half the width of the water from shore. This distance is measured from the low water mark.

No licenses shall be issued for stationary waterfowl blinds on the Potomac River in Fairfax County adjacent to National Park Service lands in the Great Hunting Creek and Dyke Marsh areas. In addition, no licenses shall be issued for stationary blinds in Hunting Creek, Little Hunting Creek or Dogue Creek in the area of Fairfax County where hunting with a firearm is prohibited.

### Floating Blinds in Fairfax, Prince William, and Stafford Counties

Floating blinds must be anchored and located no closer to another's blind than 400 yards unless person has written permission of blind

owner. Such blinds must be taken in at a half hour after sunset.

In the area adjacent to the National Park Service lands in the Great Hunting Creek and Dyke Marsh areas floating blinds must be attached to a Department-placed post or buoy or anchored at global positioning system (GPS) locations designated by the Department. Only one floating blind per post. These are on a first-come, first-served basis; sites to be occupied no earlier than 4:00 a.m. or later than one-half hour after sunset, and blinds removed each day. Hunters in licensed floating blinds can hunt from designated locations during legal shooting hours on Thanksgiving Day and on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the open season.

### Placement of Blinds Adjacent to Certain Wildlife Management Areas

No stationary blinds shall be licensed in the waters adjacent to the Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Charles City County, the Game Farm Marsh WMA in New Kent County, the Lands End WMA in King George County, Ware Creek WMA in New Kent County, and the Ragged Island WMA in Isle of Wight County.

### Occupied or Unoccupied Blinds

No person shall hunt or shoot migratory waterfowl in the public waters of this Commonwealth within 500 yards of any legally licensed erected stationary blind of another, whether occupied or not, without the written consent of the licensee, except when in active pursuit of a visible crippled waterfowl which was legally shot by the person.

### Crippled Waterfowl

When in active pursuit of a visible waterfowl which was legally shot, the hunter may pursue such waterfowl without regard to the 500 yard prohibition protecting licensed waterfowl blinds.

### Jump Shooting from Boats

Permitted where appropriate landowner permission has been secured or where generally

permitted on public waters. Consult with the local Conservation Police Officer to learn local restrictions. Not permitted within 500 yards of a licensed stationary blind, except with consent of blind owner. If a boat is used for jump shooting and is modified for the purpose of concealing the hunter, it is a floating blind and must be licensed as such. Jump shooting is not permitted from a boat having a motor attached or any sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sails furled and its progress therefrom has ceased.

### Abandoned Blinds

Those licensing stationary blinds in the public waters shall remove same when licenses are allowed to expire or when they no longer intend to use them, whichever comes first.

### Waterfowl Blind Cleanup

Hunters are asked to remove unnatural materials, such as netting, camouflage cloth, wire, or twine from stationary blinds after the waterfowl hunting season. Birds such as ospreys, eagles, and owls often use blind structures for perching and/or nesting. Such materials, if left after the hunting season, can cause injury and even death to these birds if they become entangled in the material.

## DO YOU USE A BOAT TO HUNT?

**Boating Safety Courses Are Required to Operate Boats With Motors 10 HP or Greater**

For more information visit:  
[www.virginiawildlife.gov/boating/education/](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/boating/education/)

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# Areas Closed to Waterfowl Hunting

The discharge of firearms is prohibited within 750 yards of a wildlife sanctuary in any city in Virginia.

**Taking, attempting to take, pursuing, or disturbing waterfowl is prohibited in the following areas:**

- In Virginia Beach on the waters and from the shores of Crystal Lake, Linkhorn and Broad Bay, and Long Creek and their tributaries.
- Hog Island State Waterfowl Refuge in Surry County and all of the waters of the James River within a radius of 1,000 yards around that island, with the exception of blinds erected by the Department of Wildlife Resources.
- The waters of the James River around Presquile National Wildlife Refuge (except for the Turkey Island Cutoff navigational channel) to the mean low water mark on the opposite shore.
- Gaston Reservoir (Roanoke River) from a point beginning at High Rock and extending to the John H. Kerr Dam.
- The public waters extending 1,000 yards out from the marked shoreline of the Lands

End WMA on the Rappahannock River in King George County, with the exception that adjacent landowners may still exercise their riparian rights. Additional information, including a map of this area, can be found at [www.virginiawildlife.gov/wma/](http://www.virginiawildlife.gov/wma/).

- The waters of the Great Hunting Creek embayment within the city of Alexandria, and the waters of the Potomac River in Fairfax County north of Dyke Marsh and south of the city of Alexandria and between the shore and a line 1,000 feet from the Maryland State Line, although waterfowl that have been wounded elsewhere may be pursued into this area.
- The waters of Kane Creek Waterfowl Refuge within the boundaries of Mason Neck State Park in Fairfax County.
- The waters of the Potomac River in Fairfax County adjacent to the Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge extending from Sycamore Point northeasterly to Hallowing Point including all tributary creeks, guts, and inlets along the shoreline.
- The portion of the New River that lies entirely within the boundaries of the Radford Army Ammunition Plant in the counties of Montgomery and Pulaski.
- The waters of Kittewan Creek Refuge in Charles City County, west (upstream) of the posted refuge boundary markers (latitude -

longitude coordinates 37.29831 - 77.05134) located approximately one mile upstream from the James River.

- In the section of the James River, downstream from Boshers' Dam to the Interstate 95 bridge.
- The discharge of a firearm is prohibited on the Potomac River in Fairfax County north of Accotink Creek (see Fairfax County Ordinance 6-1-2). This includes Little Hunting Creek. Please check with Fairfax County before attempting to hunt in this area.
- Waterfowl hunting in the Dutch Gap area of the James River in Chesterfield County is prohibited except during a special Quota Hunt administered by the Department. See page 19 for Quota Hunt details.

## PERMISSION TO HUNT

The person whose name and address appears on the opposite side of this form has promised to use your land for outdoor recreation in an ethical way. Please read the signed pledge on the reverse side for specifics.

In deciding whether or not to allow this person to use your property, please consider that he/she is putting his/her name and address on the line as assurance that they will abide by your wishes and conduct themselves as true sportsmen or sportswomen.

I grant \_\_\_\_\_ my property  
permission to \_\_\_\_\_

on these dates \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(over)

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on these dates \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(over)



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Toll Free 814.572.4387 [HuntofaLifetime.org](http://HuntofaLifetime.org)

Hunter's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Auto License No \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's License No. \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby absolve the landowner of all liability for my person while engaged in recreation on his property.

#### SPORTSMAN'S PLEDGE

In return for the privilege of using private property, I agree to:

1. Respect the landowner's property, only go where he/she designates and assume liability for my actions and my person while on this property.
2. Take every precaution against littering and fire.
3. Obey the game, fish, and other wildlife laws.
4. Observe all safety precautions and the traditions of good sportsmanship.

Hunter's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Hunter's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Auto License No \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's License No. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Observe all safety precautions and the traditions of good sportsmanship.

Hunter's Signature \_\_\_\_\_



# Sunrise and Sunset Timetable – Richmond, Virginia

Times below are Eastern Standard Time and reflect Daylight Saving Time when in use.

	JULY 2025		AUG. 2025		SEPT. 2025		OCT. 2025		NOV. 2025		DEC. 2025		JAN. 2026		FEB. 2026		MAR. 2026		APR. 2026		MAY 2026		JUNE 2026	
DAY	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)	RISE (AM)	SET (PM)
1	5:53	8:35	6:14	8:18	6:41	7:38	7:06	6:53	7:35	6:11	7:06	4:52	7:25	5:03	7:13	5:34	6:41	6:04	6:55	7:33	6:15	8:00	5:50	8:25
2	5:53	8:35	6:15	8:17	6:41	7:37	7:07	6:51	6:36	5:10	7:07	4:52	7:25	5:03	7:12	5:35	6:40	6:05	6:54	7:34	6:13	8:01	5:50	8:26
3	5:54	8:35	6:16	8:16	6:42	7:35	7:07	6:50	6:37	5:09	7:08	4:52	7:25	5:04	7:12	5:36	6:38	6:06	6:52	7:35	6:12	8:02	5:50	8:27
4	5:54	8:35	6:17	8:15	6:43	7:34	7:08	6:48	6:38	5:08	7:09	4:51	7:25	5:05	7:11	5:37	6:37	6:07	6:51	7:35	6:11	8:03	5:49	8:27
5	5:55	8:34	6:18	8:14	6:44	7:32	7:09	6:47	6:39	5:07	7:10	4:51	7:25	5:06	7:10	5:38	6:35	6:08	6:49	7:36	6:10	8:04	5:49	8:28
6	5:55	8:34	6:18	8:12	6:45	7:31	7:10	6:45	6:40	5:06	7:11	4:51	7:25	5:07	7:09	5:40	6:34	6:09	6:48	7:37	6:09	8:04	5:49	8:29
7	5:56	8:34	6:19	8:11	6:45	7:29	7:11	6:44	6:41	5:05	7:11	4:51	7:25	5:08	7:08	5:41	6:33	6:10	6:46	7:38	6:08	8:05	5:48	8:29
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9	5:57	8:33	6:21	8:09	6:47	7:26	7:13	6:41	6:44	5:03	7:13	4:52	7:25	5:10	7:06	5:43	6:30	7:12	6:43	7:40	6:06	8:07	5:48	8:30
10	5:58	8:33	6:22	8:08	6:48	7:25	7:14	6:39	6:45	5:03	7:14	4:52	7:25	5:11	7:05	5:44	6:28	7:12	6:42	7:41	6:05	8:08	5:48	8:31
11	5:58	8:32	6:23	8:07	6:49	7:23	7:15	6:38	6:46	5:02	7:15	4:52	7:24	5:12	7:04	5:45	6:27	7:13	6:41	7:42	6:04	8:09	5:48	8:31
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15	6:01	8:31	6:26	8:02	6:52	7:17	7:18	6:32	6:50	4:59	7:18	4:53	7:23	5:16	6:59	5:49	6:21	7:17	6:35	7:45	6:01	8:12	5:48	8:33
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17	6:02	8:29	6:28	7:59	6:54	7:14	7:20	6:29	6:52	4:57	7:19	4:54	7:23	5:18	6:57	5:51	6:18	7:19	6:32	7:47	5:59	8:14	5:48	8:33
18	6:03	8:29	6:29	7:58	6:55	7:12	7:21	6:28	6:53	4:57	7:19	4:54	7:22	5:19	6:55	5:53	6:16	7:20	6:31	7:48	5:58	8:15	5:49	8:34
19	6:04	8:28	6:30	7:57	6:55	7:11	7:22	6:27	6:54	4:56	7:20	4:54	7:22	5:20	6:54	5:54	6:15	7:21	6:30	7:49	5:57	8:16	5:49	8:34
20	6:05	8:28	6:30	7:55	6:56	7:09	7:23	6:26	6:55	4:56	7:21	4:55	7:21	5:21	6:53	5:55	6:13	7:22	6:28	7:50	5:57	8:17	5:49	8:34
21	6:05	8:27	6:31	7:54	6:57	7:08	7:24	6:24	6:56	4:55	7:21	4:55	7:21	5:22	6:52	5:56	6:12	7:23	6:27	7:51	5:56	8:17	5:49	8:34
22	6:05	8:26	6:32	7:53	6:58	7:06	7:25	6:23	6:57	4:55	7:22	4:56	7:20	5:23	6:50	5:57	6:10	7:24	6:26	7:52	5:55	8:18	5:49	8:35
23	6:07	8:25	6:33	7:51	6:59	7:05	7:26	6:22	6:58	4:54	7:22	4:56	7:19	5:24	6:49	5:58	6:09	7:25	6:24	7:53	5:54	8:19	5:50	8:35
24	6:08	8:25	6:34	7:50	7:00	7:03	7:27	6:20	6:59	4:54	7:22	4:57	7:19	5:25	6:48	5:59	6:07	7:25	6:23	7:54	5:54	8:20	5:50	8:35
25	6:09	8:24	6:35	7:48	7:01	7:02	7:28	6:19	7:00	4:53	7:23	4:58	7:19	5:26	6:47	6:00	6:06	7:26	6:22	7:54	5:54	8:21	5:50	8:35
26	6:09	8:23	6:35	7:47	7:01	7:00	7:29	6:18	7:01	4:53	7:23	4:58	7:18	5:27	6:45	6:01	6:04	7:27	6:20	7:55	5:53	8:21	5:50	8:35
27	6:10	8:22	6:36	7:46	7:02	6:59	7:30	6:17	7:02	4:53	7:23	4:59	7:17	5:29	6:44	6:02	6:03	7:28	6:19	7:56	5:53	8:22	5:51	8:35
28	6:11	8:21	6:37	7:44	7:03	6:57	7:31	6:16	7:03	4:52	7:24	5:00	7:16	5:30	6:42	6:03	6:01	7:29	6:18	7:57	5:52	8:23	5:51	8:35
29	6:12	8:20	6:38	7:43	7:04	6:56	7:32	6:15	7:04	4:52	7:24	5:00	7:16	5:31			6:00	7:30	6:17	7:58	5:51	8:34	5:52	8:35
30	6:13	8:20	6:39	7:41	7:05	6:54	7:33	6:13	7:05	4:52	7:24	5:01	7:15	5:32			6:58	7:31	6:16	7:59	5:51	8:24	5:52	8:35
31	6:13	8:19	6:40	7:40			7:34	6:12			7:24	5:02	7:14	5:33			6:57	7:32			5:51	8:25		

Apply corrections below to Richmond sunrise-sunset times to obtain official times at other Virginia locations.

LOCATION	CORRECTION	LOCATION	CORRECTION
Bristol.....	+19 minutes	Newport News.....	-5 minutes
Cape Charles.....	-6 minutes	Norfolk.....	-5 minutes
Charlottesville.....	+4 minutes	Roanoke.....	+10 minutes
Chincoteague.....	-8 minutes	Tazewell.....	+16 minutes
Danville.....	+8 minutes	Williamsburg.....	-3 minutes
Fredericksburg.....	0 minutes	Winchester.....	+3 minutes

**Information obtained from:**

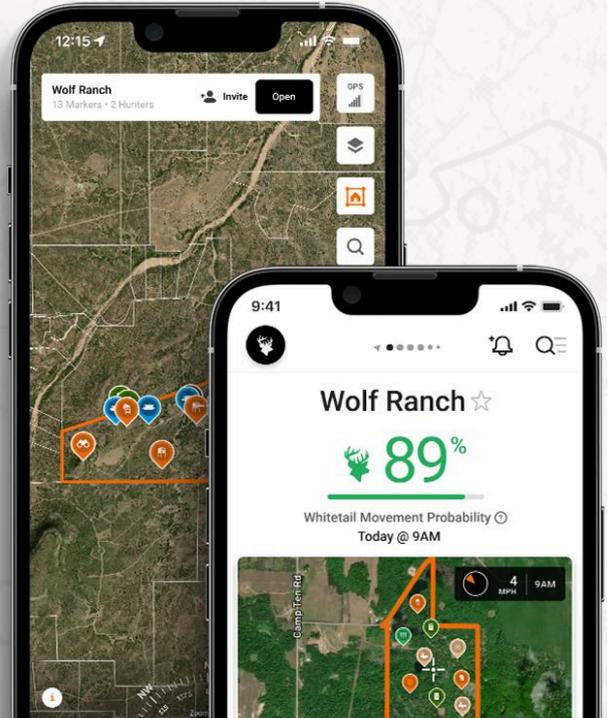
Astronomical Applications Dept.  
 Location: Richmond, VA  
 U. S. Naval Observatory  
 Washington, DC 20392-5420  
 Eastern Standard Time



# THE ULTIMATE HUNTING TOOLSET

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## ADVANCED PREDICTIONS



Your predictive guide, utilizing a proprietary algorithm for animal movement predictions to anticipate and intercept whitetail movement.



Nationwide County-by-County whitetail rut phase predictions, guiding your strategic planning for success.



Your wind guide, comparing stands and blinds based on ideal and historical winds and for optimal positioning and placement.

“If I had an app like this when I started hunting, **the amount of ‘the one that got away’ stories would be far less.** It’s going to take years of mistakes and translate them into years of success.”



**John Dudley**  
@nockontv

