

SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON FACT SHEET - 2021

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

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates</u>	<u>Season Dates</u>
	<u>East of I-95</u>	<u>West of I-95</u>
2021	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2020	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2019	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2018	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2017	Sept. 16 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2016	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2015	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 21 - 30
2014	Sept. 17 – 30	Sept. 22 - 30
2013	Sept. 16 – 30	Sept. 23 - 30
2012	Sept. 17 – 29	Sept. 24 - 29
2011	Sept. 19 – 30	Sept. 26 - 30
2010	Sept. 20 – 30	na
2009	Sept. 21 – 30	na
2008	Sept. 20 – 30	na
2007	Sept. 17 – 26	na
2006	Sept. 15 – 25	na
2005	Sept. 16 – 24	na
2004	Sept. 16 – 25	na
2003	Sept. 13 – 23	na
2002	Sept. 14 – 24	na
2001	Sept. 15 – 25	na
2000	Sept. 14 – 23	na
1999	Sept. 16 – 25	na

Average Annual Harvest: 600 teal

FACT SHEET - Waterfowl Hunters and Harvests – 2021

- Liberal duck seasons (60 days, 6 bird bag limit) and resident goose seasons have resulted in high waterfowl harvests in Virginia during the past ten years. Harvest has averaged ~132,400 ducks and ~47,400 Canada geese from 2016-2020, compared to 114,770 ducks and 25,000 geese during the 1990's. The long season length and liberal bags offer greater opportunity and a greater cumulative harvest over the course of the season.
- Waterfowl hunter numbers in Virginia have been generally stable since the late 1990's. Since 1999, the Harvest Information Program (HIP) has been used to estimate hunter effort and harvest. The average number of duck and goose hunters over the past 3 years, as measured by HIP, was 16,700 and 13,800 respectively.
- Conditions during the 2020-2021 season were generally mild resulting in poor waterfowl hunting conditions and a delayed migration. This resulted in a lower duck harvest than previous seasons and below the 5-year average. Although harvest was slightly higher than the prior season. Estimated Canada goose harvest was also lower than previous years mainly due to the decrease in the AP Canada goose bag limit.
- The total estimated duck harvest during the 2019-2020 season in Virginia (128,800) was 6% higher than the previous year (121,400) but 3% below the past 5-year average (132,400).
- During the 2020-2021 season mallards were the most commonly harvested duck in Virginia, followed by wood ducks, buffleheads, gadwall and black ducks which compromised the top 5 harvested species. The mallard harvest in Virginia in 2020-2021 (33,190) increased 13% from 2019-2020 (29,032) but was 9% lower than the past 5-year average (36,500). This is a result of a reduction in the mallard bag limit from 4 to 2 starting with the 2019-2020 season.
- The Canada goose harvest in Virginia in 2020-2021 (30,350) was similar to the previous season (30,819) and 35% lower than the past 5-year average (47,400).

FACT SHEET - The Status of Ducks - 2021

- **Due to covid-19 most waterfowl breeding surveys were cancelled during the spring of 2021. The numbers below for the total duck breeding population and for the Eastern breeding area were generated from predictions of breeding population size and habitat conditions.**
- Waterfowl harvest in the Atlantic flyway is managed by the stocks of four different species of eastern waterfowl populations (wood ducks, American green-winged teal, ring-necked ducks and goldeneyes). In 2021 estimated breeding population size for wood ducks was 1.02 million (SE = 0.13 million, 0.34 million (SE = 1.10 million for American green-winged teal, 0.71 million (SE = 0.17 million) for ring-necked ducks and 0.59 million (SE = 0.2 million) for goldeneyes.
- The total 2021 mid-continent mallard breeding population is predicted to be 8.62 million (SE = 1.43 million)

Virginia: Habitat conditions in Virginia during the spring of 2021 were slightly below average as dry conditions throughout the spring and summer potentially limited nesting and brood rearing habitat.

- The 2021 breeding pair estimate for mallards (14,210) was 61% lower than last year (36,430). Estimated black duck pairs (152) decreased from last year (1,545). The number of Wood duck pairs (10,424) decreased 23% from last year (13,559). The breeding pair estimate for Canada geese (53,025) was slightly higher than the 2020 estimate (46,563).

FACT SHEET - The Status of Resident Canada Geese - 2021

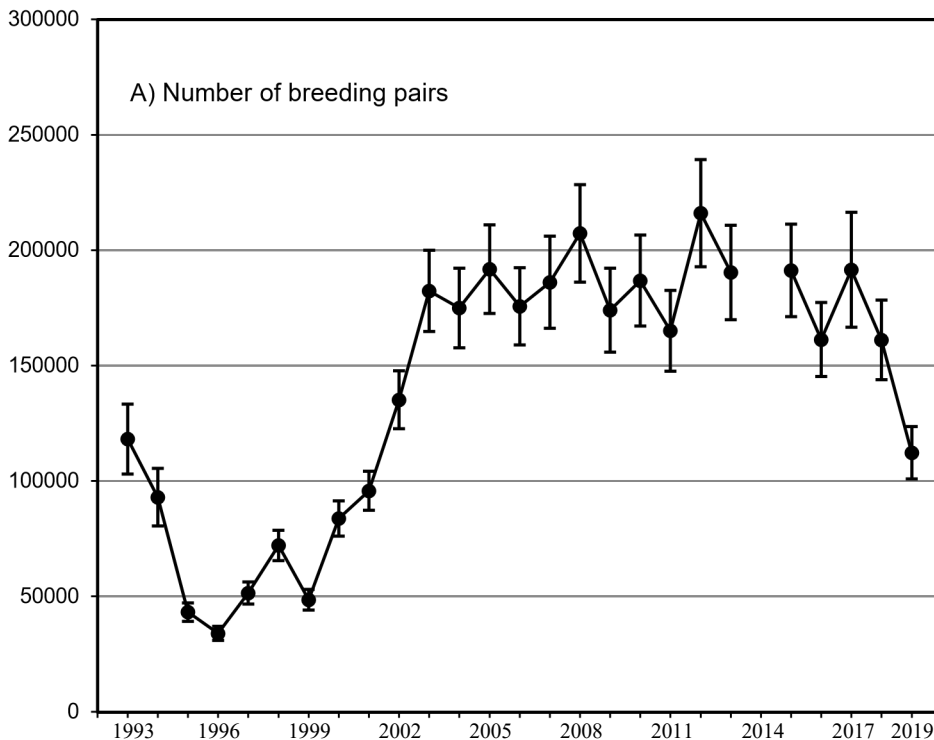
- The resident Canada goose population increased significantly in Virginia during the 1980's and 1990's, and peaked at 260,000 geese in the late 1990's. This population caused significant conflicts with human and wildlife populations, and management actions were taken to reduce their numbers. The current population estimate is 180,000 (+/- 77,000) in Virginia and near 1 million in the Atlantic Flyway.
- Special resident goose hunting seasons were initiated in 1993 to help manage this population and to provide recreational opportunities for hunters. These seasons occur prior to the arrival of most migrant geese (~Sept. 25 in Virginia), or in areas where there are fewer migrant geese. The Federal Framework allows Virginia to conduct a statewide September Resident Goose season from September 1-25.
- There are fewer migrant geese in the western portions of Virginia, and special “Goose Hunting Zones” has been established that allow more liberal seasons in areas with more resident Canada goose.
- Special resident goose hunting seasons have been very popular, and have increased hunter participation and resident goose harvests. These seasons have been very effective in managing resident goose populations and helping to meet our statewide population objectives.
- In areas where hunting is not feasible, other options including Airport, Agricultural, and Nest and Egg Depredation Orders have been implemented to help manage resident goose conflicts.

Year	Population Estimate *	September Harvest
2021	177,056 +/- 29%	n/a
2020	163,198 +/- 24%	13,000
2019	125,966 +/-20%	6,300
2018	132,633 +/- 24%	5,600
2017	142,167 +/- 21%	5,500
2016	158,200 +/- 19%	900
2015	150,651 +/- 22%	6,100
2014	130,503 +/- 26%	7,500
2013	144,910 +/- 26%	10,700
2012	158,267 +/- 28%	9,700
2011	165,022 +/- 28%	14,700
2010	147,313 +/- 29%	15,600
2009	145,019 +/- 29%	16,800
2008	157,560 +/- 29%	17,500
2007	154,030 +/- 27%	13,600
2006	136,700 +/- 27%	11,100
2005	129,486 +/- 26%	10,100
2004	143,741 +/- 25%	17,000
2003	186,753 +/- 23%	14,800
2002	218,719 +/- 24%	14,300
2001	218,384 +/- 27%	11,800
2000	227,164 +/- 32%	10,800
1999	261,554 +/- 34%	11,400
1998	264,867 +/- 35%	12,200
1997	249,612 +/- 34%	10,500
1996	181,813 +/- 36%	10,000

*3-year running average

FACT SHEET- The Status of Migrant Canada Geese - 2021

- Migrant Canada geese from the Atlantic Population (AP) declined significantly from 1985-1995. The hunting season was closed in 1995 to allow the population to recover as quickly as possible. Goose numbers rebounded quickly and a limited season (6 days with a 1-bird bag) was held in both 1999 and 2000.
- As the population increased, hunting regulations were liberalized. The season was extended to 30 days in 2001, then 45 days in 2002, and 50 days in 2012. The AP bag limit was increased to 2 per day in 2004. In 2019 the AP bag limit was reduced to 1 per day with a 30 day season. This is the result of several years of poor conditions on the arctic breeding grounds.
- Annual productivity has been below average for 5 of the past 6 years, and adverse weather conditions on the nesting grounds in Canada resulted in very poor production in 2018. The breeding population has declined over the past several years (see graph below) and dropped again in 2019 to 119,530 slightly from the 2018 of 112,000 breeding pairs. 2020 and 2021 data was not collected because of the covid-19 pandemic. Using an Integrated Population Model the 2022 estimate is 153,000 breeding pairs. The model used spring weather conditions to predict slightly higher than average production for 2022.



Canada Goose Populations and Hunt Zones

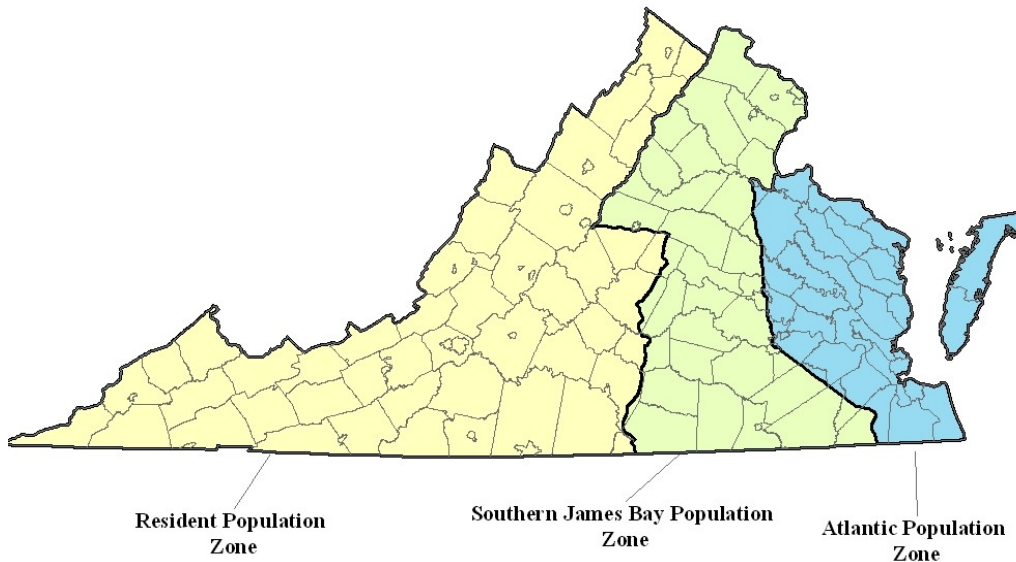
- There are 4 subpopulations of Canada geese in Virginia. These include the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population (RP) along with three migrant goose populations, the North Atlantic Population (NAP), the Southern James Bay Population (SJB), and the Atlantic Population (AP). The majority of our migrant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

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

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

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

Virginia's Canada Goose Hunt Zones



FACT SHEET - Status of Light Geese (Greater and Lesser Snow Geese, and Ross's Geese) - 2021

- The Greater Snow Goose population is monitored on spring staging areas along the St. Lawrence Valley in Quebec. Population surveys were not conducted for greater snow geese in 2020 or 2021. The 2019 population estimate was 714,000 geese (+/- 11%), which is 19% lower than last year and similar to the long term average.
- The principal nesting areas for greater snow geese are on Bylot, Axel Heiberg, Ellesmere, and Baffin Islands, and on Greenland. These geese winter along the Atlantic Coast from New Jersey to North Carolina.
- Spring and nesting phenology was average or later than average in many areas.
- Over the last 30 years, snow goose populations have increased almost ten-fold. A shift from feeding almost exclusively in marshes to feeding more on agricultural grains has allowed them to expand their range and habitat use. This shift has also allowed them to return to their breeding habitats in better physical condition, which has led to increased productivity.
- This population boom has resulted in ecological degradation on their breeding, migration and wintering areas. It has also led to conflicts with agricultural interest. Snow geese can cause damage to these habitats by pulling up plant roots and denuding marshes of vegetation.
- Current hunting regulations for snow geese are as liberal as Federal Frameworks will allow and include a 107-day season that runs from October to January, and a bag limit that was increased from 15 to 25 in 2010. Liberal seasons have helped increase the harvest, however, the population is still quite large and concerns remain about detrimental impacts these birds are having on breeding and wintering habitats.
- A Conservation Order (CO) season was established in 2009, and authorizes the use of alternative management strategies (unplugged shotguns, electronic calls, shooting to ½ hour after sunset, no daily bag limit) to further increase the harvest of snow geese in the Atlantic Flyway. The 3 year average for snow goose harvest is 300.

FACT SHEET - Status of Atlantic Brant and Tundra Swan - 2021

- **BRANT.** The main breeding areas for Atlantic Brant are in the Eastern Canadian Arctic on Baffin, Southampton, and Ellesmere Islands. Most brant winter along the Atlantic Coast from Massachusetts to North Carolina.
- There was no mid-winter survey for brant in 2021 and no breeding grounds banding this summer. Productivity surveys were conducted last fall and indicated a 6% increase in the number of young birds from the previous year, although this is still 35% below the long-term average.
- The annual brant hunting regulation is now based on the Atlantic Brant Integrated Population Model (IPM) that was adopted by the flyway last year, and provides an index to the brant population. The model prediction for this year is 116,000 birds. As per the Brant Harvest Strategy, this estimate calls for a 2022-2023 harvest regulation of 50 days with a 2 bird daily limit, which is no change from last year.
- **TUNDRA SWANS.** The Eastern Population of tundra swans nest in arctic tundra areas from Alaska, east to Hudson Bay and Baffin Island. These birds winter in coastal areas from Maryland to North Carolina. Estimated productivity of eastern population tundra swans in 2020 was 9% immature birds. This estimate is higher than the 2019 estimate (8%) but 30% lower than the long-term average (12.9%).
- There were 76,701 eastern population tundra swans counted in the Atlantic Flyway on the 2021 Mid-Winter Survey. This count was 10% higher than last year, but still 18% below the past 10-year average (2011-2020: 105,435)
- Eight states in the U.S. hunt tundra swans including Alaska, Utah, Montana and Nevada in the Pacific Flyway, North Dakota and South Dakota in the Central Flyway, and Delaware, North Carolina and Virginia in the Atlantic Flyway.
- There are no changes in the total number of hunting permits allowed for EP tundra swans this year (9,600 across the U.S., with 5,600 of those in the Atlantic Flyway) as the mid-winter index is still within the 70,000 to 110,000 range. In the Atlantic Flyway, the allocation of hunt permits is split between the 3 states in approximate proportion to the number of swans in each state. There are 5,600 permits available and they are distributed as follows: NC- 4,721, VA-532, and DE-347.
- The tundra swan hunting season in Virginia is authorized and conducted as specified in the Atlantic Flyway Tundra Swan Management Plan and Hunt Plan, with limits and guidelines as specified under an MOU with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.