

Waterfowl & Migratory Game Birds

License Requirements

A general hunting license is required in all seasons.

To hunt waterfowl, persons 16 and older are required to have a federal duck stamp, and it must be signed across the face and carried by the hunter.

The Electronic Duck Stamp, or E-Stamp, is valid in Pennsylvania, and stamps can be purchased through "The Outdoor Shop."

In addition, all licensed hunters ages 12 and older must have a Pennsylvania Migratory Game Bird License to hunt ducks, geese, doves, woodcock, brant, coots, gallinules, rails and snipe. This license may be obtained from any license issuing agent, or through the Game Commission's website.

When hunting light geese in the conservation season, hunters also need a free permit and harvest report card, which can be obtained online at the Game Commission's website, www.pgc.pa.gov, or by calling the Harrisburg Headquarters at 717-787-4250.

Purchase of a voluntary Pennsylvania Duck Stamp helps to finance wetland acquisition and development, and waterfowl education.

Arms & Ammunition

1) Manual and semiautomatic shotguns no larger than 10-gauge with a capacity limited to no more than three shells in the chamber and magazine combined; 2) Long, recurve and compound bows and arrows; and crossbows. Only non-toxic fine shot up to and including size T (.20 inches) is lawful for waterfowl. It is unlawful to hunt waterfowl with lead shot.

Fluorescent Orange

Not required for waterfowl and dove hunters.

LEGAL HUNTING HOURS

Hunting hours for the **entire dove season** are now from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset. Hunting hours during the **September Canada goose season**, and the **light-geese conservation season**, are from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset. However, hunting hours for all waterfowl end at sunset on Youth Waterfowl Days. Hours for **all other migratory bird seasons** are from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset.



Restrictions

NO PERSON SHALL TAKE MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS:

- With a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler that is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun.
- From a sink box (a low-floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).
- From or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance, or any aircraft.
- From or by means of any motorboat or sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sail furled, and its progress therefrom has ceased.
- By the use or aid of live decoys. By using records or tapes of migratory bird calls or sounds, or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls.
- By driving, rallying or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in range of hunters.
- By the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement), or on or over any baited area. Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 30 days after the removal of the bait.

Decoys

Electronic decoys can now be used in hunting waterfowl. Electronic dove decoys can be used solely for hunting doves. Electronic crow decoys can be used for hunting crows.

Hunting Parties

Waterfowl and dove hunters can hunt in a party of more than six persons as long as they are hunting from a blind or stationary position.

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING HOURS TABLE

DATES	BEGIN A.M.	END P.M.	DATES	BEGIN A.M.	END P.M.
Aug. 26 - Sept. 1	5:58	7:32	Dec. 23 - 29	6:52	4:40
Sept. 2 - 8	6:05	7:21	Dec. 30 - Jan. 5	6:53	4:45
Sept. 9 - 15	6:12	7:09	Jan. 6 - 12	6:52	4:51
Sept. 16 - 22	6:18	6:58	Jan. 13 - 19	6:51	4:54
Sept. 23 - 29	6:25	6:46	Jan. 20 - 26	6:48	5:05
Sept. 30 - Oct. 6	6:32	6:35	Jan. 27 - Feb. 2	6:43	5:14
Oct. 7 - 13	6:39	6:24	Feb. 3 - 9	6:37	5:22
Oct. 14 - 20	6:46	6:14	Feb. 10 - 16	6:30	5:30
Oct. 21 - 27	6:54	6:04	Feb. 17 - 23	6:21	5:39
Oct. 28 - Nov. 3	7:02	5:56	Feb. 24 - Mar. 2	6:12	5:47
Nov. 4 - 10 **	6:10	4:55	Mar. 3 - 9	6:01	5:54
Nov. 11 - 17	6:18	4:43	Mar. 10 - 16 *	6:50	7:02
Nov. 18 - 24	6:26	4:39	Mar. 17 - 23	6:39	7:09
Nov. 25 - Dec. 1	6:33	4:36	Mar. 24 - 30	6:28	7:16
Dec. 2 - 8	6:40	4:36	Mar. 31 - Apr. 6	6:17	7:24
Dec. 9 - 15	6:45	4:35	Apr. 7 - 13	6:05	7:31
Dec. 16 - 22	6:49	4:37			

Daylight Saving Time Begins* Ends**

Add the minutes from the Meridian Map to the begin/end times on this table.

Ducks, Mergansers & Coots

Seasons for **Ducks, Sea Ducks, Coots and Mergansers** run concurrently, but each of the state's four zones has its own **opening and closing dates**.

Lake Erie Zone

Oct. 29-Jan. 5

Northwest Zone

Oct. 6-Dec. 8

Dec. 27-Jan. 1

North Zone

Oct. 6-Nov. 17

Dec. 18-Jan. 12

South Zone

Oct. 13-20

Nov. 20-Jan. 19

Ducks & Sea Ducks

6 daily, 18 in possession

The daily bag limit of six ducks or sea ducks is **combined** for any species with an open season, except for the following restrictions:
Daily limit may not include more than:

- 4 mallards
including 2 hen mallards
- 2 scaup
- 2 black ducks
- 3 wood ducks
- 2 redheads
- 4 eiders
- 2 canvasbacks
- 2 pintails
- 1 mottled duck
- 1 fulvous whistling duck
- 4 scoters
- 4 long-tailed ducks

Possession limits are triple the daily limits.

There is no open season for Harlequin Ducks

Mergansers

5 daily, 15 in possession

**Not more than
2 hooded mergansers daily,
6 hooded in possession.**

Coots

15 daily, 45 in possession

DUCK ZONE BOUNDARIES

Lake Erie Zone

Lake Erie, Presque Isle and the area within 150 yards of the Lake Erie shoreline.

Northwest Zone

The area bounded on the north by the Lake Erie Zone and including all of Erie and Crawford counties and all of Mercer and Venango counties north of I-80.

North Zone

The area east of the Northwest Zone and north of I-80 to Route 220, north from I-80 to I-180, north and east of I-180 from Route 220 to I-80, north of I-80 from I-180 to the Delaware River.

South Zone

All of state not in the Lake Erie, Northwest and North Zones.

Canada Geese

Canada Goose hunting is open statewide, but **season lengths and bag limits vary** by zone. Seasons for Canada geese include white-fronted geese.

Southern James Bay Population Zone

Sept. 1-25*

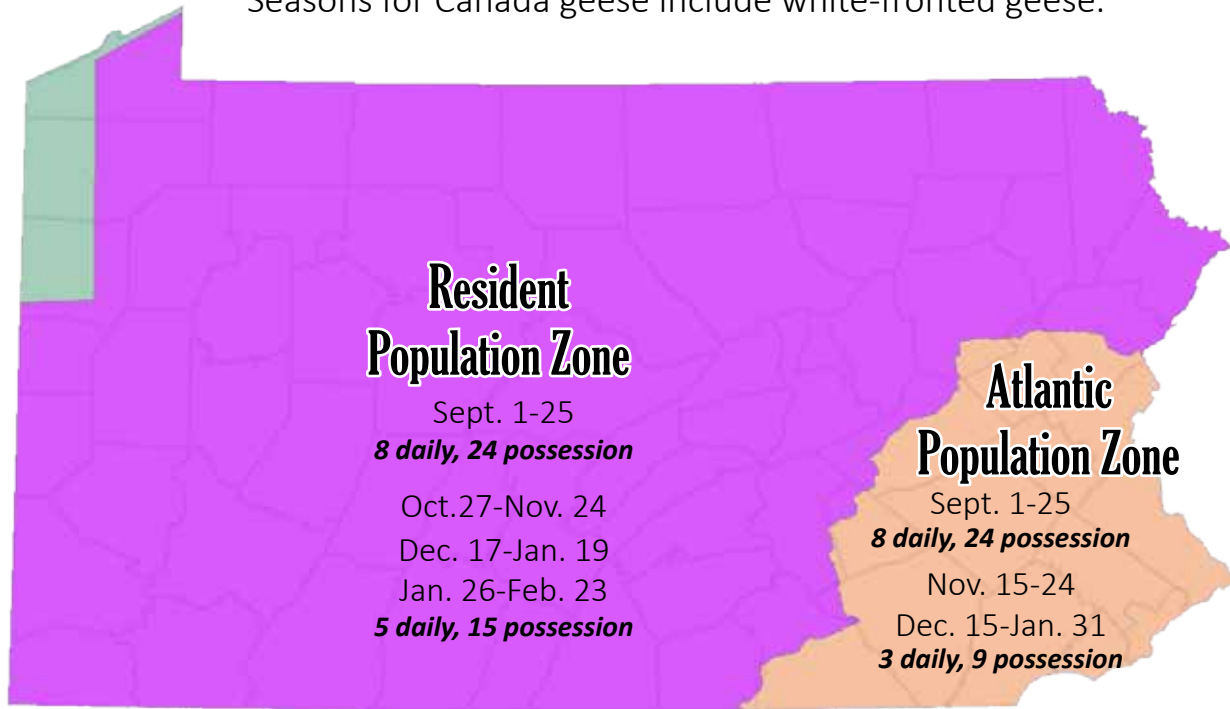
1 daily, 3 possession

Oct. 6-Nov. 24

Dec. 11-Jan. 19

3 daily, 9 possession

* In western Crawford County, the season runs from Sept. 1-15



Resident Population Zone

Sept. 1-25

8 daily, 24 possession

Oct. 27-Nov. 24

Dec. 17-Jan. 19

Jan. 26-Feb. 23

5 daily, 15 possession

Atlantic Population Zone

Sept. 1-25

8 daily, 24 possession

Nov. 15-24

Dec. 15-Jan. 31

3 daily, 9 possession

EXCEPTIONS

September Season *Detailed maps of described areas available at www.pgc.pa.gov*

1.) In the area south of SR 198 from the Ohio state line to intersection of SR 18, SR 18 south to SR 618, SR 618 south to US Route 6, US Route 6 east to US Route 322/SR 18, US Route 322/SR 18 west to intersection of SR 3013, SR 3013 south to the Crawford/Mercer County line. The season is Sept. 1-15. The daily bag limit is 1, possession limit 3; except on SGL 214 where the season is closed to September goose hunting.

2.) In the area of Lancaster and Lebanon counties north of the Pennsylvania Turnpike I-76, east of SR 501 to SR 419, south of SR 419 to Lebanon-Berks county line, west of Lebanon-Berks county line and the Lancaster-Berks county line to SR 1053 (also known as Peartown Road and Greenville Road), west of SR 1053 to Pennsylvania Turnpike I-76, the daily bag limit is 1, possession limit 3; except on SGL 46 (Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area) where the season is closed.

Note: These exceptions do not apply to youth participation on youth waterfowl days, when regular season regulations apply. Hunting hours for all migratory birds, including Canada geese, close at sunset on youth waterfowl days.

Regular Season

Areas outside of the controlled goose hunting areas at the Middle Creek WMA and SGL 46 in Lebanon- Lancaster counties have a daily limit of one, and a possession limit of three during the regular Canada goose season. Areas inside the goose hunting areas at the Middle Creek WMA and SGL 46 have a season limit of one.

GOOSE ZONE BOUNDARIES

Southern James Bay Population Zone

The area north of I-80 and west of I-79 including in the city of Erie west of Bay Front Parkway to and including the Lake Erie Duck zone (Lake Erie, Presque Isle and the area within 150 yards of Lake Erie Shoreline). The SJBP is no longer separately monitored and managed. However, the zone remains in place to help meet resident Canada goose management objectives in northwest Pennsylvania and to retain greater overlap of duck and goose season than would be available under federal frameworks for other goose zones.

Atlantic Population Zone

The area east of SR 97 from Maryland State Line to the intersection of SR 194, east of SR 194 to intersection of US Route 30, south of US Route 30 to SR 441, east of SR 441 to SR 743, east of SR 743 to intersection of I-81, east of I-81 to intersection of I-80, south of I-80 to New Jersey state line.

Resident Population Zone

All of Pennsylvania except for the Southern James Bay Population and the Atlantic Population zones.

Light Geese, Brant & Webless Birds

Light Geese (Snow Geese & Ross' Geese)

25 daily, no possession limit

Southern James Bay Population Zone

REGULAR SEASON
Oct. 1-Jan. 19

CONSERVATION SEASON
Jan. 21-April 19

Resident Population Zone

REGULAR SEASON
Oct. 23-Feb. 23

CONSERVATION SEASON
Feb. 25-April 19

Atlantic Population Zone

REGULAR SEASON
Oct. 1-Jan. 31

CONSERVATION SEASON
Feb. 1-April 19

CONSERVATION SEASON

During the conservation season, recorded or amplified calls or sounds are permitted.

Webless Birds & Brant

Brant

2 daily, 6 possession
Federal duck stamp needed

ALL GOOSE ZONES
Oct. 13-Dec. 21

Woodcock

3 daily, 9 possession

STATEWIDE
Oct. 13-Nov. 24
Dec. 10-18

Gallinules

3 daily, 9 possession

STATEWIDE
Sept. 1-Nov. 21

Common Snipe

8 daily, 24 possession

STATEWIDE
Oct. 13-Nov. 24
Dec. 10-18

Doves

15 daily, 45 possession

STATEWIDE
Sept. 1-Nov. 24
Dec. 18-Jan. 5

Virginia & Sora Rails

3 daily, 9 possession

Bag limit singly or combined

STATEWIDE
Sept. 1-Nov. 21

Clapper and King Rail hunting is closed statewide.

LIFE JACKETS REQUIRED BY LAW NOV. 1 TO APRIL 30

All boaters, including waterfowl hunters, must wear life jackets on boats less than 16 feet in length, or on any canoe or kayak during the cold-weather period from Nov. 1 through April 30.

Recreational boating fatalities that occur in Pennsylvania from November through April are primarily caused by the effects of cold-water immersion.

When water temperatures are less than 70 degrees Fahrenheit, cold-water shock is a major factor in boating fatalities.

Victims who wear a life jacket when exposed to cold water have potentially life-saving advantages, such as insulation from the cold, buoyancy for victims who are unable to tread water and reduced risk of aspiration of water.

In an effort to reduce the number of fatalities related to cold-water immersion, the Fish & Boat Commission has amended regulations to require life jackets to be worn on small and unstable boats during the period most noted for cold-water temperatures.

For other times of the year and on other types and sizes of boats, all boaters are required to have properly fitted personal flotation devices readily accessible. For more information on boating laws and safety, visit www.fishandboat.com.

Youth Waterfowl Days

Licensed junior hunters ages 12-16 can hunt ducks, mergansers, Canada geese, coots and gallinules during a series of Youth Waterfowl Days. Sixteen-year-olds need a federal duck stamp to participate. Regular season bag limits and other restrictions apply. Check the Game Commission website for more details. This season, Youth Waterfowl Days will be held:

Statewide
Sept. 15

North Zone
Jan. 19

Northwest Zone
Dec. 15

Lake Erie Zone
Oct. 20

South Zone
Jan. 26

Goose Blind Application

GOOSE BLIND APPLICATION

Middle Creek or Pymatuning Wildlife Management Areas

Permittees to hunt these areas during goose season are selected only by public drawings held prior to the hunting season. Only the **electronic application form** found on the Game Commission's website www.pgc.pa.gov under the Goose Blind Application link will be accepted.

An individual may apply to only one area per year and may submit only an electronic application to either area through the application found on the Game Commission's website.

Applications will be accepted electronically through Sept. 1 and selected through a public drawing at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area on Sept. 12 and the Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area on Sept. 15.

The electronic application must contain the applicant's 2018-19 hunting license Customer Identification Number (CID).

The number of applications to be drawn will be established prior to the drawing.

One shooting day each at Middle Creek and Pymatuning will be designated as a youth-only day. Adults who accompany a junior license hunter on this day may assist the junior hunter, but are not permitted to shoot or harvest waterfowl. This does not forfeit the adult hunter's option to hunt a different day. Applications received from junior hunters will be drawn prior to the other applications on the established drawing date for the management area. Unsuccessful applicants for the youth shooting day will then be placed with all other applications and the drawing will proceed until all shooting days are filled.

A drawing for a special hunt for qualifying veterans with disabilities will be conducted for Pymatuning. Applicants must hold a Resident Disabled Veteran Hunting License or Resident Reduced Fee Disabled Veteran License to qualify, and up to three guests can accompany the disabled hunter. See the License Information section of this digest for qualifications.

A separate drawing is held for blinds that accommodate hunters with disabilities. Applicants must type in their current Disabled Person Permit (permit to hunt from a vehicle) number issued by the Game Commission in the space provided on the application.

Blinds at Middle Creek and Pymatuning will not be operational during the September season. Shooting days at Middle Creek are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Shooting days at Pymatuning are Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Specific dates are listed on the electronic application.

Persons may hunt only once per year on a goose blind reservation, either as a blind holder or a guest. Persons may hunt more than once per year in the controlled goose hunting program, but only if unclaimed permits exist after the first no-show drawing. If a "no-show" blind is used, the hunter forfeits his or her right to future blind reservations during that license year. Successful applicants will be mailed a hunting reservation entitling them to be accompanied by a maximum of three guests.

DISCOVER THE PA HUNTING INTERACTIVE MAP

Visit www.hunting.pa.gov

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Game Commission have teamed up to create a new interactive map specifically for hunters. Collectively, state forest land and state game lands offer more than 3.7 million acres open to hunting in Pennsylvania.

Hunters can use this map to:

- View public lands open to hunting.
- Search hunting seasons and bag limits across different parts of the state.
- Display hunting hours (starting and ending times) across different parts of the state.
- Add personal GPS data to the map (GPS waypoints and tracklogs).
- View different types of wildlife habitat across public forest lands, including mature oak forests, meadows, food plots, openings, winter thermal (coniferous) cover and young aspen forest.
- See where recent timber harvests have occurred on public forest lands.
- Get Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) information for state forest land.
- Add map layers associated with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).
- Identify bear check station locations and get driving directions.
- Display and get information on the elk hunt zones.
- Add the locations of gated roads opened for hunters on public forest lands and when those gates will be opened.
- Analyze graphs and trends in antlerless/antlered deer harvests, and antlerless license allocations from 2004 to the present.

Mute Swans

Mute swans are non-native and not protected under state or federal law. Hunters may harvest mute swans and they do not count as part of the daily bag. Taking mute swans on private property requires landowner permission. Mute swans have an orange bill with a black fleshy knob on top at the feather line. Mute swans do not feed in fields and are encountered only in wetlands. Native tundra and trumpeter swans are protected. They have a black bill and commonly are found in fields and wetlands. Sandhill cranes are likely to be present in certain areas and are protected.



Mute Swan



Trumpeter Swan



Tundra Swan

REPORT BANDED BIRDS

Hunters can report bird bands online at www.reportband.gov. In addition to band numbers, information requested includes when, where and what species of waterfowl were killed. The age and sex of the bird and where it was banded will be provided to the hunter by email. Online reporting provides better data quality and lowers costs.