

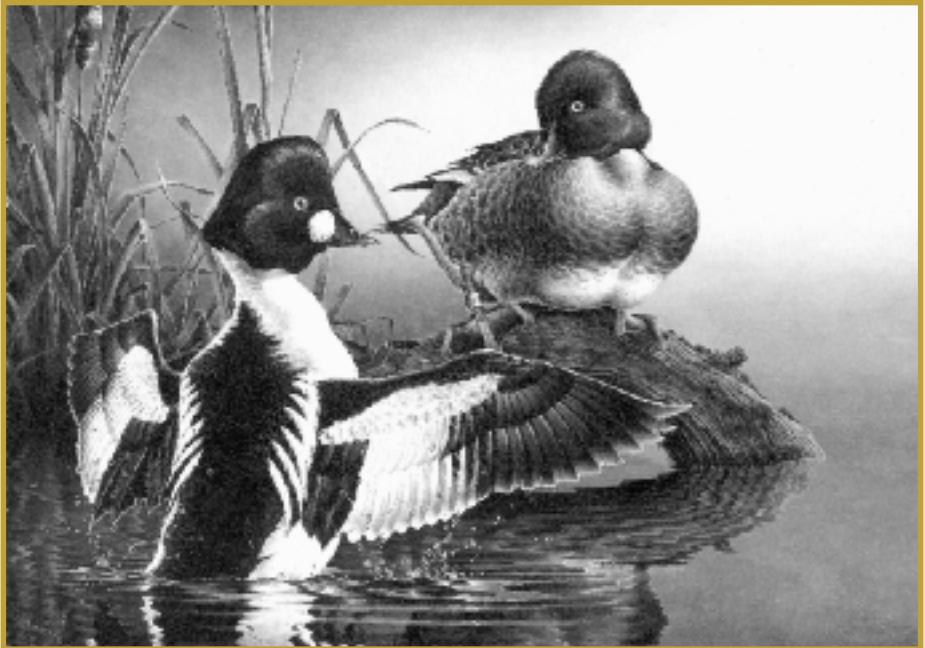


State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Natural Resources



Digest of Waterfowl Hunting Regulations *2009-2010*

**Illinois Best of Show
National Second Place Winner
2009 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest**



Common Golden-Eye

by Abraham Hunter



Illinois
Department of
Natural
Resources

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New Regulations are shaded.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



The 2009-2010 edition of the Illinois *Digest of Waterfowl Hunting Regulations* is an important resource, with details on season dates, hunting hours, bag limits, and other facts that should prove useful as you head to the field this fall.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources' mission is to manage, protect, and sustain the natural and wildlife resources of our state. Governor Quinn and I share a vision for rebuilding the IDNR – and rebuilding the public faith and trust in the Department's efforts to fulfill our mission with the taxes, fees, and license revenue provided by sportsmen and women.

We have established season dates and limits that should provide you with good hunting opportunity while protecting our valuable waterfowl resources. The Illinois waterfowl seasons are based on factors including hunter preferences, aerial waterfowl survey data, and weather records for each waterfowl hunting zone in the state.

I would like to encourage you to take a young person hunting this season. The IDNR offers a number of youth hunting opportunities throughout the year, but there is no better way to get youngsters interested in hunting than to take them along when you head to the field, duck blind or goose pit. It is an important way to promote hunting safety, a conservation ethic, and our great heritage of hunting to the next generation.

Thank you for your support of our hunting programs and best wishes for a successful 2009-2010 Illinois waterfowl season.

A stylized, handwritten signature in gold ink, appearing to read 'Marc Miller'.

Marc Miller
Director

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM

Harvest Information Program (HIP) – Required. This important program is designed to produce more accurate federal harvest estimates which will ultimately improve our ability to maximize hunting opportunity without detriment to the waterfowl resource. You can help preserve your sport by registering with HIP at the license vendor when you purchase your hunting license and state duck stamp. Remember, registration is **MANDATORY**, not optional.

OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK FOR 2009

Dear Illinois Waterfowl Hunter,

Illinois duck hunters experienced a good hunting season last year harvesting the seventh most ducks recorded since state estimates began in 1981. Of the 14 states in the Mississippi Flyway, only Arkansas and Missouri harvested more mallards than Illinois. The Canada goose harvest was again the highest in Illinois history. This was accomplished despite below average reproduction on the MVP Canada goose breeding grounds in 2008. Increasing giant Canada goose populations in our flyway may have contributed to this high harvest. Well that's enough about last year. Let's take a look at what is in store for us this fall.

You will find a great deal of information about our upcoming waterfowl seasons in the paragraphs below. Conditions on the duck breeding grounds were generally very good this year. There were 6.4 million ponds in prairie Canada and northern U.S. breeding areas. This was 45% above last year and 31% above the long term average of 4.9 million ponds. A record number of ponds in the U.S. was 108% above last year and 87% above the long term average. This is the 13th year in a row we have been offered a 60-day duck season. We anticipate a fall duck flight larger than last year's due to greatly increased water levels over a large portion of the breeding grounds. MVP Canada goose breeding numbers are down from last year due to a late spring and a late spring snowstorm and production is expected to be poor this year. However, giant Canada geese are doing well in our flyway and should provide good hunting despite poor MVP production.

In closing, we encourage each of you to take a new young hunter along with you this season. Remember, hunters who come to appreciate and value wildlife at an early age are the foundation upon which the future of wildlife will be built.

We hope you find the information in this digest useful and we wish you a safe and memorable 2009-2010 waterfowl season!

Sincerely,



John Buhnerkempe
Chief, Division of Wildlife Resources



Ray Marshalla
State Waterfowl Biologist

DUCKS

Duck Populations – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) annual survey of key nesting areas indicated 42 million breeding ducks, 13% higher than last year's 37.3 million birds, and 25% above the 1955-2008 long-term average. This is the 4th highest breeding population since 1955. Only 1956, 1997 and 1999 had more ducks.

Mallards – The mid-continent mallard fall flight forecast (minus Alaska mallards) is 10.3 million, which is 1.1 million more than last year but not significantly different. The fall flight index predicts 1.8 million young mallards will fly south this year compared to 1.3 million last year. Thus there will be a half million more young mallards this season than last year. Young mallards are generally twice as vulnerable to hunting as adults.

Pintails – The northern pintail population of 3.2 million was 23% higher than last year. Pintails remain 20% below their long-term average but the population this year was above the threshold of 2.5 million, again justifying a full season length according to the Fish and Wildlife Service's interim pintail harvest strategy.

Canvasbacks and Redheads – The canvasback population increased 35% from last year's low population to 662,000 and was similar to the long-term average. Therefore the Service has reopened a full season on canvasbacks with a daily bag limit of one bird. The redhead breeding population of 1.04 million was the second highest since 1955.

Scaup – Scaup population estimates of 4.2 million were similar to last year but are still 18% below the long-term average. The Fish and Wildlife Service decreased the daily bag limit from 3 to 2 in 2005 because of concerns regarding a decreasing population with an increasing harvest rate for the past several years. Last year a restrictive season was approved and Illinois hunters were allowed to take only one scaup daily during 40 days and 2 daily during 20 days of the 60-day season. With the increased population this year the moderate season was approved which will allow hunters to take 2 scaup daily during the entire 60-day season.

Wood Ducks – Last season the Service approved increasing the daily bag limit on wood ducks from 2 to 3. The federal harvest estimates indicated that the 2008 wood duck harvest increased only 6% from 2007 with the increased bag limit in eastern North America. Such a small increase might have occurred without increasing the bag limit. The bag limit will remain at 3 this season.

Teal – The green-winged teal breeding population is 3.4 million which is 79% above the long-term average and is a record since estimates began in 1955. Blue-winged teal breeding populations were at 7.4 million which is 60% above the long-term average and is the second highest count ever recorded.

2008 Duck Harvest – The preliminary state duck harvest estimate of 447,795 was 4% lower than in 2007 (464,366) and was the 7th highest harvest since state estimates began in 1981. The harvest was 27% above the long term 1981-2006 average (352,940). The North Zone harvested an estimated 91,327 ducks while the Central took 208,776 and the South took 142,056. Federal harvest estimates indicated that Illinois hunters took more mallards than any other state in the 14-state Mississippi Flyway except for Arkansas and Missouri. On average, duck hunters spent a little under 13 days afield to harvest 8.8 ducks per hunter for the season. This annual harvest per hunter was 4% below the previous 5-year average of 9.2 ducks per hunter. The duck harvest per hunter per day last season was 0.75 which is similar to last year and is the 7th highest daily success rate in the previous 26 years. Harvest of teal during the 2008 September season was 19,981 compared to 29,900 in 2007. The North Zone harvested an estimated 5,810 teal while the Central zone took 16,660 and the South took 7,139.

2009 Duck Hunting Outlook – The wetland habitat for breeding waterfowl in the U.S. and Canada is much better this year than last year. The estimate of May ponds for Prairie Canada was 3.6 million compared to 3.1 million last year. This was 17% greater than last year and similar to the long-term average. Total ponds in the U.S. and Canada were at 6.4 million which was 45% above last year and 31% above the long-term average. Even though water levels are good and duck populations are high for many species, water without nesting cover does little to improve the duck outlook. Grassy nesting cover continues to be lost in the duck production prairie pothole region of north-central U.S. More than 1.2 million Conservation Reserve Program acres were lost since 2007, and more than 3.3 million acres of native prairie are expected to be lost during the next 5 years. We need landscape level policy efforts to ensure that grassland nesting cover is in place in years like 2009 when water levels are abundant. Although continental duck populations are in good shape, hunters should be aware that local food, water and weather can influence individual success more than the total number of ducks coming down the flyway. Illinois has had an unusually wet spring and summer. Many areas along the Illinois River and reservoirs such as Lake Shelbyville, Carlyle Lake, and Rend Lake may not get the high water off of shallow areas in time

for crops or moist-soil plants to produce good food conditions for ducks. If the weather cooperates and allows seed production for the rest of the summer and early fall, these areas may be in better shape. But hunters need to watch local flooding conditions to get an idea of where food may or may not be plentiful enough to attract ducks this fall.

2009 Duck Season Timing – Preliminary results of the 2008 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey, a random survey of approximately 5,000 waterfowl hunters, indicate that 58 percent of hunters in the North Zone and 60 percent of hunters in the Central Zone felt last year's duck season dates were about right. In the South Zone, 43 percent of hunters believed last year's duck season dates were about right when the season opened on Thanksgiving Day. The survey indicated that 50 percent of South Zone hunters prefer that the season start on Nov. 14 or earlier, compared with 43 percent who want the season to start on Nov. 26. Therefore the season will start on the earlier date in the South Zone after four consecutive years of later starts. Nearly two-thirds of South Zone hunters surveyed object to the season opening the same weekend as the first firearm deer season (the first weekend of firearm deer hunting this fall will be Nov. 20-22).

CANADA GEESE

2009 Spring Survey Results – Spring aerial surveys found only 239,631 breeding MVP Canada geese, the lowest level since surveys began in 1989. This was 35% below average. However, there were 581,232 total geese which is only 3% below the long-term average. A very late spring resulted in too much snow and ice during breeding season over most of the coast of Hudson Bay, which is where the highest nest densities typically occur. Hunting for MVP geese will be more difficult because of the low number of young expected this fall. The MVP harvest experiment is in its third year of five and the plan calls for no change in regulations unless the breeding population falls below 225,000. Biologists will carefully monitor breeding populations, harvest rates and survival models for MVP geese to make sure the migratory population is protected. If as a result of the experiment the MVP population of geese is affected negatively below a predetermined point, then the experiment will be cancelled in favor of more restrictive regulations.

The 2009 giant Canada goose survey in Illinois provided a population estimate of 133,550 compared with 138,300 and 105,000 in 2008 and 2007, respectively. Biologists estimated the presence of 1,906,000 Mississippi Flyway giant Canada geese during the spring of 2009 which was the second highest estimate on record. Production in Illinois and other midwestern states was good as usual so there should be plenty of young giants for the fall season.

MVP Canada geese comprise about 51 percent of the Illinois harvest during the regular waterfowl season. Giant Canada geese comprise about 44 percent (half of those from Illinois, with the remainder from other Mississippi Flyway states and provinces, primarily Minnesota and Wisconsin).

2008 Canada Goose Harvest – The preliminary state Canada goose harvest estimate during the regular season of 142,806 was similar to the 2007 harvest and is the highest recorded since 1981. In 2008 North Zone hunters took 45,863 geese compared to 68,553 in the Central Zone and 27,889 in the South Zone. During the September season hunters took an estimated 17,420 Canada geese compared to 16,207 in 2007.

2009 Canada Goose Season Dates

North Zone: Preliminary results from the 2008 IWHS indicated that 71% of North Zone hunters felt that last year's season dates (Oct. 18 – Jan. 10) were about right, while 18% thought they were too early and 9% thought they were too late. This year's season is one day earlier than last year.

Central Zone: Preliminary results from the 2008 IWHS indicated that 75% of Central Zone hunters felt that last year's season dates (Oct. 25 – Nov. 9 and Nov. 24 – Jan. 31) were about right, while 16% thought they were too early and 5% said they were too late. In previous surveys hunters in this zone have told us that they like the closed portion of a split season to include the first 3-day firearm deer season weekend and that they strongly preferred to have the season run through the end of January.

South Zone: Preliminary results of the 2008 IWHS indicated that 70% of South Zone goose hunters felt that last year's season dates (Nov. 27 – Jan. 31) were about right, while 17% thought they were too early and 8% said they were too late. The season is open during the first weekend of duck season when many duck hunters are out who may have opportunities to shoot local giant Canada geese and it reopens late enough to ensure that the season runs through the end of January which is the preference of most South Zone Canada goose hunters.

SNOW GEESE

During the 2009 Midwinter Survey, biologists counted 2,753,000 light geese (snow, blue and Ross' geese), 12% more than in 2008. Breeding conditions for light geese were poor over much of their breeding range due to a late spring with very cold temperatures and above average snow cover.

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

During the fall 2008 survey in Saskatchewan and Alberta, biologists counted 751,700 Mid-continent Population (MCP) white-fronted geese (a.k.a. "specs"), 2% fewer than the previous year. During 1996-2008, these estimates have declined an average of 3% per year. Production is expected to be reduced from last year due to spring snow and delayed nesting in many areas of the breeding grounds.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has again authorized two consecutive days for the 2009 youth waterfowl hunt. The Youth Waterfowl Hunting dates for the North and Central zones will open the weekend immediately preceding the regular duck season opening date. In the Central zone, aerial survey data on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers combined suggest that there will be about 100,000 more ducks available during the weekend immediately preceding the regular duck season opener than the weekend before that. In the South Zone, the weekend immediately preceding the regular duck season is the upland game season opener and we did not want youths to lose opportunities due to potential conflicts for them or their parents that weekend. Therefore the South Zone Youth Hunt will be held 2 weeks prior to the regular duck season opening date. Most waterfowlers know that the average age of the Illinois duck and goose hunter is getting older. That is because few new hunters (especially youth) are being recruited into the sport. If you are concerned about this trend - and all of us should be - please take a qualifying young person hunting during the Youth Hunt as well as during the regular season.

AVIAN INFLUENZA AND WILD BIRDS

Many different subtypes of avian influenza virus (bird flu) are found in wild birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds. In most instances, only a small number of birds become infected and most wild birds do not exhibit observable symptoms of sickness or die. Recently a highly pathogenic form of avian influenza (Asian H5N1) has emerged in Asia and spread to Africa and Europe. The virus has primarily affected domestic poultry operations but some wild birds have also been affected. In addition, humans in Asia, Africa, and Europe have contracted Asian H5N1 causing human mortality in some cases. Human infections are thought to have primarily occurred due to close contact with contaminated domestic poultry, surfaces, or equipment.

While wild migratory birds may be able to carry H5N1 over large geographic regions, their ability to maintain circulation of the virus in the wild is unclear. Some mortality events in wild birds have been associated with outbreaks of Asian H5N1 in domestic poultry but it is not known if wild birds were the source of the virus or if the virus was acquired from poultry. Because Asian H5N1 surveillance in wild birds can aid in the early detection of the virus if it arrives in North America, efforts to monitor wild migratory birds for Asian H5N1 have been undertaken. During 2006-2008, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources collected 1,304 samples from nine species of waterfowl for avian influenza testing. Four of the samples collected in Illinois tested positive for avian influenza, however, none of the types of avian influenza found in these samples were the Asian H5N1 subtype and none of them presented a risk to human or animal health. To date (June 30, 2008) the Asian H5N1 subtype has not been detected in North America. The IDNR plans to continue sampling for avian influenza testing this fall as part of the nationwide surveillance effort. While the role of wild birds in transporting Asian H5N1 is not clear, the nationwide surveillance effort will help to ensure the early detection of Asian H5N1 should it occur in North America. Several species will be selected for sampling and Department biologists may be sampling in your hunting area. The sample collection only lasts a minute and your birds will be returned to you intact. So please help the Department in its efforts to watch for the disease by allowing your birds to be sampled.

Some hunters have also inquired as to whether their hunting dogs could be at risk for contracting Asian H5N1 avian influenza. Dogs are susceptible to infection with avian influenza viruses from different species and oral transmission can occur. At the moment, H5N1 is not present in the U.S., so the risk to hunting dogs is probably minimal. If H5N1 is introduced to North America, however, that risk will increase. More research is still being conducted on this topic.

Apparently healthy birds can carry diseases other than avian influenza which can infect humans. As a result, hunters and others handling wild birds and game should follow the minimum basic precautions below:

The following advisory guidelines have been developed by the National Wildlife Health Center: (see www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/wildlife_health_bulletins/WHB_05_03.jsp for more details)

- Do not handle or eat sick game.
- Wear rubber or disposable latex gloves while handling and cleaning game, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, and thoroughly clean knives, equipment and surfaces that come in contact with game. After cleaning, surfaces and equipment can be disinfected with a 10% household bleach solution.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.
- All game should be thoroughly cooked (well done or 160° F). Additional information on food safety can be found at: www.who.int/entity/foodsafety/fs_management/No_02_Avianinfluenza_Dec04_en.pdf

Links for further information about Avian Influenza:

Illinois Department of Public Health -
www.idph.state.il.us/avianflu.htm

Illinois Department of Agriculture -
www.agr.state.il.us/news/Special/birdflu/

National Wildlife Health Center -
www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/avian_influenza/index.jsp

Alaska Department of Fish and Game -
www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm

World Health Organization -
www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

2009-2010 WATERFOWL HUNTING INFORMATION

New Regulations are Shaded.

LICENSES, STAMPS AND HIP

Hunters must have a current, valid hunting license, Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration/certification and Federal and State Migratory Waterfowl Stamps in their possession at all times when afield. Federal stamps must be signed in ink across the face of the stamp. Please refer to the **2009-2010 Digest of Hunting & Trapping Regulations** for exemptions and further information.

Annual Fees Are *(including agent's fees)*:

Resident Hunting License	\$7.50
Non-resident Hunting License 5-day/regular	\$28.75 / \$50.75
Resident Senior Hunting License	\$4.00
Apprentice Hunting License (Resident or Non-resident)	\$7.50 *
State Waterfowl Stamp	\$10.50
Federal Waterfowl Stamp	\$15.00 **
Sportsman's License (hunt-fish)	\$19.25

* This is a one-time, non-renewable license. It allows persons ages 10-17 to go hunting with a parent or guardian who has a valid hunting license. Those 18 and older can hunt with any family member or friend who is a validly licensed hunter. A hunter safety course is not needed to purchase this hunting license.

** Does not include agent's fee which may be 50¢ or 75¢.

A State Habitat Stamp is **NOT** required to hunt waterfowl.

IF YOU WANT TO HUNT WATERFOWL IN ILLINOIS AND YOU ARE:

YOU NEED:	under 16	16 – 64	65 & Older	Disabled ¹	Service-man ¹	Land-owner ¹
Hunting License	X	X	X			
Federal Waterfowl Stamp		X	X	X	X	X
State Waterfowl Stamp		X	X			
Harvest Information Program (HIP) Registration/Certification ^a	X	X	X			

^a To hunt migratory game birds (doves, ducks, geese, coots, mergansers, woodcock, snipe and rails). Lifetime license holders are automatically registered in HIP.

¹ For the purpose of this section, "DISABLED" = disabled American veterans with at least 10% service-related disabilities or disabled persons certified under the Illinois Identification Card Act as having a Type 1 or Type 4, Class 2 disability. "SERVICEMAN" = persons on leave from the Armed Services, having entered the military as an Illinois resident. "LANDOWNER" (or tenant) = those persons and their children, parents, brothers and sisters **permanently residing** on their land and **hunting on that land**.

HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM (HIP)

Waterfowl, Dove and Other Migratory Gamebird Hunters

Registration with **HIP** (National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program) is required **annually** to hunt migratory game birds in Illinois. For waterfowl, dove and other migratory gamebird hunters, register with HIP at the license vendor when you purchase your hunting license and state duck stamp. Hunters can register with HIP online at **www.dnr.state.il.us** or by calling **1-888-6PERMIT** (1-888-673-7648). A \$3.08 convenience fee will be charged for phone sales if you do not register for HIP at the time of license purchase.

DUCKS & EARLY CANADA GEESE

SPECIES	DATES (Inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Teal	Sept. 5-Sept. 20 (Statewide)	Sunrise to Sunset	4	8
Ducks	North Zone Oct. 17 – Dec. 15	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	6 (See section on Bag Limits)	2 x daily bag limit
Mergansers	Central Zone Oct. 31 – Dec. 29		5 (See section on Bag Limits)	2 x daily bag limit
Coots	South Zone Nov. 14 – Jan. 12		15	30
Early Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 15 (Northeast, North and Central Zones)		5 (a)	10
Early Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 15 (South Zones only)		2 (a)	4

(a) Daily bag limit is five in Northeast Canada Goose Zone and North & Central Zones and 2 in the South Zone.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS*

SPECIES	DATES	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT
Ducks	North Zone Oct. 10 – 11	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	6 (See section on Bag Limits)
Mergansers			5 (See section on Bag Limits)
Coots	Central Zone Oct. 24 – 25		15
Canada Geese			2
Snow Geese	South Zone Oct. 31 – Nov. 1		20
White-fronted Geese			2
Brant			1

*Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day Regulations

1. Youth hunters must be 15 years of age or younger and must have a hunting license and HIP registration/certification unless hunting on property where they reside. No stamps are required for youths under 16.
2. Only geese, ducks, mergansers and coots may be taken in addition to other game in season.
3. An adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult cannot hunt geese, ducks, coots or mergansers but can participate in other open seasons.
4. Bag limits for ducks includes 2 scaup during youth hunt.

Bag Limit – DUCKS – Bag limits on ducks are as follows: The basic daily bag limit shall be 6 ducks of any species including all teal species, (except mergansers); however, no more than 4 shall be mallards (no more than 2 hen mallards) and not more than 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 2 scaup, and not more than 1 black duck and 1 pintail and 1 canvasback. The daily bag limit for all mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be a hooded merganser. The possession limit for ducks and mergansers is twice the daily bag limit.

GEESE

		DATES (Inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Canada Geese					
North Zone		Oct. 17 – Jan. 9			
Central Zone		Oct. 31 – Nov. 15 & Nov. 24 – Jan. 31		2	4
South Zone		Nov. 14 – 15 and Nov. 29 – Jan. 31			
Snow/Blue & Ross' Geese and Brant					
North Zone		Oct. 17 – Jan. 9	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset		
Central Zone		Oct. 31 – Jan. 31		20 Snow/Blue & Ross' Geese 1 Brant	Unlimited Snow/Blue & Ross' Geese 2 Brant
South Zone		Nov. 14 – Jan. 31			
White-fronted Geese					
North Zone		Oct. 30 – Jan. 9			
Central Zone		Nov. 21 – Jan. 31		2	4
South Zone		Nov. 14 – 15 and Nov. 29 – Jan. 31			

CONSERVATION ORDER LIGHT GOOSE SEASONS

DATES (Inclusive)		HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
(Snow/blue and Ross' Goose)		1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset	None	None
North Zone	Jan. 10 – March 31			
Central Zone	Feb. 1 – March 31			
South Zone	Feb. 1 – March 31			

CONSERVATION ORDER SEASON REGULATIONS

1. Unplugged shotguns may be used. There is no limit to the number of shells that may be placed in a shotgun.
2. Electronic calling devices may be used.
3. No federal duck stamp required.
4. State duck stamp and hunting license required.

DON'T SHOOT A SWAN

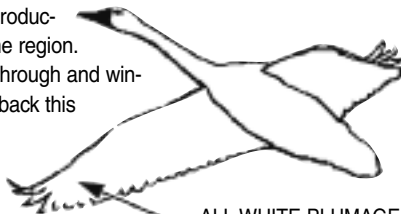
DON'T MAKE A MISTAKE! ALL WILD SWANS ARE PROTECTED IN ILLINOIS

Several Midwestern states are reintroducing the native Trumpeter Swan to the region. Some of these birds are migrating through and wintering in Illinois. You can help bring back this magnificent swan by:

- Learning the difference between swans and snow geese.
- Reporting observations of marked swans with wing tags, neck collars, bands.
- Protecting wetland habitat.
- Reporting any harassment of Trumpeter Swans.

Please report swan sightings to:

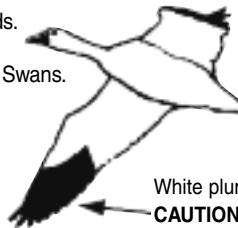
**Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Waterfowl Program,
700 South 10th Street,
Havana, IL 62644
309/543-3065**



TRUMPETER SWAN

Protected Species.
Long neck
Length: 4 ft.
Wingspan: 7 ft.
Weight: 20 - 30 lbs.

ALL WHITE PLUMAGE



SNOW GOOSE

Legally hunted.
Short neck
Length: 1 1/2 ft.
Wingspan: 3 1/2 ft.
Weight: 3 - 6 lbs.

White plumage, but **BLACK WING TIPS**.

CAUTION-White Pelicans have black wing tips, but their wingspan is 8-9 1/2 ft.

FIREARMS SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU

1. Be sure of your target and what's beyond it before you pull the trigger.
2. Do not shoot towards homes, buildings, people or animals that may be hit by your shot, especially when using large shot sizes.
3. Use caution when shooting over water or ice to avoid ricochet.
4. Set up a safe shooting corridor in front of your blind and do not shoot outside it.
5. You are responsible for what your shot strikes. Hunters who damage property or injure others can be charged with reckless conduct and face criminal and financial penalties.

WATERFOWL BANDS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers a toll-free number for reporting waterfowl bands. If you take a banded bird, please report the band number online at www.reportband.gov or call **1-800-327-BAND** (2263), with information about when and where you shot the bird. From September 1 through February 28, you can call this number 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From March 1 through August 31, services are available from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CDT. You will receive a Certificate of Appreciation with information about when and where the bird was banded. Your cooperation on reporting band numbers gives waterfowl biologists a wealth of useful information that allows them to manage the resource in a way that provides hunters with maximum recreational opportunities while protecting waterfowl populations. You may report any band to this number, even if it is an old band that does not have the 1-800 number inscribed on it.

WETLAND MANAGEMENT FOR WATERFOWL

At some public waterfowl hunting areas some hunters are concerned about a lack of crops planted for ducks and duck hunting. As the state agency responsible for managing wildlife in Illinois, it is our duty to use best management practices that benefit waterfowl and other wildlife. Current research in waterfowl management emphasizes the value of moist-soil management for ducks and other wildlife. There appears to be an abundance of waste grains available to migrating waterfowl in Illinois, especially mallards and Canada geese, due to the advent of modern farming practices such as no-till and reduced tillage farming. However, many waterfowl do not eat corn, and wetland habitats along with moist-soil forage have been drastically reduced in Illinois when compared to historical times due to wetland drainage, siltation, dams, and other human alterations to the landscape. A combination of cereal grains and moist-soil plants at public hunting areas and refuges will provide quality duck hunting opportunity as could be expected with all cereal grains, while also providing waterfowl and other wildlife with ideal habitat and forage. Some examples of beneficial moist-soil plants for waterfowl includes wild millet (barnyard grass), rice cutgrass, smartweed, sprangletop, sedges, panic grass, teal grass, arrowhead and beggarticks.

Advantages of Moist Soil Management

- Lower cost per unit than row crop management.
- Productive in a variety of moisture and weather conditions when domestic grains fail.
- Moist soil plants and seeds contain many essential nutrients lacking in domestic grains. Used in conjunction with nearby grain production on other areas, the best of both is provided to waterfowl and other wildlife.
- Provide valuable insect and other macroinvertebrate communities important for diverse populations of waterfowl and other wildlife. Studies in Missouri have documented enhanced wildlife diversity in moist-soil units when compared with adjacent row cropped areas.
- Provide spring migration habitat for waterfowl as well as shorebirds and a variety of other waterbirds such as egrets, herons, and rails. Spring migration habitat is important to waterfowl so that they return to the breeding grounds in the best body condition possible.

WATERFOWL HUNTING ZONES

North Zone – That portion of the state north of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Peotone-Beecher Road to Illinois Route 50, south along Illinois Route 50 to Wilmington-Peotone Road, west along Wilmington-Peotone Road to Illinois Route 53, north along Illinois Route 53 to New River Road, northwest along New River Road to Interstate Highway 55, south along I-55 to Pine Bluff-Lorenzo Road, west along Pine Bluff - Lorenzo Road to Illinois Route 47, north along Illinois Route 47 to I-80, west along I-80 to I-39, south along I-39 to Illinois Route 18, west along Illinois Route 18 to Illinois Route 29, south along Illinois Route 29 to Illinois Route 17, west along Illinois Route 17 to the Mississippi River, and due south across the Mississippi River to the Iowa border.



Central Zone – That portion of the state south of the North Zone to a line extending west from the Indiana border along Interstate Highway 70 to Illinois Route 4, south along Illinois Route 4 to Illinois Route 161, west along Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 158, south and west along Illinois Route 158 to Illinois Route 159, south along Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 156, west along Illinois Route 156 to A Road, north and west on A Road to Levee Road, north on Levee Road to the south shore of New Fountain Creek, west along the south shore of New Fountain Creek to the Mississippi River, and due west across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.



South Zone – The remainder of Illinois.

Northeast Canada Goose Zone – Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties This zone only applies during September goose season.

OCTOBER

REGION

**SUNRISE
SUNSET**

**All times are for
Central
Standard
Time.**

**Add one
hour for
Daylight
Savings
Time
Oct. 1-31**

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**All times
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JANUARY

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SUNSET

All times
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FEBRUARY

REGION

**SUNRISE
SUNSET**

**All times
are for
Central
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Time.**

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**AM
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MARCH

REGION

**SUNRISE
SUNSET**

DST

**All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.**

**Add one
hour for
Daylight
Savings
Time.
Mar. 7 -
31, 2010.**

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SUMMARY OF STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

In addition to statewide regulations, the following regulations apply to MIGRATORY WATERFOWL HUNTERS (ducks, geese, mergansers, coots).

NOTE: Material below is only a summary. Each hunter should also consult Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, Chapter 520 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes and IL Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations - 2009-2010, or talk with a local Conservation Police Officer or a Division of Wildlife Resources Biologist. For additional information on federal regulations call the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Springfield, Illinois at 217-793-9554.

Non-Toxic Shot Requirements

It is unlawful to have in possession while attempting to take migratory waterfowl (including coots and captive reared mallards), snipe or rail in Illinois any shotgun shells not approved as non-toxic by federal regulations (see 50 CFR 20). Non-toxic shot currently approved by the USFWS includes: steel, bismuth-tin, iron-tungsten, iron-tungsten-nickel, tungsten-bronze, tungsten-iron-copper-nickel, tungsten-matrix, tungsten-polymer, tungsten-tin-iron, tungsten-tin-bismuth, tungsten-tin-iron-nickel and tungsten-iron-polymer.

Shot Size Requirements

It is unlawful to hunt with or have in your possession while hunting waterfowl a shotgun shell with shot larger than steel size T or larger than BBB of any other non-toxic shot.

Hunting Devices & Ammunition Restrictions

It is unlawful to use a trap, snare, net, crossbow, rifle, pistol, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.

It is unlawful to hunt with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, UNLESS it is plugged with a one-piece filler which limits its total shell capacity to three and which is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun. This does not apply during Conservation Order light goose seasons (snow/blue and Ross' geese) that occur after Canada goose season has closed. (see page 10).

Hunting From Floating Blinds, Boats & Scull Boats

It is unlawful to hunt from a floating blind that is not anchored EXCEPT a scull boat may be used on certain public waters and waterfowl may be taken from a boat not mechanically powered and not camouflaged or disguised. A boat merely painted camouflage is not considered camouflaged.

Live Decoys

It is unlawful to hunt by the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.

Electronic Calling Devices

It is unlawful to use a recording or electronic calling device to hunt migratory birds other than crows, except during Conservation Order light goose seasons that occur after Canada goose season such electronic call devices may be used to hunt snow/blue and Ross' geese. (see page 10).

Shooting Crippled Waterfowl From Boats

It is unlawful to hunt waterfowl from a moving watercraft propelled by mechanical power or sails. NOTE: However, waterfowl hunters may have an uncased and unloaded gun in their boat for the purpose of pursuing crippled migratory waterfowl incapable of normal flight in an attempt to reduce said bird to possession, provided that the attempt is made immediately upon downing the bird and is done within 400 yards of the blind from which the bird was downed. The gun cannot be loaded unless the motor has been completely shut off and the crippled birds may not be shot from such a boat until the motor has been completely shut off and its progress therefrom has ceased.

Driving or Chasing Birds

It is unlawful to hunt by driving, rallying or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range of the hunters.

Permits Required for Leased Lands and Commercial Clubs

It is unlawful to commercially control land or water, or both, in whole or in part for the taking of migratory waterfowl, unless first obtaining a permit from the Department. NOTE: A person is "commercially controlling land or water, or both" when he directly or indirectly receives compensation from persons in exchange for the opportunity to enter onto that land or water.

Possession of Live Birds

It is unlawful to retain live waterfowl taken while hunting. Every migratory game bird wounded by hunting and reduced to possession by the hunter shall be immediately killed and become part of the daily bag limit.

Field Possession Limit

It is unlawful to possess, have in custody, or transport more than one daily bag limit tagged or not tagged while in the field or while returning from the field to one's car, hunting camp, home, etc.

Wanton Waste – Retrieval of Downed Game Birds

It is unlawful to kill or cripple any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and retain it in your actual custody, at the place where taken or between that place and your automobile or personal abode or temporary place of lodging or a migratory bird preservation facility or a post office or a common carrier facility. ***Birds must remain in your possession while in the field.*** NOTE: You need permission to enter private property.

Tagging Requirements

It is unlawful to give, put or leave any migratory game birds at any place (other than his personal abode) or in the custody of another person UNLESS the birds are tagged by the hunter with the hunter's signature and address, the total number of birds involved, by species, and the dates such birds were killed.

Gift of Migratory Game Birds

No person may receive, possess, or give to another, any freshly-killed migratory game bird as a gift, except at the personal abode of the donor or donee, unless such birds have a tag attached (see tagging requirements).

Custody of Birds of Another

It is unlawful to receive or have in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person UNLESS such birds are properly tagged.

Species Identification Requirement

It is unlawful to completely field dress any migratory game bird (except doves) and then transport the birds from the field. The head or one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all such birds while being transported from the field to one's home or commercial preservation facility.

Termination of Possession

The possession of birds taken by any hunter ceases 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.

Shipment – Marking Package

It is unlawful to ship migratory game birds UNLESS the package is marked clearly and conspicuously on the outside with the name and address of the person sending the birds, the name and address of the person to whom the birds are being sent, and the number of birds, by species, contained in the package.

Importation

It is unlawful to import migratory game birds killed in any foreign country, except Canada, UNLESS such birds are dressed (except as required below), drawn and the head and feet are removed. NOTE: One fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory game birds being transported between a port of entry and one's home or to a migratory bird preservation facility. No person shall import migratory game birds belonging to another person. For information regarding the importation of migratory birds killed in another country, hunters should consult 50 CFR 20.61 through 20.66.

Sink Box

It is unlawful to hunt from a sink box (a low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).

ADDITIONAL CANADA GOOSE HUNTING REGULATIONS ON NON-COMMERCIAL AREAS IN ALEXANDER, FRANKLIN, JACKSON, JEFFERSON, UNION AND WILLIAMSON COUNTIES

On any property where the principal use is to take wild geese in Alexander, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Union and Williamson counties, other than property operated under a Commercial Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Area Permit, all of the following restrictions shall be observed but only during Canada goose season:

- (1) No person may take wild geese except from a blind or pit and it shall be illegal to take or attempt to take geese from the base of standing timber except when immediately adjacent to an open field.
- (2) No person may establish or use a blind or pit within 100 yards of the boundary of the property on which the blind or pit is located unless the minimum yardage requirement cannot be met, in which case one blind or pit may be permitted only if there is a minimum of 200 yards between that pit or blind and the nearest pit or blind.
- (3) No person may establish or use a blind or pit for the taking of wild geese within 200 yards of any wildlife refuge boundary or public road right-of-way adjacent to any State or Federal waterfowl refuge. If a blind or pit has been established for more than 10 years and it was believed by both the landowner and the Department during that time to meet the minimum yardage requirements of this paragraph (3), then the blind or pit may remain in place even though a survey or other evidence may indicate that the minimum yardage requirements are not met.

STATE AND FEDERAL BAITING REGULATIONS

Federal baiting regulations define key terms for hunters and land managers, and clarify conditions under which you may legally hunt waterfowl and other migratory game birds. As a waterfowl hunter or land manager, it is your responsibility to know and obey all Federal and State laws that govern the sport. Rules that affect waterfowl hunting also apply to hunting coots and all references to waterfowl encompass these birds as well. Federal regulations are more restrictive for waterfowl hunting than for dove hunting.

For further information, go to www.fws.gov/le/huntfish/waterfowl_baiting.htm.

Definitions from Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20.11

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, that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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 State Research, Education, and 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 State Research, Education, and 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 10 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, discing, 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.

Excerpts from Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20.21(i)

No persons shall take migratory game birds:

- (i) 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. However, nothing in this paragraph prohibits:
- (1) The taking of any migratory game bird, including waterfowl and coots, on or over the following lands or areas that are not otherwise baited areas —
 - (i) Standing crops or flooded standing crops (including aquatics); standing, flooded, or manipulated natural vegetation; flooded harvested croplands; or lands or areas where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation or normal soil stabilization practice;
 - (ii) From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation;
 - (iii) From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with vegetation from agricultural crops, as long as such camouflaging does not result in the exposing, depositing, distributing or scattering of grain or other feed; or
 - (iv) Standing or flooded standing agricultural crops where grain is inadvertently scattered solely as a result of a hunter entering or exiting a hunting area, placing decoys, or retrieving downed birds.

What Part 20.21(i) of the Code of Federal Regulations Means

You cannot hunt waterfowl or any other migratory game bird by the aid of baiting or on or over any baited area where you know or reasonably should know that the area is or has been baited. Baiting is the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of salt, grain, or other feed that could lure or attract migratory game birds to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them. A baited area is any area on which salt, grain, or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, if that salt, grain, or feed could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds.

The 10-Day Rule

A baited area remains off limits to hunting for 10 days after all salt, grain, or other feed has been completely removed. Waterfowl will habitually still be attracted to the same area even after the bait is gone. The 10-day rule recognizes that removing bait does not remove the lure created and that waterfowl will still be attracted to the area.

What is Legal?

You can hunt migratory game birds, including waterfowl, on, over, or from:

- 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 harvesting or normal agricultural 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.

- From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation.
- From 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. You should be aware that seeds or grains from such vegetation could create a baited area.
- On or over standing, or flooded standing agricultural 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 grains will create a baited area.

Waterfowl Hunting on Agricultural Lands

Agricultural lands offer prime waterfowl hunting opportunities. You can hunt waterfowl in fields of unharvested standing crops. You can also hunt over standing crops that have been flooded. You can flood fields after crops are harvested and use these areas for waterfowl hunting.

The presence of seed or grain in an agricultural area rules out waterfowl hunting unless the seed or grain is scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, normal agricultural harvesting, normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation, or normal agricultural soil stabilization practice. A normal agricultural planting, normal agricultural harvesting, or normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation means a planting or harvesting undertaken to produce **and** gather a crop, or manipulation after such harvest and removal of grain. These activities must be conducted in accordance with official recommendations of the State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Planting and Harvesting

A normal agricultural planting is undertaken for the purpose of producing **and** gathering a crop. Normal agricultural plantings do not involve the placement of seeds in piles or other concentrations. Relevant factors include recommended planting dates, proper seed distribution, seed bed preparation, application rate, and seed viability. A normal soil stabilization practice means a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation conducted in accordance with official recommendations of USDA State Extension Specialists. Lands planted by means of top sowing or aerial seeding can **only** be hunted if seeds are present solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting or normal soil stabilization practice. Lands planted as part of normal soil stabilization practices may be hunted over even if there is no intent to gather a crop.

Seeds that remain on the surface of the ground as the result of planting wildlife food plots, planting a “goose field,” or planting for erosion control on a construction site are examples of activities that constitute baiting since they are not plantings undertaken for the purpose of producing and gathering a crop, agricultural soil erosion control, or post-mining land reclamation. You cannot hunt waterfowl over such areas.

A normal agricultural harvest is undertaken for the purpose of gathering a crop. The arrangement of harvested grain in long rows or piles should raise questions about the legality of the area for waterfowl hunting. A normal post-harvest manipulation first requires a normal agricultural harvest and removal of grain before any manipulation of remaining agricultural

vegetation, such as corn stubble or rice stubble. You should be aware that although you can hunt doves over manipulated agricultural crops, you cannot hunt waterfowl over manipulated agricultural crops except after the field has been subject to a normal harvest and removal of grain (i.e., post-harvest manipulation).

If, for whatever reason, an agricultural crop or a portion of an agricultural crop has not been harvested (i.e., equipment failure, weather, insect infestation, disease, etc.) and the crop or remaining portion of the crop has been manipulated, then the area is a baited area and cannot be hunted for waterfowl. For example, no hunting could occur on or over a field of sweet corn that has been partially harvested and the remainder manipulated. To be considered normal, an agricultural planting, agricultural harvesting, and agricultural post-harvest manipulation must be conducted in accordance with official recommendations of USDA State Extension Specialists. However, the Service will continue to make final determinations about whether official recommendations were followed.

Hunting Over Natural Vegetation

Natural vegetation is any non-agricultural, native, or naturalized plant species that grows at a site in response to planting or from existing seeds or other propagules. Natural vegetation does not include planted millet because of its use as both an agricultural crop and a species of natural vegetation for moist soil management. However, planted millet that grows on its own in subsequent years is considered natural vegetation.

If you restore and manage wetlands as habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds, you can manipulate the natural vegetation in these areas and make them available for hunting. Activities that fall within the definition of “manipulation” include mowing, shredding, discing, rolling, chopping, trampling, flattening, burning, and herbicide treatments.

Natural vegetation is not intended to include plants grown as agricultural crops.

Problem Areas

Feeding waterfowl. Many people feed waterfowl for the pleasure of birdwatching. It is illegal to hunt migratory game birds in an area where such feeding has occurred that could lure or attract birds to, on, or over any area where hunters are attempting to take them. The 10-day rule applies to such areas, and any salt, grain, or feed must be gone 10 days before hunting. The use of sand, shell grit, and artificial corn is not prohibited.

Distance. How close to bait can you hunt without breaking the law? There is no set distance. Court rulings vary depending on the circumstances. The influence of bait will increase or decrease depending on such factors as topography, weather, and waterfowl flight patterns. The question of distance can only be answered on a case-by-case basis. Remember, however, that the law prohibits hunting if bait is present that could lure or attract birds “to, on, or over areas where hunters are attempting to take them.”

Manipulation of crops and other agricultural practices. Although you can hunt waterfowl over natural vegetation that has been manipulated, you cannot hunt waterfowl over any manipulations of agricultural crops that occur before harvest and removal of grain. You cannot hunt waterfowl on or over areas where farmers feed grain to livestock, store grain, or engage in other normal agricultural practices. You cannot hunt waterfowl on or over ponds or other waters where fish farmers feed food to their fish, or on or over areas where wildlife is being fed.

The Hunter's Responsibility

As a hunter, you are responsible for determining whether your proposed hunting area is baited. Before hunting, you should:

- Familiarize yourself with Federal and State migratory game bird hunting regulations.
- Ask the landowner, your host or guide, and your hunting partners if the area has been baited.
- Suspect the presence of bait if you see waterfowl feeding in a particular area in unusual concentrations or displaying a lack of caution.
- Look for grain or other feed in the water, along the shore, and on the field. Pay particular attention to the presence of spilled grain on harvested fields and seeds planted by means of top-sowing.
- Confirm that scattered seeds or grains on agricultural lands are present solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, normal agricultural harvesting, normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation, or normal soil stabilization practice by consulting with USDA State Extension Specialists.
- Abandon the hunting site if you find grain or feed in an area and are uncertain about why it is there.

Other Responsibilities

If you prepare lands for hunting, participate in such preparations, or direct such preparations, it is important for you to know and understand what practices constitute baiting. You should know **prior to hunting** what activities constitute baiting and when lands or other areas would be considered baited. If you bait or direct that an area be baited and allow hunting to proceed, you risk being charged with an offense that carries significant penalties.

Strict Liability

For years, courts in most parts of this country had historically applied a strict liability standard to baiting offenses. Under this standard, law enforcement officers did not have to prove that hunters knew bait was present in order to prove a violation had occurred. However, on October 30, 1998, Public Law 105-312 eliminated strict liability for baiting offenses and instead made it unlawful for anyone to hunt with the aid of bait "if the person knows or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area." The Service has incorporated this "knows or reasonably should know" standard in the baiting regulation to promote public understanding of the new law. As in the past, however, hunters are responsible for ensuring that no bait is present before they begin hunting. They should thoroughly inspect the field or marsh, question landowners and guides, and take other reasonable steps to verify the legality of their hunt.

Penalties

Legislators increased the maximum fine for hunting over bait from \$5,000 to \$15,000. They also made the placement of bait a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act punishable by a fine up to \$100,000 for an individual or \$200,000 for an organization, a prison term of up to one year, or both. In the past, individuals who baited fields were charged with "aiding and abetting," that is, helping someone else commit the crime of hunting over bait. They face stiffer penalties under the new law.

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