



Summary of Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations

AUGUST 2023
TO JULY 2024



Notice: Avian influenza virus (AIV) is a contagious viral infection that can affect domestic and wild birds throughout the world. Guidelines have been developed to prevent or mitigate the spread of this virus, and for precautionary measures to take when handling wild game. For more information, please refer to www.canada.ca/Avian-flu and the *Wildlife and Avian Influenza – Handling Guidelines to Protect Your Health* web page on the Government of Canada website.

To hunt migratory game birds in Canada, you must possess:

- a valid Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit;
- a Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp on the permit.

These two documents are issued by the federal government and are valid in all provinces and territories.

The 2023 federal permit is also valid for the 2024 spring special conservation harvest for Snow Geese and Ross’s Geese.

Hunting Districts

1. Hudson–James Bay District

Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 1A, 1B, and the portions of WMUs 1D, 25, and 26 lying north of latitude 51° and east of longitude 83°45’.

2. Northern District

WMU 1C, those portions of WMU 1D, 25 and 26 lying south of latitude 51° and west of longitude 83°45’, as well as WMUs 2 to 24 inclusive, 27 to 41 inclusive, and 45.

3. Central District

WMUs 42 to 44 inclusive, 46 to 50 inclusive, and 53 to 59 inclusive.

4. Southern District

WMUs 60 to 95 inclusive.

For more information on WMUs, contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and see this link: www.ontario.ca/page/find-wildlife-management-unit-wmu-map.

Note that south of the French and Mattawa rivers, Sunday gun hunting is permitted by provincial regulations in some municipalities, but not all. Season dates for Canada Geese and Cackling Geese in the Southern District may differ between municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is permitted and those where it is not. Hunters should consult the provincial regulations for information about WMUs and a list of municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is permitted.

Most provinces and territories have additional licence requirements for hunting migratory birds and/or to carry firearms. To know what you require, and if there are further restrictions for hunting migratory birds, please verify the applicable regulations for the province/territory where you will be hunting. Municipalities may have additional restrictions on discharging firearms. Note that all required permits and licences must be in your possession while you are hunting.



You can purchase your Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit by visiting the Government of Canada website (www.permis-permits.ec.gc.ca)

It is no longer required to sign the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit (both physical and electronic forms). This allows you to carry your permit in a digital format, such as on a mobile device. If you choose to carry your permit on your mobile device, it must be in the PDF format provided by the e-permitting system (a photograph or screenshot of your permit is not valid). It is also your responsibility to be able to show the permit to a game officer immediately upon request.

Consultation Process and Migratory Birds Regulatory Reports

A national consultation process has been developed to provide an opportunity for everyone to participate in developing the migratory birds hunting regulations. For more information, consult the *Migratory Birds Regulatory Report Series* web page on the Government of Canada website.

Youth Migratory Game Bird Hunting (MGBH) Permit

Hunters who are minors (less than 18 years old) have the option to hunt with a Youth MGBH permit. The Youth MGBH permit, as well as the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation stamp, can only be obtained through our online purchasing system, free of charge. The Youth MGBH permit is not available for purchase from independent vendors.

The Youth MGBH permit provides young hunters with the opportunity to practice their skills under the supervision of an adult mentor (in possession of a MGBH Permit) throughout the full open season and the special conservation season, and provides Youth MGBH Permit holders with their own daily bag and possession limits.

Mentors must possess their own MGBH permit, must have held such a permit in a previous year, and may accompany no more than two youth hunters in all regions except Ontario. In Ontario, according to provincial law, a mentor may accompany no more than one youth. Mentors may carry a firearm, and may hunt. For more information on the new rules pertaining to hunting migratory game birds in the modernized *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022*, please consult the Government of Canada *Migratory Game Bird Hunting* website.

Enforcement

The *Environmental Violations Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations* authorize game officers to use administrative monetary penalties (AMPs) to enforce the provisions of the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* (MBCA) and its associated regulations.

The fine regime and penalty provisions in the MBCA and the *Designation of Regulatory Provisions for Purposes of Enforcement (Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994) Regulations* allow courts to impose penalties that reflect the seriousness of offences following a conviction pursuant to the MBCA or its associated regulations.

For more information on AMPs and the fine regime, consult the *About the Environmental Enforcement Act* web page on the Government of Canada website.



Game officers enforce the federal MBCA throughout Canada. This law regulates human activities such as hunting that could adversely affect long-term wildlife conservation. Individuals may be subject to a minimum penalty of \$5000 if they are found liable for committing an offence on summary conviction. For any questions, please contact Wildlife Enforcement by the telephone or email found with the regional office address at the end of this summary.

Shot

- Lead shot is toxic to wildlife and the environment.
- In Ontario, the use and possession of shot other than non-toxic shot is prohibited while hunting migratory game birds other than woodcock. Within National Wildlife Areas that allow hunting, the possession of lead shot is prohibited for all types of hunting, including the hunting of migratory and upland game birds.
- Hunters should consult provincial or territorial regulations for additional restrictions.

To reduce your exposure to contaminants in meat, make sure, before cooking it, to:

- remove the shot from birds hunted with lead shot;
- remove the skin and fat from fish-eating birds.

Species at Risk

- **Barrow's Goldeneye** is listed in the *Species at Risk Act* as a species of special concern, and the **daily bag and possession limit is 1 bird**.
- There is no open season for **Harlequin Ducks, King Rails** and **Yellow Rails**.

Crime Stoppers

Anyone wishing to report illegal hunting activities, illegal selling of birds or other offences related to migratory birds is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Your call is anonymous, and you may be eligible for a cash reward.

Open Seasons and Daily Bag and Possession Limits for Migratory Game Birds in Ontario

Area	Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Hudson-James Bay District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks), combined	September 1 to December 16	6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye and not more than 4 may be American Black Ducks)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16	5	No limit
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16	50	No limit
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 1 to December 16	5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails and King Rails), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 1 to December 16	10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to December 16	8	24
	Snipe	September 1 to December 16	10	30
	Mourning Doves	No open season	N/A	N/A

Northern District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks), combined	September 10 to December 25		6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye and not more than 4 may be American Black Ducks)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to September 9		10 (in WMUs 8, 10, 13, 36, 37, 39, 41 and 45)	No limit
		September 10 to December 16		5 (in other WMUs)	
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16		20	No limit
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 1 to December 16		5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails and King Rails), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 10 to December 25		10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to December 16		8	24
	Snipe	September 10 to December 25		10	30
Mourning Doves	No open season		N/A	N/A	
Central District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks), combined	September 16 to December 31		6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye and not more than 4 may be American Black Ducks)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to September 15		10	No limit
		September 16 to December 16		5	
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16		20	No limit
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 1 to December 16		5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails and King Rails), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 16 to December 31		10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to December 16		8	24
	Snipe	September 16 to December 31		10	30
Mourning Doves	September 1 to November 30		15	45	
Southern District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks), combined	September 23 to January 7		6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye and not more than 2 may be American Black Ducks)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	In municipalities where hunting with guns on Sunday is permitted by provincial regulations.	September 7 to September 17	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)	No limit
				8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85, 93 and 94)	
			September 23 to December 27	5 (in WMUs 60 to 64, 66 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95, from September 23 to October 27)	
				3 (in WMUs 65, 82, 84, 85 and 93, from September 23 to October 27)	
				5 (in WMUs 60 to 93 and 95 from October 28 to December 27)	
			3 (in WMU 94)		
		In municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is not permitted by provincial regulations. Excluding any Sunday in these periods. If a municipality within a WMU allows Sunday hunting, the season is closed within that municipality.	September 7 to September 17	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)	
				8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85, 93 and 94)	
			September 23 to January 6	5 (in WMUs 60 to 64, 66 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95, from September 23 to October 27)	
			3 (in WMUs 65, 82, 84, 85 and 93, from September 23 to October 27)		
	5 (in WMUs 60 to 93 and 95 from October 28 to January 6)				
	3 (in WMU 94)				
	February 24 to March 2	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)			
		8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85 and 93)			
		No open season in WMU 94			
Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 23 to January 7. This open season excludes Sundays in municipalities where hunting with guns on Sunday is not permitted by provincial regulations.		20	No limit	
February 24 to March 2, excluding Sundays, in municipalities where hunting with guns on Sunday is not permitted by provincial regulations. If a municipality within a WMU allows Sunday hunting, the season is closed within that municipality.					
Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 23 to January 7		5	15	

Rails (other than Yellow Rails and King Rails), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 23 to January 7	10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
Woodcock	September 15 to September 24. The season is only open in WMUs 60 to 67 and 69B.	8	24
	September 25 to December 20. The season is only open in WMUs 60 to 95.		
Snipe	September 23 to January 7	10	30
Mourning Doves	September 1 to November 30	15	45

Special Measures for Overabundant Species in Ontario

Area	Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit	Additional Hunting Method or Equipment
Southern District (only WMUs 65, 66, 67 and 69B)	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 23 to January 7	20	No limit	Electronic bird calls of Snow Geese and Ross's Geese may be used. While hunting those species with those calls, any other species of migratory bird for which it is open season may be hunted.
		February 24 to March 2, excluding Sundays, in municipalities where hunting with guns on Sundays is not permitted by provincial regulations. If a municipality within a WMU allows Sunday hunting, the season is closed within that municipality.			
		March 1 to May 31			

The information presented here is a summary of the law. If there is a discrepancy between the law and this summary, the law prevails. For more information, consult the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022*, the frequently asked questions for hunters, and other information on the Government of Canada website (www.canada.ca).

You may also direct your questions to:

**Environment and Climate Change Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service**

Regional Office

4905 Dufferin Street
Toronto, Ontario M3H 5T4
Tel.: 1-800-668-6767
enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Report Your Migratory Bird Bands:
Call 1-800-327-BAND (2263) to leave a message or go to:
www.reportband.gov

