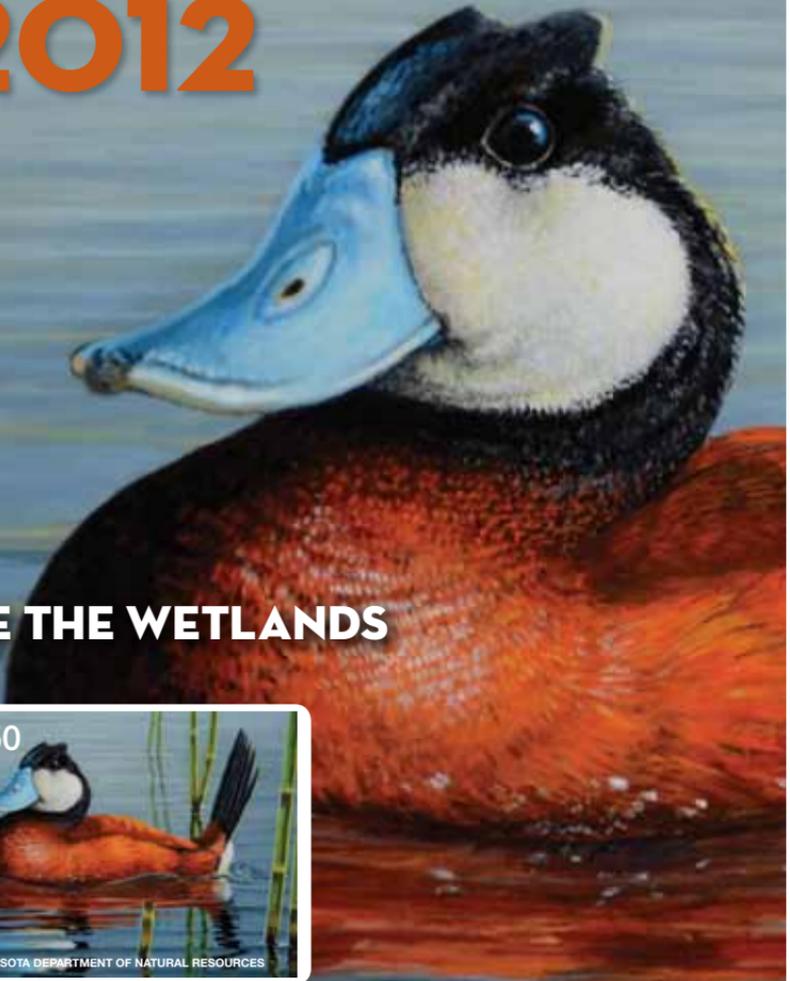


## MINNESOTA HUNTING REGULATIONS

# WATERFOWL 2012



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Henry Freeman was the sole survivor of the Whitby (England) lifeboat disaster of 1861. Twelve other members of his crew drowned when their lifeboat capsized in mountainous seas attempting the rescue of a sinking schooner's crew. His escape from death was attributed to the newly-introduced cork life jacket he is wearing in this photograph.

*Photo courtesy The Sutcliffe Gallery.*



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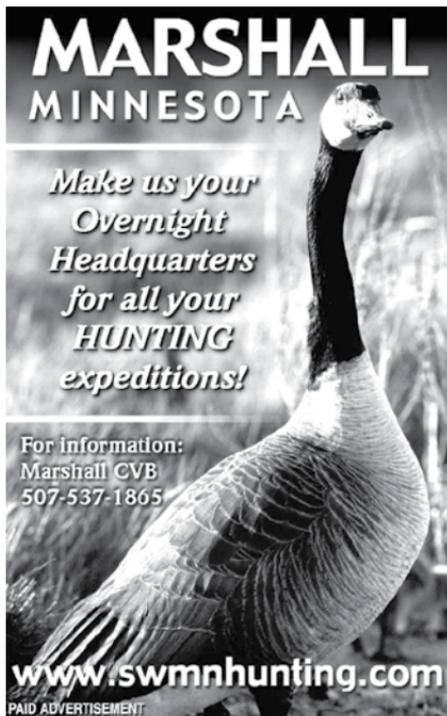
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## ON THE COVER



Ruddy duck  
Painting by Stephen P. Hamrick, Lakeville, MN

*Funds raised through the sale of Minnesota state duck stamps pay for waterfowl research, management and habitat thereby improving conditions for the state's resident and migrating waterfowl.*



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[mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)

FAW-109-13

# LICENSE INFORMATION

## GENERAL

A resident waterfowl hunter 16 years or older and all nonresident waterfowl hunters<sup>+</sup> must carry:

1. Minnesota Waterfowl Stamp\* validation (\$7.50), (residents ages 18-64)
2. a federal Migratory Bird Hunting electronic validation (\$17) or pictorial Conservation Stamp signed in ink across the face (\$15) \*\*
3. proof of Minnesota HIP registration and
4. one of the following licenses
  - \$19 Resident Small Game License
  - \$29.50 Resident Individual Sports License
  - \$38.50 Resident Combination Sports (small game hunting, husband-wife angling)
  - \$12.50 Resident Senior Citizen Small Game (65 years or older)
  - \$12.50 Youth Small Game (ages 16-17)
  - \$12.50 Nonresident youth small game (under 18)
  - \$84.50 Nonresident small game license
  - \$\*\*\* Lifetime Small Game License (federal, state waterfowl stamps required)
  - \$\*\*\* Lifetime Individual Sports License (federal, state waterfowl stamps required)

Prices shown do not include additional fees charged for issuing licenses.

There is no issuing fee for state stamps issued simultaneously with a license.

**Special goose permit (ages 18-64) required for the September season. (\$4)**

**Sandhill crane permit (ages 18-64) required for NW crane season. (\$3)**

- \* State stamp validations are not required for residents under age 18 or age 65 or older.
- \*\* An electronically-issued federal stamp is valid for 45 days. Pictorial stamps, when received by mail, must be signed and in the possession of the hunter.
- \*\*\* Price varies depending on age at purchase. Lifetime license applications are available by calling toll free 1-888-646-6367 or online at [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)
- <sup>+</sup> All hunters age 16 and older must have a federal migratory waterfowl stamp.

(Persons hunting waterfowl on commercial shooting preserves are required to have both a federal and a state duck stamp validation in addition to a small game license. The only exception is when taking only marked, pen-reared mallards.)

### Notes:

- There are licensing exceptions for landowners, military personnel and others. See pages 15-16 and 33 of the 2012 Hunting Regulations Handbook for a complete listing of license requirements.
- Youth age 15 and under are required to obtain a free license before hunting small game, including waterfowl. HIP certification is also required to hunt waterfowl or migratory game birds.

## YOU MUST BE HIP CERTIFIED

Before hunting waterfowl or migratory game birds (except sandhill cranes), you must be Harvest Information Program (HIP) certified by answering "yes" when asked whether you intend to hunt migratory birds at the time you buy your small game or sports license. If you don't, you can still answer "yes" at a later date at no cost by getting a HIP receipt at any electronic license sales location. Evidence of compliance will be noted on your license as "HIP Certified" and must be carried while hunting migratory birds.

## WHY HIP?

Using information gathered with HIP, DNR waterfowl biologists and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are developing more reliable estimates of the number of all migratory birds harvested throughout the country.

## FIREARMS SAFETY CERTIFICATE

Anyone born after Dec. 31, 1979 must have a Firearms Safety Certificate, Apprentice Hunter Validation (residents only), a previous hunting license with a firearms safety indicator or other evidence of successfully completing a hunter safety course to obtain a license to take wild animals with firearms in Minnesota.

# QUESTIONS ABOUT LICENSES

## WHERE CAN I BUY A LICENSE OR STAMP?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources issues licenses through 1,500 license agent locations throughout Minnesota—sporting goods stores, hunting and fishing supplies stores and some discount chains.

Federal migratory waterfowl stamps validations will be available at all of Minnesota's 1,500 electronic license vendors. The electronic validation for the federal stamp is valid for up to 45 days until the customer receives the pictorial stamp by mail, when it must be signed and kept in possession.

## HOW DO I BUY A LICENSE ONLINE OR BY TELEPHONE?

Licenses may be purchased via the DNR website at [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov) or by calling toll free (888) 665-4236. Additional convenience fees are added for sales via the internet or telephone.

## SUGGESTED SHOT SIZE SELECTION FOR WATERFOWL

	MINIMUM	TYPICAL HUNTING CONDITIONS	MINIMUM DESIRED PATTERN DENSITY (hits / 30-inch circle)
SMALL / MEDIUM DUCKS	6 steel*	3 - 4 steel	120
	6 bismuth	4 - 6 bismuth	
	6 tungsten alloy	4 - 6 tungsten alloy	
LARGE DUCKS	4 steel	3 steel	90
	6 bismuth	4 bismuth	
	6 tungsten alloy	4 - 6 tungsten alloy	
SMALL GEESE	2 steel	1 - BB steel	60
	4 bismuth	2 bismuth	
	4 tungsten alloy	2 tungsten alloy	
LARGE GEESE	2 steel	BB - BBB steel	50
	2 bismuth	1 - BB bismuth	
	4 tungsten alloy	2 - BB tungsten alloy	

\*Close range—less than 35 yards

**Note:** Small shot (#6) is excellent for swatter loads to kill waterfowl hit, but not dead on the water.

Pattern testing should be done at the distance typical of your hunting conditions. Pattern testing is as important for the waterfowl hunter as sighting in is for the deer hunter.

## For Your Information

Carlos Avery WMA Controlled Hunt Zone—A special restricted access hunt will be held in the pool 2 portion of the sanctuary at Carlos Avery WMA in Anoka County. Two blinds will be available by drawing on Saturday and Tuesday mornings through the waterfowl season.

Applications will be accepted for groups of up to 4 with preference given to groups with at least one youth hunter (age 17 and under) or one senior hunter (age 65 and over). Minnesota Waterfowl Association will conduct drawings for blinds two weeks prior to each week of hunting. For rules, application form and dates go to:

<http://www.mndnr.gov/averyhunt>,

<http://www.mnwaterfowl.com/>, or

call Carlos Avery WMA Headquarters at 651-296-5200



# GENERAL WATERFOWL REGULATIONS

## NEW FOR 2012

### General

- The early goose season will be held Sept. 1-21.
- The daily bag limit for Scaup has been increased to four.
- Motorized decoys controlled by remote may be used for taking migrating waterfowl and doves when and where they are otherwise legal.
- The Sandhill crane season (northwest zone only) will be open Sept. 15-Oct. 21.
- The regular waterfowl season will open statewide on Sept. 22. The season will then be split in the central and south zones to provide additional hunting opportunity. See page 20 for details.
- Shooting hours will be one-half hour before sunrise until 4 p.m. from Sept. 22 through Oct. 6 and until sunset thereafter.
- Goose season will run concurrent with duck season, but will close in December, depending on zone.
- Youth waterfowl day will be Sept. 8. (see page 20).
- Falconry waterfowl season will run concurrent with the open duck season with a split in the late season. See page 20 for details.
- The Rochester goose zone is no longer necessary due to the late season closure in the south zone.

## LICENSE VALIDATION/APPRENTICE HUNTER

- License validations for state migratory waterfowl stamps are legal for hunting without the pictorial stamp. Purchasers can request the optional pictorial stamp for a fee but it is not required for hunting.
- Apprentice hunter validation is now available for Minnesota residents who would normally be required to possess a firearms safety certificate to hunt small game or deer. See pages 13 and 30 of the *2012 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Handbook* for details.



### AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

The invasive faucet snail is an increasing threat to waterfowl populations and could be inadvertently spread on waterfowl hunting equipment — by directly attaching to equipment, within mud, and by attaching to aquatic plants. These small snails (up to 1/2 inch, but usually smaller) are a co-host for a parasite that kills diving ducks and coots. They caused thousands of waterfowl in Minnesota to die in recent years. They are designated as a prohibited invasive species and are illegal to transport. Hunters are required to remove faucet snails and other prohibited invasive species from boats, waders, push poles, decoys and decoy anchors before leaving the water access to avoid their spread. The snails can live out of water for more than 5 days, so double checking for snails and cleaning off equipment before reuse is also strongly recommended.

## DEFINITIONS

- **"Migratory game birds"** means ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, moorhens (gallinules), woodcock, rails, snipe, and mourning doves.
- **"Migratory waterfowl"** means ducks, geese, and mergansers.
- **"Undressed bird"** means ducks with one fully feathered wing and head attached or geese with one fully feathered wing attached.

## NON-TOXIC SHOT REQUIRED

It is unlawful to take geese, ducks, mergansers, coots, moorhens, or sandhill cranes with lead shot or while having any lead shot in possession. This restriction includes muzzle loading shotguns and taking pen-reared mallards on commercial shooting preserves. Only shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be used.

## SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for coots, ducks, geese, moorhens, sandhill cranes (NW zone only) rails and snipe are one-half hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. from Sept. 22 through Saturday Oct. 6, and until sunset thereafter. See sunrise/sunset tables inside back cover.

## DON'T SHOOT A SWAN

Both tundra and trumpeter swans are found in Minnesota and are not legal game birds. All-white trumpeter swans weigh up to 23 pounds. Young swans are gray in color.



Trumpeter Swan

## OPENING DAY POSSESSION LIMIT

On the opening day of the season, no person may possess more freshly killed migratory game birds than is allowed by the daily bag limit.

## RETRIEVAL

A person may not kill or wound any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and include it in the daily bag limit.

## TAKING IN OPEN WATER

A person may not take migratory waterfowl, coots, or rails in open water unless that person is:

- a) within a natural growth of vegetation sufficient to partially conceal the person or boat, or
- b) pursuing or shooting wounded birds (while in compliance with watercraft restrictions), or
- c) on a river or stream that is not more than 100 yards in width.

## WATERCRAFT

- A person using watercraft to take migratory waterfowl must comply with the provisions for "Taking in Open Water."
  - Migratory waterfowl may be taken from a floating watercraft if the craft is drifting, beached, moored, resting at anchor, or is being propelled by paddle, oars, or pole.
  - Migratory waterfowl may be taken from a watercraft propelled by motor or sails only if the motor is shut off and the sails are furled and the watercraft has stopped.
- While on the water and traveling to or from a site the person intends to hunt, unloaded and uncased firearms may be transported in a boat or other watercraft capable of being propelled by motor or sail. Firearms must be transported unloaded and cased in such watercraft:
  - Within Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey counties
  - Within the boundaries of a home rule, charter or statutory city with a population of 2,500 or more.
  - As otherwise restricted by game refuge, shining or night vision laws
- All watercraft (including boats used for duck hunting during the duck season) are required to carry and have readily accessible, one U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved **wearable** (Type I, II, or III) personal flotation device (PFD or life preserver) for each person on board. **In addition, boats 16 feet or longer** (except canoes and kayaks) must carry at least one USCG approved Type IV throwable device (boat cushion or ring buoy) for the boat. Due to change in federal requirements, **boat cushions are no longer acceptable as primary life saving devices.**
- During open waterfowl seasons, a person may not leave an unattended boat used for hunting waterfowl in public waters between sunset and one hour before sunrise unless the boat is adjacent to private land under control of the person and the water does not contain a natural growth of vegetation sufficient to partially conceal a hunter or a boat.
- A duck boat does not have to be licensed during the Waterfowl Hunting Season for waterfowl hunting only.
- Persons leaving waters of the state must drain boating-related equipment holding water and live wells and bilges by removing the drain plug before transporting the watercraft and associated equipment on public roads. Drain plugs, bailers, valves, or other devices used to control the draining of water from ballast tanks, bilges and live wells must be removed or opened while transporting watercraft on public roads.

## **BLINDS AND SINK BOXES**

- No person may erect a blind in public waters or on public land more than one hour before the open season for waterfowl.
- No person may take migratory waterfowl, coots, or rails using a sink box or in public waters from a permanent artificial blind. A sink box is a structure that allows a hunter to partially hide beneath the water surface.
- Any blind on public land or in public waters when not in use is considered public and not the property of the person who constructed it. Any use of threat or force against another person to gain possession of a blind is unlawful.
- Hunters may use aquatic emergent plants, such as cattails and bulrushes, cut above the waterline, for building blinds.

## **DECOYS**

- No person may place decoys on public lands or in public waters more than two hours before legal shooting hours for waterfowl.
- No person may leave decoys on public waters between sunset and two hours before legal shooting hours or leave decoys unattended during other times for more than three consecutive hours, except decoys may be left in waters adjacent to private land under control of the hunter where there is not sufficient natural vegetation growing in the water to partially conceal a hunter. A person may not leave decoys in public waters between sunset and one hour before shooting hours if the decoys constitute a navigational hazard.

## **MOTORIZED DECOY RESTRICTIONS**

From the opening day of the duck season (and on Youth Waterfowl Day) through Saturday October 6, a person may not use a motorized decoy or other motorized device designed to attract migratory waterfowl. On water bodies and lands fully contained within state wildlife management area boundaries, a person may not use motorized decoys or motorized devices designed to attract migratory waterfowl at any time during the waterfowl season. This restriction applies whether the motor is running or not. Devices without motors, such as wind-powered spinning-wing decoys, are not restricted under this law.

## **WHITEFISH NETTING SEASON OPEN**

The whitefish netting season on Leech Lake and other lakes is open during duck season. Be careful when venturing near buoys.

## **POSSESSING AND TRANSPORTING MIGRATORY WATERFOWL AND GAMEBIRDS**

A person may not possess or transport unlawfully taken migratory game birds. Migratory game birds, except doves, must be transported in an undressed condition (ducks with head and wing attached; geese and all other migrating game birds with a fully-feathered wing attached) at all times until delivery to either the taker's residence or a commercial processing facility.

## MIGRATORY WATERFOWL FEEDING AND RESTING AREAS

The following areas have been designated Migratory Waterfowl Feeding and Resting Areas. When posted as such during the open waterfowl season no person may use any motor-propelled watercraft except trolling motors with battery power of 12 volts or less on lakes as indicated by the asterisk (\*) in the table below.

COUNTY	LAKES
Beltrami Big Stone, Lac qui Parle and Swift	Puposky Lake* and Little Puposky Lake* Part of Marsh Lake, Thielke Lake
Blue Earth Carver Cass	Cottonwood Lake Tiger Lake* Big Rice, Goose, Mud Lakes
Clearwater Faribault Freeborn	Upper Rice Lake Part of Minnesota Lake* Bear Lake*, Upper Twin Lake*
Grant and Douglas Itasca Jackson	Part of Lake Christina Rice Lake (near Max) and Nature's (Squaw) Lake Part of South Heron Lake* and all of North Heron Lake* except Winzer Bay and North Marsh
Kandiyohi LeSueur McLeod	Wagonga Lake* and Lake Lillian* Dora, Diamond, Henry, Rice, Sanborn and Scotch lakes Bakers Lake* and the unnamed lake* in Sec. 28, Twp. 114N., R. 29 W. (Penn Twp.)
Nicollet Otter Tail	Oakleaf Lake That part of Lake Lizzie, also known as Rush Lake, located in Sec. 3-9, Twp. 136 N., R. 42 (Lida Twp.); and Mud Lake in Aastad Twp.
Polk Pope Scott Sibley Traverse	Turtle Lake* Nelson Lake* and Lake Johanna Pleasant Lake Washington Lake and Mud Lake in Washington Lake Twp. Part of Mud Lake*

## AIRBOATS PROHIBITED ON LAKES DESIGNATED FOR WILDLIFE USE

The use of airboats is prohibited at all times on the following lakes, which have been designated for wildlife management purposes, except as specifically authorized. Additional motorized restrictions may be posted at access points.

LAKE	COUNTY	LAKE	COUNTY
White Elk	Aitkin	Towner	Grant
Fish	Anoka	Heron	Jackson
Cottonwood	Blue Earth	Teal	Jackson
Perch	Blue Earth	Sanborn	LeSueur
Eagle	Blue Earth	Pierce	Martin
Rice	Blue Earth	Onamia	Mille Lacs
Hanska	Brown	Maria	Murray
Patterson	Carver	Round	Murray
Tiger	Carver	South Badger	Murray
Big Rice	Cass	North Badger	Murray
Augusta	Cottonwood	Swan	Nicollet
Bolstad Slough	Cottonwood	Little Rice	St. Louis
Dog	Crow Wing	Big Rice	St. Louis
Anka	Douglas	Sand	Sibley
Jennie	Douglas	Rice	Steele/Dodge
Christina	Douglas/Grant	Hassel	Swift
Rice	Faribault	Buffalo	Waseca
Minnesota	Faribault	Goose	Waseca
Bear	Freeborn	Willis	Waseca
Lower Twin	Freeborn	Pelican	Wright
Geneva	Freeborn	Smith	Wright
Upper Twin	Freeborn	Curtis	Yellow Medicine
Ash	Grant	Spellman (N. and S.)	Yellow Medicine
Denton Slough	Grant		

**Note:** The use of outboard motors (including electric trolling motors) or motorized water vehicles (including amphibious vehicles) is prohibited on most wildlife management areas, waterfowl production areas or national wildlife refuges. See page 104 of the Minnesota Hunting and Trapping Regulations for more details.

## For Your Information

### Report Your Bands. Call 1-800-327-BAND

Each year, state and federal waterfowl biologists mark thousands of waterfowl with numbered leg bands. Hunters who report recovered bands receive specific information on where and when the bird was banded while providing important information for waterfowl management. Bands may be reported by calling 1-800-327-BAND (2263) or online at [www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL).

**MALLARD**

Length—24"

Weight—2.75 lbs.



drake



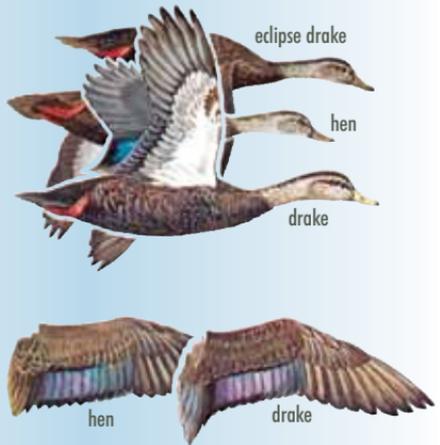
hen

The mallard is the state's most common duck. Typical Minnesota harvest: 270,000.

**BLACK DUCK**

Length—24"

Weight—2.75 lbs.



drake



hen

Primarily found in the Atlantic Flyway and, to a lesser extent, the Mississippi. There is a small breeding population in northeast Minnesota. Typical Minnesota harvest: 1,000.

## GADWALL

Length—21"

Weight—2 lbs.



drake



hen



drake

eclipse drake

hen



hen

drake

Often called "gray mallards" or "gray ducks," gadwalls are one of the earliest migrants. Typical Minnesota harvest: 36,000.

## WOOD DUCK

Length—18.5"

Weight—1.5 lbs.



drake



hen



drake



eclipse drake

hen



hen

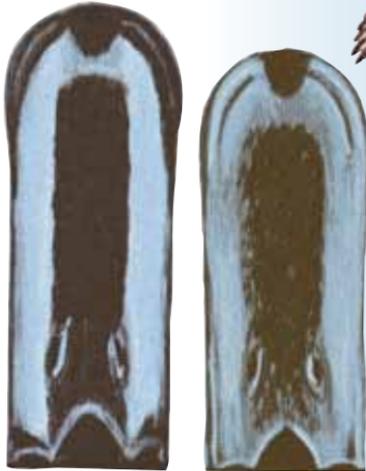
drake

Found in all flyways; most numerous in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. Typical Minnesota harvest: 125,000.

## PINTAIL

Length—26"

Weight—1.75 lbs.



drake

hen



drake

eclipse drake

hen

hen

drake

These ducks use all four flyways but are most plentiful in the west. Typical Minnesota harvest: 15,000.

## HOODED MERGANSER

Length—18"

Weight—1.5 lbs.



drake

hen



eclipse drake

drake

hen

hen

drake

Often seen in pairs or very small flocks. Typical Minnesota harvest: 9,000.

## SCAUP

**Greater** Length—18.5"  
Weight—2 lbs.

**Lesser** Length—17"  
Weight—1.75 lbs.



drake



hen



Lesser

hen

drake



Greater

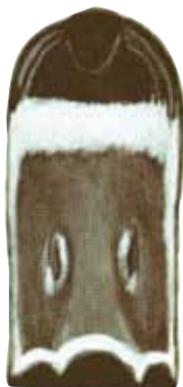
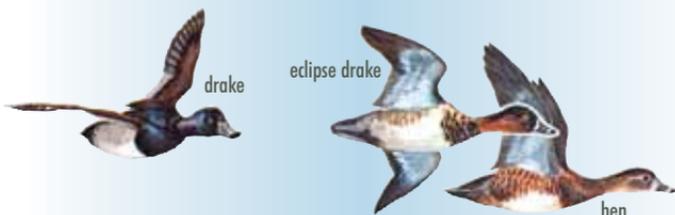
hen

drake

Except for the wing marks, greater and lesser scaup appear nearly identical in the field. The North American breeding population has rebounded in recent years. Minnesota harvest is at historic low levels and averages only about 10,000 birds.

## RINGNECK

Length—17"  
Weight—1.5 lbs.



drake



hen



hen

drake

Similar in appearance to scaup but more often found in fresh marshes and wooded ponds. Flocks of up to 200,000 stage on north central Minnesota refuges. Typical Minnesota harvest: 80,000.

## CANVASBACK

Length—22"

Weight—3 lbs.



drake



hen



drake

eclipse drake



hen



hen



drake

Tend to favor open-water areas.  
Normally late to start south.  
Typical Minnesota harvest:  
3,000.

## REDHEAD

Length—20"

Weight—2.5 lbs.



drake



hen



drake



eclipse drake



hen



hen



drake

Range coast to coast with the  
largest numbers in the Central  
Flyway. Often found associating  
with canvasback. Typical Minnesota  
harvest: 14,000.

## CANADA GOOSE

*Length—25-43"*

Average annual Minnesota harvest: 249,000. About 36 percent of the harvest occurs during the September season.



Canada Goose

## SNOW GOOSE

*Length—25-38"*

Black grin patch on bill is found only on Snow Geese.



Snow Goose

## BLUE SNOW GOOSE

*Length—25-30"*

The "Blue" goose is a variation of the Lesser Snow Goose species.

Average annual Minnesota harvest of snow geese and blue geese: 3,000.



"Blue" Snow Goose

## WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

*Length—25-30"*

The pinkish bill, white patch on front of head and dark bars on the belly identify this species. Uncommon in Minnesota, the average annual harvest is fewer than 200 birds.



White-Fronted Goose

# 2012 SEASON DATES AND BAG LIMITS

## DUCKS/COOTS

### DUCKS, COOTS, MERGANSERS, MOORHENS (GALLINULES)

Zone	Season Dates
North Zone	Sept. 22-Nov. 20
Central Zone	Sept. 22-30
South Zone	Oct. 6-Nov. 25
	Sept. 22-30
	Oct. 13-Dec. 2

See map, page 22

**Duck bag limits:** 6 ducks daily; may not include more than any combination of the following:

4 mallards (2 hen mallard), 4 scaup, 3 wood ducks, 2 pintails, 2 redheads, 1 black duck, 1 canvasback. If not listed up to 6 ducks of a species may be taken. The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit.

**Coot and moorhen (gallinule) bag limits:** Daily bag limit is 15. The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit. Shooting hours are the same as for the regular waterfowl season.

**Merganser bag limits:** Daily bag limit is 5, no more than 2 of which may be a hooded merganser. The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit.

## OTHER MIGRATORY BIRDS

	SEASON DATES	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Mourning doves	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15	30
Woodcock	Sept. 22 - Nov. 5	3	6
Sora and Virginia rail	Sept. 1 - Nov. 5	25 (in aggregate)	25 (in aggregate)
Common snipe (Wilson's or Jacksnipe)	Sept. 1 - Nov. 5	8	16
Sandhill crane*	Sept. 15 - Oct. 21	2	4

\* Northwest goose zone only, page 22

**Youth Hunt:** On Sept. 8, 2012, waterfowl hunters age 15 and younger, when accompanied by a non-hunting adult (age 18 and older, no license required) may take ducks, Canada geese, mergansers, coots and moorhens from one-half hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. Motorized decoy restrictions are in effect. Bag limits are the same as the regular duck season. Five Canada geese may be taken statewide. Hunters ages 13 to 15 must have a firearms safety certificate or apprentice hunter validation in their possession. All other migratory bird hunting regulations apply. **A free small game license and HIP certification are required for youth age 15 and under.**

## SPECIAL FALCONRY SEASON

### Dates:

- Ducks, coots and moorhens may be taken by falconry from Sept. 22 - Dec. 2 only when and where they may be taken by firearm and from Dec. 15 through Jan 29, 2013 statewide.
- Geese may be taken by falconry during any open goose season. Woodcock, rail doves and snipe may be taken by falconry from Sept. 1 to Dec. 16.

### Bag limits and hours:

- Three daily combined and six in possession combined.
- Falconry hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except after Sept. 22, when they are the same as the waterfowl shooting hours.

# SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for sandhill crane, rail, snipe, ducks and geese are one-half hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. from the opening day of duck season through Saturday Oct. 6, and until sunset thereafter. See youth hunt and early goose season for additional hours.

## GEESE

	DATES	BAG LIMITS
<b>NEW</b> North zone Canada Light geese White-front and brant	Sept. 22-Dec. 16	3 20 1
Central zone Canada Light geese White-front and brant	Sept. 22-30; Oct. 6-Dec. 21	3 20 1
South zone Canada Light geese White-front and brant	Sept. 22-30; Oct. 13-Dec. 28	3 20 1
September (early) Canada	Sept. 1-21	5

The possession limit is twice the daily bag limit. Zone maps are on page 22.  
Light geese include Snow, Blue and Ross' geese.

\* A special \$4 permit is required to hunt Canada geese during the special September season. All persons must have the permit to participate in this hunt, except residents under age 18 or age 65 and older and persons hunting on their own property. The permit is available from ELS license agents and the DNR License Center or by telephone. There is no deadline for purchasing a permit.

Note: Shooting hours during the early goose seasons are one half hour before sunrise to sunset.

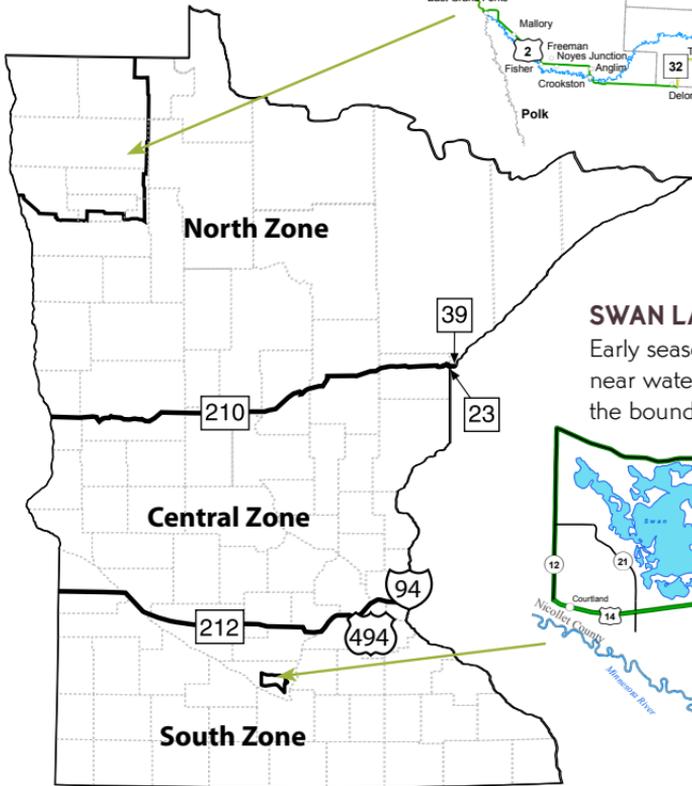
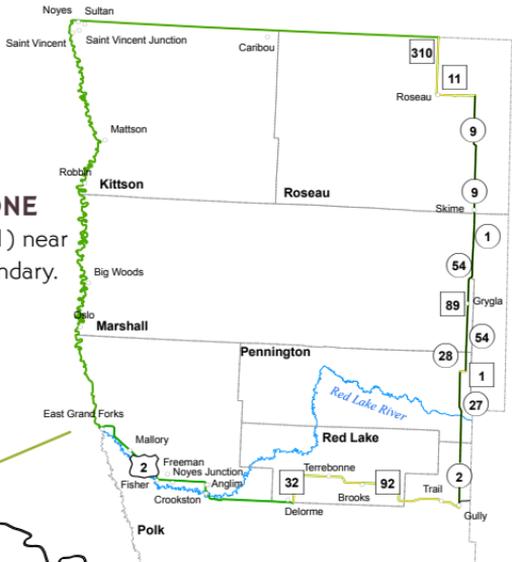
## SURFACE WATER RESTRICTIONS

"Surface water" includes, but is not limited to wetlands, lakes, rivers and streams. Temporarily flooded cropland, pasture, or other temporarily flooded areas (unless contiguous with lakes, wetlands, rivers or streams) are not included. This restriction does not apply to youth participating in the youth waterfowl hunt or in other areas as specifically authorized by the commissioner.

See additional restrictions on page 22.

## NORTHWEST GOOSE AND SANDHILL CRANE ZONE

Early season hunting (Sept. 1-21) near water prohibited within the boundary.



## SWAN LAKE AREA

Early season hunting (Sept. 1-21) near water prohibited within the boundary.



### LEGEND

	GOOSE HUNT BOUNDARY (VARIOUS COLORS)
	COUNTY BOUNDARY
	TOWNSHIP LINE
	U.S. HIGHWAY
	STATE TRUNK HIGHWAY
	COUNTY STATE AID HIGHWAY
	INTERSTATE
	COUNTY ROAD

## SURFACE WATER RESTRICTIONS

A person may not hunt geese during the September goose season within 100 yards of surface water in the following areas:

- Northwest Goose and Sandhill crane zone
- Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area
- Swan Lake Area
- Ocheda Lake Game Refuge



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!**

**AVOID SPREADING INVASIVE SPECIES**

Aquatic invasive species such as purple loosestrife, Eurasian watermilfoil, and zebra mussels damage wildlife habitat and faucet snails kill waterfowl. It is illegal to transport most aquatic plants and zebra mussels in or on boats, trailers, or decoys in boats, when on roads. However, waterfowl hunters *may* use emergent aquatic plants, such as cattails and bulrushes, *cut above the waterline*, for building blinds. How to help:

- **Switch** to elliptical, bulb-shaped, or strap decoy anchors that won't collect submergent aquatic plants as easily.
- **Clean** aquatic plants, zebra mussels, snails and mud off of decoy lines or anchors, push poles, and waders.
- **Drain** the water from boats and equipment and leave drain plugs out when transporting.



### **BLINDS FOR HUNTERS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Lac qui Parle, Talcot Lake, Swan Lake and Whitewater Wildlife Management Areas have a number of duck or goose hunting blinds for hunters with disabilities. For more information, write to: Lac qui Parle WMA 14047 20th St. NW Watson, MN 56295; Nicollet area wildlife office (Swan Lake WMA) 501 Ninth St. Nicollet, MN 56074, Talcot Lake WMA, 40249 County Road 7, Dundee MN, 56131; Whitewater WMA 15035 Highway 74, Altura MN, 55910.

# Wipe 'Em Off. Wipe 'Em Out!



## Help Prevent The Spread Of Invasive Plants And Animals.

- Clean your gear before entering and leaving the recreation site.
- Remove mud and seeds from clothes, pets, boots, gear and vehicles.
- Burn only local or certified firewood.
- Stay on designated trails.

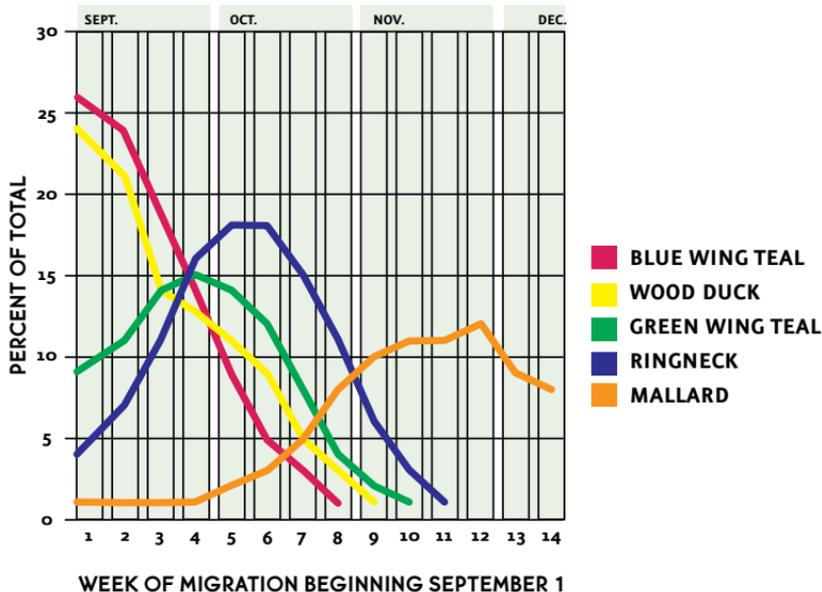


**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES  
IN YOUR TRACKS.**

[PlayCleanGo.org](http://PlayCleanGo.org)

# FALL MIGRATION

## Upper Mississippi Region



# MAKE THE SHOT

## It's the responsible thing to do

Quick, clean, humane kills reduce unretrieved losses of waterfowl. Make the shot by following these five steps.

### 1.) Identify your effective range

Shoot crossing clay targets at predetermined distances. Your effective range is the distance at which you can consistently break six out of eight targets (75 percent).

### 2.) Pattern your gun

Pattern-testing shotguns and shot shells is as important to the waterfowl hunter as "sighting in" is to the deer hunter. Be sure to know how your equipment will perform at your effective range plus or minus ten yards.

### 3.) Know the distance

Learn to estimate distance over the barrel of your shotgun through subtending.

Subtending is simply knowing how much of a duck or goose is covered by the end of your barrel at various distances when the shotgun is mounted. The most important distance to be able to determine is your effective range.

### 4.) Focus on the bird

Flocks of waterfowl tend to confuse the eye and make it hard to concentrate on one bird. Focus on the head, or even just the bill, of a single bird.

### 5.) Set up for success

Plan decoys and pass shooting so birds drop in open water or open field rather than dense vegetation. Having only one or two hunters shooting at one time will also help. Rotate shooting opportunities among hunters in the blind.

## STATE REFUGES OPEN TO GOOSE HUNTING

COUNTY	REFUGE	OPEN SEASON
<b>Beltrami</b>	Bemidji Game Refuge (except Lake Bemidji, Miss. River and Stump Lake)	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21
<b>Benton</b>	Sauk Rapids-Rice* Goose Refuge	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Chisago</b>	Linn Lake Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Clay</b>	Clay County Game Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21
<b>Cottonwood</b>	Talcot Lake Waterfowl Refuge	Goose hunters with disabilities. Contact refuge
<b>Dakota</b>	Vermillion Highlands Research, Recreation and WMA	Goose Dec. 10 - 28
<b>Dodge</b>	Claremont Game Refuge	Goose hunting
<b>Douglas</b>	Douglas County Goose Refuge * Evansville Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21
<b>Freeborn</b>	Moscow Game Refuge	Goose hunting
<b>Isanti</b>	Elizabeth Lake Game Refuge German Lake Game Refuge	Early goose season and youth participating in a designated hunting mentoring program only
<b>Martin</b>	Fox Lake Game Refuge** Mud-Bardwell Game Refuge**	Goose hunting Sept. 22, 23 Goose hunting Dec. 22 - 28 Canada geese Nov. 3 - Dec. 28
<b>Mower</b>	Austin Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Nicollet</b>	Swan Lake No. 2 Game Refuge (south island only)	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Nobles</b>	Ocheda Lake Game Refuge***	Youth Waterfowl Day Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21, Dec. 1 - 28
<b>Olmsted</b>	Rochester Game Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21
<b>Otter Tail</b>	Otter Tail County Goose Refuges *	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Pine</b>	Pine County Unit 2 Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Sherburne</b>	Sand Dunes Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting
<b>Stearns</b>	Stearns County Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting (south of Kimball)
<b>Steele</b>	Rickert Waterfowl Refuge except Myron Buelow Waterfowl Sanctuary WMA	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21
<b>Stevens</b>	Harstad Slough Waterfowl Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 21
<b>Washington</b>	St. Croix River Game Refuge Stillwater Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting Waterfowl hunting
<b>Watsonwan</b>	Saint James Game Refuge	Goose hunting Sept. 22 - 23

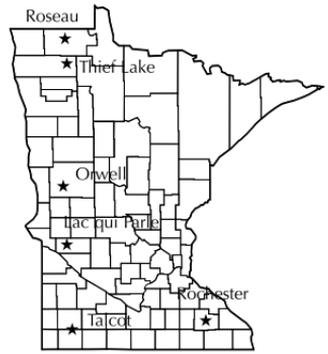
\* No hunting from roads or rights of way

\*\* No hunting within 100 yards of Fox, Temperance, Mud and Bardwell Lakes

\*\*\* No hunting within 100 yards of surface water during September season

## CONTROLLED HUNTING ZONES

Waterfowl or small game hunting, as specified, is restricted to designated hunting stations in the portions posted as controlled hunting zones on or adjacent to the Lac qui Parle, Roseau River, Thief Lake, Talcot Lake, and Orwell Wildlife Management Areas, and the Rochester Game Refuge.



### General Restrictions

The following regulations apply to persons within all the controlled hunting zones during the open Canada goose seasons or as otherwise specified:

- No more than one hunting party, consisting of no more than three hunters, may occupy any hunting station at one time.
- Waterfowl hunters must have their guns unloaded and cased except within 10 feet of a hunting station.
- The hunting and taking of migratory waterfowl is limited to a distance within 10 feet of each designated hunting station, except hunters may retrieve downed birds away from a posted station if they comply with all other refuge and trespass regulations.
- On public lands, dogs must be on a leash except within 10 feet of stations or while retrieving, and must be under control at all times.
- All persons occupying a hunting station must meet all license requirements to hunt waterfowl in Minnesota.
- No person may leave any refuse, offal, or feathers on public lands in the controlled hunting zone or in any parking lot or designated overnight use area on the management area.
- No alcoholic beverages may be consumed or possessed at any of the hunting stations on public lands.
- No person may loiter between the designated hunting stations on public lands.
- On public lands, after each party member has bagged a limit of Canada geese or expended their limit of shells (if applicable), the party must promptly leave the station.
- No trailers of any kind are allowed in designated parking lots.

## LAC QUI PARLE

The following regulations apply to all persons in the Lac qui Parle Controlled Hunting Zone from Oct. 18 - Nov. 30.

### Reservations and Permits

- Waterfowl and small game hunters may reserve hunting stations in accordance with rules available at the Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area headquarters. For information, contact: Lac qui Parle WMA, 14047 20th St. NW, Watson, MN 56295.
- On public lands, no person may hunt migratory waterfowl or small game in the controlled hunting zone without first registering at the check station and obtaining an entry permit. There is a daily fee of \$3 per hunter 18 years and older.
- The transfer of entry permits to other hunters is prohibited.

### Hunting Restrictions

- Hunters are limited to 12 shells per trip in possession.
- Within one hour of hunt completion, each party must return their entry permit to the check station and report number of geese harvested.
- Waterfowl and small game hunters must have guns unloaded and cased except within 10 feet of assigned hunting stations.
- Hunters are limited to one trip to the blinds before noon, and one trip after noon, per day.

The following regulations apply to waterfowl hunters in the Lac qui Parle Controlled Hunting Zone from December 1 through the close of the Canada goose season.

- Hunters must use designated hunting stations on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Hunters are limited to one trip to the blinds before noon, and one trip after noon, per day.
- Hunters are limited to 12 shells per trip in possession
- Hunters must have guns unloaded and cased except within 10 feet of assigned hunting stations.
- No person may park in or otherwise occupy any designated CHZ parking lot or occupy any hunting station from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

## THIEF LAKE

The following regulations apply to waterfowl and small game hunters in the Thief Lake Controlled Hunting Zone (CHZ) during all open waterfowl seasons (including Early September and Youth Waterfowl Seasons). The restriction on

small game hunting in the CHZ applies from the opening of the regular waterfowl season through October 22.

- Hunters must use designated hunting stations on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Hunters are limited to one trip to the blinds before noon, and one trip after noon, per day.
- Hunters are limited to 12 shells per trip in possession.
- Hunters must have guns unloaded and cased except within 10 feet of the hunting stations.
- Selected blinds will be posted closed during the early September Canada Goose Season because of their proximity to open water.
- No person may park in or otherwise occupy any designated CHZ parking lot or occupy any hunting station from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

## **ORWELL**

The following regulations apply to all persons in the Orwell Controlled Hunting Zone during the Regular Goose Season:

- Hunting, other than waterfowl, is prohibited.
- No person may enter the controlled hunting zone except when their vehicle is occupying a numbered parking stall in the designated parking lot in the controlled hunting zone.
- No persons other than those hunting at a station in the controlled hunting zone may occupy a numbered stall in a designated parking lot.
- Hunters must hunt only at the hunting stations having a number corresponding to their parking stall number.
- No person may park in or otherwise occupy any parking stall in the designated parking lot or occupy any hunting station during any two consecutive days or from one hour after the close of daily waterfowl shooting hours to 8 p.m.
- All guns must be unloaded and cased except within 10 feet of a hunting station.

## **ROCHESTER AND ROSEAU RIVER**

The following regulations apply to all persons in the Rochester and Roseau River Controlled Hunting Zones during the open Goose Season:

- The wildlife manager may limit all persons to one day of hunting in every three. If hunting is limited, the manager will stamp the date on the Small Game Hunting License or Firearms Safety Certificate of every person at each restricted hunting station. Persons may hunt at any restricted station on the day stamped, but may not occupy a restricted station for the next two days. Restricted stations will be posted.
- No one may be in a hunting station or designated parking lot from one hour after the close of the daily waterfowl shooting hours to 8 p.m.

## TALCOT LAKE

### Closed Area

All waterfowl hunting is prohibited upon or from the 1.5 mile segment of State Trunk Highway 62 and its right-of-way along the south boundary of the Talcot Lake Waterfowl Refuge (between the Cottonwood County line on the west and County Highway 7 on the east).

The following regulations apply to all persons in the Talcot Lake controlled hunting zones during Canada Goose Seasons:

### General Restrictions

- Hunting, other than waterfowl, is prohibited on public land in the East and West Side Controlled Hunting Zones.
- The wildlife manager may limit persons to one day of hunting in every three. The manager will stamp the date on the Small Game Hunting License or Firearms Safety Certificate of each person at a restricted hunting station. Persons may hunt at any restricted station on the day stamped, but may not occupy a restricted station for the next two days. Restricted stations will be posted.
- No persons may occupy a hunting station within a controlled hunting zone except when their vehicle is occupying a numbered parking stall in a designated parking lot in the controlled hunting zone. No persons other than those hunting at a hunting station may occupy a numbered stall or park in a designated parking lot.
- Waterfowl hunters must hunt only at the hunting stations having numbers corresponding to their parking stall number.
- No person may park in or otherwise occupy any parking stall in the designated parking lot or occupy any hunting station from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

## For Your Information

### Spring Snow Goose Season (Light Goose Conservation Action)

Minnesota again plans to participate in a cooperative light goose conservation action in March and April of 2013. This action is being taken in an attempt to reduce an overabundance of snow geese that is threatening their arctic breeding habitat. All participants must have a Light Goose Conservation Permit in their possession while attempting to take light geese. Details will be announced early in 2013.

# SUMMARY OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

*In addition to state regulations, the following federal rules apply to the taking, possession, shipping, transporting and storing of migratory gamebirds.*



*Caution: The following material is a summary. Each hunter should also consult the actual federal regulations found in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20. More restrictive regulations may apply to national wildlife refuges and state wildlife management areas open to public hunting.*

## ILLEGAL HUNTING METHODS

### **You may not hunt migratory birds**

...With a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.

...From a sink box or any other low floating device that conceals you beneath the surface of the water.

...From a motorboat or sailboat, unless you shut the motor off or furl the sail and the vessel is no longer in motion.

...Using live birds as decoys.

...Using recorded or electrically amplified bird calls or sounds or imitations of these calls and sounds.

...While possessing any shot other than approved nontoxic shot. A list of approved shot is available online at: [www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/currentbirdissues/nontoxic.htm](http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/currentbirdissues/nontoxic.htm)

...With a shotgun that can hold more than three shells, unless you plug it with a one piece filler that cannot be removed without disassembling the gun.

...From or by means, aid, or use of any motor vehicle, motor-driven land conveyance, or aircraft (if you are a paraplegic or are missing one or both legs, you may hunt from a stationary car or other stationary motor-driven land vehicle or conveyance).

...By the aid of baiting or on or over a baited area where a person knows or reasonably should know that the area is or has been baited. A baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after removal of bait.

## POSSESSION LIMIT

No person shall possess more migratory game birds taken in the United States than the possession limit or the aggregate possession limit, whichever applies.

## FIELD POSSESSION LIMIT

No person shall possess, have in custody or transport more than the daily bag limit or aggregate daily bag limit, whichever applies, of migratory game birds, tagged or not tagged at or between the place where taken and either (a) his automobile or principal means of land transportation; or (b) his

personal abode or temporary transient place of lodging; or (c) migratory bird preservation facility; or (d) a post office or (e) a common carrier facility.

## WANTON WASTE

You must make a reasonable effort to retrieve all migratory game birds that you kill or wound and keep these birds in your actual custody while in the field. You must immediately kill any wounded birds that you retrieve and count those birds toward your daily bag limit. Birds must remain in your possession while in the field. You may not give your birds to another person in the field regardless of whether or not they are properly tagged.

## TAGGING

You may not put or leave migratory game birds at any place or in the custody of another person unless you tag the birds with your signature, address, number of birds identified by species and the date you killed them.

## RALLYING

You may not hunt migratory game birds that have been concentrated, driven, rallied or stirred up with a motorized vehicle or sailboat.

## DRESSING

You may not completely field dress migratory birds, except doves, see page 11, before taking them from the field.

## DUAL VIOLATION

A violation of a state migratory game bird regulation is also a violation of federal regulations.

## PROTECTED BIRDS

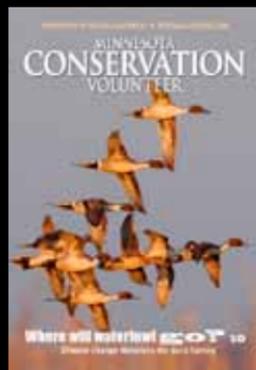
Federal law prohibits the killing of nongame migratory birds.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Federal migratory game bird hunting regulations can be found in 50 CFR Part 20. If you have additional questions about waterfowl hunting and the law, contact Division of Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5600 American Blvd, W. suite 990, Bloomington, MN 55437-1458. Telephone: (612) 713-5320.

**National Wildlife Refuge** specific regulations may differ from state regulations. Please consult the refuge specific hunting regulations where you plan to hunt or follow the link to find the individual refuge web site at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

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## WATERFOWL SEASON Q AND A WITH DNR COMMISSIONER TOM LANDWEHR

### **Q: What prompted the Minnesota DNR to add a third duck zone this year?**

A: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows states to select duck hunting zones and split season options that remain in place until 2015. States cannot change the boundaries during that time, but are not required to use the zones each year. We added a third duck zone in southern Minnesota this year to provide some later duck hunting opportunity in that portion of the state. This was supported by a waterfowl hunter focus group convened last year, public input meetings we held this spring, and by results from a waterfowl hunter survey conducted after last season. And, should duck season length need to be reduced in future years to only 30 or 45 days, having a third duck zone provides more opportunity to select duck season dates to satisfy hunter preferences in different regions of the state.

### **Q: Doesn't having three duck zones with different season dates add complexity?**

A: It does add a little complexity, but we had very few problems last year and the different season timing in each zone was well supported by hunters. The split season, or closed portion, used in the central (5 days) and south (12 days) duck zones also provide an additional weekend of duck hunting and allow the season to extend through Thanksgiving weekend, which is important to many duck hunters. And, keep in mind that duck season in the north zone will be identical to last year and the season in the central zone nearly identical, with slightly different timing for the five-day closed period. In the south duck zone, we will still provide early season opportunity for two weekends, close the season for 12 days, and reopen so the season ends later than the rest of the state. The second opener in the south zone should provide good hunting and there will be additional opportunity to hunt late mallards, as many hunters have requested in southern Minnesota. Using duck zones allows us to satisfy duck hunter preferences in different regions of the state.

### **Q: Why is this year's opening date Sept. 22? Has duck season ever opened that early in Minnesota?**

A: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows states in the Mississippi Flyway to open duck hunting seasons on the Saturday nearest Sept. 24, which is Sept. 22 this year. This is based on overall status of mallards in North America. This year's mallard breeding population estimate, which includes Minnesota, was almost 11 million mallards, which is well above long-term average of 8.1 million mallards and the second highest estimate since 1992. This year's opening date will be the earliest opening date since 1945, but the early opening date should again provide excellent opportunity for blue-winged teal and wood ducks before those species migrate south. Duck season opened on Sept. 24 last year and we saw large increases in both blue-winged teal and wood duck harvest in Minnesota, which is exactly what we hoped for with the earlier opening date.

**Q: What was the reaction to last year's increase in the hen mallard and wood duck bag limits?**

A: Both of these changes were well supported by waterfowl hunters. In fact, based on past waterfowl hunter surveys, we have learned that duck hunters generally support the bag limits that are set each year. Moreover, we felt that the changes were biologically-justified based on the status of breeding ducks in Minnesota and elsewhere. Last season's harvest of 181,000 mallards, was below the 10-year average mallard harvest of 206,000 birds and did not negatively affect the state's mallard numbers. We can monitor these changes over time with our waterfowl population surveys, harvest estimates, and banding data we collect annually.

**Q: The bag limit on scaup increased this year to 4/day. Why the change and what impact do you expect to see?**

A: The bag limit on scaup is determined by a harvest strategy used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This strategy is based on the continental breeding population of scaup and expected harvest levels in each flyway based on overall duck season length. The breeding population of scaup increased to over 5 million this spring, which is the highest it's been since 1991. Scaup harvest in Minnesota has been very low in recent years compared to historical averages. There is still uncertainty as to why the population declined, or why it increased this year, but the change in bag limits should have very little impact other than perhaps allowing a few diving duck hunters to target scaup in a few locations.

**Q: Why is Youth Waterfowl Day Sept. 8? That seems earlier than previous years.**

A: Youth waterfowl day can be held up to two weeks before the regular waterfowl season. Based on results from our waterfowl hunter surveys, youth day is still well supported in Minnesota by the majority of waterfowl hunters. Youth day is earlier this year because opening date is earlier than last year due to the calendar. There should be large numbers of early migrants, such as blue-winged teal, present in the state for young hunters. A free youth hunting license and HIP-certification are required to participate in youth day. We have had about 5,000 Youth licensed to hunt the past two years on youth day and encourage other hunters to take some young hunters out on youth day.

**Q: Do any of these changes impact Canada goose regulations?**

A: The Canada goose season this year will again be the maximum allowed by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which provides Canada goose hunting for 107 days beginning no earlier than Sept. 1 in Minnesota. The daily bag limits will remain the same as last year, with a 5 goose bag limit during the September goose season and a 3 bird bag limit the remainder of the year. Goose seasons will be closed in the central and south duck zones when duck season is closed. The Rochester goose zone has been eliminated because Canada goose season will already extend until Dec. 28 in the entire south duck zone, so there was no need for the Rochester goose zone.

**Q: What about open water hunting? Were there any changes to allow that this year?**

A: The legislature supported our recommendation to allow open water hunting on selected areas. There is support from our waterfowl hunter surveys to allow open water hunting opportunity on a small number of lakes in the state. We will propose a few lakes and/or border waters where this change could be made in 2013 and take public input on those this winter. Open water hunting has not been allowed in Minnesota since 1915, so we wanted to make sure we addressed all of the potential issues regarding this change

**Q: What overall impact do you expect to see from these changes?**

A: We continue to try and adjust waterfowl seasons in hopes of increasing hunter numbers, hunting opportunity, and hunting satisfaction. We have 40,000 fewer waterfowl hunters than a decade ago. We made some significant changes to regulations last year that were all well supported by hunters. We saw a slight increase in hunter numbers last year but remain committed to trying to increase hunting opportunity, satisfaction, and hunter numbers. All waterfowl hunters should consider taking a friend, lapsed duck hunter, or new hunter out this year in hopes of maintaining our strong waterfowl hunting heritage in Minnesota.

**Q: Why did the sandhill crane hunting season dates change?**

A: We moved the opening date for sandhill cranes in the Northwest goose zone to mid-September so it does not open with early Canada goose season this year. The season length (37 days) and daily bag limit (2 per day) did not change. Sandhill crane hunter numbers and harvest have been higher than we expected during the first two seasons. Harvest has averaged about 800 cranes each year. We are conducting some additional monitoring work over the next two years and we expect numbers of sandhill cranes will be high on opening day and throughout the sandhill crane season even with the delay in opening date.

**Q: Any predictions on the fall waterfowl seasons?**

A: Canada goose hunting should be excellent this fall, particularly early in the season, with a large population of resident Canada geese in the state, lots of young geese produced this year, and large numbers of migrant Canada geese from other areas later in the season. Duck season should be good early in the season if large numbers of blue-winged teal and wood ducks remain in the state. There are so many variables that influence waterfowl abundance later in the fall that it's almost impossible to predict. Waterfowl habitat is degraded in many areas of the state and while we remain committed to habitat improvements, which takes time and resources. But, with the season structure in place this year, the potential is there for a good to excellent season if Mother Nature, and the ducks, cooperate.

# Ruddy ducks: a truly unique duck

By Steve Cordts, DNR Waterfowl Specialist

Ruddy ducks are one of the least studied (and most unusual) waterfowl species in North America. They are small, stout diving ducks that belong to the family of ducks called stiff-tails due to their unique, pointed tail feathers. They are rarely observed flying and instead prefer to dive to escape danger.

Ruddy ducks are also called broadbills, boobies, butterballs, and "dollar ducks". During the market hunting era, ruddy ducks were prized table fare in restaurants on the east coast. It was thought that due to the declines in canvasbacks and other species of ducks at that time, market hunters began to target ruddy ducks. They could pack many more of the smaller ruddy ducks into their barrels for shipment than larger canvasbacks or mallards, and the going rate at the time was about \$1 for a ruddy duck, hence the name "dollar duck". A menu from an upscale New York City restaurant in 1901 had a \$2 price for a single cooked ruddy duck. Adjusted for inflation, that would cost over \$50 today. In appearance, both males and females are a drab colored grayish brown during fall and winter. The large white cheek patch and black head of the male are the only distinctive color differences between the sexes. The bill of ruddy ducks is very unique amongst waterfowl. It is concave in shape, grayish black during fall and winter, but a brilliant sky-blue on males during spring courtship. Male ruddy ducks arrive on the breeding grounds first, which is unusual compared to other species of ducks. When the females



arrive, males attract females by bobbing their heads up and down quickly, often forming bubbles in the water, erecting their tail feathers at 90 degree angles, and calling to the females. During the rest of the year, ruddy ducks are usually silent.

Their current population status is thought to be stable to slightly increasing, with a population of around 500,000 birds, centered mainly in the prairie pothole region of the northern U.S. and southern Canada. There are small numbers of ruddy ducks that breed elsewhere, including the western US, New York, and even portions of Texas and Mexico. During a study of overwater nesting ducks in Minnesota, of the 155 nests found during a 3-year period in west central Minnesota, ruddy ducks accounted for 13% of the total overwater duck nests found and were more abundant than redheads. Their nest preferences were deeper marshes surrounded by cattails. They are known to be territorial around the nest and nest initiation is very late compared to other ducks. Their diet consists of about  $\frac{3}{4}$  plant matter and  $\frac{1}{4}$  animal matter.

Chironomid (or midge) larvae and pupae are a very important food source for ruddy ducks. In one study, female ruddy ducks that were laying eggs at the time consumed over 6,000 chironomid larvae per hour to meet the energetic demands of egg laying. The eggs of ruddy ducks are massive compared to their body size and an average ruddy duck nest consisting of 7 eggs weighs nearly as much as the female that laid them.

During fall migration, ruddy ducks head for coastal areas, with the majority wintering in the Pacific Flyway. On the Pacific coast, San Francisco Bay is a main wintering area. On the east coast, Chesapeake Bay and coastal areas in Florida seem to be the main wintering areas. Smaller numbers of ruddy ducks winter in and around the Gulf of Mexico in Texas and Louisiana.

Annual harvest of ruddy ducks in the U.S. averages only about 50,000 birds, compared to 4.5 million mallards and about 15 million total ducks, which ranks ruddy ducks as one of the least harvested duck species in North America. In Minnesota, harvest of ruddy ducks averages about 1,000/year, compared to about 700,000 total ducks/year.

The hunting season on ruddy ducks was closed in Minnesota from 1932-37. This was likely due to extreme drought conditions across the prairie breeding areas and little information on the continental status of ruddy duck populations. After that time, the bag limits on ruddy ducks have always matched the overall daily duck bag limit. A few ruddy ducks are probably shot accidentally, but legally, by hunters pursuing crippled ducks of a different

species when a ruddy duck surfaces nearby and is mistaken for the crippled duck.

Ruddy ducks have become established in Europe and are considered an invasive species and a pest in some locations. They escaped from captive-breeding facilities and are known to hybridize with a native species called the white-headed duck. At present, eradication efforts have proved to be unsuccessful.

Ruddy ducks previously appeared on the 2002 Minnesota State Waterfowl Stamp and have appeared on the Federal Duck Stamp in 1941 and 1981. The 1941 Federal stamp depicts a pair of ruddy ducks with a brood, which was one of only 2 Federal stamps depicting a duck with a brood. At that time, it was thought that male ruddy ducks were involved in brood-rearing, but that was probably erroneous.

In hand, most hunters would be surprised at how stout the birds actually are and how large the breast plate is on such a diminutive duck. They are excellent table-fare, especially when plucked and roasted. If you are lucky enough to harvest one this season, enjoy one of Minnesota's oddest ducks, and consider yourself fortunate you didn't have to pay \$50 for your "dollar duck".

Now if only we could teach them to fly a little more during the fall.....

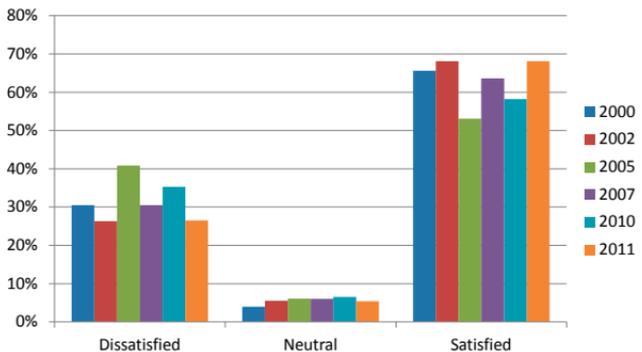
# WATERFOWL HUNTER SURVEYS PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO HUNTER SATISFACTION, PREFERENCES

The Minnesota DNR, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, has conducted a number of waterfowl hunter surveys over the past decade. These reports provide data on hunter satisfaction, preferences for various management techniques, and other valuable information so wildlife managers and others can gain insight and knowledge specific to waterfowl hunters.

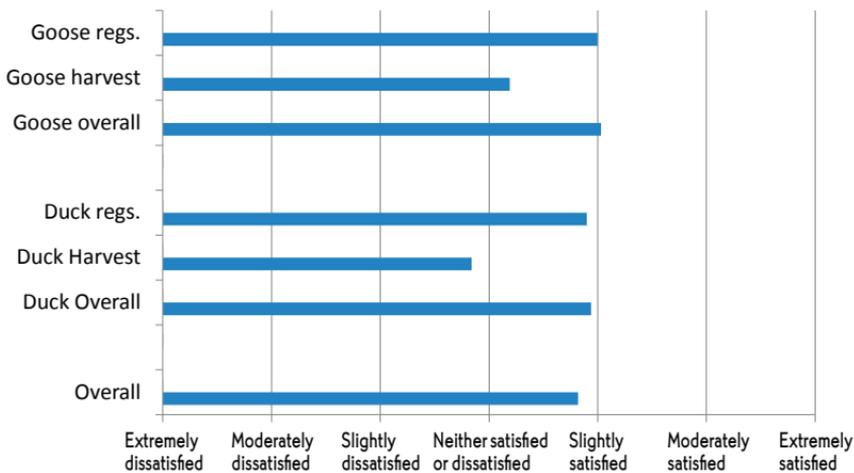
“This focus on the waterfowl hunter is not unique to Minnesota. There is a broad effort across the country over the past decade or so to gain more human dimensions information related to waterfowl hunters. There was a National Duck Hunter Survey conducted in 2005. Even the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which is waterfowl habitat-based plan that has been in place since 1986, has incorporated some human dimensions aspects related to waterfowl hunters and habitat into the most recent update,” said Steve Cordts, DNR Waterfowl Staff Specialist. “In addition, there are plans to form a national working group to try and address issues like declines in waterfowl hunter numbers nationwide.”

The Minnesota surveys are conducted about every 3 years, but the timeline is modified to address certain topics when necessary. “We had conducted a waterfowl hunter survey after the 2010 season, but because of changes we made in 2011 to regulations, we opted to conduct one after the 2011 season as well.” These changes included: shooting hours of ½ hour before sunrise opening day, increase in hen mallard and wood duck bag limits, an earlier opening date, and using North and South Duck zones with different season dates in each zone. The results of that survey showed very strong support by hunters for all of those regulation changes. “We don’t necessarily use these as polls and we realize there are always differences of opinions for every regulation, but they do provide a solid basis to guide waterfowl management decisions.”

### Waterfowl Hunter Satisfaction 2000-2011

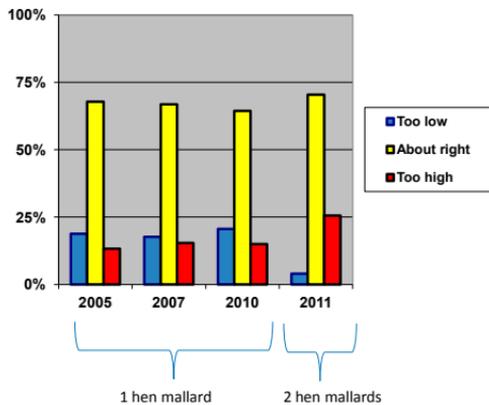


# Waterfowl Hunter Satisfaction - 2011



The DNR has also conducted waterfowl hunter surveys focused on other groups of hunters, including Minnesota hunters who hunt waterfowl in North Dakota, new recruits, surveys of hunters who completed past surveys, and a survey aimed at lapsed waterfowl hunters. “The results have been very informative to broaden our understanding of different groups of waterfowl hunters and their motivations and preferences. We have learned that there are a variety of factors that play a role in whether or not someone hunts ducks in Minnesota, and it goes way beyond number of ducks, number of ducks harvested, access to hunting areas, and other factors that wildlife managers may be able to address,” said Cordts.

Hen mallard bag limit preference



The full reports of many of these surveys are available on the DNR webpage at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/waterfowl/index.html>

## SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for most migratory game birds are one-half hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. through Oct. 6, and until sunset thereafter.



Nine hunting time zones are shown on the Minnesota state map (left). Sunrise and sunset times to be used for hunting in the zone titled "In Table" are shown in the table (below). For other zones, add or subtract the minutes shown at the top of the map to the times shown in the table.

Source: U.S. Naval Observatory

## Sunrise/Sunset Table

### WHY DOES MINNESOTA SET EARLY-SEASON SHOOTING HOURS?

Early season shooting hours help manage duck harvest in areas with high harvest and high hunter numbers. They reduce harassment of newly arrived migrants, allow feeding and roosting patterns to be established and maintained, allow mixing of locally reared birds with lightly harvested migrants and extend hunting opportunity.

*Note: Times shown in the tables vary by specific location. For the exact time in your area consult a local airport or check on line at [mndnr.gov/sunrise-sunset](http://mndnr.gov/sunrise-sunset)*

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

# Calling All Waterfowl Hunters.

The next generation of waterfowl hunters will be created largely by those who learn from and admire your skills.

**Please do your part to keep the legacy alive.**

**Take Someone New Hunting.**