

# MINNESOTA HUNTING REGULATIONS

# WATERFOWL 2013

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ON THE COVER



Northern Pintail  
Painting by David Chapman, Minnetonka

*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)**

# LICENSE INFORMATION

## GENERAL

A resident waterfowl hunter 16 years or older and all nonresident waterfowl hunters 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 Certification and
4. One of the following licenses:

FEE	License	Age
\$13.50	Resident Senior Citizen Small Game	65 and older
\$ 5	Resident Youth Small Game	16 and 17
\$22	Resident Small Game	18 to 64
\$19	Resident 72 hour Small Game	18 to 64
\$38	Resident Individual Sport	18 and older
\$52	Resident Combination Sport	18 and older
\$93	Resident Individual Super Sport	18 and older
\$117	Resident Combination Super Sports	18 and older
\$***	Resident lifetime small game renewal	
\$***	Resident lifetime sport renewal	
\$ 5	Nonresident Youth Small Game	16 and 17
\$75	Nonresident 72 hour Small Game	18 and older
\$102	Nonresident Small Game	18 and older

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

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

**Sandhill crane permit required for NW crane season (residents and non-residents). (\$3)**

\*\* 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)

(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 the 2013 Hunting Regulations Handbook for a complete listing of license requirements.

## 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, 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* 6 bismuth 6 tungsten alloy	3 - 4 steel 4 - 6 bismuth 4 - 6 tungsten alloy	120
LARGE DUCKS	4 steel 6 bismuth 6 tungsten alloy	3 steel 4 bismuth 4 - 6 tungsten alloy	90
SMALL GEESE	2 steel 4 bismuth 4 tungsten alloy	1 - BB steel 2 bismuth 2 tungsten alloy	60
LARGE GEESE	2 steel 2 bismuth 4 tungsten alloy	BB - BBB steel 1 - BB bismuth 2 - BB tungsten alloy	50

\*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 areas 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 2013

### General

- Possession limits are three times the daily bag limit for all migratory birds.
- The daily bag limit for canvasbacks is 2 per day.
- The daily bag limit for scaup (bluebills) is 3 per day.
- Open water hunting will be allowed on selected lakes.
- Canada goose harvest will be allowed in August in the Intensive Harvest Zone.
- The daily bag limit for Canada geese during the early September and August season increased to 10 per day in the Intensive Harvest 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 residents and non-residents who would normally be required to possess a firearms safety certificate to hunt small game or deer. See pages 10 and 18 of the *2013 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Handbook* for details.

## DEFINITIONS

- **"Migratory game birds"** means ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, moorhens (gallinules), woodcock, rails, snipe, sandhill cranes, 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.

## 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.



## NON-TOXIC SHOT REQUIRED

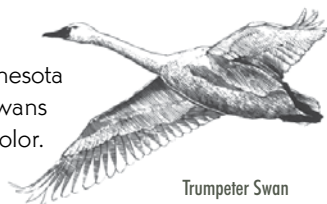
It is unlawful to take geese, ducks, mergansers, coots, moorhens, or sandhill cranes with lead shot or while having any lead shot in possession. This restriction includes muzzle loading shotguns and taking pen-reared mallards on commercial shooting preserves. Only shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife 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. 21 through Friday Oct. 4, 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, or
- d) hunting on one of the following water bodies:



- 1) Mississippi River from the Highway 61 bridge at Hastings to the Iowa border: hunting is allowed not more than 100 feet from any shoreline, including islands.
- 2) Lake Pepin, Lake of the Woods, and Lake Mille Lacs: open water hunting is allowed as long as boats remain anchored.
- 3) Lake Superior: open water hunting is allowed on the MN waters north and east of the Minnesota/Park Point peninsula as long as boats remain anchored

## 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 waterfowl 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. Layout boats are not considered sink boxes.
- 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 5, 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 duck 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 GAME BIRDS

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



hen

drake



drake



eclipse 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



eclipse drake

hen

drake



hen

drake

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.



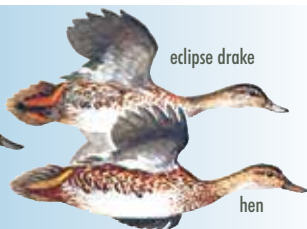
drake



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.



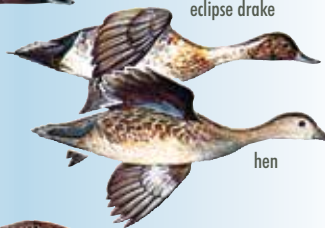
drake



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

hen

drake



hen



drake

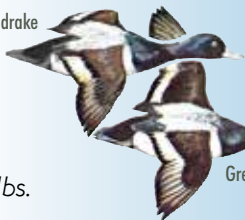
Often seen in pairs or very small flocks. Typical Minnesota harvest: 9,000.

## SCAUP

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

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

Lesser drake



Greater drake



eclipse drake



hen



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



eclipse drake



hen



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

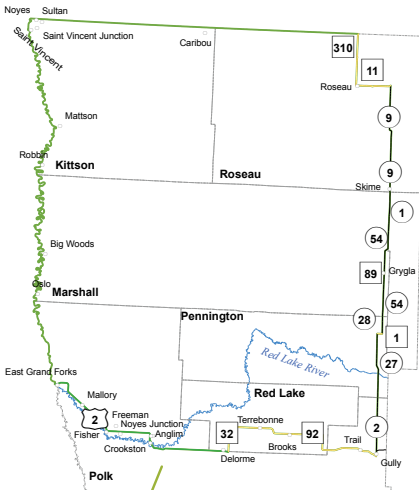


drake

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

## NORTHWEST GOOSE AND SANDHILL CRANE ZONE

Early season hunting (Sept. 1-20) near water prohibited within the boundary.  
See page 22 for details.



## AUGUST CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT ACTION

### *Intensive Harvest Zone Only*

**Season Dates:** August 10-25, 2013

**Daily Bag Limit:** 10 Canada Geese

**Possession Limit:** None

**Shooting Hours:** 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset. All other restrictions are the same as for the regular goose season, including nontoxic shot requirements, refuges, plugged shotguns, baiting, etc.

## SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE HUNT

**Season dates:** Sept. 1-20

**Daily Bag limit:**

10 Canada geese (Intensive Harvest Zone)

5 Canada geese (remainder of state)

**Shooting Hours:** 1/2-hour before sunrise to sunset.

### **License Requirements (both seasons):**

Small game license

State waterfowl stamp (\$7.50)

Special Canada goose permit (\$4, ages 18-64)

No Federal Duck stamp is required for the

August season. A federal stamp is

required for the

September and regular

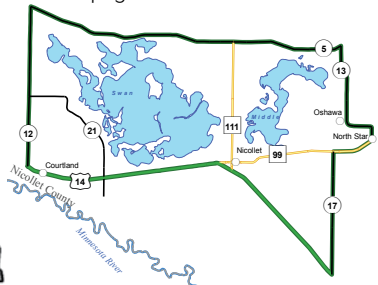
goose seasons.



## SWAN LAKE AREA

Early season hunting (Sept. 1-20) near water prohibited within the boundary.

See page 22 for details.



# 2013 SEASON DATES AND BAG LIMITS

## DUCKS/COOTS

DUCKS, COOTS, MERGANSERS, MOORHENS (GALLINULES)		SEASON DATES
North Zone	See map, page 21	Sept. 21-Nov. 19
Central Zone		Sept. 21-29
		Oct. 5-Nov. 24
South Zone		Sept. 21-29 Oct. 12-Dec. 1

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

**NEW** 4 mallards (2 hen mallard), 3 scaup, 3 wood ducks, 2 pintails, 2 redheads, 1 black duck, 2 canvasback. If not listed up to 6 ducks of a species may be taken.

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

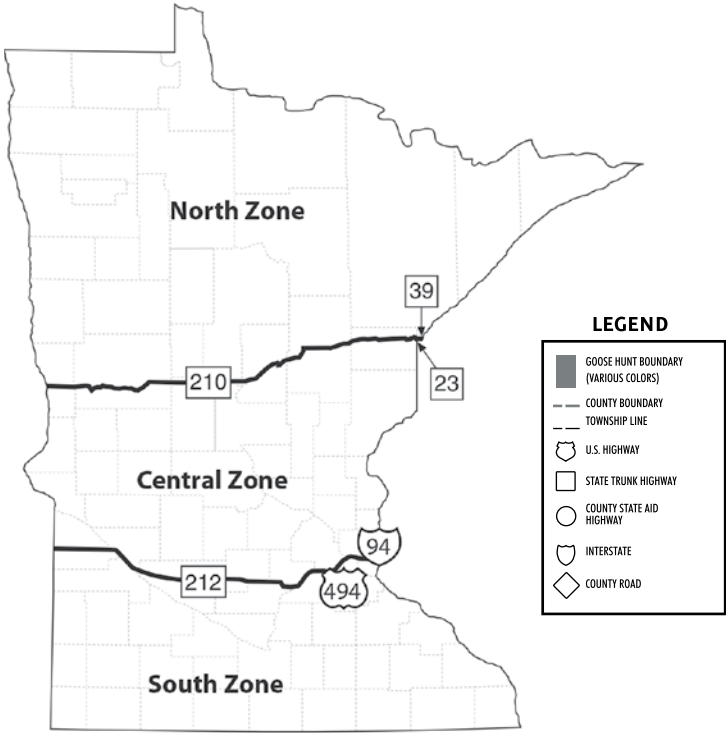
**Merganser bag limits:** Daily bag limit is 5, no more than 2 of which may be a hooded merganser.

**NEW** The possession limit for ducks, coots, mergansers and moorhens (gallinules) is three times the daily bag limit

## GEESE

	DATES	BAG LIMITS
North zone Canada Light geese White-front and brant	Sept. 21-Dec. 16	3 20 1
Central zone Canada Light geese White-front and brant	Sept. 21-29; Oct. 5-Dec. 21	3 20 1
South zone Canada Light geese White-front and brant	Sept. 21-29; Oct. 12-Dec. 28	3 20 1
August Canada goose	August 10-25 (Intensive harvest zone only)	10
September Canada goose	Sept. 1-20	10 Intensive harvest zone 5 Remainder of state

# REGULAR SEASON DUCK AND GOOSE ZONES



**Youth Hunt:** On Sept. 7, 2013, 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.

## 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 Friday Oct. 4, and until sunset thereafter. See youth hunt and early goose season for additional hours.

## OTHER MIGRATORY BIRDS

	SEASON DATES	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Mourning doves	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15	45
Woodcock	Sept. 21 - Nov. 4	3	9
Sora and Virginia rail	Sept. 1 - Nov. 4	25 (in aggregate)	75 (in aggregate)
Common snipe (Wilson's or Jacksnipe)	Sept. 1 - Nov. 4	8	24
Sandhill crane*	Sept. 14 - Oct. 20	2	6

\* Northwest goose and crane zone only, page 19

## SPECIAL FALCONRY SEASON

### Dates:

- Ducks, coots and moorhens may be taken by falconry from Sept. 21 - Dec. 1 only when and where they may be taken by firearm and from Dec. 14 through Jan 28, 2014 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 nine in possession combined.
- Falconry hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except after Sept. 21, when they are the same as the waterfowl shooting hours.

## SURFACE WATER RESTRICTIONS

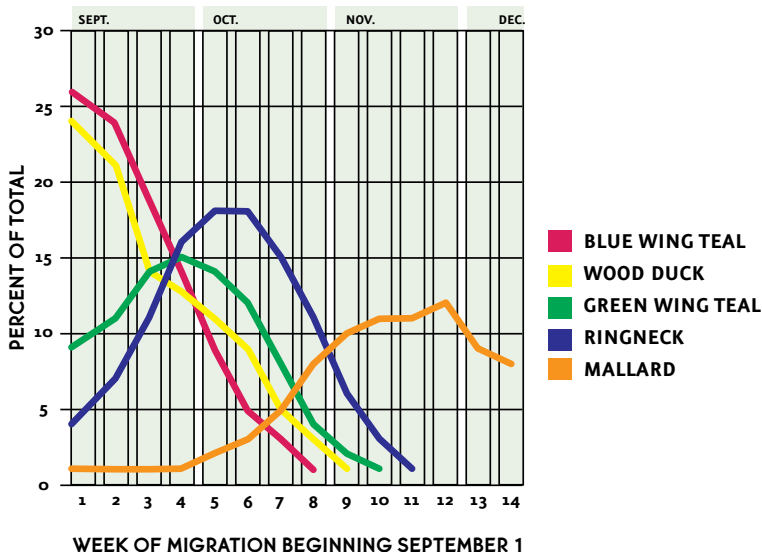
"Surface water" includes, but is not limited to wetlands, lakes, rivers and streams. Temporarily flooded cropland, pasture, or other temporarily flooded areas (unless contiguous with lakes, wetlands, rivers or streams) are not included. This restriction does not apply to youth participating in the youth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

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



## 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.



**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)

## 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 - 20
<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 - 20 <sup>+</sup>
<b>Cottonwood</b>	Talcot Lake Waterfowl Refuge	Goose hunters with disabilities. Contact refuge
<b>Dakota</b>	Vermillion Highlands Research, Recreation and WMA	Goose Dec. 16 - 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 - 20 <sup>+</sup>
<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. 21 - 22 Goose hunting Dec. 22 - 28 Canada geese Nov. 2 - 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 - 20, Dec. 7 - 28
<b>Olmsted</b>	Rochester Game Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 20
<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 - 20
<b>Stevens</b>	Harstad Slough Waterfowl Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 1 - 20 <sup>+</sup>
<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. 21 - 22

\* No hunting from roads or rights of way

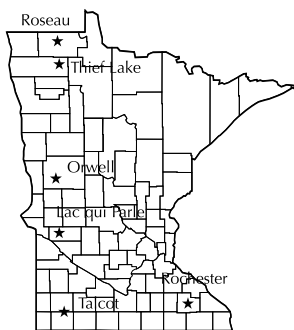
\*\* No hunting within 100 yards of Fox, Temperance, Mud and Bardwell Lakes

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

<sup>+</sup> Open to August harvest

## 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. 17 - Nov. 30.

- On public lands, no person may hunt migratory waterfowl or small game in the controlled hunting zone without first registering at the Lac qui Parle State Park and Wildlife Headquarters 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.
- 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 headquarters 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 21.

- 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 2014. 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 2014.



# 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 12, 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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# Northern Pintails:

## Greyhounds of the Sky

By Steve Cordts, DNR Waterfowl Specialist

Northern pintails are a medium-sized dabbling duck with a slim profile, long neck, and a long pointed tail that distinguishes them from other ducks. Their long tail has earned them the nickname “sprig” or “sprigtail”. In flight, they are fast flyers with an almost sleek or elegant appearance, and some hunters have dubbed them the “greyhound of the sky”. Pintail drakes in breeding plumage have chocolate brown heads, white necks, and extremely long central tail feathers. The tail alone can be up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a drake pintail’s total body length. Females are also slender compared to other dabbling duck females with a pointed tail, dull to mottled brown bodies, and dark gray to black bills. The wing speculum on pintails is iridescent green or green-black in color. Male pintails whistle a “kwee” or “kwee-hee” call.

The distribution of breeding northern pintails is circumpolar and they prefer to nest in very open country with high densities of very shallow wetlands and low grassland or tundra vegetation. In North America, the current breeding population of northern pintails is about 3.5 million birds and has been relatively stable for the past decade but lower than documented in the past. Populations of northern pintails have varied dramatically over the past 50 plus years, with peak abundance occurring in the mid to late 1950s at over 10 million birds and all-time low



populations of less than 2 million birds during some severe drought years over the past 20 years. Their core breeding areas in North America are Alaska and the Prairie Pothole Region of southern Canada and the northern Great Plains. Pintails are an uncommon nesting duck in Minnesota, and nest almost exclusively in the prairie portions of western Minnesota. Their abundance appears to have declined in recent decades. Studies in the 1950s noted that 3-4 percent of all nesting duck pairs in Minnesota were northern pintails. In recent years, northern pintails account for only about 1 percent of the nesting ducks in Minnesota. Much of this decline is likely driven by changes in wetland, grassland and even agricultural habitat across Minnesota. Pintails prefer very shallow wetlands during spring and very short or sparse grass cover for nesting. In many cases, pintails will even nest in small grain crop stubble or winter or spring wheat fields. Improvements in agricultural drainage have reduced the amount of

temporary and sheet water wetlands in western Minnesota. Agricultural habitat has also changed and the more diverse small grain fields and pastures present 50 years ago have been replaced by corn and soybean fields, which are not as attractive to nesting northern pintails.

During spring migration, northern pintails are one of the earliest species of ducks to arrive on the breeding grounds, typically just after ice-out. They also are one of the first species of ducks to initiate nests each spring. Pintails are also unique in that during extreme drought years in the northern Great Plains, large numbers of pintails will “overfly” the prairies and move north to Alaska and tundra regions in search of more favorable breeding habitat conditions.

During fall migration, northern pintails are also a very early migrant, with adult males departing their breeding grounds as early as August in some years. Females and immature birds depart slightly later. Pintails winter in large numbers along coastal areas, primarily along the Gulf Coast and the Pacific coast. They make extensive use of rice fields in these regions for foraging. Most pintails in North America use “California, here I come” as their motto, since 1/2 or more of the entire North American population is thought to migrate through California each year.

Annual harvest of northern pintails in the U.S. averages about 600,000 birds, compared to 4.5 million mallards and 14-15 million total ducks, ranking

pintails eighth in importance in duck hunters’ bags. Harvest of northern pintails peaked during the 1970s at between 1-2 million pintails per year, due in part to the “point system” that was used in some states to determine daily bag limits. At times under the “point system”, hunters could harvest up to 10 pintails per day since they were 10 point ducks and hunters were allowed 100 points per day.

Due to high harvest and a declining breeding population, the bag limits on northern pintails were restricted to no more than 2/day in 1985 and have been higher than that only 1 year since that time. Minnesota never used the “point system” and bag limits for pintails have been 1 or 2 per day since 1985. A northern pintail harvest management strategy has been developed and remains in place that uses continental breeding status and other factors to determine annual bag limits in all Flyways. At present, there are only 2 bag limit options for pintails that apply to all Flyways: either 2 per day or 1 per day.

Historically, northern pintails likely ranked as high as #5 in importance for Minnesota duck harvest in the 1940s, behind only mallard, scaup, and blue and green-winged teal. They have declined in importance in recent decades, and harvest of northern pintails in Minnesota now averages about 10,000/year, compared to about 700,000 total ducks/year,

*Continued on page 34*

ranking pintails ninth in importance in Minnesota duck hunters' bags. For many waterfowl hunters, however, adult male pintails with a partially or fully developed "sprig" remain a true trophy.

Because of their circumpolar distribution and ability to make transoceanic flights, some notable movements of pintails have been documented based on leg-banded northern pintails recovered by

hunters. For example, a northern pintail banded in Japan was recently recovered in Mississippi! Small numbers (fewer than 100) of northern pintails are banded in Minnesota by DNR banding crews each year. Recoveries of those birds by hunters have occurred in all 4 Flyways, Canada, and even locations in Mexico over the years.

Northern pintails previously appeared on the 1979 Minnesota State Waterfowl Stamp.

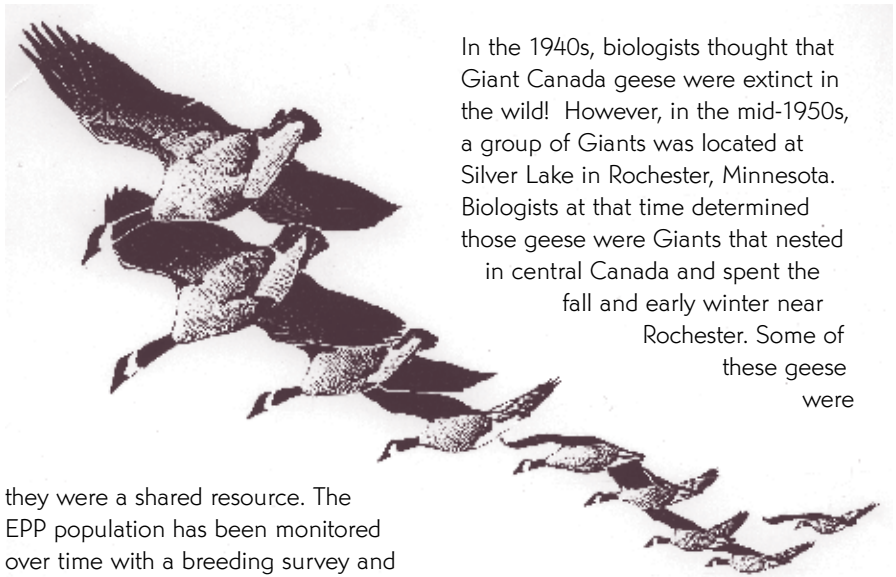
## **Managing Canada geese in Minnesota is complicated and constantly changing.**

**Why so difficult?** By Dave Rave, Minnesota DNR goose specialist

### ***When Canada Geese are Canadian Geese!***

The first issue with managing Canada geese is to acknowledge they are a shared migratory resource amongst states/provinces. Some of the geese harvested in Minnesota each fall have nested and/or hatched in Canada, making them "Canadian" Canada geese. These geese typically migrate into western Minnesota during October and November and stage in large numbers at places like Lac Qui Parle Wildlife Management area. Those birds nested and/or hatched along the western shores of Hudson's Bay in northern Manitoba, Canada and are

part of the Eastern Prairie Population (EPP) of Canada Geese. They are medium-sized Canada geese, typically weighing between 8 and 10 pounds. During the 1970s and early 1980s, almost all of the geese that passed through Minnesota in the fall were EPP geese and extremely important for Minnesota goose hunters. This population of geese historically wintered in Missouri and Iowa after departing Minnesota. Management of geese in Minnesota from the 1960s through the 1990s was aimed at protecting EPP geese with special goose hunting zones, shorter seasons, lower daily bag limits, and quotas established in some areas because



In the 1940s, biologists thought that Giant Canada geese were extinct in the wild! However, in the mid-1950s, a group of Giants was located at Silver Lake in Rochester, Minnesota. Biologists at that time determined those geese were Giants that nested in central Canada and spent the fall and early winter near Rochester. Some of these geese were

they were a shared resource. The EPP population has been monitored over time with a breeding survey and banding information. At present, the population status is healthy and has increased slightly over time, attesting to successful management over the past 40 years.

### ***Back from the Brink of Extinction!***

The most numerous Canada goose in Minnesota today is no longer a "Canadian" Canada goose, but the resident Giant Canada goose (Giants). Giants are the geese that actually nest and raise goslings in Minnesota and can now be observed in Minnesota throughout the entire year, including late into winter. These birds typically weigh between 9 and 12 pounds and on rare occasion, some adult males can exceed 16 pounds. Canada geese nest throughout the entire state today and most, if not all, Minnesotans should be able to observe Canada geese at some point during the year. But that was not always the case...

eventually captured and placed in captive breeding facilities. From this group of birds, several wild flocks of resident Giants were established in Minnesota, most notably in the Twin Cities area and around Fergus Falls. Once these flocks were established in the wild, young geese from those areas were captured each year and trans-located throughout the state into other suitable habitat. Eventually, some of these birds were supplied to other states in their attempts to reestablish breeding populations of giant Canada geese. Today, barely 60 years after this bird was thought to be extinct in the wild, there are now over 2 million Giant Canada geese in the Mississippi Flyway.

*Continued on page 36*

Most biologists remain surprised and shocked at how quickly the population of giant Canada geese increased. But as populations increased, so did problems associated with growing numbers of large birds. Canada geese prefer to graze on grass, lawns, golf courses, or any other mowed grassy areas. They also graze on agricultural crops such as emerging soybeans and corn. And, increasing numbers of geese can cause health concerns due to their feces in areas with large numbers of people and large numbers of geese.

### ***How Many Geese is Too Many?***

The population of Giant Canada geese in Minnesota has grown from virtually none in the late 1960s and early 1970s to >300,000 geese in recent years. The population is monitored in the state each spring using a helicopter-based survey conducted in April. The survey has been conducted each year since 2001 and the population has fluctuated between 268,000 and 434,000 and has averaged 327,000 breeding geese since the survey was initiated. In 2008, the Minnesota DNR established a statewide Canada goose population goal of 250,000 geese. That goal was established to provide large numbers of Canada geese for recreational hunting opportunity but also to minimize conflicts caused by excessive numbers of Canada geese.

As the population of Canada geese increased, hunting opportunities also

expanded in attempts to manage giant Canada geese. In 1987, Minnesota initiated its first special Canada goose season in an attempt to deal with overabundant Canada geese in certain areas. These seasons were held in early September and late December to target resident geese and minimize impact to migrant Canada geese. Special hunting zones were established in the Twin Cities area and around Fergus Falls and Ottertail county. Over the past 25 years, goose hunting seasons have expanded with the increasing goose population. In recent years, Canada goose hunting seasons are the maximum allowed by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which allows open hunting seasons of up to 107 days in a state.

These expanded hunting seasons have generally worked to greatly increase giant Canada goose harvest and help to reduce population growth rates. In the early 1960s, Minnesota hunters harvested as few as 5,000 Canada geese during the entire fall hunting season. In fact, harvesting a single Canada goose often earned the hunter a picture in the local newspaper at that time! Today, more Canada geese are harvested in the first hour of the first day of the early September season than were harvested in an entire season 50 years ago! On average, more than 100,000 Canada geese are harvested during the early September season and annual Canada goose harvest now approaches  $\frac{1}{4}$  million geese per year, ranking Minnesota as the #1 Canada goose harvest state. And today, over 90% of these geese are giant Canada geese and no longer



“Canadian” Canada geese like they were historically.

### ***Canada goose management into the future?***

The breeding population of Canada geese in Minnesota has remained high and above the statewide goal for the past decade despite substantial increases in goose harvest. The highest density of breeding geese in the state occurs in west central Minnesota, where wetland density is high as well as large areas of row-crop agricultural. Agricultural depredation by geese has increased in this portion of the state in recent years. The combination of these

factors prompted the DNR to request authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a special August Canada goose management take season. This request was approved and the DNR established an Intensive Harvest Zone in this region with very liberal Canada goose bag limits in an attempt to increase goose harvest. The liberal Canada goose bag limits will also be in effect in this zone during the September season.

It's probable that in future decades, managers will continue to deal with “too many geese”, when just a few decades ago those geese were nearly extinct!

## **Open Water Hunting in Minnesota: First Time in a Century**



Minnesota has restricted open water hunting for waterfowl for almost a century, dating back to 1915. This restriction was initially put into place when market hunting for waterfowl was still occurring and large numbers of waterfowl were shot each year. The restriction has been maintained

for almost a century to minimize disturbance to ducks, particularly diving ducks, by providing refuge areas on the open water portions of all lakes. The statutory language for this restriction has been modified slightly

*Continued on page 38*

over the past century, but still requires waterfowl hunters to remain “within a natural growth of vegetation sufficient to partially conceal the person or the boat”. It provides some exceptions when pursuing wounded birds or to allow hunting or jump shooting on rivers or streams less than 100 yards wide.

In 2012, the statute language was modified to allow open water hunting on lakes designated by the DNR Commissioner. Based on waterfowl hunter surveys, public input, and input from the Waterfowl Focus Group, the DNR will open a small number of lakes to open water hunting in 2013.

Most Minnesota waterfowl hunters are likely unfamiliar with open water hunting or techniques, equipment and methods required to do so. In fact, while legal in all other states in the U.S., very few duck hunters pursue ducks in open water. Most open water hunting is for diving ducks such as scaup, buffleheads, goldeneyes, or sea ducks such as scoters or long-tailed ducks that often use open water habitats for roosting and foraging. In general, it requires specialized boats and often large numbers of decoys and decoy-rigging techniques. Layout boats are the most common technique used to hunt in open water. These are generally small, specialized boats (resembling a pumpkinseed when viewed from above) with no motors. The boats are typically gray in color to

resemble the water and float extremely low in the water. The boats are often towed or carried to the area by a larger boat or tender boat. The layout boat is deployed and anchored next to the decoys. The hunter lays in layout boat while the tender boat motors a safe distance away to observe and retrieve any ducks that are shot. Or, another technique that hunters use is in larger boats with boat blinds that are anchored offshore and large spreads of decoys are deployed around the boat.

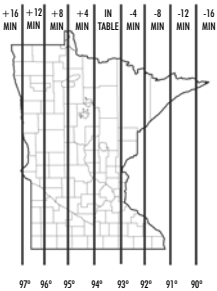
Although duck hunters should always think about safety, they should be especially careful during open water duck hunting which will occur further from shore, in deeper water, and on some of the larger bodies of water in the state. In addition, some of the better hunting is likely to occur late into the duck season under extreme weather conditions.

In 2013, 5 areas will be open for open water hunting, including Lake Mille Lacs and 4 border waters. On the border waters (Lake of the Woods, Lake Superior, Lake Pepin, and the Mississippi river south of Hastings), the Minnesota regulations will mirror regulations already in place in adjacent states/provinces.

Open water duck hunting is a very unique, exciting, and at times, effective way to hunt ducks, particularly diving ducks. For those hunters that give it a try, remember that “Safety never takes a holiday”.

## SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for most migratory game birds are one-half hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. through Oct. 4, 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	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	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	6:54	4:59	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



*Drive 'em  
Wild*

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