



# 2014 MINNESOTA WATERFOWL HUNTING

## REGULATIONS

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## Minnesota State Duck Stamp



Canada Geese  
Painting by Thomas Moen, Montrose

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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FAW-209-15

# LICENSE INFORMATION

## GENERAL

Resident and nonresident waterfowl hunters 16 years old or older must have 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 (residents ages 18-64 and all non residents) 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.)

- A Federal Duck Stamp or Federal Duck Stamp validation is required for all persons age 16 and older.
- HIP certification is required for any licensed waterfowl or migratory bird hunter. (See HIP information page 6.)
- A Minnesota state waterfowl stamp validation is required for residents age 18 to 64 and nonresidents age 16 and over. (Note: 72 hour licenses include the state waterfowl stamp validation).

**Note:** There are licensing exceptions for landowners, military personnel and others. See the *2014 Hunting Regulations Handbook* for a complete listing of license requirements.

# HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM (HIP)

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.

### Notes:

- 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 2014

- The daily bag limit for canvasback is one per day.
- Blinds at the Lac qui Parle Controlled Hunt Zone are available on a first-come, first-served basis. See page 28 for details.
- The daily bag limit for Sandhill Crane is one per day.

## 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 19 of the *2014 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



R.T. Dillon, fwgna.org

The invasive faucet snail is an increasing threat to waterfowl populations and could be inadvertently spread on waterfowl hunting equipment. Snails can attach directly to equipment, hide within mud, and attach 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. Faucet 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. Visit [mndnr.gov/AIS](http://mndnr.gov/AIS) for more information about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species.



## NON-TOXIC SHOT REQUIRED

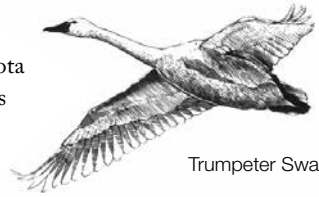
It is unlawful to take geese, ducks, mergansers, coots, moorhens, or sandhill cranes with lead shot or while having any lead shot in possession. This restriction includes muzzle loading shotguns and taking pen-reared mallards on commercial shooting preserves. Only shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife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

## SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for coots, ducks, geese, moorhens, sandhill cranes (NW zone only) rails and snipe are 1/2 hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. from Sept. 27 through Friday Oct. 10, 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 Oct. 11, 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.

## **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).

**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	Puposky Lake* and Little Puposky Lake*
Big Stone, Lac qui Parle and Swift	Part of Marsh Lake, Thielke Lake
Blue Earth	Cottonwood Lake
Carver	Tiger Lake*
Cass	Big Rice, Goose, Mud Lakes
Clearwater	Upper Rice Lake
Faribault	Part of Minnesota Lake*
Freeborn	Bear Lake*, Upper Twin Lake*
Grant and Douglas	Part of Lake Christina
Itasca	Rice Lake (near Max) and Nature’s (Squaw) Lake
Jackson	Part of South Heron Lake* and all of North Heron Lake* except Winzer Bay and North Marsh
Kandiyohi	Wagonga Lake* and Lake Lillian*
LeSueur	Dora, Diamond, Henry, Rice, Sanborn and Scotch lakes
McLeod	Bakers Lake* and the unnamed lake* in Sec. 28, Twp. 114N., R. 29 W. (Penn Twp.)
Nicollet	Oakleaf Lake
Otter Tail	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	Turtle Lake*
Pope	Nelson Lake* and Lake Johanna
Scott	Pleasant Lake
Sibley	Washington Lake and Mud Lake in Washington Lake Twp.
Traverse	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
White Elk	Aitkin
Fish	Anoka
Cottonwood	Blue Earth
Perch	Blue Earth
Eagle	Blue Earth
Rice	Blue Earth
Hanska	Brown
 Lake 14	Big Stone
Patterson	Carver
Tiger	Carver
Big Rice	Cass
Augusta	Cottonwood
Bolstad Slough	Cottonwood
Dog	Crow Wing
Anka	Douglas
Jennie	Douglas
Christina	Douglas/Grant
Rice	Faribault
Minnesota	Faribault
Bear	Freeborn
Lower Twin	Freeborn
Geneva	Freeborn
Upper Twin	Freeborn
Ash	Grant
Denton Slough	Grant

Lake	County
Towner	Grant
Heron	Jackson
Teal	Jackson
Sanborn	LeSueur
Pierce	Martin
Onamia	Mille Lacs
Maria	Murray
Round	Murray
South Badger	Murray
North Badger	Murray
Swan	Nicollet
Little Rice	St. Louis
Big Rice	St. Louis
Sand	Sibley
 Cedar	Stearns
Rice	Steele/Dodge
Hassel	Swift
Buffalo	Waseca
Goose	Waseca
Willis	Waseca
Pelican	Wright
Smith	Wright
Curtis	Yellow Medicine
Spellman (N. and S.)	Yellow Medicine

**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 96-118 of the Minnesota Hunting and Trapping Regulations for more details.

# ILLUSTRATED DUCKS AND GEESE OF MINNESOTA

NOT ALL SPECIES  
ARE DEPICTED

## 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

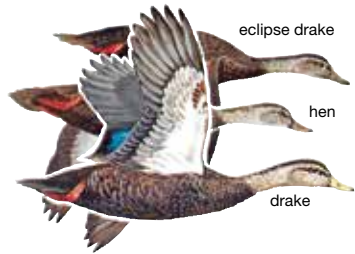
Length—24"  
Weight—2.75 lbs.



drake



hen



eclipse drake

hen

drake



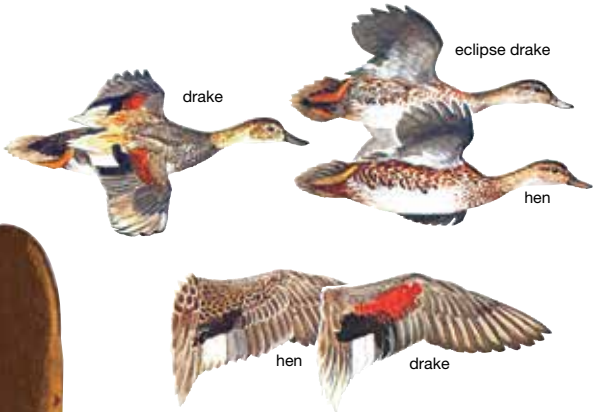
hen

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**

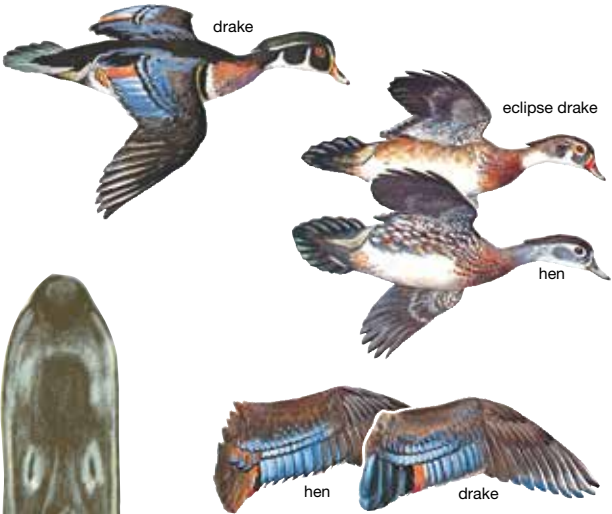
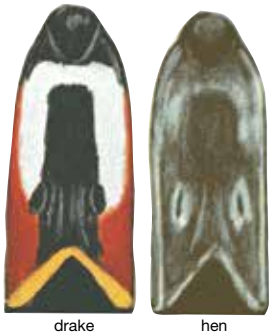
Length—21"  
Weight—2 lbs.



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

**WOOD DUCK**

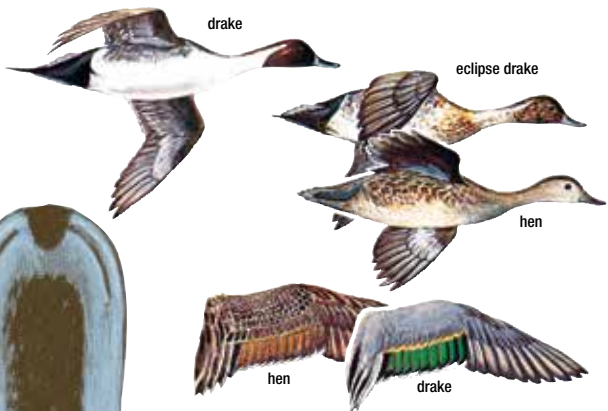
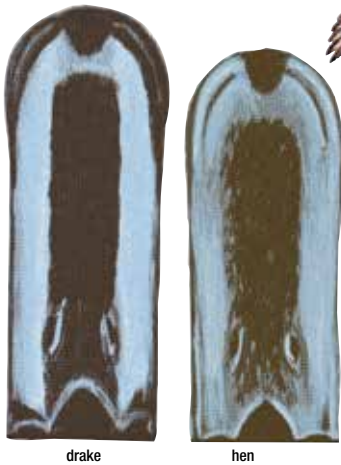
Length—18.5"  
Weight—1.5 lbs.



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

**PINTAIL**

Length—26"  
Weight—1.75 lbs.



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.



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

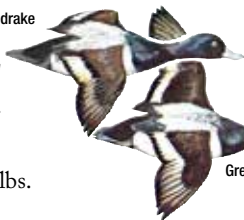


## SCAUP

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

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

Lesser drone



Greater drone



eclipse drone



hen



drone



hen

Lesser



hen

drone

Greater



hen

drone

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.



drone

eclipse drone



hen



drone



hen



hen

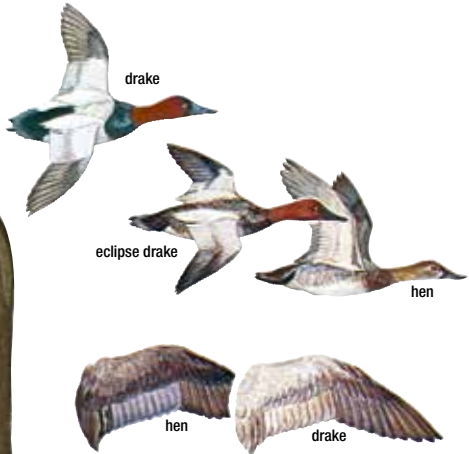


drone

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**

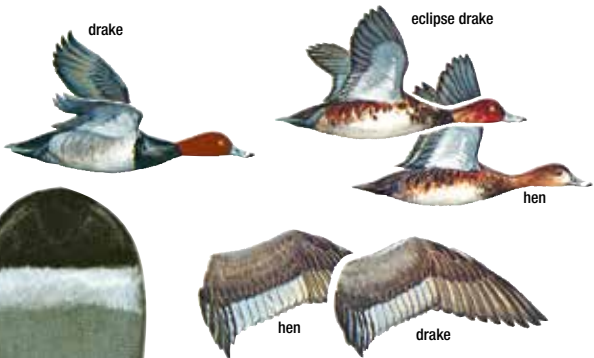
Length—22"  
Weight—3 lbs.



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

**REDHEAD**

Length—20"  
Weight—2.5 lbs.



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.

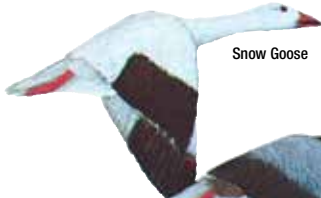


Canada Goose

## 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.

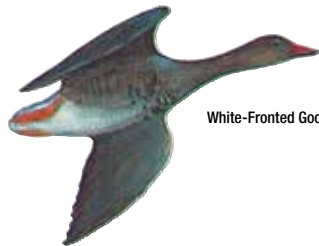


"Blue" Snow Goose

## 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.

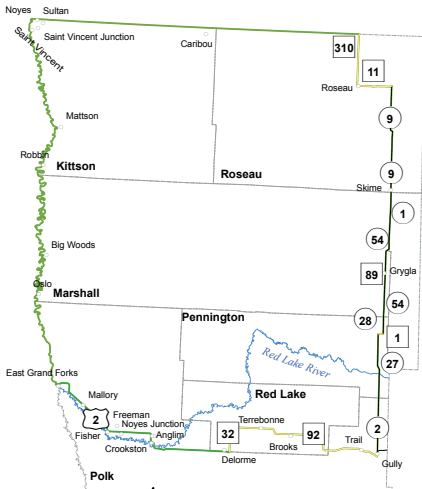


White-Fronted Goose

# SANDHILL CRANE AND EARLY GOOSE SEASONS

## NORTHWEST GOOSE AND SANDHILL CRANE ZONE

Early season hunting (Sept. 6-22) near water prohibited within the boundary. See page 23 for details.



## AUGUST CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT ACTION

### Intensive Harvest Zone Only

**Season Dates:** Aug. 9-24, 2014

**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, no electronic calls, etc.

## SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE HUNT

**Season dates:** Sept. 6-22

**Daily Bag limit:** Intensive Harvest Zone—10  
Remainder of state—5

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

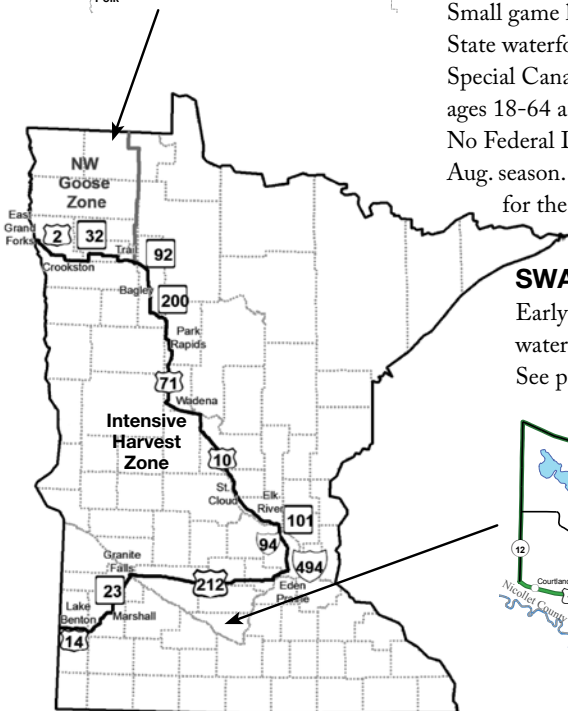
### License Requirements (both seasons):

Small game license

State waterfowl stamp (\$7.50)

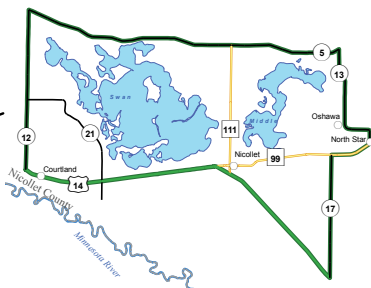
Special Canada goose permit (\$4, residents ages 18-64 and all nonresidents).

No Federal Duck stamp is required for the Aug. season. A federal stamp is required for the Sept. and regular goose seasons.



## SWAN LAKE AREA

Early season hunting (Sept. 6-22) near water prohibited within the boundary. See page 23 for details.




# 2014 SEASONS, DATES AND BAG LIMITS

## DUCKS/COOTS

DUCKS, COOTS, MERGANSERS, MOORHENS (GALLINULES)		SEASON DATES
North Zone	See map, page 22	Sept. 27-Nov. 25
Central Zone	See map, page 22	Sept. 27-Oct. 5; Oct. 11-Nov. 30
South Zone	See map, page 22	Sept. 27-29; Oct. 11-Dec.6

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

 4 mallards (2 hen mallard), 3 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.

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

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

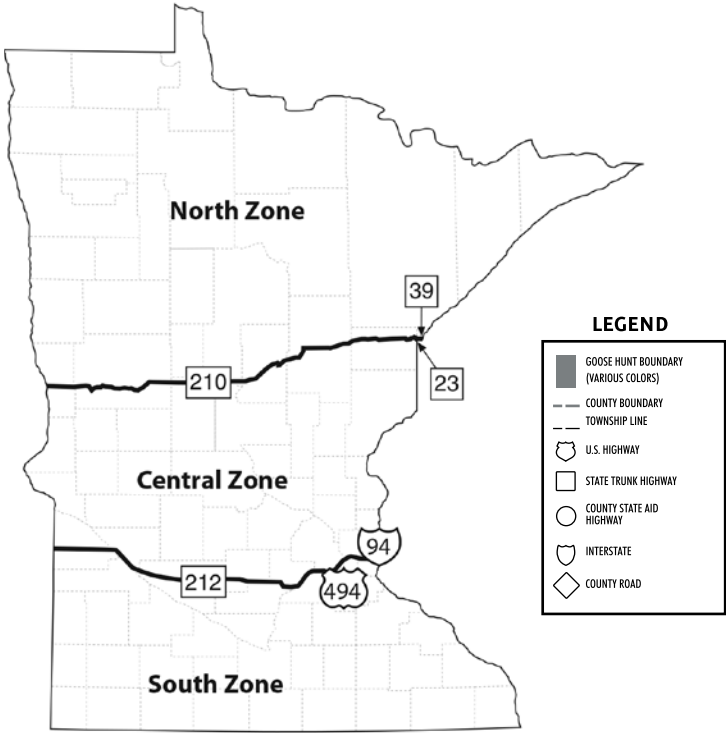
**The possession limit for all migratory birds is three times the daily bag limit.**

## GEESE

	DATES	BAG LIMITS
North zone*	Sept. 27-Dec. 25	
Canada		3
Light geese		20
White-fronted	Sept. 27-Dec. 23	1
Central zone*	Sept. 27-Oct. 5; Oct. 11-Dec. 30	
Canada and brandt		3
Light geese		20
White-fronted	Sept. 27-Oct. 5; Oct. 11-Dec. 28	1
South zone*	Sept. 27-Sept. 29; Oct. 11-Jan. 5	
Canada		3
Light geese		20
White-fronted	Sept. 27-Sept. 29; Oct. 11-Jan. 3	1
August Canada goose	Aug. 9-24 (Intensive harvest zone only)	10
September Canada goose	Sept. 6-22	10 Intensive harvest zone 5 Remainder of state

\* One brant may be taken during the open dates for the regular Canada goose seasons beginning Sept. 27, 2014.

REGULAR SEASON DUCK AND GOOSE ZONES



YOUTH HUNT

On Sept. 13, 2014, 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 1/2 hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. from the opening day of duck season through Friday Oct. 10, 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. 20 - Nov. 3	3	9
Sora and Virginia rail	Sept. 1 - Nov. 3	25 (in aggregate)	75 (in aggregate)
Common snipe (Wilson's or Jacksnipe)	Sept. 1 - Nov. 3	8	24
Sandhill crane*	Sept. 13 - Oct. 19	1	3

\* Northwest goose and crane zone only, page 20.

## SPECIAL FALCONRY SEASON

### Dates:

- Ducks, coots and moorhens may be taken by falconry from Sept. 27-Dec. 6 only when they may be taken by firearm and from Dec. 13 through Jan. 27, 2015 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. 27, when they are the same as the waterfowl shooting hours.

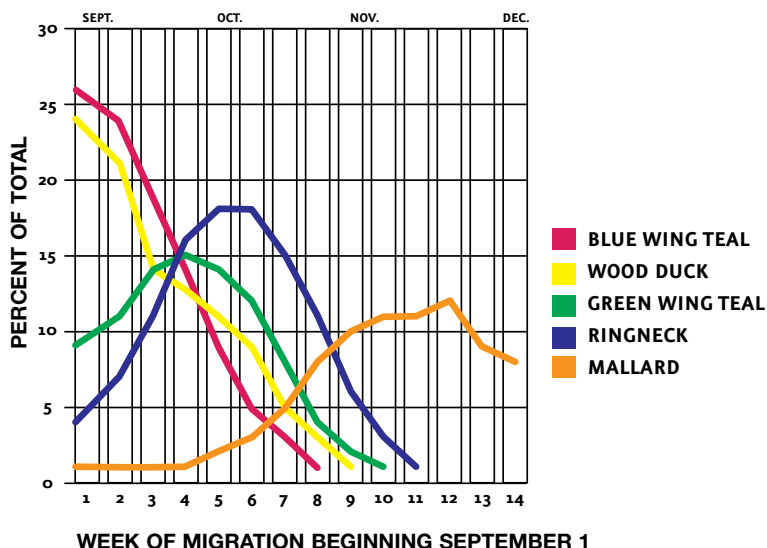
## SURFACE WATER RESTRICTIONS

"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



## 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.



## Avoid Spreading Invasive Species



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) such as curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, and zebra mussels can do irreparable damage to wetlands and wildlife

habitat—and faucet snails carry parasites that infect and eventually kill waterfowl. It is illegal to transport aquatic plants, zebra mussels and other prohibited invasive species in or on boats, trailers, or other equipment, such as decoys and waders. However, waterfowl hunters may use emergent aquatic plants, such as cattails and bulrushes, cut above the waterline, for building blinds or camouflage. Take these steps to prevent the spread of AIS:

- Clean aquatic plants, zebra mussels, snails, and mud from boat, motor, trailer, waders or hip boots, decoy lines, anchors, push poles, hunting dogs, and ATVs. Drain the water from boats and equipment and leave drain plugs out when transporting.
- Dry everything for at least 5 days before hunting in other waters.
- Use elliptical, bulb-shaped, or strap decoy anchors to help reduce snagging submergent aquatic plants.

## For Your Information

### **Make the shot—it's the responsible thing to do**

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
Beltrami	Bemidji Game Refuge (except Lake Bemidji, Miss. River and Stump Lake)	Canada geese Sept. 6-22
Clay	Clay County Game Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 6-22*
Cottonwood	Talcot Lake Waterfowl Refuge	Goose hunters with disabilities. Contact refuge.
Dakota	Vermillion Highlands Research, Recreation and WMA	Goose Dec. 15-Jan. 5
Dodge	Claremont Game Refuge	Goose hunting
Douglas	Evansville Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting Canada geese Sept. 6-22*
Freeborn	Moscow Game Refuge	Goose hunting
Isanti	Elizabeth Lake Game Refuge German Lake Game Refuge	Early goose season and youth participating in a designated hunting mentoring program only.
Martin	Fox Lake Game Refuge** Mud-Bardwell Game Refuge**	Goose hunting Sept. 27-28 Goose hunting Dec. 30-Jan. 5 Canada geese Nov. 1-Jan. 5
Nobles	Ocheda Lake Game Refuge***	Youth Waterfowl Day Canada geese Sept. 6-22, Dec. 6-Jan. 5
Olmsted	Rochester Game Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 6-22
Steele	Rickert Waterfowl Refuge except Myron Buelow Waterfowl Sanctuary WMA	Canada geese Sept. 6-22
Stevens	Harstad Slough Waterfowl Refuge	Canada geese Sept. 6-22*
Watsonwan	Saint James Game Refuge	Goose hunting Sept. 27-28

\* 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

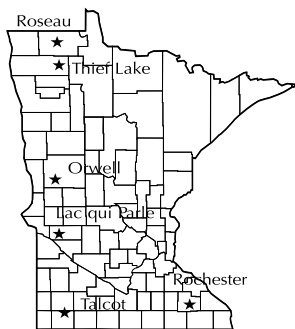
+ Open to August harvest

## 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.
- Hunters taking migratory waterfowl must be 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. 16-Dec. 30.

- 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.
- Waterfowl and small game 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.

**Note:** A goose hunting guide for the Lac qui Parle controlled hunting zone will be available on the DNR website in late September. Hunters are encouraged to view this guide for regulations unique to the refuge, blind maps, and other helpful tips.

## 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 Oct. 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 2015. 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 2015.

# 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 website at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)



# Designation of Minnesota's 50th Wildlife Management Lake

In 2014, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is celebrating the designation of Minnesota's 50th Wildlife Management Lake. The DNR has the authority to manage water levels in designated Wildlife Management Lakes to benefit wildlife habitat. Some of the most well-known Wildlife Lakes are Christina, Heron, and Swan. The 50th lake to receive this designation is Eagle Lake, which is just south of Hutchinson in McLeod County.

Eagle Lake was historically used by a variety of waterfowl, including ring-necks, canvasbacks, redheads and mallards, however prolonged stable water levels and the presence of carp have degraded waterfowl habitat and waterfowl use has declined. The lake will get a new water control structure in the fall of 2014. Funds for the new structure will be provided by Ducks Unlimited (DU) through Outdoor Heritage Fund money approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). The new water control structure will allow drawdowns to occur on Eagle Lake which will transform it from a turbid lake devoid of aquatic vegetation to one with clear water, abundant invertebrates, and submerged vegetation which will be much more attractive to waterfowl and other wetland wildlife. According to Area Wildlife Supervisor Joseph Stangel, "This Wildlife Lake designation and associated infrastructure work are the result a truly collaborative partnership among the Buffalo Creek Watershed District, DU,

LSOHC, area landowners, and the DNR and it will improve waterfowl habitat and water quality in this very degraded lake."

The Wildlife Lake designation statute was passed in 1969 as part of Minnesota Waterfowl Association's (MWA) effort to "Save the Game Lakes" in southern Minnesota. The first designations were completed in January, 1971. By the end of the 1970's, 15 lakes were designated, including two of the most well-known waterfowl lakes—Swan and Heron. An additional 17 lakes were designated in the 1980's. In 2001, the DNR stepped up wildlife lake management efforts by expanding the Shallow Lakes Program in the DNR's Section of Wildlife Management and lot of attention was focused on updating shallow lake infrastructure. The DNR and conservation partners have spent much of the last 10+ years repairing and replacing water control structures on those lakes that were designated 30 to 40 years ago. In addition, several new lakes have been designated and water level management implemented. One of the more recently designated lakes, Smith Lake in Wright County, was highlighted in a recent edition of the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/issues/2014/jul-aug/shallow-lake-restoration.html>).

The DNR has several additional Wildlife Lake designations planned and will continue to work with partners like MWA

and DU to complete more in coming years. The availability of Outdoor Heritage Funds by LSOHC has helped the recent acceleration of shallow lake management including wildlife lake designations. Bob Welsh, Wildlife Habitat Program Manager with the DNR's Section of Wildlife said, "Shallow lakes enhancement and management is a great story that shows

how we can effectively address needed work on the landscape by combining Outdoor Heritage Funds from the people of Minnesota, knowledge of our wildlife managers and conservation partners, and support from waterfowl hunters and others who understand the value of shallow lakes and other wetland habitats."



Designated Wildlife Lakes

# Wild Rice: Food for Us, Food for Ducks

Bailey Petersen | Wildlife Lake Specialist | MN DNR Shallow Lakes Program

## WILD RICE ECOLOGY

Wild rice is a native aquatic grass of the Great Lakes region. Minnesota has more natural wild rice than any other state in the nation, and wild rice was designated as the official state grain of Minnesota in 1978. This plant is not only Minnesota's state grain; it is also an important plant in our state's history and an important plant for waterfowl and a host of other wetland wildlife.

Wild rice is found in lakes, rivers, and streams throughout the north-central and northeastern regions of Minnesota, but it is also found in central, western, and southern Minnesota. Rice is generally found in non-stagnant, free flowing waters, in depths less than 36 inches; although it can grow in deeper water. The ideal depth range is 6-18 inches. Wild rice grows best in a loose organic substrate, but will tolerate sand or other substrates occasionally.

The annual cycle for wild rice averages 105-135 days from germination to complete maturity, but this is highly variable depending on factors such as substrate, water chemistry, water depth, and timing of ice out. In late summer/early fall, the rice kernel falls off the plant and sinks into the water. The wild rice seed



lays dormant during the winter, and due to the shape of the seed, continues to work its way into the bottom sediment. The seed must be exposed to temperatures close to freezing for germination to occur, which usually begins in early May. The seedling grows into a submerged aquatic stalk in about 30 days. In early to mid-June, the plant reaches a floating-leaf stage when the stalk sends up a leaf that floats on the surface of the water for about 10-15 days before emerging from the water. Rice in the floating-leaf stage is especially vulnerable to rain

events, since the buoyant leaf can float up with rising water levels and uproot the plant. In late June the floating leaf plant develops into an aerial or emergent stalk, and begins to produce flowers. A seed head develops from each flower and will be mature and ready for harvest generally in mid-August to early September. Wild rice begins ripening in the northern part of the state first, and then progresses to the south. River rice generally matures earlier than lake rice. So the wild rice harvesting season can extend for several weeks across the state. Seasonal production of wild rice is highly variable and dependent on local conditions.

## IMPORTANCE

Wild rice is at the core of Native American culture in the upper Great Lakes region. For centuries, the people around Lake Superior owed their existence to this food. Not only was wild rice abundant, it was also easy to store for long winters, enabling people to survive when other food sources were scarce or unavailable. Wild rice harvest also provides economic benefits to some Minnesota communities. The tradition of hand harvesting wild rice remains very important to Native Americans in Minnesota as well as around 1,500 other Minnesotans who purchase a license to harvest rice each year. Over 70% of the annual harvest of natural wild rice comes from Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Itasca, and St. Louis Counties.

Besides the cultural significance and social and monetary values to local communities, wild rice is also of great biological significance. Wild rice provides key brood-rearing and migration habitat in many areas of Minnesota for waterfowl and other water birds. As a whole grain, wild rice seeds are high in complex carbohydrates, vitamins, fiber, and protein, making them an excellent food source for waterfowl. Emergent wild rice plants provide cover for hiding ducklings from predators. The roots and stalk of the plant provide structure for invertebrates and are also a food source for geese, swans, and muskrats. The straw left standing in the spring from last fall's rice crop provides nesting material for waterfowl and cover for invertebrates, and the decomposition of this straw releases nutrients which then become available for aquatic plants and invertebrates. According to the

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, more than 17 species of greatest conservation need utilize wild rice lakes for food or brood rearing. For more details about the importance of wild rice in Minnesota, you can view the 2008 legislative report "Natural Wild Rice in Minnesota" on the MNDNR website: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us).

## MANAGEMENT

The primary management technique to promote wild rice is water level management, because wild rice requires low, stable water levels to thrive. Large water level bounces, especially during the floating-leaf stage, can destroy the entire crop for the year. The roots of the rice plant are very fragile and can be uprooted easily in flood events. Late spring and early summer flood events can be detrimental to wild rice crops in lakes where water levels rise after heavy rains. Lakes towards the bottom of their watersheds or with little to no outflow are especially susceptible to rice crop failures due to high water. This is why wild rice succeeds in basins with larger outflow potential and in streams and shallow rivers.

To maintain water levels ideal for wild rice production, removing beavers and beaver dams are also critical management techniques. Beavers can wreak havoc on wild rice lakes, by damming up the outlets. A blocked outlet holds back the water that should be flowing downstream from the lake, which raises water levels higher than they should be. For maximum wild rice production potential, lake outlets should be cleared and kept clear of beaver



**2013 rice crop on Moose Lake in Aitkin County**

debris to allow for maximum outflow and to maintain the lake at the lowest natural level. Ducks Unlimited and DNR Wildlife have partnered on a program called the Joint Wild Rice Project, which is a beaver trapping and dam removal program where trappers are hired to trap beavers and clear outlets on important wild rice lakes in Minnesota. This partnership program is funded by wild rice harvester license sales and a donation from Ducks Unlimited. As part of this program, over 100 wild rice lakes totaling over 27,000 acres were managed in 2014.

## HUNTING

The duck hunting season begins in late September, about a month after the end of the wild rice harvesting season, but timing of the wild rice harvest can vary since wild rice matures over several weeks across the state. Migrating waterfowl often select wild rice waters as stopover sites because there is a lot of cover and food available.

As a hunter, site selection is crucial if you expect birds to arrive opening morning. There are many wild rice lakes located within state Wildlife Management Areas and federal Waterfowl Production Areas, but there are also many located within state and county forests. Target these basins for early-season dabblers such as wood ducks, mallards, and teal. Late-season mallards can be expected to arrive at these basins in November and stay potentially through ice-up. Ring-necked ducks often use wild rice lakes during brood rearing and migration as well. The list of known wild rice waters in Minnesota can be found on the DNR website at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/wildlife/shallowlakes/wildrice.html>. A

scouting trip will likely be necessary to determine which lakes are having a good rice year, since every lake does not provide a bumper crop every year. This year, for example, spring flooding damaged or significantly reduced the rice crop on many lakes without large water discharge potential.

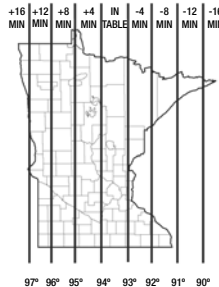
Scouting does take extra time and effort but can really pay off. The key to finding a successful hunting basin is to locate the areas where ducks eat and rest. Wild rice lakes usually serve both of these purposes. Hunt out of a canoe or try to find a basin where you can set up a blind on shore or wade out and hide amongst the dense wild rice straw. This will provide more concealment, which is necessary, because not being spotted is the key to duck hunting in the land of 10,000 lakes. I have found luck in tossing out a dozen or so decoys randomly near small openings in the rice. Using feeding calls to lure in dabblers has also proved beneficial. Lastly, I recommend arriving a half hour earlier than you think you need to for setting up and preparing for your hunt.

Minnesota's breeding waterfowl numbers are down slightly from last year; however, the continental duck population has reached a record high. It is likely that Minnesota hunters will see a good number of migrating birds again this fall on basins that provide necessary food resources and cover. MN DNR Area Wildlife staff and the Shallow Lakes Program work to restore and maintain high quality wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl and to provide quality waterfowl hunting opportunities.



# SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for most migratory game birds are 1/2 hour before sunrise to 4 p.m. through Oct. 10, 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 online 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	7:52	5:00	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

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