

NEW—this book now includes
waterfowl regulations

Effective July

2026

through June 30, 2027

Updated 8.5.26



MINNESOTA HUNTING & TRAPPING REGULATIONS



m DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

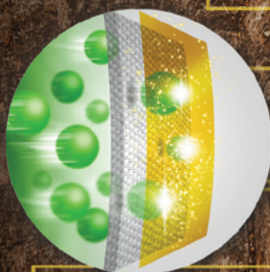
This booklet contains summaries of hunting and trapping laws in Minnesota. It's not a full list of all hunting and trapping laws and isn't a legal document.

 **75** YEARS OF
WMAs
1951-2026

SCENT KILLER® GOLD®

99%

EFFECTIVE AT STOPPING REPLICATED
HUMAN ODOR IN TESTING AT RUTGERS
UNIVERSITY - 20 DAYS AFTER DRYING*



**DESTROYS ODORS
ON CONTACT**

- Doesn't just cover them up.

**SPECIALIZED BLEND OF ADVANCED
ODOR FIGHTING INGREDIENTS**

- Attacks a wide range of odors - most importantly, human odor!

20 DAYS*

**CONTINUES TO WORK FOR
DAYS AFTER DRYING**

- No need to frequently re-apply in the field.



**Effectively Turns Your Hunting clothes into a
High-Powered Scent Elimination Suit.**

**THE GOLD STANDARD®
100% MONEY-BACK GUARANTEED**

* The color gold for a cap is a registered trademark of Wildlife Research Center, Inc.



**WILDLIFE
RESEARCH CENTER®**

Paid Advertisement

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

FEDERAL PREMIUM

BLACKCLOUD®

THE LIMIT

THE SKY IS

Premium steel

FLITESTOPPER pellets

FLITECONTROL
FLEX wad



FEDERAL PREMIUM® BLACK CLOUD®

The boundaries have been broken. FLITESTOPPER® pellets blended with Premium® Steel and deployed with the rear-opening FLITECONTROL FLEX® wad. Longer range. Denser patterns. Lethal through any choke.



BUY NOW AT [FEDERALPREMIUM.COM](https://www.federalpremium.com)

© 2026 Federal Ammunition

SHARE THE PASSION

**Become a DNR Volunteer Hunter
Education/Firearms Safety Instructor**



Teaching hunter education is a great way to further your enjoyment of the outdoors and give something back to future generations of hunters.

Currently, more instructors are needed.
Go to mndnr.gov/safety/instructors to get started!

m DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

ENF_0023_25



HUNT WITH A HENRY

BUILT BY WOODSMEN, FOR WOODSMEN. HENRY PUTS MEAT IN THE FREEZER.



H23 Lever Action Supreme Rifle (LASR)
.450 Bushmaster



H9 Provider Rifle
.30-30, .360 Buckhammer

From frosty deer stands to thick Northwoods cover, Henry knows how to build rifles for this part of the country because we hunt it, too.

This season, Hunt with a Henry.



HENRY

Made In America,
Or Not Made At All



FREE DECALS + CATALOG



HENRYUSA.COM

MADE IN WISCONSIN | LIFETIME WARRANTY | #1 CUSTOMER SERVICE | 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEE

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



SUPPORT THOSE WHO GET YOUTH OUTDOORS



**Your donation to No Child Left Inside
provides grants to programs that help
children experience the outdoors.**



Learn more and donate today:

mndnr.gov/kidsoutdoors

mn DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

FAW_0056_2022



**OUTDOOR WOOD &
WOOD PELLET FURNACES**



CentralBoiler.com
218-782-2575

Paid Advertisement

ALTOZ®
ALWAYS AHEAD®

Outdoor Power Equipment



Altoz.com
218-782-5869

©2026 Central Boiler/Altoz | ad8057



Minnesota Forestry Association

**YOUR HUNT
YOUR FOREST
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

- Sustainable timber & habitat management
- Public land access for all hunters
- Wildlife corridors & reforestation
- MFA Newsletters & Magazines
- Field days, tours & member events

**JOIN TODAY
\$50 MEMBERSHIP**
(218) 879-5100
minnesotaforestry.org



Scan to join

*MN Forestry Association
P.O. Box 6060, Grand Rapids, MN 55744*

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Don't let a spark ruin your season. Prevent wildfires.

- Completely extinguish any outdoor fire you make.
- Drown the fire with water. Stir and repeat until it's no longer hot.
- Avoid parking vehicles in tall dry grass.
- Keep your ATVs/UTVs on trails and exhaust system clean and free of debris.

If a fire rekindles or escapes, the person who set it is liable for any damage caused and the wildfire suppression costs.

FOR_0021_2026

Just wear it.



Waterfowlers are more likely to drown in a duck boat capsizing accident than they are to be accidentally injured in a firearms mishap.

For a free brochure on duck boat safety contact the Minnesota DNR.
Call 888-MINNDNR or email
info.dnr@state.mn.us

**ANYONE CAN REGISTER TO BE AN
ORGAN, EYE & TISSUE DONOR**



LifeSource
ORGAN, EYE AND TISSUE DONATION



www.DonateLifeMN.org

Plant habitat with the State Forest Nursery



Grow the cover, food, and shelter that deer and other game need with native bareroot seedlings from the State Forest Nursery.

Seedlings can ship directly to your home.

Sign up for updates:
mndnr.gov/nursery



mn DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

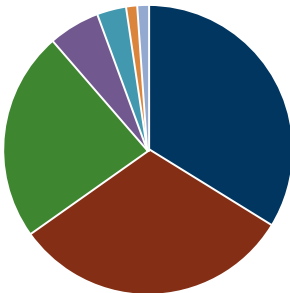
LoginMN

AGY_0137_26

Your License Dollars at Work

License dollars improve fishing, hunting, wildlife and habitat to maintain and create outdoor recreation opportunities

How DNR Spends a License Dollar



- Fisheries – 33.8 cents
- Wildlife – 31.4 cents
- Conservation officers – 23.4 cents
- Clean water – 5.7 cents
- Licensing – 3.3 cents
- Boat ramps and accesses – 1.2 cent
- Sustainable forests – 1.1 cent

mn DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

To learn more visit:
mndnr.gov/LicenseDollarsAtWork

FAW_0106_26



m DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Electronic Licensing System

Modernization of the Electronic Licensing System (ELS)

Updates to the electronic licensing system have improved processes for license purchasing, validation/tagging, registration and viewing lottery preference points.

Buy a license today!

There are three different ways to purchase a license.
See the list of options below.

- Visit *Minnesota DNR license sales online* at mndnr.gov/elsinfo or scan the QR code for a quick link.
- Download the mobile app today. MN DNR Licensing



- *Seeking an in-person option?* The Minnesota DNR issues licenses at more than 1,200 agent locations across Minnesota—sporting goods stores, hunting and fishing supply stores, and some retail chains.

Additional questions?

If you have questions, please call the DNR Information Center at 888-MINNDNR (646-6367) or 651-296-6157.

CONTENTS

New for 2026.....	13	Small Game.....	56
Trespass Law	14	Game Birds.....	58
Duty to Render Aid	16	Wild Turkey Season Dates	60
Licenses.....	16	Youth Small Game and	
Stamps	25	Upland Bird Hunts.....	62
Firearm Safety Certificates	26	Hunting Furbearers.....	65
Apprentice Validations for		2026 Furbearer Trapping	
Hunting and Trapping	27	Season Dates	66
General Information	30	Trapping	66
Protected and		Big Game	79
Unprotected Animals.....	31	Big Game Regulations	79
Accessible Hunting Options	32	White-tailed Deer.....	80
All-terrain Vehicles for Hunting.....	34	Feeding and Attractant Ban	93
Dogs	35	Shotgun Zone Updates	94
Using Lights, Night Vision,		Youth Season.....	97
Drones, or Wireless Devices.....	36	Firearms Season	98
Storage, Possession and		Deer—Special Hunts	101
Sale of Wild Animals.....	37	Public Lands and Wildlife Refuges	109
Hunting Outside Seasons and		Public Hunting Land Maps	109
Controlled Substances	38	State Lands.....	109
Blaze Clothing and		State Refuges	113
Ground Blind Requirements	39	Tribal Lands	127
Waterfowl	41	Tribal Nations Contact List	127
Definitions.....	41	Contact Information.....	128
General Waterfowl Regulations.....	41		
Controlled Hunting Zones	46		
Accessible Blinds for Hunters	47		
2026 Seasons and Bag Limits.....	47		

Cover images: Main photo of two hunters from Cara Hanson. Ruffed grouse photo by Alyssa Sheffield. American black duck photo from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS).

Waterfowl images on pages 52-55 from Waterfowl Identification by Richard LeMaster, Stackpole Books, stackpolebooks.com. Used with permission.

The sale of advertising pays for a portion of this publication. The state of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources neither endorse products or services listed nor accept any liability arising from the use of products or services listed.



A message from Kelly Straka, Fish and Wildlife Division Director

75 years ago, a small group of Minnesota conservationists looked at a landscape losing wetlands at an alarming rate and refused to accept it. In 1951, they launched the "Save the Minnesota Wetlands" program with an audacious goal: permanently protect 250,000 acres of land and preserve it for wildlife habitat. That vision became Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system.

Today, the WMA system encompasses more than 1,500 areas and 1.4 million acres across 86 Minnesota counties—one of the largest and most respected public land networks in the nation. It stands as a testament to generations of DNR staff, conservation partners, legislators, hunters, trappers, anglers, recreationists and the landowners who entrusted their acres to this legacy. Together, they built something far bigger than anyone in 1951 dared imagine.

As we mark this 75th anniversary, I'd like to extend our gratitude to everyone who has contributed land, labor, or resources to this vital work. We still have formidable challenges ahead—habitat loss, climate pressures, changing landscapes—but I continue to see the same forward-thinking spirit that launched this program, and I believe it will help us continue to meet these challenges well into the future. Our WMAs belong to all Minnesotans. Stewarding them for the next 75 years is work worth doing together. As we reflect on this remarkable anniversary, I remain optimistic and inspired by the ambitious spirit of partnership and conservation that makes Minnesota so special.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kelly Straka'.

Dr. Kelly Straka
Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



mndnr.gov/wmas

*NEW FOR 2026

NEW Regulation book updates: These changes will improve user experience and accessibility. The organization and presentation of content was updated for 2026. Public engagement opportunities on both the Fishing and Hunting & Trapping regulations were provided in early 2026. That feedback will be considered for the regulation books in the coming 1-5 years.

Waterfowl

The waterfowl regulations were previously a separate regulations booklet. They have now been incorporated into this Hunting and Trapping Regulations book. The pintail daily limit has increased to 3 (previously 2).

Sunrise/Sunset tables

These tables have traditionally been located in the back of this regulation book. They have been removed. Additional information can be found on page 30.

Trapping/furbearers

Trappers will be required to present only the heads of bobcats at furbearer registration. The full carcasses of bobcats are no longer required.

Deer—Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

A statewide rotational CWD surveillance plan will begin this year. CWD testing will occur in different surveillance blocks on a rotating basis over the next four years. See page 88 for details.

Mandatory CWD testing is required for all deer one year of age and older that are harvested over the opening weekend of the firearms season in all DPAs that are within the surveillance block.

A new carcass disposal rule is replacing the carcass movement restrictions. This rule is in effect for all CWD management zones which gives hunters more options of handling the carcass of their deer. See page 92 for details.

Dumpsters will not be provided by DNR for deer carcass waste within CWD management zones.

Deer—General

Hunters who reach the bag limit for the DPA they are hunting can move to any other DPA to continue hunting, as long as DPA and statewide bag limits are followed. For example, a hunter who harvested two deer in a 2-deer limit DPA can still hunt another 2-deer limit DPA.

Hunters can now apply for both an antlerless lottery permit and special hunt permit, if they choose. Previously, hunters could only apply to one. Preference points will be accrued separately for each. There will be a new, stand-alone application process for firearms and muzzleloader special deer hunts.

Successful hunters no longer need to physically tag their deer after harvest, as part of the ELS modernization. Validation of your license or permit is still required via the MN DNR Licensing app or on the paper license.

Nontoxic ammunition requirements apply to all youth special hunts in state parks. There is no longer a nontoxic ammunition exemption for youth special hunts in state parks located in the former shotgun zone.

Shotgun Zone Elimination

In 2025, the Minnesota Legislature eliminated the shotgun zone. Counties have the option to pass an ordinance restricting weapon-type (example: a county may pass an ordinance to remain shotgun only). See page 94 for details.

Electronic Licensing System (ELS)

The ELS has been modernized. See page 10 for general information and ELS call outs throughout the book for changes to specific sections.

TRESPASS LAW

The trespass law applies to all outdoor recreation, including activities like hunting, trapping, hiking, and recreational vehicle use. You must get permission before going onto posted land or agricultural land.

Landowners or managers must post “No Trespassing” signs on their property yearly. Signs should be placed every 1,000 feet (or 500 feet in wooded areas) or at the primary corners of each parcel and at access points to the property. The signs need to have 2-inch letters and include the owner or manager signature or name, and telephone number. Trespassing can result in fines up to \$3,000, loss of licenses, or criminal or civil penalties. Conservation officers and peace officers must enforce these laws. If you are unsure, ask the landowner for permission.

Restrictions

- You need permission to do outdoor activities on posted or agricultural land.
- If you are asked to leave private property, you cannot return for a year.
- On private land or public right-of-way, you cannot fire a gun within 500 feet of a building with people or livestock, unless it's your property or you have written permission.
- A person may hunt from the water, a private shooting preserve, or from public land that is within 500 feet of a building occupied by humans or livestock.
- Shooting a firearm near small (<1 acre) livestock corrals without permission is not allowed, except during hunting seasons on government-owned land.
- You may not take a wild animal on land that you are prohibited from lawfully entering. This prohibition includes coyote hunters intentionally running their dogs on posted or agricultural land without permission of the landowner, occupant, or lessee.
- Don't harm domestic animals or damage property. Leave gates open if they are open; keep gates closed if they are closed.

Exceptions

- You can enter unposted land on foot, to retrieve a lawfully shot animal but must leave immediately if asked by the landowner.
- You can enter private land without permission to retrieve your hunting dog, if you are on foot, without a firearm, and leave immediately. This does not allow you to take any wild animals on this property.
- You can walk on land marked with “Walk-In Access” signs from September 1 to May 31 if you have a Walk-In Access validation.

Permission is required on agricultural land even if it’s not posted

What is agricultural land?

“Agricultural land” is land that: 1) is plowed or tilled; 2) has crops or leftover plant materials; 3) is fenced for livestock (including horses); 4) is planted as grassland or hay; or 5) grows trees like poplar that are harvested within 15 years of planting.

Water access and recreational use

What is lawful access?

You can access streams or lakes legally through public access points, public land, public roads, or with private landowner permission.

What is recreational use?

Recreational use includes boating, swimming, fishing, hunting, trapping and walking in the water regardless of land ownership beneath it.

What waters are open to recreational use?

Lakes and streams are open for recreational use if legally accessible and usable. Any water that can float a canoe qualifies, but other waters may qualify depending on the situation.

Landowner liability

If a landowner gives permission for someone to use their land for free for recreation, they:

- do not guarantee the land is safe,
- do not owe the user special legal protections or rights, and
- are not responsible for injuries or damages caused by the user

Road right-of-way

Some road rights-of-way are private land with an easement for vehicles and walking. If you are unsure who owns a road ditch, ask permission or check with county or township offices.

DUTY TO RENDER AID

If someone fires a gun and believes it caused injury to another person, they must check and provide reasonable help right away. Not doing so is a crime, with penalties including jail time, fines, or additional charges.

LICENSES



***The new ELS is live and affects activities in this section.
See page 10 for details.***

A license to take a wild animal is valid for the license period, even if the license holder's age, residency, or student status changes.

What is a resident?

To qualify as a resident, a person must live in Minnesota for at least 60 days before buying a license.

Residents 21 years of age and older need a current Minnesota driver's license or public safety ID, or a receipt for one that's at least 60 days old.

Nonresidents under 21 years of age with a Minnesota-resident parent are considered residents.

Tribal members with a Minnesota address and an unexpired Tribal ID, who haven't had resident licenses in another state in the past 60 days, are considered residents

What is a nonresident?

A nonresident is anyone who does not meet the definition of a resident.

Licenses for nonresident students

Full-time students at a Minnesota school, college, or university can get a small game, deer, or bear license at the resident rate by showing a fee statement and proof of living in Minnesota during the school year. Foreign exchange students can also get a resident rate for deer or bear licenses if living with a Minnesota resident (proof required).

Licenses for military personnel

In Minnesota, special regulation may apply to current and past members of the military.

Can veterans with disabilities who are residents of Minnesota take antlerless deer without a lottery permit?

Yes, veterans with a 100% service-connected disability who are Minnesota residents can hunt antlerless deer without a lottery permit, except in bucks-only areas, as long as they have the appropriate deer license.

I'm a resident in the military stationed outside the state.

You may hunt small game without a license while on leave. You also do not need a Minnesota Waterfowl Stamp or Pheasant Stamp but must have a Federal Duck Stamp to hunt waterfowl. You may hunt deer, bear, and wild turkeys without charge after

obtaining the appropriate licenses and permits by presenting official leave papers to a license agent. Deer bonus permits may be purchased. You must carry proof of residency and official leave papers while hunting. Residents must possess a current Minnesota driver's license or public safety identification.

I'm not a state resident but am the spouse of a Minnesota resident on active military duty.

By showing proof, you may purchase hunting licenses at the resident rate.

I'm a resident home on leave or have been discharged from active service outside the country in the past 24 months.

You may take small game and fish without a license. Any required endorsements, coupons, or validations may be obtained at no fee.

You are eligible for 1 free deer license, valid for a deer of either sex, except in bucks-only areas. Discharged residents must provide a current Minnesota driver's license or public safety identification card, proof of residency, and official discharge papers.

What if I have a 100 percent service-related disability?

Residents may obtain a free small game license and 1 free firearms, muzzleloader or archery deer license (state pheasant and waterfowl stamps not required).

What if I'm a nonresident active National Guard?

A nonresident active member of Minnesota's National Guard may obtain a resident license to take fish or game. This does not apply to elk.

***NEW—Buying a license**

Where can I buy a license, stamp, or validation?

The DNR's Electronic Licensing System (ELS) issues licenses through more than 1,200 license agents in Minnesota, on the DNR website at mndnr.gov/buyalicense, or on the new MN DNR Licensing mobile app. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources issues licenses at agent locations throughout Minnesota—sporting goods stores, hunting and fishing supply stores and some retail chains.

Federal migratory waterfowl stamp validations will be available at all electronic license vendors, post offices, online, or through the MN DNR Licensing app. The electronic validation for the federal stamp is valid for the entire season. Pictorial stamps will be mailed to purchasers after March 10th.



***NEW—Tags and validations**

Some fish and game licenses previously had physical site tagging requirements (example: turkey). The DNR no longer requires that game be site tagged after harvest, and those physical tags are now replaced with the act of site validation. Licensed hunters will validate their harvest at the site of the kill, prior to movement of the animal, either electronically via the mobile app or by hand via a printed site validation tag (which does not need to be affixed to the animal). Harvested game must then be registered either online, through the MN DNR Licensing mobile app, or at designated agent locations.

Lifetime license

Lifetime license application forms are available online or by calling the DNR Information Center at 651-296-6157 or 888 MINNDNR (646-6367). Lifetime sports or small game license holders who plan to trap need a free trapping endorsement on their renewal, which has no fee.

Annual renewals are free and can be done online, through the mobile app or at an agent location. The initial purchase of a lifetime license is only available through DNR's License Center. Applications can be faxed or mailed in.

Resident Hunting				Cost does not include issuing fee.
Category	Code	Subcategory	Description	Cost
APPRENTICE Validation	199	Born after 12/31/79, age 12 or over for hunters; Born after 12/31/89, age 13 or over for trappers	Validation to allow an individual to trap or hunt small game, bear, and deer without having completed trapper education or hunter education firearms safety, must purchase required licenses. Limited to twice in a lifetime	\$3.50
SPORTS	216	Individual Sports	Individual angling and small game license	\$41
	142	Individual Super Sports	Individual angling with trout validation, small game license with pheasant and state waterfowl stamp validations, 1 deer license	\$100
	217	Married Combination Sports	2 angling and 1 small game license	\$57
	143	Married Combination Super Sports	2 angling with trout stamp validations, 1 small game license with pheasant and state waterfowl stamp validations, 1 deer license	\$126
SMALL GAME and TRAPPING	NA	Youth under age 16 Annual	Small Game License not required	Free
	208	Youth age 16-17 Annual	Small Game License	\$5
	211	Adult age 18 or over and under age 65 Annual	Small Game License	\$22
	100	Senior age 65 and over Annual	Small Game License	\$13.50
	144	Adult age 18 and over Consecutive 72-hour	Small Game License (72-hour state waterfowl and pheasant stamp validations included)	\$19
	671 672	Furbearer site validation coupons	Fisher/Marten (671) or River Otter (672)	Free
	218	Junior Trapping Annual age 13 to 17	Age 13 to 17 trapping license, small game license also required for 16-17	\$5
	214	Adult Trapping Annual age 18 or over and under 65	Age 18 and over trapping license, small game license also required. Trappers education may also be required	\$23
	101	Senior Trapping Annual age 65 or over	Age 65 and over trapping license, small game license also required	\$11.50

Category	Code	Subcategory	Description	Cost
STAMPS	229	Pheasant	Age 18 to 64 state pheasant validation	\$7.50
	226	State Waterfowl	Age 18 to 64 state waterfowl validation, federal migratory bird hunting validation also needed	\$7.50
TURKEY	600	Adult Lottery Application	Turkey Lottery Application Fee when needed	\$4
	619	Youth under age 13	Turkey Spring archery or firearm (any permit area and time period)	Free
Turkey (continued)	641	Youth under age 13	Turkey Fall archery or firearm	Free
	601	Youth age 13 to 17	Turkey Spring archery or firearm (any permit area and time period)	\$5
	655	Youth age 13 to 17	Turkey Fall archery or firearm	\$5
	610	Adult age 18 or over	Turkey Spring firearm	\$26
	607	Adult age 18 or over	Turkey Spring archery (all time periods)	\$26
	650	Adult age 18 or over	Turkey Fall archery or firearm	\$26
	190	Access Validation all ages	Walk-In Access Validation	\$3
	NA	Donation	Voluntary donation on small game and deer licenses	\$5 \$3 \$1
DEER	246	Youth age 10 to 12	Youth Archery	Free
	247	Youth age 10 to 12	Youth Firearms	Free
	248	Youth age 10 to 12	Youth Muzzleloader	Free
	210	Youth age 13 to 17	Deer by Firearms	\$5
	209	Youth age 13 to 17	Deer by Archery	\$5
	204	Youth age 13 to 17	Deer by Muzzleloader	\$5
	212	Adult age 18 and over	Deer by Firearms	\$34
	213	Adult age 18 and over	Deer by Archery	\$34
	203	Adult age 18 and over	Deer by Muzzleloader	\$34
	422	Early Antlerless Season	Deer Early Antlerless Season (no longer required, page 96)	\$8.50
	430	Bonus	Bonus Permit (of which \$1 goes to the venison donation program)	\$18
	201	Disease Management	Disease Management Antlerless Permit (for certain 600-series deer permit areas, page 99)	\$1.50
ELK	625	Application	Elk Application	\$4
BEAR	662	Application	Bear Application	\$4
	659	Youth age 10 to 12	Bear License. Must obtain a free license to take big game.	Free
	674	Youth age 10 to 12	Surplus Bear License. Must obtain a free license to take big game.	Free

Continued on next page

Category	Code	Subcategory	Description	Cost
BEAR (continued)	676	Youth age 10 to 12	No Quota Bear License. Must obtain a free license to take big game.	Free
	643	Youth age 13 to 17	Bear License	\$5
	644	Youth age 13 to 17	Surplus Bear License	\$5
	642	Youth age 13 to 17	No Quota Bear License	\$5
	660	Adult age 18 and over	Bear License	\$44
	664	Adult age 18 and over	Surplus Bear License	\$44
	224	Adult age 18 and over	No Quota Bear License	\$44
	697	Bear Bait Drum	Surcharge (\$5 per drum)	\$5
PRAIRIE CHICKEN	616	Application	Prairie Chicken Application	\$4
	617	License	Prairie Chicken License	\$23
SANDHILL CRANE	250	Permit	Sandhill Crane Permit	\$3
GOOSE	521	Permit	Spring Light Goose Conservation Permit	\$2.50

Nonresident Hunting Cost does not include issuing fee.				
Category	Code	Subcategory	Description	Cost
APPRENTICE Validation (Nonresident)	199	Born after 12/31/79, age 12 or over for hunters; Born after 12/31/89, age 13 or over for trappers	Validation to allow an individual to trap or hunt small game, bear, and deer without having completed trapper education or hunter education firearms safety, must purchase required licenses. Limited to 2 in a lifetime	\$3.50
WALK-IN ACCESS (Nonresident)	190	Access Validation ALL ages	Walk-In Access Validation	\$3
SMALL GAME and TRAPPING (Nonresident)	146	Youth under age 16 Annual	Small Game License	Not Required
	206	Youth age 16-17	Small Game License	\$5
	221	Adult age 18 or over Annual	Small Game License	\$102
	145	Adult age 18 or over Consecutive 72-hour	Small Game License (72-hour state waterfowl and pheasant stamps included)	\$75
	207	Trapping	Trapping (landowner only)	\$84
STAMPS (Nonresident)	229	Pheasant	Age 18 to 64 state pheasant validation	\$7.50
	226	State Waterfowl	Age 18 to 64 state waterfowl validation, federal migratory bird hunting validation also needed	\$7.50

Category	Code	Subcategory	Description	Cost
TURKEY (Nonresident)	600	Adult Lottery Application	Turkey Lottery Application Fee when needed	\$4
	594	Youth under age 13	Turkey Spring Archery or Firearm (any permit area and time period)	Free
	593	Youth under age 13	Turkey Fall Archery or Firearm (any permit area and time period)	Free
	602	Youth age 13 to 17	Turkey Spring Archery or Firearm (any permit area and time period)	\$5
	656	Youth age 13 to 17	Turkey Fall Archery or Firearm (any permit area and time period)	\$5
	611	Adult age 18 or over	Turkey Spring Archery or Firearm	\$96
	608	Adult age 18 or over	Turkey Spring Archery Only (non-lottery, all time periods)	\$96
	651	Adult age 18 or over	Turkey Fall (no lottery)	\$96
DEER (Nonresident)	246	Youth age 10 to 12	Youth Archery	Free
	247	Youth age 10 to 12	Youth Firearms	Free
	248	Youth age 10 to 12	Youth Muzzleloader	Free
	236	Youth age 13 to 17	Deer Archery	\$5
	231	Youth age 13 to 17	Deer Firearms	\$5
	236	Youth age 13 to 17	Deer Muzzleloader	\$5
	222	Adult age 18 or over	Deer Firearms	\$185
	223	Adult age 18 or over	Deer Archery	\$185
	237	Adult age 18 or over	Deer Muzzleloader	\$185
	423	Early Antlerless	Deer Early Antlerless Season (no longer required, page 96)	\$45
	431	Bonus	Bonus Permit (\$1 venison donation)	\$91
	202	Disease Management	Disease Management Antlerless Permit (for certain 600-series deer permit areas only, page 99)	\$1.50
BEAR (Nonresident)	662	Application	Bear Application	\$4
	659	Youth age 10 to 12	Bear License. Must obtain a free license to take big game.	Free
	674	Youth age 10 to 12	Surplus Bear License. Must obtain a free license to take big game.	Free

Continued on next page

Category	Code	Subcategory	Description	Cost
BEAR (Nonresident) <i>(continued)</i>	676	Youth age 10 to 12	No Quota Bear License. Must obtain a free license to take big game.	Free
	646	Youth age 13 to 17	Bear License	\$5
	647	Youth age 13 to 17	Surplus Bear License	\$5
	645	Youth age 13 to 17	No Quota Bear License	\$5
	661	Adult age 18 or over	Bear License	\$230
	667	Adult age 18 or over	Surplus Bear License	\$230
	225	Adult age 18 or over	No Quota Bear License	\$230
RACCOON or BOBCAT (Nonresident)	228	License	Raccoon or Bobcat. Small game license also required.	\$183
SPECIAL GOOSE (Nonresident)	521	Permit	Spring Light Goose Conservation Permit	\$2.50

Youth License Requirements

Individuals ages 18 and older must purchase an adult license. Youth licenses for wild turkey, deer (firearms, muzzleloader, and archery) bear and elk are qualified by the age of the licensee on the opening day of their respective season. Youth licenses for species that may be taken under a small game license are qualified by the age of the licensee on September 1.

Small Game

Age at the time of the hunt	Can I hunt?	Firearm Safety Training certification? (required for firearm and archery hunting)	License requirement?	Required parent or guardian?	Parent or guardian license?
12 and younger	Yes	Not required. However, youth hunting prairie chicken must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who has a firearms safety training certification.	Not required, except for turkey and prairie chicken. (see page 19).	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	Yes, if assisting the youth hunter.
13	Yes	Required. Not required for prairie chicken but must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who has a firearms safety training certification.	Not required, except for turkey and prairie chicken. (see page 19).	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	Yes, if assisting the youth hunter.
14 to 15	Yes	Required	Not required, except for turkey and prairie chicken. (see page 19).	No, may hunt on own.	Not required.

Age at the time of the hunt	Can I hunt?	Firearm Safety Training certification? (required for firearm and archery hunting)	License requirement?	Required parent or guardian?	Parent or guardian license?
16 to 17	Yes	Required	Reduced price youth license. Stamps may be required.	No, may hunt on own.	Not required.

Big Game

Age at the time of the hunt	Can I hunt?	Firearm Safety Training certification? (required for youth archery hunters age 12-15 and youth firearm hunters 12-17)	License requirement?	Required parent or guardian?	Parent or guardian license?
9 and younger	No				
10 to 11	Yes	Not required.	Free license	Yes. A parent or guardian within immediate reach.	Yes, if assisting the youth hunter.
12	Yes	Required	Free license	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	Yes, if assisting the youth hunter.
13	Yes	Required	Reduced price youth license	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	Yes, if assisting the youth hunter.
14 to 17	Yes	Required	Reduced price youth license	No, may hunt on own.	Yes, if assisting the youth hunter.

Wild Turkey

Age at the time of the hunt	Can I hunt?	Firearm Safety Training certification? (required for youth archery hunters age 12-15 and youth firearm hunters 12-17)	License requirement?	Required parent or guardian?	Parent or guardian license?
11 and younger	Yes	Not required for youth hunter. Parent or guardian must have a firearm safety certificate if the youth hunter does not.	Free youth license required.	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	No, if assisting the youth hunter without possessing/shooting a firearm or bow.
12	Yes	Required	Free youth license required.	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	No, if assisting the youth hunter without possessing/shooting a firearm or bow.
13	Yes	Required	Reduced price youth license.	Yes, must accompany youth hunter.	No, if assisting the youth hunter without possessing/shooting a firearm or bow.
14 to 17	Yes	Required	Reduced price youth license.	No, may hunt on own.	No, if assisting the youth hunter without possessing/shooting a firearm or bow.

Trapping

Age	Can I trap?	Trapper Education?	License requirement?	Required parent or guardian?	Parent or guardian license?
4 and under	Yes	No	No	Yes, must accompany youth trapper.	Any fisher/ marten, bobcat and/or otter trapped must be included in the limit of the accompanying parent or guardian.
5 to 12	Yes	No	No	No	No
13 to 15	Yes	Must complete trapper education or have apprentice trapper validation	Reduced price junior trapping license	No	No
16 and 17	Yes	Must complete trapper education or have apprentice trapper validation	Reduced price junior trapping license AND reduced price youth small game license	No	No

Federal aid in wildlife restoration

Minnesota’s rich outdoor heritage is enjoyed by all. When you purchase a rifle, ammunition, archery equipment, and other sporting gear, you pay a federal excise tax and import duties. Since 1937, this money has been collected by the federal government and redistributed to states based on hunting license sales and the state’s land area. These funds support projects, habitat management, wildlife management areas, technical guidance, population management, wildlife inventory and surveys, wildlife land acquisition, and hunter education, recruitment and retention.



Have you moved, changed your name, or has your driver’s license number changed?

Customers and agents can update a customer’s last name, address, and driver’s license. For updates to first name, middle name, date of birth, or social security number, please contact the DNR License Center at 877-348-0498 or 651-297-1230.

Stamps

Are stamps required to hunt ducks and pheasants?

Yes, for most hunters. Those who do not need pheasant or state waterfowl stamps include:

- Residents with a super sports license.
- Residents and nonresidents hunting with a 72-hour license.
- Residents on military leave.
- Resident veterans who possess a veteran’s disability hunting license.
- Residents and nonresidents hunting on commercial shooting preserves.
- Residents hunting pheasants on the land where they live.
- Residents and nonresidents hunting waterfowl on their own property.
- Stamps are not required for residents and nonresidents age 15 and under.

Stamp Validations Required by Age

Age	Are you a Minnesota Resident?	State Pheasant Stamp	State Waterfowl Stamp	Federal Duck Stamp	HIP Certification (migratory birds & waterfowl hunting)
15 years old and younger	Yes	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required
	No	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required
16 to 17	Yes	Not required	Not required	Required	Required
	No	Not required	Required	Required	Required
18 to 64	Yes	Required	Required	Required	Required
	No	Required	Required	Required	Required
65 and older	Yes	Not required	Not required	Required	Required
	No	Required	Required	Required	Required

Federal Duck Stamps can be purchased at post offices, at any license vendor, online, or the MN DNR License app. Electronically issued federal duck stamps are for the entire waterfowl season. Pictorial stamps will be mailed after March 10th.



2026 Waterfowl Stamp art by Matt Linz



2026 Pheasant Stamp art by Stephen Hamrick.

Harvest Information Program (HIP)

HIP certification is required for licensed resident and nonresident migratory bird or waterfowl hunters.

Before hunting waterfowl or migratory game birds (except sandhill cranes), you must be Harvest Information Program (HIP) certified. When you buy a license, say “yes” if you plan to hunt migratory birds. If you forget, you can still get certified later by getting a HIP receipt online or on the MN DNR Licensing mobile app. Your license will show “HIP Certified,” and you must carry it while hunting.

Why HIP?

DNR waterfowl biologists and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service use HIP information to develop more accurate estimates of all migratory birds harvested across the country.



Firearm Safety Certificates

If you were born after December 31, 1979, you will need one of the following to get a license to hunt wild animals with a firearm in Minnesota.

- A Firearms Safety Certificate
- An Apprentice Hunter Validation
- A past hunting license with a firearms safety mark, or
- Proof of completing a hunter education and firearms safety course from another state

If you are on active duty and completed basic training in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard you may purchase a license or obtain approval that authorizes hunting without possessing a firearms safety certificate. Once discharged, you must obtain a firearms safety certificate.

A replacement for a lost or destroyed firearms safety certificate can be obtained for \$3.50 at any DNR license agent or through the Electronic Licensing System in the customer profile online or in the mobile app.

A permit to carry a weapon under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act does not meet requirements for firearms safety.

Youth Firearms Safety Training Requirements

Demand for firearms safety training classes is high, and many classes fill very rapidly or have waiting lists. Youth may attend a class at age 11. Information on classes can be found online at mndnr.gov/safety.

Firearms safety training certificate requirements by age:

- 11 years old and younger: not required
- 12 years old: required for big game and turkey; not required for small game
- 13-17 years old: required
- Firearms safety certificates are required for archery hunters ages 12 to 15.
- Apprentice hunter/trapper validation available in lieu of firearm safety/trapper education certificate (see section below for details).

Apprentice Validations for Hunting and Trapping

Apprentice hunter validation is available for residents and nonresidents who would normally be required to possess a firearms safety certificate to hunt small game, bear, turkey, or deer.

The apprentice hunter/trapper validation is a short-term exception to the requirement for completing trapper education or hunter firearms safety training. The apprentice hunter/trapper validation can be purchased where hunting licenses are sold and may be purchased in two license years in a lifetime. The apprentice hunter must obtain all applicable licenses and stamps.

People who use an apprentice hunter or trapper validation must be within sight and hearing distance of an adult who has a valid license to hunt or trap the same species of game. The accompanying adult may not use an apprentice hunter or trapper validation.

When hunting turkey or prairie chicken, the accompanying adult may be licensed for another permit area or time period, but must be licensed for the same season as the apprentice hunter. If the accompanying adult is not licensed for the same permit area or time period as the apprentice hunter, they may not shoot or possess a firearm or bow while accompanying the apprentice hunter.

*NEW—Online or Mobile App Validation and Registration Process

Validation and registration are required for deer, bear, elk, turkey, fisher, pine marten, and river otter. Fisher, pine marten, and river otter can be validated on the paper coupon, online, or via the app but must be registered in person at dates and locations identified in the book (pages 74-75).

PURCHASE LICENSE



Two options:

- Mobile app
- Online at the DNR website

You will have the option to email the license PDF while also being able to view it in the mobile app.

VALIDATE HARVEST



Congratulations! Before moving the animal, you must validate your harvest. You have two options to validate at the harvest location:

- Use the mobile app—cell phone service is NOT required, but device must be logged into mobile app to validate. You must log in before leaving cell service.
- Licenses purchased online must be validated on paper (mark the paper/.pdf) or through the MN DNR Licensing app.

REGISTER HARVEST



You must register your harvest within 48 hours after validating your harvest. You have two options:

- Mobile app
- Online at the DNR website

If you are out of service when registering your harvest, you must open the mobile app when you return to service to sync with the licensing system.

Additional Information

Select the mobile app or online option for your license, you must validate and register your harvest through the mobile app or online.

Looking for more detailed guidance?

Scan the QR code or go to mndnr.gov/elsinfo



Validate: to indicate the time and date the game was taken with a license.

Register: to indicate the date, management unit, and sex/age of the animal taken.

*NEW—In-Person at a License Agent Validation and Registration Process

Validation and registration are required for deer, bear, elk, turkey, fisher, pine marten, and river otter. Fisher, pine marten, and river otter can be validated on the paper coupon, online, or via the app but must be registered in person at dates and locations identified in the book (pages 74-75).

PURCHASE LICENSE

Visit a license agent to purchase an in-person license. You will receive a paper license and paper validation (formerly known as a “tag”).



VALIDATE HARVEST

Congratulations! Before moving the animal, you must validate your harvest. At the harvest location, notch or mark the paper validation and save for registering your harvest.



The validated paper **does not** need to be attached to the harvested animal.

REGISTER HARVEST

You must register your harvest within 48 hours after validating your harvest in person at license agent that offers registration (game registration stations).



The license agent only needs the paper validation to register the harvest, not the harvested animal.

Do I have other options? Yes! You can transition to an electronic option. Register your harvest using the mobile app or online at the DNR website.



The phone option for registering harvest is **NO LONGER AVAILABLE**

Additional Information

How do I find a game registration station to register my harvest in-person?

- Ask your preferred license agent if they register harvests
- Call the DNR Information Center at 651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (646-6367)
- Visit the DNR website at:
 - › General game registration stations:
dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/stations.html
 - › Bear registration stations:
dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/bear/bear-registration-stations.html

Validate: to indicate the time and date the game was taken with a license.

Register: to indicate the date, management unit, and sex/age of the animal taken.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following are general hunting regulations. Regulations for specific game species and for specific types of public land follow.

*NEW—Sunrise and Sunset Information

Sunrise and sunset times vary widely across the state. For the exact time in your area, consult a local newspaper, airport, phone weather app, or check online at mndnr.gov/sunrise-sunset.

Firearms, Bows and Crossbows

How do I legally transport my firearm?

A person may not transport a firearm, including a handgun, in or on a motor vehicle unless the firearm is:

- unloaded and fastened in a case so that no part of the firearm is exposed (a holster is not a legal case);
- unloaded and in the closed trunk of a motor vehicle; or
- a pistol or handgun authorized under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act.

Under the following circumstances, a person may transport unloaded, uncased firearms (excluding pistols) in a motor vehicle, including ATVs:

- while at a shooting range with permission.
- while lawfully hunting on private or public land or while traveling to or from a site the person intends to hunt or trap or has lawfully hunted that day.

Firearms must be transported unloaded and cased:

- within Anoka, Hennepin, or Ramsey counties.
- within the boundaries of a home rule, charter, or statutory city with a population of 2,500 or more.
- on school grounds.
- as otherwise restricted in laws related to game refuges, shining, thermal imaging or night vision laws.

What does unloaded mean?

Unloaded means a firearm without ammunition in the barrels or magazine, if the magazine is in the firearm. A flintlock ignition is unloaded if it does not have priming powder in a pan. Muzzleloaders with primer caps are considered unloaded if the primer is removed.

How do I legally transport my bow?

Vertical bows and crossbows may be transported uncased in a motor vehicle but cannot be armed with a bolt or arrow.

Can I shoot from my vehicle?

No person may take a wild animal with a firearm or bow from a motor vehicle, except hunters with a disability permit. See pages 16 and 17.

Can I carry a handgun while hunting?

- Persons age 18 or older may carry a handgun to hunt or target shoot.
- Persons under age 18 who meet firearms safety requirements (see page 26) may carry handguns for hunting under the supervision of a parent or guardian.
- Unless authorized to carry a pistol or handgun under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act, a person may not possess a firearm while bow hunting for deer.
- A person may take bear and elk by archery while in possession of a firearm.
- Persons authorized to carry a handgun or pistol under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act may carry it uncased and loaded while hunting and while traveling to or from hunting locations by motor vehicle.

Can I hunt with a crossbow?

- Any person with a valid archery license may take deer or turkey with a crossbow during the respective regular archery seasons.
- Persons with a regular firearms license can hunt deer, bear, or turkey with a crossbow during the firearms season. Any person may use a crossbow to hunt during the fall wild turkey season.

If I'm not hunting deer, can I possess a firearm during the deer season?

No person may possess a firearm or ammunition outdoors 5 days before the November firearms deer opener through the second day after the close of the season where deer may be taken by firearms, except:

- A person hunting big game with a valid firearms big game license in possession.
- Possession is also legal under these conditions:
 - › An unloaded firearm that is cased or in a closed trunk of a motor vehicle.
 - › A shotgun and shells containing No. 4 buckshot or smaller.
 - › A handgun or rifle with .22 caliber short, long, or long rifle, magnum or .17 caliber rimfire cartridges.
 - › Handguns by a person with a permit to carry a weapon under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act.
 - › On a target range or under a target range permit issued by a conservation officer.

This does not apply to the muzzleloader season. Only persons with a muzzleloader or firearms license can have a legal muzzleloader in the field during that season.

Protected and Unprotected Animals

Protected animals

Protected animals are all birds and mammals that may be taken during established hunting seasons.

Crows

- Crows can be taken without a license during the hunting season or anytime they are causing or about to cause damage.
- Electronic calls or sounds may be used for crow hunting.
- Crows may be taken with a legal firearm (shotgun not larger than 10 gauge, rifle, or handgun), bow and arrow, or by falconry.

Mammals

- All mammals with hunting seasons listed in these rules are protected, but can be taken as allowed.
- There is no open season on caribou, antelope, lynx, wolverine, cougar, wolf, moose or spotted skunk (“civet cat”).

Nongame bird species

Most bird species, including bobwhite quail, swans, hawks, owls, eagles, herons, bitterns, cormorants, loons and grebes may not be taken. Only designated game birds during open hunting seasons and unprotected birds may be taken.

Taking protected species

All protected species must be killed before being removed from the site where taken. Poison or explosives are not a legal method of take for protected animals. Example: explosive tip arrows cannot be used to take wild turkey.

Unprotected animals

- Unprotected birds include house sparrows, starlings, common pigeons, Eurasian collared dove, chukar partridge, quail other than northern bobwhite, and monk parakeets. These birds may be taken at any time.
- Unprotected mammals include: coyotes, plains pocket gophers, porcupines, red/pine squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), striped skunks, and woodchucks. Mammals for which there are no closed seasons or other protection are also unprotected. These animals may be taken at any time.
- Unprotected birds and mammals may be taken in any manner, except with the aid of artificial lights or by using a motor vehicle to drive, chase, run over, or kill the animal. Exceptions for coyote hunting are on page 36.
- Poisons may be used only when the safety of humans and animals is ensured and in accordance with state and federal restrictions.

Do I need a license to hunt unprotected species?

No. Residents and nonresidents are not required to have a license to hunt unprotected species including coyote.

What do “taking” and “possession” mean for hunters?

“Taking” means pursuing, shooting, killing, capturing, trapping, snaring, angling, spearing, or netting wild animals; or placing, setting, drawing, or using a net, trap, or other device to take wild animals. Taking also includes attempting to take wild animals or assisting another person in taking wild animals.

“Possession” means game animals are in a person’s possession whether on hand, in cold storage, in transport, or elsewhere.

Accessible Hunting Options

I have a disability. Can I get a permit to hunt from a vehicle?

Yes. A person with a disability who has the appropriate permit may take a wild animal with a firearm or by archery from a motor vehicle on public land or on private land where they have permission to hunt.

What does the permit allow?

A person with a disability permit to shoot from a stationary motor vehicle may take a deer of either sex without an antlerless permit. This does not apply to bucks-only areas. Other members of the hunting party may not shoot antlerless deer for this person.

How do I get a permit?

Permits to shoot from a stationary motor vehicle may be issued by DNR Enforcement. Permit applications are available online at mndnr.gov/licenses/special or from any DNR regional office. See contact information on page 128.

Who qualifies for a permit?

The applicant must: be unable to step from a vehicle without aid of a wheelchair, crutches, braces, or other mechanical support or prosthetic device; or be unable to walk any distance because of a permanent lung, heart, or other internal disease that requires the person to use supplemental oxygen to assist breathing.

Do I need to get my disability verified to get a permit?

Yes. The permanent disability must be verified in writing by a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner or certified physician's assistant acting under the direction of a licensed physician or chiropractor. The applicant must possess a valid disability parking certificate or license plates issued by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Are there other permits or exceptions for hunters with disabilities?

Yes. More information is available as noted:

- Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices—permit allows hunters with mobility disabilities to operate a motorized device on DNR-owned lands. For more information, call the DNR Information Center at 888-MINNDNR (646-6367).
- Special seasons, page 95.
- Blinds at some major wildlife management areas (WMAs), page 111.
- Deer stands at Agassiz, Rydell, Minnesota Valley, and Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge.

People with permanent physical disabilities may obtain a firearms hunting license with a provisional firearms safety certificate. While hunting, they must be accompanied and assisted by a parent, guardian or other adult.

Accessible hunting seasons

Accessible deer hunts organized by Capable Partners, Access North, and Midwest Outdoors Unlimited are being scheduled for this fall. Contact these organizations directly for more information.

Persons who are totally blind may use a laser sight to participate in permitted assisted hunting opportunities.

All-terrain Vehicles for Hunting

What is considered an all-terrain vehicle (ATV)?

For the purposes of these regulations, all vehicles not requiring Minnesota Department of Public Safety licensing, including motorized trail bikes, 3-wheelers, 4-wheelers, 6-wheelers, tracked vehicles, and other similar vehicles.

A person may not operate:

- in most wildlife management areas, state parks, or scientific and natural areas, except as authorized;
- in unfrozen public waters (lakes, rivers, streams and certain wetlands), or in calcareous fens;
- on a trail on public land that is designated for non-motorized use only;
- on areas within public lands that are posted or where gates or other clearly visible structures are placed to prevent unauthorized motorized vehicle access; or to shoot at a wild animal from an all-terrain vehicle.

Are there special restrictions during deer season?

To reduce disturbance during deer hunting, operation of ATVs and snowmobiles is restricted during any firearms or muzzleloader deer season:

Licensed deer hunters

Licensed deer hunters must not operate an ATV or snowmobile on public or private property in an area where their license is valid except:

- Before legal shooting hours (½ hour before sunrise).
- From 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.
- After legal shooting hours (½ hour after sunset).
- On property they own.
- On private property with the landowner's permission.
- Under a permit issued by a conservation officer.
- Details about exceptions in the northwest are on page 111.

These special restrictions do not apply to vehicles licensed for public highways, or farm tractors used for agriculture.

Recreational riders

During the Statewide Firearms Deer Season, trails and routes on state forest lands are closed to all recreational riding (ATVs and snowmobiles) where deer may be taken by rifle (see the 2026 Deer Season Area Map and Shotgun Zone Updates, page 94). Trails remain open for licensed deer hunters in conjunction with their hunting activities. Forest roads remain open to all-terrain vehicle use.

Operation in parks, refuges, and other managed areas

ATVs and snowmobiles are not allowed in state parks, national wildlife refuges, scientific and natural areas, or most wildlife management areas. ATV use is also regulated in state and national forests.

Additional regulations on motor vehicle operation can be found on the following pages:

- Wildlife management areas, page 109.
- State forests, page 118.
- Federal lands, page 123.

When can I train my dog on public land?

Dogs may not be trained on DNR administered lands from April 16 to July 14. Regulations for dogs on wildlife management areas can be found on page 110. At other times, a person training a dog outdoors with a gun may only have blank cartridges and shells if the hunting season for game birds is closed, unless they have a permit. Applications for dog training permits are found here: files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/permits/enforcement/dog-training.pdf.

Dogs pursuing big game

No persons may allow their dog to chase or kill big game.

Between January 1 and July 14, a dog seen hurting, killing, or chasing big game in a dangerous way may be killed by any person. A peace officer or conservation officer may kill a dog that threatens big game at any time of the year. The person or officer will not be responsible for any damages for killing the dog.

Dogs running game during closed seasons

- Rabbits, hares and foxes may be run by use of dogs during the closed season without being taken, except from April 16-July 14.
- Raccoons may be run by the use of dogs during the closed season, without being taken, and without a license.

Dogs retrieving wounded deer and bear

A person may use a dog to locate and retrieve a wounded deer or bear as follows:

- The person attempting to locate the animal must possess a valid license to take the deer or bear.
- Dog handlers who do not have a hunting license must be accompanied by a hunter possessing a license.
- The licensed hunter and dog handler must be on foot and must wear blaze orange/pink.
- Any light used must be an artificial light carried in the hand or attached to the person.
- The dog must be on a leash no longer than 30 feet. The hunter or dog handler must physically control the leash at all times.
- The dog owner's name and telephone number must be on the dog.
- Hunters may not possess firearms or archery equipment when tracking deer outside legal shooting hours.

Preventing and handling accidental trap catches

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has developed excellent information to help dog owners identify traps placed in a natural setting and release dogs accidentally caught in traps. This information is available at: fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/hunt/?getPage=141. See page 62, "How to release a dog caught in a body-grip trap."

Demonstrations about how to release dogs from traps are provided by the Minnesota Trappers Association mntrappers.org

Can I legally use lights to look at deer?

A person cannot shine artificial light (for example; onto a highway, field, or forest) to find or take a wild animal while possessing a gun, bow, or any other tool that could be used to hunt big game, small game, or unprotected animals, whether alone or with others.

Shining lights generally

Shining is allowed for 2 hours after sunset without a firearm, bow or other tool to take wild animals. From 2 hours after sunset until sunrise, no person may shine artificial light on a highway or into a field or forest to locate a wild animal.

A person may not shine artificial light on land posted with signs that say “No Shining” or similar. Display letters should be at least 2 inches in height. Signs should be placed at intervals of 500 feet or less along the boundary of an area.

A person may not shine artificial light from a vehicle onto fenced agricultural land, residential property, or building sites.

Exceptions:

- Without a firearm or a bow, a person on foot may use a handheld artificial light to retrieve wounded or dead big game animals.
- A person taking raccoons or tending traps legally. See page 65.

Lights for hunting fox and coyote (January 1-March 15)

A person hunting for coyote or fox from January 1-March 15 may use an artificial light (either carried in the hand or attached to the person) under ALL of the following conditions:

- While on foot and not within a public right of way
- Using a shotgun
- Using a calling device
- Not within 200 feet of a vehicle

Night vision equipment

Except when taking fox or coyote at night, a person may not possess any kind of night vision or thermal imaging equipment while taking wild animals or while possessing a firearm, bow, or other implement that could be used to take wild animals.

- A person legally taking coyote or fox may use night vision or thermal imaging equipment, including infrared illuminators to enhance night vision equipment. This exception does not apply when hunting other species or during the regular firearms deer season. There are additional firearms restrictions during the deer season, see page 30.
- A person may use night vision or thermal imaging equipment, including infrared illuminators to enhance night vision equipment if firearms are unloaded, cased, and in the closed trunk of a motor vehicle; or a bow is cased or unstrung, and in the closed trunk of a motor vehicle. If the vehicle does not have a trunk, the firearm or bow must be placed in the rearmost location of the vehicle.

Can I use a drone when hunting?

Drones cannot be used to take big game or small game, which includes the recovery of wounded or dead game. It is also illegal to harass hunters, trappers or anglers with a drone. No person may use aircraft over a WMA in a manner that chases, herds, scares, or otherwise disturbs wildlife, except in emergencies or by authorization of the wildlife manager.

Can I use wireless devices to take game?

No. Using walkie talkies, cell phones, remote control or other radio equipment, including drones, to take big game or small game is unlawful.

- A person may use radio equipment without a permit to take unprotected wild animals.
- Dog training collars are allowed.
- Remote controlled motorized decoys may be used for taking migratory waterfowl or mourning doves where allowed.
- A remote controlled animal noise caller can be used for crows, furbearing animals and unprotected animals.
- Unattended electronic devices may not be used for taking wild animals.
- Electronic/motorized deer decoys are prohibited. Non-motorized deer decoys are legal.

Storage, Possession and Sale of Wild Animals

Can someone store my game or pelts for me?

Yes, but the package must be plainly marked, in ink, with your name and address, your license number, and the number and species in the package.

What parts of animals may legally be bought or sold?

A person may possess, transport, buy, or sell these parts of lawfully taken game animals except for migratory game birds, which cannot be bought or sold: adipose (fatty) tissue, bones (including skulls), hooves, antlers, sinews, teeth, hides, claws. The flesh of legally taken beaver, muskrat, raccoon, rabbits, and hares may be bought, sold, and transported at any time. Skulls of game animals, including deer skulls with antlers attached may not be possessed without a permit unless they were lawfully taken.

A person may not sell bear meat or organs, including gall bladders, and may not sell bear paws unless attached to the hide.

Who can legally buy and sell pelts?

A hunter or trapper may sell the pelts of legally taken furbearers to a licensed fur buyer. A person may not buy raw furs without a fur buyer's license, except a fur manufacturer or licensed taxidermist may buy raw furs from a licensed fur buyer.

Game for consumption at fund raising events

Nonprofit organizations may charge a fee for admission to fundraising events when legally taken wild game (excluding migratory game birds that cannot be sold under federal law), is donated to the organization and is served for consumption at the event. Records of donations must be kept for 2 years.

Wanton waste

A person may not intentionally destroy or waste a harvested protected wild animal by failing to use or properly process its meat or other usable parts.

Can I give game I harvest as a gift?

Yes, but a receipt containing: name and address of the owner; name and address of the recipient, date of transfer, description and the license number must remain with the gift.

I found a car-killed animal. Can I keep it?

Yes, but you must have a permit to possess protected wild animals that have been killed by a vehicle. Permits are available from conservation officers and many local law enforcement agencies. See page 128 for contact information.

Hunting Outside Seasons and Controlled Substances

Is anyone allowed to hunt outside of state established deer seasons?

Indian bands may be hunting big game by firearms before and after state firearms seasons.

Hunting while under the influence

You may not hunt or be afield with a loaded or uncased firearm or an uncased bow while under the influence of a controlled substance or with a blood-alcohol level of .08 or higher.

Hunter/trapper harassment prohibited

A person may not prevent or disrupt another person from taking or preparing to legally take a wild animal. A person may not disturb wild animals with the intent to prevent or disrupt another person from hunting or trapping.

Enforcement

A person must allow inspection in the field of firearms, licenses, wild animals, motor vehicles, boats, or other conveyances used while taking or transporting wild animals.

Wild animals that are unlawfully taken, bought, sold or possessed may be seized and confiscated. The person may be liable for wildlife restitution in addition to criminal fines. Personal property such as firearms, traps and archery equipment that were unlawfully used may be seized and confiscated.

Blaze Clothing and Ground Blind Requirements

Blaze requirements:

- All hunters and trappers in the field during the open firearms/muzzleloader deer seasons (see page 95 for season dates) must display blaze orange or pink on the visible portion of the person's cap (if worn) and outer clothing above the waist, excluding sleeves and gloves.
- When no firearms/muzzleloader deer season is open, a person may not take small game unless the visible portion of at least 1 article of clothing above the waist is blaze orange or pink. See exceptions noted below.
- Blaze orange or pink camouflage patterns are allowed and must be at least 50 percent blaze orange or pink within each square foot.
- A person who is hunting deer in a fabric or synthetic ground blind on public land must have a blaze orange safety covering on top of the blind that is visible from all directions or a patch made of blaze orange material that is at least 144 square inches (12x12 inches) on each side of the blind. This regulation applies to people who are hunting deer using archery, a firearm, or a muzzleloader on public land.

Exceptions: blaze clothing is not required during a firearms/muzzleloader deer season (see page 95 for season dates) when:

- Hunting an area open only to archery hunting (no firearms hunting allowed)
- Hunting migratory waterfowl while on the water or in a stationary location
- Trapping while on the water

Exceptions: blaze clothing is not required when no firearms/muzzleloader deer season (see page 95 for season dates) is open if:

- Taking small game while archery deer hunting in a stationary location
- Hunting turkey
- Hunting migratory birds
- Hunting raccoons and predators (coyote, fox, bobcat)
- Trapping furbearers
- Hunting small game by falconry
- Hunting bear

WATERFOWL HUNTERS



Future hunters are relying on you to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species... do your part.

- ✓ **CLEAN** aquatic plants, animals and mud from all gear, boats, clothing, dogs and vehicles.
- ✓ **DRAIN** all water from boats and equipment and leave drain plugs out when transporting.
- ✓ **DRY** everything for at least 5 days before hunting in other waters.

Learn more at mndnr.gov/ais

WATERFOWL

Definitions

Migratory game birds

Ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, moorhens (gallinules), woodcock, rails, snipe, sandhill cranes, and mourning doves.

Migratory waterfowl

Ducks, geese, and mergansers.

Undressed bird

Ducks, or geese or other migratory game birds with one fully feathered wing attached.

General Waterfowl Regulations

State and federal stamps

Stamps or validations are required for most hunters. See page 25 for a full list of state and federal stamp requirements.

Nontoxic 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. Only shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be used.

Don't shoot a swan

Both tundra and trumpeter swans are found in Minnesota and are not legal game birds. Both swans are entirely white with a black bill and black legs. Young swans are gray-brown in color.

Opening day possession limit

On opening day of the season, no person may possess more than the daily limit.

Retrieval

A person may not kill or injure a migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to find it and include it in the daily limit.

Taking in open water

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

- within a natural growth of vegetation sufficient to be partially concealed by natural vegetation (including their boat), or
- pursuing or shooting wounded birds, or
- on a river or stream that is not more than 100 yards wide, or
- 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 from anchored boats 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 from anchored boats.
3. Lake Superior: open water hunting from an anchored boat is allowed on the Minnesota waters north and east of the Minnesota/Park Point peninsula.

Watercraft

- A person using watercraft to take migratory waterfowl must comply with the requirements for “Taking in open water.” See page 41.
 - › You can take migratory waterfowl from a boat if it’s drifting, anchored, beached, moored, or being moved with paddle, oars, or a pole.
 - › You can take migratory waterfowl from a motorboat or sailboat only if the motor is off, the sails are rolled up, and the boat is not moving.
- When traveling by boat to or from a hunting spot, firearms must be unloaded if the boat has a motor or sail. Firearms must be unloaded and cased when:
 - › Within Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey counties.
 - › Within the boundaries of a city with a population of 2,500 or more.
 - › As otherwise restricted by game refuge, shining or night vision laws.
- The following are life jacket requirements in Minnesota:
 - › State law requires children under 10 years old to wear a properly fitted life jacket while a boat is underway. Underway means not securely fastened to a permanent mooring or tied to a dock.
 - › A readily accessible and wearable life jacket is required for each person on board a boat. This includes canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, paddleboats and waterfowl boats.
 - › One Type IV throwable is required on boats 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks) and must be immediately available.
 - › Personal watercraft operators and passengers must each wear a life jacket.
- During waterfowl season, you cannot leave a hunting boat unattended on public waters between sunset and one hour before sunrise, unless it is next to private land you own or control, and there is not enough natural vegetation to hide the hunter or boat.
- A waterfowl boat does not have to be licensed when used for waterfowl hunting.
- Before leaving state waters, you must drain all water from your boat, live wells, and bilges by removing the drain plug before transporting the boat and equipment. When transporting a boat on public roads, you must remove or open the drain plugs, bailers, valves, or any devices used to drain water from ballast tanks, bilges, and live wells.

Report Your Bands at reportband.gov

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 online at reportband.gov

Blinds and sink boxes

You cannot set up a blind in public waters or on public land more than one hour before waterfowl season starts.

- It is illegal to take migratory waterfowl, coots, or rails using a sink box or from a permanent blind in public waters. A sink box is a structure that allows a hunter to hide beneath the water surface. Layout boats are not sink boxes.
- Any blind left unused on public land or in public waters belongs to the public, not the person who built it. Using force to take someone else's blind is illegal.
- Hunters can use aquatic plants like cattails and bulrushes, cut above the waterline, to build blinds.

Decoys

You cannot place decoys in public waters more than one hour before the open season for waterfowl.

Decoys may not be placed on public lands or in public waters more than two hours before legal shooting hours for waterfowl.

Decoys cannot be left on public waters between sunset and two hours before shooting time. Decoys cannot be unattended for more than three hours. However, you can leave decoys in waters near private land you control if there isn't enough vegetation to hide a hunter. Decoys cannot be left on public waters between sunset and one hour before shooting time if they are a navigation hazard.

Motorized decoy

Motorized decoys are legal and may be used statewide during the waterfowl seasons.

Whitefish netting season open

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

Use of aeration systems

Aeration systems may not be used to create open water areas to attract or delay the migration of wild waterfowl on public waters.

Possessing and transporting migratory waterfowl and game birds

Ducks and all other migratory game birds must be transported with a feathered wing attached. Exception: doves may be fully dressed (wings and feet may be removed).

Migratory Waterfowl Feeding and Resting Areas

The following areas have been designated Migratory Waterfowl Feeding and Resting Areas. Motorized boats are limited to trolling motors 12 volts or less during waterfowl season on the lakes listed below.

County	Lakes
Beltrami	Puposky Lake and Little Puposky Lake
Carver	Tiger Lake
Faribault	Part of Minnesota Lake
Freeborn	Bear Lake and Upper Twin Lake
Jackson	Part of South Heron Lake, all of North Heron Lake except Winzer Bay and North Marsh
Kandiyohi	Wakanda Lake, Lake Lillian
LeSueur	Dora, Diamond and Sanborn
McLeod	Bakers Lake and the unnamed lake (Penn Marsh) in Sec. 28, Twp 114N, R 29W (Penn Twp.)
Polk	Turtle Lake
Pope	Nelson Lake
Traverse	Part of Mud Lake

Lakes banning motorized boats during waterfowl seasons

County	Lakes
Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift	Part of Marsh Lake, Thielke Lake
Blue Earth	Cottonwood Lake
Cass	Big Rice, Goose, Mud Lakes
Clearwater	Upper Rice Lake
Grant and Douglas	Part of Lake Christina
Itasca	Rice Lake (near Max) and Nature's Lake
LeSueur	Henry, Rice and Scotch lakes
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
Pope	Lake Johanna
Scott	Pleasant Lake
Sibley	Washington Lake and Mud (Erin) Lake in Washington Lake Twp

Outboard motor use on state and federal lands

The use of outboard motors (including trolling motors) or motorized water vehicles is prohibited on most state wildlife management areas, federal waterfowl production areas or national wildlife refuges. See pages 109-126 for more details.

Airboat use on designated wildlife lakes

The use of airboats is prohibited at all times on the following lakes. Additional restrictions may be posted at access points.

County	Lake
Aitkin	White Elk
Anoka	Fish
Blue Earth	Cottonwood, Eagle, Perch, Rice
Brown	Hanska
Big Stone	Lake 14
Carver	Patterson, Tiger
Cass	Big Rice
Cottonwood	Augusta, Bolstad Slough, Long Lake
Crow Wing	Dog
Douglas	Anka, Christina, Jennie
Faribault	Minnesota, Rice
Freeborn	Bear, Geneva, Twin (Lower and Upper)
Grant	Ash, Christina, Denton Slough, Towner
Jackson	Heron, Teal
Kandiyohi	Middle
LeSueur	Sanborn

County	Lake
Lyon	Mahlke Marsh
Martin	Pierce
Mahnomen	Beaulieu
McLeod	Eagle
McLeod	Ward
Mille Lacs	Onamia
Murray	Maria, Badger (North and South), Round
Nicollet	Swan
Otter Tail	Mud, Upper Landing
Pope	Simon
St. Louis	Big Rice, Little Rice
Sibley	Indian Lake, Sand
Stearns	Cedar
Steele/Dodge	Rice
Swift	Hassel
Waseca	Buffalo, Goose, Willis
Watsonwan	Sulem
Wright	Pelican, Smith
Yellow Medicine	Curtis, Spellman (North and South), Timm Lake

Controlled Hunting Zones

General restrictions

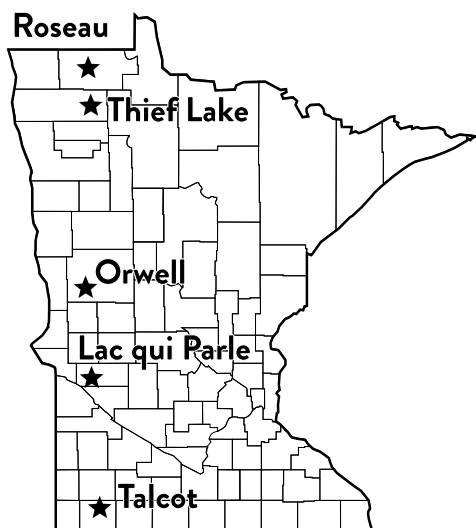
The following regulations apply to designated hunting stations in game refuges or controlled hunting zones at Roseau River, Thief Lake, Orwell, Lac qui Parle, and Talcot Lake.

- Designated hunting stations are on a first-come, first-served basis.
- No one may occupy or park in any hunting station from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.
- General regulations for wildlife management areas and state game refuges, all waterfowl and general hunting regulations apply to hunters using designated blinds.
- No refuse, offal, or feathers can be left on public lands.
- Alcoholic beverages are not allowed at any hunting stations.

Lac qui Parle Game Refuge (Chippewa and Lac qui Parle counties)

Waterfowl hunting allowed at designated hunting stations only from October 17 through the end of the goose season. Small game other than waterfowl may not be taken from October 12 through November 30.

Stations Designated for Waterfowl Hunting



Talcot Lake Game Refuge (Cottonwood County)

The Talcot Lake Game Refuge is open to waterfowl hunting at designated hunting stations only during the regular goose season.

- All waterfowl hunting is prohibited upon or from the 1.5 miles of Minnesota 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 Talcot Lake Waterfowl Refuge is closed to waterfowl hunting except for persons with disabilities hunting geese at designated hunting stations.

Accessible Blinds for Hunters

The following areas have duck or goose hunting blinds for hunters with mobility issues. For more information, contact:

- Lac qui Parle WMA, 14047 20th St NW, Watson, MN 56295, 320-435-4034
- Talcot Lake WMA, 40249 County Rd 7, Dundee, MN 56131, 507-873-5650
- Whitewater WMA, 15035 Hwy 74, Altura, MN 55910, 507-796-3281
- Thief Lake WMA, 42280 240th Ave NE, Middle River, MN 56737, 218-633-7670
- Roseau River WMA, 27952 400th St, Roseau, MN 56751, 218-452-7610

2026 Seasons and Bag Limits

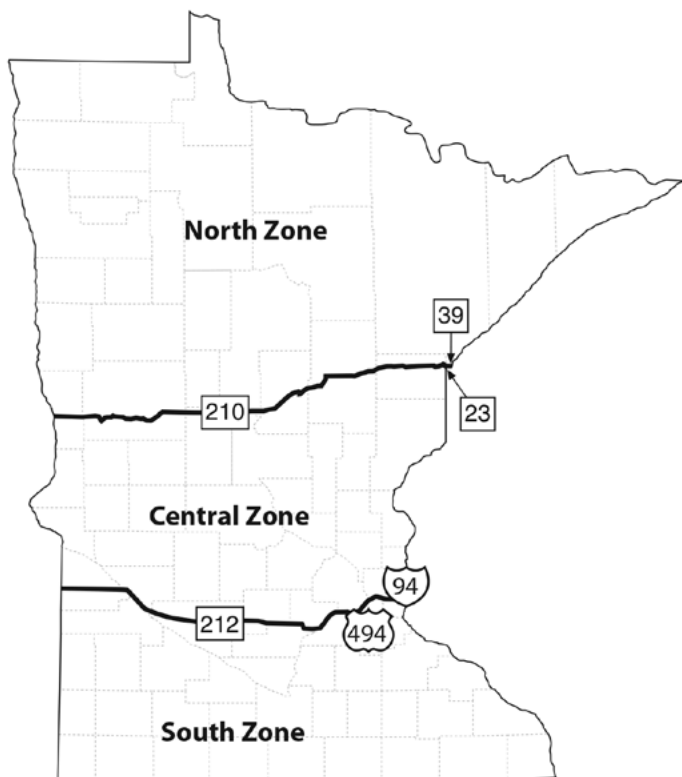
Shooting hours

Shooting hours for sandhill crane, rail, snipe, ducks, coots, moorhens, mergansers and geese are ½ hour before sunrise to sunset for the entire season (except during teal season when shooting hours for teal begin at sunrise).

Possession limit

The possession limit for all migratory birds is 3 times the daily limit.

Regular Season Duck and Goose Zones



Teal season (statewide)

Season dates	Species	Daily limit
Sept. 5-9 (statewide)	Blue-winged, green-winged, and cinnamon teal	6 (blue-winged, green-winged, and cinnamon teal combined)

Shooting hours for teal during the teal season are sunrise to sunset. Note that this is different from other waterfowl seasons.

*NEW—Early teal season shooting restrictions

Early-season teal hunting restrictions (September 5-9) occur within the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, the Leech Lake Reservation, and the White Earth Nation Reservation. Contact the respective tribal authorities for additional information:

- Within the boundaries of the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, the taking of teal during the early-teal season is prohibited on wild rice waters identified by tribal authorities by tribal authorities. Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe: <https://millelacsband.com> or at 320-532-7896.
- Within the boundaries of the Leech Lake Reservation, the taking of teal during the early-teal season is prohibited within ½ mile of wild rice beds that are posted open to rice harvest by tribal authorities. Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe: <https://llojibwe.org/drm/> or at 218-368-4767.
- Within the boundaries of the White Earth Reservation, the taking of teal during the early-teal season is prohibited on wild rice waters identified by tribal authorities. White Earth Nation: <https://whiteearth.com>, 218-935-3933 (office), or 218-850-8035 (cell).

Duck, coot, moorhen and merganser

Season dates	Species	Daily limit
NORTH ZONE Sept. 26-Nov. 24	Duck	6
	Coot and moorhen (gallinules)	15
	Merganser	5 (no more than 2 can be hooded mergansers)
CENTRAL ZONE Sept. 26-Oct. 4; Oct. 10-Nov. 29	Duck	6
	Coot and moorhen (gallinules)	15
	Merganser	5 (no more than 2 can be hooded mergansers)
SOUTH ZONE Sept. 26-Oct. 4; Oct. 17-Dec. 6	Duck	6
	Coot and moorhen (gallinules)	15
	Merganser	5 (no more than 2 can be hooded mergansers)

See page 49 for duck species specific restrictions.

Duck species bag limits

If not listed, up to 6 ducks of a species may be taken daily until the possession limit is reached.

Scaup (bluebill) daily limit is 1 through October 10 in the north zone, through October 15 in the central zone, and through October 22 in the south zone. After that time, the daily limit is 2 scaup per day through the remainder of the season in each zone.

Duck daily limit includes no more than any of the following duck species: 4 mallards (2 hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks, 3 pintail, scaup (bluebill) limit dependent on dates, as noted above.

Goose season

Hunting over water

During the September goose season, hunting over water is legal statewide.

Required licenses

A special permit is no longer required for the September goose season. Hunters may still need a small game license, state waterfowl stamp, federal duck stamp, and HIP certification. See License section starting on page 16.

Early goose season (statewide)

Season dates	Species	Daily limit
Sept. 5-20	Canada, white-fronted and brant	5 combined
	Snow, blue snow and Ross's	20

Regular goose season

Season dates	Species	Daily limit
NORTH ZONE Sept. 26-Dec. 25	Canada, white-fronted and brant	5 combined
	Snow, blue snow and Ross's	20
CENTRAL ZONE Sept. 26-Oct. 4; Oct. 10-Dec. 30	Canada, white-fronted and brant	5 combined
	Snow, blue snow and Ross's	20
SOUTH ZONE Sept. 26-Oct. 4; Oct. 17-Jan. 6	Canada, white-fronted and brant	5 combined
	Snow, blue snow and Ross's	20

Spring Snow Goose Season

Light Goose Conservation Action

Minnesota again plans to participate in a cooperative light goose conservation action in February, March and April 2027. 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.

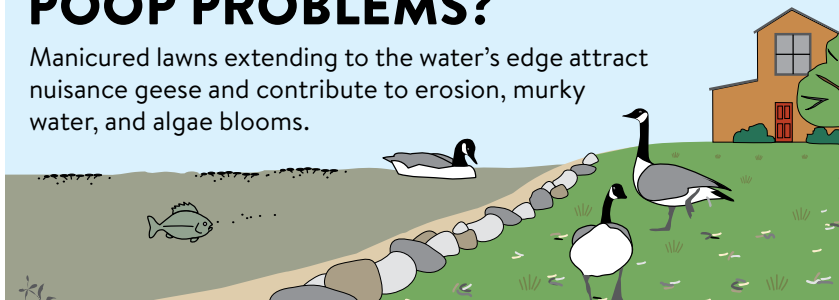
Special falconry season

Hunting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

Season dates	Species	Daily limits	Possession limit
NORTH ZONE Sept. 26-Nov. 24; Dec. 12-Jan. 20	Duck, coot, mergansers, moorhen (Gallinules), and geese	3 combined for ALL migratory game birds	9 combined for ALL migratory game birds
CENTRAL ZONE Sept. 26-Oct. 4; Oct. 10-Nov. 29; Dec. 12-Jan. 20	Duck, coot, mergansers, moorhen (Gallinules), and geese		
SOUTH ZONE Sept. 26-Oct. 4; Oct. 17-Dec. 6; Dec. 12-Jan. 20	Duck, coot, mergansers, moorhen (Gallinules), and geese		
Sept. 1-Dec. 16	Woodcock, sora, rail, doves, and snipe		

POOP PROBLEMS?

Manicured lawns extending to the water's edge attract nuisance geese and contribute to erosion, murky water, and algae blooms.



Natural vegetation provides habitat, filters runoff, and protects against wave action. To learn more about establishing natural shorelines visit: mndnr.gov/shorelines



EWR_0040_23

Youth Hunt

On September 12-13, 2026, waterfowl hunters age 17 and younger, when accompanied by a non-hunting adult (age 18 and older) may take ducks, geese, mergansers, coots and moorhens from ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.

- Daily limits are the same as the regular duck and goose seasons.
- Hunters ages 13 to 17 must have a firearms safety certificate or apprentice hunter validation in their possession.
- No hunting license or state waterfowl stamps are required, but all youths age 16 and older must have a Federal Duck Stamp.
- All other migratory bird hunting regulations apply.

Aquatic Invasive Species Alert: Faucet Snails

The faucet snail carries a parasite that has killed thousands of diving ducks and coots in Minnesota. Faucet snails can be moved to new lakes on waterfowl hunting equipment—they can attach to your gear, be hidden in mud, or attached to plants. You can help prevent the spread of faucet snails by taking a few moments to check your boat, waders, push poles, decoys, and decoy anchors before leaving the water access:



- ✓ **Clean** aquatic plants, animals and mud from all gear, boats, clothing, dogs and vehicles.
- ✓ **Drain** all water from boats and equipment, and leave drain plugs out when transporting.
- ✓ **Dry** everything for at least 5 days before hunting in other waters.
- ✓ Check your gear before you go back out to hunt—faucet snails can live out of water for more than 5 days.

Use elliptical, bulb-shaped or strap decoy anchors to reduce snagging aquatic plants.

Looking for more Waterfowl ID resources?

The 'Ducks at a Distance: A Waterfowl Identification Guide' is an excellent resource offered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The guide includes colored images of numerous waterfowl species and detailed identification tips. It can found at: **Ducks at a Distance Waterfowl ID Guide**

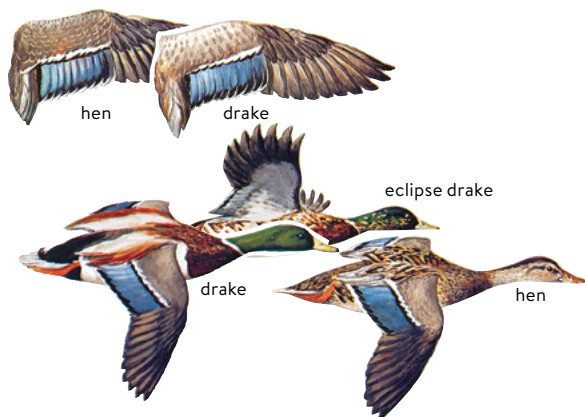
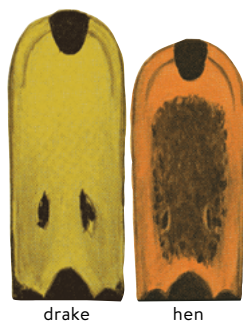
Illustrated Ducks and Geese of Minnesota

Not all species are depicted.

MALLARD

Length 24"

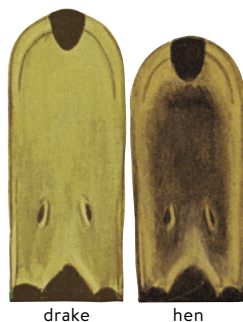
Weight 2.75 lbs.



BLACK DUCK

Length 24"

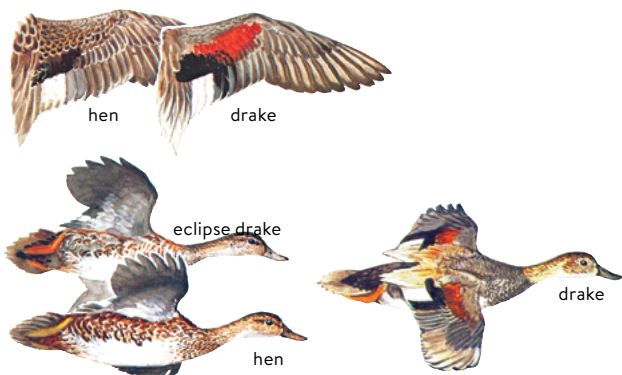
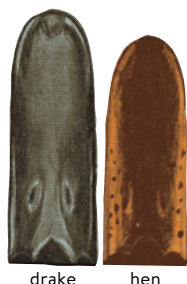
Weight 2.75 lbs.



GADWALL

Length 21"

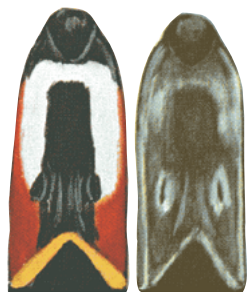
Weight 2 lbs.



WOOD DUCK

Length 18.5"

Weight 1.5 lbs.



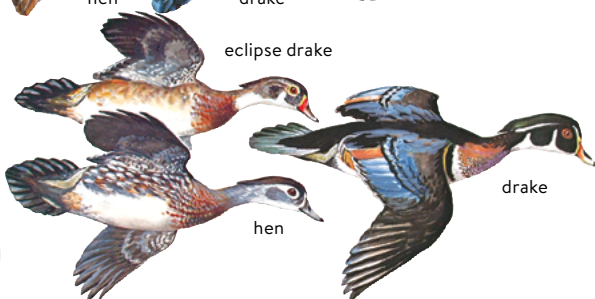
drake

hen



hen

drake



eclipse drake

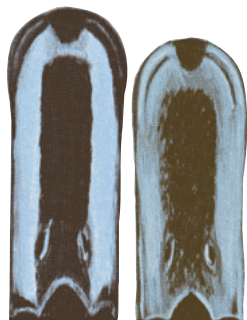
hen

drake

PIN TAIL

Length 26"

Weight 1.75 lbs.



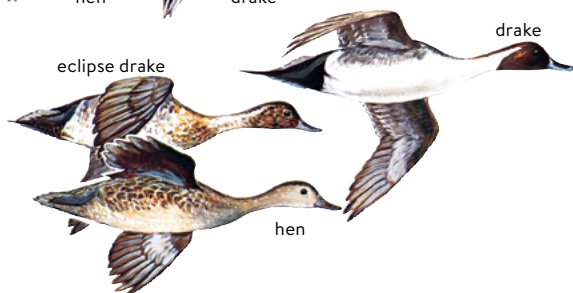
drake

hen



hen

drake



eclipse drake

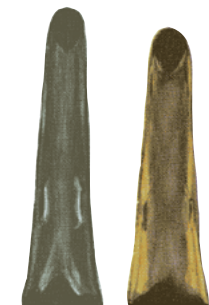
hen

drake

HOODED MERGANSER

Length 18"

Weight 1.5 lbs.



drake

hen



hen

drake



eclipse drake

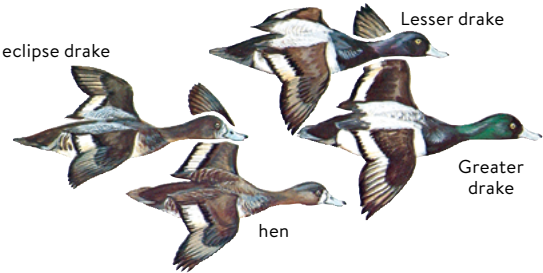
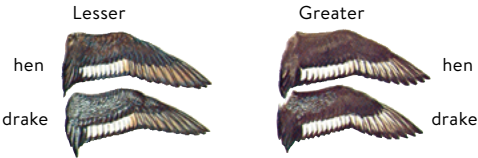
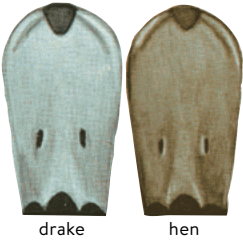
hen

drake

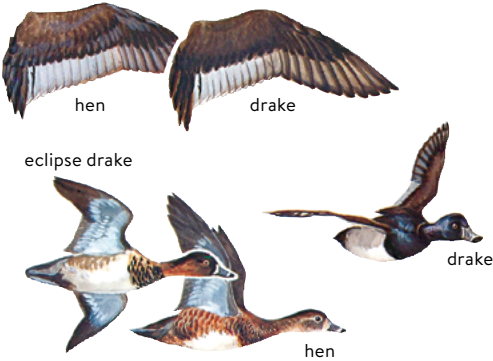
SCAUP

Greater:
Length 26"
Weight 1.75 lbs.

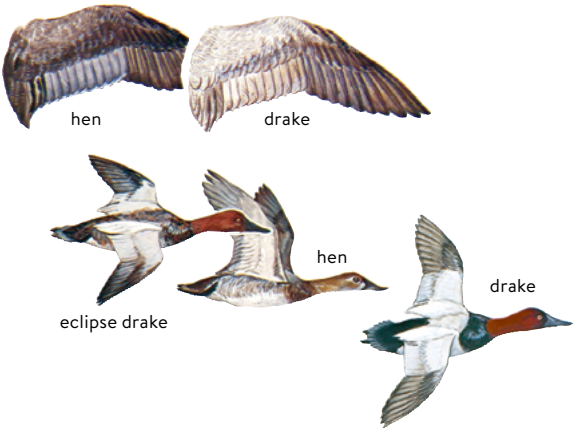
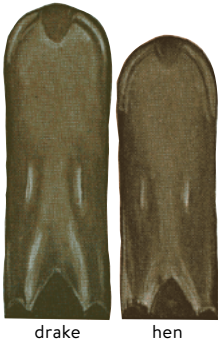
Lesser:
Length 17"
Weight 1.75 lbs.



RINGNECK
Length 17"
Weight 1.5 lbs.



CANVASBACK
Length 22"
Weight 3 lbs.



REDHEAD

Length 22"

Weight 3 lbs.



drake



hen



hen

drake



eclipse drake



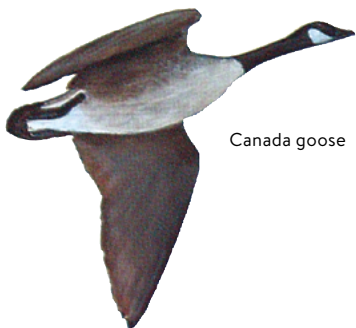
drake



hen

CANADA GOOSE

Length 25-43"



Canada goose

SNOW GOOSE

Length 25-38"

BLUE SNOW GOOSE

Length 25-30"

Black "grin patch" on bill is found only on snow geese.

The "blue" snow goose is a variation of the lesser snow goose species.



snow goose

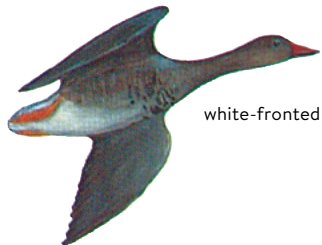


blue snow goose

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Length 25-30"

The pinkish bill, white patch on front of head and dark bars on the belly identify this species.



white-fronted goose

SMALL GAME



***The new ELS is live and affects activities in this section.
See page 10 for details.***

Small game season dates, bag limits and shooting hours are on pages 57. A license year runs from March 1 through the end of February.

Definitions

Small Game Licenses

All residents and nonresidents, 16 and older, must have a valid small game license to take small game. Residents may hunt small game without a license at their principal residence. There are exemptions for military personnel. See page 16.

Stamps are required to take ducks, geese and pheasants. See pages 25.

A nonresident must have a nonresident furbearer license and a nonresident small game license to take raccoon and bobcat by firearm. A nonresident furbearer license is not required to take fox and coyote. However, a small game license is still required to take fox and other small game. A small game license is not needed to take coyotes with a firearm.

Small Game Regulations

General restrictions

Blaze orange/pink is required for most small game hunting. See page 39 for exceptions.

Party hunting for small game

A “party” is defined as a group of 2 or more persons maintaining unaided visual and vocal contact with each other while taking non-migratory small game. “Party hunting” means that members of a party may take animals for other members’ limits. A party may lawfully take small game in accordance with the following regulations:

- A member of the party may take more than an individual limit, but the total number of small game taken and possessed by the party may not exceed the combined limits of members of the party.
- Each party member may transport only an individual limit of small game.
- Party hunting is not allowed for migratory game birds (doves, ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, woodcock, rail, sandhill cranes, snipe, and gallinules).

Use of lead ammunition

No person may take ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, sandhill cranes, or gallinules with lead shot or while having lead shot in their possession. Lead shot may be used statewide for hunting other small game except in federal Wildlife Refuges and Waterfowl Production Areas. Nontoxic ammunition requirements for hunts on state parks and scientific and natural areas is on pages 119 and 124.

Small Game Hunting Seasons

Small Game	Open Season	Daily Limit	Possession Limit	Shooting/Hours
Cottontail rabbit and snow-shoe hare	Sept. 19-Feb. 28	10 combined	20 combined	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Jack rabbit	Sept. 19-Feb. 28	1	3	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Gray and fox squirrel	Sept. 19-Feb. 28	7 combined	14 combined	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Ruffed and spruce grouse	Sept. 19-Jan. 3	5 combined; no more than 2 can be spruce grouse	10 combined; no more than 4 can be spruce grouse	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Sharp-tailed grouse	Sept. 19-Nov. 30 (Northwest zone only, east central closed)	3	6	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Hungarian partridge	Sept. 19-Jan. 3	5	10	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Pheasant	Oct. 10-Jan. 3	2 roosters (3 roosters Dec. 1-Jan. 3)	6 roosters (9 roosters Dec. 1-Jan. 3)	9 a.m. to sunset
Prairie chicken (by special permit only)	Sept. 26-Oct. 4	2 (season limit)	2 (season limit)	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Fall wild turkey	Oct. 3-Nov. 1	1 either sex (season limit)	1 (season limit)	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Non-migratory small game by falconry	Sept. 1-Feb. 28	10 rabbits, 7 squirrel, other small game: 3 combined, not to include more than 1 hen pheasant	20 rabbits, 14 squirrel, other small game: 6 combined, not to include more than 2 hen pheasants	½ hour before sunrise to sunset except pheasants may not be taken before 9 a.m.
Mourning doves	Sept. 1-Nov. 29	15	45	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Sandhill cranes (Sandhill crane zone)	Sept. 12-Oct. 18	2	6	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Woodcock	Sept. 19-Nov. 2	3	9	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Sora and Virginia rail	Sept. 1-Nov. 9	25 combined	75 combined	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Wilson's snipe	Sept. 1-Dec. 16	8	24	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Crow (may also be taken when committing or about to do damage)	Sept. 1-Oct. 31, Dec. 15-31, Jan. 1-15 and March 1-31	No limit	No limit	½ hour before sunrise to sunset

Game Birds

Taking game birds

A person may not take protected game birds with a trap or snare, using bird lime, with a swivel or set gun, by dragging a rope, wire, or other device across a field or by using fire.

Transportation of game birds

Game birds must be transported with a fully-feathered wing attached except:

- Turkey, pheasant, and Hungarian partridge may have 1 leg or a fully-feathered wing attached.
- Doves may be transported fully dressed.

Hungarian partridge and pheasant

A person may not shoot pheasants or Hungarian partridge with a rifle or handgun other than a .22 caliber rimfire using short, long, or long rifle ammunition. Shotguns used for upland birds may hold more than 3 shells. Season dates and shooting hours are on page 57.

Prairie chickens

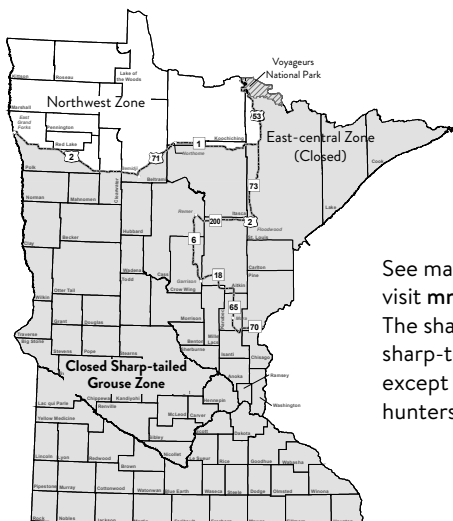
Prairie chicken licenses are distributed by lottery only to Minnesota residents. No small game license is required. Applications are due Friday, August 14. Application information and complete regulations are online at mndnr.gov/hunting/prairiechicken. Persons without a prairie chicken license may not assist a licensed hunter, including handling dogs. A hunter awarded a prairie chicken license in the lottery must purchase the license before hunting.

Sharp-tailed Grouse

Northwest Zone season dates

September 19-November 30

East-central Zone closed. Visit mndnr.gov/wildlife/grouse.html



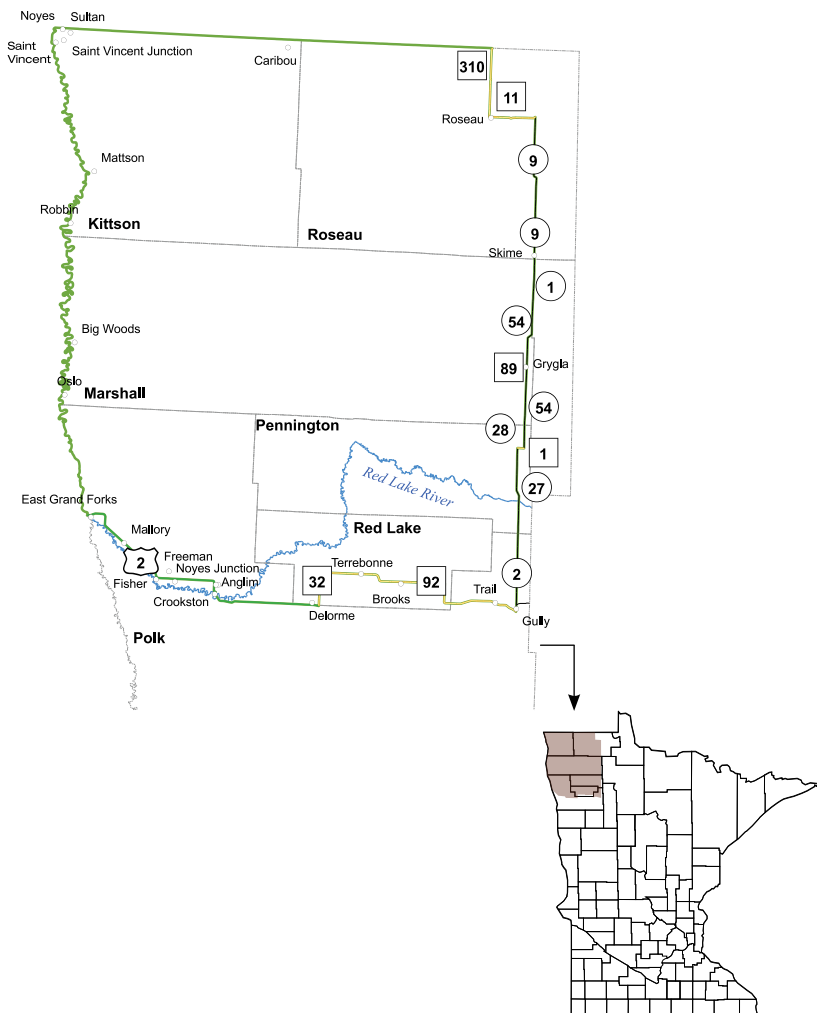
See map for zone boundaries or visit mndnr.gov/hunting/grouse. The shaded area is closed to sharp-tailed grouse hunting, except for licensed prairie chicken hunters within their selected zone.

Sandhill Crane Season

Season	Species	Daily limit	Possession limit	Shooting hours
Sept. 12-Oct. 18	Sandhill crane (Sandhill Crane Zone only)	2	6	½ hour before sunrise to sunset

- License: small game
- Stamps: not required
- Sandhill Crane Permit (\$3): all hunters
- Nontoxic shot required
- HIP certification: not required

Sandhill Crane Zone



Wild Turkey Season Dates

Fall season dates (2026) October 3-November 1

Spring firearms season dates (2027) A = April 14-20; B = April 21-27; C = April 28-May 4;
D = May 5-11; E = May 12-18; F = May 19-31

General Restrictions:

- Shooting hours are 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset
- No person can have a dog while hunting or assisting in hunting wild turkeys.
- Wild turkeys cannot be taken with the aid of any electronic device, except red dot scopes, rangefinders, and devices designed to improve hearing.
- Live turkey decoys are not allowed.
- Hunters may only possess weapons legal for taking wild turkeys.
- Hunting turkeys over bait is not allowed.
- Guiding turkey hunters for compensation is illegal.
- Assisting: A licensed wild turkey hunter may assist another licensed wild turkey hunter but may not shoot or harvest a turkey for another hunter.
- Ground blinds on public land no longer need a blaze orange safety covering on the top of the blind while turkey hunting. See page 39 for clothing blaze requirements.

Licenses:

- Spring wild turkey licenses can be purchased starting March 1.
- All hunters will be asked which permit area they hunt most, but they are not restricted to hunting only that permit area. This provides information on expected harvest pressure.
- Firearms turkey hunters, age 18 and older, can only hunt in the time-period selected at the time of license purchase.
- Archery-only license holders may use vertical bows or crossbows and may hunt statewide for the entire season (April 14-May 31) but may not use firearms to take a turkey.
- Youth hunters, age 17 and younger may hunt statewide for the entire spring season (April 14-May 31) with firearms or archery equipment.
- Hunters who purchase a firearms license may also use crossbows or vertical bows but may only hunt during their selected time-period or the final time-period (F - May 19-31).
- Hunters cannot purchase both a firearms and archery-only license.
- Firearms hunters who do not harvest a turkey in their selected time-period may also hunt the final hunt time-period (F - May 20-31).
- Hunters possessing a valid permit to hunt from a standing motor vehicle may purchase a spring turkey license for any firearms season time-period and hunt all spring turkey periods.
- There is no lottery for fall turkey season. Licenses may be purchased after August 1.
- Youth license requirements—see page 23.

Method of taking:

Firearms

- Shotguns or muzzleloader shotguns must be 10 gauge or smaller.
- Only fine shot size No. 4 and smaller diameter (sizes 4, 5, 6, 7½, 8, etc.) may be used.

Archery

- Bows must have a pull of no less than 30 pounds at or before full draw.
- A person may use a mechanical device attached to the bowstring if the person's own strength draws and holds the bowstring.
- Arrowheads must have at least two metal cutting edges of barbless design at least 7/8 inch in diameter or must be of a blunt head design.
- Expandable arrowheads may be used if barbless and at least 7/8 inch at or after impact.

Crossbows

- May be used by any person who possesses a valid firearms license during their selected time-period or by any person who possesses a valid archery-only license.
- Must be fired from the shoulder.
- Must be able to deliver at least 42 foot-pounds of energy at a distance of 10 feet.
- Must have a working safety.
- Must be used with arrows or bolts at least ten inches long.

Bag Limit

Spring season—bag limit is 1 wild turkey with a visible beard (a feathered appendage at the breast, generally on males).

Fall season—bag limit is 1 wild turkey of either sex.

***NEW—Tagging**

Placing a durable site harvest tag on a turkey is no longer required; however, hunters still must validate their harvest at the site of the kill. See the diagram on pages 28 and 29 for the new site validation process.

***NEW—Registration**

Wild turkeys must be registered either online, through the MN DNR Licensing mobile app, or in person at an agent location within 24 hours of harvest. See the diagram on pages 28 and 29 for the new registration process.

- Successful hunters will be required to provide the permit area where they harvested the bird. A map of turkey permit areas is available online.
- One leg or fully-feathered wing must remain on the wild turkey until it is registered.
- Registered wild turkeys may be transported without an attached fully-feathered wing or leg and foot.
- No person may possess an unregistered wild turkey outside the permit area where the turkey was killed unless it is being transported directly to a registration station.

Prairie chicken hunters—we are seeking volunteers

Prairie chicken hunters can voluntarily participate in a study to compare the genetic make-up of Greater Prairie Chickens in Minnesota with those residing in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The data generated from the study will help inform movement and habitat connectivity needs of Greater Prairie Chickens across the core of their range. To participate, please send 10 large wing feathers in an envelope to Grouse Research, 1201 East Hwy 2, Grand Rapids, MN 55744. Please include your permit area with the feather submissions.



Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Youth Small Game and Upland Bird Hunts

Wild Turkey

Sand Prairie WMA (Sherburne County)

Open during the spring turkey season for youth up to age 18. Regular spring turkey regulations apply.

Take-a-Kid Hunting weekend (September 19-20)

Adult residents accompanied by a youth under age 16 may hunt small game without a license, according to regulations.

Looking for turtles and frogs?

We're in the 2026 Fishing Regulations.
dnr.state.mn.us/regulations/fishing/index.html



How to identify wolves and coyotes

Coyote hunters—know your target

Wolves have been mistakenly shot outside Minnesota's primary wolf range because hunters thought they were coyotes. Wolves were once restricted to the northern part of Minnesota, but they have expanded their range and could show up in any part of the state. Do not assume that because you are outside Minnesota's primary wolf range that the animal in your sights is a coyote. Wolves and coyotes are closely related, but are well distinguished by their difference in size and physical characteristics. Shooting a wolf because you think it is a coyote is illegal and punishable by Minnesota game and fish laws.

Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) AKA—Timber wolf

Height: 30 inches average.

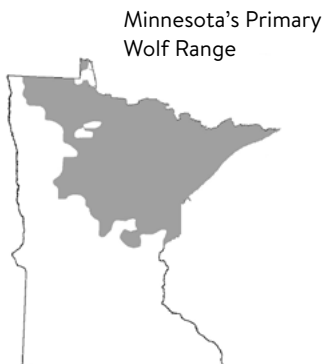
Length: 5½ feet.

Weight: 50-110 lbs.

Color: shades of gray or tan, sometimes black, rarely white.



Photo: Jenni Bidner/Wildlife Science Center



Minnesota's Primary Wolf Range



Coyote (*Canis latrans*) AKA—Brush wolf

Height: 18 inches maximum.

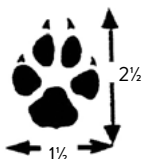
Length: 3 feet.

Weight: 25-35 lbs.

Color: all shades of gray, tan, buff, rarely black or white.



Photo: USFWS



How to release a dog from a body-grip trap

If a dog is caught in a body-grip trap you have a brief time to safely release the animal. It is important to act as quickly as possible.

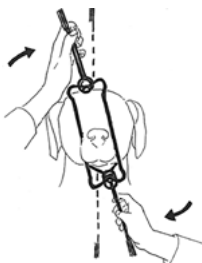
STEP 1

Immediately squeeze both springs and turn the trap so the jaws are not placing pressure on the dog's windpipe.



STEP 2

Compress one spring using two hands until you're able to fasten the safety lock over the opposite side of each spring.



STEP 3

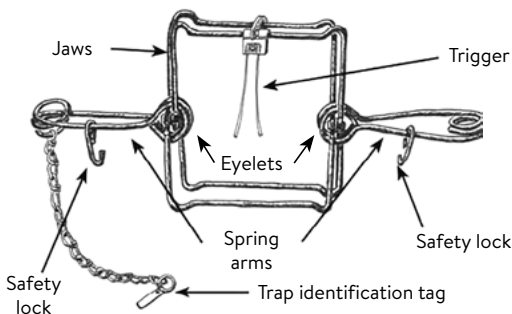
Secure the safety lock, which keeps the spring compressed. This relieves the pressure from one side of the trap.



STEP 4

Repeat the process for the other spring. If you cannot squeeze the springs of the trap easily, use a leash, rope or zip ties to compress the springs. Strong nylon zip tie release kits with detailed instructions are available upon request from the Minnesota Trappers Association at mntrappers.org. Zip ties used should have a rated strength of 175 pounds or more. See a video demonstration of release techniques and learn how to avoid traps at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/hunt/trap>.

A body-grip trap and its parts



Furbearer Hunting Seasons (Furbearer zone maps are on page 68)

Hunting	Open season	Daily, season and possession limit	Shooting hours
Raccoon and red/gray fox	Oct. 17-Mar. 15 (N. Furbearer Zone) Oct. 24-Mar. 15 (S. Furbearer Zone)	No limit	Day or night except not before 9 a.m. on opening day.
Badger, opossum, long-tailed and short-tailed weasels	Oct. 17-Mar. 15 (N. Furbearer Zone) Oct. 24-Mar. 15 (S. Furbearer Zone)	No limit	½ hour before sunrise to sunset except 9 a.m. to sunset opening day.
Bobcat	Dec. 12-Jan. 17 (N. Furbearer Zone) Jan. 2-Jan. 17 (S. Furbearer Zone)	5 with only 1 bobcat from south of I-94 (includes trapping limit).	½ hour before sunrise to sunset
Coyote, striped skunk and other unprotected animals	Continuous	No limit	See page 32

Hunting Furbearers

- A person may not disturb the burrow or den of any wild animal between November 1 and April 1, without a permit.
- A person may not take pine marten, fisher, mink, muskrat, beaver, or otter by firearms or archery hunting. However, a firearm may be used to dispatch an animal already taken in a trap.
- Rabbits, hares, and squirrels may be taken by hunting or trapping.

Raccoons

A person may take raccoons between ½ hour after sunset and ½ hour before sunrise only in accordance with the following regulations:

- Hunters must be on foot.
- Artificial lights may be used to locate, attempt to locate, or shoot a raccoon only if the raccoon has been treed or put at bay by dogs.
- Rifles and handguns used must be .17 or .22 caliber rimfire (including .22 magnum).
- Shotgun shells must be loaded with No. 4 shot or smaller (sizes 4, 5, 6, 7½, etc.).
- A person may not take a raccoon in a den or hollow tree, or by cutting down a tree occupied by a raccoon.

Fox and coyote night hunting

A person may use a light to hunt for coyote or fox from January 1 to March 15. See page 36 for details.

Fox and raccoon may be run by dogs during closed seasons. See page 35 for details.

2026 Furbearer Trapping Season Dates

Furbearer Trapping Seasons (Furbearer zone maps are on page 68).

Trapping	Open season	Daily, season and possession limit	Trapping hours
Raccoon, red fox, gray fox, badger, opossum, long-tailed and short-tailed weasels	Oct. 17-Mar. 15 (N. Furbearer Zone) Oct. 24-Mar. 15 (S. Furbearer Zone)	No limit	Hours are 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Traps may not be set or tended for fox, badger, opossum, mink, muskrat, beaver, otter, or raccoon before 9 a.m. on opening day.
Bobcat	Dec. 12-Jan. 17 (N. Furbearer Zone) Jan. 2-Jan. 17 (S. Furbearer Zone)	5 with only 1 bobcat from south of I-94 (includes hunting limit).	Same hours as above
Fisher and pine marten	Dec. 12-20 (N. Furbearer Zone) Jan. 2-17 (S. Furbearer Zone, fisher only)	2 combined, with only 1 fisher from south of I-94. (1 fisher and 1 pine marten, or 2 fishers or 2 pine martens)	Same hours as above
Mink and muskrat	Oct. 24-Feb. 28 (N. Furbearer Zone) Oct. 31-Feb. 28 (S. Furbearer Zone)	No limit	Same hours as above
Beaver	Oct. 24-May 15 (N. Furbearer Zone) Oct. 31-May 15 (S. Furbearer Zone)	No limit	Same hours as above
Otter	Oct. 24-May 15 (N. Furbearer Zone) Oct. 31-May 15 (S. Furbearer Zone)	4 statewide	Same hours as above

Trapping

Review Best Management Practices for trapping in the United States online at: fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management.

License requirements

- All residents and nonresidents, 16 and over, must have a small game license and a trapping license to take small game (including furbearers) with traps.
- Persons may trap without a small game license on their own land if they occupy it as their principal residence. A trapping license is required.
- Residents under age 13 do not need a trapping license. Residents age 13 through 17 must have a junior trapping license and residents age 18 through 64 must have a regular trapping license to trap. Residents age 65 and over must have a regular or reduced-fee trapping license.
- Fisher, otter, bobcat, or pine marten taken by a resident under age 5 must be included in the limit of the accompanying parent or guardian.
- Nonresidents may trap only on land they own in Minnesota with nonresident trapping and small game licenses.

- Lifetime sports or small game license holders who plan to trap are required to have a free trapping endorsement on their renewal.

Trapper education

The apprentice trapper validation will allow people born after December 31, 1989 to trap while accompanied by a licensed trapper without obtaining a trapper education certificate. The validation is valid for 1 license year and may be obtained for 2 seasons. More information on the apprentice hunter/trapper validation is on page 27.

Persons born after December 31, 1989, who have not been issued a trapping license in a previous license year may not obtain a trapping license without a trapper education certificate or an apprentice trapper validation. The Minnesota Trappers Association (MTA) conducts free trapper education courses statewide and issues certificates that meet this requirement. Trappers must take the Minnesota course to meet the requirement.

Contact the MTA at mntrappers.org for class information. These courses include a mandatory field training portion that must be completed before certification. Please plan to take courses before the fur trapping season.

If you find a dog in a trap

Trappers must set and tend traps in strict adherence to all regulations and take great care to avoid accidentally capturing dogs. If you find a dog in a trap, or if your dog is caught in a trap—please contact your local conservation officer and report the incident. Call the Minnesota DNR at 888-MINNDNR (646-6367) to be connected with your local conservation officer. More information may be found on pages 35 and 64.

General Trapping Regulations

Trap and snare identification

You may not set or place a trap or snare unless the following information is attached: 1) your driver's license state and number; or 2) your Minnesota identification card number; or 3) your name and mailing address; or 4) your MNDNR number. This requirement does not apply to traps or snares set on your own property.

This information must remain legible while the trap or snare is on land or in water.

From April 1 to August 31, the trap identification provisions listed above do not apply to traps set for the taking of unprotected wild animals.

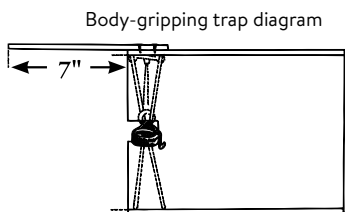
Trap size and design

Maximum size for traps:

- Foot or leghold traps cannot have a jaw opening greater than $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches;
- Body-gripping traps cannot have a jaw opening greater than $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, except as a waterset; or

Body-gripping traps set on public lands and waters with a jaw opening greater than $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches and less than $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches must meet one of the following:

- Recessed 7 inches or more from the top and front of an enclosure (see diagram);
- No bait, lure or other attractants are within 20 feet of the trap; or
- The trap is elevated at least 3 feet from the ground or surface of the snowpack



Setting near culverts and in the right-of-way

- A body-gripping trap with a jaw opening greater than 6½ inches may not be set in or within 3 feet of the opening of a 6-foot wide or smaller culvert, except as a completely submerged waterset; or
- A body-gripping trap with a jaw larger than 6½ inches may not be set in the road right-of-way within 500 feet of a building occupied by human or livestock without written permission of the landowner, except as a completely submerged waterset.

DNR recommends cubbies constructed so the trap is at least 7 inches from all sides of the opening. Cubbies made from natural materials that comply with regulations may also be used.

Find updated lynx management zone regulations on pages 71 and 72.

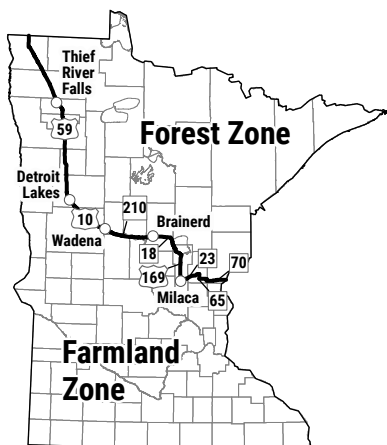
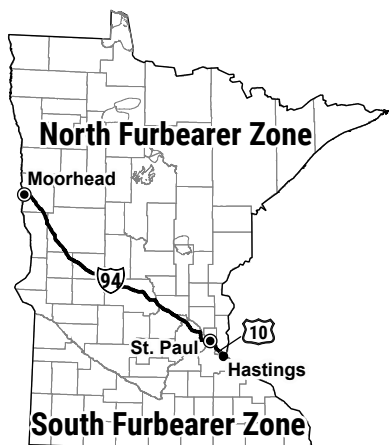
Waterset vs. completely submerged waterset

Waterset: A body-gripping trap or snare set so the jaws or snare loop are at least half-submerged in water.

Completely submerged waterset: A body-gripping trap or snare set so the jaws or snare loop are completely submerged in water.

Furbearer zones

The North Furbearer Zone is north of the Interstate 94/Hwy 10 line indicated on the map below. The South Furbearer Zone is south of the Interstate 94/Hwy 10 line. The Forest and Farmland Zones are indicated for snaring seasons on pages 69 and 70.



Trap setting and tending

- A person may set or tend traps only from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., except opening day for some species. See page 66.
- A person on foot may use a light to set or tend traps. However, you may not possess a bow and arrow or a firearm other than a handgun or rifle of .17 or .22 caliber with short, long, or long rifle rim fire ammunition (including .22 magnum) while using the light.

- A trapper may authorize an agent, in writing, to tend traps on their behalf. The agent must possess all required licenses and may reset traps at the same set and remove animals. Site validation coupon requirements apply for certain species. Details on page 70.
- You may not set a trap within 50 feet of any water except temporary surface water within 30 days before the open season for mink and muskrat.
- Traps capable of capturing a protected animal and not capable of drowning it must be tended at least once each calendar day, except body-gripping traps. Traps capable of drowning the animal and body-gripping traps must be tended at least once each third calendar day, except traps set under the ice. A trap may not be left untended for more than 3 consecutive days (a trap set or tended on Saturday would have to be tended again by 10 p.m. Tuesday). When a trap is tended, any animal must be removed.
- Foothold traps with a jaw spread of 4¾ inches or less and rat type snap traps that are entirely in a container with an opening no more than 2 inches in height and/or width that are designed to kill an animal need not be tended more frequently than once every third calendar day (these are often referred to as weasel boxes).
- No person may remove or tamper with a trap or snare legally set without authorization by the trapper, a DNR agent, or the landowner where the trap is located.
- No person may set or leave a trap, or mark a location to claim a trapping spot before trapping season begins.
- No person may leave any trap for a protected wild animal in place, either set or unset, after the close of the trapping season.
- Animals must be killed before being removed from a site.

Water trapping

- During the muskrat trapping season, no flag or other marker may be placed in or on a muskrat house for the purpose of marking a trap site unless an operational trap is set at the site at the time it is first marked.
- No person may disturb, or destroy a muskrat house or den. Traps may be set at natural entrances to muskrat burrows. Openings may be made in muskrat houses for trapping if all material removed is wetted and used to plug the opening.
- No person may disturb or destroy any beaver house, dam, burrow, or den.
- No person may set a trap inside any beaver house or upon the outside of any beaver house above the waterline.
- Mink and muskrats may not be taken by digging or with dogs.
- No person may trap beaver or otter on a state wildlife management area without a permit from the wildlife manager.

Baited foothold/birds

- No person may set or maintain any foothold trap within 20 feet of bait visible to soaring birds. "Bait" is any animal or animal parts, including live or dead fish, except that small pieces of fur and feathers may be used for flagging.
- No person may take a bird with a foothold trap, except by special permit.

Snares

- Snares may be used by licensed trappers for taking all species of protected wild mammals that may be trapped.

- Snares capable of taking a wild animal must include a breakaway device that causes the snare loop to disassemble at 350 pounds pull or less as measured by a static load test, except snares set under the ice. See mndnr.gov/trapping for general information on breakaway devices.
- All snares not capable of drowning the captured animal must be tended at least once each calendar day.
- The diameter of the snare loop may not exceed 10 inches.
- No snare may be set in such a way that the top of the loop is more than 20 inches above the first surface beneath the bottom of the set snare loop.
- Snare cable or wire may not have a diameter exceeding $\frac{1}{8}$ inch.
- No person may set, place, or operate a snare in a culvert, except as a completely submerged waterset.
- Snares may not be used with spring poles or other devices that wholly or partly lift from the ground an animal caught in the snare.
- Snares that operate with springs are allowable if they do not lift the animal wholly or partially off the ground.
- No snare set for a protected animal may be left in place after the applicable trapping season has closed.
- Snares may be used as water sets during applicable seasons statewide.
- Snares may not be set in deer trails and bears cannot be taken with snares.

Snaring zones (maps on page 68)

- In the forest zone, snares are allowed on public land and on private land with permission of the landowner.
- In the farmland zone, snares are allowed from October 24-March 31 on private land with landowner permission. Snares may also be set as water sets or on the frozen surface of public waters. Snares may not be set on public lands or waters contained in public lands, road rights-of-way or in fence lines along road rights of way.

Site validation coupons for fisher, pine marten and river otter

- Free trapping coupons are available online, via the mobile app or in-person from license agents. Site validation is required for fisher, pine marten, and river otter. Trappers may now choose to site validate electronically via the MN DNR Licensing mobile app or on a printed site validation coupon. Trappers must choose the method of validation when obtaining the trapping coupons. One coupon is issued for each animal that may be harvested--for example, a trapper targeting all three species would receive 6 coupons (2 fisher/marten and 4 river otter), either printed or in the app.
- Each person age 5 or older who takes a river otter, fisher, or pine marten must site validate their harvest at the site of the kill. Validation may be done electronically on a mobile device or on printed paper.
- Site validation coupons must be in possession while taking or transporting fisher, pine marten or river otter. They do not need to be attached to the animal, but must be validated at the site of a harvest, prior to transporting the animal.
- Fisher, river otter, bobcat or pine marten taken by a resident under age 5 must be included in the limit of the accompanying parent or guardian.
- Fisher, pine marten and river otter must not be removed from the kill site without the site validated trapping coupon—electronic or printed—in possession. Authorized agents may remove animals but must first site validate their own trapping coupon before doing so.

- Site validation coupons may be electronic or on printed paper and are not transferable. Trappers may acquire site validation coupons before or during the trapping season. Replacements are available upon request from any license vendor, and a fee may apply.
- Trappers must present completed site validation coupons—electronic or printed paper—for each fisher, pine marten, and river otter when they present the pelts for furbearer registration.

Example of trapping coupon for 2026/2027

 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES MNDNR: 88313490 SMUCKLEY BEAR 500 LAFAYETTE ROAD SAINT PAUL, MN 55155-4002 DOR: 010311980		2026 Height: 5'11" Weight: 982.85 Gender: MALE Eyes: BROWN Drivers License: MN 45088546855465 Firearms Safety:	
This license is NON-REFUNDABLE. 671 FISHER/PINE MARTEN COUPON (#1388845) Effective Date: 06/02/2026-02/28/2027		2020	
Upon taking of the animal, you must immediately validate your license at the site of kill by notching the month, day and time of harvest (and spaces for notestamper) on this paper license.			
Trans # 71854342 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		Issued: 05/02/2026 02:46 Agent: 98001	

Furbearer pelting and transportation

A person who performs a service by recovering and preserving the pelt of a protected furbearer (except muskrat) that was accidentally killed or lawfully killed while doing damage, may be entitled to a pelting fee of up to 50 percent of the proceeds from the sale of the pelt not to exceed \$25 per pelt. Contact your local DNR conservation officer or regional DNR Enforcement office within 24 hours for authorization to pelt the animal.

Releasing protected species

Every effort should be made to avoid catching fully protected species. If possible, a trapper should release incidentally captured protected species back into the wild. If a fully protected species is caught out of season or a daily or possession limit has been reached and the animal is dead in the trap or otherwise cannot be released, you must notify a DNR conservation officer. Without authorization from a conservation officer, a person may not possess or transport a lynx that was incidentally killed or lawfully killed. Information on reporting incidentally captured animals can be found on page 72.

Lynx management zone regulations

Trapping regulations east and north of U.S. Highway 53, are intended to reduce or eliminate the incidental take of Canada lynx.

Snares must be set as follows:

- Loop size must be at least 8 inches but no more than 10 inches when set on land.
- Snare wire must be at least 5/64 inch in diameter but no more than 1/8 inch in diameter.
- Must be anchored (no drags) when set on land.



Snares set on dry land only:

- Must be equipped with a minimum loop stop that prevents the snare loop from closing to a diameter less than 3 3/4 inches;
- Must be equipped with a one-piece snare lock that contains no moving parts, has no integrated or attached compression springs, and has a side that contacts the animal that is a minimum of 1/2 inch in width.

- May not be attached or anchored to a fence or tree and may not be set in a location such that they, when fully extended, can reach any part of a fence, or any rooted vegetation greater than ½ inch in diameter.
- Snares may not exceed 7 feet in length from the anchor point to the end of the snare when fully extended.
- Must be equipped with at least 1 swivel.

Staking and tethering traps set on dry land

- Except traps in weasel boxes, all foothold traps set on land must be tethered and anchored with a chain or cable no longer than 18 inches.
- Foothold traps, except those set under water, must have 2 or more swivels in the tethering chain or cable.
- Foothold traps larger than 6½ inches measured between the inside edges of the jaw are prohibited on dry land.

Bait and sight attractants

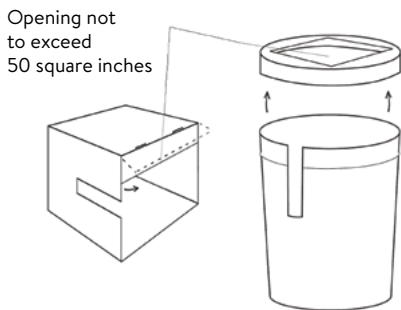
- The flesh of rabbits or hares or parts of rabbits or hares may not be used as bait. Other meat must be exposed to air for at least 24 hours before use as bait.
- Suspended flags or other sight attractants may not be used within 20 feet of a trap or snare.

Body grip

- Traps larger than 5 inches and smaller than or equal to 7½ inches measured between the inside edges of the jaws must be set at least half submerged in water or either:
 - › Three feet off the ground or snow level in a tree or on a leaning pole 6 inches or less in diameter or;
 - › In a cubby box recessed at least 7 inches from the front with an opening no larger than 50 square inches.

Cubby box traps

This diagram is for illustration purposes only. Cubby boxes may be constructed of any material and openings may be restricted with wire mesh, wood strips, or other material.



Reporting incidentally taken furbearers

The following regulations apply for reporting incidentally trapped furbearers.

A person may not possess or transport a lynx that was incidentally killed or was lawfully killed until the person notifies the local conservation officer, other authorized DNR employee, or regional enforcement office of the killing and receives authorization to possess, transport, or skin the animal.

A person may possess and transport mink, muskrat, beaver, badger, opossum, fox or raccoon incidentally killed or lawfully killed while causing damage or threatening injury or damage only if the local conservation officer or other authorized DNR department is notified within 24 hours of such killing and before any skinning has begun.

A person may possess and transport fisher, otter or pine marten that were incidentally killed, or bobcat that was incidentally killed or lawfully killed while causing or threatening injury or damage, only after the species is reported to a local conservation officer or by calling 888-646-6367, and providing the required information. After making the required notification and taking possession of the animal, the person may not skin, transfer possession or otherwise dispose of the animal without authorization from a conservation officer.

- Trappers should be prepared with the following information when calling 888-646-6367:
- The trapper's name and DNR number as it appears on the trapping license.
- Date and time that the catch was discovered.
- The number and species taken (example: 1 otter).
- General location of the catch (example: 5 miles south of Ely off County Road 21).
- Complete address of the location where the carcass is being kept.
- A telephone number where you can easily be reached.

***NEW—Furbearer registration requirements for 2026**

1. Trappers will be required to present only the heads of bobcats at furbearer registration. The full carcasses of bobcats are no longer required.
2. Keep female and male heads of fisher, pine marten, and bobcat separated for placement in the appropriate bins at registration.

Whole bobcat carcasses will no longer be collected at registration. Bobcat heads will be collected. The pelt of each bobcat, fisher, pine marten, and otter must be removed from the carcass and presented for registration by the person taking it. The head of each bobcat, pine marten, and fisher must also be surrendered. To facilitate tagging, please be sure that pelts are thawed before registration.

Pelts, heads, and completed site validated trapping coupons—electronic or paper—must be presented for registration at a DNR registration station or area wildlife office (by appointment in case of an unavoidable conflict) before the pelt is sold or removed from the state and no more than 48 hours after the season closes for fisher, pine marten, and bobcat. River otter may be registered through May 17, 2027.

Bring the following information for each animal to be registered: species, sex, method of take, date taken and county, township and range where taken. Forms are available at wildlife offices and online at mndnr.gov/recreation/hunting/trapping. Individuals who take more than one bobcat, fisher, or marten should keep heads from males and females separate for placement in the appropriate bins at furbearer registration.

Plastic registration tags must remain attached to the raw pelt until the pelt is tanned or mounted. Site validation coupons do not need to be attached to the animal.

Furbearer registration stations

Fisher, pine marten, river otter and bobcat may be registered at designated DNR offices without an appointment during the hours listed in the following table. Furbearers may be registered at any DNR area wildlife office throughout open seasons by appointment.

Office	Date and Time
Aitkin Wildlife 1200 Minnesota Ave S; 218-429-3053	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Backus Forestry 4391 State Hwy 87 NW; 218-732-8452	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Baudette Wildlife 204 Main St E; 218-395-6031	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Bemidji Wildlife 2114 Bemidji Ave; 218-308-2339	Dec. 22, noon-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, noon-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Big Falls Forestry 7754 Town Rd 293; 218-328-8860	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Brainerd Wildlife 1601 Minnesota Dr; 218-203-4301	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Cambridge Wildlife 800 Oak Savanna Ln SW; 763-284-7224	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Cloquet Wildlife 305 Business Park Dr E; 218-878-5661	Dec. 22, noon-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Detroit Lakes Wildlife 14583 County Hwy 19; 218-846-8470	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Duluth Forestry 4805 Rice Lake Road; 218-878-5661 (Cloquet)	Dec. 22, noon-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Eveleth Forestry 7979 Hwy 37; 218-300-7860	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Fergus Falls Wildlife 1509 1st Ave N; 218-671-7968	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Finland Forestry 6686 Hwy 1; 218-834-1454	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Grand Marais Forestry 1356 Hwy 61 E; 218-834-1453	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Grand Rapids Wildlife 1201 E Hwy 2; 218-328-8860	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Hibbing Core Library 1521 1st Ave; 218-300-7860	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
International Falls Forestry 392 Hwy 11 E; 218-328-8860	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.

Continued on next page

Office	Date and Time
Middle River (Thief Lake) Wildlife 42280 240th Ave NE; 218-633-7670	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
New London Wildlife 398 Sibley Park Rd NE; 320-347-7630	Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Nicollet Wildlife 501 9th St; 507-386-3920	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
North Metro Wildlife (Carlos Avery WMA) 5463-C W Broadway; 651-539-3324	Dec. 22, noon-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Northome Forestry 12006 E Hwy 1; 218-328-8860	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Onamia/Mille Lacs Wildlife 29172 100th Ave; 320-532-3537	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Orr Forestry 4656 Hwy 53; 218-300-7860	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Owatonna Wildlife 8485 Rose St; 507-414-6200	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Park Rapids Wildlife 603 West 1st St; 218-732-8452	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Roosevelt Wildlife 11536 Faunce-Butterfield Rd SW; 218-783-6861	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Roseau Courthouse 606 5th Ave SW; 218-452-7610	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Rochester Wildlife 2118 Campus Dr SE, Suite 100; 507-206-2858	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Sauk Rapids Wildlife 1035 South Benton Dr; 320-223-7878	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Tower Wildlife 650 Hwy 169; 218-300-7860	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Two Harbors Wildlife 1568 Hwy 2; 218-834-1452	Dec. 22, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment
Vermilion River Area Wildlife 15325 Babcock Ave Rosemount; 651-322-4643	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Wadena County Bldg. 221 Harry Rich Dr; 218-732-8452	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Warroad Forestry 804 Cherne Dr NW; 218-783-6861	Dec. 22, noon-7 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; May 17, 3-6 p.m.
Willow River Forestry 85894 County Hwy 61; 218-878-5661 (Cloquet)	Dec. 22, noon-6 p.m.; Jan. 19, 3-6 p.m.; by appointment



www.mndeerhunters.com

MINNESOTA DEER HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association has been Minnesota's premier deer hunting/conservation organization since 1980, uniting hunters across the state to protect and celebrate our shared passion for deer hunting. Whether you're a seasoned hunter or just starting out, MDHA offers something for everyone.

Get involved. Protect the future of deer hunting in Minnesota. Visit www.mndeerhunters.com to join today!

Join MDHA



- **20,000 Members**
- **60 Chapters Statewide**
- **Conservation Tree & Seed Program**
- **Hides For Habitat**
- **Forkhorn Camps**
- **Huntin & Haulin Sweepstakes**
- **Whitetails Magazine**
- **Education Raffle**
- **Wolf Report**

*Whitetails
Forever*



The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association's Hides for Habitat program is a recycling program to turn donated deer hides into dollars to be used for habitat.



Since 1985, MDHA's Hides for Habitat program has collected over one million donated deer hides raising nearly \$6.5 million dollars.

HIDES FOR HABITAT™ DROP STATION



**For more information, call:
1-800-450-DEER**

Local Contact Person: _____

paid advertisement



TRAPPERS EDUCATION ONLINE COURSE AVAILABLE

Located under the “Education” tab,
choose “Online Course”

Full details in Trapping Regulations

Upon course completion, click the Events tab
to find a Field Day in your area.

MNTRAPPERS.ORG

*Helping to Perpetuate the Nation's Oldest Industry –
The Fur Trade: Conservation-Education-Outreach*

Paid Advertisement

Hook into Minnesota's Favorite Nature Magazine!



Packed with beautiful
wildlife photography and
insightful storytelling,
*Minnesota Conservation
Volunteer* is the perfect gift
for anglers young and old.

DONATE & SUBSCRIBE

Visit mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine
Or call 844-245-7115 using
promo code **T25FISH**



For All Your Hunting Needs

Dunham's
SPORTS®

15% OFF*

**Regular Price Of Any One Item
In Stock With Coupon**

*Excludes Firearms, Ammunition, YETI, Nike, & Under Armour. Additional exclusions may apply, see www.dunhamssports.com/coupon-exclusions.html for details. Not valid for online purchases or Gift Cards. Cannot be used with another offer, coupon, current sale, or clearance item. Only one coupon per customer. Not valid on previous purchases. Void if copied. Not for resale. Dunham's Sports reserves the right to terminate this coupon/offer/discount at any time, without prior notice.

Coupon Expires July 31, 2027



46288000000000

Paid Advertisement

**MAKE YOUR OWN WILD GAME
SUMMER SAUSAGE AND SALAMI.**

**WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO PROCESS
YOUR MEAT INTO DELICIOUS SAUSAGE
RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME.**



**COMPLETE KITS
STARTING AT \$13.95**



Butcher & Packer Supply
P.O. Box 71748
Madison Heights, Michigan 48071

Call 1-800-521-3188
www.butcher-packer.com



Paid Advertisement

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

THE SHARPEST
REPLACEABLE BLADES ON THE MARKET

SHOP NOW



HAVALON.COM

HAVALON®
KNIVES

NEVER LOSE YOUR EDGE™

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



*The new ELS is live and affects activities in this section.
See page 10 for details.*

Big Game Regulations

Equipment for Taking Big Game

Firearms

Firearms for big game must meet the following criteria:

- At least .220 caliber and has centerfire ignition;
- Loaded only with single projectile ammunition;
- The projectile has a soft point or is an expanding bullet type.
- Muzzleloaders (long gun or handgun) cannot be loaded at the breech (black powder revolvers are not legal for taking big game if they are loaded through the cylinder);
- Smooth-bore muzzleloaders must be at least .45 caliber;
- Rifled muzzleloaders are at least .40 caliber;
- Muzzleloaders with scopes are legal for taking deer.
- The rifle/shotgun boundary was repealed by the MN Legislature in 2025. Counties in the former shotgun zone have the option to pass an ordinance to remain shotgun-only. See page 94 for more information.

Archery

Bows and arrows for big game must meet the following criteria:

- Bows must have a pull no less than 30 pounds at or before full draw.
- Arrowheads used for taking big game must have a minimum of 2 metal cutting edges, of barbed broadhead design, with a diameter of at least $\frac{7}{8}$ inch.
- “Expandable” broadheads may be used to take big game if they meet the requirements above, and: 1) are at least $\frac{7}{8}$ inch in width and no more than 2 inches in width at or after impact; and 2) are a barbed design and function in a barbed manner.
- A hand-held mechanical release attached to the bowstring may be used if the person’s own strength draws and holds the bowstring.

Crossbows

Crossbows may be used:

- Throughout the archery deer season by a person who has purchased a license to take deer by archery.
- Throughout the early antlerless and youth deer seasons by any licensed hunter.
- Throughout the firearms deer season by any licensed hunter.
- Throughout the bear season by a person who has purchased a bear hunting license.

Crossbows used for hunting must:

- Be shoulder fired;
- Deliver at least 42 foot-pounds of energy at 10 feet;
- Have bolts (arrows) at least 10 inches long with arrowheads that meet archery specifications listed above;
- Have a working safety.

Shooting hours

Shooting hours for big game are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

Shooting near roadways

No person may discharge a firearm or an arrow from a bow or crossbow on or within the right-of-way of an improved public highway (including but not limited to federal, state, county, and township) at a big game animal or a decoy of a big game animal that has been set out by a licensed peace officer.

Use of dogs and horses

A person may use a dog to locate and retrieve a wounded deer or bear. Find details in the section on dogs, page 35. A person may not use a horse to take big game.

Possession of big game

Any person who takes a big game animal must retain the registration for as long as any part of the meat is in possession.

White-tailed Deer

Definitions

Legal buck and antlerless deer

- Legal bucks have 1 antler at least 3 inches long.
- Fawn bucks, sometimes called button bucks are not legal bucks.
- Antlerless deer are deer without an antler at least 3 inches long.
- The statewide bag limit for legal bucks is 1, unless otherwise specified.

“Take”

The term “take” includes attempting to take deer, deer drives, spotting, or otherwise assisting another person in taking deer.

Licenses, Lotteries, Permits

License purchase and validity

Starting August 1, all deer licenses (archery, firearms, muzzleloader) as well as bonus permits, early antlerless permits and disease management permits may be purchased at any time before or during the season. After a deer season is open, all licenses and permits are valid the same day of purchase if purchased before legal shooting hours. If the license or permit is purchased after legal shooting hours have begun, it is valid the following day.

- A person may purchase no more than 1 firearms, 1 muzzleloader, and 1 archery deer license in a calendar year.
- Legal bucks may be tagged only by a firearms, muzzleloader, or an archery license (unless otherwise specified, bonus permits and disease management permits may not be used to tag legal bucks).
- Bonus, early antlerless permits, and disease management permits may be purchased in addition to regular licenses. Regular licenses, bonus permits, or disease management permits may be used in any order.
- A person may not take deer without the appropriate license or permit.

Landowner deer license

This free license allows the taking of 1 additional antlerless deer in either-sex, 2-deer limit, 3-deer limit, and 5-deer limit permit areas.

- This license is available to residents, tenants, and nonresident owners with at least 80 acres of farmed or grazed land.
- The license is valid during any open season, with the correct weapon.
- 1 landowner license per person per year.
- The license is only valid on the owner's land in the designated deer area.
- This license CAN be transferred to a spouse or dependent.
- This license can be used to purchase bonus permits, where allowed.
- Landowners must allow public hunting on their land, except the first Saturday and Sunday of the season.
- Hunters need permission, and landowners decide hunting access.
- Party hunting is legal with a landowner license as long as all hunters are using the same weapon type, are in the field together, and hunting on the landowner's property.

Youth deer license privileges and restrictions

Privileges

- Residents and nonresidents under 18 may take a deer of either sex in antlerless deer lottery permit areas without having to apply for or obtain an antlerless permit.
- The youth firearms license is valid during the Youth Deer Season, the Statewide Firearms Season and the Late Southeast Seasons but not the muzzleloader season.

Restrictions

- A youth license may not be used to take a deer harvested by another hunter through party hunting. A licensed youth hunter is allowed to party hunt with one or more licensed adult hunters, and may use an adult's license to take a deer.
- Youth may not take antlerless deer in bucks-only deer areas.

Application for antlerless permits in antlerless lottery deer areas

When deer hunting in an antlerless lottery area, the bag limit for firearms and muzzleloader hunters is 1 legal buck, unless a hunter applies for and receives an antlerless permit in the lottery. The permit gives hunters the choice of taking either a legal buck or an antlerless deer. Those exempt from the lottery include:

- Residents of Minnesota State Veterans' Homes.
- Residents age 84 and older.
- Youth under age 18.
- Hunters who have a permit to shoot deer from a stationary vehicle.
- Exceptions for military personnel and veterans with disabilities are on pages 16 and 17.

Only hunters authorized above may shoot and register the antlerless deer in an antlerless permit lottery area.

A hunter can apply using both a firearm and muzzleloader license; but may only enter 1 lottery per license. The application deadline is Thursday, September 10. All hunters who purchase a firearms or muzzleloader license, and declare an antlerless permit lottery area by September 10 will be automatically entered into the lottery for an antlerless permit.

- Successful applicants will receive a postcard in the mail authorizing them to take an antlerless deer using their regular license in that antlerless permit lottery area. The authorization will be valid for both the firearm and muzzleloader season; however, you must still have a valid license for that season.

- Antlerless permit lottery winners may take antlerless deer only in the area specified on the permit, but they may hunt deer anywhere during the season indicated on the license.
- Surplus antlerless permits will be available first come, first serve beginning at 5pm on October 5th. Surplus antlerless permits will be available to any hunter who has a valid license but has not been selected. Hunters may obtain only 1 antlerless lottery permit.

How hunters are selected for antlerless permits and special hunts

If permit applications exceed the number of permits available, computerized drawings will be used to issue permits.

- ***NEW**—Hunters can now apply for both an antlerless lottery permit and a special hunt permit. Previously, hunters could only apply to one. There is a new, stand-alone application process for firearms and muzzleloader special deer hunts.
- Drawings for antlerless deer or special hunt permits are based on a preference system. You accumulate preference by applying without getting drawn.
- ***NEW**—Preference points are accrued separately for antlerless deer permits and special hunt permits. Applicants who receive either permit lose their accrued preference points for that permit type.
- Preference is not affected by applying for a different area than the year before or by not applying for 1 or more years.
- Preference for group applications is based on the member with the fewest points.
- Only successful applicants will be notified.
- Information about the drawings and individual applications is available by the end of September. Check the DNR website (mndnr.gov) to view results.

Bonus and disease management permits

Bonus and disease management permits are available to archery, firearms, and muzzleloader hunters to take antlerless deer in designated areas.

- Bonus permits may only be used in 2-deer, 3-deer, and 5-deer limit areas, and almost all special hunts. Bonus permits may not be used in bucks-only, antlerless permit lottery, or either-sex deer areas. Unless otherwise specified, bonus permits may not be used to harvest legal bucks.
- Disease management permits may only be used in the following 600-series deer permit areas: 601, 604, 605, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 655, 661, 671, and 685 as well as special hunts within DPAs 666, 679 and 684 where the harvest of more than 1 deer is allowed. Unless otherwise specified, disease management permits may not be used to tag legal bucks.
- Hunters must have the appropriate regular license for the area, season, and method they are using before purchasing bonus or disease management permits.
- Once purchased, bonus and disease management permits may be used with other season licenses. For example, a hunter who purchases a bonus permit with their archery license may use that bonus permit to harvest an antlerless deer during firearms deer season if they purchased a firearms deer license.

Deer Regulations

Hunting method restrictions—hunting deer with bait is illegal

Hunters are not allowed to take deer with the aid or use of bait. “Taking” includes attempting to take.

Baiting

- Baiting greatly increases the chance of disease spread by bringing animals into closer contact.
- Baiting attracts and holds large numbers of deer on private parcels creating a privatization of the deer herd.
- Bait piles change a deer's natural movement. One hunter using bait can ruin another hunter's chance of harvesting a deer.
- Baiting—means placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering bait that is capable of attracting or enticing deer.

What is bait?

- **Bait**—includes grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, or other food that is capable of attracting or enticing deer and has been placed by a person.
- Liquid scents (example: doe in heat), sprays, salt, and minerals are not bait if they do not contain food products.
- Read the ingredient label prior to use. Many products, including liquid, powder and block forms, contain food or attractants such as grains, fruits, and sugar derivatives (glucose, dextrose, and fructose). If a salt or mineral product has anything other than salt or mineral in it, it is illegal to use for hunting.
- Agricultural crops, wildlife food plantings, orchards, or similar land management activities are not bait. This exclusion does not apply to agricultural crops that have been reintroduced where a person is hunting. Example: A person may spread a crop on a previously planted field as fertilizer. However, if the fertilizer is piled or concentrated where the person is hunting deer, it is baiting.
- If a person hunts on land next to a baited property, they are not hunting illegally, so long as they did not help or agree to the baiting.

Removal of bait

- All bait must be completely removed for 10 days prior to hunting.

Penalties for baiting violations

- A person may not obtain any deer license or take deer under a lifetime license for 1 year after they are convicted of hunting with bait. A second conviction within 3 years results in a 3-year license loss. If the conviction includes a trophy deer scoring over 170, the license loss doubles.
- Weapons used to take deer with bait will be seized and may be confiscated if convicted. In some areas, deer feeding and attractants are banned year-round, see page 93.

Elevated stands

There are special regulations regarding elevated stands. Details on wildlife management areas are on pages 109-110; state forests, on public lands page 118; state parks and state recreation areas are on page 122.

Party hunting regulation

The intent of the party hunting regulation is to prevent parties from shooting more deer than the available number of licenses/permits. All hunters who intend to harvest deer for each other must be hunting together, in the field, when the deer are taken.

- A “party” is defined as any group of 2 or more licensed deer hunters who are all afield; hunting together at the same time; and all using firearms (including muzzleloaders) or all using archery. See crossbow exception below.
- A mixed group of firearms and archery hunters is considered 2 separate parties.

- Crossbow hunters may party hunt with archery hunters if they possess an archery license. Crossbow hunters may party hunt with firearms hunters if they possess a firearms license.
- Party members must be hunting afield together to legally take a deer under another party member's license or permit.
- The person whose license is being used on the deer must be at the site of kill and must validate the harvest, either electronically or on a paper validation, before the deer is moved from the site of the kill.
- Hunters may not lend or borrow licenses.
- Any member of a party may take a deer for any other member of the party who has an unused license or permit valid for that deer. The following exceptions apply:
 - › Party members may not kill a deer in an antlerless permit lottery area for: 1) a person with a disability authorized to take antlerless deer under a permit to shoot from a motor vehicle; 2) a resident of a Minnesota State Veterans' Home; or 3) a resident age 84 and older.
 - › Youth hunters must harvest their own deer--party hunting isn't allowed. A youth license can't be used to register a deer shot by someone else. While an adult can help register a deer taken by the youth, that adult isn't allowed to hunt themselves.

***NEW—Registration**

Every deer taken must be registered and antlers must remain attached until the deer is registered. In all cases, the deer must be registered within 48 hours after the deer was taken and before the deer is processed either privately or commercially. Deer may be transported out of the area where taken without first being registered, after site validation. See page 28 and 29 for a detailed graphic of the updated validation and registration process.

Note that harvest registration is a separate process from CWD testing. There are 3 registration options (see below). Phone registration is NO LONGER available.

1. **Walk-in Big Game Registration Stations:** Registration stations display large, orange "Big Game Registration" signs at select license agent locations. See <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/stations.html> for a list of game registration stations.
2. **Online:** Connect to mndnr.gov/buyalicense and click on the "Harvest registration" link to register your deer. You will receive a confirmation number.
3. **MN DNR Licensing mobile app:** Log into the app, select "Harvest Validation/Registration" and complete the steps. Online and mobile app harvest registration options will not be available until the site validation is completed for that harvested animal. Site validation must be completed (mobile app or paper) prior to transporting a harvested animal. Big game possession tags are no longer issued after registration. When registering:
 - › **Adult male:** male deer with one antler at least 3 inches long.
 - › **Fawn male:** 6-month-old male deer, commonly known as a "button buck" weighs less than 75 pounds dressed. Register deer with antlers less than 3 inches or shed antlers as fawn male.
 - › **Adult female:** doe at least 18 months old. Longer nose and larger body (over 75 pounds dressed weight) than younger antlerless deer.
 - › **Fawn female:** 6-month-old female deer. Shorter nose, weighs less than 75 pounds dressed.

Licenses requiring registration will no longer have a unique registration number associated with them, rather the license number will serve in that capacity.

You will only be asked questions valid to your license. Here are a few examples:

- **Regular Firearms License:** Will ask all 4 deer types but will not ask season because it's only valid during the firearm season. The same applies to muzzleloader, archery, lifetime, etc.
- **Bonus Permits:** Will only ask 3 deer types (adult female, fawn male, fawn female) but will also ask season (archery—vertical bow or crossbow, firearm, muzzleloader).

Big game registration stations

Big game registration provides essential information for managing deer populations. Registration station owners in the state donate the use of their business and the time of their staff to help collect this information. Station operators are not required to inspect deer or verify registration information. This is the hunter's responsibility.

Transportation

A legally registered animal may be transported any time during and after the deer hunting season. See page 92 and the 2026 Deer Season Area Map.

- The licensee must accompany the deer in transport except as follows: A deer that has been registered may be transported by another person, if the signature, address, and license number of the licensee and the origin and destination of the transport are written on the back of the paper license.
- All deer in transport must be readily accessible for inspection by DNR conservation officers.
- The head of a deer must remain attached to the carcass until the deer is registered. Skin and entrails may be removed before registration. Deer may be quartered before being registered, but the animal's head must remain attached to one of the quarters.

Deer carcass disposal

Hunters may not dispose of carcasses (including head or spine) on public land, including wildlife management areas, state forests, road rights-of-way, or in any water body. Deer carcasses may be disposed of in the following ways:

- On private land with the permission of the landowner. If the carcass originates in a CWD management zone, see the carcass disposal rule details on page 92.
- Through your refuse hauler after checking on how to properly bag the carcass.
- At a local landfill.

The use of carcasses or parts of carcasses as bait for trapping remains legal within applicable laws; however, the unlawful deposit of carcasses not associated with legal baiting or field dressing constitutes litter. Details about moving carcasses in CWD areas are on page 92 and the 2026 Deer Season Area Map.

Statewide bag limits for deer

Hunters may buy archery, firearm, and muzzleloader licenses; however, a single deer permit area (DPA) harvest limit may not allow all 3 licenses to be filled. It is the hunter's responsibility to know the bag limit for the areas they hunt. The statewide bag limit for deer is 5. Deer harvested during the early antlerless season and the late CWD season do not count toward the statewide bag limit. The statewide bag limit for legal bucks is 1, except in DPA 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, and 655, see page 95. Deer harvested in special hunts do not contribute to the bag limit within the surrounding DPA; however, they do contribute to the statewide limit.

Landowner Licensee—Landowner licensees may take 1 antlerless deer in addition to the statewide bag limit for either-sex, 2-deer limit, 3-deer limit, or 5-deer limit permit areas. See page 95.

How to validate your harvest

The DNR no longer requires that game be site tagged after harvest, and those *physical tags are now replaced with the act of site validation.*

At the site of the kill

Licensed hunters will validate their harvest at the site of the kill, prior to movement of the animal, either via the mobile app or by hand via a printed site validation tag.

Moving your harvested animal

An animal no longer needs to be physically tagged but must be validated electronically (via the mobile app) or on the paper license at the site of the kill. If utilizing the paper option, keep your paper validation with your license (or take a picture). Once validated, your harvest can be moved.

REMINDER—You must register you harvest either online, through the mobile app, or at a select agent locations within 48 hours of the kill.

 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES		2026
	MNDNR#: 88313490	Height: 5'11"
	SMOKEY BEAR	Weight: 982LBS
	500 LAFAYETTE ROAD	Gender: MALE
	SAINT PAUL, MN 55155-4002	Eyes: BROWN
	DOB: 01/01/1980	Drivers License: MN 458985465855465 Firearm Safety: 445585455487
<i>Expires February 28, 2027 (unless noted elsewhere)</i>		
224 RESIDENT BEAR NO-QUOTA LICENSE (91388846)		
Effective Date: 6/2/2026 - 10/15/2026		
214 RESIDENT TRAPPING LICENSE (91388844)		
Effective Date: 6/2/2026 - 2/28/2027		
671 FISHER/PINE MARTEN COUPON (91388845)		
Effective Date: 6/2/2026 - 2/28/2027		
All licenses are NON-REFUNDABLE.		
Trans #: 76854243		Issued: 06/02/2026 02:50
		Agent: 96001

Example of paper license:

Note that all of your current licenses, permits, and coupons are listed on this license.

This printable license can be saved to your phone as a PDF rather than being printed. The durable printed licenses are no longer available.

 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES		2026
	MNDNR#: 88313490	Height: 5'11"
	SMOKEY BEAR	Weight: 982LBS
	500 LAFAYETTE ROAD	Gender: MALE
	SAINT PAUL, MN 55155-4002	Eyes: BROWN
	DOB: 01/01/1980	Drivers License: MN 458985465855465 Firearm Safety: 445585455487
<i>This license is NON-REFUNDABLE.</i>		
224 RESIDENT BEAR NO-QUOTA LICENSE (91388846)		
Effective Date: 06/02/2026-10/15/2026		
Upon taking of the animal, you must immediately validate your license at the site of kill by notching the month, day and time of harvest on the paper license or validate using the DNR Licensing App. Registration of the animal is mandatory and can be completed by visiting a license agent, registering online or by using the DNR Licensing App. When using the DNR Licensing App both validation and registration can be completed at the same time and a paper license is not needed.		
Trans #: 76854243		Issued: 06/02/2026 02:50
		Agent: 96001
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		

Example of paper validation:

This validation form will be generated with your license for printing or to download as a PDF. To validate, mark the correct harvest date.

The paper validation DOES NOT need to be attached to the harvested animal.

See pages 28-29 for additional details on the updated harvest-validation-registration process.

Deer Permit Area (DPA) Management Designations

Designation	Bag limit	Can I take an antlerless deer?	Can I use a bonus permit to take an antlerless deer?	If I am successful, can I take another deer in a different permit area?
Bucks-only	1 deer, regardless of license type. Only 1 legal buck may be taken.	No, unless you are a resident of a Minnesota State Veterans' Home or age 84 or older. The bucks only designation also applies to archery.	No	Yes. Hunters must comply with the statewide bag limit of five deer, the applicable DPA limit, and a buck limit of one unless otherwise noted. Deer harvested during the early antlerless season, the late CWD season, and certain special hunts are subject to bag limits established for those hunts but do not count towards the statewide five-deer limit.
Antlerless permit lottery	1 deer, regardless of license type. Only 1 legal buck may be taken.	No, unless you obtain an antlerless permit by lottery or are a resident who is also: a veteran who is 100% disabled, or on military leave or discharged from service outside the country in the past 24 months or living in a Minnesota State Veterans' Home or under 18 or 84 or older or possess a permit to shoot from a stationary vehicle. Youth and hunters with disabilities must personally take antlerless deer they register. Archery hunters may take 1 either-sex deer in antlerless permit lottery areas.	No	
Either-sex	1 deer, regardless of license type. Only 1 legal buck may be taken.	Yes	No	
2-deer limit	2 deer, only 1 legal buck may be taken.	Yes	Yes. In some 600-series DPAs disease management permits may be used.	
3-deer limit	3 deer, only 1 legal buck may be taken, except in some selected areas (page 99).	Yes	Yes. In some 600-series DPAs disease management permits may be used.	
5-deer limit	5 deer, only 1 legal buck may be taken, except in selected areas (page 99).	Yes	Yes. In some 600-series DPAs disease management permits may be used.	

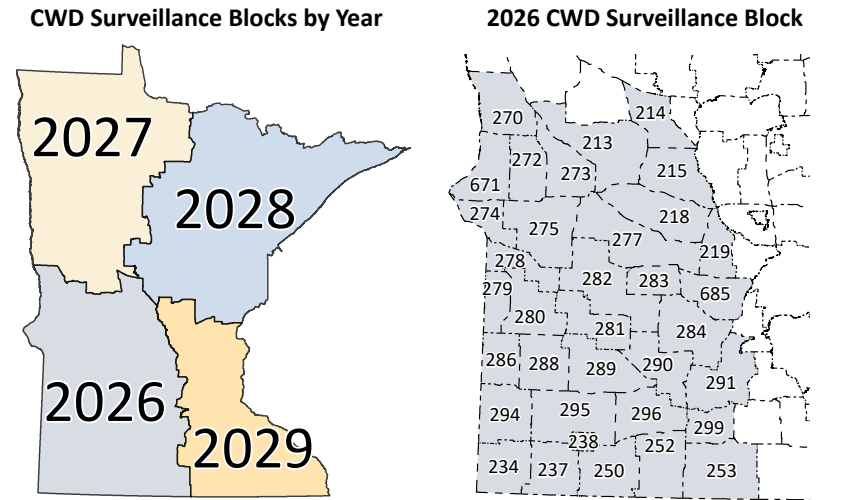
Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) affects deer, caribou, reindeer, elk and moose. Signs of this disease in deer include drooping head or ears, trouble moving, weight loss, excessive drooling, and increased thirst or urination. CWD can infect a deer for 1½ to 3 years before symptoms appear. CWD can spread before symptoms appear and is always fatal. In Minnesota, the disease has been found on deer and elk farms since 2002 and in wild deer since 2010. For more information about CWD visit mndnr.gov/cwd.

***NEW—CWD sample submission is mandatory in all DPAs within the CWD surveillance block (DPAs 213, 214, 215, 218, 219, 234, 237, 238, 250, 252, 253, 270, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286, 288, 289, 290, 291, 294, 295, 296, 299, 671, and 685) during the opening weekend of the firearms season (November 7-8)**

DNR will begin a statewide rotational CWD surveillance plan conducting CWD surveillance in different surveillance blocks on a rotating basis over the next 4 years. This approach will gather information about CWD prevalence, especially in areas of the state that have been lacking testing efforts in recent years. DNR will start testing for CWD in groups of DPAs (called surveillance blocks) in the southwest portion of the state and rotate in a clockwise pattern (see map below). By the end of 2029, CWD surveillance will have been conducted in every DPA. In the current CWD surveillance block, hunters must provide a sample from deer 1 year or older within 24 hours of harvest during the opening weekend of the firearms season. Sampling stations, either staffed or self-service, will be available.

For deer harvested outside of November 7 and 8 in the surveillance block, and in all DPAs (including management zones) that fall outside of the current surveillance block, voluntary CWD sample submission is available through the mail-in sampling kit program, the partner sampling program, or by scheduling an appointment at a DNR wildlife office (see page 128 for office locations).



Sampling information during opening weekend

- Deer should be registered before sampling. Deer will not be registered as part of the sampling process. The hunter must register the deer online, via the mobile app, or walk-in registration.
- Staffed sampling stations will be available from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, and from 9 a.m. to noon on Monday of opening weekend of the firearms season. A list of stations is found online at mndnr.gov/cwd. View page 91 for details.
 - › To speed up the sampling process, have the head accessible and facing towards the tailgate or rear of your vehicle. Let station staff know right away if you plan to keep the cape for taxidermy purposes.
 - › Know where you harvested your deer and be able to provide that location on a map. A pamphlet with a unique barcode ID will be given to you once a sample is collected; ensure you keep this until you receive your test result.
- Self-service sampling stations are only available on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday (24 hours a day) on opening weekend of firearms season. A list of stations is found online at mndnr.gov/cwd. View page 91 for details.
 - › Hunters using self-service sampling stations should remove deer heads before arriving, but equipment is available at each station if needed. Heads will not be returned. If hunters wish to keep antlers, they must be removed prior to submitting the head. Removing the antlers or skull plate does not affect CWD sampling.
 - › To provide a sample, hunters must fill out the larger portion of the provided tag and attach it to the deer head. The perforated stub should be kept to check test results and identify individual deer.
- Test results will be posted online at mndnr.gov/cwdcheck. The time it takes to receive test results will vary depending on testing volume at the diagnostic lab. Hunters are responsible for checking their results, as DNR only notifies hunters directly if they have a suspect or positive test result.
- Hunters should process deer as normal and keep processed deer separate and identifiable from other deer until test results are received. Freezing your deer meat is recommended while awaiting a result.
- If a hunter harvests a trophy deer on November 7-8, or would like to retain the head for any reason, they must still submit a sample. The hunter should contact a partnering taxidermist (more information on the partner sampling program is on page 91). Taxidermists will likely charge a fee to cape the deer. Hunters may also collect their own sample by following the instructional video provided on the DNR website, and then place the sample in a plastic baggie and fill out a sample identification tag at a self-service sampling station, or use a mail-in kit (see below).
- Hunters who participate in the mail-in sampling kit program to meet mandatory requirements on November 7-8 must obtain their kit before opening weekend. Samples collected through this program must be submitted by mail and postmarked within 72 hours of harvest. More information on the mail-in sampling kit is available on page 91.

CWD management zone (DPAs 601, 604, 605, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 655, 661, 666, 671, 679, 684, and *NEW—685)

The CWD management zone (600-series DPAs) was created when CWD was found in wild deer. The management zone includes all DPAs starting with the number 6. CWD sample submission is **not required** in management zones unless that management zone falls within the surveillance block. If hunters want to submit a sample, they may voluntarily submit a sample through the partner sampling program, mail-in sampling kit program, or by appointment at their local wildlife office. More information can be found on page 91.

In the CWD management zone, the following hunting regulations apply:

- Deer permit area (DPA) bag limits apply, please see page 95 for deer limit by DPA.
- ***NEW**—Carcass disposal rules apply during all seasons for all deer including fawns. Any deer harvested in a CWD management zone may leave the zone immediately prior to receiving a test result but must be disposed of properly. Dumpsters will not be provided by DNR for disposing of carcass parts. Additional details on proper disposal and exceptions can be found on page 92.
- ***NEW**—Carcass movement restrictions have been eliminated.
- Hunters may purchase disease management permits for \$2.50 each to take antlerless deer in areas where the bag limit allows more than 1 deer to be taken.
- DPAs 605, 642, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, and 655 are open during the late CWD season December 18-20, 2026. Special regulations apply, see page 99.
- In DPAs 601, 604, 605, 642, 644, 661, 666, 671, 679, 684, and 685, hunters must comply with the statewide buck limit of 1 per year.
- In DPAs 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, and 655 hunters may harvest up to 3 legal bucks per year. Hunters can take 1 buck under an archery license, 1 buck under a firearms license, and 1 buck under a muzzleloader license. Bucks taken in these DPAs do not count toward the statewide 1 buck limit, but do count toward the statewide bag limit and the DPA limit. For example, a hunter can take 1 buck with a firearms license in DPA 643 and another buck with a muzzleloader license in DPA 171.

Partner-sampling program

The DNR has partnered with taxidermists and others to collect samples from deer. These partners will submit samples to the DNR. Additional services provided by the partner may require a fee. Test results will be posted on the DNR website. A list of partners can be found by scanning the QR code or online at mndnr.gov/cwd/cwd-testing.html.



Mail-in sampling kit program

The DNR will provide a free kit that includes instructions and all items needed to submit a sample by mail. Hunters will need to remove the lymph node from the deer, list the harvest location and hunter contact information, and deliver the kit to the shipping vendor. Kits are free and may be requested by scanning the QR code or online at mndnr.gov/cwd/cwd-kits.html.



A list of wildlife offices where kits may be obtained is also available online. Hunters throughout the state may use the mail-in sampling kit program, regardless of harvest location. Mail-in kits will be available on a first-come first-served basis. To ensure reliable shipping, you will need to request a shipping label from MNDNR after you harvest your deer. This will need to be completed for all mail-in kits regardless of the date you received your kit. You can request this label by visiting the mail-in kit website or scanning the QR code.

Hunters in the CWD surveillance block who plan to use the mail-in sampling kit option on the opening weekend of firearms deer season (November 7-8) should obtain their kit before the weekend. Samples from deer taken on opening weekend must be postmarked within 72 hours of harvest to comply with mandatory sampling requirements.

Sampling Station Locations in Surveillance Block— Opening Weekend of Firearms Season

Stations will be available from November 7-9 for hunters to comply with mandatory CWD sampling. Stations listed as staffed will have DNR staff present to remove samples from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. November 7-8, and from 9 a.m. to noon on November 9. A self-service station will also be available at staffed stations for afterhours sampling. All self-service stations will be available 24 hours each day, November 7-9.

After opening firearms weekend, hunters may voluntarily submit samples through the partner sampling program, with a mail-in sampling kit or by appointment at a DNR wildlife office.

A list of stations can be found online at mndnr.gov/cwd or by scanning the QR code to access the interactive map.



Carcass Regulations

Carcasses are defined as the head with brain tissue and spinal column of the deer.

Harvest Location	Carcass Regulations	Exemptions
In the CWD Management Zone (DPAs 601, 604, 605, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 655, 661, 666, 671, 679, 684, 685)	*NEW—Carcass Disposal Rule: Carcasses from all deer, including fawns, harvested within a CWD Management Zone may leave the zone immediately but must be disposed of through your refuse hauler, at your local landfill, or it may be left on the private property where the deer was harvested with permission from the landowner. Carcass movement restrictions have been eliminated.	The following exemptions apply to the carcass disposal rule: 1) Deer may be taken to a Minnesota wild game meat processor or Minnesota Licensed taxidermist, and 2) deer that have a not detected test result for CWD may be disposed of in any otherwise legal manner.
Anywhere in Minnesota outside of the CWD Management Zone	No carcass regulations exist for deer harvested in permit areas outside the CWD Management Zone in Minnesota.	NA
Outside of MN	Carcass Import Restriction: Carcasses of any deer, elk, or moose species obtained anywhere outside of Minnesota cannot be brought into the state (see exceptions). Nonresidents transporting whole or partial carcasses on a direct route through Minnesota are exempt from this restriction.	In situations where movement of carcasses is banned, the following parts can be transported into Minnesota: 1) Quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached, 2) Meat that is boned out or that is cut and wrapped (either commercially or privately), 3) Hides and teeth, 4) Antlers or clean (no brain tissue attached) skull plates with antlers attached, and 5) finished taxidermy mounts. Heads from cervids with or without the cape and neck attached that originate from outside Minnesota may be transported into the state only if they are delivered to a licensed taxidermist within 48 hours of entering the state.

THE DNR PROVIDED DUMPSTERS WILL NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE.

That program was implemented to help hunters comply with carcass movement restrictions in CWD management zones. The new carcass disposal rule now gives hunters more flexibility and options to move and dispose of carcasses that originate from CWD management zones.

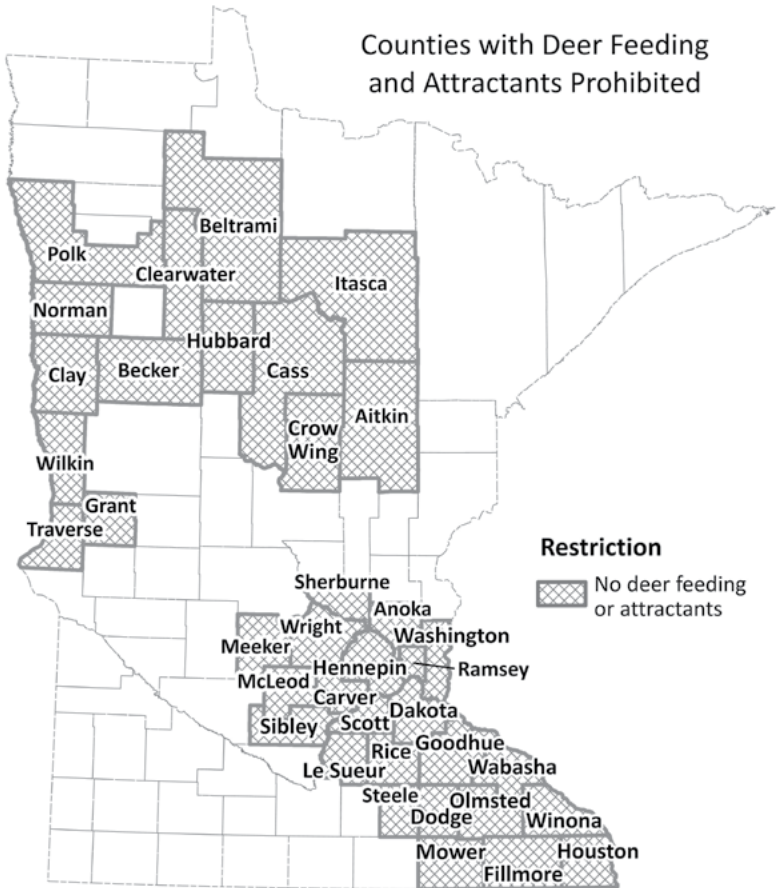
Feeding and Attractant Ban

Feeding deer increases the risk of disease spread. Deer feeding includes placement or distribution of grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay and food that attracts or entices deer. Hunting deer with the use of bait is illegal statewide. Information on the difference between deer feeding and baiting can be found on pages 82-83.

Attractants are food scents, salt, minerals, pre-scented items with natural or synthetic attractants, and any product, natural or synthetic, that contains or claims to contain (example “doe in heat”) cervid bodily fluids or feces.

Deer feeding and deer attractants are prohibited in the following counties: Aitkin, Anoka, Becker, Beltrami, Carver, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Grant, Hennepin, Houston, Hubbard, Itasca, Le Sueur, McLeod, Meeker, Mower, Norman, Olmsted, Polk, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Steele, Traverse, Wabasha, Washington, Wilkin, Winona, and Wright.

For more information about CWD visit the DNR’s website at mndnr.gov/cwd.



Shotgun Zone Updates

The MN Legislature repealed the shotgun zone during the 2025 legislative session. Counties in the shotgun zone have the option of passing an ordinance to remain shotgun-only.

Except in counties that pass a shotgun-only ordinance, firearms deer hunters will be able to use all legal shotguns, handguns, and rifles throughout the state where deer hunting is allowed. This change will be in effect for the 2026 firearms deer season.

The table below provides a list of of counties that have notified the state that they have passed shotgun-only ordinances as of May 5, 2026.

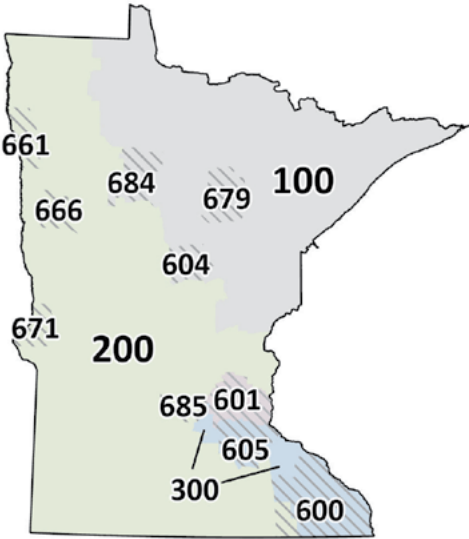
Please check with your local county where you intend to hunt to ensure you have the most current information.

County	Status	Contact Information
Brown	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://browncountymn.gov 507-233-6640
Clay	Partial shotgun-only ordinance	https://claycountymn.gov 218-299-5012
Cottonwood	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.cottonwoodcountymn.gov 507-832-8287
Dodge	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.co.dodge.mn.us 507-635-6272
Fairbault	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.co.faribault.mn.us 507-526-6225
Houston	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.hocomn.gov 507-725-5800
Jackson	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://jacksoncountymn.gov 507-662-6682, Ext. 4
Kandiyohi	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.kcmn.us 320-231-6229
Nobles	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.co.nobles.mn.us 507-295-5200
Pope	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.popecountymn.gov 320-634-7791
Rock	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.co.rock.mn.us 507-283-8862
Watonwan	Shotgun-only ordinance	https://www.watonwancountymn.gov 507-375-1225
Wilkin	Partial shotgun-only ordinance	https://wilkincounty.gov 218-643-7165

Deer Seasons

Season	Date
Archery	Sept. 19-Dec. 31
Statewide firearms: 100 series and 604, 679, and 684	Nov. 7-22
Statewide firearms: 200 series and deer permit areas 338, 341, 605, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 655, 661, 666, 671, and 685	Nov. 7-15
Late Southeast Firearms: 338, 341, 605, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648 and 649	Nov. 21-29
Metro management zone DPA 601	Nov. 7-29
Muzzleloader	Nov. 28-Dec. 13
Youth Season open statewide	Oct. 15-18
Early Antlerless season (see page 96 for open areas)	Oct. 15-18
Late CWD season (605, 642, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, and 655).	Dec. 18-20
Additional deer permit areas may be announced online this fall.	

Deer Permit Areas Zones



2026 Bag Limits by Deer Permit Area Designation

Bag limit	Deer Permit Areas (DPAs)
Bucks Only	118, 119, 126, 130, 131, 132, 203
Lottery	104, 107, 109, 110, 111, 133, 153, 154, 155, 156, 169, 171, 172, 173, 176, 177, 178, 181, 197, 199, 234, 237, 238, 259, 270, 272, 274, 278, 280, 282, 297, 298
Either-Sex	114, 117, 159, 208, 235, 246, 250, 251, 252, 253, 258, 260, 269, 275, 284, 286, 287, 288, 294, 295, 296, 666, 679, 684
2-Deer Limit	101, 105, 152, 157, 201, 210, 224, 239, 248, 249, 256, 262, 263, 273, 279, 283, 289, 291, 644, 671
3-Deer Limit	182, 209, 213, 214, 215, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 225, 227, 229, 230, 232, 233, 236, 240, 241, 254, 255, 257, 264, 265, 267, 268, 277, 281, 290, 292, 293, 299, 338, 341, 604, 642, 655, 661, 685
5-Deer Limit	601, 605, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649

Archery Season

Season dates	September 19-December 31
--------------	--------------------------

Regular archery license: except in bucks-only permit areas, a regular archery license is valid for an either-sex deer statewide in any open area.

Open areas: Archery hunters can hunt permit areas statewide except in Itasca State Park (DPA 287).

Unless authorized under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act, a person may not possess a firearm while bow hunting for deer.

Bag limit and permit area reminder

Check the management designations and associated bag limits for your permit area on pages 87 and 95 and online mndnr.gov/hunting/deer/map.html.

Bucks-only areas

No antlerless deer may be taken with an archery license in a bucks-only deer area, except for residents age 84 and older, and residents of a MN State Veterans home. An archery license is only valid for legal bucks in these areas.

Venison donation program

The venison donation program allows hunters to donate deer that they have shot for distribution to food shelves at no cost to the hunter. Drop off a deer at any of the participating processors posted on the DNR website. Processing fees are paid from a \$1 fee collected from the sale of bonus permits. The DNR and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture fully support deer hunting and the venison donation program. Venison is a healthy source of high-quality protein. Lead contamination can be avoided by using nontoxic ammunition or reduced by using ammunition with high weight retention, such as bonded bullets, and by placing shots in vital areas, away from major muscle groups and liberally trimming meat around the wound channels.

Deer—Early Antlerless Season

Season dates	October 15-18
Open areas early antlerless season	Permit areas 213, 214, 215, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 225, 227, 229, 236, 240, 277, 341, 601, 605, 642, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 661, 685

Hunters must hunt in an open deer permit area listed above and your deer license must match the weapon you plan to use during the season. Hunters are not required to obtain an early-antlerless permit to participate if you use:

- Firearms → Firearm deer license
- Archery equipment → Archery deer license
- Muzzleloader → Muzzleloader or firearms deer license
- Crossbow → Firearm or archery deer license

The bag limit is 3 antlerless deer, which is in addition to the statewide bag limit and the deer permit area bag limit. You may need to purchase additional licenses if you plan to harvest more than 1 antlerless deer or if you want to save your parent license to register a legal buck during a later season.

The following may be used to fill the bag limit:

- Early antlerless permits can only be used during the early-antlerless season or late CWD season.
- Bonus permits are valid during all other seasons if not filled during early antlerless season.
- Disease management permits can only be used in the 600-series permit areas and special hunts listed on page 95, where they are valid. They can be used during other seasons if not filled during early antlerless season.
- Any combination of permits in any order can be used. For example, you can purchase your firearms deer license + 1 early antlerless permit + 1 bonus permit and register all 3 antlerless deer with those licenses and permits.

The Whitewater State Game Refuge in Winona County and the surrounding deer permit area (DPA 644) are not open during the early-antlerless season. The refuge is open only to youth participating in the Youth Deer Season.

Youth Season	
Season dates	October 15-18
Open areas	Statewide, except Itasca State Park

Youth may take 1 deer during the Youth Deer Season, statewide. Participant numbers are not limited and there is no special permit. Resident and nonresident youth are eligible. Antlerless deer may be taken in any deer permit area that is not designated as Bucks-only. Legal bucks may be taken statewide, but will apply to the statewide bag limit of 1 legal buck.

Participation

- Youth ages 10 to 17 may participate. Youth ages 10 to 13 must be accompanied by an adult parent/guardian/mentor 18 or older. The adult does not need to be licensed.
- The accompanying adult cannot hunt in most areas and party hunting is not allowed (youth must kill their own deer). Adults may hunt in areas where the early antlerless season is open with the correct license. More about the early antlerless season is on page 96.
- Participation does not affect eligibility for the regular deer season; however, deer harvested during the youth season count toward the youth’s annual statewide bag limit.
- If a youth hunter does not fill their license during the youth deer season, it can be used during the regular deer season.

Requirements

- Participating youth must possess a valid firearm deer license (same as required for November deer season). Youth age 10, 11 and 12 must possess a free license. Youth age 12 and older must also have a firearms safety certificate or apprentice hunter validation.
- Crossbows may be used by youth who possess a youth firearms or archery license during the youth deer season.

- An early antlerless deer license is not required for youth to participate in the youth deer season.

Bag limit/bonus permits

- The bag limit is 1 deer of either sex, except antlerless deer may not be taken in bucks-only areas. Higher bag limits apply in areas where the early antlerless season is open; detail are on page 91.
- Legal bucks must be registered with the youth’s firearm license. Bonus permits are not valid for legal bucks.
- Youth must validate their youth firearm license if they take an antlerless deer in a permit area designated lottery or either-sex. Bonus permits are not valid in these areas.
- In certain 600-series areas, youth may use a disease management permit in place of a bonus permit to register antlerless deer under a youth firearms license. Disease management permits are not valid in DPAs 666, 679, and 684 except where special hunts allow the harvest of more than 1 deer. See page 101 for more details.
- Early antlerless permits are only valid in areas designated open during the concurrent early antlerless season.
- The Whitewater State Game Refuge in Winona County is open to youth participating in the youth deer season. The game refuge and surrounding deer permit area (644) are not open for the early-antlerless season.
- Itasca State Park (DPA 287) is closed to hunting during the youth deer season.

Youth Deer Season Allowable Harvest By DPA

DPA designation	What type of deer can youth harvest during youth season?	Can youth use a bonus permit to register an antlerless deer?
Bucks-only	1 legal buck	No
Antlerless permit lottery	1 either-sex deer	No
Either-sex	1 either-sex deer	No
2-deer limit	1 either-sex deer	Yes
3-deer limit	1 either-sex deer	Yes
5-deer limit	1 either-sex deer	Yes

Firearms Season

Regular firearms license

- The Statewide Firearms License is valid in any area that opens November 7 and can now be used in any area open during the Late Southeast Season. The B season license has been eliminated.
- Hunters may use any of the following licenses during the firearms season in the metro deer management zone (601): statewide firearms license, or a muzzleloader license.
- A regular firearms license is valid for either a legal buck or antlerless deer in any either-sex, 2-deer limit, 3-deer limit, or 5-deer limit area or in an antlerless permit lottery area if successful in the lottery. If unsuccessful in the lottery, the firearms license is only valid for a legal buck in antlerless permit lottery areas.
- The youth firearm license may be used in the youth deer season, the statewide, late southeast seasons, and the late CWD hunt.

How to buy a firearms deer license

- Tell the agent which deer area you hunt most often or if applying for a lottery, which deer permit area you plan to hunt. This is collected for information or application purposes and will not print on the license. You are not obligated to stay in the area you say you hunt most often.
- Use the foldout map to help determine your deer area.

Muzzleloader Season

Season dates	November 28-December 13
--------------	-------------------------

Regular muzzleloader license: any hunter can buy a muzzleloader license, including people who have purchased a firearm license.

- The license is valid for a legal buck or an antlerless deer in any either-sex, 2-deer limit, 3-deer limit, or 5-deer limit permit area. In antlerless permit lottery areas, you must apply and receive an antlerless permit to take an antlerless deer. If unsuccessful in the lottery, the license is only valid for a legal buck in antlerless permit lottery areas.
- A youth muzzleloader license is required for youth to participate in the muzzleloader season.
- Muzzleloader hunters may hunt statewide where it is legal to hunt. Areas closed to firearms hunting are also closed to muzzleloader hunting.
- Any hunter may use magnifying or holographic “red dot” scopes during the muzzleloader deer season without a special permit.

Possessing muzzleloaders with other firearms

Muzzleloading firearms lawful for the taking of deer may be possessed only by persons with a valid license to take deer by muzzleloader. While muzzleloader hunting, a person may not possess a firearm other than the following: an unloaded firearm in a case or closed trunk of a motor vehicle, a shotgun and shells containing No. 4 buckshot or smaller, a handgun or rifle capable of firing only rimfire cartridges of .17 or .22 caliber, including .22 magnum or handguns by persons authorized under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act.

Deer—Late CWD Season

Season dates	December 18-20
Open areas	DPA's 605, 642, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, and 655 (additional deer permit areas may be announced online this fall)

Valid license

Any unused archery, firearms, muzzleloader, or landowner license may be used. Weapons used must match the parent license but crossbows may be used with either a firearms or archery license. Landowner deer licenses may be used outside the deer area where the qualifying land is located. Disease management permits may be purchased without a parent license (archery, firearms, or muzzleloader) after the muzzleloader season ends on December 13. This opportunity is only valid during the late CWD season. Unfilled bonus permits or early antlerless permits may also be used.

Bag limit

The bag limit is 5 deer including both antlerless deer and legal bucks. The statewide bag limits for antlerless deer and legal bucks do not apply during this hunt. During this hunt only, disease management permits are valid for taking both legal bucks and antlerless deer. Only antlerless deer may be registered with bonus permits or early antlerless permits.

***NEW—CWD sampling not required**

CWD sampling is voluntary for any deer harvested. Hunters may use the partner sampling program, the mail-in sampling kit program, or schedule an appointment with the area wildlife office to get their deer tested. To find more information on these options, see page 91.

***NEW—Carcass disposal rules apply**

See page 92.

Public land access

In addition to Wildlife Management Areas, some State Parks, Scientific and Natural Areas, and other public lands will be open to hunting. Those with limited permits will be available on a first-come, first serve basis from license vendors beginning December 4. Permits will be available until the limit for the hunt is reached or until the Tuesday before the hunts begins (December 15), whichever occurs first. There is a limit of 1 of these special permits per hunter. The permit is required in addition to a hunting license and is no-cost. A state park pass is required for vehicles entering state parks.

Public Hunting for Late CWD Season

Area	Is there a limit on hunters?	Is a permit required?	Additional information
Rushford Sand Barrens SNA	No	No	
Savage Fen SNA	No	No	Archery only
Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA	No	No	Hunting allowed on portions of the SNA. See website for details: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/detail.html?id=sna01030
Pin Oak Prairie SNA	Yes	Yes	
Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area	No	No	Archery only Carver Rapids Unit
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	No	No	Special regulations online at https://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley/visit-us/activities/hunting
Vermillion Highlands WMA	NA	NA	Closed to public hunting due to scheduled special hunt
Nerstrand-Big Woods State Park and Prairie Creek Woods SNA	Yes	Yes	

Deer—Special Hunts

Application deadline for special youth hunts (page 97)	August 14
Application deadline for special firearm and muzzleloader hunts	September 10

***NEW**—Hunters can now apply for both an antlerless lottery permit and special hunt permit, if they choose. Previously, hunters could only apply to one. Preference points will be accrued separately for each. There will be a new, stand-alone application process for firearms and muzzleloader special deer hunts. The only cost will be an issuing fee of \$1.00.

Permits required for most special hunts

Special hunt permits are required to hunt deer in places where the number of hunters must be limited to control the harvest or for safety.

Those who receive a special hunt area permit may also hunt deer outside that special hunt area during the season indicated on the license. Parties of up to 4 may apply.

Bonus permits may be used to harvest deer in special hunts where antlerless deer may be taken. Any deer harvested as part of a special deer hunt should be registered using the special hunt number, if assigned. Secondly, hunters should use the surrounding Deer Permit Area number.

Special hunt permit areas are listed on the DNR website at mndnr.gov/hunting/deer/special-deer-hunts.html.

Applications for Special Hunts

How to apply for special archery deer hunts

An application for an archery special area permit must be made on a form supplied by each special hunt area. No other application will be accepted. Please refer to the website mndnr.gov/hunting/deer for details and hunt administrator contact information. All questions related to archery special hunts should be directed to the area conducting the hunt.

Before submitting an application, check with the location you are interested in hunting. Different special hunt areas have different regulations such as requiring bonus permit use, taking an antlerless deer first, written permission, and/or proficiency tests.

Any deer harvested as part of a special deer hunt should be registered using the Special Hunt Number, if assigned.

How to apply for special firearm deer hunts

***NEW**—A new, stand-alone application for firearms and muzzleloader special deer hunts now exists in the electronic licensing system. Hunters may apply for both a firearms and a muzzleloader special deer hunt but must first purchase a firearms or muzzleloader license, or have one added to the shopping cart. Hunters no longer have to choose between the antlerless permit lottery and the special hunt lottery.

Hunters can only apply for 1 special hunt per weapon type. Applications cannot be made after the September 10 deadline. Deer harvested in a special hunt area should use the special hunt number when registering their deer. City special hunts do their own permit drawing. Contact the city directly for more information.

The complete list of special firearm deer hunts including updates and corrections is available online at mndnr.gov/deer. This online list includes additional hunt details and contact information.

Muzzleloader special hunt areas

Apply wherever hunting licenses are sold by Thursday, September 10.

The complete list of special muzzleloader deer hunts including updates and corrections is available online at mndnr.gov/hunting/deer.

Earn-a-buck regulations

Some special hunts have earn-a-buck regulations, which require the harvest of 1 or more antlerless deer before the hunter can take a legal buck. Details on these rules are available from the hunt administrator or online at mndnr.gov/hunting/deer.

CWD Sampling required November 7-8

CWD sample submission is mandatory in all DPAs within the surveillance block during the opening weekend of the statewide firearms season (November 7-8). This applies to deer taken in special hunts within the surveillance block. Details are on page 88z.

Nontoxic ammunition requirement

Hunters may only possess and use nontoxic ammunition when participating in a special hunt or disease management hunt in a Minnesota State Park or Scientific and Natural Area.

A person authorized under the Minnesota Personal Protection Act may carry a pistol with lead ammunition but that ammunition may not be used to take an animal during the hunt.

***NEW**—Nontoxic ammunition requirements apply to all youth special hunts in state parks. There is no longer a nontoxic ammunition exemption for youth special hunts in state parks located in the former shotgun zone.

City of Baxter

The city of Baxter will hold special hunts for archery, youth firearms, early antlerless, regular firearms and muzzleloader hunters this year. Visit the city’s website for more information at baxtermn.gov/government/departments/police/hunting.

Special youth firearms deer or archery deer hunts

Requirements

Youth hunters must meet the following age requirements to participate in youth special hunts: 12-15 years of age for firearms youth special hunts; 12-17 years of age for archery youth special hunts.

All participating youth must attend orientation as required by the hunt administrator prior to the hunt (details will be included in notices to successful applicants). An adult mentor, who may not hunt, must accompany participants during the orientation and the hunt. Each hunter can apply online at the MN DNR website, through the MN DNR Licensing app, at a license agent, or at the DNR License Center. Group applications

and party hunting are not allowed. A drawing will be held if applications exceed available permits for each hunt. Unsuccessful applicants will receive preference for future youth hunt lotteries of the same type. Applicants may only apply for 1 youth archery hunt and 1 youth firearms hunt. Participation in a youth hunt does not affect one's eligibility to participate in the regular deer seasons, but harvested deer count toward a youth's annual statewide bag limit. The application deadline is August 14.

Firearms Special Youth Deer Hunt Schedule

Bonus permits may be used to take antlerless deer at all hunts. Application deadline is August 14. Rules found on page 98.

CWD sample submission is mandatory in all DPAs within the surveillance block during the opening weekend of the firearms season (November 7-8). This applies to deer taken in special hunts. Details are on page 88.

Area name	Hunt No.	No. participants	Dates	Bag limit	Hunt type	Orientation
Afton State Park	951	30	Nov. 7-8	3	Either-sex	Oct. 31
Banning State Park	965	6	Oct. 31- Nov. 1	2	Either-sex	Oct. 31
Blue Mounds State Park	966	10	Dec. 5-6	2	Either-sex	Dec. 4
Buffalo River State Park	959	12	Oct. 24-25	2	Earn-a-buck	Oct. 23
Camden State Park	967	12	Oct. 24-25	2	Earn-a-buck	Oct. 23
City of Baxter						Details on page 102
Kilen Woods State Park	963	6	Oct. 31- Nov. 1	2	Either-sex	Mandatory orientation
Lake Bemidji State Park	954	10	Oct. 16-18	2	Either-sex	Oct. 15
Lake Bronson State Park	969	10	Oct. 24-25	1	Either-sex	Oct. 23
Lake Shetek State Park	968	15	Nov. 21-22	2	Anterless only	Oct. 20
Minneopa State Park	899	12	Nov. 14-15	2	Either-sex	Mandatory orientation
Savanna Portage State Park	958	25	Oct. 24-25	2	Either-sex	
Sibley State Park	952	10	Oct. 24-25	1	Either-sex	Mandatory orientation
St. Croix State Park	956	45	Oct. 31- Nov. 1	1	Either-sex	Mandatory orientation

Youth archery opportunity

Sand Prairie WMA (Sherburne County) is open during the regular archery deer season for youth ages 10 through 17. Regular archery deer rules apply.

Special hunts where no permit is required

Special hunts listed in the following table do not require application for a permit. They are being held to reduce deer numbers in areas where hunting is not normally allowed. Anyone may hunt deer as specified in these areas without a special permit. No other species of wild animal may be taken during the hunts and hunting is only allowed during the dates specified. Deer taken should be registered using the hunt number listed in the table.

Archery Special Hunts Where no Permit is Required						
Area name	Hunt No.	No. of participants	Dates	Bag limit	Hunt type	Additional information
City of Baxter	989	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 31	5	Either-sex	Application required. Details on page 102
City of East Gull Lake	880	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 31	5	Either-sex	Laura Christensen; 218-828-9279; laura@eastgulllake.us
City of Grand Rapids	995	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 31	3	Either-sex	Andy Morgan; 218-326-3464; amorgan@grandrapids.mn.gov
City of Jackson	928	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 31	3	Either-sex	Shawn Haken; 507-847-4420; shawn.haken@co.jackson.mn.us
City of Red Wing	977	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 11	5	Other	Patrick Ramaker; 651-385-3674; patrick.ramaker@ci.redwing.mn.us, Fee \$20. Application required.
Greenleaf Lake SRA	987	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 31	3	Either-sex	Kristy Rice; 320-753-0326; kristy.rice@state.mn.us
Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area—Carver Rapids Unit & Thompson Ferry Unit Archery	979	Unlimited	Sept. 19- Dec. 31	5	Either-sex	No additional information

Firearms Special Hunts Where no Permit is Required						
Area name	Hunt No.	No. of participants	Dates	Bag limit	Hunt type	Additional info
City of Baxter	993	Unlimited	Nov. 7-22	5	Either-sex	Application required. Details on page 102.
City of Grand Rapids	931	Unlimited	Nov. 7-22	3	Either-sex	Mandatory CWD sampling. DNR Wildlife Office 218-328-8860
Franz Jevne State Park	988	Unlimited	Nov. 7-22	3	Either-sex	No additional information
Itasca State Park	287	Unlimited	Nov. 7-15	1	Either-sex	Louis Peterson 218-407-5645
Schoolcraft State Park	912	Unlimited	Nov. 7-22	1	Either-sex	No additional information

Muzzleloader Special Hunts Where no Permit is Required

Area name	Hunt No.	No. of participants	Dates	Bag limit	Hunt type	Additional info
City of Baxter	941	Unlimited	Nov. 28-Dec. 13	5 deer	Either-sex	Application required. Details on page 102.
City of Grand Rapids	946	Unlimited	Nov. 28-Dec. 13	3	Either-sex	Mandatory CWD sampling. DNR Wildlife Office 218-328-8860
Itasca State Park	287	Unlimited	Nov. 28-Dec. 13	1	Either-sex	Includes Itasca Wilderness Sanctuary. Louis Peterson 218-407-5645
Schoolcraft State Park	971	Unlimited	Nov. 28-Dec. 13	1	Either-sex	No additional information

Bear

Start of baiting	August 14
Bear season	September 1-October 18
Applications available for the 2027 season	April 2027
Application deadline for the 2027 season	May 1, 2027

Instructions to apply for a bear license and hunting regulations are available online at mndnr.gov/hunting/bear.

Licenses

Residents and nonresidents can participate in a drawing for licenses within bear permit areas, and they may purchase a license over the counter for the no-quota area.

- Bear lottery winners must purchase their license by August 1, 2026. Unsold and any surplus licenses will then become available for purchase starting at noon on August 5, 2026.

Moose

There is no state moose hunting season. More information is available online at mndnr.gov/moose. Tribal moose seasons may be open in some areas.

Elk

The application deadline for the 2026 elk hunt has passed.

Applications for the 2027 hunt will be taken starting in May 2027. More information is available online at mndnr.gov/elk.

***NEW**—Seeking to create or join a lottery group? The new ELS has updated this process.

 **Join Lottery Group**

- The first applicant in your group will generate the lottery group number.
- When online or in the mobile app, look for the green ‘create or join lottery group’ button
- To join a group, individuals will need the first applicant’s last name and lottery group number

How to identify elk and deer

Deer hunters—know your target

Elk have been mistakenly shot in Minnesota, because hunters thought they were deer. Elk are primarily found in northwestern Minnesota, in Kittson and Marshall counties. However, individual elk are beginning to appear in a wider geographic area. Elk and deer are closely related but are well distinguished by their difference in size and physical characteristics. Shooting an elk because you think it is a deer is illegal.

Elk Traits

Body: Coloring appears reddish to lighter brown; legs are darker in color.

Neck: Chestnut brown color.

Rump: Coloring is pale yellow to tan.

Tail: Short in length and yellow to tan in color.

Antlers: Heavy and dark-colored main beams that extend back towards the body (mature bull elk). There are 4 to 6+ ivory-tipped tines (tips). Yearling bulls have long spikes.

Body Length: 6.5 to 8 feet

Height: 4.5 to 5 feet at the shoulder

Weight: Males (bulls) weigh 700 to 900 pounds; females (cows) weigh 500 to 600 pounds

Range: Mainly in far northwestern Minnesota centered within Kittson and Marshall counties. Individuals are appearing more widely outside of this area.



Elk bull near Grygla, Minnesota.



Elk Cow

Photo: USFWS

White-Tailed deer Traits

Body: Coloring appears reddish brown in late spring and summer; color appears gray in fall and winter; belly is white.

Neck: White-colored patch at throat.

Rump: No visible rump patch when tail is down.

Tail: Tail is long and broad; colored brown with a white fringe. When the tail is up, the tail appears all white.

Antlers: Consist of 1 main beam with 3 to 5 tines (tips) pointing upward (in mature bucks). Yearling bucks have short spikes or forked antlers.

Body Length: 4 to 6 feet.

Height: 2 to 3 feet tall at the shoulder.

Weight: Males (bucks) weigh 100 to 300 pounds; females (does) weigh 85 to 130 pounds.

Range: Live throughout the state of Minnesota in a variety of habitats.



White-tailed doe crossing Fort Snelling trail.



White-tailed buck.

Conservation grazing on wildlife management areas—good for the resources

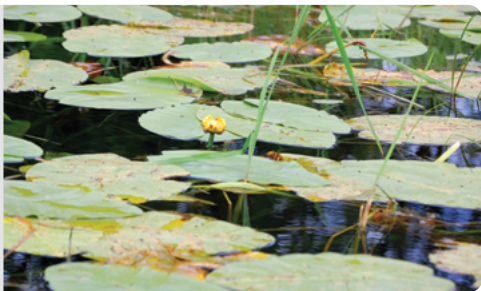
Conservation grazing can be an excellent grassland management tool. Planned grazing can improve plant diversity and habitat structure which benefits wildlife. Hunting is allowed when livestock are on a WMA.

In most cases livestock will be removed by mid-August. For more information visit: mndnr.gov/publications/wildlife



Save the wetlands

Protecting wetlands is crucial to ensuring healthy populations of ducks, pheasants, herons, and even deer. Minnesota leads the nation in protecting wetlands. Let's not lose that honor.

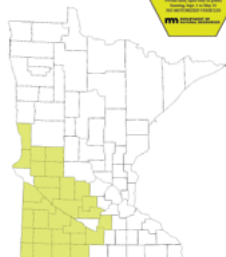


Tax time is your time to help wildlife.

Look for the line with the loon on your Minnesota tax form and donate to the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff. It's fast, easy, and tax deductible. Be part of the wildlife success story.

Walk-In Access Program 2026-2027

Walk-In Access (WIA) provides public access on private land and compensates landowners for providing that access. Through WIA, 23,000 acres of private land will be open for public hunting at more than 230 sites in Minnesota, September 1 to May 31.



Validation required

A Walk-In Access Validation (ELS Privilege Code 190) is required to legally access WIA land. WIA Validations are available online, via the MN DNR Licensing app, or in person at ELS licensing vendors.

The fee helps monitor hunter use of WIA land. It does not cover costs associated with purchasing access, installing boundary signs or providing maps of the enrolled properties.

Maps are available

A printable atlas of WIA sites, aerial photos of each site and interactive maps are available online at mndnr.gov/walkin. Printed copies are available at area DNR Wildlife offices, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or by calling the DNR at 888-MINNDNR (646-6367). Maps may not accurately show property boundaries and should be used for reference only.

Uses of WIA land

- Motorized vehicles are not allowed on WIAs.
- Target practice, trapping, dog training, camping, horseback riding, fires, or similar activities are not allowed by the public.
- Individuals with a WIA validation can hunt during legal hunting hours and open seasons with no landowner contact necessary from September 1 to May 31.
- The landowner retains the right to engage in, or give written permission for another individual to engage in, those activities listed above and other limited activities that do not impede public hunting, at any time of the year.
- Parking is along roads or in designated parking areas—be sure vehicles do not block field entrances.
- All hunting rules and regulations apply and will be enforced.

Respect the land

Be respectful of the land and the people who own the land. This program depends on landowner participation to be successful. The WIA Code of Conduct can be found at mndnr.gov/walkin.

PUBLIC LANDS AND WILDLIFE REFUGES

Public Hunting Land Maps

Find exact boundaries of WMAs, WPAs, state forests, national forests, and national wildlife refuges using the Recreation Compass online at mndnr.gov/maps/compass.html.

State Lands

Aquatic Management Areas

The DNR Fish and Wildlife Division acquires land along lakes and streams to provide fishing opportunities and to protect critical fish habitat. These areas, known as Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs), are posted with signs to indicate allowable uses. It is unlawful to leave personal equipment, such as tree stands, unattended on AMAs.

Wildlife Management Areas

Find a list of the newest wildlife management areas (WMAs) and additions to existing wildlife management areas on the DNR's WMA web page at: mndnr.gov/wmas, then select "New WMAs." Hunting protected wild animals and trapping mammals is allowed on all state-owned WMAs during the seasons listed in this booklet, except as follows:

General restrictions

- **Trespass:** Portions of WMAs posted closed to trespassing may not be entered without DNR authorization.
- **Closed hours:** WMAs may not be entered or used during closed hours if posted with these restrictions at major access points, except by permit.
- **Camping:** Camping is prohibited except in designated overnight-use areas or with a permit from the wildlife manager. A vehicle, trailer or tent legally left overnight must be occupied or attended.
- **Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed, except by persons lawfully occupying an overnight-use area.
- **Firearms and target shooting:** Target, skeet, trap, or indiscriminate shooting is prohibited. A person may not possess an uncased or loaded firearm or an uncased or strung bow, except when lawfully taking a wild animal or by permit.
- **Destruction or removal of property:** Signs, posts, fences, gates, buildings, trees, shrubs, vines, plants, or other property may not be destroyed or removed except as follows: Wetland vegetation may be used to build blinds on the area, and edible fruits and seeds, or decorative portions of plants may be removed for personal use. Shed antlers may be collected for personal use.
- **Garbage disposal and animal abandonment:** Littering is prohibited on any WMA.
- **Hunting, fishing and trapping equipment:** Boats, decoys, game cameras and other equipment must not be left unattended overnight, with the exception of traps in areas open to trapping, fish houses or dark houses in certain designated WMAs and legally placed drums for bear baiting.

- **Blinds and structures:** A person may not construct or maintain any building, dock, fence, billboard, sign, or other structure on any WMA, except that temporary waterfowl blinds may be erected, but may not become private property or be used to preempt hunting rights. Any materials brought into a WMA for the construction of a blind must be removed each day at the close of hunting hours.
- **Portable stands:** Portable stands may be used if they are removed each day at the close of hunting hours and do no permanent damage. Screw-in or clamping steps may be used if they are removed each day. Permanent stands are prohibited. Prior to the opening day of archery deer season, portable stands may be left overnight in a wildlife management area by a person with a valid bear license who is hunting within 100 yards of a bear bait site that is legally tagged and registered. The licensee's name and address, or drivers license number, or MNDNR number must be affixed to the stand in such a manner that it can be read from the ground.
- **Dogs:** Dogs are permitted on WMAs only when accompanied by or under the control of the owner. From April 16 through July 14, dogs must be on a leash. A person training a dog on a WMA may not use live ammunition or blank cartridges, including blanks in dummy launchers or similar devices. Dog training is only allowed on a small number of WMAs. Check with your area wildlife office to confirm if dog training is allowed on a specific WMA.
- **Other domestic animals:** Livestock, horses, and other domestic animals, are not permitted on WMAs except under cooperative agreement or permit approved by the wildlife manager.
- **Unprotected animals:** Unless specifically closed, unprotected wild animals may be taken from September 1 through the last day of February, or by any person legally hunting a protected species.
- **Beaver and otter:** Beavers and otters may only be taken by permit issued by the wildlife manager.
- **Crows:** Crows may be taken during established seasons, unless the area is specifically closed.

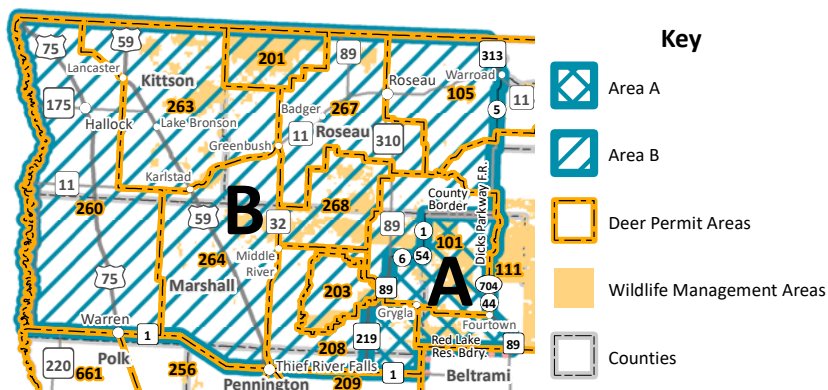
Trapping permits required

All trappers must, regardless of furbearers taken, obtain a permit from the area manager on the following WMAs: **Carlos Avery** (Anoka and Chisago counties), **Hampton Woods** (Dakota County), **Hubbel Pond** (Becker County), **Red Lake** (Beltrami and Lake of the Woods counties), **Lac qui Parle** (Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift, and Chippewa counties), **Mille Lacs** (Mille Lacs and Kanabec counties), **Roseau Lake** and **Roseau River** (Roseau County), **Talcot Lake** (Cottonwood and Murray counties), **Thief Lake** (Marshall County), **Vermillion Highlands** (Dakota County) and **Whitewater** (Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties).

WMAs with special restrictions

Many WMAs have special hunting and/or trapping restrictions. Plan ahead and look up details on any restrictions before you go hunting or trapping. For current details on a specific WMA, restrictions, maps, and contact information, go to the DNR WMA web page at mndnr.gov/wmas.

Northwest Minnesota wildlife management area regulations



Area A: On WMAs within this area, ATVs are permitted on designated ATV trails only, except during regular firearms deer season ATVs are:

- Permitted off trail by licensed deer hunters before and after legal shooting hours and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Permitted off trail by licensed deer hunters to retrieve a harvested deer the day after the end of the season.

Area B: Within this area, an ATV may be used by a licensed firearms deer hunter who does not possess a firearm (cased or uncased) to retrieve and transport a deer that is known to be dead from the close of shooting hours to 2 hours after the close of shooting hours during the regular firearms deer season and for 1 day after the season.

In both areas A and B: From November 1 through December 31, a portable stand may be left overnight by a person possessing a license to take deer. A person leaving a portable stand overnight must affix a tag with:

- the person's name and address; and
- driver's license number; or
- MNDNR number as it appears on their hunting license.

The tag must be affixed so that it can be read from the ground and must withstand weather conditions. A deer hunter may not leave more than 2 portable stands in any 1 wildlife management area. Unoccupied portable stands left overnight may be used by anyone.

Accessible blinds

The Carlos Avery, Lac qui Parle, Roseau River, Talcot Lake, and Whitewater Wildlife Management Areas have several accessible goose or duck hunting blinds for hunters with mobility issues. Talcot Lake WMA and Roseau River WMA each have a wheelchair accessible deer blind for firearms hunting. Reservations are required for the Roseau River and Talcot Lake WMA blinds. A wheelchair accessible deer blind is available during all deer seasons on a first come, first served basis at the Russ Blandford WMA (Rock County, administered by Talcot Lake WMA). Interested persons are encouraged to call ahead for details.

For more information, contact individual DNR wildlife offices. Contact information is located on page 128.

Motor vehicles and aircraft

The following regulations apply to motor vehicle and aircraft use on WMAs other than on federal, state, county, or township roads:

- No person may use aircraft over a WMA in a manner that chases, herds, scares, or otherwise disturbs wildlife. Drones may not be flown over wildlife management areas.
- Motor vehicles licensed for use on a public highway may be operated on established roads on the following WMAs: Carlos Avery (Anoka and Chisago counties), Hubbel Pond (Becker County), Mille Lacs (Kanabec and Mille Lacs counties), Red Lake (Beltrami and Lake of the Woods counties), Roseau River (Roseau County), Spring Lake Islands (Dakota County) for the purpose of ice fishing, and Thief Lake (Marshall County).
- Vehicles are prohibited on all other WMAs except on travel routes designated with signs for travel purposes.
- No vehicle may be parked in front of any gate or obstruct travel.
- Unless authorized, no person may operate an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), all-terrain cycle (ATC), hang glider, air boat, personal watercraft (jet-ski), or hovercraft in a WMA.
- Without written permission from the DNR, no person may operate a snowmobile in a WMA south of a line described as follows: U.S. Highway 2 from Grand Forks east to Bemidji, then south along U.S. Highway 71 to Wadena, then east along U.S. Highway 10 to Staples and U.S. Highway 210 to the eastern boundary of the state.

Motorized watercraft

Using outboard motors (including electric trolling motors) or motorized water vehicles (including amphibious vehicles) is prohibited on waters within the boundaries of WMAs, except as follows:

Motorized Watercraft Permitted	
Area	County
Gold Portage WMA	Koochiching and St. Louis
Gores (Mississippi River Pool 3) WMA	Goodhue and Dakota
Hubbel Pond (Hanson Lake) WMA	Becker
Indian Lake WMA Watercraft with electric motors with more than a single 12-volt battery.	Sibley
Lac qui Parle WMA (except where posted)	Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa and Swift
Mud-Goose WMA Motor size is restricted to 10 horsepower or less except during the waterfowl season, when no motors, including trolling motors, are allowed.	Cass
Orwell Reservoir Motor size is restricted to 10 horsepower or less.	Otter Tail
Roseau River WMA There are no motor limits on the main channel and oxbows of the Roseau River. Elsewhere on the Roseau River WMA, motors of 10 horsepower or less may be used only on days that the waterfowl season is open.	Roseau

Continued on next page

Area	County
South Walnut Lake WMA Motor size is restricted to 10 horsepower or less.	Faribault
Swamp River WMA	Cook
Spring Lake Islands WMA	Dakota
Talcot Lake WMA On the Talcot Lake WMA, motors are permitted on the lake (except on any day that the waterfowl season is open) but are prohibited on the river and marshes at any time of year.	Cottonwood and Murray
Thief Lake WMA Motor size is restricted to 10 horsepower or less.	Marshall
Eugene H. Wynn Jr. Memorial WMA	Pine County

State Refuges

Game refuges

A state game refuge is closed to the hunting and trapping of wild animals unless listed below or in the table (pages 114-117). **Even though a refuge may be open, it could contain privately owned land on which the landowner may prohibit access.**

General restrictions

- A person may not trap beaver or otter within any state-owned game refuge without first obtaining a permit from the appropriate wildlife manager.
- Unprotected wild animals may be taken when there is an open season for any protected species, but only during the hours and by methods allowed for the protected species.
- Firearms must be cased and unloaded and bows must be cased unless lawfully hunting in a refuge.

Lac qui Parle Game Refuge (Chippewa and Lac qui Parle counties)

Is open under the following restrictions: the portions of the refuge within the Lac qui Parle State Park, Lac qui Parle Mission Site, Rosemoen Island, or portions that are posted with “State Wildlife Sanctuary—Do Not Trespass” signs are closed to hunting except for permitted participants in disability hunts or those with specific authorization.

The remainder of the refuge is open to:

- Deer hunting.
- Waterfowl hunting at designated hunting stations only from October 19 through the end of the goose season. Stations are available first-come, first-served.
- Small game (including turkey) other than waterfowl, except from October 12 through November 30. Small game hunting is not allowed on closed regular goose hunting days during a split goose season.

No unauthorized person may trespass during the dates posted on any part of the refuge posted with “State Wildlife Sanctuary—Do Not Trespass” signs.

The exceptions are:

- Ice fishing.
- Open water fishing is permitted in the posted closed area except from November 1 through the close of the open regular goose season.

Rochester Refuge (Olmsted County)

Unprotected animals may be taken at any time by any legal method.

Talcot Lake Game Refuge (Cottonwood County)

The Talcot Lake Game Refuge is open to waterfowl hunting only at designated hunting stations only during the regular goose season. The Talcot Lake Waterfowl Refuge is closed to waterfowl hunting, except for persons with disabilities hunting geese at designated hunting stations.

Ogechie Lake (Mille Lacs County)

Ogechie Lake lies within Mille Lacs Kathio State Park, and tribal land. All of Ogechie Lake is closed to public hunting.

Duck refuges and duck sanctuaries

From September 1 through the final day of the duck season, or as otherwise posted, a person may not hunt, trap, fish, or trespass on portions of state wildlife management areas or federal waterfowl production areas that are posted to prohibit trespass.

Goose or waterfowl refuges

State goose refuges are closed to goose or waterfowl hunting (as posted) except when specifically opened during special seasons (page 114-117). Other forms of hunting and trapping are permitted during the established seasons.

Hunting and Trapping on State Game Refuges

Refuges may be private property. Landowner permission may be required. Small game includes turkey; excludes waterfowl. For refuges open to goose hunting, see page 117.

County	Refuge	Small game	Trapping	Ducks	Deer/bear (firearms)	Deer/bear (archery)
Beltrami	Bemidji	Closed Nov. 7-24	Open for beaver, mink, muskrat, and otter	Closed	Muzzleloader deer season only	Open
	Hagali-Rice	Open Nov. 1	Open Nov. 1	Closed	Open	Open
Blue Earth and Le Sueur	East Minnesota River	Archery turkey only	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open
Clay	Clay County	Open	Closed	Closed	Open	Open
Crow Wing	Cross Lake	Archery turkey only	Open	Closed	Closed	Open
Dakota	Bellwood	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Open
Dakota and Rice	Carleton	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Special archery deer hunt. Page 104
Dodge	Claremont	Open	Open	Closed	Muzzleloader deer season only	Open
Douglas	Evansville	Closed	Open	Closed	Open	Closed
	Lake Winona	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed

County	Refuge	Small game	Trapping	Ducks	Deer/bear (firearms)	Deer/bear (archery)
Freeborn	Moscow	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
	Albert Lea	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
Hubbard	Paul Bunyan	Closed Nov. 7-17	Open	Closed	Muzzleloader deer season only	Open
	Park Rapids	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Open
	Schoolcraft	Closed Nov. 7-24	Open	Closed	Closed	Open
Isanti	Elizabeth Lake	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
	German Lake	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
Itasca	Lower Pigeon Lake	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open	Open
	Pigeon River Flowage	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open	Open
Kanabec	Fish Lake-Ann River	Open	Open	Open for ducks and geese	Open	Open
Martin	Fox Lake	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
McLeod	Glencoe Izaak Walton League	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
	Gopher Campfire	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
Meeker	Lake Ripley	Open after duck season	Open after duck season	Closed	Closed	Closed
Morrison	Camp Ripley	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open for deer only by permit
Nobles	Ocheda Lake	Open before duck season, after Dec. 1	Open	Closed	Deer before duck season, after Dec. 1	Open for archery deer
Olmsted	Rochester	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
Otter Tail	Erhard's Grove	Open	Closed	Closed	Open	Open
	Little Pine Lake	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
Pine	Pine County Unit 2	Open	Open	Open for ducks and geese	Closed	Open
Pipestone	Hiawatha	Open (shotgun only)	Open	Closed	Closed	Open
Polk	Oak Lake	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
Polk and Clearwater	Polk-Clearwater	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Open

Continued on next page

County	Refuge	Small game	Trapping	Ducks	Deer/bear (firearms)	Deer/bear (archery)
Rice	Nerstrand (written landowner permission required)	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
Roseau	Marvin Lake	Open	Open	Closed	Open	Open
	Warroad	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Deer only
St. Louis	Butterball	Closed	Open Nov. 25	Closed	Closed	Closed
	Little Rice	Closed	Open Nov. 25	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sherburne	Clear Lake	Open	Closed	Closed	Deer only	Deer only
Sherburne and Stearns	St. Cloud	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	St. Cloud, city permit may be required
Stearns	Cedar Lake	Closed	Closed	Closed	Deer only	Deer only
	Collegeville (St. Johns)	Closed	Closed	Closed	Written permission required	Deer only, written permission required
Watonwan	St. James	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wilkin	Sunnyside Twp.	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
Winona	Whitewater	Open	Open by permit	Closed	Deer only by permit; Open during youth deer season	Closed
Wright	Howard Lake	Closed	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed
Yellow Medicine	Hanley Falls	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Written permission required

State Refuges Open to Goose Hunting

County	Refuge	Open Season
Beltrami	Bemidji Game Refuge (except Lake Bemidji, Lake Irving, Mississippi River and Stump Lake)	Early goose Sept. 5-20
Clay	Clay County Game Refuge	Early goose Sept. 5-20
Dodge	Claremont Game Refuge	Goose hunting
Douglas	Evansville Game Refuge	Waterfowl hunting; Early goose Sept. 5-20
Freeborn	Moscow Game Refuge	Goose hunting
Isanti	Elizabeth Lake Game Refuge and German Lake Game Refuge	Early goose season and youth participating in a designated hunting/mentoring program only.
Martin	Mud-Bardwell Game Refuge	Goose hunting Oct. 10-Jan. 6
	Fox Lake Game Refuge	Goose hunting Sept. 5-20 and Dec. 7-Jan. 6. No goose hunting within 100 yards of Fox and Temperance Lakes.
Nobles	Ocheda Lake Game Refuge	Youth Waterfowl Weekend; Early goose Sept. 5-20; Dec. 5-Jan. 6
Olmsted	Rochester Game Refuge	Early goose Sept. 5-20
Steele	Rickert Waterfowl Refuge except Myron Buelow Waterfowl Sanctuary WMA	Early goose Sept. 5-20
Stevens	Harstad Slough Waterfowl Refuge	Early goose Sept. 5-20
Watsonwan	Saint James Game Refuge	Early goose Sept. 5-20; 26-27

Only approved firewood is allowed on DNR lands

Approved firewood is:

- Firewood purchased from the DNR.
- Firewood purchased from an approved vendor (check out mndnr.gov/firewood for a list of approved vendors).
- Kiln-dried wood, such as unstained, unpainted dimensional lumber free of metal or other foreign objects.

These restrictions are needed to help prevent the introduction, or slow the spread, of damaging forest pests, including emerald ash borer, spongy moth, and oak wilt. Help protect Minnesota's forests by leaving firewood at home! Check with the state park, state forest campground, or other state recreational facility you will be visiting to get the latest recommendations and restrictions on firewood movement to and within Minnesota.



State forests

State forest lands are generally open for hunting and other types of outdoor recreation. If you hunt on private land within a state forest, you must follow state trespass laws. A summary of state forest rules are listed below.

Elevated stands

- Portable tree stands are recommended, especially stands that don't require nails. Nails are a safety hazard for woodcutters and harm the forest.
- Personal property must be removed from State Forest lands.
- It is against the law to damage state property (ex: cutting trees for shooting lanes).
- Littering and constructing permanent buildings is not allowed.
- Permanent stands or blinds left on public land belong to everyone, not the person who built them.

Putting up a deer stand on state forest land?

Illegal stands include permanent stands (see photo to the right) and are often associated with unauthorized trail building and illegal tree cutting for shooting lanes.

Types of legal stands: ladder, hang on, climbers or similar products that do not damage trees or leave metal behind. No permanent structures.



Firearms

- Firearms can be used on forest lands if it is legal and the area is not closed to firearm use.
- Firearms must be unloaded and cased within 200 feet of a forest recreation area (campground, day use area, parking area). However, during hunting seasons, you can carry an unloaded, uncased firearm or a strung, uncased bow to hunt outside these areas.

Personal property

Personal property may not block use of a road or trail. Personal property left unattended for 14 days is considered abandoned.

Motor vehicle and off-road rules

State forest hunting/trapping exceptions

Cross-country travel off roads and trails is not allowed in LIMITED or MANAGED state forests, except for people with a valid hunting or trapping license, who may use Class I ATVs for cross-country travel to:

- Retrieve big game (September through December).
- Hunt for big game and construct stands (October through December).
- Trap during the open season for protected furbearers.
- Trap for minnows under certain conditions.

Areas with limitations

The big game hunter/trapper exceptions do not apply in areas signed and mapped as “No Motorized Travel.” It also does not apply within the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest.

Motor vehicle restrictions

On state forest and county lands within state forests where motor vehicles are allowed:

- Motor vehicles can’t be used on non-motorized trails unless also posted open for motorized use.
- Motor vehicles and snowmobiles are not allowed to damage forest lands by causing erosion, creating ruts, or harming trees or crops.
- Motor vehicles on state forest roads must: travel at a reasonable speed; obey posted speed limits, parking and traffic signs; observe road closures; and may not damage the road, land or other natural resources.
- Creating unauthorized permanent trails is not allowed.
- In the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest, motor vehicles and snowmobiles may operate only on forest roads that are open and on forest trails designated for motorized use. Motorized trails are open to ATVs and OHMs from May 1 through November 1.

Scientific and Natural Areas

State Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) listed on page 120 are open to hunting and trapping as noted below. Check the DNR website for any changes at individual SNAs.

Portable stands and elevated scaffold may be used if it is removed each day and does not damage trees or plants. Nails, spikes, screws or other devices that damage tree bark are not allowed. No motor vehicles are allowed in SNAs. More on SNAs can be found at mndnr.gov/snas.

Nontoxic ammunition

Hunters are only allowed to use and carry nontoxic ammunition while hunting in a SNA. Bullets, slug, shot, muzzleloader ammunition and other single projectiles must be made of nontoxic material approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nontoxic ammunition includes copper-plated, nickel-plated, zinc-plated steel shot and other projectiles made from a nontoxic material approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any projectile containing lead is not allowed, including lead ammunition plated with nontoxic material. The nontoxic ammunition requirement does not apply to peatland SNAs listed on page 120.

SNAs Open to Hunting and Trapping

Trapping allowed only where indicated. SNAs open for special deer hunts by permit are listed on the DNR website, under special deer hunts. For additional details, go to dnr.state.mn.us/snas/rules.html#hunting

County	Area	Open for
Aitkin	McGregor Marsh SNA	All hunting
Becker	Dinner Creek SNA	All hunting and trapping
Beltrami	Maurice O'Link Ribbed Fen Unit SNA	All hunting (wholly within Red Lake Peatland SNA)
Brown	Joseph A. Tauer Prairie SNA	All hunting and trapping
Carver	Seminary Fen SNA	Archery hunting only
Chisago	Franconia Bluffs SNA	All hunting
	Lawrence Creek SNA	Deer only, by archery. No hunting in sanctuary. Access only from north. See SNA map on DNR website.
Clay	Felton Prairie SNA, Bicentennial Unit only	Deer hunting only
Clearwater	Iron Springs Bog SNA	Deer hunting only
Cook	Hovland Woods SNA	All hunting
	Lutsen SNA	All hunting; except only deer hunting in Scherer Conservation Unit. See SNA map on DNR website.
	Myhr Creek Ridge SNA	All hunting
	Spring Beauty Northern Hardwoods SNA	All hunting
Crow Wing	Mille Lacs Moraine SNA	All hunting
Fillmore	Rushford Sand Barrens SNA	All hunting
Goodhue	Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA	Hunting allowed on portions of the SNA. See website for details: dnr.state.mn.us/snas/detail.html?id=sna01030
Houston	Brownsville Bluff SNA	Deer only, no hunting in posted sanctuary. See SNA map on DNR website.
	Mound Prairie SNA	All hunting in the portion north of Hwy 16.
Hubbard	Badoura Jack Pine Woodland	All hunting and trapping
	La Salle Lake SNA	All hunting and trapping
	Lester Lake SNA	All hunting and trapping

Continued on next page

County	Area	Open for
Itasca	Boltuck-Rice Forever Wild SNA	All hunting
	Chisholm Point Island SNA	Deer only, by archery
	Ladies Tresses Swamp SNA	All hunting
	Little Too Much Lake SNA	All hunting
	Lost 40 SNA	All hunting
	Mississippi Oxbow SNA	All hunting and trapping
	Potato Lake SNA	All hunting
	Wabu Woods SNA	All hunting
Koochiching	Caldwell Brook Cedar Swamp SNA	All hunting
	Watrous Island SNA	All hunting and trapping
Lac qui Parle	Yellow Bank Hills SNA	All hunting and trapping
Lake of the Woods	Gustafson's Camp SNA	All hunting and trapping
	Pine and Curry Island SNA	Waterfowl only
Mahnomen	Santee Prairie SNA	All hunting and trapping
Morrison	Lake Alexander Woods SNA	Portions open to deer hunting. See SNA map on DNR website.
Norman	Prairie Smoke Dunes SNA	Antlerless deer hunting only
Pine	Black Lake Bog SNA	All hunting and trapping
Pipestone	Prairie Coteau SNA	All hunting and trapping
Polk	Gully Fen SNA	Deer only, by archery
Redwood	Cedar Rock SNA	All hunting and trapping
	Cedar Mountain SNA	Deer only, by archery
Renville	River Warren Outcrop SNA	All hunting and trapping
Roseau	Two Rivers Aspen Prairie Parkland SNA	All hunting
Scott	Savage Fen SNA	Archery hunting only
Sherburne	Uncas Dunes SNA	All hunting
St. Louis	Big Island SNA	Waterfowl hunting only
	Moose Mountain SNA	Deer only; archery Sept. 19-Nov. 22, firearm Nov. 7-22
Stearns	Avon Hills Forest SNA	Deer only, by archery
	St. Wendel Tamarack Bog SNA	All hunting
Wabasha	Zumbro Falls Woods SNA	Deer hunting by permit
Yellow Medicine	Antelope Valley SNA	All hunting and trapping
	Mound Spring Prairie SNA	All hunting and trapping

Peatland SNAs Open to All Trapping and Hunting

County	Peatland SNA
Beltrami	Red Lake Peatland SNA
Cass	Hole-in-the-Bog Peatland SNA (Except Hole-in-the-Bog Lake, which is a waterfowl refuge)
Koochiching	East Rat Root River Peatland SNA
	Lost River Peatland SNA
	Myrtle Lake Peatland SNA
	North Black River Peatland SNA
	South Black River Peatland SNA
	West Rat Root River Peatland SNA
Lake	Sand Lake Peatland SNA
Lake of the Woods/Beltrami	Mulligan Lake Peatland SNA
Lake of the Woods	Norris Camp Peatland SNA
	Winter Road Lake Peatland SNA
Roseau	Luxemburg Peatland SNA
	Pine Creek Peatland SNA
	Sprague Creek Peatland SNA
St. Louis	Lost Lake Peatland SNA

State Parks and State Recreation Areas

All or portions of the state parks and state recreation areas (SRA) listed on the following page are open to public hunting, or public hunting and trapping unless otherwise noted. Maps showing the areas where hunting and trapping is allowed within each of these units are available online at mndnr.gov/parksandtrails. Hunters and trappers should refer to these maps to confirm they are in the correct area, where these activities are allowed.

With the exception of restrictions on firearms and traps, all state park rules apply throughout the hunting and trapping seasons.

No permanent stands are allowed in state parks or SRAs open to hunting. Portable tree stands may be used for hunting (in areas open to hunting) or watching wildlife if the stand is removed daily and does not damage trees. In areas open to hunting by special permit, early placement of portable stands is allowed under the following conditions:

- Portable stands may be placed during normal business hours only and no more than 7 days before the hunt. Stands must be removed 1 day after the hunt.
- All stands must have owner/hunter contact information attached.
- Only portable stands that do no damage to trees or other vegetation are allowed. Nails, screw or other devices that damage the bark of trees are prohibited. No screw-in steps are allowed.
- Only 1 stand is allowed per hunter.

State parks and SRAs open to public hunting

Big Bog State Recreation Area

Most of the northern portion of Big Bog SRA is open to public hunting and trapping. Hunting and trapping is not allowed on Ludlow Island and vicinity or the boardwalk.

Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

Much of Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area is open to public hunting, but closed to trapping.

Forestville Mystery Cave State Park

Approximately 430 acres of the park is open to public hunting but closed to trapping.

Garden Island State Recreation Area

Much of the SRA is open to public hunting but closed to trapping.

George H. Crosby Manitou State Park

The park area east of the Manitou River and north of Minnesota Highway 61 (approximately 3,000 acres) is open to public hunting but closed to trapping.

Greenleaf State Recreation Area

Open to archery deer hunting following general archery season regulations. No special permit required.

La Salle State Recreation Area

Most of La Salle SRA is open to public hunting and trapping during open seasons. Hunting and trapping is not allowed near the campground and cabins.

Split Rock Lighthouse State Park

Approximately 50 acres in the far northern part of the park is open to public hunting but closed to trapping.

Temperance River State Park

Approximately 600 acres of Temperance River State Park is open to public hunting but closed to trapping. The area is located north of Minnesota Highway 61 and adjacent to the Cross River on both sides.

Tettegouche State Park

Much of the southern half of the park (approximately 3,700 acres) known as the Palisade Valley unit is open to public hunting and trapping.

Federal Lands

In addition to state regulations, the following federal rules apply.

The following material is a summary. Each hunter should consult the federal regulations found in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 20, 26, and 32.



Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges

Federal Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) are open to public hunting except where prohibited. National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) are not open to public hunting unless specifically allowed. Please consult NWRs and Wetland Management District (WMD) managers or [fws.gov/hunting](https://www.fws.gov/hunting) for specific regulations.

General restrictions

- All hunters using shotguns, including turkey hunters, are required to use and possess only nontoxic shot.
- Small game hunters must wear blaze orange/pink consistent with state regulations.
- Target shooting is not allowed.
- During the small game season, hunting dogs must be under the immediate control of the hunter. Training is not allowed.
- Motorized vehicles are not allowed except on designated parking areas, access roads, and public roads. Vehicle permits for other roads may be available for disabled hunters.
- Motorized watercraft are prohibited on all WPAs and are restricted on most NWRs.
- Camping, campfires and overnight parking are prohibited on all WPAs. Camping, campfires, and overnight parking are restricted on most NWRs.
- No permanent stands are permitted. Also prohibited are the use of nails, wire, screws, or bolts to attach a stand to a tree or hunting form a tree, into which a metal object has been drive to support a hunter. Portable stands must be set up and removed each day.
- All property brought onto a NWR or WPA must be removed after each day.
- Damage to government property and nature/natural objects is not allowed.
- Plants and animals cannot be introduced or removed on NWRs or WPAs.
- Disposing of animal carcasses, trash, or other debris on NWRs or WPAs is prohibited.
- Cutting, collecting or removing vegetation is prohibited.
- Hunting over bait or distributing bait is not allowed.
- Unmanned aircraft/drones are not allowed on NWRs or WPAs.
- Horseback riding is prohibited on all WPAs and NWRs, unless specifically allowed.

Illegal hunting methods

You may not hunt migratory waterfowl:

- 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 similar device.
- 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:
fws.gov/story/2022-04/nontoxic-shot-regulations-hunting-waterfowl-and-coots-us
- With a shotgun that can hold more than 3 shells, unless you plug it with a 1-piece filler that cannot be removed without disassembling the gun.
- From any motor vehicle, motor-driven land conveyance, or aircraft.
- 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 than the possession limit or the aggregate possession limit, whichever applies.

Field possession limit

You cannot have more than the daily limit of migratory game birds, tagged or not, while transporting them in your vehicle, home, lodging, a preservation facility, post office, or common carrier.

Trapping

A person may not trap in a NWR without a permit from the refuge manager. WPAs are open to trapping per state regulations unless specifically prohibited.

Artificial lights

A person may not use a spotlight, headlight, or other artificial light to spot, locate, or take any wild animal in a NWR or WPA.

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 custody while in the field. You must keep them with you in the field. Any wounded birds you retrieve must be killed immediately and will count toward your daily limit. Birds cannot be given to someone else in the field, even if they are tagged.

Tagging

You cannot leave migratory game birds at any location or with another person unless you tag them with your signature, address, number of birds, species, and the date killed.

Rallying

You may not hunt migratory game birds that have been gathered, driven, or disturbed by a motorized vehicle or sailboat.

Dressing

You may not completely field dress migratory birds (except doves) before taking them from the field. See pages 41 and 43.

Dual violation

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

Protected birds

It is illegal to kill nongame migratory birds.

If you have additional questions, contact Division of Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5600 American Blvd. W, Suite 990, Bloomington, MN 55437-1458, 612-699-4658.

National forest lands in Minnesota

Minnesota state hunting, fishing, trapping, snowmobiling and OHV regulations apply on national forest lands, except as otherwise stated below or in national forest regulations.

Special designation areas within national forests, such as Wilderness Areas, Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized Areas, and Research Natural Areas may have additional restrictions:

- It is illegal to create, install, or maintain a structure without approval. Portable stands that are not enclosed with walls or a roof and do not damage natural features are allowed August 15-December 31. Enclosed blinds may be used, but must be removed each day.
- Portable stands and blinds left on national forest lands after the close of the hunting season may be impounded.
- Cross-country or off-road OHV use is not allowed. This includes the use of OHVs for big game retrieval, bear baiting and trapping.
- Commercial activities such as outfitting and guiding may not be conducted without a Special-Use Authorization.
- Cutting or damaging of trees, including the cutting of shooting lanes, is prohibited.
- Constructing, placing, or maintaining any kind of road, trail, structure or other improvement is prohibited.
- Storing or abandoning personal property is prohibited.
- Discharging a firearm within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site, or occupied area is not allowed.
- Damaging or removing any natural/cultural feature or federal property is prohibited.
- Individual national forests may have restrictions unique to their location, above and beyond what is identified in this book. Refer to the fs.usda.gov website for additional information. Permits are required year-round for entry into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

For information on trapping, which is restricted at the riverway, see nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/trapping.htm

TRIBAL LANDS

Lands of the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe

Lands belonging to the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe in Beltrami, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Roseau counties are closed to non-band members except by special authorization of the tribal council. Persons taking, validating, and transporting deer from reservation lands on the Northwest Angle will do so in accordance with the Red Lake Band Code and do not need a state license.

Other tribal lands

Nett Lake in Koochiching and St. Louis counties is closed to hunting by non-band members, except for duck hunting when accompanied by a band-member guide.

Other reservation lands may be open for hunting or trapping to non-band members by authorization of the reservations. All non-band members who are hunting or trapping on reservation lands must comply with all state regulations, including licensing.

Questions about hunting or trapping within tribal lands? See the contact list of tribal nations below.

Tribal Nations Contact List	
Tribal Nation	Phone Number
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	218-335-7400
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	218-878-7120
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	320-532-7439
White Earth Nation	218-935-2488
Red Lake Nation	218-679-3313 (24 Hour Dispatch)

CONTACT INFORMATION

DNR Information Center

500 Lafayette Rd
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (646-6367)

For TTY/TDD communication contact us through the
Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 800-627-3529. mndnr.gov



DNR Wildlife Offices

NORTHWEST REGION

Bemidji Headquarters
218-308-2651

Baudette Area Office
218-395-6033

Bemidji Area Office
218-308-2339

Erskine Field Office
218-551-1100

Detroit Lakes Area Office
218-846-8470

Fergus Falls Area Office
218-671-7969

Glenwood Area Office
320-634-7337

Karlstad Area Office
218-772-1260

Park Rapids Area Office
218-732-8452

Red Lake WMA
218-783-6861

Roseau River WMA
218-452-7610

Thief Lake WMA
218-633-7670

Thief River Falls Area Office
218-219-8587

NORTHEAST REGION

Grand Rapids Headquarters
218-328-8780

Aitkin Area Office
218-429-3053

Brainerd Area Office
218-203-4323

Cloquet Area Office
218-878-5661

Grand Rapids Area Office
218-328-8860

Tower Area Office
218-300-7860

Two Harbors Area Office
218-834-1453

CENTRAL REGION

Regional Headquarters
651-259-5756

Cambridge Area Office
763-284-7231

North Metro Area Office
(includes Carlos Avery WMA
and Forest Lake)
651-539-3324

Little Falls Area Office
320-232-1063

Mille Lacs WMA
320-532-3537

Rochester Area Office
507-206-2858

Sauk Rapids Area Office
320-223-7878

Vermillion
Highlands WMA
651-322-4643

Whitewater WMA
507-796-3281

SOUTH REGION

New Ulm Headquarters
507-233-1257

Appleton Area Office/
Lac qui Parle WMA
320-435-4034

Marshall Area Office
507-706-6170

New London Area Office
320-347-7630

Nicollet Area Office
507-386-3920

Owatonna Area Office
507-414-6200

Talcot Lake Field Office
507-873-5650

Windom Area Office
507-832-6025

Conservation Officer

888-MINNDNR (646-6367)

Call the DNR Information Center for easy access to DNR information and to connect with a Conservation Officer.



Turn in Poachers (TIP)

800-652-9093

If you witness a violation in progress or need to contact a Conservation Officer immediately, call the Turn in Poachers 24-hour hotline.



Take part in a CRITICAL SUCCESS



This Critical Habitat license plate features previously unpublished work by Minnesota wildlife artist Les Kouba. When you purchase any of Minnesota's Critical Habitat license plates, your \$30 annual contribution is used to match private donations at a rate of \$2 for every \$1 donated.

Call of the Moose Minnesota is a partnership between the Minnesota DNR and Les Kouba Outdoors. Portions of the proceeds from sales of Call of the Moose artwork and licensed products support DNR moose management and research.

mndnr.gov
leskoubaoutdoors.com

FAW_0097_2025

CALL US

Interpreters are available to answer all of your questions

License, titling and registration: M-F 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
General information: M-F 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
888-MINNDNR (646-6367) or 651-296-6157
info.dnr@state.mn.us



mnfishwildlife



mndnr



minnesotadnr

TURN IN POACHERS

24-hour hotline, 800-652-9093

m DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
888-MINNDNR (646-6367) or 651-296-6157
mndnr.gov

The Minnesota DNR prohibits discrimination in its programs and services based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital or familial status, disability, public assistance status, age, sexual orientation, and local human rights commission activity. Individuals with a disability who need a reasonable accommodation to access or participate in DNR programs and services or to request this document in an alternative format, please contact the DNR ADA Title II Coordinator at info.dnr@state.mn.us, 651-296-6157. We welcome calls from Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) users. For assistance in other languages, please call 651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (646-6367). Discrimination inquiries should be sent to Minnesota DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4049.

© 2026, State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources.

Publication printed using vegetable-based ink. Please recycle.

FAW_0030_2027

OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE



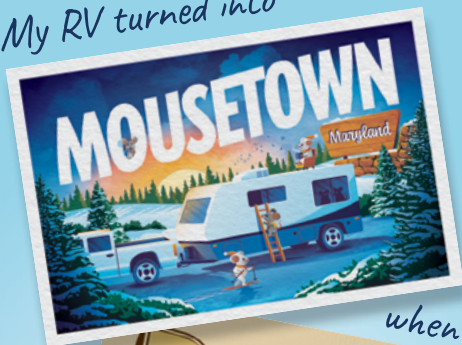
REGISTER TO VOTE

sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting

888-MINNDNR

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

My RV turned into



when I left the



open, causing a



Good thing we're protected by Progressive, a leader
in RV insurance with over 1 million RVs insured.

1-800-PROGRESSIVE / PROGRESSIVE.COM

PROGRESSIVE

Quote RV
insurance in
as little as
4 minutes



Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. & affiliates. RV includes both Travel Trailer and Motor Home.

CWD — statewide opportunities to get your deer tested



Mandatory sampling

CWD sample submission is mandatory in all DPAs within the surveillance block during the opening weekend of the firearms season (November 7-8).

In the surveillance block, hunters must provide a sample from deer 1 year or older within 24 hours of harvest during the opening weekend of the firearms season. Sampling stations, either staffed or self-service, will be available. Details on page 88.

Partner sampling

The DNR has partnered with taxidermists and others to collect samples from deer that are dropped off by hunters. These partners will remove the samples and submit them to the DNR. Additional services provided by the partner may require a fee. Results will be posted online. A list of partners can be found by scanning the QR code or online at mndnr.gov/cwd/cwd-testing.html.



Mail-in sampling

The DNR will provide a free kit that includes instructions, all necessary forms and plastic bags to submit a sample by mail. Hunters who use this option will need to extract the lymph node sample from the deer, provide the harvest location and hunter contact information on the forms, and deliver the kit to the shipping vendor. Kits are free and may be requested by scanning the QR code or online at mndnr.gov/cwd/cwd-testing.html. A list of wildlife offices where kits may be obtained is also available online. Hunters throughout the state may use the mail-in sampling kit program, regardless of harvest location. Details on page 91.



Minnesota Hunting and Trapping Regulations

The following updates were made after the hunting and trapping regulations handbook was printed. The updates are summarized below. See the page listed for the detailed regulation.

August 5, 2026

Page 42—‘Watercraft’ section, second bullet verbiage modified to further clarify firearm requirements while in a boat with a motor or sail.

Page 48—Correction to Central Zone season dates for duke, coot, moorhen and merganser.

Page 58—Correction to Sharp-tailed grouse Northwestern Zone season dates.

Page 87—Revision of text in far right column to provide additional clarity on deer limits.