

	SEASON DATES	BAG	POSSESSION
Sora Rail	Sep. 1 – Nov. 6	5	15
Virginia Rail	Sep. 1 – Nov. 6	10	30
Snipe	Sep. 1 – Dec. 15	8	24
Woodcock	Oct. 2 – Nov. 22	3	9
Ducks <sup>A</sup>			
Berkshire:	Oct. 13 – Nov. 28	6*	18*
	Dec. 13 – Jan. 3	6*	18*
Central:	Oct. 11 – Nov. 28	6*	18*
	Dec. 15 – Jan. 3	6*	18*
Coastal:	Oct. 11 – Oct. 18	6*	18*
	Nov. 28 – Jan. 28	6*	18*
	Jan. 8 – Jan. 28 (Scaup with 2-bird daily bag, Coastal Zone only)		
American Coot	Same as ducks	15	45
Mergansers	Same as ducks	5*	15*
Regular Goose (except Snow & Blue)			
Berkshire:	Oct. 13 – Nov. 15 (no second half)	1	3
Central:	Oct. 11 – Nov. 28	2	6
	Dec. 15 – Jan. 3	2	6
Coastal:	Oct. 11 – Oct. 18	2	6
	Nov. 28 – Jan. 28	2	6
Early Canada Goose (Statewide) <sup>B</sup>	Sep. 1 – Sep. 19	15	45
Late Canada Goose			
Berkshire:	Dec. 15 – Feb. 14	5	15
Central:	Jan. 17 – Feb. 14	5	15
Northern portion of Coastal Zone	Jan. 29 – Feb. 14	5	15
Snow & Blue Goose	Same as ducks	15	45
Late Snow & Blue Goose (Central Zone / Northern portion of Coastal Zone)	Same as Late Canada Goose	15	45
Sea Ducks <sup>C</sup>	Same as ducks (Included as part of 6-duck daily bag limit)	4**	12**
Brant (Coastal Zone Only)	Nov. 28 – Jan. 1	1	3
Falconry (Ducks & Coot only, no geese)	Oct. 11 – Feb. 12	3*	9*
Youth Waterfowl Hunt (Statewide)	Sep. 20 & Oct. 4	Same As Regular Seasons	
Active Military & Veteran Waterfowl Hunt (Statewide)	Sep. 20 & Oct. 4	Same As Regular Seasons	

\* Singly or in the aggregate. \*\* Singly or in the aggregate, but no more than 3 Scoter, 3 Eider (one female), 3 Long-tailed duck in the daily bag. 9 in possession, but no more than 9 Scoter, 9 Eider (3 females), 9 Long-tailed duck.

**A. The daily bag may contain no more than 6 ducks, of which no more than 4 may be sea ducks\*\*\* (see below):**

American Black Duck	2	Mallard	4 (only 2 female)	Wood Duck	3
Northern Pintail	1	Redhead	2	Canvasback	2
Fulvous Whistling	1	Mottled	1	Harlequin	NONE
Scaup	1 (See Coastal Season)	Eider***	3 (only 1 female)	Scoter***	3
Long-tailed duck***	3	<b>All other duck species have a daily bag limit of 6, and possession limit of 18</b>			

**Possession limits are triple the daily bag.** (e.g., Mallards — possession limit is 12 of which only 6 may be female).

B. For Early Canada Goose season only, hunting hours are 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset.

C. Sea ducks count as regular ducks during the regular duck season in all Zones.

Visit [mass.gov/migratory-game-bird](https://mass.gov/migratory-game-bird) for more information.



### ACTIVE MILITARY & VETERAN WATERFOWL HUNT

Two statewide Active Military & Veteran Waterfowl Hunt season dates (Sep. 20 and Oct. 4, 2025) are open for waterfowl hunting (ducks, coots, mergansers and geese only) by veterans and current members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty (other than for training). The term “veteran,” is defined, per section 101 of title 38, United States Code, as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable. Proof of eligibility is required and must be carried on person while hunting. All regular season waterfowl regulations and bag limits apply.

### YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNT

During the statewide Youth Waterfowl Hunt season dates (Sep. 20 and Oct. 4, 2025), waterfowl hunters ages 12–17 may hunt ducks, coots, mergansers and geese. All regular season waterfowl regulations and bag limits apply. All youth hunters must be accompanied by a licensed adult hunter with a valid MA waterfowl stamp. One firearm only. Adult hunter may not hunt and may carry firearm only when unloaded and cased. No license, waterfowl stamps, or firearms identification card (FID) required for Youth Waterfowl season hunters aged 12–14. License, MA waterfowl stamp, and FID required for 15 year old Youth Waterfowl season hunters. License, MA waterfowl stamp, federal waterfowl stamp, and FID required for Youth Waterfowl season hunters aged 16–17.

### HIP SURVEY REQUIRED

All migratory game bird hunters must register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP) each calendar year. Licensed woodcock, snipe, coot, rail, and waterfowl hunters must complete a HIP survey online at [mass.gov/massfishhunt](https://mass.gov/massfishhunt) or anywhere hunting licenses are sold. When purchasing a state waterfowl stamp, waterfowl hunters are automatically registered with HIP.

Cover photo: An American woodcock in flight. © Troy Gipps

### MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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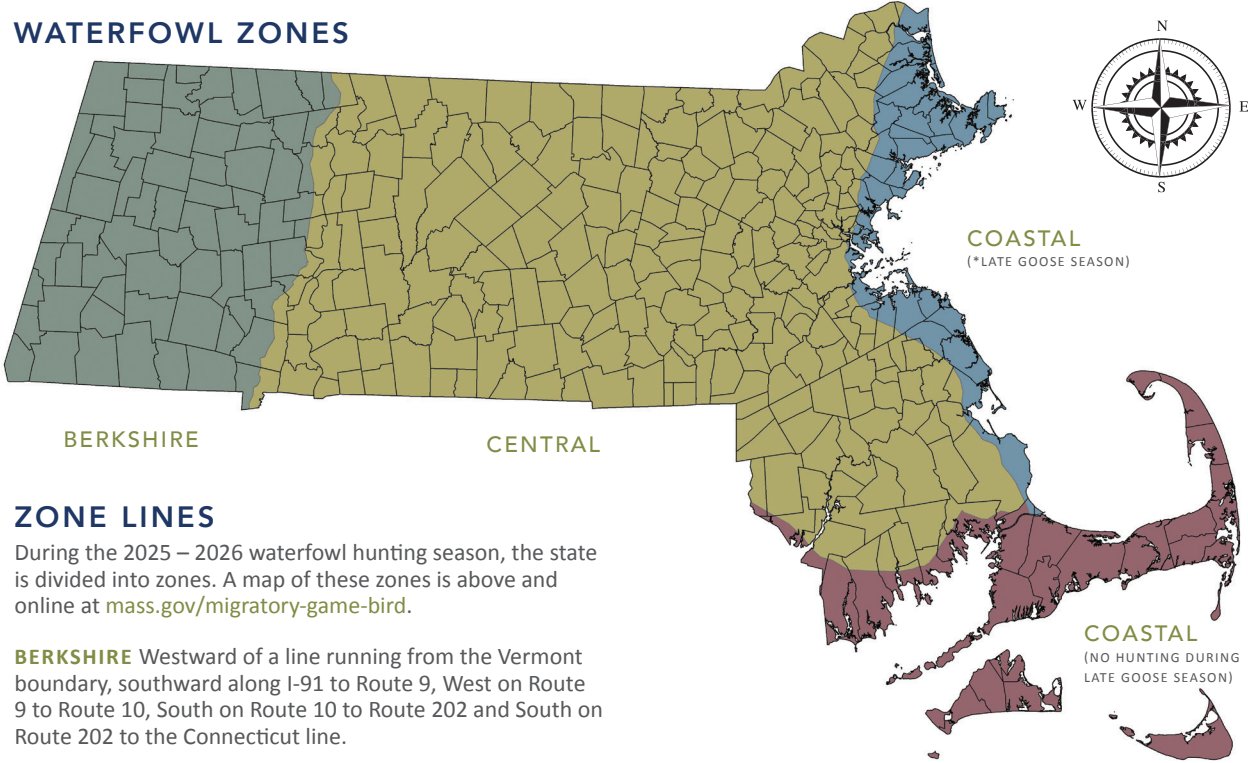


## 2025 – 2026 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD REGULATIONS





WATERFOWL ZONES



ZONE LINES

During the 2025 – 2026 waterfowl hunting season, the state is divided into zones. A map of these zones is above and online at [mass.gov/migratory-game-bird](https://mass.gov/migratory-game-bird).

**BERKSHIRE** Westward of a line running from the Vermont boundary, southward along I-91 to Route 9, West on Route 9 to Route 10, South on Route 10 to Route 202 and South on Route 202 to the Connecticut line.

**CENTRAL** That portion of Massachusetts lying between the Berkshire Zone and the Coastal Zone.

**COASTAL** Eastward and southward of a boundary line running south from the New Hampshire border along Route I-95 south to Rte. 1, to Rte. I-93, south along I-93 to Rte. 3, south on Rte. 3 to Rte. 6, west on Rte. 6 to Rte. 28, west on Rte. 28 to Rte. I-195, Rte. I-195 west to Rte. 79, Rte. 79 north to Rte. 24, Rte. 24 north to N. Main St., N. Main St. north to Friend St., Friend St. west to Bayview Ave., Bayview Ave. north to Elm St., Elm St. west to Center St., Center St. west to Rte. 138, Rte. 138 south to Riverside Ave., Riverside Ave.

south to Walker St., Walker St. south to Rte. I-195, and west on Rte. I-195 to the Rhode Island border.

**\*NORTHERN PORTION OF COASTAL ZONE** (late Goose season only) is that portion of the Coastal Zone lying north of the Cape Cod Canal and east of the Sagamore Bridge/Route 3 and extending north to the New Hampshire line. During the late Canada goose season, this section is open to hunting. The remainder of the Coastal Zone is closed.

**REPORT ALL BANDED BIRDS**  
[WWW.REPORTBAND.GOV](https://www.reportband.gov)



REGULATIONS

No one may take migratory game birds except during days and hours open to hunting. No one shall take more than one daily bag limit per day nor possess more than one daily bag limit in the field or while returning to vehicle, hunting camp, and/or home.

**BAITING** No person shall take migratory game birds by baiting (placing corn or any other food to constitute a lure or enticement) or hunting over a baited area. An area is considered baited for 10 days after removal of the bait. It is

not necessary for the hunter to know that the area is baited to be in violation of this section.

**BOW & ARROW** Lawful for hunting migratory game birds. Expanding broadheads are legal. Use of crossbows allowed by those duly permitted. Airbows, poisoned arrows, explosive tips, bows drawn by mechanical means are prohibited.

**DRESSING** The head and one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to each migratory game bird while it is transported to the hunter’s home or preservation facility.

**DRIVING** A person shall not hunt migratory game birds from or in connection with a motor driven land conveyance, aircraft, or any kind of motor or sail boat used in concentrating or driving birds either for themselves or for others.

**ELECTRIC CALLS** No person shall take migratory game birds using pre-recorded calls or sounds or any electronic imitations of calls.

**FALCONRY** All permitted ducks and coot may be taken by falconry October 11 – February 12. No geese. Falconry closed Sundays.

**HUNTING HOURS** 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset. During Early Canada Goose season only, hunting hours end 1/2 hour after sunset.

**IMPORTATION** No person shall import migratory game birds killed in any foreign country except Canada unless such birds are dressed, drawn, and the head and feet removed. One fully-feathered wing must remain on each bird transported between port of entry and the hunter’s home or preservation facility. No person shall import migratory game birds belonging to another. For further information on migratory game birds killed in another country, consult Title 50 CFR 20.61-20.66.

**LIVE DECOYS** No person shall hunt migratory game birds with the aid of live decoys or domesticated fowl of any kind. Such fowl must be removed for 10 consecutive days prior to hunting and be confined in an enclosure which reduces the audibility of their calls and conceals them from the sight of migratory waterfowl.

**NON-TOXIC SHOT** Is required for all waterfowl and coot hunting. No lead shot in possession. Waterfowl and coot hunters must use non-toxic shot up to and including BBB shot while hunting waterfowl. Non-toxic shot is not required for hunting woodcock, snipe, or rails.

**PROHIBITED DEVICES** No one shall hunt migratory birds using a sinkbox, trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, air gun, swivel gun, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.

**PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES** Anyone aboard a canoe or kayak from Sept. 15 – May 15 must wear a life jacket or vest.

**SHIPMENT** Any package containing migratory game birds must be marked on the outside with the name and address of the sender and recipient and number of birds, by species, contained inside.

**SHOTGUN** Migratory game birds may be hunted with shotguns no larger than 10 gauge, fired from the shoulder. Shotguns capable of holding more than 3 shells may not be used unless plugged with a one-piece filler which limits the gun’s total capacity to 3 shells and which cannot be removed without disassembling the gun.

**SHOTGUN DEER SEASONS** During the shotgun seasons for deer (including the Youth Deer Hunt Day on Sep. 27, 2025), dogs can be used for waterfowl and falconry hunting only on coastal waters and salt marshes. All hunters must wear 500 square inches of blaze orange (cap and vest) while hunting or in transit to their blind or boat during these periods. The orange may be removed once a hunter is in a blind or boat.

**STAMPS** Waterfowl stamps are required for most hunters who hunt any ducks (including sea ducks), geese, and brant. Stamps are not required for hunting woodcock, snipe, rails or coot. Waterfowl hunters aged 12–14 do not need stamps (or a license). Waterfowl hunters aged 15 or older must possess a MA waterfowl stamp. MA waterfowl stamps are valid from Jan 1 – Dec 31 and may be obtained online at [mass.gov/massfishhunt](https://mass.gov/massfishhunt) or wherever hunting licenses are sold. Waterfowl hunters aged 16 and older are also required to possess a Federal Duck stamp. Federal electronic “eDuck” Stamps no longer expire after 45 days following purchase and are valid from the date of purchase through June 30. They may be obtained online at [mass.gov/massfishhunt](https://mass.gov/massfishhunt), <https://duckstamp.com/e-stamp>, or wherever MA hunting licenses are sold. The Federal eDuck Stamp must be carried by waterfowl hunters in either digital or hardcopy format, but does not need to be signed. For those who purchase an eDuck Stamp, their physical Federal Duck Stamp will now be mailed via U.S. mail after the close of the season, on March 10. If it does not arrive, hunters should contact Amplex at [duckstamp@amplex.com](mailto:duckstamp@amplex.com) or (800) 852-4897. Physical Federal Duck stamps are also available for purchase at all National Wildlife Refuges and select post offices, and must be signed across the face in ink and carried while waterfowl hunting.

**TAGGING** Any migratory game birds not in the custody of the hunter must be tagged with the hunter’s signature, address, total number of birds by species, and dates such birds were killed. No person shall receive or have in custody another’s migratory game birds unless such birds are properly tagged.

**VEHICLES/BOATS** No person shall hunt migratory game birds from or with the aid of a motor vehicle or other motor driven land conveyance or aircraft except that paraplegics may take game birds from a stationary motor vehicle or other land conveyance. Further, no person may hunt from or by means of any motor boat or sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or sails furled and all progress therefrom has ceased. However, a hunter may pick up or retrieve dead or crippled birds from a craft under power and may shoot injured birds from powered craft in coastal waters seaward of the first upstream bridge.

**WANTON WASTE** A reasonable effort is required to retrieve all migratory birds killed or crippled. Cripples should be killed immediately, and, along with all other birds killed, must be retained by the hunter as part of the daily bag.

*This brochure is a summary of migratory game bird hunting regulations. A violation of state regulations is also a violation of federal law. Special regulations may apply on National Wildlife Refuges. For more information on federal regulations, contact the Resident Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, 70 Everett Ave., Ste. 315, Chelsea, MA 02150, phone: (617) 889-6616.*