MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Public Hearing Notice
321 CMR 3.02(2)

In accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 131, Sec. 5 and 63, and Ch. 30A, Sec. 2, NOTICE is hereby given that the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., on proposed regulatory amendments to 321 CMR 3.02(2) Migratory Game Bird Regulations in Massachusetts, via a Zoom video webinar with the Hearing Officer and MassWildlife staff, with the public joining via computer or phone line. The proposed amendments will set the dates and bag limits for the 2026-2027 migratory game bird seasons.

Click to register in advance to join the webinar

After registering, you will automatically receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The proposed regulatory amendments to 321 CMR 3.02(2) and the link to register for the Zoom webinar are also posted at Mass.gov/MassWildlife/Hearings, so that interested persons can review the proposed regulations and provide written comments prior to the hearing or oral comments during the virtual hearing. Written public comments will be accepted until Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., via an online comment form; a link to the form can also be found in the notice on the public hearings page. Written comments may also be submitted by mail, to MassWildlife, Attn: Public Hearing Comments, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581. Please note that, due to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's requirements for filing these regulations, the Fisheries and Wildlife Board must vote as soon as possible following the close of the hearing. Therefore, there will be no written comment period after this public hearing.

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. To submit a request for an accommodation, please email eeadiversity@mass.gov or call 617-626-1282; an ADA Coordinator will receive your request. Please include a description of the request in as much detail as possible and a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please allow at least 2 weeks' (14 days) advance notice. Last-minute requests will be accepted but we may be unable to fulfill the request.

MassWildlife is committed to providing equitable access to its public meetings, hearings, and events. American Sign Language (ASL) and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

captioning, as well as live interpretation, including in Español, Português, 中文, Kreyòl Ayisyen, and Tiếng Việt, will be provided for attendees who wish to use it. We will make every effort to provide other languages as requested. Please contact Susan Sacco at susan.sacco@mass.gov to request another language by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

Everose Schlüter, Ph.D.
Director (Acting)

3.02: continued

4. to use or possess while black bear hunting or while accompanying a black bear hunter during any period of the open season as described in 321 CMR 3.02(1)(b), any radiotelemetry transmitter or receiver, including directional antennas, or any other electronic device designed or intended or adapted for the emitting of an electronic signal. Transmitters, receivers, or antennas carried by or under the control of a person hunting black bear shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of 321 CMR 3.02(1)(j). No person shall, except under permit from the Director pursuant to M.G.L. c. 131, §§ 4 or 23, at any time possess alive any bear, or use at any time any radio-telemetry transmitter, receiver, or similar device with the intent to locate any bear. Nothing in 321 CMR 3.02(1)(j) shall be construed to prohibit the use of possession of citizen's band radios or cellular telephones used for verbal communication with other persons.

(2) MigratoryGame Bird Regulations. In accordance with the authority found in M.G.L. c. 131, §§ 5 and 63, and subject to federal law and to 321 CMR 3.02(2), the annual open seasons for the hunting and possession of certain migratory game birds are hereby adopted.

(a) Definitions. For the purposes of 321CMR 3.02(2), the following words or phrases shall have the following meanings.

American Coot or Coot means the American coot (*Fulica americana*).

Berkshire Zone means that portion of Massachusetts west of a boundary line running south from the Vermont border along Route I-91 to Route 9, west on Rte. 9 to Rte. 10, south on Rte. 10 to Rte. 202, and south on Rte. 202 to the Connecticut border.

Central Zone means that portion of Massachusetts lying between the Berkshire Zone and the Coastal Zone.

Coastal Zone means that portion of Massachusetts east and south 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.

Director means the Director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife or their authorized agent.

Migratory Game Birds means those migratory birds included in the terms of conventions between the United States and any foreign country for the protection of migratory birds, for which open seasons are prescribed in 321 CMR 3.02(2) and belong to the following families:

1. Anatidae (ducks, mergansers, geese, and brant);
2. Rallidae (rails and American coot); and
3. Scolopacidae (snipe and woodcock). Non-toxic Shot means steel shot or such other non-toxic shot as shall be approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as an acceptable non-toxic alternative to lead shot. Primitive Firearm Loaded with Shot means loose shot carried in a shot pouch or similar container, or which is carried on the person and could readily be so loaded, as well as shot which has been loaded in the barrel of a primitive firearm.

Sea Ducks means scoter, eider, and long-tailed (oldsquaw) ducks.

Waterfowl means migratory game birds of the family Anatidae (ducks, mergansers, geese, and brant).

(b) Open Seasons. The dates of the open seasons for the various species herein mentioned, the daily bag limits, possession limits, and related matters are shown in Table 1.

321 CMR 3.02(2) Migratory Game Bird Regulations

TABLE 1. OPEN SEASONS, ALL DATES INCLUSIVE.

Species	Open Season	Daily Bag	Possession Limit
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. 12 - Nov. 212	3	9
Ducks[A] Berkshire	Oct. 123 - Nov. 28 Dec. 143 - Jan. 23	6* 6*	18* 18*
Ducks[A] Central	Oct. 101 - Nov. 28 Dec. 15 - Jan. 23	6* 6*	18* 18*
Ducks[A] Coastal	Oct. 101 - Oct. 178 Nov. 278 - Jan. 278	6* 6**	18* 18**
American Coot	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Mergansers	Same Dates as Ducks	5*	15*
Geese Berkshire (except blue & snow)	Oct. 123 - Nov. 145	1	3
Geese Central (except blue & snow)	Oct. 101 - Nov. 28 Dec. 15 - Jan. 23	2 2	6 6
Geese Coastal (except blue & snow)	Oct. 101 - Oct. 178 Nov. 278 - Jan. 278	2 2	6 6
Early Canada Goose [B] (Statewide)	Sep. 1 - Sep. 2519	15	45
Late Canada Goose (Central)	Jan. 167 - Feb. 134	5	15
Late Canada Goose (North Coastal)	Jan. 289- Feb. 134	5	15
Late Canada Goose (Berkshire)	Dec. 15 – Feb. 134	5	15
Snow & Blue Goose (Berkshire)	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Snow & Blue Goose (Central)	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Snow & Blue Goose (Coastal)	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Late Snow & Blue Goose (Central)	Same as Late Canada Goose	15	45
Late Snow & Blue Goose (North Coastal)	Same as Late Canada Goose	15	45
Sea Ducks [A] (Scoter, Eider, Long-tailed duck)	Same Dates as Ducks	4*	12*
Brant (Coastal Only)	Nov. 278 - DecJan. 31	1	3
Falconry (Ducks and Coot only, no Geese)	Oct. 121 - Feb. 12	3**	9**
Youth Waterfowl Hunt [C] (Ducks, Coots, Mergansers and Geese only)	Sep. 260 & Oct. 34	Same as regular season *	Same as regular season *
Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunt (Ducks, Coots, Mergansers and Geese only) [C]	Sep. 2620 & Oct. 34	Same as regular season *	Same as regular season *

* Singly or in the aggregate

** Singly or in the aggregate. Scaup bag limit of 2 (6 possession) between January 8 7 – 28 27, 2026 2027.

3.02: continued

A. The daily bag for ducks may contain no more than six ducks (no more than four of which may be sea ducks), unless additionally restricted as indicated below.

Species	Daily Bag	Possession Limit
American Black Duck	2	6
Redhead	2	6
Canvasback	2	6
Mallard	4 (only 2 females)	12 (only 6 females)
Scaup	1	3
Scaup (coastal zone Jan. ~~8~~ 7 - Jan. ~~28~~ 27)	2	6
Fulvous Whistling Duck	1	3
Mottled Duck	1	3
Wood Duck	3	9
Northern Pintail	1	3
Scoter	3	9
Long-tailed Duck	3	9
Eider	3 (only 1 female)	9 (only 3 females)
Harlequin	0 (Season Closed)	0 (Season Closed)

B. For Early Canada Goose season only, hunting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.
C. On September ~~20~~26, ~~2025~~ 2026, and ~~October4~~October 3, ~~2025~~2026, there shall be a veterans and active military personnel waterfowl hunt in all counties of the state for Veterans (as defined in 38 USC, § 101) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training), may participate. All hunters shall possess a Massachusetts Hunting or Sporting License, a Massachusetts Waterfowl Stamp, and Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp). On September ~~20~~26, ~~2025~~ 2026, and October ~~4~~3, ~~2025~~2026, there shall be a youth waterfowl hunt in all counties of the state for minors 12 through 17 years of age only. During the veterans and active military personnel and youth waterfowl hunts, such participants may hunt ducks, geese, mergansers, and coot during the period from ½ hour before sunrise to sunset, with a bag limit of six, possession 18, singly or in the aggregate, subject to the species restrictions in 321 CMR 3.02(2): *Table 1A*. During the youth waterfowl hunt all such minors must be accompanied by an adult licensed to hunt in Massachusetts and who possesses a Massachusetts Waterfowl Stamp. No adult may be accompanied by more than one minor, and no more than one firearm may be carried. The licensed adult may not hunt but may carry the minor's firearm when unloaded and cased. During this youth waterfowl hunt, minors 12 through 14 years of age shall not be required to possess a hunting or sporting license and a Massachusetts and Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp. Minors 15 years of age shall possess a Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and a Massachusetts waterfowl stamp but need not possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp. Minors 16 and 17 years old shall possess a Massachusetts hunting or sporting license, a Massachusetts waterfowl stamp, and a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp. All minors shall otherwise conform to all provisions of M.G.L. c. 131 and 321 CMR 3.02(2) not excepted or specified in 321 CMR 3.02(2)(b): *Table 1C*.

(c) Hunting Hours. The hunting hours for migratory game birds shall be from ½ hour before sunrise to sunset, except that hunting hours for the Early Canada Goose seasons shall be from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

(d) Falconry. Notwithstanding the dates of the open seasons and the bag and possession limits as prescribed in 321 CMR 3.02(2)(b) and Table 1 thereof, ducks and coots may be hunted or taken with falcons by licensed falconers from October ~~11~~12, ~~2025~~ 2026 through February 12, ~~2026~~2027. The bag limits for such falconry hunting shall be three birds daily or nine in possession, singly or in the aggregate, subject to the limitations prescribed in 321 CMR 3.02(2)(b), Table 1, footnotes A through C. Hunting with falconry on Sundays is prohibited.

3.02: continued

(e) Restrictions.

1. Migratory game birds shall not be hunted by the aid of salt, bait, grain of any kind, or other feed or means similarly used to lure, attract, or entice such birds to, on, or over the area where hunters are hunting or attempting to hunt or take them.

2. Migratory game birds mentioned in 321 CMR 3.02(2) may be hunted only with bow and arrow or with a shotgun not larger than ten gauge, fired from the shoulder, or by falconry. Automatic loading or hand-operated repeating shotguns capable of holding more than three shells, the magazine of which has not been cut off or plugged with a one-piece metal, plastic or wooden filler incapable of removal without disassembling the gun so as to reduce the capacity of the said gun to not more than three shells at one time in the magazine and chamber combined, shall not be used in the hunting of migratory game birds.

3. A person shall not hunt migratory game birds by means or aid of any motor-driven land, water or air conveyance or any sailboat used for the purpose of or resulting in the concentrating, driving, rallying or stirring up of such birds either for himself or for others.

4. A person shall not hunt migratory game birds from, or by means of, a sinkbox (battery), live duck or live goose decoys or domesticated fowl or any kind.

5. A person shall not kill or cripple any migratory game bird pursuant to 321 CMR 3.02(2) without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and include it in his daily bag.

3.02: continued

4. to use or possess while black bear hunting or while accompanying a black bear hunter during any period of the open season as described in 321 CMR 3.02(1)(b), any radiotelemetry transmitter or receiver, including directional antennas, or any other electronic device designed or intended or adapted for the emitting of an electronic signal. Transmitters, receivers, or antennas carried by or under the control of a person hunting black bear shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of 321 CMR 3.02(1)(j). No person shall, except under permit from the Director pursuant to M.G.L. c. 131, §§ 4 or 23, at any time possess alive any bear, or use at any time any radio-telemetry transmitter, receiver, or similar device with the intent to locate any bear. Nothing in 321 CMR 3.02(1)(j) shall be construed to prohibit the use of possession of citizen's band radios or cellular telephones used for verbal communication with other persons.

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Central Zone means that portion of Massachusetts lying between the Berkshire Zone and the Coastal Zone.

Coastal Zone means that portion of Massachusetts east and south 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.

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Sea Ducks means scoter, eider, and long-tailed (oldsquaw) ducks.

Waterfowl means migratory game birds of the family Anatidae (ducks, mergansers, geese, and brant).

(b) Open Seasons. The dates of the open seasons for the various species herein mentioned, the daily bag limits, possession limits, and related matters are shown in Table 1.

321 CMR 3.02(2) Migratory Game Bird Regulations

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Virginia Rail	Sep. 1 - Nov. 6	10	30
Snipe	Sep. 1 - Dec. 15	8	24
Woodcock	Oct. 1 - Nov. 21	3	9
Ducks[A] Berkshire	Oct. 12 - Nov. 28 Dec. 14 - Jan. 2	6* 6*	18* 18*
Ducks[A] Central	Oct. 10 - Nov. 28 Dec. 15 - Jan. 2	6* 6*	18* 18*
Ducks[A] Coastal	Oct. 10 - Oct. 17 Nov. 27 - Jan. 27	6* 6**	18* 18**
American Coot	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Mergansers	Same Dates as Ducks	5*	15*
Geese Berkshire (except blue & snow)	Oct. 12 - Nov. 14	1	3
Geese Central (except blue & snow)	Oct. 10 - Nov. 28 Dec. 15 - Jan. 2	2 2	6 6
Geese Coastal (except blue & snow)	Oct. 10 - Oct. 17 Nov. 27 - Jan. 27	2 2	6 6
Early Canada Goose [B] (Statewide)	Sep. 1 - Sep. 25	15	45
Late Canada Goose (Central)	Jan. 16 - Feb. 13	5	15
Late Canada Goose (North Coastal)	Jan. 28- Feb. 13	5	15
Late Canada Goose (Berkshire)	Dec. 15 – Feb. 13	5	15
Snow & Blue Goose (Berkshire)	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Snow & Blue Goose (Central)	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Snow & Blue Goose (Coastal)	Same Dates as Ducks	15	45
Late Snow & Blue Goose (Central)	Same as Late Canada Goose	15	45
Late Snow & Blue Goose (North Coastal)	Same as Late Canada Goose	15	45
Sea Ducks [A] (Scoter, Eider, Long-tailed duck)	Same Dates as Ducks	4*	12*
Brant (Coastal Only)	Nov. 27 - Dec. 31	1	3
Falconry (Ducks and Coot only, no Geese)	Oct. 12 - Feb. 12	3**	9**
Youth Waterfowl Hunt [C] (Ducks, Coots, Mergansers and Geese only)	Sep. 26 & Oct. 3	Same as regular season *	Same as regular season *
Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunt (Ducks, Coots, Mergansers and Geese only) [C]	Sep. 26 & Oct. 3	Same as regular season *	Same as regular season *

* Singly or in the aggregate

** Singly or in the aggregate. Scaup bag limit of 2 (6 possession) between January 7 – 27, 2027.

3.02: continued

A. The daily bag for ducks may contain no more than six ducks (no more than four of which may be sea ducks), unless additionally restricted as indicated below.

Species	Daily Bag	Possession Limit
American Black Duck	2	6
Redhead	2	6
Canvasback	2	6
Mallard	4 (only 2 females)	12 (only 6 females)
Scaup	1	3
Scaup (coastal zone Jan. 7 - Jan. 27)	2	6
Fulvous Whistling Duck	1	3
Mottled Duck	1	3
Wood Duck	3	9
Northern Pintail	1	3
Scoter	3	9
Long-tailed Duck	3	9
Eider	3 (only 1 female)	9 (only 3 females)
Harlequin	0 (Season Closed)	0 (Season Closed)

B. For Early Canada Goose season only, hunting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

C. On September 26, 2026 and October 3, 2026, there shall be a veterans and active military personnel waterfowl hunt in all counties of the state for Veterans (as defined in 38 USC, § 101) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training), may participate. All hunters shall possess a Massachusetts Hunting or Sporting License, a Massachusetts Waterfowl Stamp, and Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp). On September 26, 2026 and October 3, 2026, there shall be a youth waterfowl hunt in all counties of the state for minors 12 through 17 years of age only. During the veterans and active military personnel and youth waterfowl hunts, such participants may hunt ducks, geese, mergansers, and coot during the period from ½ hour before sunrise to sunset, with a bag limit of six, possession 18, singly or in the aggregate, subject to the species restrictions in 321 CMR 3.02(2): *Table 1A*. During the youth waterfowl hunt all such minors must be accompanied by an adult licensed to hunt in Massachusetts and who possesses a Massachusetts Waterfowl Stamp. No adult may be accompanied by more than one minor, and no more than one firearm may be carried. The licensed adult may not hunt but may carry the minor's firearm when unloaded and cased. During this youth waterfowl hunt, minors 12 through 14 years of age shall not be required to possess a hunting or sporting license and a Massachusetts and Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp. Minors 15 years of age shall possess a Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and a Massachusetts waterfowl stamp but need not possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp. Minors 16 and 17 years old shall possess a Massachusetts hunting or sporting license, a Massachusetts waterfowl stamp, and a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp. All minors shall otherwise conform to all provisions of M.G.L. c. 131 and 321 CMR 3.02(2) not excepted or specified in 321 CMR 3.02(2)(b): *Table 1C*.

(c) Hunting Hours. The hunting hours for migratory game birds shall be from ½ hour before sunrise to sunset, except that hunting hours for the Early Canada Goose seasons shall be from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

(d) Falconry. Notwithstanding the dates of the open seasons and the bag and possession limits as prescribed in 321 CMR 3.02(2)(b) and Table 1 thereof, ducks and coots may be hunted or taken with falcons by licensed falconers from October 12, 2026 through February 12, 2027. The bag limits for such falconry hunting shall be three birds daily or nine in possession, singly or in the aggregate, subject to the limitations prescribed in 321 CMR 3.02(2)(b), Table 1, footnotes A through C. Hunting with falconry on Sundays is prohibited.

3.02: continued

(e) Restrictions.

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2. Migratory game birds mentioned in 321 CMR 3.02(2) may be hunted only with bow and arrow or with a shotgun not larger than ten gauge, fired from the shoulder, or by falconry. Automatic loading or hand-operated repeating shotguns capable of holding more than three shells, the magazine of which has not been cut off or plugged with a one-piece metal, plastic or wooden filler incapable of removal without disassembling the gun so as to reduce the capacity of the said gun to not more than three shells at one time in the magazine and chamber combined, shall not be used in the hunting of migratory game birds.

3. A person shall not hunt migratory game birds by means or aid of any motor-driven land, water or air conveyance or any sailboat used for the purpose of or resulting in the concentrating, driving, rallying or stirring up of such birds either for himself or for others.

4. A person shall not hunt migratory game birds from, or by means of, a sinkbox (battery), live duck or live goose decoys or domesticated fowl or any kind.

5. A person shall not kill or cripple any migratory game bird pursuant to 321 CMR 3.02(2) without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and include it in his daily bag.