Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada - 2024

2024/2025 and 2025/2026 Hunting Seasons

Canadian Wildlife Service • Waterfowl Technical Committee
CWS Migratory Birds Regulatory Report **Number 60**

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Environnement et Changement climatique Canada

Canada

Cat. No.: CW69-16/59-2024E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-660-72436-2
EC24036

Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from Environment and Climate Change Canada's copyright administrator. To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Information Centre
Place Vincent Massey building
351 St-Joseph boulevard
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H3
Toll free: 1-800-668-6767
Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Cover Illustration: © 2023 Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp and Print Image, "Boreal Mist – Ring-Necked Ducks" by Isabelle Collin

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, 2024

Aussi disponible en français

For more information on migratory birds, please visit the Government of Canada's website: Migratory birds - Canada.ca

Important Notice about the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

There are temporary restrictions on importing or exporting harvested meat from migratory game birds hunted in areas affected by HPAI. For more information, consult the CFIA – Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Zones, Permits and conditions needed for movement control, Bringing food, plant and animal products into Canada and Animal Health Status of Regions (United States Department of Agriculture, available in English only).

The migratory game bird hunting regulations that will be in effect in 2024 and 2025 can be viewed at : Hunting regulations for migratory birds: provincial and territorial summaries - Canada.ca

Cover Art:

The 2023 Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp image, entitled “Boreal Mist – Ring-necked ducks” features the Ring-necked duck. It is a creation of the Canadian wildlife artist Isabelle Collin.

Wildlife Habitat Canada provides financial support to conservation initiatives related to waterfowl and migratory birds and their habitat. Through a special partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada receives the revenues from the sale of the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, purchased primarily by waterfowl hunters to validate their Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits. The conservation stamp is also sold to stamp and print collectors and those interested in contributing to habitat conservation. Wildlife Habitat Canada has provided over $64 million in grants to more than 1,600 habitat conservation projects across Canada. Since 2012, Wildlife Habitat Canada has helped to restore, enhance and conserve 1.43 million acres of wildlife habitat.

For more information on Wildlife Habitat Canada or the conservation stamp and print program, please call Wildlife Habitat Canada at 613-722-2090 (in the Ottawa region) or toll-free at 1-800-669-7919, or consult the website at Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada 2024

2024/2025 and 2025/2026 Hunting Seasons

Canadian Wildlife Service Waterfowl Technical Committee
CWS Migratory Birds Regulatory Report - Number 60

Authors:
This report was prepared by the Canadian Wildlife Service Waterfowl Technical Committee and edited by Rose Lacombe and Renée Bergeron in the Wildlife Management and Regulatory Affairs Division of the National Office of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Recommended citation for this report:
Canadian Wildlife Service Waterfowl Committee. 2024. *Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada, 2024 –2024/2025 and 2025/2026 Hunting Seasons.* CWS Migratory Birds Regulatory Report Number 60. Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ottawa.

Comments:
Comments regarding the regulation-setting process or other concerns relating to national migratory birds should be sent to the Director of Wildlife Management and Regulatory Affairs Division in the Wildlife Management Directorate of the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment and Climate Change Canada at the following postal address: 351 St. Joseph Boulevard, Gatineau QC K1A 0H3 or by email: MbregsReports-Rapports-Omregs@ec.gc.ca.

Region-specific comments should be sent to the appropriate Regional Director, Regional Operations, Canadian Wildlife Service, at the following postal addresses:

Atlantic Region: 17 Waterfowl Lane, P.O. Box 6227, Sackville NB E4L 1G6
Quebec Region: 801–1550 d'Estimauville Avenue, Québec QC G1J 0C3
Ontario Region: 4905 Dufferin Street, Toronto ON M3H 5T4
Prairie Region: 9250 - 49th Street NW, 2nd Floor, Edmonton AB T6B 1K5
Northern Region: 5019 - 52nd Street, P.O. Box 2310, Yellowknife NT X1A 2P7
Pacific Region: RR1, 5421 Robertson Road, Delta BC V4K 3N2

This report may be downloaded from the following website:
Migratory birds regulatory report series - Canada.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND **1**

SCHEDULE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUNTING REGULATIONS WITHIN EACH REGULATORY CYCLE **2**

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK INTERNATIONAL HARVEST STRATEGY **2**

2023 FALL ECCC REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS REGARDING THE HUNTING REGULATION FOR THE 2024/2025 AND 2025/2026 SEASONS **3**

SUMMARY OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS HELD IN WINTER 2024 REGARDING THE HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR THE 2024/2025 AND 2025/2026 SEASONS **4**

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR THE 2024/2025 AND 2025/2026 SEASONS **6**

Management of overabundant geese *6*
Newfoundland and Labrador *6*
Prince Edward Island *9*
Nova Scotia *9*
New Brunswick *10*
Quebec *11*
Ontario *12*
Manitoba *12*
Saskatchewan *13*
Alberta *13*
British Columbia *13*
Yukon *13*
Northwest Territories *13*
Nunavut *13*

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING PERMIT **14**

PLEASE REPORT BIRD BANDS **14**

Background

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is responsible for the conservation of migratory birds in Canada and the management of the sustainable hunting of migratory game birds. The hunting regulations for migratory game birds are reviewed and amended biennially by ECCC, with input from provinces and territories, as well as from various other stakeholders. However, the population status of migratory game birds is assessed on an annual basis to ensure that the regulations are appropriate, and amendments can be made between review periods, if necessary, for conservation reasons.

As part of the regulatory process to amend the hunting regulations, the ECCC's Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) produces a series of regulatory reports:

The first report, *Population Status of Migratory Game Birds in Canada*, contains population and other biological information on migratory game birds and thus provides the scientific basis for informing management decisions that ensure the long-term sustainability of their population. Every two years, ECCC reviews hunting regulations and publishes the population status report. However, CWS analyzes population trends on a yearly basis to evaluate the status of migratory game bird populations.

The second report, *Proposals to Amend the Canadian Migratory Birds Regulations*, outlines the proposed changes to the hunting regulations for the next two hunting seasons, as well as proposals to amend the overabundant species regulations and sometimes, proposed amendments to the *Migratory Birds Regulations*. Proposals for hunting regulations are developed in accordance with the Objectives and Guidelines for the Establishment of National Regulations for Migratory Game Bird Hunting (visit the website Establishing national regulations for migratory game bird hunting: objectives and guidelines - Canada.ca). The consultation document is published every second year, concurrently with the revision of hunting regulations.

The third report, *Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada*, summarizes the hunting regulations that were approved for the next two hunting seasons. The report is published every second year, concurrently with the revision of hunting regulations.

The three reports are distributed to organizations and individuals with an interest in migratory bird conservation, to provide an opportunity for input on the development of hunting regulations in Canada. They are also available on the ECCC website: Migratory birds regulatory report series.

The process for developing regulations in Canada requires that any changes be in the form of final proposals by late February during years of regulatory changes. That means that regulations must be set without knowing about the breeding conditions and production forecasts for the coming year. This does not usually present difficulties because the hunting regulations are based on trends over several years, but in some cases the results from recent harvest surveys or breeding population surveys conducted in May and June will indicate that changes in the national approach are needed to ensure the conservation of migratory game birds. In this case, ECCC will process a regulatory amendment and issue a bulletin updating these regulations.

Regulatory changes described in the current document will start in September 2024 and remain in effect for two hunting seasons (fall 2024/winter 2025, fall 2025/winter 2026). There is no change to the special conservation measures for overabundant geese for spring 2025 and spring 2026 (note that the regulations for spring 2024 were made into law as part of the fall 2021 process).

Schedule for the development of hunting regulations within each regulatory cycle

The schedule for the development of hunting regulations is based on the requirement to have the hunting regulations made into law by July:

- September through November – The *Population Status of Migratory Game Birds in Canada* report, containing biological information on migratory game birds, is developed. In January, it is distributed and posted on the Government of Canada's website
- September and October– CWS regional offices develop proposals for hunting regulations in consultation with the provinces and territories and interested stakeholders
- January – The *Proposals to Amend the Canadian Migratory Birds Regulations* report containing the regulation proposals is posted on the Government of Canada's website and distributed to allow for public consultation
- June – Hunting regulations become law
- July – The *Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada* report, containing the approved hunting regulations, is distributed, and posted on the Government of Canada's website
- August – Summaries of migratory birds hunting regulations are available with the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits at Canada Post outlets, independent vendors and on the Government of Canada's website

Migratory game bird hunters are made aware of the migratory game bird hunting regulations at the same time as they receive information on season dates and bag and possession limits, when they purchase their hunting permits.

American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy was adopted in 2012 by the CWS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) based on the value of Black Ducks to both countries and the ability of each country to affect harvest. The objectives of the Strategy, based on the principles of adaptive harvest management (AHM), are to:

- maintain a Black Duck population that provides consumptive and non-consumptive use commensurate with habitat carrying capacity
- maintain societal values associated with the hunting tradition
- maintain equitable access to the Black Duck resource

In 2022, the strategy was evaluated by partners to ensure that its objectives were achieved. Based on this evaluation, a number of parameters used in the AHM framework were updated. First, the spatial extent of spring survey data used to calculate the abundance of breeding Black Ducks in the integrated population model expanded from the core survey area (Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey [WBPHS] strata 51, 52, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, and 72) to eastern Canada (WBPHS strata 51–53, 56, 62–72). Second, the definition of an “indicated pair” changed from 1.5 to 1.0 based on an updated analysis of observation data from Quebec and New Jersey from 1990-2009. Prior to 2023, one “indicated pair” was defined as 1.5 pairs based on sex-specific observations that showed approximately 50% of historically observed groups of two birds were male-male and 50% were male-female. For the “indicated pair” calculation, a male-female group equals one “indicated pair” while a male-male group equals two; therefore, two “unknown sex” bird groups equaled 1.5. Updated analysis of observation data showed that this calculation is now 1.0. Third, the effect of Mallard competition on Black Ducks has been removed from the AHM framework based on an evaluation of the Mallard competition model versus a model with only random effects. These results showed no appreciable difference in the predictive capacity of the Mallard model and, as such, the parameter that accounts for Mallard competition has been removed. Fourth, band reporting

rates were updated, which subsequently updated the value of the harvest additivity parameter.

The strategy continues to identify appropriate Black Duck harvest levels in Canada and the U.S. based on the size of the breeding population while maintaining equity in the harvest between the two countries. However, recognizing incomplete control of harvest through regulations, it allows the realized harvest in either country to vary between 40% and 60% of the annual continental harvest before a strong penalty is applied under the parity constraint. During the evaluation of the strategy in 2022, the parity constraint was also assessed, which showed that the current difference in predicted harvest rates between Canada and the U.S. would trigger a strong restriction penalty to U.S. hunters, even though Canada is under a liberal regulatory option. Given this result does not align with the original intent of the parity constraint, for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 policy optimization, the parity constraint was temporarily modified so that if one country was under its most liberal regulatory package, the other country would not be penalized by the constraint. To further address the parity issue, Canada has also modified its province-specific Black Duck harvest regulations implemented under the Liberal regulatory package.

The strategy, used to determine the appropriate Black Duck harvest regulations, consists of four pre-defined regulatory packages in Canada and three in the U.S. Country-specific harvest opportunities are determined from a set of expected harvest rate distributions defined as regulatory alternatives. Canada developed four regulatory packages (liberal, moderate, restrictive, and closed) with the Canadian moderate alternative defined as the 1997 to 2010 mean harvest rate (the reference package). The Canadian packages are as follows:

- Liberal: 30% increase in harvest rate over the 1997–2010 mean harvest rate
- Moderate: 1997–2010 mean harvest rate (3.5% per year [mean harvest rate for adult males])
- Restrictive: 30% decrease in harvest rate below the 1997–2010 mean harvest rate
- Closed: no Black Duck harvest allowed

As part of the evaluation of the strategy, each regulatory package is evaluated after at least three years of implementation before changes to that specific regulatory package will be considered. Over the past five years, province-specific harvest regulations implemented under the Liberal regulatory package have not been able to achieve the expected 30% increase in harvest rate for Black Ducks in Canada. As a result, harvest regulations for Black Ducks have been modified in each province in an attempt to increase harvest rate to levels prescribed within the strategy. As per the strategy, CWS will continue to monitor harvest rate in addition to the breeding population to ensure that the strategy continues to meet the objectives stated above.

The optimal Canadian policy for the 2024-2024 hunting season is the continuation of the liberal regulatory package. This recommendation is based on long-term trends in Black Duck and Mallard breeding populations in eastern Canada as well as the estimated effects of hunting on the Black Duck population. According to data collected by the CWS and USFWS, the current level of harvest has only a low effect on population levels. The liberal package is therefore the optimal alternative.

2023 Fall ECCC regional stakeholder meetings regarding the hunting regulation for the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 seasons

In fall of 2023, biologists from ECCC met with their provincial and territorial counterparts, as well as other stakeholders, in technical committees to discuss new information on the status of migratory game bird populations, and how it compares to annual trends. These regional technical committees used survey information from national and international bird population surveys, species-specific studies, and information received from migratory game bird hunters and non-government organizations to identify concerns with population levels of migratory game bird species. In order to address these concerns and ensure a sustainable harvest for migratory game birds, hunting season dates, daily bag limits and possession limits required adjustment for certain species for the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 hunting seasons.

Summary of the comments received during public consultations held in winter 2024 regarding the hunting regulations for the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 seasons

The proposed changes were described in detail in a consultation document titled *Proposals to Amend the Canadian Migratory Birds Regulations – 2024: Consultation Document Hunting Seasons 2024-2025 and 2025-2026*, which was published online on January 13, 2024 for public comment. The consultation document was also distributed directly to over 480 partners and stakeholders, including federal biologists in the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, Greenland and St. Pierre and Miquelon, provincial and territorial biologists, Indigenous organizations, hunting organizations, individual migratory game bird hunters, conservation organizations and academia. During the 30-day consultation period, the Department received more than 100 written comments. Comments were submitted by provincial governments, provincial and national hunting organizations, outfitters, academia, hunters and individuals interested in migratory bird conservation as well as Indigenous groups.

Most comments received were supportive of the proposed changes to the Regulations for the next two hunting seasons. The comments also included some suggestions for the next round of amendments to the MBR, 2022 (2026-2027 and 2027-2028 hunting seasons). These suggestions will be carefully considered and discussed prior to then.

The following presents a summary of comments received during the public consultation, outlined on a regional basis:

Atlantic provinces

Most comments supported the Atlantic provinces' proposals. However, one local hunting organization as well as a small number of hunters in Nova Scotia indicated their opposition to the extension of the duck season length in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. They expressed concerns that an extension of the season to mid-January could concentrate ducks in small areas of open water making them easy targets for hunters. The Department will continue to carefully monitor harvest and populations using data from banding, the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey and the National Harvest Survey on an annual basis, and should a substantial increase in harvest pressure occur, the Department can determine if modifications to the season are required for conservation reasons. Under the MBR, 2022, if the Minister of the Environment considers it necessary for the conservation of migratory game birds, the Minister may take measures such as altering open seasons, daily bag limits, or possession limits, and prohibiting the hunting of a species of migratory game bird during the hunting season. A closure to the migratory game bird season would only occur if waterfowl populations were experiencing population-level impacts.

A few comments expressed opposition to the increase in bag limit for American Black Ducks in New Brunswick. The American Black Duck Hunting Strategy is currently set for a 30% increase in the Canadian harvest rate of American Black Ducks over the 1997-2010 mean harvest rate (i.e., a "liberal" regulatory regime under the Strategy). However, current American Black Duck provisions in the MBR, 2022 result in a harvest rate in Canada that is much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. These amendments are in line with the *Migratory Birds Convention* as well as the American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy. The amendments increase daily bag limits for American Black Duck to help ensure parity between Canada and the U.S.

One hunter in Newfoundland and Labrador expressed concerns that moving to a fixed opening date could give an unfair advantage to some hunters when the opening date is not on a Saturday, as some people may not be able to hunt. The additional seven days added to the end of the season may offset any loss of hunting opportunity at the beginning of the season from a fixed opening date. The proposed opening date of September 16 will allow consistency within the regulations and provide all zones on the island of Newfoundland with the same opening date. Further, this date is considered biologically appropriate, as the majority of waterfowl have completed their annual molt, and some have initiated fall migration at this latitude

by mid-September.

A small number of hunters in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador suggested that the waterfowl seasons were opening too early, and suggestions were made to delay opening the seasons. The waterfowl opening dates set in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are considered biologically appropriate, as they correspond to when the majority of waterfowl have completed their annual molt, and some have initiated fall migration at the latitudes for which they are set.

Quebec

All comments received supported the proposals to increase the daily bag limit for American Black Ducks and advance the Woodcock season to earlier dates in Quebec.

Ontario

All comments received except one supported the proposal to increase the daily bag limit for American Black Ducks in Ontario. The comment expressed that this proposal was not limited to subsistence hunting of American Black Ducks and that all non-subsistence harvest of American Black Ducks in Canada should be banned.

The goals of the Harvest Strategy recognize the importance of maintaining an American Black Duck population for both consumptive and non-consumptive use, the societal values associated with the hunting tradition and to allow equitable harvest between both countries. The amendments are in line with the Convention as well as the American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy. The amendments liberalize the American Black Duck hunting regulations to help ensure parity between Canada and the U.S. The Department will continue to carefully monitor harvest and populations using data from banding, the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey and the National Harvest Survey on an annual basis, and should a substantial increase in harvest pressure occur, the Department can determine if modifications to the season are required for conservation reasons.

Saskatchewan

Most comments were supportive of allowing all-day hunting for dark geese (Canada Geese, Cackling Geese and White-fronted Geese). Individual hunters indicated that this measure will be beneficial because hunting opportunity to harvest geese will increase, it will encourage young hunters to participate in hunting in the evening after school and will align the regulations with adjacent provinces. They also expressed that goose populations are abundant and increased hunting opportunity is a way to encourage new permit holders as well as retain existing hunters and counter the decline in migratory game bird hunters in Canada. However, a few hunters expressed concerns that this measure would put pressure on geese to migrate south sooner and provide less hunting opportunity for local resident hunters. A suggestion was made to keep the restriction or limit the season for non-residents of Canada. Outfitters were supportive because they feel this change will increase business opportunities. However, one outfitter opposed this measure because it would eliminate the period for geese to rest in the afternoon and was concerned outfitters could be blamed.

Canada Geese, Cackling Geese and White-fronted Geese populations are abundant in Saskatchewan and hunting is sustainable. Allowing all-day hunting will provide more hunting opportunities for both individual hunters and outfitters. There is full-day hunting for residents and non-residents of Canada of other migratory game bird species in Saskatchewan, and dark geese are already subject to disturbance by hunting of those species, so additional disturbance by the proposed measure is not expected to be significant.

Migratory game birds hunting regulations for the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 seasons

The Canadian Wildlife Service and the provinces and territories have jointly developed the hunting regulation amendments presented here. They were approved by Cabinet and published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II on June 19th, 2024.

The following section summarizes the hunting regulations amendments by province and by territory during this regulatory cycle.

The complete set of regulations that will be in effect in fall 2024 and winter/spring 2025 are posted on the Government of Canada's website: Hunting regulations for migratory birds: provincial and territorial summaries.

Management of overabundant geese

Seasons 2024-2025 and 2025-2026

There is no change for Snow Geese and Ross's Geese as well as Temperate-breeding Canada Goose population in southern Manitoba.

The special conservation measures for Snow Geese, Ross's Geese and the Manitoba Temperate-breeding population of Canada Geese that were implemented in past regulatory cycles will continue to be in effect in spring 2025. They are included in the hunting regulation summary posted on the Government of Canada's website : Hunting regulations for migratory birds: provincial and territorial summaries - Canada.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador

- American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy – Updated hunting regulations under the liberal regulatory package

The late season American Black Duck harvest restrictions (not more than four ducks in the daily bag limit) were removed throughout Newfoundland, and it is allowed to harvest six American Black Ducks per day for the entire 107-day season. These changes are consistent with the target harvest rate of American Black Ducks under the liberal regulatory package as per the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. Previous American Black Duck hunting regulations in Canada resulted in a harvest rate much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. Similar increases were also made for Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick as well as for Quebec and Ontario.

- Increase season length and change generic season dates to fixed dates for duck, geese and snipe

All waterfowl (ducks and geese) and snipe opening and closing hunting season dates were changed in Newfoundland and Labrador from generic dates to fixed calendar dates. Further, the number of waterfowl and snipe hunting days were increased to the maximum allowable of 107 days. These measures allow for up to seven more hunting days. Further, one additional day has been added to compensate for the removal of the Waterfowl Heritage Day. Finally, an eider season has been added to Western Labrador Zone. The updated season dates by hunting zone for Newfoundland and Labrador are presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively. All these changes simplify the regulations and will provide more hunting opportunities for hunters. It is not expected that these changes will result in an appreciable increase in harvest and will be monitored through the National Harvest Survey.

Table 1. Changes to the season dates in Newfoundland hunting zones for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 hunting seasons

Species	Previous Opening and Closing Season Dates	New Opening and Closing Season Dates
Northwestern Coastal NFL Zone		
Long-tailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters	November 1 to February 14	November 1 to February 15
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	October 10 to January 23	October 10 to January 24
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
All geese	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
Snipe	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
Northern Coastal NFL Zone / Southern Coastal NFL Zone / Southwestern Coastal NFL Zone / Northeastern Coastal NFL Zone / Avalon-Burin Coastal NFL Zone		
Long-tailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters	November 25 to March 10	November 24 to March 10
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	October 10 to January 23	October 10 to January 24
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
All geese	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
Snipe	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
Inland NFL Zone		
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	October 10 to January 23	October 10 to January 24
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
All geese	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31
Snipe	The third Saturday of September to the last Saturday of December	September 16 to December 31

Table 2. Changes to the season dates in Labrador hunting zones for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 hunting seasons

Species	Previous Opening and Closing Season Dates	New Opening and Closing Season Dates
Northern Labrador Zone		
Scoters	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Eiders	The last Saturday of September to the first Sunday after January 7	September 26 to January 10
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
All geese	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Snipe	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Western Labrador Zone		
Scoters	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Eiders	No open season	September 1 to December 16
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
All geese	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Snipe	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Southern Labrador Zone		
Scoters	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Eiders	November 1 to February 14	November 1 to February 15
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
All geese	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Snipe	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Central Labrador Zone		
Scoters	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Eiders	i)The last Saturday of October to the last Saturday of November ii) The first Saturday of January to the last day of February	October 25 to November 30 December 21 to February 28
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16

Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
All geese	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16
Snipe	The first Saturday of September to the third Saturday of December	September 1 to December 16

Prince Edward Island

- American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy – Updated hunting regulations under the liberal regulatory package

The late season American Black Duck harvest restrictions (not more than four ducks in the daily bag limit) were removed throughout Prince Edward Island, and it is allowed to harvest six American Black Ducks per day for the entire 107-day season. These changes are consistent with the target harvest rate of American Black Ducks under the liberal regulatory package as per the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. Previous American Black Duck hunting regulations in Canada resulted in a harvest rate much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. Similar increases were also made for Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick as well as for Quebec and Ontario.

- Increase season length for ducks

The number of duck hunting dates were increased to the maximum allowable of 107 days throughout Prince Edward Island. The duck hunting seasons were extended by 15 days (Table 3). These changes will provide more hunting opportunities for hunters. It is not expected that the increase in season length will result in an appreciable increase in harvest and will be monitored through the National Harvest Survey.

Table 3. Changes to the season dates throughout Prince Edward Island for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 hunting seasons

Species	Previous Opening and Closing Season Dates	New Opening and Closing Season Dates
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters	October 1 to December 31	October 1 to January 15
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	October 1 to December 31	October 1 to January 15

Nova Scotia

- American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy – Updated hunting regulations under the liberal regulatory package

The late season American Black Duck harvest restrictions (not more than four ducks in the daily bag limit) were removed throughout Nova Scotia, and it is allowed to harvest six American Black Ducks per day for the entire 107-day season. These changes are consistent with the target harvest rate of American Black Ducks under the liberal regulatory package as per the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. Previous American Black Duck hunting regulations in Canada resulted in a harvest rate much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. Similar increases were also made for Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick as well as for Quebec and Ontario.

- Increase season length for ducks and advance eider season

The number of duck hunting dates were increased to the maximum allowable of 107 days throughout Nova Scotia. The duck hunting season was extended by up to eight days. The eider season was also changed

to align open season dates between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (Table 4). These changes will provide more hunting opportunities for hunters. It is not expected that these measures will result in an appreciable increase in harvest and will be monitored through the National Harvest Survey.

Table 4. Changes to the season dates in Nova Scotia hunting zones for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 hunting seasons

Species	Previous Opening and Closing Season Dates	New Opening and Closing Season Dates
Zone No 1		
Eiders	November 9 to January 7	November 2 to December 31
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, and Scoters	October 1 to January 7	October 1 to January 15
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	October 1 to January 7	October 1 to January 15
Zone No 2		
Eiders	November 17 to January 15	November 2 to December 31
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, and Scoters	October 8 to January 15	October 8 to January 22
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted ergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	October 8 to January 15	October 8 to January 22

New Brunswick

- American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy – Updated hunting regulations under the liberal regulatory package

The late season American Black Duck harvest restrictions (not more than four ducks in the daily bag limit) were removed throughout New Brunswick, and it is allowed to harvest six American Black Ducks per day for the entire 107-day season. These changes are consistent with the target harvest rate of American Black Ducks under the liberal regulatory package as per the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. Previous American Black Duck hunting regulations in Canada resulted in a harvest rate much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. Similar increases were also made for Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia as well as for Quebec and Ontario.

- Increase season length for ducks and advance eider season

The number of duck hunting dates were increased to the maximum allowable of 107 days throughout New Brunswick. The duck hunting seasons were extended by up to 15 days. The eider season was also changed to align open season dates within New Brunswick and between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (Table 5). These changes will provide more hunting opportunities for hunters. It is not expected that these measures will result in an appreciable increase in harvest and will be monitored through the National Harvest Survey.

Table 5. Changes to the season dates in New Brunswick hunting zones for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 hunting seasons

Species	Previous Opening and Closing Season Dates	New Opening and Closing Season Dates
Zone No 1		
Eiders	November 6 to January 4	November 2 to December 31
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, and Scoters	October 15 to January 4 February 1 to February 24	October 15 to January 5 February 1 to February 24
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	October 15 to January 14	October 15 to January 29
Zone No 2		
Eiders	November 2 to December 31	No change
Common and Redbreasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, and Scoters	October 1 to December 31	October 1 to January 15
Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks, Common and Red-breasted ergansers, Longtailed Ducks, Eiders, and Scoters)	October 1 to December 31	October 1 to January 15

Quebec

- American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy – Updated hunting regulations under the liberal regulatory package

The restriction of not more than two Black ducks per day in locations south of Route 148 and west of Highway 15 was removed. It is allowed to harvest six Black Ducks per day in all locations within hunting district F. Opening and closing season dates have not changed. These changes are consistent with the target harvest rate of American Black Ducks under the liberal regulatory package as per the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. Previous American Black Duck hunting regulations in Canada resulted in a harvest rate much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. Similar increases were also made for the Atlantic provinces and Ontario.

- Advance the opening date for American Woodcock hunting season

The opening date of the American Woodcock hunting season was advanced by one week for hunting district B, and by 2 weeks for districts C, D, E and F (Table 6). No change was made to the length of the hunting season (remains 106 days). Thus, the 2024 woodcock season in districts B, C, D, E and F will span from September 7 to December 21, 2024. No changes were made to season dates for districts A and G. No changes were made to the daily bag and possession limits.

Bringing forward the hunting season in Quebec from mid-September to early September will offer better hunting opportunities before peak migration. This change is not expected to have a marked effect on the number of harvested birds or population size.

Table 6. Changes to the season dates in Quebec hunting zones for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 hunting seasons

Hunting District	Previous Opening and Closing Season Dates	New Opening and Closing Season Dates
District A	September 1 to December 16	No change
District B	The first Saturday following September 7 to the first Saturday following December 21	The first Saturday following August 31 to the first Saturday following December 14
District C, D, E, and F	The first Saturday following September 14 to the first Saturday following December 28	The first Saturday following August 31 to the first Saturday following December 14
District G	The last Saturday of September to December 26	No change

- Administrative change

A grammatical error was corrected in the French version of Table 2 of Part 5 of Schedule 3 of the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022*. The terms “ces espèces” were replaced by “cette espèce”.

Ontario

- American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy – Updated hunting regulations under the liberal regulatory package

The daily bag limit was increased from four to six Black Ducks per day in the Hudson-James Bay, Northern, and Central Hunting Districts. In the Southern Hunting District, the daily bag limit increased from two to six Black Ducks per day in Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 60 to 87E and from two to three Black Ducks per day in WMUs 88 to 95. Opening and closing season dates have not changed. These changes are consistent with the target harvest rate of American Black Ducks under the liberal regulatory package as per the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. Current American Black Duck hunting regulations in Canada result in a harvest rate much lower than the maximum allowed in the liberal package. Similar increases were also made for the Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

- Administrative change to hunting zone denomination

The term “provincial” was added in front of “Wildlife Management Unit” in Part 6 of Schedule 3 of the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022* to clarify that those units are under provincial jurisdiction.

Manitoba

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 hunting seasons. However, minor changes were made to correct errors in Part 7 of Schedule 3 of the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022*.

- Administrative changes

- Hunting zone denomination

The term “provincial” in front of “Game Bird Hunting Zone” was removed in Part 7 of Schedule 3, as those hunting zones are under federal jurisdiction.

- Corrected a grammatical error

An error in Table 2 in Part 7 of Schedule 3 was corrected. “Those” (species) was replaced by “that” (species).

Saskatchewan

- Remove the restriction of half-day hunting for dark geese

The restriction of half-day hunting in part of Saskatchewan was removed and all-day hunting for Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, and White-fronted Geese is now allowed**.** Hunting is allowed from one half-hour before sunrise until one half-hour after sunset for the entire hunting season. Allowing all-day hunting for dark geese in all seasons is consistent with the hunting times for all other species of migratory game birds in Saskatchewan. The effects of the regulation change will be monitored through the Canada National Harvest Survey and through survival and harvest rates derived from banding efforts.

- Administrative change

A grammatical error in the French version of Table 2 in Part 8 of Schedule 3 was corrected. The terms "…toute autre espèce d'oiseau migrateur dont c'est la saison de chasse peut chassée" were replaced by "…toute autre espèce d'oiseau migrateur dont c'est la saison de chasse peut <u>être</u> chassée".

Alberta

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 hunting seasons. However, minor changes were made to clarify Part 9 in Schedule 3 of the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022.*

- Administrative change to hunting zone denomination

The term "provincial" was added in front of "Wildlife Management Unit", to clarify that those units are under provincial jurisdiction.

British Columbia

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 hunting seasons.

However, minor changes were made to clarify the regulations and correct errors in Part 10 of Schedule 3 of the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022.*

- Administrative changes to species names

A clarification was made. The additional geese that may be killed in Provincial Management Units 2-4 and 2-5 in the hunting district No. 2 exclude Ross' Geese.

It was also clarified in the English version of Schedule 3 that the term "Goldeneyes" mentioned in the Open Season and Daily Bag and Possession Limit Table includes both Common Goldeneye and Barrow's Goldeneye.

Yukon

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 hunting seasons.

Northwest Territories

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 hunting seasons.

Nunavut

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 hunting seasons.

Migratory Game Bird Hunting permit

Since 2022, the Youth Migratory Game Bird Hunting (MGBH) permit is available to hunters who are minors (under the age of 18), providing the opportunity to youth to practice their skills under the supervision of an adult hunter throughout the hunting seasons, while enabling them to benefit from having their own daily bag and possession limits. Youth MGBH permits along with Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps (CWHC stamps) are offered free of charge and are only available for order through the MGBH e-Permitting System.

The options to obtain MGBH permits have evolved over time to increase service and optimize availability to hunters. MGBH permits along with the CWHC stamps can be purchased:

1. Electronically
2. At select Canada Post outlets (physical permit)
3. At some independent vendors (physical permit)

The MGBH e-Permitting system provides hunters additional convenience and benefits compared to purchasing a physical permit at traditional outlets. The system is accessible to hunters 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hunters can order a Youth MGBH permit or purchase a permit, including the CWHC stamp online from the comfort and safety of their home, download the permit immediately from the checkout complete page as well as receive electronic copies of the stamp and permit by email. The permit is valid immediately, either in printed or electronic format. MGBH permits that were purchased online can also be reprinted if lost or damaged. A photo of the permit is not acceptable, it must be the PDF. There have been versions of the electronic system since 2014 and every year the number of permits purchased online continues to increase. The current version was successfully launched on August 1, 2019, and since then there have been additional enhancements to increase user satisfaction and to promote a robust MGBH e-Permitting system.

It should also be noted that the MGBH e-permitting purchasing system makes it easier for hunters to respond to the questions on the permit, which help inform the National Harvest Survey. Data from this and other CWS surveys are used to assess the status of migratory game bird populations in Canada, their productivity, their survival rates, and the amount of harvest they can sustain. This information also provides data to inform hunting regulations and harvest management plans for future years.

New options, features, and conveniences continue to be assessed and planned for future MGBH e-Permitting releases.

Physical MGBH Permits continue to be distributed and sold through some Canada Post outlets and a select number of independent vendors. Canada Post is the original MGBH permit vendor and continues to offer them in over 3,700 postal outlets. ECCC works closely with Canada Post to promote communication with outlets and manage inventory and distribution. There are also approximately 45 independent vendors across seven provinces that sell the physical MGBH permits. Examples of vendors include Canadian Tire and Cabela's as well as small local convenience stores and registry offices.

Please Report Bird Bands

- North American Bird Banding Program

The North American Bird Banding Program is jointly administered by Canada's Bird Banding Office and the United States' Bird Banding Laboratory. The program relies on the public to report their observations or recoveries of bird bands and other bird markers to the Bird Banding Office. These data help scientists and wildlife managers better understand, monitor and conserve migratory bird populations by providing information on the distribution and movement of species. Although over 1.2 million birds are banded in the US and Canada each year, only about 10 percent of game bird bands are recovered. Your contribution is

important!

- How to report band

If you see a marked bird or shoot a bird with a band, please report the band online at www.reportband.gov or call toll-free 1-800-327-BAND (2263) to leave a message. Visit the Report a Banded Bird web page for more details or contact the Bird Banding Office at:

Bird Banding Office
National Wildlife Research Centre
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive (Raven Rd)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

Email: bbo@ec.gc.ca
Phone: 613-998-0524

- Certificate of appreciation

After your information has been submitted, you will receive a certificate of appreciation by email which will tell you the species of bird, where and when it was banded, its age, whether it was male or female, and who banded it. We will tell the bander where and when the bird or band was found and its condition.