



Summary of Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations

August 2025
to July 2026



Notice: Avian influenza virus (bird flu) is a contagious viral infection that can affect domestic and wild birds throughout the world. Guidelines have been developed to prevent or mitigate the spread of this virus, and for precautionary measures to take when handling wild game. For more information, please refer to www.canada.ca/Avian-flu and the [Wildlife and Avian Influenza – Handling Guidelines to Protect Your Health](#) web page on the Government of Canada website.

To hunt migratory game birds in Canada, you must possess:

- a valid Migratory Game Bird Hunting (MGBH) Permit;
- a Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp on the permit.

These two documents are issued by the federal government and are valid in all provinces and territories.

The 2025 federal permit is also valid for the 2026 spring special conservation harvest for Snow Geese and Ross's Geese.

Hunting Districts

1. Hudson–James Bay District

Provincial Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 1A, 1B, and the portions of provincial WMUs 1D, 25, and 26 lying north of latitude 51° and east of longitude 83°45'.

2. Northern District

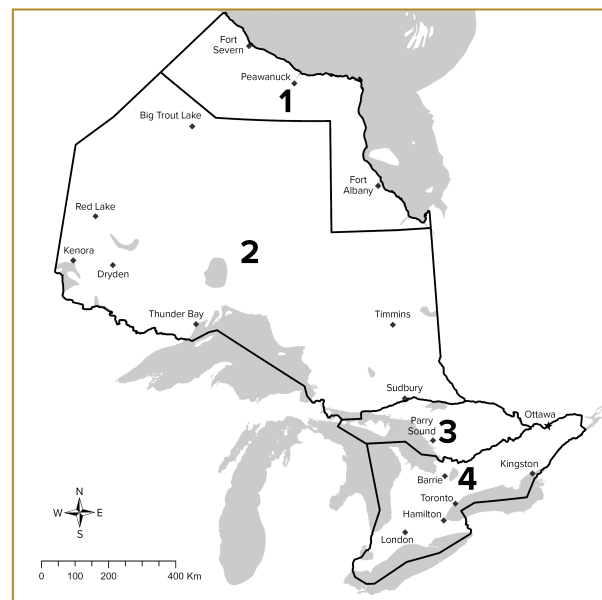
Provincial WMU 1C, those portions of provincial WMU 1D, 25 and 26 lying south of latitude 51° and west of longitude 83°45', as well as provincial WMUs 2 to 24 inclusive, 27 to 41 inclusive, and 45.

3. Central District

Provincial WMUs 42 to 44 inclusive, 46 to 50 inclusive, and 53 to 59 inclusive.

4. Southern District

Provincial WMUs 60 to 95 inclusive.



For more information on WMUs, contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and visit the web page:

www.ontario.ca/page/find-wildlife-management-unit-wmu-map.

Note that south of the French and Mattawa rivers, Sunday gun hunting is permitted by provincial regulations in some municipalities, but not all. Season dates for Canada Geese and Cackling Geese in the Southern District may differ between municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is permitted and those where it is not. Hunters should consult the provincial regulations for information about WMUs and a list of municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is permitted and visit the web page: www.ontario.ca/page/sunday-gun-hunting.

For more information on restrictions and requirements for hunting migratory game birds, please refer to the [Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022](#) (MBR), and/or consult the Government of Canada [Migratory Game Bird Hunting](#) website, which includes a [frequently asked questions](#) page.

The Canadian [Firearms Act](#) outlines the requirements for the storage, transportation and possession of firearms, as well as details requirements for licensing and registration of certain firearms. Most provinces and territories have additional licence requirements for hunting migratory birds and/or to carry firearms. To know what you require, and if there are further restrictions for hunting migratory birds, please verify the applicable regulations for the province/territory and municipality where you will be hunting. Restrictions such as Sunday hunting closures and minimum required distances from residences and businesses for the discharge of firearms may be applicable.

You can purchase an electronic MGBH Permit by visiting the Government of Canada website (www.permis-permits.ec.gc.ca).

Hunters may carry their MGBH Permit either in physical (paper) or electronic formats (such as on a mobile device). Electronic MGBH Permits must be in the PDF format provided by the e-permitting system (a photograph or screenshot of your permit is not valid). It is the hunter's responsibility to be able to show all required permits to a game officer immediately upon request.

Consultation Process and Migratory Birds Regulatory Reports

A national consultation process has been developed which includes a report on the population status of migratory game birds and a consultation document that provides an opportunity to participate in developing the hunting regulations. For more information, consult the [Migratory Birds Regulatory Report Series](#) web page on the Government of Canada website.

Youth Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit

The Youth MGBH Permit is an option available to hunters who are minors (under the age of 18 years old on the day the permit is issued). The Youth MGBH Permit, as well as the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, are free of charge and can **only be obtained through the e-permitting system** (www.permis-permits.ec.gc.ca).

The Youth MGBH Permit provides young hunters with the opportunity to practice their skills under the supervision of an adult hunter (known as a mentor) and allows them to have their own daily bag and possession limits.

Mentors must possess their own MGBH Permit, must have held a MGBH Permit in a previous year, and may accompany no more than two Youth MGBH Permit holders at a time. Mentors may carry a firearm and may hunt.

Many provinces and territories, including Ontario, have additional licence requirements and restrictions for hunters who are minors and/or for mentors. Please consult the applicable provincial/territorial regulations.

Enforcement



Federal game officers enforce the [Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994](#) (MBCA) and its associated regulations throughout Canada. This law regulates human activities, such as hunting, that could adversely affect wildlife conservation. Game officers may use warnings, administrative monetary penalties, tickets or prosecutions to enforce the provisions of the MBCA and its regulations. The fines and penalties that may be imposed reflect the seriousness of the offence(s). Individuals may be subject to a fine range for a first offence associated to sections of the MBR designated for the purposes of paragraph 13(1)(c) of the MBCA on summary conviction of not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$300,000, or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months, or both.

Shot

- Lead shot is toxic to wildlife and the environment.
- In Ontario, the use and possession of shot other than non-toxic shot is prohibited while hunting migratory game birds other than woodcock.
- Within National Wildlife Areas (NWA) that allow hunting, the possession of lead shot is prohibited for all hunting, including the hunting of migratory birds and upland game birds. Refer to the [Wildlife Area Regulations](#) to know which NWAs allow hunting and for the restrictions or requirements when conducting this activity.

To reduce your exposure to contaminants in meat, make sure, before cooking it, to:

- remove the shot from birds hunted with lead shot;
- remove the skin and fat from fish-eating birds.

Species at Risk*

- Barrow's Goldeneye** is listed in the [Species at Risk Act](#) as a species of special concern, and the **daily bag and possession limit is 1 bird**.
- Harlequin Duck** and the **Yellow Rail** are listed in the [Species at Risk Act](#) as species of special concern. There is **no open season for these species**.
- King Rail** is listed in the [Species at Risk Act](#) as an endangered species. There is **no open season for this species**.

Crime Stoppers

Anyone wishing to report illegal hunting activities, illegal selling of birds or other offences related to migratory birds is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Your call is anonymous, and you may be eligible for a cash reward.

Open Seasons and Daily Bag and Possession Limits for Migratory Game Birds in Ontario

Note: This table must be read from left to right, with the hunter ensuring each element described by each column is met.

Area	Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Hudson-James Bay District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks*), combined	September 1 to December 16	6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16	5	No limit
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16	50	No limit
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 1 to December 16	5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails* and King Rails*), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 1 to December 16	10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to December 16	8	24
	Snipe	September 1 to December 16	10	30
	Mourning Doves	No open season	N/A	N/A

Area	Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Northern District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks*), combined	September 10 to December 25	6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to September 9	10 (in WMUs 8, 10, 13, 36, 37, 39, 41 and 45)	No limit
			5 (in other WMUs)	
		September 10 to December 16	5	
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16	20	No limit
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 1 to December 16	5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails* and King Rails*), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 10 to December 25	10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to December 16	8	24
	Snipe	September 10 to December 25	10	30
	Mourning Doves	No open season	N/A	N/A
Central District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks*), combined	September 20 to January 4	6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to September 19	10	No limit
		September 20 to December 16	5	
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 1 to December 16	20	No limit
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 1 to December 16	5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails* and King Rails*), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 20 to January 4	10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to December 16	8	24
	Snipe	September 20 to January 4	10	30
	Mourning Doves	September 1 to November 30	15	45

Area	Species	Open Season		Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Southern District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks*), combined	September 27 to January 11		6 (in WMUs 60 to 87E and not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye*)
				6 (in WMUs 88 to 95 and not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye* and not more than 3 may be American Black Ducks)	
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	In municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is permitted by provincial regulations.	September 4 to September 14	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)	No limit
				8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85, 93 and 94)	
			September 27 to December 31	5 (in WMUs 60 to 64, 66 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95, from September 27 to October 31)	
				3 (in WMUs 65, 82, 84, 85 and 93, from September 27 to October 31)	
				5 (in WMUs 60 to 93 and 95 from November 1 to December 31)	
				3 (in WMU 94)	
		In municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is not permitted by provincial regulations, exclude any Sunday in these periods (i.e. the season is closed on Sundays within these municipalities) .	September 4 to September 14	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)	
				8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85, 93 and 94)	
			September 27 to January 10 The season is closed from January 1 to 10 in municipalities that allow Sunday gun hunting.	5 (in WMUs 60 to 64, 66 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95, from September 27 to October 31)	
				3 (in WMUs 65, 82, 84, 85 and 93, from September 27 to October 31)	
				5 (in WMUs 60 to 93 and 95 from November 1 to January 10)	
				3 (in WMU 94)	
			February 28 to March 7 This is not an open season in municipalities that allow Sunday gun hunting.	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)	
				8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85 and 93)	
				No open season in WMU 94	
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 27 to January 11, excluding Sundays in municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is not permitted by provincial regulations (i.e. the season is closed on Sundays within these municipalities) .		20	No limit
		February 28 to March 7, excluding Sundays, in municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is not permitted by provincial regulations (i.e. the season is closed on Sundays within these municipalities) . This is not an open season in municipalities that allow Sunday gun hunting.			
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 27 to January 11		5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails* and King Rails*), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 27 to January 11		10 (not more than 8 may be Coots and not more than 4 may be Gallinules)	30
	Woodcock	September 15 to September 24 The season is only open in WMUs 60 to 67 and 69B.		8	24
		September 25 to December 20 The season is only open in WMUs 60 to 95.			
	Snipe	September 27 to January 11		10	30
	Mourning Doves	September 1 to November 30		15	45

Special Measures for Overabundant Species in Ontario

Area	Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit	Additional Hunting Method or Equipment
Southern District (only WMUs 65, 66, 67 and 69B)	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 27 to January 11	20	No limit	Electronic bird calls of Snow Geese and Ross's Geese may be used. While hunting those species with those calls, any other species of migratory bird for which it is open season may be hunted.
		February 28 to March 7, excluding Sundays, in municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is not permitted by provincial regulations (i.e. the season is closed on Sundays within these municipalities). This is not an open season within municipalities that allow Sunday gun hunting.			
		March 1 to May 31			

The information presented here is a summary of the law. If there is a discrepancy between the law and this summary, the law prevails.

For more information, consult the [Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994](#), the [Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022](#), the [frequently asked questions on migratory game bird hunting](#), and other information on the Government of Canada website (www.canada.ca).

You may also direct your questions to:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service

Regional Office
4905 Dufferin Street
Toronto, Ontario M3H 5T4
Tel.: 1-800-668-6767
enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Report your Migratory Bird Bands:
Call 1-800-327-BAND (2263) to leave a message or go to:
www.reportband.gov