

Summary of the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations

August 2026
to July 2027



Notice: Avian influenza (bird flu) is a contagious virus that mainly affects domestic and wild birds. Follow safety guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading the virus and to protect your health when handling wild game. Learn more at ["Avian influenza in wild birds - Canada.ca"](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds.html).

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

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

The MGBH Permit is valid anywhere in Canada where and when there is an open season to hunt migratory game birds.

Hunting Districts

1. Hudson-James Bay District

Provincial Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 1A and 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, the 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, 27 to 41, and 45.

3. Central District

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

4. Southern District

Provincial WMUs 60 to 95.

For more information on provincial WMUs, contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and consult ["Find a wildlife management unit \(Wmu\) map - ontario.ca"](https://www.ontario.ca/govt/find-a-wildlife-management-unit-wmu-map-ontario-ca).

Note that south of the French and Mattawa rivers, Sunday gun hunting is permitted by provincial regulations in some municipalities, but not all. Hunters should consult the province for a list of municipalities where Sunday gun hunting is permitted and refer to ["Sunday gun hunting - ontario.ca"](https://www.ontario.ca/govt/sunday-gun-hunting-ontario-ca).



Hunting Restrictions and Requirements

For more information on restrictions and requirements to hunt migratory game birds, please refer to the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022* and/or consult ["Migratory game bird hunting - Canada.ca"](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting-canada-ca), which includes a frequently asked questions page.

The Canadian *Firearms Act* outlines the requirements for the licensing, possession, storage and transportation of firearms. Learn more at rcmp.ca/en/firearms.

Most provinces and territories have additional requirements to hunt and/or carry firearms. Check the provincial/territorial and municipal regulations 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 apply.

You can purchase an electronic MGBH Permit through the Regulatory Services Platform (psr-rsp.az.ec.gc.ca).

Hunters must carry their MGBH Permit with them at all times when hunting or when in possession of unpreserved migratory game birds. Permits obtained online may be presented as an electronic PDF or as a printed copy. A provincial or territorial licence may also be required. It is the hunter's responsibility to be able to show all required permits to a game officer immediately upon request.

As of the 2027-2028 hunting season, Environment and Climate Change Canada will no longer print physical (paper) copies of the hunting regulation summaries. They will continue to be available online at ["Hunting regulations for migratory birds: provincial and territorial summaries - Canada.ca"](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/hunting-regulations-for-migratory-birds-provincial-and-territorial-summaries-canada-ca).

The physical MGBH Permits may be phased out as early as the 2027-2028 hunting season. Hunters will be invited to obtain their MGBH Permit through the Regulatory Services Platform.

Youth Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit

The Youth MGBH Permit is an option available to hunters who are minors (under 18 years old on the day the permit is issued). The Youth MGBH Permit and electronic CWHC Stamp are free of charge and **can only be obtained through the Regulatory Services Platform**.

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 requirements and restrictions for hunters who are minors and/or for their mentors.

Enforcement



Federal game officers enforce the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and its associated regulations. This law regulates human activities, such as hunting, that could adversely affect the conservation of migratory birds. Game officers may use warnings, administrative monetary penalties, tickets or prosecutions. Fines and penalties vary depending on the severity of the offence. Individuals found guilty of a summary conviction for a first offence are liable to a fine between \$5,000 and \$300,000, a maximum imprisonment term of six months, or both.

Crime Stoppers

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

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, except for woodcock.
- Within National Wildlife Areas (NWA) that allow hunting, the possession of lead shot is prohibited for all hunting, including the hunting of migratory and upland game birds. Refer to Schedule I.1 of the *Wildlife Area Regulations* to know which NWAs allow hunting and what restrictions or requirements apply.

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. 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**.

Important Updates to the Hunting Regulations for Ontario

New open season for Sandhill Cranes

- In all areas of the Hudson-James Bay District.
- On farmland only in the Northern and Central Districts in provincial WMUs 23, 24, 27 to 30, 36, 37, 39 to 43, 45, 47 and 48.
- Restricted to Canadian residents.
- The daily bag and possession limits are both 1.

Potential Sandhill Crane hunters are encouraged to visit ["Migratory game bird hunting - Canada.ca"](https://www.canada.ca/en/migratory-birds/hunting.html) to learn how they can help with monitoring efforts and how to identify Sandhill Cranes.

Southern District

- The daily bag limit restriction for Canada and Cackling Geese in provincial WMU 65 has been removed. For the 2026-2027 season, the limit is now 5 from September 26 to December 30.
- In provincial WMUs 65, 66, 67 and 69B, the spring open season for Snow and Ross's Geese has been shortened by 62 days and is now from April 1 to April 30 (only on farmland). The daily bag limit has decreased from 20 to 12.

In provincial WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 93

- The early season for Canada and Cackling Geese remains unchanged. For 2026-2027, it is September 10 to September 20.
- The regular season for Canada and Cackling Geese and for Snow and Ross's Geese in 2026-2027 opens on October 3, the Saturday following the opening of the duck season.
- There is a 7-day winter season for Canada and Cackling Geese and for Snow and Ross's Geese, which for 2026-2027 is February 27 to March 5.

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

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)
	Harlequin Ducks	No open season	N/A	N/A
	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
	Sandhill Cranes	September 1 to September 14, for residents of Canada only	1	1
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)
	Harlequin Ducks	No open season	N/A	N/A
	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
	Sandhill Cranes	September 12 to September 25, only for residents of Canada and on farmland The season is only open in WMUs 23, 24, 27 to 30, 36, 37, 39 to 41 and 45.	1	1
Central District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks), combined	September 19 to January 3	6 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye)	18 (not more than 1 may be Barrow's Goldeneye)
	Harlequin Ducks	No open season	N/A	N/A
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 1 to September 18	10	No limit
		September 19 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 19 to January 3	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 19 to January 3	10	30
	Mourning Doves	September 1 to November 30	15	45
	Sandhill Cranes	September 12 to September 25, only for residents of Canada and on farmland The season is only open in WMUs 42, 43, 47 and 48.	1	1

Area	Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Southern District	Ducks (other than Harlequin Ducks), combined	September 26 to January 10	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)	
	Harlequin Ducks	No open season	N/A	N/A
	Canada Geese and Cackling Geese, combined	September 10 to September 20	10 (in WMUs 60 to 81, 83, 86 to 92 and 95)	No limit
			8 (in WMUs 82, 84, 85, 93 and 94)	
		September 26 to December 30 (in WMUs 60 to 68, 69B, 74 to 76, 82 to 85, 94 and 95)	5 (in WMUs 60 to 68, 69B, 74 to 76, 83 and 95 from September 26 to October 30)	
			3 (in WMUs 82, 84 and 85 from September 26 to October 30)	
			5 (in WMUs 60 to 68, 69B, 74 to 76, 82 to 85 and 95 from October 31 to December 30)	
			3 (in WMU 94)	
		October 3 to December 30 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 93)	5 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 92 from October 3 to October 30)	
			3 (in WMU 93 from October 3 to October 30)	
			5 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 93 from October 31 to December 30)	
		February 27 to March 5 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 93)	10 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 92)	
			8 (in WMU 93)	
	Snow Geese and Ross's Geese, combined	September 26 to January 10 (in WMUs 60 to 68, 69B, 74 to 76, 82 to 85, 94 and 95)	20	No limit
		October 3 to January 10 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 93)		
		February 27 to March 5 (in WMUs 69A, 70 to 73, 77 to 81 and 86 to 93)		
	Geese (other than Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Snow Geese and Ross's Geese), combined	September 26 to January 10	5	15
	Rails (other than Yellow Rails and King Rails), Coots and Gallinules, combined	September 26 to January 10	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 26 to January 10	10	30
	Mourning Doves	September 1 to November 30	15	45
	Sandhill Cranes	No open season	N/A	N/A

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 26 to January 10	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.
		April 1 to April 30 (only on farmland)	12		

Hunting Hours: No person shall hunt earlier than half an hour before sunrise or later than half an hour after sunset.

Consultation Process and Migratory Birds Regulatory Reports

There is a national consultation process which includes a report on the population status of migratory game birds and a proposal report that provides an opportunity to participate in developing the hunting regulations. To learn more, visit "[Migratory birds regulatory report series - Canada.ca](#)".

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

Contact us:
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service

Regional Office
4905 Dufferin Street
Toronto, ON 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 visit:
reportband.gov