

# PROPOSED MARYLAND MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR THE 2026-27 HUNTING SEASON

## SPECIAL EARLY RESIDENT POPULATION CANADA GEESE

***Federal framework: A 15-day special season may be held between September 1 – 15 in the Eastern zone and a 25-day season between September 1 - 25 in the Western zone.***

### Proposed Season Dates

Eastern Zone                      Sept. 1, 2026 - Sept 15, 2026

Western Zone                      Sept. 1, 2026 - Sept 25, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 8 in both zones. Possession limit is 3 times the daily limit.

Eastern Hunt Zone: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that part of Anne Arundel County east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County east of 301 to the Virginia line.

Western Hunt Zone: Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Montgomery and Washington Counties; and that part of Anne Arundel County west of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County west of 301 to the Virginia line.

Shotguns capable of holding more than 3 shells may be used. Shooting hours in both zones are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

## SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON

***Federal framework: States may select a 9-day season to be held between September 1 and 30. Teal season may not run concurrently with other seasons (resident Canada goose) that allow special considerations such as modified shooting hours or unplugged guns.***

Proposed Season Dates              Sept. 17, 2026 - Sept. 26, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 6 blue-winged or green-winged teal, singly or in aggregate. The possession limit is 3 times the daily bag limit.

September Teal Hunt Zone: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; that part of Anne Arundel County east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97, Route 3; that part of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County east of 301 to the Virginia line. Shooting hours for teal during this season are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

## DUCKS, COOTS and MERGANSERS

***Federal Framework: A 60-day season may be held between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31.***

Proposed **Eastern Zone** Season Dates      Oct. 10, 2026 - Oct. 17, 2026  
Nov. 14, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
Dec. 15, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2027

Black Duck    Nov. 14, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
Dec. 15, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2027

**The Eastern Duck Hunting Zone Description:** That portion of the state not included in the Western Duck Hunting Zone

Proposed **Western Zone** Season Dates      Oct. 3, 2026 - Oct. 17, 2026  
Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
Dec. 15, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2027

Black Duck    Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
Dec. 15, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2027

**The Western Duck Hunting Zone Description:** Allegany, Carroll, Garrett, Frederick and Washington counties; and: those portions of Baltimore, Howard, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties west of a line beginning at I83 at the Pennsylvania state line, following I83 south to the intersection of I83 and I695 (Outer Loop), south following I695 (Outer Loop) to its intersection with I95, south following I95 to its intersection with I495 (Outer Loop), and following I495 (Outer Loop) to the Virginia shore of the Potomac River

Duck Daily Bag and Possession Limits for Eastern and Western Duck Zones: The daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is 6. The 6-duck limit shall consist of no more than 4 sea ducks (no more than 3 long-tailed ducks, 3 scoters or 3 eiders), 4 mallards (no more than 2 hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 3 pintails, 2 redheads, 1 scaup\*, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks (during black duck open season), 1 fulvous tree duck and 1 mottled duck. All other species of ducks (except harlequin duck) may be taken up to the 6-duck limit. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit. In addition to the duck bag limit hunters may take 15 coots per day. No open season for harlequin ducks and swans.

\*Scaup hybrid season: Daily bag limit is 1 except between Jan. 9, 2027 - Jan 31, 2027 when 2 scaup per day may be harvested.

**Note: Sea ducks count towards the regular duck daily bag limit. Only sea ducks may be harvested where the Sea Duck Zone does not overlap with the Offshore Waterfowl Hunting Zone.**

## YOUTH, VETERAN, AND MILITARY WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

***Federal Framework: States may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Youth, Veteran, and Military Waterfowl Hunting Days,” in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holiday or other non-school day when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck season framework, within any split of a regular duck season or within any other open season on migratory bird. Military veterans (as defined in Section 101 of title 38, United States Code) of any age and members of the armed forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on Active duty (other than for training) can participate in these two hunt days.***

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 7, 2026, and Feb. 6, 2027

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is 6. The 6-duck limit shall consist of no more than 4 sea ducks (no more than 3 long-tailed ducks, 3 scoters or 3 eiders), 4 mallards (no more than 2 hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 2 scaup, 3 pintails, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks, 1 fulvous tree duck and 1 mottled duck. All other species of ducks (except harlequin duck) may be taken up to the 6-duck limit. In addition, youth hunters may take 2 Canada geese in the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone or 5 Canada Geese in the Late Resident Canada Goose Hunt Zone, 1 brant, 25 light geese and 15 coots. No open season for harlequin ducks and swans.

Any licensed hunter 16 years old or younger may participate during these one-day hunts. Youth of this age who are exempt from the Maryland hunting license requirements may also participate. Youth waterfowl hunters must possess a receipt showing they purchased a \$9 Maryland Migratory Game Bird Hunting Stamp. A Federal Migratory Hunting and Conservation Stamp is required of youth hunters who are 16 years old. Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult at least 21 years old that holds a valid Maryland hunting license or is exempt from the hunting license requirements. The accompanying adult may call waterfowl, assist with decoys, and retrieve downed birds but may not possess a hunting weapon.

## ATLANTIC POPULATION (AP) CANADA GEESE

***Federal Framework: AP Zone: A 45-day season may be held between November 15 and February 5, with a 2-bird daily bag limit. These seasons also include white-fronted geese. Unless specified otherwise, seasons may be split into two segments.***

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 24, 2026 – Nov. 27, 2026  
Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027

Bag Limit: 2 per day

AP Zone: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, St. Mary’s, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97 and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; and that portion of Prince George’s County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line.

**AF RESIDENT POPULATION CANADA GEESE**

***Federal Framework: An 80-day season may be held between November 15 and March 10, with a 5-bird daily bag limit. The season may be split into 3 segments.***

**Late Southern Maryland Resident Canada Goose Zone**

<b>Proposed Season Dates</b>	<b>Daily Bag Limit</b>
Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 23, 2026	5 per day*
Nov. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026	2 per day*
Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027	2 per day*
Feb. 1, 2027 – Mar. 10, 2027	5 per day*

Zone Boundaries includes these counties: Montgomery; and that portion of Prince George’s County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County west of Route 301 to the Virginia line.

\*Includes Canada geese, cackling geese and white-fronted geese singly or in aggregate.

**Late Western Maryland Resident Canada Goose Zone**

Proposed Season Dates:      Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
   Dec. 15, 2026 - Mar. 10, 2027

Daily Bag Limit:                      5 per day\*

Zone Boundaries includes these counties: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties; and that portion of Carroll County west of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97 and west of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line.

**ATLANTIC BRANT**

***Federal Framework: States may select a 30-day season between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31, with a 1-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.***

Proposed Season Dates:      Dec. 28, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2027

Daily Bag Limit:                      1 per day

**LIGHT GEESE** This section edited to correct errors 2/16/2027

***Federal Framework: States may select a 107-day season between October 1 and March 10, with a 25-bird daily bag limit and no possession limit. States may split their seasons into three segments.***

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 5, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026 Statewide  
Nov. 30, 2026 – Feb. 6, 2027 Statewide  
Feb. 8, 2027 – March 10, 2027 \*Eastern Zone only  
\*\*Special methods authorized

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day No possession limit.  
Includes greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese singly or in aggregate.

\* Eastern Zone Hunt Area: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. The Special Sea Duck Zone is excluded from this hunt area.

\*\*The following special methods may be used from February 8, 2027 – March 10, 2027: (1) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; and (2) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese.

## **LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER**

***Federal Framework: The conservation order allows new methods of taking light geese, allows shooting hours for light geese to end one-half hour after sunset and imposes no daily bag limits for light geese. Control activities may be conducted only when all waterfowl (including light goose) and crane hunting seasons, excluding falconry, are closed.***

Proposed Season Dates: TBD

Daily Bag Limit: No Limit, no possession limit

Hunt Area: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. The Special Sea Duck Zone is excluded from this hunt area.

### **Special Regulations during Light Goose Conservation Order Season:**

(1) Participating hunters must possess a \$5 Snow Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season Permit while hunting light geese during this season; (2) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; (3) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese; and (4) Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

*Note: Shooting hours for regular waterfowl seasons are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset except for (1) Resident Canada geese during September seasons when shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset, and (2) for light geese during the Light Goose Conservation Order Season when shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset. All season dates are inclusive. There is no possession limit for light geese; for all other waterfowl, the possession limit is three times the daily bag limit. In the Atlantic Flyway States of Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and North Carolina where Sunday hunting is prohibited statewide by State law, all Sundays are closed to all take of migratory waterfowl (including mergansers and coots).*

## **WEBLESS MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS (Doves, Rails, Snipe and Woodcock)**

### **MOURNING DOVE**

***Federal Framework: States may select a 90-day season between September 1 and January 31 with a 15-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into three segments.***

Proposed Season Dates:      Sept. 1, 2026 - Oct. 17, 2026  
   Oct. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
   Dec. 19, 2026 - Jan. 9, 2027

Daily Bag Limit:                15 per day

### **KING AND CLAPPER RAIL**

***Federal Framework: States may select a 70-day season between September 1 and the last Sunday in January with a 10-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.***

Proposed Season Dates:      Sept. 1, 2026 - Nov. 20, 2026

Daily Bag Limit:                10 per day (No more than 1 King Rail)

### **SORA AND VIRGINIA RAIL**

***Federal Framework: States may select a 70-day season between September 1 and the last Sunday in January with a 25-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.***

Proposed Season Dates:      Sept. 1, 2026 - Nov. 20, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day

### **COMMON SNIPE**

***Federal Framework: States may select a 107-day season between September 1 and January 31 with an 8-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.***

Proposed Season Dates: Sept. 26, 2026 - Jan 28, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 8 per day

### **WOODCOCK**

***Federal Framework: States may select a 45-day season between October 1 and January 31 with a 3-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.***

Proposed Season Dates: Oct. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026  
Jan. 11, 2027 - Jan. 27, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 3 per day

For additional information on migratory game bird populations, regulations, where to hunt, and more go the [DNR Waterfowl Page](#).