

# 2026-27 MAINE MIGRATORY GAME BIRD QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Please reference the *Maine 2026-27 Summary of Hunting Laws* for more details, available at [mefishwildlife.com/huntinglaws](http://mefishwildlife.com/huntinglaws).



## MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

For the purpose of this section, migratory game birds include and are limited to species in the following families: 1. Anatidae (wild ducks, geese, and brant); 2. Rallidae (rails, coots, moorhens and gallinules); and 3. Scolopacidae (woodcock and snipe). Except as expressly provided in the regulations, it is unlawful to hunt, capture, kill, take, possess, transport, buy or sell any migratory game bird or part thereof.

## LICENSES

To hunt in Maine, you need to have one of the 30+ hunting licenses available. These vary by category of game, equipment used, resident status, age, and other factors.

Go to [mefishwildlife.com](http://mefishwildlife.com) to see which license type is right for you, and to read what the license allows, when it allows it, and what permits are included or need to be purchased separately.

## STAMPS

Waterfowl hunters age 16 and up must purchase state waterfowl permits and federal duck stamps. 16-year-olds still hunting on a junior license may hunt on a youth day, but need a Federal duck stamp. A federal EStamp can be purchased online through participating state websites found at [fws.gov/service/buy-duck-stamp-or-e-stamp](http://fws.gov/service/buy-duck-stamp-or-e-stamp).

Migratory waterfowl permits are not required to hunt Crow, Woodcock, Common Snipe, Sora & Virginia Rails, or Gallinules. A pheasant permit is required to hunt pheasant in York and Cumberland counties.

## OPERATION GAME THIEF

Call 1-800-ALERT US (253-7887) to report game law violations. Caller identification protected. Rewards paid. Poachers are thieves — help us stop them.



## SUNDAY HUNTING IS ILLEGAL IN MAINE

### LEGAL HUNTING HOURS FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS:

1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset.



## BAND RECOVERY REPORTS

Anyone finding a band or recovering one while hunting should log onto: [reportband.gov](http://reportband.gov)

Results will provide better estimates of survival and harvest rates and will reduce high costs associated with banding studies.

## HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM

If you plan to hunt woodcock, ducks, geese, snipe, rails, or coots, you are required to indicate on your license your intention of doing so at the time you purchase your license. The information will be used by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.).

## ETHICS ARE WHAT WE DO WHEN NO ONE ELSE IS WATCHING

In the Maine woods, rarely will anyone be there to notice your ethical behavior, but the landowner and the hunters that follow will greatly appreciate it. Ethical behavior is vital to Maine's sporting future, and it encourages landowners to keep their property open for all to enjoy. So remember: always respect the rights of landowners, and please *ask first*.

## OUTDOOR PARTNERS LANDOWNER RELATIONS PROGRAM

For \$15.00, you can become an Outdoor Partner and support the MDIFW landowner relations program, which works to preserve and enhance access, helps landowners with access issues, and promotes responsible, ethical sporting behavior.

Each year when you make a contribution to the Outdoor Partners Program, you are entered into our weekly drawing for a chance to win exclusive merchandise from our sponsoring businesses and organizations. You can join at any time – either as an add-on to your license purchase or at [mefishwildlife.com/outdoorpartners](http://mefishwildlife.com/outdoorpartners).



The following are general dates for the 2026-2027 season. Please reference the *Maine 2026-27 Summary of Hunting Laws*, available at [mefishwildlife.com/huntinglaws](http://mefishwildlife.com/huntinglaws).

## 2026-27 MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

| SPECIES                                                                                                           |                                      | SEASON             |                    | LIMITS                                                                                                                                                                      |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | FIRST DAY          | LAST DAY           | DAILY BAG                                                                                                                                                                   | POSSESSION |
| Crows*                                                                                                            | Wildlife Management Districts 1 - 6  | August 1, 2026     | September 19, 2026 | No Limit                                                                                                                                                                    |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | January 30, 2027   | April 15, 2027     |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   | Wildlife Management Districts 7 - 29 | August 1, 2026     | September 19, 2026 |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | January 15, 2027   | March 31, 2027     |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
| Common Snipe**                                                                                                    |                                      | September 1, 2026  | January 2, 2027    | 8                                                                                                                                                                           | 24         |
| Woodcock**                                                                                                        |                                      | September 26, 2026 | November 17, 2026  | 3                                                                                                                                                                           | 9          |
| Sora & Virginia Rails (and Gallinules)***                                                                         |                                      | September 1, 2026  | November 20, 2026  | 25 <i>Single or in aggregate</i> 25                                                                                                                                         |            |
| Canada Goose (Early)                                                                                              | North Zone                           | September 1, 2026  | September 25, 2026 | 8                                                                                                                                                                           | 24         |
|                                                                                                                   | South Zone                           | September 1, 2026  | September 25, 2026 | 10                                                                                                                                                                          | 30         |
|                                                                                                                   | Coastal Zone                         | September 1, 2026  | September 25, 2026 | 10                                                                                                                                                                          | 30         |
| Canada Goose<br><i>Regular, White-Fronted Geese</i>                                                               | North Zone                           | October 1, 2026    | December 9, 2026   | 2                                                                                                                                                                           | 6          |
|                                                                                                                   | South Zone                           | October 1, 2026    | October 10, 2026   |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | October 29, 2026   | December 26, 2026  |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   | Coastal Zone                         | October 3, 2026    | October 10, 2026   | 3                                                                                                                                                                           | 9          |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | October 24, 2026   | January 5, 2027    |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
| Snow Geese<br><i>Including Blue Geese</i>                                                                         |                                      | October 1, 2026    | January 30, 2027   | 25                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| Ducks<br><i>Including all duck species unless listed in exceptions on page 37, Mergansers, and American Coots</i> | North Zone                           | September 28, 2026 | December 5, 2026   | 6                                                                                                                                                                           | 18         |
|                                                                                                                   | South Zone                           | October 1, 2026    | October 10, 2026   |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | October 29, 2026   | December 26, 2026  | <i>Species-specific bag limits may be found on page 37. All duck species not listed under exceptions on page 37 have a daily bag limit of 4 and possession limit of 12.</i> |            |
|                                                                                                                   | Coastal Zone                         | October 3, 2026    | October 10, 2026   |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | November 5, 2026   | January 5, 2027    |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
| Brant                                                                                                             | North Zone                           | September 28, 2026 | October 31, 2026   | 1                                                                                                                                                                           | 3          |
|                                                                                                                   | South Zone                           | October 1, 2026    | October 10, 2026   |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | October 29, 2026   | November 21, 2026  |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   | Coastal Zone                         | October 3, 2026    | October 10, 2026   |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |
|                                                                                                                   |                                      | December 10, 2026  | January 5, 2026    |                                                                                                                                                                             |            |

All dates are inclusive except that hunting is prohibited on Sunday.

\*Crows are neither migratory waterfowl or migratory game birds. The use of lead shot and the use of a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells is permitted. A migratory waterfowl stamp is not required. Use of electronic calls is permitted.

\*\*Woodcock & Snipe are considered migratory game birds, not migratory waterfowl. The use of lead shot is permitted.

The use of a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells is prohibited. A migratory waterfowl stamp is not required.

\*\*\*Rails are considered migratory game birds not migratory waterfowl. The use of lead shot and a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells is prohibited. A migratory waterfowl stamp is not required.

## 2026-27 MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

| SPECIES AND AREA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              | SEASONS                                |                   | LIMITS                                                                                               |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |              | FIRST DAY                              | LAST DAY          | DAILY BAG                                                                                            | POSSESSION |
| <b>Special Falconry Season</b><br><i>In addition to the regular migratory bird season (for the take of Ducks, Mergansers and American Coots)</i>                                                                                                                                                              | North Zone   | December 15, 2026                      | February 4, 2027  | 3                                                                                                    | 9          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | South Zone   | January 7, 2027                        | February 27, 2027 | <i>Respectively, singly or in aggregate Species Restrictions Apply</i>                               |            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Coastal Zone | January 7, 2027                        | February 27, 2027 |                                                                                                      |            |
| <b>Special Youth Waterfowl Hunts</b><br><i>All duck species except Harlequins, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Moorhens and Gallinules – may be hunted on these days, including geese. For the September 19, October 17, and December 12 youth days, the goose limit is under the Regular Season daily bag limit.</i> | North Zone   | September 19, 2026 & December 12, 2026 |                   | <i>Special regulations apply to youth and accompanying adult. Please see Junior Hunters section.</i> |            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | South Zone   | September 19, 2026 - October 17, 2026  |                   |                                                                                                      |            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Coastal Zone | September 26, 2026 - October 17, 2026  |                   |                                                                                                      |            |

## DAILY BAG LIMIT EXCEPTIONS

|                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Harlequin Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneye, Moorhens and Gallinules | Closed Season                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| American Coots                                               | In addition to the 6 duck daily bag limit, hunters may harvest 5 coots. It is unlawful to possess more than 15 coots at any time.                                                                                                                                                          |
| Mottled Ducks, Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Scaup and Hen Eider  | The daily limit on these species is 1 bird; possession limit is 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Black Duck, Redhead, Hen Mallards, Canvasback and Eider      | The daily limit on these species is 2 birds; possession limit is 6.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Mallards                                                     | The daily limit is 4 (2 hen mallards); possession limit is 12 (6 hen mallards).                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Mergansers (Common, Red-breasted and Hooded)                 | In addition to the 6 duck daily bag limit, hunters may harvest 5 mergansers in the aggregate, with a species specific limit of 5. It is unlawful to possess more than 15 mergansers at any time.                                                                                           |
| Sea Ducks (Scoter, Eider, and Long-Tailed Duck)              | The daily limit is 3 by species (4 total sea ducks), possession limit is 9 by species (12 total seas ducks). Except that the daily bag limit for eiders is 2, not to exceed 1 hen eider; and possession limit for hen eiders is 3, with the total possession limit for all eiders being 9. |
| Northern Pintails and Wood Ducks                             | The daily limit is 3 birds, possession limit is 9.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 2026-27 MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTER'S LEGAL HUNTING HOURS

| LEGAL HUNTING HOURS |      |       | LEGAL HUNTING HOURS |      |       |
|---------------------|------|-------|---------------------|------|-------|
| DATE                | OPEN | CLOSE | DATE                | OPEN | CLOSE |
| 9/1/26              | 5:27 | 7:12  | 11/17/26            | 6:05 | 4:05  |
| 9/2/26              | 5:29 | 7:10  | 11/18/26            | 6:06 | 4:04  |
| 9/3/26              | 5:30 | 7:08  | 11/19/26            | 6:08 | 4:03  |
| 9/4/26              | 5:31 | 7:06  | 11/20/26            | 6:09 | 4:02  |
| 9/5/26              | 5:32 | 7:05  | 11/21/26            | 6:10 | 4:01  |
| 9/7/26              | 5:35 | 7:01  | 11/23/26            | 6:13 | 4:00  |
| 9/8/26              | 5:36 | 6:59  | 11/24/26            | 6:14 | 3:59  |
| 9/9/26              | 5:37 | 6:57  | 11/25/26            | 6:15 | 3:59  |
| 9/10/26             | 5:38 | 6:55  | 11/26/26            | 6:17 | 3:58  |
| 9/11/26             | 5:39 | 6:53  | 11/27/26            | 6:18 | 3:57  |
| 9/12/26             | 5:40 | 6:51  | 11/28/26            | 6:19 | 3:57  |
| 9/14/26             | 5:43 | 6:48  | 11/30/26            | 6:21 | 3:56  |
| 9/15/26             | 5:44 | 6:46  | 12/1/26             | 6:23 | 3:56  |
| 9/16/26             | 5:45 | 6:44  | 12/2/26             | 6:24 | 3:55  |
| 9/17/26             | 5:46 | 6:42  | 12/3/26             | 6:25 | 3:55  |
| 9/18/26             | 5:48 | 6:40  | 12/4/26             | 6:26 | 3:55  |
| 9/19/26             | 5:49 | 6:38  | 12/5/26             | 6:27 | 3:54  |
| 9/21/26             | 5:51 | 6:34  | 12/7/26             | 6:29 | 3:54  |
| 9/22/26             | 5:52 | 6:33  | 12/8/26             | 6:30 | 3:54  |
| 9/23/26             | 5:53 | 6:31  | 12/9/26             | 6:31 | 3:54  |
| 9/24/26             | 5:55 | 6:29  | 12/10/26            | 6:32 | 3:54  |
| 9/25/26             | 5:56 | 6:27  | 12/11/26            | 6:33 | 3:54  |
| 9/26/26             | 5:57 | 6:25  | 12/12/26            | 6:34 | 3:54  |
| 9/28/26             | 6:00 | 6:21  | 12/14/26            | 6:35 | 3:55  |
| 9/29/26             | 6:01 | 6:19  | 12/15/26            | 6:36 | 3:55  |
| 9/30/26             | 6:02 | 6:17  | 12/16/26            | 6:37 | 3:55  |
| 10/1/26             | 6:03 | 6:16  | 12/17/26            | 6:37 | 3:55  |
| 10/2/26             | 6:04 | 6:14  | 12/18/26            | 6:38 | 3:56  |
| 10/3/26             | 6:06 | 6:12  | 12/19/26            | 6:39 | 3:56  |
| 10/5/26             | 6:08 | 6:08  | 12/21/26            | 6:40 | 3:57  |
| 10/6/26             | 6:09 | 6:06  | 12/22/26            | 6:40 | 3:57  |
| 10/7/26             | 6:11 | 6:04  | 12/23/26            | 6:41 | 3:58  |
| 10/8/26             | 6:12 | 6:03  | 12/24/26            | 6:41 | 3:59  |
| 10/9/26             | 6:13 | 6:01  | 12/25/26            | 6:41 | 3:59  |
| 10/10/26            | 6:14 | 5:59  | 12/26/26            | 6:42 | 4:00  |
| 10/12/26            | 6:17 | 5:56  | 12/28/26            | 6:42 | 4:01  |
| 10/13/26            | 6:18 | 5:54  | 12/29/26            | 6:42 | 4:02  |
| 10/14/26            | 6:19 | 5:52  | 12/30/26            | 6:43 | 4:03  |
| 10/15/26            | 6:21 | 5:50  | 12/31/26            | 6:43 | 4:04  |
| 10/16/26            | 6:22 | 5:49  | 1/1/27              | 6:43 | 4:05  |
| 10/17/26            | 6:23 | 5:47  | 1/2/27              | 6:43 | 4:06  |
| 10/19/26            | 6:26 | 5:43  | 1/4/27              | 6:43 | 4:08  |
| 10/20/26            | 6:27 | 5:42  | 1/5/27              | 6:43 | 4:09  |
| 10/21/26            | 6:28 | 5:40  | 1/6/27              | 6:42 | 4:10  |
| 10/22/26            | 6:30 | 5:39  | 1/7/27              | 6:42 | 4:11  |
| 10/23/26            | 6:31 | 5:37  | 1/8/27              | 6:42 | 4:12  |
| 10/24/26            | 6:32 | 5:35  | 1/9/27              | 6:42 | 4:13  |
| 10/26/26            | 6:35 | 5:32  | 1/11/27             | 6:41 | 4:15  |
| 10/27/26            | 6:36 | 5:31  | 1/12/27             | 6:41 | 4:16  |
| 10/28/26            | 6:38 | 5:29  | 1/13/27             | 6:40 | 4:18  |
| 10/29/26            | 6:39 | 5:28  | 1/14/27             | 6:40 | 4:19  |
| 10/30/26            | 6:41 | 5:26  | 1/15/27             | 6:39 | 4:20  |
| 10/31/26            | 6:42 | 5:25  | 1/16/27             | 6:39 | 4:21  |
| 11/2/26             | 5:45 | 4:22  | 1/18/27             | 6:37 | 4:24  |
| 11/3/26             | 5:46 | 4:21  | 1/19/27             | 6:37 | 4:25  |
| 11/4/26             | 5:47 | 4:19  | 1/20/27             | 6:36 | 4:27  |
| 11/5/26             | 5:49 | 4:18  | 1/21/27             | 6:35 | 4:28  |
| 11/6/26             | 5:50 | 4:17  | 1/22/27             | 6:34 | 4:29  |
| 11/7/26             | 5:51 | 4:16  | 1/23/27             | 6:34 | 4:31  |
| 11/9/26             | 5:54 | 4:13  | 1/25/27             | 6:32 | 4:33  |
| 11/10/26            | 5:56 | 4:12  | 1/26/27             | 6:31 | 4:35  |
| 11/11/26            | 5:57 | 4:11  | 1/27/27             | 6:30 | 4:36  |
| 11/12/26            | 5:58 | 4:10  | 1/28/27             | 6:29 | 4:38  |
| 11/13/26            | 6:00 | 4:09  | 1/29/27             | 6:28 | 4:39  |
| 11/14/26            | 6:01 | 4:08  | 1/30/27             | 6:27 | 4:40  |
| 11/16/26            | 6:04 | 4:06  |                     |      |       |

All times listed through October 31 are Eastern Daylight Time; after that date, they are Eastern Standard Time (for Bangor).