

2025-26 MAINE MIGRATORY GAME BIRD QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Please reference the *Maine 2025-26 Summary of Hunting Laws* for more details, available at 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 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.

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

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.



The following are general dates for the 2025-2026 season. Please reference the *Maine 2025-26 Summary of Hunting Laws*, available at mefishwildlife.com/huntinglaws.

2025-26 MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

SPECIES		SEASON		LIMITS	
		FIRST DAY	LAST DAY	DAILY BAG	POSSESSION
Crows*	Wildlife Management Districts 1 - 6	August 1, 2025	September 20, 2025	No Limit	
		February 2, 2026	April 15, 2026		
	Wildlife Management Districts 7 - 29	August 1, 2025	September 20, 2025		
		January 17, 2026	March 31, 2026		
Common Snipe**		September 1, 2025	January 2, 2026	8	24
Woodcock**		September 27, 2025	November 18, 2025	3	9
Rails (Sora And Virginia)***		September 1, 2025	November 20, 2025	25 <i>Single or in aggregate</i> 25	
Canada Goose (Early)	North Zone	September 1, 2025	September 25, 2025	8	24
	South Zone	September 1, 2025	September 25, 2025	10	30
	Coastal Zone	September 1, 2025	September 25, 2025	10	30
Canada Goose <i>Regular, White-Fronted Geese</i>	North Zone	October 1, 2025	December 9, 2025	2	6
	South Zone	October 1, 2025	October 11, 2025		
		October 29, 2025	December 25, 2025		
	Coastal Zone	October 4, 2025	October 11, 2025	3	9
		October 25, 2025	January 6, 2026		
Snow Geese <i>Including Blue Geese</i>		October 1, 2025	January 30, 2026	25	
Ducks <i>Including all duck species unless listed in exceptions on page 37, Mergansers, and American Coots</i>	North Zone	September 29, 2025	December 6, 2025	6	18
	South Zone	October 1, 2025	October 11, 2025		
		October 29, 2025	December 25, 2025		
	Coastal Zone	October 4, 2025	October 11, 2025	<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>	
		November 6, 2025	January 6, 2026		
Brant	North Zone	September 29, 2025	November 1, 2025	1	3
	South Zone	October 1, 2025	October 11, 2025		
		October 29, 2025	November 20, 2025		
	Coastal Zone	October 4, 2025	October 11, 2025		
		December 11, 2025	January 6, 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.

2025-26 MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

SPECIES AND AREA		SEASONS		LIMITS	
		FIRST DAY	LAST DAY	DAILY BAG	POSSESSION
Special Falconry Season <i>In addition to the regular migratory bird season (for the take of Ducks, Mergansers and American Coots)</i>	North Zone	December 15, 2025	February 4, 2026	3	9
	South Zone	January 7, 2026	February 27, 2026	<i>Respectively, singly or in aggregate Species Restrictions Apply</i>	
	Coastal Zone	January 7, 2026	February 27, 2026		
Special Youth Waterfowl Hunts <i>All duck species except Harlequins, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Moorhens and Gallinules – may be hunted on these days, including geese. For the September 27, October 18, and December 13 youth days, the goose limit is under the Regular Season daily bag limit.</i>	North Zone	September 20, 2025 & December 13, 2025		<i>Special regulations apply to youth and accompanying adult. Please see Junior Hunters section.</i>	
	South Zone	September 20, 2025 & October 18, 2025			
	Coastal Zone	September 27, 2025 & October 18, 2025			

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.

2025-26 MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTER'S LEGAL HUNTING HOURS

LEGAL HUNTING HOURS			LEGAL HUNTING HOURS		
DATE	OPEN	CLOSE	DATE	OPEN	CLOSE
9/1/25	5:28	7:11	11/17/25	6:05	4:04
9/2/25	5:29	7:10	11/18/25	6:07	4:04
9/3/25	5:30	7:08	11/19/25	6:08	4:03
9/4/25	5:31	7:06	11/20/25	6:09	4:02
9/5/25	5:32	7:04	11/21/25	6:11	4:01
9/6/25	5:34	7:02	11/22/25	6:12	4:00
9/8/25	5:36	6:59	11/24/25	6:14	3:59
9/9/25	5:37	6:57	11/25/25	6:16	3:58
9/10/25	5:38	6:55	11/26/25	6:17	3:58
9/11/25	5:40	6:53	11/27/25	6:18	3:57
9/12/25	5:41	6:51	11/28/25	6:19	3:57
9/13/25	5:42	6:49	11/29/25	6:21	3:56
9/15/25	5:44	6:45	12/1/25	6:23	3:56
9/16/25	5:45	6:43	12/2/25	6:24	3:55
9/17/25	5:47	6:42	12/3/25	6:25	3:55
9/18/25	5:48	6:40	12/4/25	6:26	3:55
9/19/25	5:49	6:38	12/5/25	6:27	3:54
9/20/25	5:50	6:36	12/6/25	6:28	3:54
9/22/25	5:53	6:32	12/8/25	6:30	3:54
9/23/25	5:54	6:30	12/9/25	6:31	3:54
9/24/25	5:55	6:28	12/10/25	6:32	3:54
9/25/25	5:56	6:26	12/11/25	6:33	3:54
9/26/25	5:57	6:24	12/12/25	6:34	3:54
9/27/25	5:59	6:23	12/13/25	6:35	3:54
9/29/25	6:01	6:19	12/15/25	6:36	3:55
9/30/25	6:02	6:17	12/16/25	6:37	3:55
10/1/25	6:03	6:15	12/17/25	6:37	3:55
10/2/25	6:05	6:13	12/18/25	6:38	3:56
10/3/25	6:06	6:11	12/19/25	6:39	3:56
10/4/25	6:07	6:10	12/20/25	6:39	3:57
10/6/25	6:10	6:06	12/22/25	6:40	3:58
10/7/25	6:11	6:04	12/23/25	6:41	3:58
10/8/25	6:12	6:02	12/24/25	6:41	3:59
10/9/25	6:13	6:00	12/25/25	6:41	3:59
10/10/25	6:15	5:59	12/26/25	6:42	4:00
10/11/25	6:16	5:57	12/27/25	6:42	4:01
10/13/25	6:18	5:53	12/29/25	6:42	4:02
10/14/25	6:20	5:52	12/30/25	6:43	4:03
10/15/25	6:21	5:50	12/31/25	6:43	4:04
10/16/25	6:22	5:48	1/1/26	6:43	4:05
10/17/25	6:24	5:46	1/2/26	6:43	4:06
10/18/25	6:25	5:45	1/3/26	6:43	4:07
10/20/25	6:27	5:41	1/5/26	6:43	4:09
10/21/25	6:29	5:40	1/6/26	6:42	4:10
10/22/25	6:30	5:38	1/7/26	6:42	4:11
10/23/25	6:31	5:37	1/8/26	6:42	4:12
10/24/25	6:33	5:35	1/9/26	6:42	4:13
10/25/25	6:34	5:33	1/10/26	6:41	4:14
10/27/25	6:37	5:30	1/12/26	6:41	4:17
10/28/25	6:38	5:29	1/13/26	6:40	4:18
10/29/25	6:40	5:27	1/14/26	6:40	4:19
10/30/25	6:41	5:26	1/15/26	6:39	4:20
10/31/25	6:42	5:25	1/16/26	6:39	4:22
11/1/25	6:44	5:23	1/17/26	6:38	4:23
11/3/25	5:46	4:20	1/19/26	6:37	4:26
11/4/25	5:48	4:19	1/20/26	6:36	4:27
11/5/25	5:49	4:18	1/21/26	6:35	4:28
11/6/25	5:50	4:16	1/22/26	6:34	4:30
11/7/25	5:52	4:15	1/23/26	6:33	4:31
11/8/25	5:53	4:14	1/24/26	6:33	4:32
11/10/25	5:56	4:12	1/26/26	6:31	4:35
11/11/25	5:57	4:11	1/27/26	6:30	4:37
11/12/25	5:59	4:09	1/28/26	6:29	4:38
11/13/25	6:00	4:08	1/29/26	6:28	4:39
11/14/25	6:01	4:07	1/30/26	6:27	4:41
11/15/25	6:03	4:06	1/31/26	6:26	4:42

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