

IDNR Announces Key Dates And Information For 2023-2024 Waterfowl Season

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is reminding waterfowl hunters of key dates and other information regarding the 2023-2024 waterfowl seasons.

Season update

This is the third year of a five-year waterfowl season plan that was developed in 2020. Early Canada goose and teal hunting will kick off statewide in all zones, with seasons opening Sept. 1 and Sept. 9 respectively.

In the north and central zones, the daily bag limit for Canada geese during the September portion of the season is five birds, with 15 in possession. In the south-central and south zones, the daily bag limit for Canada geese during the September portion of the season is two birds, with six in possession. The daily bag limit for teal is six for all teal species combined, with a possession limit of 18.

Additionally, rail season (sora and Virginia only) will be open statewide in all zones from Sept. 9 until Nov. 17, with a daily bag limit of 25 and possession limit of 75. Snipe season will be open statewide in all zones from Sept. 9 to Dec. 24, with a daily bag limit of 8 and possession limit of 24.

As temperatures fall and migration proceeds, Illinois will open the regular duck, Canada goose, and snow goose seasons on Oct. 21 in the north zone, Oct. 28 in the central zone, Nov. 11 in the south-central zone, and Dec. 2 in the south zone.

White-fronted goose (specklebelly) seasons will open Oct. 23 in the north zone, Nov. 5 in the central zone, and on the same dates as duck season in the south-central (Nov. 11) and south (Dec. 2) zones.

The daily limit is six ducks of any species; however, daily limit can consist of no more than four mallards (of which no more than two can be hens), three wood ducks, two redheads, two canvasbacks, two black ducks, one pintail and one mottled duck.

Scaup (bluebills) will have a daily limit of two for the first 45 days of the season in each zone and one for the last 15 days of the season in each zone.

The daily bag limit of mergansers is five, only two of which may be hooded mergansers. The possession limit for ducks and mergansers is three times the daily bag limit (18 and 15, respectively) by species and sex.

During the regular season, Canada goose daily limits will be three with a possession limit of nine. White-fronted goose daily bag limits will be two with a possession limit of six. The snow goose daily bag limit is 20 birds, with no possession limit, during the regular hunting season.

The spring Light Goose Conservation Order will open Jan. 19 in the north zone and Feb. 1 in the central, south-central, and south zones, ending April 30 in all zones. There is no daily bag or possession limit on snow, blue, and Ross' geese during the spring conservation order.

Duck and goose permit lotteries currently open

The first lottery for the public duck and goose hunting area permits is open through Aug. 31. The second lottery will be open Sept. 1-15, with the third lottery application period open Sept. 16-28. For more information or to apply, visit <https://dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/waterfowl/onlinepermitapplication.html>

Additional details on waterfowl seasons can be found in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations 2023-2024, available online at <https://dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/hunttrapdigest.html>.

The Illinois waterfowl hunting zone maps and anticipated season dates for the 2021-2025 seasons are available online at <https://bit.ly/ILwaterfowlzones>.

Note that sunrise and sunset times are not included in the Hunting and Trapping Digest again this year. Hunters should refer to their preferred weather application or website for local sunrise and sunset information.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) reminder

In coordination with other state and federal agencies, IDNR continues to monitor for outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of HPAI that was observed in Illinois during spring 2022. Similar mortality events may occur as waterfowl arrive in Illinois from northern breeding grounds during the fall migration.

IDNR reminds waterfowl hunters to take precautions and thoroughly cook game meat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Avoid handling sick or dead waterfowl found in the field. Do not allow dogs and other pets to consume waterfowl that died from unknown causes. Further guidance for hunters can be found at https://bit.ly/USDA_HPAI.