

A current and valid hunting license (Bow and Arrow, Firearm or All-around Sportsman) is required to pursue any small game species. See page 26 for *General Hunting Regulations*. The use of dogs, unless specifically stated otherwise, is permitted to pursue any small game species except wild turkey. Hunting for those species shown on page 61 is prohibited during the statewide Six-day Firearm (deer) Season and on the Wednesday of the Permit Shotgun (deer) Season that immediately follows the Six-day Firearm Season. For exceptions, see *Coyote and Fox* and *Semi-wild and Commercial Preserves Hunting* sections below. Sunday hunting is prohibited; see *Raccoon and Opossum* below for exceptions.

Season Dates and Bag Limits: The Small Game Hunting Seasons table on page 61 lists dates, hunting hours and daily bag limits for all small game species open for hunting. Hunting with firearms is prohibited on Nov. 9, 2007 on state wildlife management areas designated as Pheasant and Quail Stamp Areas (see Pheasants below) except in tidal marshes open to an ongoing waterfowl season.

General Small Game Hunting Methods: Properly licensed hunters may hunt small game with shotguns, bow and arrow and limited hunting with small caliber rifles; see below. See also General Hunting Regulations, page 26.

- Unless specifically stated otherwise, shotguns for small game hunting may be no larger than 10-gauge or smaller than .410 caliber and capable of holding no more than three shells.
- Unless specifically stated otherwise, shot size for small game may be no larger than #4 fine shot.
- Compound bow and all other bows must meet the requirements specified in the section on *General Hunting Regulations*, page 26.
- For limited small game rifle hunting, see below for *Coyote and Fox - Special Permit Season*, *Raccoon and Opossum*, *Squirrel - Muzzleloading Rifle Season* and *Woodchuck* for restrictions.
- Property owners or their agents and occupants of dwellings that are suffering damage from opossum, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel or woodchuck may control them by lawful means at any time subject to local ordinances.

Coyote and Fox, General

Seasons: Bow and Arrow only - Sept. 29 to Nov. 9, 2007; **Firearm or Bow and Arrow** - Nov. 10, 2007 to Feb. 18, 2008.

Hours: 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset, except on Nov. 10, 2007

when hunting may not begin until 8 a.m.

Hunting with Dogs: The use of dogs is prohibited from Sept. 29 to Nov. 9 and during the Six-Day Firearm (deer) Season and the Wednesday of the Permit Shotgun (deer) Season immediately following the Six-day Firearm Season. Dogs may be used for hunting coyote and fox at all other times, except when hunting under the provisions of the Special Permit Coyote and Fox Season; see below.

Hunting Methods: Properly licensed persons hunting deer during the Six-day Firearm, Permit Muzzleloader or Permit Shotgun deer seasons may kill coyote or fox when the person is in possession of a valid deer transportation tag for the applicable deer season (i.e., before harvesting a deer). All hunting must cease immediately upon harvesting the daily deer bag limit and completing the deer transportation tag(s). Hunting coyote or fox while deer hunting may resume following the issuance of a valid New Jersey Supplemental Deer Transportation Tag for the applicable deer season (provided the season remains open and the season bag limit of deer has not been reached). Only applicable projectiles approved for deer hunting may be used to take coyote and fox incidental to deer hunting during the deer seasons described above. See chart, page 30.

Bag Limit: No limit for fox; coyote daily limit: two. **All successful coyote hunters must report any coyote harvested to the regional Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Office within 24 hours. Callers must state their name and daytime phone number.**

Coyote and Fox, Special Permit Season

In addition to the seasons outlined in the previous section, a Special Permit Coyote and Fox Season runs concurrent with the regular small game coyote and fox season. A Fish and Wildlife-issued permit is required to hunt coyote or fox under the provisions of the Special Permit Coyote and Fox Season; as follows:

Coyote/Fox permits: \$2, available at any license agent or via Fish and Wildlife's Internet license sales site (www.WildlifeLicense.com/NJ) beginning Dec. 15, 2007. A 2008 hunting license must be purchased prior to or in conjunction with the purchase of a 2008 Coyote and Fox Permit.

Seasons: Firearm or Bow and Arrow - Jan. 14 to Feb. 18, 2008.

- Shotguns may not be smaller than 12 or larger than 10 gauge and capable of holding no more than three shells.

- Shot size may not be larger than "T" or smaller than #4 fine shot.
- Muzzleloading rifles shall be no less than .44 caliber. Smoothbore muzzleloaders shall be single barreled.

Hours: Coyotes and foxes may be hunted at any time by persons in possession of a Special Permit:

- From 1/2 hour *before* sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset, hunters may use a bow, muzzleloading rifle or shotgun.
- From 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise, hunters are restricted to using 10 or 12 gauge shotguns with "T", #2 or #4 fine shot only. The use of bows and muzzleloading rifles is prohibited during these hours.

Use of dogs: The use of dogs is prohibited by holders of a special permit during this season.

Hunting methods: While hunting under the provisions of the Special Permit Coyote and Fox Season:

- Hunting methods are restricted to calling and stand hunting. No person may stalk or attempt to approach a coyote or fox for the purpose of hunting.
- A predator calling device (electronic, mouth-blown or other) must be in possession while hunting during the Special Permit Season.
- The use of dogs or bait is prohibited.
- Fluorescent hunter orange is not required but it is recommended to be worn while traveling to and from hunting areas.
- Portable lights are allowed.

Bag Limit: There is no bag limit for fox. The coyote daily bag limit is two. **All successful coyote hunters must report any coyote harvested to Fish and Wildlife Regional Law Enforcement Office within 24 hours. Callers must identify themselves by name and daytime phone number.**

Northern Bobwhite (Quail)

Northern bobwhites (quail) are native to the southern half of New Jersey. In recent years, quail populations have declined throughout their range including New Jersey. In an effort to reverse this decline in New Jersey, two quail hunting zones were delineated in 2005. North of Route 33, where wild quail populations are not known to occur, the season length is Nov. 10-Dec. 1 and Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 and Jan. 1-Feb. 18, 2008; the daily bag is seven birds. **South of Route 33, the season ends on Jan. 31 and the daily bag limit is four birds.** The reduction in season length and bag limit will be monitored to determine any impact on the native quail population.

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Small Game Hunting

REGULATIONS

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Pheasants

Pheasant zones have been eliminated. The daily bag limit is two pheasants of either-sex statewide. See exceptions below for *Semi-Wild and Commercial Preserve Hunting*.

Pheasant and Quail Stamp Areas: Anyone aged 16 and over (except 16 year olds whose youth license remains valid through Dec. 31 of the year they turn 16) hunting or possessing pheasant or quail on the following designated wildlife management areas (WMAs) shall have in possession a current and valid Pheasant and Quail Stamp (Youth hunting licenses include a pheasant and quail stamp): Assunpink, Berkshire Valley, Black River, Clinton, Colliers Mills, Dix, Flatbrook, Glassboro, Greenwood (including Pasadena-Howardsville), Heislerville, Mad Horse, Manahawkin, Manasquan River, Medford, Millville (Bevan), Nantuxent, Peaslee, Pequest, Port Republic, Stafford Forge, Tuckahoe (MacNamara), Walpack, Whittingham and Winslow. A current and valid Pheasant and Quail Stamp is also required at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Pheasant and Quail

Fish and Wildlife anticipates pheasant releases to be in excess of 50,000 birds and plans to purchase 11,000 quail for release as follows:

The Assunpink, Berkshire Valley, Black River, Clinton, Colliers Mills, Dix, Flatbrook, Glassboro, Millville, Nantuxent, Pequest, Port Republic, Tuckahoe, Walpack and Whittingham WMAs will be stocked with pheasants for the following dates:

Nov. 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, 27 and 29
Dec. 1, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 29

For the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Heislerville, Howardsville, Mad Horse, Manahawkin, Manasquan, Medford, Stafford Forge and Winslow WMAs will be stocked with pheasants for the following dates:

Nov. 10, 17, 22 and 24
Dec. 1, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 29

Greenwood Forest and Peaslee WMAs will be stocked with a combination of quail and pheasant for the following dates:

Nov. 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, 27 and 29
Dec. 1, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 29

Fish and Wildlife reminds sportsmen and sportswomen that the pheasant and quail stocking list is tentative until approved by the Fish and Game Council in early October. The schedule is subject to pheasant production and may change due to emergency weather conditions.

Raccoon and Opossum

Season: Oct. 1, 2007 to March 1, 2008, inclusive.

Hours: Hunting may not begin until one hour after sunset on Oct. 1. On all other days open during the season, the hours of hunting are one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise. Sunday hunting is permitted only between the hours of midnight (Saturday) and one hour before sunrise (Sunday).

Hunting methods: Portable lights are permitted. Fluorescent hunter orange is *encouraged but not required* on outer clothing while hunting raccoon and opossum. A current and valid rifle permit is required when possessing a .22 caliber rifle while hunting raccoon and opossum.

Bag limit: No daily or season bag limit for either raccoon or opossum.

Dog Training: Dogs may be trained during the month of September and from March 2 to May 1, inclusive. The training hours are one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise.

Semi-Wild and Commercial Preserve Hunting

Youth hunters (in possession of a valid Youth Hunting License and accompanied by a licensed, non-shooting adult) are permitted to hunt pheasant, quail and/or chukar partridge on licensed semi-wild preserves on Saturday, Nov. 3, 2007, the Youth Pheasant Hunting Day.

Hunting for certain species of game birds is allowed from Nov. 10, 2007 to March 15, 2008 on semi-wild preserves and Sept. 1, 2007 through May 1, 2008 on commercial shooting preserve lands that are properly licensed for the taking of such species. These species of game may be hunted on Sunday only on semi-wild or commercial shooting preserve lands.

All game taken on semi-wild or commercial preserves must be properly tagged before transport.

A person may legally hunt on semi-wild or commercial preserves for game species under license during the deer seasons, but no shot larger than #4 fine may be used. Pheasant of either sex may be taken. There are no daily bag or seasonal limits for pheasant, quail, chukar or mallard taken on commercial preserves. There are no daily bag limits for pheasant, quail or chukar taken on semi-wild properties. Seasonal harvests on semi-wild properties may not exceed the number of birds to be stocked as indicated on the semi-wild permit application.

Squirrel, Muzzleloading Rifle Season

Persons holding both a current and valid firearm license and rifle permit may hunt for squirrels from sunrise to one-half hour after sunset with a muzzleloading rifle (.36 caliber or smaller loaded with a single projectile) during the periods Sept. 29 to Nov. 9, 2007; and Jan. 5 to Feb. 18, 2008. Hunting for squirrel in the manner described above is restricted to the areas described below:

Those portions of Passaic, Mercer, Hunterdon, Warren, Morris and Sussex counties lying within a continuous line beginning at the intersection of the New York state line and Rt. 511 then south along Rt. 511; then south along Rt. 511 to its intersection with Rt. 46; then west along Rt. 46 to its intersection with Rt. 80; then west along Rt. 80 to its intersection with Rt. 15; then north along Rt. 15 to its intersection with the Morris-Sussex County line; then south along the Morris-Sussex County line to the Warren County line; then southwest along the Morris-Warren County line to the Hunterdon County line; then southeast along the Morris-Hunterdon County line to the Somerset County line; then south along the Somerset-Hunterdon County line to its intersection with the Mercer County line; then west and south along the Hunterdon-Mercer County line to its intersection with Rt. 31; then south along Rt. 31 to its intersection with Rt. 546; then west along Rt. 546 to the Delaware River; then north along the east bank of the Delaware River to the New York state line; then east along the New York state line to the point of beginning at Lakeside; **and** in that portion of Salem, Gloucester, Camden, Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties lying within a continuous line beginning at the intersection of Rt. 295 and the Delaware River; then east along Rt. 295 to its intersection with the New Jersey Turnpike; then east along the New Jersey Turnpike to its intersection with Rt. 40; then east along Rt. 40 to its intersection with Rt. 47; then north along Rt. 47 to its intersection with Rt. 536; then east along Rt. 536 to its intersection with Rt. 206; then north along Rt. 206 to its intersection with the New Jersey Turnpike; then northeast along the New Jersey Turnpike to its intersection with Rt. 571; then southeast along Rt. 571 to its intersection with the Garden State Parkway; then south along the Garden State Parkway to its intersection with Rt. 9 at Somers Point; then south along Rt. 9 to its intersection with Rt. 83; then west along Rt. 83 to its intersection with Rt. 47; then north

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Small Game Hunting Seasons

REGULATIONS

(RED indicates a regulation change this year)

Species (alphabetical)	Inclusive Dates	Hunting Hours	Daily Limits	Notes
Bobwhite quail	North of Route 33: Nov. 10, 2007 to Dec. 1; Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 to Feb. 18, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	7 - North	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007
	South of Route 33: Nov. 10, 2007 to Dec. 1; Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 to Jan. 31, 2008		4 - South	Pheasant and Quail Stamp required on designated areas (see Small Game Hunting, page 59)
Coyote* and Fox All coyote must be reported within 24 hrs.	Bow and Arrow only: Oct. 1 to Nov. 11, 2007	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	Coyote - 2 Fox - No limit	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007 Closed Dec. 3-8 and Dec. 12, 2007 except as noted (See Small Game Hunting, page 59).
	Firearm or Bow and Arrow: Nov. 10, 2007 to Feb. 18, 2008		Coyote - 2 Fox - No limit	
Coyote* and Fox Special Permit Season All coyote must be reported within 24 hrs.	Firearm or Bow and Arrow: Jan. 14 to Feb. 18, 2008	No restriction on hunting hours while in possession of a special season permit and hunting under the special provisions provided. See Small Game Hunting, page 59	Coyote - 2 Fox - No limit	Calling and stand hunting only. Predator calling device must be in possession. Rifle permit required if hunting with rifle Between the hours of ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise, only 10 or 12 gauge shotguns with #4 to "T" size shot may be used.
Grouse (Ruffed)	Oct. 18 to Dec. 1**; Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	2	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007
Pheasant & Chukar	Nov. 10 to Dec. 1 and Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 and Jan. 1 to Feb. 18, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	Chukar - 7 Pheasant - 2	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007 Pheasant and Quail Stamp required on designated areas (See page 59).
Rabbit, Hare and Jackrabbit	Nov. 10 to Dec. 1 and Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 and Jan. 1 to Feb. 18, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	Cottontail - 4 Hare - 1 Jackrabbit - 1	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007
Opossum & Raccoon	Oct. 1, 2007 to March 1, 2008	1 hour after sunset to 1 hour before sunrise	No limit	Rifle permit required if hunting with rifle 7:41 PM start on Oct. 1 Closed Dec. 3 - 8 and Dec. 12, 2007
Squirrel (Gray)	Sept. 29 to Dec. 1** and Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 and Jan. 1 to Feb. 18, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	5	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007
Squirrel (Eastern Gray) Muzzleloading Rifle (.36 caliber or smaller)	Sept. 29 to Nov. 9, 2007 and Jan. 5 to Feb. 18, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	5	Rifle permit required. Designated areas only (see Small Game Hunting, page 59).
Turkey (Fall, Either-Sex)	N - Oct. 29 to Nov. 3, 2007	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.	1 Turkey, (either sex) per permit	Permit required. Turkey Hunting Areas 1-11, 20 and 21 only.
Turkey (Spring Gobbler)	Apr. 14 to May 23, 2008	½ hour before sunrise to noon	1 Male Turkey per permit	Permit required. See 2008 Turkey Permit Supplement
Woodchuck — Bow, Rifle or Shotgun	Mar. 1 to Sept. 26, 2007 Mar. 1 to Oct. 1, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	No limit	Rifle permit required if hunting with rifle. Rifle hunting prohibited on state properties (see Small Game Regulations, page 59).
Woodchuck — Bow or Shotgun	Sept. 29 to Dec. 1** and Dec. 10, 11, 13-31, 2007 and Jan. 1 to Feb. 18, 2008	Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	No limit	8 a.m. start on Nov. 10, 2007
Youth Turkey Day	Apr. 12, 2008	½ hour before sunrise to noon	1 Male Wild Turkey	Permit required. See 2008 Turkey Permit Supplement.
Youth Upland Bird Day	Nov. 3, 2007	8:00 a.m. to sunset	Pheasant - 2	Selected WMAs & licensed semi-wilds (See page 24)

* All harvested coyote must be reported to a Fish and Wildlife regional Law Enforcement Office within 24 hours. Callers must identify themselves by name and daytime phone number.**

No firearm hunting is permitted on November 9, 2007 on those WMAs designated as Pheasant and Quail Stamp Areas.

Small Game Hunting

REGULATIONS

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along Rt. 47 to its intersection with Dennis Creek; then south along the west bank of Dennis Creek to its intersection with Delaware Bay; then northwest along the east shore of Delaware Bay and the Delaware River to the point of beginning.

Woodchuck

All persons in possession of a rifle (including a muzzleloading rifle) while hunting must have a current and valid rifle permit in addition to a current hunting license. Rifle hunting (of any kind) for woodchuck is prohibited on state wildlife management areas, state parks and forests or state recreation areas. Farmers and their agents may use shot not larger than #4 buckshot to control woodchucks causing damage. Hours of hunting are sunrise to one half hour after sunset. See chart below for details.



Woodchuck Season Dates	Weapon Type Permitted	Gauge, Caliber or Weight	Projectile(s)
Mar. 1 to Sept. 26, 2007 and Mar. 1 to Oct. 1, 2008	Center-fire rifle	.25 caliber or less	Hollow point, soft point or expanding lead core bullets of any weight.
		Larger than .25 caliber	Hollow point, soft point or expanding lead core bullets of any weight not exceeding 100 grains in weight.
	Rim-fire rifle	.25 caliber or less	Hollow point or soft point
	Muzzleloading rifle—single-shot, single barrel. Flintlock, percussion and in-line ignitions permitted.	No restriction	Must be loaded with a single projectile, either round ball or conical bullet.
	Bow long, recurve or compound	35 pounds pull at archer's draw length (long and recurve bows) or peak weight (compound bow)	Arrows must be fitted with a well-sharpened metal broadhead with a minimum width of 3/4"
Sept. 29 to Dec. 1, Dec. 10, 11 and 13-31, 2007; and Jan. 1 to Feb. 18, 2008	Shotgun—single or double barrel, rifled bore or smoothbore	Not larger than 10 gauge, capable of holding no more than three shells	Shot—sizes not larger than #4 fine shot
	Bow long, recurve or compound	35 pounds pull at archers draw length (long and recurve bows) or peak weight (compound bow)	Arrows must be fitted with a well-sharpened metal broadhead with a minimum width of 3/4"
	Shotgun—single or double barrel, rifled bore or smoothbore	Not larger than 10 gauge, capable of holding no more than three shells	Shot—sizes not larger than #4 fine shot

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Bryan Di Iorio, 13, says an early morning of rattling paid off by bringing in this handsome 10-pointer taken on Youth Deer Hunt Day in Morris County's Washington Township.



Photo: Ed Moore

Father and son Ed and Richard Moore teamed up on the Millville WMA so that Richard could harvest this longbeard.

Youth Turkey Hunt Day April 12, 2008 See page 26

Non-hunting adults accompanying youth turkey hunters need only have in possession a valid hunting license. Turkey hunting is by permit only.

Spring and fall turkey hunting is by permit only. See *Turkey Hunting Permits, General*, page 13. For farmers, see *Farmer Turkey Permits*, page 13.

Fall 2007 Turkey Hunting Regulations

The 2007 fall turkey season consists of one six-day hunting segment, N, from Monday, Oct. 29 through Saturday, Nov. 3, 2007. Fall hunting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset. Turkey Hunting Areas 1-11 and Turkey Hunting Areas 20 and 21 will be open for hunting. Turkey Hunting Areas 12, 14, 15, 16 and 22 are closed to fall hunting.

- Bag Limit: One wild turkey of either sex per permit during the fall season. However, hunters may only take one turkey per day regardless of the number of permits the hunter holds.

- Dogs and artificial decoys may be used while turkey hunting in the fall season, except the use of electronically-operated decoys is prohibited. All hunters are required to possess a calling device while turkey hunting.

- The maximum group size while turkey hunting is five hunters. Hunters may not attempt to chase or drive turkeys for the purpose of putting them in range of other hunters. However, hunters may flush a flock of turkeys to cause the flock to scatter.

- No shot larger than #4 fine shot or smaller than #7 1/2 fine shot may be used for turkey hunting.

- Hunters may not use shotguns larger than 10-gauge or smaller than 20-gauge for turkey hunting.

- Fluorescent hunter orange is not required to hunt turkey.

- Properly licensed hunters may use archery tackle to hunt turkeys.

- Turkeys may not be hunted within 300 feet of any baited area.

Immediately upon killing a turkey, hunters must complete the transportation tag on their fall hunting permit and affix it to the bird. The turkey must be taken to an official wild turkey check station by 7 p.m. on the day it is killed by *the hunter who killed the bird*.

Spring 2008 Gobbler Hunting Regulations

Spring gobbler hunting regulations are published in the 2008 Wild Turkey Hunting Season permit supplement. See *Turkey Hunting Permits, General*, page 13.

2008 Spring Gobbler Hunting Season

Youth Turkey Hunting	Day: Sat., April 12
Segment A:	Mon., April 14 - Fri., April 18
Segment B:	Mon., April 21 - Fri., April 25
Segment C:	Mon., April 28 - Fri., May 2
Segment D:	Mon., May 5 - Fri., May 9
Segment E:	Mon., May 12 - Fri., May 16; Mon., May 19 - Fri., May 23
Segment G:	all Saturdays, April 19, April 26, May 3, May 10 and May 17

Turkey Hunting Seminars

The latest turkey hunting techniques are presented at several turkey hunting seminars sponsored by Fish and Wildlife or wildlife conservation organizations. These seminars focus on how to set up, calling techniques and key safety information for turkey hunters. New turkey hunters are especially encouraged to join us at a seminar. Check your newspaper and the 2008 Wild Turkey Hunting Season permit supplement for the seminars scheduled during March and April.

Fall 2007 Turkey Check Stations

ATLANTIC

Ted's Taxidermy, 713 Route 40, Buena, (856) 697-8585

BURLINGTON

Sportsman's Center, Route 130, Bordentown, (609) 298-5300

CUMBERLAND

Blackwater Sports Center, 2228 Delsea Dr., Vineland, (856) 691-1571

Big Daddy's Sports Haven, 595 Sherman Ave., Millville, (856) 825-5500

HUNTERDON

Lakeside Deli, 1878 Rt. 31 N., Clinton, (908) 638-3354

Sportsman's Rendezvous, Route 31, Speedway Plaza, Flemington, (908) 788-5828

Boan's Marine, 1296 Route 179, Lambertville (609) 397-3311

The Corner Store, Rt. 12 And Rt. 519, Baptistown, (908) 996-7648

Carousel Deli And Bakery, Rt. 179 And Wertsville Rd., Ringoes, (908) 788-5180

Ralph Anthony Automotive, 1173 Rt. 579, Quakertown, (908) 735-7800

Jugtown Mountain Campsites, 1074 Rt. 173 East, Asbury, (908) 735-5995

MIDDLESEX

Sayreville Sportsmen, 52 Washington Ave., Sayreville, (732) 238-2060

MORRIS

The Country Sportsman, 63 Hamburg Turnpike, Riverdale, (973) 839-7622

Mount Hope Deli, 662 Mount Hope Ave. Wharton, (973) 328-7259

R&S Sports, 3 New Street, Budd Lake, (973) 347-1944

PASSAIC

D & D Sport and Paintball, 1846 Route 23 North, West Milford, (973) 838-7522

Greenwood Lake Sports Center, 1745 Greenwood Lake Turnpike, Hewitt, (973) 728-1000

SALEM

Bradway's Farm Market, Jericho Rd & Rt 49, Quinton, (856) 935-5698

Sam's Super Service, 290 Rt. 40, Elmer, (856) 358-3488

SOMERSET

Gladpack Sunoco, 1 Pottersville Rd, Peapack-Gladstone, (908) 234-1355

Millstone Sport Shop, 20 N. River St., Millstone, (908) 359-5713

SUSSEX

Garden State Bow & Reel, 2760A Rt. 23N, Stockholm, (973) 697-3727

Hainesville General Store, 283 Rt. 206 South, Hainesville, (973) 948-4280

Simon-Peter Bait And Tackle, Route 206 And Brighton Rd, Newton, (973) 786-5313

Sig Borstad Hunting Supply, 7 Old Rudetown Road, McAfee, (973) 827-6527

Swartswood Country Store, 911 Newton-Swartswood Rd., Stillwater, (973) 383-5470

WARREN

Alpine Meats, Rt. 94 N., Blairstown, (908) 362-8568

Hi-Way Sport Shop, Box 253, Route 31 North, Washington, (908) 689-6208

Smitty's Liqueur & Deli, 89 Rt. 46, Delaware, (908) 475-5933

Straco 3 Auto Parts, Hunting and Fishing, 147 Mountain Ave., (908) 852-2829

The Owl's Nest, 97 Rt 519, Warren Glen, (908) 995-7903

Dark Moon Tavern, 606 Route 519, Johnsonburg, (908) 459-4487

Trapping

REGULATIONS

- A trapping license is required and a Trapper Education course must be passed. See page 8 for license information.
- All traps set or used must bear a legible tag of durable material with the name and address of the person setting, using and maintaining the traps.
- A trap identification number issued by Fish and Wildlife may be used in lieu of marking with your name and address. You must provide proof of license and a daytime telephone number. To fax your information, photocopy the carbon copy of your current and valid trapping license. Contact the Bureau of Wildlife Management at (609) 292-6685 for more information.
- No traps or trap stakes are to be set prior to times indicated in this section.
- All traps must be checked and tended at least once every 24 hours, preferably in the morning.
- No trap shall be permitted to remain set on any property at the close of the trapping season.
- No person shall steal or attempt to take traps of another, or remove a trapped animal without permission of the trap owner.
- **Any person (including a farmer) who traps a coyote must notify a Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement office within 24 hours.**
- Licensed trappers at least 18 years of age and in possession of a valid rifle permit may carry a .22 caliber rifle and use only .22 caliber short rimfire cartridges to kill legally trapped animals other than muskrat. Firearms may not be loaded with more than three rounds.

Beaver and River Otter

Beaver may be taken only by properly licensed trappers in possession of a special beaver trapping permit valid for an entire management zone, or a special site-specific beaver permit valid as designated on the permit. River otter may only be taken by properly licensed trappers in possession of a special river otter trapping permit valid for an entire management zone. Application can be made at license agents or via Fish and Wildlife's Internet license sales site www.WildlifeLicense.com/NJ. Applicants must have a valid 2007 trapping license to apply.

Zone maps, boundary descriptions and permit quotas are available on our Web site or call (609) 292-1473. The application period is October 1-31. Applicants may apply for only one beaver trapping permit and/or one otter trapping permit. If the number of applications exceeds the permit quota, a random lottery



opportunity for otter permits in their respective zone.

Beaver trappers may indicate on their application if they wish to be considered for a site-specific beaver permit within your chosen zone. Site-specific permits are issued for properties where confirmed beaver damage or nuisance problems exist. A separate, random lottery will determine site-specific permit holders; however, applicants who did not receive a zone-wide beaver permit will have first opportunity for a site-specific permit.

Other rules and regulations:

- Holders of a beaver trapping zone permit may use a maximum of five traps daily.
- Holders of a site-specific permit may use an additional five traps daily only at the location specified on the permit.
- Holders of a river otter trapping permit may use a maximum of three traps daily.
- All beaver and otter trap tags must be clearly visible above the water or ice.
- A Fish and Wildlife-issued Beaver Transportation Tag or Otter Transportation Tag must be affixed to the beaver or otter carcass immediately upon removal from the trap.
- All successful trappers (or their agents) must present their beaver and/or otter pelts at a designated check station for examination where pelt tags will be affixed, and otter carcasses will be surrendered if requested. Trappers are strongly encouraged to properly flesh and stretch all pelts for examination. Additional information on check stations will be provided to all permit holders.
- The tentative date for beaver/otter pelt check is Saturday, Feb. 23, 2008. Successful trappers who cannot attend the scheduled date may contact either Joseph Garris at (908) 735-7040 or Andrew Burnett at (609) 748-2058 prior to February 23 to schedule a pelt examination.

Traps, Body gripping Restraining Type (Snares)

- No person shall set, use or maintain any type of snare unless they have first satisfactorily completed a Fish and Wildlife-approved trapper education course and carry on their person appropriate certification thereof.
- All natural baits consisting of fish, bird or mammal carcasses or flesh used in trapping with body gripping restraining snares must be covered or concealed from view except when

drawing will be held to determine permit holders. Successful beaver permit applicants will be given first

placed at least 30 feet from any trap set.

Body gripping restraining snares set for mink, muskrat and nutria are subject to the following requirements:

- All such traps must be constructed of aircraft cable or crucible wire measuring 1/32, 3/64 or 1/16 inches in diameter, equipped with a swivel and set within 50 feet of the mean high water line;
- All such traps must be equipped with a stop to prevent the average loop diameter from exceeding 4 inches; and,
- All such traps must be set so that the distance between the ground/walking surface to the top of the loop does not exceed 7 inches

Body gripping restraining snares set for coyote, fox, opossum, raccoon, skunk and weasel shall be subject to the following requirements:

- All such traps must be constructed of aircraft cable of crucible wire measuring from 5/64 to 1/8 inches in diameter and be equipped with a swivel;
- All such traps must be equipped with a deer stop locate no less than 6 inches from the beginning of the cable and a loop stop to prevent the average loop diameter from exceeding 12 inches; and,
- All such traps must be set so that the distance between the ground / walking surface to the top of the loop does not exceed 24 inches.

The above requirements for cable diameters, loops stops and loop sizes do not apply to body gripping restraining snares that are completely submerged underwater at all times (e.g., when set for beaver or river otter).

Traps, Conibear or Killer-type

No Conibear or killer-type trap shall be used in non-tidal waters unless completely submerged underwater when the water is at the normal level. In tidal water, such traps must be completely covered at normal high tide.

It is illegal to use, set or possess a Conibear or killer-type trap having a jaw spread greater than 6 inches without a permit for beaver or river otter. A Conibear or killer-type trap with a jaw spread of no more than 10 inches may be used for beaver or river otter. Jaw spread shall be measured across the trigger of a set trap to the inner edges of the jaws.

Beaver and otter trap tags must be placed above the water line and exposed to view. It is illegal to possess or use steel-jawed

Traps, Leg-hold

It is illegal to possess or use steel-jawed leghold traps anywhere in New Jersey.

2007-08 New Jersey Trapping Zones, Seasons and Bag Limits

Species	Zone	Inclusive Dates	Season Limits	Notes
Raccoon, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel & Coyote	Statewide (except stocked WMAs)*	Nov. 15, 2007 through March 15, 2008	No limit	6 a.m. on Nov. 15, 2007
All coyote must be reported within 24 hrs.	Pheasant Stocked State WMAs ONLY*	Jan. 1 to Mar. 15, 2008	No limit	6 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2008
Mink, Muskrat & Nutria	Northern Zone** (except stocked WMAs*)	Nov. 15, 2007 through March 15, 2008	No limit	6 a.m. on Nov. 15, 2007
	Southern Zone† (except stocked WMAs*)	Dec. 1, 2007 to March 15, 2008	No limit	6 a.m. on Dec. 1, 2007
	Pheasant Stocked State WMAs ONLY*	Jan. 1 to Mar. 15, 2008	No limit	6 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2008
Beaver	Statewide (except stocked WMAs*)	Dec. 26, 2007 to Feb. 9, 2008	8 / permit	Permit required. Max. of 5 traps in use‡
	Pheasant Stocked State WMAs ONLY*	Jan. 1 to Feb. 9, 2007		
River Otter	Statewide (except stocked WMAs*)	Dec. 26, 2007 to Feb. 9, 2008	1 / season	Permit required. Max. of 3 traps in use
	Pheasant Stocked State WMAs ONLY*	Jan. 1 to Feb. 9, 2008		

* Pheasant stocked state WMAs are: Assunpink, Berkshire Valley, Black River, Clinton, Colliers Mills, Dix, Flatbrook, Glassboro, Greenwood (including Pasadena-Howardsville), Heislerville, Mad Horse, Manahawkin, Manasquan River, Medford, Millville, Nantuxent, Peaslee, Pequest, Port Republic, Stafford Forge, Tuckahoe, Walpack, Winslow, Whittingham and Fort Dix Military Reservation. **The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is closed to trapping.**

** Those portions of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren counties lying north of a line beginning at the intersection of US Route 1 and the Delaware River at Trenton; then north along US Route 1 to its intersection with Interstate Route 287; then south on I-287 to its intersection with Route 440; then east along Route 440 to its intersection with the New Jersey – New York state line in the Arthur Kill.

† Those portions of the Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem counties lying south of a line beginning at the intersection of US Route 1 and the Delaware River at Trenton; then north along US Route 1 to its intersection with Interstate Route 287; then south on I-287 to its intersection with Route 440; then east along Route 440 to its intersection with the New Jersey – New York state line in the Arthur Kill.

‡ Holders of both a special Beaver Permit and a special Site-Specific Beaver Permit may use five additional traps per special Site-Specific Beaver Permit provided they are used only on the property or site specified in the special Site-Specific Beaver Permit. The bag limit per Site-Specific Beaver Permit is 10 beaver.

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Deer shot on a preserve are not eligible for Boone & Crockett, Pope & Young or New Jersey's Outstanding Deer Program.

Wildlife Profile: **River Otter**



The river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) is the most aquatic member of the weasel family. Other family members include the badger, fisher, marten, mink, skunk and weasel. Otters have a long and streamlined body supported by short, powerful legs. The tail makes up 40 percent of its total length 38-47 inches. Their long, stiff whiskers located below and behind the nose aid in finding prey. Prey consists primarily of slow-swimming fish like carp, catfish, sunfish, perch and darter; of lesser importance are crustaceans, reptiles, amphibians, birds, insects and mammals. Furriers have long valued otter pelts with its short, dense, soft underfur protected by stiff, glossy guard hairs.

River otter are often found in close association with beaver in freshwater streams, rivers or other bodies of water plus in brackish coastal waters where fish are plentiful year-round. Although primarily aquatic, they may travel several miles over land to reach another stream or lake area. Otters den in banks, with the entrance below the water, or other suitable places.

According to the scientific literature, male and female otters reach sexual maturity around two years of age, but evidence from Fish and Wildlife's current study reveals some New Jersey female otters are sexually active at an earlier age, as had earlier studies. Data relative to otter age and reproductive status were collected during 1983-84 and 2005-06. A high percentage of young otters (2 years of age or less) were noted for both 1983-84 and 2005-06 (63 and 72 percent, respectively), indicating a very productive otter population. In 2005, 25 percent of juvenile females (less than 2 years) were sexually active; one was actively pregnant. In 2006, 36 percent of juvenile females were sexually active.

Historically, river otters were found throughout North America, but wild populations are thought never to have been dense in the arid regions of the southwest where water flow is not sustained year round. Human encroachment, habitat destruction, pollution and over-harvesting had reduced otter populations in many portions of their range.



Otters have always maintained a presence in New Jersey, despite some liberal harvest regulations in the first half of the 20th century. The open trapping season typically ran from 30 November to 15 March with no season bag limit as late as the 1963-64 season. Only one open season was held between 1964 and 1981. Approximately 100 otter trapping permits have been issued annually since the season was reopened in February 1982. Permit holders may harvest only one river otter per year.

Today, thanks to efforts to clean up the nation's waterways along with modern wildlife management practices, river otter populations are stable or increasing throughout most of the continental United States. Over 4,100 otters have been live-trapped and used for reintroduction and restocking efforts in 18 states, with more than 2,400 supplied by Lee Roy Sevin, a Louisiana trapper. Sevin perfected the capture, care and maintenance of live, wild otters over a 41-year career from 1957 to 1999. Interestingly, all of the otters Sevin supplied to zoos and state wildlife agencies were captured with steel-jawed foothold traps, devices prohibited for use in New Jersey since 1985.

Despite improved water quality, environmental contaminants are linked to adverse effects on the health and reproduction of weasel family members. For example, declines in some North American mink and European otter populations have been attributed to the effects of PCBs. Recently, much attention

has focused on a class of flame retardant chemicals called polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs. While environmental levels of PCBs are decreasing, PBDE levels have increased dramatically in both humans and wildlife. Presently, the potential effects of this newer chemical class are poorly understood.

Fish and Wildlife's Office of Fish and Wildlife Health and Forensics examined livers from otters harvested in 2005 to quantify concentrations of mercury and persistent organic compounds (DDT, PCBs, PBDEs, etc.) in otters. Mercury, PCBs and PBDEs were detected in all 32 liver samples. The greatest mercury concentration occurred in otters captured in or near the state's Pinelands region. Pinelands fish also have the highest mercury levels in New Jersey due to the region's acidic soils and surface waters. PCBs in most samples were below levels thought to affect reproduction, although a few samples had elevated levels. While the effects of PBDEs are currently unknown, the data will provide a baseline for monitoring this new environmental contaminant.

The data collected, together with harvest information taken over the last 25 years, suggests that contaminant levels are not high enough to affect the otter population as a whole. However, it is possible that contaminants could adversely affect some individuals and might conceivably limit population growth in localized areas. Further investigation is recommended.



Migratory Bird

REGULATIONS

A summary of the migratory bird regulations, below, are confirmed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and will be published in the *New Jersey 2007-08 Migratory Bird Regulations* available in September at license agents, Fish and Wildlife offices and on the Fish and Wildlife Web site at www.NJFishandWildlife.com. **Migratory bird season dates published in the Migratory Bird Regulations supersede those printed in this Digest if there are discrepancies.**

Migratory Bird Seasons

Season	Area	Dates	Daily Bag Limit
September Canada Goose*	Statewide	Sept. 1-29	15
Rail and moorhen	Statewide	Sept. 1-Nov. 8	Sora & Virginia rail: 25 total or aggregate; moorhen and clapper rail: 10
Sea Duck	Special Sea Duck Area	Sept. 25 - Jan. 26, 2008	7, except no more than 4 scoters
Snipe	Statewide	Sept. 15-Dec. 29	8
Crow (Mon, Thur, Fri, Sat)	Statewide	Aug. 13 - Mar. 15, 2008 (Except closed Dec. 3-8)	No limit
Woodcock	North Zone	Oct. 18-Nov. 10	3
	South Zone	Nov. 10-Nov. 24 & Dec. 21-29	
Morning Dove	Statewide	Closed	No Season
Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	North Zone	Oct. 6	As for regular season for all species
	South Zone	Oct. 13	
	Coastal Zone	Oct. 27	

* See special regulations only for September Canada goose hunting, page 69.

Hunters: Report Banded Birds

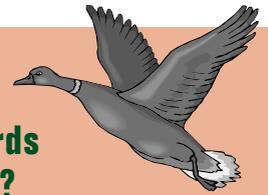
Hunters who recover banded migratory birds are asked to report the band number to the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), Washington, D.C. There are three methods to report bands:

1. **NEW:** Report online at <http://www.reportband.gov>. Those reporting via the Internet will have instant access to the original banding information including the species, sex, and location, date, and age of the bird at banding. Band reporters will be able to print a certificate of appreciation on their home computer or have a certificate mailed to them.
2. Report by telephone toll free at (800) 327-BAND.
3. Report via mail by writing to the address inscribed on the band.

Banding data plays a critical role in migratory bird harvest management.

When contacting the BBL, be prepared to provide: band number, date the bird was recovered, exact location of the bird's recovery as well as nearest town, and method of recovery, e.g., shot or found dead. Hunters may keep the bands.

For anyone who reports a banded bird the BBL will send a certificate of appreciation which includes information on the date and location of the banding plus the age and sex of the bird.



What Do I Need To Hunt Migratory Birds In New Jersey?

1. Required to hunt crows: a New Jersey hunting license. See page 1 for hunting license fees. See page 8 for license information.
2. Required to hunt woodcock, rail, snipe, coots or moorhens (gallinule): a New Jersey hunting license and Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification; see below for HIP information.
3. Required to hunt ducks, geese or brant: a New Jersey hunting license, HIP certification, Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp and New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp. Both Federal and State stamps are required for waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and older (even those still hunting on a youth license) and must be signed in ink across the stamp's face. Federal stamps are available at U.S. post offices, online from Ducks Unlimited. (www.ducksunlimited.org) and many major sporting goods stores who are license agents. Hunters and collectors of waterfowl stamps may purchase state stamps from license agents.

Information For Migratory Bird Hunters Important Changes in Obtaining HIP Certification

Hunters must purchase a Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification before hunting ducks, geese, brant, woodcock, rails, snipe, coot or moorhens (gallinules) in New Jersey. Hunters may purchase an HIP certification via three sales outlets:

1. **License Agents,**
HIP certification may be purchased at any license agent for a \$2 fee. Hunters will have their HIP certification printed on their license.
2. **Internet Sales Site**
Hunters may purchase an HIP certification for a \$2 fee on Fish and Wildlife's Internet sales site (www.WildlifeLicense.com/NJ/) then self-print the HIP certifications.
3. **Telephone Sales Site**
Hunters may purchase their HIP certifications using Fish and Wildlife's telephone sales process (888) 277-2015. Following the sale, hunters will receive a transaction number; write down this number as it may be used immediately for proof of completing an HIP certification. The actual HIP certification will be printed on the license and mailed to the hunter's home. **Note: any purchases made using the telephone sales process will incur an additional shipping and handling fee of \$3 plus 2.5% of the total sale.**

Hunters must have proof of HIP certification in possession while hunting migratory birds, whether the document is printed on the license, a computer self-printed certification or a transaction number obtained over the phone. This proof of certification should be carried in the hunter's license holder. The HIP certification is valid from Sept. 1, 2007 to March 10, 2008.

All information collected through the program is kept confidential and is used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service only to conduct migratory bird harvest surveys. As in the past, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will mail harvest survey information to a small, random group of HIP registrants.



2007 New Jersey Duck Stamp Print

The Retriever Puppy
Series/Print V, The
Chocolate Lab Puppy

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife's Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee is proud to announce its 24th edition waterfowl stamp painted by artist Michael Braun. Michael's father, Ed O. Braun, Jr., carved the decoy depicted in the painting. This edition is the first time a father and son have been selected to create a New Jersey waterfowl stamp and print and is the fifth and final print in the Retriever Puppy Series. The waterfowl stamp and print features the chocolate Labrador puppy with a green-winged teal decoy.

Michael Braun became interested in art at an early age. His father Ed's talent for duck decoy carving inspired the young Braun to carve and draw well before he started grade school. In his youth, he learned to pay close attention to wildlife subjects, especially to their detail, habitat and surroundings while accompanying his father and two older brothers on frequent hunting trips. His earliest works were created in watercolors and pastels until Braun becoming interested in oils and acrylics, which would prove the preferred medium for his future paintings. In 2002, he graduated from University of the Arts in Philadelphia with a bachelor's degree in fine arts.

Braun's list of accolades begins at the age of nine when he took first place and best of show in the Toms River Junior Decoy Contest, and was first to win the New Jersey Junior Duck Stamp Contest - a title he held four of the five years entered. In 2002, he won the Albert E. Gold Drawing Award for the illustration department of his college alma mater. That year he was also selected to design the senior thesis invitation postcard. In 2004, Braun placed third in Delaware's and second in Louisiana's state duck stamp contests. He continues to compete in state competitions.

Carver Ed O. Braun, Jr., is an avid hunter and fly fisherman who began carving in 1970. A former tool and die maker by trade, those skills eminently appear in the craftsmanship of his decoys. He owns DD Decoys where his high-quality carvings are sold to waterfowlers nationwide. Although each hand-made, hand-painted decoy is actually crafted for field use, many are sought and prized by collectors. Famous for his cork black duck sleeper, one of his earliest designs, he continues to carve a variety of waterfowl species and songbirds. The elder Braun is the former chairman of Ducks Unlimited and the past president of Trout Unlimited. Many of his carvings have been donated to support the conservation of wildlife and wetlands. His work is annually displayed at the Ocean County Gunning and Decoy Show in Tuckerton, New Jersey.

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife administers the New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Program for the purpose of purchasing wetlands for waterfowl habitat. Proceeds from the sale of New Jersey's duck stamps and prints total over \$4.1 million to date, all to acquire wetlands for waterfowl habitat and public use. The New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee has committed to the purchase of over 13,000 acres of waterfowl habitat. The committee continues to be involved with the enhancement of thousands of additional acres for the benefit of wildlife.

Limited edition signed and numbered prints of the 24th New Jersey waterfowl stamp may be purchased directly from New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. To purchase a print, order forms are available on our Web site (www.NJFishandWildlife.com/prod_stamps.htm) or by sending a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: ATTN: Waterfowl Prints, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863.

Attention Waterfowl Hunters: Optional, **New** Regulations Permitted During September Canada Goose Season

At the recommendation of the Atlantic Flyway Council, the US Fish and Wildlife Service approved the use of special regulations to help curb the growth of resident population Canada geese. These special regulations are optional.

1. Electronic calls are permitted.
2. No shotshell limits in shotguns - unplugged guns are permitted.
3. Hunting hours: 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset. This allows hunting one half hour later than past years.

REMEMBER: these special regulations apply only to the September Canada goose season. Hunters who choose to use an unplugged gun during the September Canada goose season must remember to reinstall the magazine plug before pursuing other game species.

During all other waterfowl seasons, including duck, brant, regular and winter Canada goose, and snow goose, standard regulations apply. Standard regulations include: electronic calls prohibited, shotguns may not be capable of holding more than three shot shells and hunting hours end at sunset.

Free! New Jersey Waterfowlers Clinic

Every year, experienced waterfowlers throughout New Jersey join together dedicating their time and energy to present the *New Jersey Waterfowlers Clinic*—an all day, free seminar covering “everything you ever wanted to know” about the traditions of waterfowl hunting in New Jersey. This year is no exception!

Thirty years ago, the clinic began as an opportunity to introduce young people to the world of waterfowl hunting. However, with the growing interest among men and women, as well as children, the event has been transformed into an opportunity for anyone 10 and up to spend a fun and interesting day learning about waterfowling!

Our full-day clinic covers waterfowling from A to Z, and includes bird identification, decoys, calling, guns and ammo, boats, safety, laws and ethics, do's and don'ts, clothing and camo, and even a demonstration by working retrievers! The value of the day is priceless. It's a unique chance to ask any question you've ever had about the sport—to be answered by the most experienced waterfowlers in New Jersey. Our instructors have a combined 300 years of experience!

Free breakfast and lunch to all attending!

Date: Sunday, Oct. 14, 2007

Location: Tip Seaman Park, Tuckerton, NJ

Time: 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Please **register in advance** so we can plan accordingly. Call George Larson at (732) 870-8473 or Bill Schaf at (732) 928-1275.

We hope you'll join us this year and share our enthusiasm for all that is waterfowling!



SETTING

Migratory Game Bird Seasons:

THE PROCESS

By Ted Nichols, Wildlife Biologist



Brian Schmidt, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has the final decision for setting annual migratory bird regulation frameworks. States participate in that process through the Flyway Council System.

Early in the 20th century, conservationists witnessed the plight of North America's rich migratory bird resource due to overexploitation. Since these birds' breeding and wintering areas spanned from Canada through South America, these visionary men recognized that the only way to cease this devastation was through a holistic management approach where migratory birds were recognized as an international resource. Through the hard work of these conservationists, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) was passed in 1918. The MBTA bestowed ultimate management authority with the federal government of each country. Until that time, individual states

had management authority over all game animals, so this was a decidedly different approach. This strategy continues today where each state maintains management authority over resident game mammals (i.e., deer) and non-migratory birds such as bobwhite quail and wild turkey while federal agencies maintain authority over migratory birds.

Migratory game bird management is a cooperative effort between state and federal agencies. During 1952, the United States and Canada were divided into four bio-administrative management units, coined flyways, to facilitate waterfowl management. Each flyway (Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific) has their own council comprised of representatives from state and provincial wildlife agencies within the flyway. The four flyway councils foster information sharing, stimulate debate and facilitate decision-making. New Jersey — along with 16 other eastern states, six eastern Canadian provinces, and Puerto Rico — is a member of the Atlantic Flyway Council.

The flyway councils recommend regulations to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), both for waterfowl and most other migratory game birds (i.e., woodcock and rails). Flyway technical sections that consist of state and provincial biologists advise the flyway councils. The technical sections evaluate species population status and habitat conditions, plus, along with consideration of harvest and hunter activity data, they debate and forward their recommendations to their respective flyway council. The technical sections and flyway councils meet in late winter and then again during mid-summer each year to conduct these evaluations.



The Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management (DMBM) also makes regulation recommendations each year. The Service's Regulations Committee (SRC), which consists of members of the Service Directorate, considers both flyway council and DMBM recommendations, as well as input from the Service's regional offices. After careful review, the SRC then forwards its recommendations for annual regulations to the Service director where final regulatory proposals are made. Once regulatory proposals are approved, they are published in the Federal Register for public comment. After the comment period, final regulations are promulgated.

Under the auspices of the MBTA, annual hunting regulations are intended to keep harvest at levels compatible with a population's ability to maintain itself. The MBTA contains the legal groundwork for managing migratory bird populations. Perhaps one of the most important tools in the MBTA are the framework regulations. These regulations are the foundation of annual regulations and consist of the outside dates for opening and closing seasons, season length, daily bag and possession limits, plus shooting hours. Although the earliest and latest dates within which states may hold hunting seasons are set by the MBTA (September 1 - March 10), most framework dates are more restrictive. For example, current duck season frameworks are the last Saturday in September to the last Sunday in January. Likewise, under the MBTA, season lengths may not exceed 107 days, but are typically less and have generally fluctuated with bird abundance through time. Generally, bag limits are more liberal for birds that are more abundant, have high reproductive rates, and/or are lightly hunted. Conversely, bag limits are more restrictive for species that do not meet these criteria. Shooting hours regulate the time of day when migratory birds may be hunted and rarely have been changed since passage of the MBTA in 1918. For most migratory birds, shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

At the conclusion of the annual regulatory process in late summer, the Service publishes its final rule whereupon states may select migratory bird season regulations

within the prescribed federal guidelines. State regulations can always be more restrictive, but never more liberal, than federal regulations.

In New Jersey, the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Fish and Game Council is empowered with selecting migratory bird regulations within the federal guidelines. Fish and Wildlife's Waterfowl Ecology and

Management Program presents recommended migratory bird regulations, including season dates, to the Fish and Game Council at their August meeting. With input from Fish and Wildlife biologists as well as our constituents, Council makes the final decision for migratory bird season selections. 🦌

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