

Wildlife Management Area

REGULATIONS

Regulations in red are new this year.

Purple text indicates an important note

THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED: alcoholic beverages, camping, cutting or damaging vegetation, removing timber or firewood, dumping, fires, swimming and picnicking.

Regulations for use of wildlife management areas (WMAs) are established by the Division of Fish and Wildlife with penalties of not less than \$50 nor more than \$1,500. **A second violation of any WMA regulation will result in a five-year loss of all sporting licenses and privileges.**

Information on these regulations and permit applications may be obtained by writing to New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, MC 501-03, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420, or NJFishandWildlife.com/wmaregs.htm.

Fish and Wildlife may revoke any permit (or other authorization) for violation or due cause.

WMA Update

Cox Hall Creek WMA is closed to hunting with the following exceptions: The eastern-most wooded portion of the WMA bounded by Bayshore Rd. to the east and the red trail to the west is open for hunting during winter bow season ONLY. All tidal marsh and the upland portion of the tract lying east of Cox Hall Creek are open for hunting during all seasons. A map illustrating these restrictions can be found at http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/wmamaps/cox_hall_creek.pdf.

Boat Ramp Maintenance Permit

Any vehicle used to transport or launch a vessel or water conveyance on the following WMAs must have affixed to the lower corner of the driver's side rear window a boat ramp maintenance permit, or a photocopy of a valid hunting, fishing or trapping license. Be sure your Conservation ID number is clearly displayed; all other personal information may be blacked out for reasons of privacy. The boat ramp maintenance permit fee is \$15, available from a license agent or at Fish and Wildlife's Internet sales site, NJFishandWildlife.com/wmaregs.htm.

Persons 70 years and older are not required to obtain a boat ramp maintenance permit and need no license, but must affix to their window proof of age, such as a former license displaying your date of birth.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Round Valley Angler Access | 4. Tuckahoe | 7. Menantico Ponds |
| 2. Assunpink | 5. Mad Horse Creek | 8. Prospertown Lake |
| 3. Dennis Creek | 6. Union Lake | |

Dog Training, Exercising and Hunting

A person may exercise or train dogs only in designated dog training areas from May 1 to Aug. 31, inclusive and only on the following select WMAs:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Assunpink | 6. Hainesville | 11. Stafford Forge |
| 2. Black River | 7. Manasquan | 12. Tuckahoe |
| 3. Clinton | 8. Millville | 13. Whittingham |
| 4. Colliers Mills | 9. Pequest | 14. Winslow |
| 5. Glassboro | 10. Salem River | |

All dogs must be properly licensed. Dogs may be exercised or trained on any WMA from Sept. 1 to April 30. No exercising or training of dogs on any WMA on Nov. 8, 2013, the Friday before the opening day of the regular small game season.

Additional regulations involve the release of game birds for training, the use of pigeons, the use of firearms, frozen game birds, the use of call back pens and the release of fox, raccoon, rabbit and hare. For more information call (609)984-0547.

Field Trials

A permit to conduct a field trial on a wildlife management area may be obtained by contacting Fish and Wildlife at (609) 259-2132.

Higbee Beach

Higbee Beach WMA is closed to hunting from Sept. 1 to Dec. 15, 2013.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is allowed on designated WMAs only by permit from the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Apply online at www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com. Horseback riding permits should be displayed on outer clothing while riding. For more information on horseback riding permits, call (609) 259-2132.

Hunting Regulations

The restriction prohibiting firearm hunting on wildlife management areas on the day prior to the opening of the regular small game season for pheasants and quail is rescinded. Pheasants are stocked after dark, precluding interaction between Fish and Wildlife personnel and hunters or the chance of prematurely harvesting a pheasant before the season opens.

The quail season is closed statewide with the exception of the Peaslee and Greenwood WMAs. See *Pheasants*, page 64.

It is legal to use a .22 caliber rifle and .22 caliber rimfire short cartridges for hunting raccoon and opossum and for dispatching trapped animals other than muskrat on WMAs.

For coyote and fox hunting: the use of .17 and .22 caliber rimfire or .17 through .25 caliber centerfire rifle ammo is allowed on WMAs. See Coyote/Fox ammo chart on page 62 for additional restrictions.

The use of air guns to hunt rabbit and squirrel is allowed on WMAs. See *Air Guns* page 26, and *Squirrel, Regular Season* on page 64.

Rifles, including muzzleloading rifles, may not be used to hunt woodchucks on WMAs.

Motor Vehicles and Other Forms of Conveyance

No person shall operate an unregistered vehicle on any state WMA. All motor vehicles are restricted to established public roads and parking areas.

All motor boats must be properly registered and have all the required safety equipment. (See *Outboard Motors*, below.)

The use of dogsleds and dog carts, off road vehicles, ATVs, trail bikes, or snowmobiles is prohibited on all WMAs unless authorized by Fish and Wildlife.

Outboard Motors

Only electric motors are allowed on freshwater lakes and ponds owned by NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife areas with the exception of Union Lake where an outboard motor, not exceeding 9.9 hp, may be used. On Prospertown Lake, only manually operated boats and canoes are allowed.

All titled boats must also be registered. Any boat mechanically propelled, regardless of length, must be registered. All boats greater than 12 feet, regardless of propulsion means, must be titled and registered.

Restricted Hours

Wildlife management areas are closed from 9 p.m. until 5 a.m. unless engaged in lawful hunting, fishing or trapping activities. Special permission may be granted for Fish and Wildlife-approved activities.

Target Practice

Only archery, shotgun, muzzleloading shotgun, muzzleloading rifle, .177 and .22 caliber rimfire rifle shooting is allowed in designated hunter training ranges according to regulations posted at the training area.

The following types of ranges are available on designated WMAs statewide:

- **Shotgun Range:** for use with clay birds and the patterning of fine shot;
- **Archery Range:** approved backstops at select ranges, no broadheads allowed;
- **Muzzleloading Rifle and Shotgun Slug Range:** for sighting in with shotgun slugs or buckshot, .177 or .22 caliber rimfire rifles and muzzleloaders; no other firearms allowed. See page 75 for a list of ranges and requirements.

Waterfowl Blinds

No permanent waterfowl blinds, including pit blinds, shall be constructed, hunted from or used in any manner on any of the following WMAs:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Assunpink | 6. Manahawkin | 11. Salem River |
| 2. Black River | 7. Stafford Forge | 12. Prospertown |
| 3. Colliers Mills | 8. Whittingham | 13. Paulinskil |
| 4. Hainesville | 9. Beaver Swamp | |
| 5. Tuckahoe | 10. Sedge Island | |

Any blind used in these designated areas must be portable and shall be completely removed at the end of the day. Blinds remaining in WMAs will be subject to confiscation and properly disposed of by Fish and Wildlife.

Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Ranges

The following information pertains to New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife facilities. Information on privately operated facilities is available at "Where To Shoot," a site maintained by the National Shooting Sports Foundation at www.wheretoshoot.org

- ♦ All WMA regulations apply.
- ♦ Ranges are open 8 a.m. to sunset.
- ♦ At least one member of the shooting party must have a current, valid New Jersey hunting license in possession.
- ♦ **Shotgun range:** fine shot only. No buckshot or rifled slugs.
- ♦ **Archery range:** target or practice tips only (NO broadheads.)
- ♦ **Muzzleloading rifle range:** muzzleloading firearms, shotguns with rifled slugs or buckshot and modern rimfire (both .177 and .22 caliber) rifles only.
- ♦ No handguns or centerfire rifles permitted.

NORTHERN REGION

Hunterdon County

Clinton WMA

Route 173W, Clinton

- ♦ Shotgun, Archery, Muzzleloader (100 yards)
- ♦ All target frames must measure a minimum 30 inches from its base to the bottom of the paper target held in the frame. Frames must be placed only on top of a target mound located at the 25, 50 and 100 yard lines. This minimum target height requirement will eliminate the risk of ricochet and ensure that all projectiles are collected in the berm behind the 100 yard target.
- ♦ Spinner type targets for .177 caliber and .22 caliber firearms MUST be placed directly at the base of the 25 yard berm so that all bullets are directed into the berm. These targets are not to be used at other yardage or target mound placements.

Morris County

Black River WMA

Route 513 (Dover-Chester Rd.), Chester

- ♦ Archery, open year-round.
- ♦ Shotgun: Closed weekends from the third Saturday in May through the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, as well as on Christmas and Easter. Operating hours are 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. during this summer period, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the rest of the year. Hunter education classes will continue at the range and are not affected by these new hours.

Sussex County

Flatbrook WMA

Route 615, Layton

- ♦ Shotgun, Archery, Muzzleloader (75 yards)

Warren County

Pequest WMA

Pequest Rd., Oxford

- ♦ Archery

CENTRAL REGION

Monmouth County

Assunpink WMA

Imlaystown-Hightstown Rd., Upper Freehold Twp.

- ♦ Archery
- ♦ Shotgun range is restricted to the use of non-toxic shot; no lead shot is allowed.

Turkey Swamp Park

Georgia Rd., Freehold Twp.

- ♦ Archery (Special regulations apply; call 732-842-4000.)

Ocean County

Colliers Mills WMA

Off Colliers Mills and Hawkins Rds., Jackson Twp.

- ♦ Archery, Muzzleloader (100 yards)
- ♦ Shotgun range is closed.

Stafford Forge WMA

Off Route 539, south of Warren Grove, Little Egg Harbor Twp.

- ♦ Shotgun, Archery, Muzzleloader (100 yards)

SOUTHERN REGION

Atlantic County

Makepeace Lake WMA

Elmwood-Weymouth Rd., Weymouth

- ♦ Shotgun, Archery, Muzzleloader (50 yards)

Gloucester County

Winslow WMA

Piney Hollow Rd., Monroe Twp.

- ♦ Archery
- ♦ Shotgun and muzzleloader ranges are closed.

Cape May County

Tuckahoe WMA

Off Tuckahoe Rd. (Rt. 631), Tuckahoe

- ♦ Archery
- ♦ Shotgun range is closed.

Cumberland County

Millville WMA

Ackley Rd. (Rt. 718), Millville

- ♦ Shotgun, Archery, Muzzleloader (100 yards)

Landowner-Hunter/Trapper Agreement Card

HUNT/TRAP SMART Courtesy Card

Visitor's Copy – Not Transferable

I request permission to enter your property for the following purpose: _____

Dates from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Limitations _____

Hunter may hunt within 450 feet (150 feet for bow)

of buildings: Yes No

Landowner's Name _____

Address _____

Landowner Copy

Permission given to _____

Address _____

Vehicle Make _____ Yr. ____ Color _____

Vehicle Lic. No. _____ No. in Party _____

Dates from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Limitations _____

Other licenses, tag no. _____

Permission dates from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Limitations _____

Hunter may hunt within 450 feet (150 feet for bow)

of buildings: Yes No



Garden State Deer Classic January 9-12, 2014

At the Garden State Outdoor Sportsmen's Show • Raritan Center, Edison, New Jersey

See New Jersey's most outstanding white-tailed deer for 2012-13

Awards ceremony on Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Applications must be received by Nov. 1, 2013 to enter a deer harvested during last year's 2012-13 hunting seasons. No exceptions!

To arrange for an official measurer to score your New Jersey white-tail, contact Cindy Kuenstner at (609) 633-7598.

Deer will not be measured at the Deer Classic.

See entry details on page 77.

Brought to you by:

- NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife
- NJ Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
- United Bowhunters of New Jersey
- New Jersey Outdoor Alliance Conservation Foundation
- Garden State Outdoor Sportsmen's Show

Visit goss.com

Promises to be the show of the year!

During the off-season, set your trail camera strategically to capture wildlife activity other than deer.

This bobcat takes advantage of an old log across the Pequest River, a crossing also used by coyotes and numerous other species for decades.



Landowner-Hunter/Trapper Agreement Card

I agree to conduct myself safely, responsibly and lawfully, respecting the landowner, property, and others using it. I accept the responsibilities which are part of the activities which I pursue. I agree to comply with the instructions of the landowner while on this property.

I understand that the laws of New Jersey absolve the landowner from liability for non-paying recreationists engaged in hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, hiking, and certain other activities, except in the case of willful or malicious failure to guard or warn of hazards.

Signed (visitor) _____
Date ____/____/____

ASK
PERMISSION
SEE LANDOWNER

This card provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife

HUNT/ TRAP SMART

HUNT/TRAP SMART Courtesy Card

I hereby give permission to: (visitor's name) _____

to enter my property for the purpose listed on the reverse side of this card. He/she has agreed to act safely, responsibly, and lawfully and to accept responsibility for his/her actions.

Signed (landowner, lessee, or operator) _____

Date ____/____/____

ASK
PERMISSION
SEE LANDOWNER

Outdoor Recreation on Private Property is a Privilege — NOT A RIGHT

HUNT/ TRAP SMART

2013 Garden State Deer Classic Winners*

Rank	Name	Score / Weight	County Harvested	DM Zone
135 Pound Doe—Archery				
1st	Stephen J. Marton	141	Somerset	14
2nd	Courtney Erndl	138	Monmouth	50
135 Pound Doe—Shotgun				
1st	Chad Watt	164	Salem	35
2nd	Christopher Hussey	144.5	Warren	7
200 Pound Buck—Archery				
1st	Samuel Malespina	209	Mercer	14
200 Pound Buck—Crossbow				
1st	Jeffrey Norton	202.25	Salem	35
Non-typical Archery				
1st	Bryan Frye	151 1/8	Salem	35
2nd	Roger Austin, Jr.	148 7/8	Gloucester	25
3rd	Christopher Cornine	147 0/8	Morris	13
Non-typical Crossbow				
1st	Jacob Morris	188 1/8	Monmouth	50
2nd	Clinton M. Hamilton	157 1/8	Monmouth	16
3rd	Joseph Feher	143 5/8	Warren	8
Non-typical Muzzleloader				
1st	Robert L. Kish	156 7/8	Warren	5
2nd	Tobias J. Richman	149 4/8	Salem	27
Non-typical Shotgun				
1st	Leslie Berry, Sr.	137 2/8	Cumberland	43
Typical Archery				
1st	Joseph D. Rotola	158 0/8	Hunterdon	7
2nd	John Tietz	154 0/8	Mercer	41
3rd	John V. Miller	147 1/8	Cumberland	29
Typical Crossbow				
1st	John Fieramosca	155 2/8	Monmouth	50
2nd	Anthony Margelis	147 2/8	Somerset	14
3rd	Edward Segreaves	145 6/8	Warren	7
	Charles Kellogg	145 6/8	Sussex	6
Typical Muzzleloader				
1st	Henry Corforte	139 4/8	Morris	6
2nd	Jerry Hackett	136 0/8	Salem	63
3rd	Paul G. Arrera, Jr.	128 7/8	Salem	27
Typical Shotgun				
1st	Matt Venditti	144 7/8	Warren	7
2nd	James Puskas	144 6/8	Somerset	14
3rd	James B. Slomian	139 3/8	Middlesex	50

* For deer harvested during the 2011–12 hunting seasons.

All qualified entries will be added to New Jersey's All Time List. For questions, call Cindy Kuenstner at (609) 633-7598.

Qualifying entries for deer taken during the previous hunting seasons are displayed and recognized at the annual Garden State Deer Classic. Join Fish and Wildlife in celebrating New Jersey's outstanding white-tailed deer at the Deer Classic in January at the Garden State Outdoor Sportsmen's Show. See the ad on page 76 for details.

The table above lists the top-scoring deer and the hunters who participated in the 2013 Garden State Deer Classic. The Classic **showcased the outstanding deer taken during the 2011–12 deer hunting seasons, not the past 2012–13 hunting seasons.** Those deer will be honored at the January 2014 Deer Classic. 🐾

- * See entry form. A certified scale might be available at the following businesses:
 - Warehouse with shipping department
 - Concrete, sand and gravel company
 - Junk yard or scrap metal recycler
 - Marina with party and charter boat fishing

Visit our website for a partial list of certified scales or contact your county weights and measures office. Be sure to locate a scale *before* the hunting season begins!

** A truck scale is not acceptable as the increments are too large.



This non-typical, crossbow-harvested white-tailed deer has a first place score of 188 1/8 and was harvested in Deer Management Zone 50 by Jacob Morris.

Rich Wolven

NEW JERSEY'S OUTSTANDING White-tailed Deer Program, initiated in 1964, includes categories for typical and non-typical antlered deer taken with bow, crossbow, shotgun and muzzleloading rifle, in addition to the weight categories listed below. A velvet category is added for early bow season deer.

In the Antlered Division, New Jersey's Outstanding Deer Program uses the most common system in North America used for rating antlers as developed by the Boone and Crockett Club. This scoring system gives credit to antler length, spread, number of points, massiveness and symmetry. This measurement system also is used by the Pope & Young Club's Bowhunting Big Game Records Program. Deer must have been taken under the Boone and Crockett-defined rules of fair chase. Deer taken from enclosed hunting lands are not eligible. **Note:** It is best to have the rack measured *before* it is mounted. **Don't wait!**

Category	Minimum score
Typical Firearm	125
Non-typical Firearm	135
Typical Archery	125
Non-typical Archery	135
Typical Muzzleloader	125
Non-typical Muzzleloader	135

In the Weight Division, the program recognizes exceptional body size as determined by the field dressed weight, including heart and liver removed. Two categories, one for bucks reaching or exceeding 200 pounds (proof of weight must be confirmed on a certified scale* for buck entries—no truck scales**—with the weighmaster's signature on a letterhead receipt or on the entry form, available on our website) and one for field dressed does reaching or exceeding 135 pounds (witnessed, non-certified scale at a Fish and Wildlife regional office or at a certified scale).

Any properly licensed hunter, regardless of residency, is eligible to enter the Outstanding Deer Program. Deer must be taken in accordance with New Jersey wildlife laws and regulations. **Applications are due Nov. 1—NO EXCEPTIONS.** Additional rules are included on the official application form which consists of the original score sheet, hunter information form plus a clear photo of the hunter with the deer. These forms with instructions are available on Fish and Wildlife's website NJFishandWildlife.com/outdeer.htm or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Outstanding Deer Program, MC 501-03, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420. State the type of form (Antlered Division, typical or non-typical; Weight Division, 200 Pound Buck or 135 Pound Doe). There is no entry fee.

CWD

Chronic Wasting Disease

▶▶ Update

What is CWD?

- ♦ Belongs to a family of neurological diseases called *transmissible spongiform encephalopathies* which include scrapie in sheep, mad cow disease in cattle and Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease in humans. *There is no evidence that CWD is transmissible to humans;* however the CDC advises against consuming any animal that appears ill.
- ♦ All members of the *Cervid* family (white-tailed deer, black-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose) are known to be susceptible.
- ♦ Caused by a misfolded protein called a prion which could be found in all deer bodily fluids.
- ♦ There is no cure. CWD is always fatal and there is no live test for deer.

Where is CWD Found?

- ♦ First discovered in captive mule deer in Colorado, in 1967.
- ♦ Now in captive or wild deer in 24 states and Canadian provinces.
- ♦ Detected in wild deer in: New York State and West Virginia (2005), Virginia (2010), Maryland (2011) plus in Pennsylvania both in captive deer (2012) and in wild deer (2013).

How New Jersey Is Responding

- ♦ Tested for CWD in symptomatic captive cervids and wild deer, and hunter-harvested wild deer since 1997. To date over 5,100 wild deer have been tested with no CWD-positive results.
- ♦ Banned the importation of cervids, recently expanded to include reindeer.
- ♦ Issued an advisory for New Jersey hunters bringing home venison from CWD-endemic states making it illegal to import into New Jersey a harvested deer carcass or deer parts from any state with CWD in wild deer unless strictly following that state's CWD protocol.
- ♦ Improved captive cervid regulations, including a proposed Herd Certification Program.
- ♦ Created the CWD Response Plan with protocols for detection of CWD to be activated when CWD is within 20 miles of the New Jersey border and within the state wild deer and captive cervids.

See NJFishandWildlife.com/cwdinfo.htm for more information on CWD in New Jersey and the 2013 New Jersey CWD Response Plan.

Visit cwd-info.org for more comprehensive CWD information.

▶▶ Chronic Wasting Disease in North America



- Areas with CWD infected Cervid populations
- States/Provinces where CWD has been found in captive populations

Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance (www.cwd-info.org)



Working to protect the environment through renewable and natural resource conservation.

Contact John Erndl, President
(732) 616-5137 or
email: john.erndl@ubnj.org
Visit our website: www.ubnj.org

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____

E-mail: _____ Date: _____

____ Individual Membership: * \$25/yr. Includes membership card, four issues of *Tracks & Trails*, decal and eligibility for contests, trophies and prizes.

*Required for UBNJ special hunts

____ Family Membership: \$40/yr. Includes all benefits of Individual Membership for the member, spouse and each child under the age of 16.

List names of family members: _____

____ Junior Membership: \$15/yr. Includes all benefits of Individual Membership for youth up to age 16.

For clubs and organizations, contact UBNJ for details.

____ Life Membership: \$400 single payment. Includes all benefits of Individual Membership.

Check One:
New Member: _____
Renewal: _____

____ Sponsoring Membership: \$100/yr.

I wish to make a donation of \$_____ to the UBNJ Protect our Rights Fund.

Signature: _____

Mail to: UBNJ Membership, P.O. Box 11, Ringwood, NJ 07456-0011.
Please allow 6 – 8 weeks to receive membership ID.



If you care about:

- Wise management of fish and wildlife populations
- Protection and enhancement of natural lands and waters
- Preservation of traditional outdoor sports

Then get involved!

- Stay informed on issues affecting NJ sportsmen and sportswomen
- Make an impact on outdoor issues
- Meet others who share similar sporting interests
- Have fun and participate in Federation-sponsored activities: jamborees, clay target shoots, tournaments, dinners, conventions, and more!

Membership:

- ____ \$35 Includes monthly newspaper and \$1 million excess liability insurance covering your sporting activities throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- ____ \$20 Monthly newspaper only

Name _____

County _____ Phone _____

Address _____

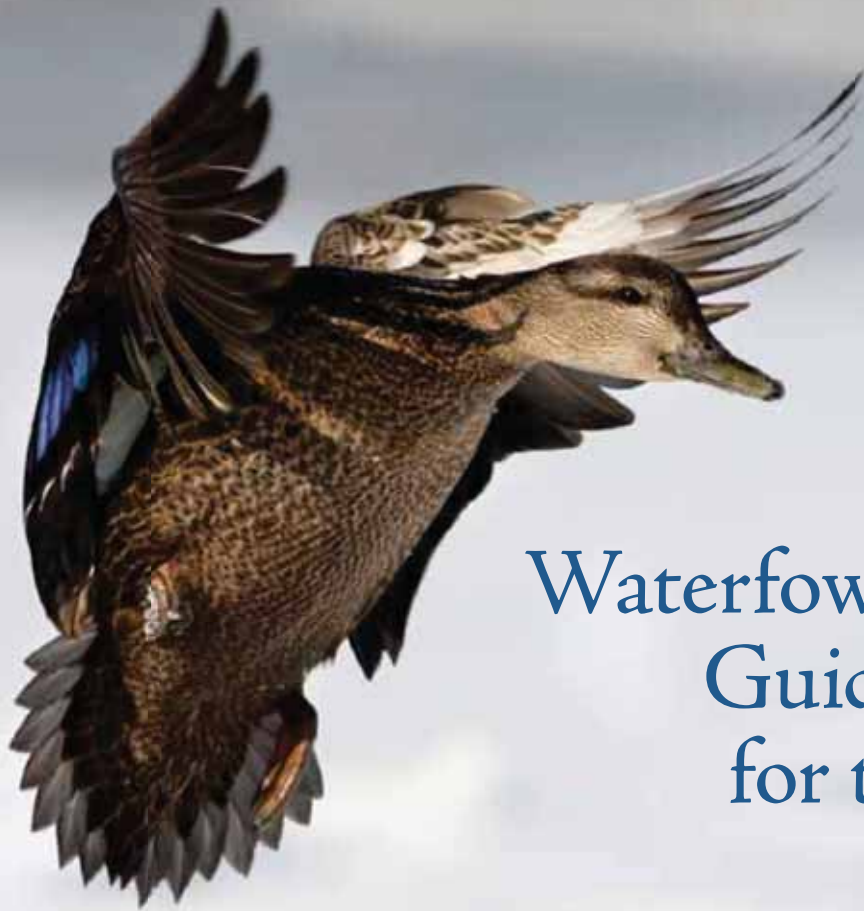
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

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www.njsfsc.org



Waterfowl Hunter Survey Guides Season Dates for the Garden State

Prepared by

Ted Nichols, Wildlife Biologist
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Orrin Jones, Seasonal Biologist

Waterfowl hunting in New Jersey is a diverse recreational activity. Garden State waterfowlers can pursue 28 species of ducks and five species of geese in a variety of habitats from small beaver ponds to the Atlantic Ocean. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife sets duck seasons within federal guidelines. The current, 60-day duck season structure in Atlantic Flyway states including New Jersey must occur between the last Saturday in September and the last Sunday in January with no more than two season splits within each zone.

Selecting hunting season dates for migratory game birds is a balance between science and social factors. The challenge for state wildlife agencies is to develop migratory game bird season dates that conform to federal frameworks yet account for migration patterns, average weather conditions, hunting traditions and the preferences of their hunters. Because of the diversity of habitats waterfowlers hunt, time spent pursuing additional quarry (e.g.: deer, striped bass), competition with work schedules and other conflicts, it is not surprising that many hunters have different opinions on waterfowl season date selections.

This diversity of opinions can make selecting annual waterfowl season dates challenging and at times contentious. One of Fish and Wildlife's primary goals is to select dates that satisfy the majority of the state's waterfowl hunters, recognizing that season date selections will not satisfy

all waterfowl hunters. The best way to ascertain hunters' preferences is to conduct an unbiased, statistically valid survey of hunters who pursue waterfowl in the state. In order to better serve the state's duck hunters, Fish and Wildlife conducted this type of survey during the winter of 2012–13.

The primary objectives of the survey were to measure the importance of several elements annually considered when setting waterfowl seasons and also to determine hunters' preferences for duck season frameworks within each of the state's three waterfowl zones. Surveys were sent via U.S. mail to a random sample of 1,080 individuals who received Harvest Information Program (HIP) certifications in New Jersey during the 2011–12 hunting season and who indicated that they hunted ducks during the previous year. The sampling rate was 16 percent for individuals who had hunted ducks. The survey response was 40 percent.

Nearly half (48 percent) of duck hunters only hunted in one zone while 8 percent of respondents hunted ducks in all three zones (Figure 1). The most common zone crossover occurred between the South and Coastal Zones.

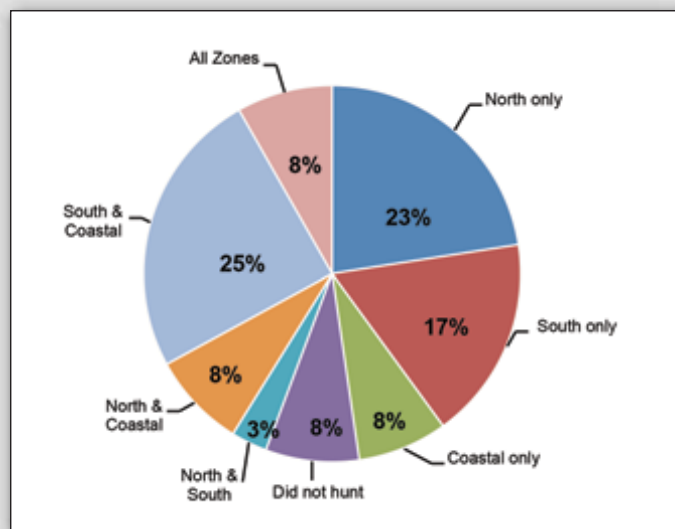
Hunters were also asked in which zone they hunted ducks most frequently; we used this response as

a cross-reference when analyzing season framework preferences within each zone.

Hunters ranked how important eight particular elements were to them in the annual consideration of waterfowl seasons. Hunters ranked the desire to maximize the number of Saturdays within the season, as well as to have opening days and closing days occur on Saturdays as high importance. Conversely, there was little support to have opening days occur on weekdays. Hunters indicated that it was very important that duck seasons be open to include Thanksgiving as well as the Christmas to New Year holiday period. Waterfowl hunters did not rank potential conflicts with other hunting seasons (e.g. deer) as being important. Hunters indicated that overlapping duck seasons with Canada goose seasons as somewhat important, even if it meant fewer goose hunting days in January.

For each of the three waterfowl zones (North, South, Coastal), hunters were presented with three choices for a duck season structure and asked to identify which season structure they preferred. The choices within each zone were the season structures that have been most frequently suggested by various waterfowl hunting organizations over the past several years. In all zones, one choice was to maintain the recent season structure which was described for each zone. For each zone, we analyzed results separately for all respondents as well as for hunters who indicated that they hunted in that particular zone most frequently.

Figure 1. Waterfowl zones where respondents hunted ducks during the past three years.



In this article, we present hunter preference results from individuals who indicated that they hunted most in that particular zone. For example, results from the Coastal Zone are from individuals who hunted ducks most frequently in that zone. It is appropriate to examine respondents from individuals who hunt most often in a particular zone for three reasons:

1. Survey results indicate that nearly half of duck hunters only hunt in one zone.
2. These hunters have the most experience with duck abundance and traditions in that particular zone.
3. These hunters have the most at stake concerning season preferences in that particular zone.

In the Coastal Zone, the majority of hunters (by a 5:4 margin) preferred the option to hunt later into January over options to have traditional or more hunting days during the first season split in November (Figure 2). Similarly, the option to hunt later into January by taking days from the first split was preferred by the most (44 percent) South Zone hunters (Figure 3). The two other options received less support as a first preference in the South Zone.

North Zone duck season preferences were the least clear. Thirty-eight percent of respondents who duck hunted primarily in the North Zone preferred an option to hunt later in the season by cutting the first split in October. However, about half of hunters were nearly equally split between retaining two Saturdays in the first split and an option to make the first split even longer. As such, North Zone duck hunters seemed to prefer to retain at least two Saturdays in the first split when compared to moving hunting days from October into January by about a 5:4 ratio (Figure 4). The ambiguity in North Zone season preferences is likely partially attributable to the recent, frequent changes to the North Zone season structure. The North Zone season structure was changed in three of the last four years.

Although Fish and Wildlife and the Fish and Game Council receive input from hunters on duck season dates throughout the year, it cannot be certain that these comments are representative of the majority of duck hunters. Statistically designed surveys are important for obtaining unbiased data regarding the preferences of user groups. The survey results weighed heavily in 2013–14 duck season date selections and will be considered in future years. Although some hunters may not be satisfied with 2013 season dates, it is reasonable to keep the season date structure similar for several years before considering season structure changes. Repeating a hunter opinion survey at periodic intervals (e.g. every three to five years) is also prudent.

Full reports on the 2012–13 Duck Hunter Survey and an additional report, *Patterns of Duck Hunting Activity and Success in New Jersey 1999–2011*, can be found on the *Waterfowl and Migratory Birds in New Jersey* page of Fish and Wildlife website. [↗](#)

Figure 2. Preferred season structure selections for the Coastal Zone: Coastal Zone hunters.

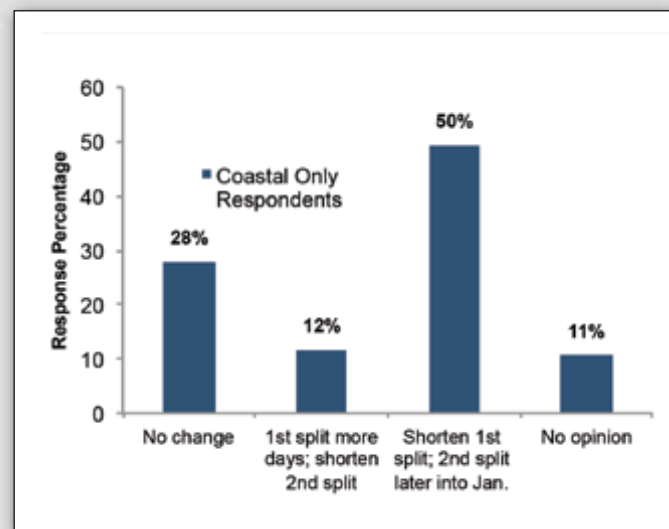


Figure 3. Preferred season structure selections for the South Zone: South Zone hunters.

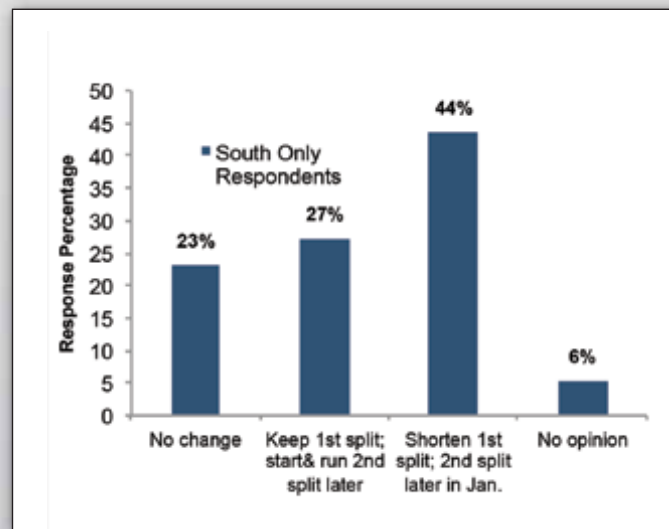


Figure 4. Preferred season structure selections for the North Zone: North Zone hunters.

