

NJ Coyote / Fox Hunting FAQ Sheet

When does the coyote / fox hunting season begin/end?

The annual NJ hunting season for coyote and fox begins the 4th Saturday prior to the last Friday in October and ends the following March 15.

How many coyote / fox hunting seasons are there?

There are three (3) seasons for hunting coyote and fox –

1. Bow & Arrow Only Season from the 4th Saturday prior to the last Friday in October through the Friday following Election Day in November.
2. Firearm or Bow Season from the Saturday after Election Day in November through March 15.
3. Special Permit Coyote / Fox Season from January 1 (or Jan. 2 if Jan. 1 is a Sunday) through March 15.

What are the hunting hours for coyote and fox?

1. During the Bow & Arrow Only Season, hunting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.
2. During the Firearm or Bow Season, hunting hours are 8AM to ½ hour after sunset on opening day and ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset on all other days.
3. During the Special Permit Season, coyote and fox may be hunted 24 hours a day (some weapon or ammunition types are restricted during evening hours).

Can I hunt coyote and fox on Sundays?

Sunday hunting for coyote and fox is prohibited.

What licenses or permits do I need to hunt coyote and fox?

1. During the Bow & Arrow Only Season, a valid archery license is required.
2. During the Firearm or Bow Season, a valid firearm or a valid archery license (depending on which weapon type you want to use) is required.
3. During the Special Permit Season, a valid firearm or a valid archery license (depending on which weapon type you want to use) is required **in addition to** a \$2 Special Permit. A rifle permit is required when using any rifle.

Can I use a dog to hunt coyote and fox?

1. During the Bow & Arrow Only Season, dogs may **NOT** be used to hunt coyote or fox.
2. During the Firearm or Bow Season, dogs may be used when hunting coyote and fox, except during the Six-day Firearm Deer Season or on the Wednesday of the Shotgun Permit Deer Season immediately following the Six-day Firearm Deer Season.
3. During the Special Permit Season, dogs may **NOT** be used to hunt coyote or fox when hunting under the permit provisions.

Can I use bait to hunt coyote and fox?

The use of bait is allowed when hunting during the Bow & Arrow Only Season or the Firearm or Bow Season, with the following restrictions –

1. If you're elevated in a standing tree, or in a structure of any kind, you must be **300** feet from the baited area.
2. The distance restriction would apply to a ground blind, which is defined as a temporary man-made structure used for the purpose of concealing from sight a person who is hunting.
3. A baited area is defined as the presence of placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered agricultural products, salt, or other edible lure whatsoever capable of attracting or enticing such birds or animals.

The use of bait during the Special Permit Season is prohibited when hunting under the permit provisions.

Can I use a call to attract coyote and fox?

Mouth or electronic calling devices are permitted during the Bow & Arrow Only Season and during the Firearm or Bow Season. Special Permit Season hunters are required to have a calling device in their possession while hunting.

Can I use a decoy to attract coyote and fox?

Decoys, including electronic decoys, may be used when hunting coyote and fox. However, live decoys are prohibited.

Can I harvest coyote and fox while hunting other game birds and game animals?

Presuming the season for the game bird or game animal you're targeting is open during the same time as the coyote and fox season, you may be able to harvest coyote and fox incidentally depending on your target species and your hunting manner. For example, you may not harvest coyote or fox when –

1. You're hunting for deer from a tree stand (or other structure) located within **300** feet of your bait pile;
2. You're night hunting raccoon or opossum before January 1; or,
3. You're night hunting raccoon or opossum between January 1 and March 1 and using a .22 caliber rifle

Note: Hunting hours for raccoon and opossum are 1 hr. after sunset to 1 hr. before sunrise from Oct. 1 (or Oct. 2 if Oct. 1 is a Sunday)-Mar. 1, so you may not harvest raccoon or opossum during the daytime (1 hr. before sunrise to 1 hr. after sunset).

Properly licensed persons hunting **deer** during the six-day firearm, muzzleloader rifle permit or shotgun permit deer seasons may kill fox or coyote, if the fox or coyote is encountered before said person has taken the season bag limit of deer. However, after the person has taken a daily bag limit of deer he or she must cease hunting immediately.

Properly licensed and permitted persons hunting **turkey** during the Spring Gobbler Season may harvest coyote incidental to turkey hunting (i.e., you're hunting turkey with a turkey decoy and a coyote comes into your setup).

Can I harvest other animals while hunting for coyote and fox?

Presuming you're following all the regulations pertaining to coyote and fox hunting, and there is an open season for another animal during the same time, you may be able to harvest other animals depending on which coyote/fox season it is and the manner in which you're hunting coyote and fox. For example –

1. During the Bow & Arrow Only and the Firearm or Bow Seasons, you may legally harvest other animals having a concurrent open season, and you follow all other regulations pertaining to the other animal in question.

2. During the Special Permit Season, you may only harvest raccoon or opossum at night if you're using shot size not greater than #4 fine shot.

Why is there a Special Permit Season, and how do I know if I need a Permit?

The State Game Code provides that, except when legally engaged in deer or black bear hunting, no person shall have in possession any shell or cartridge of any kind larger than No. 4 fine shot. The exceptions to this include –

1. Woodchuck hunting with a small caliber rifle;
2. Using a .22 caliber rifle and .22 short ammunition to hunt raccoon and opossum, or to dispatch legally captured furbearers other than muskrat;
3. Waterfowl hunting;
4. Hunting rabbit and squirrel with an air gun; and
5. Hunting coyote and fox under the Special Permit provisions.

During the Firearm or Bow Season, firearm hunters:

1. May hunt only between ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset;
2. May only use a shotgun not larger than 10 gauge using shot size up to #4 fine;
3. Must wear a cap of fluorescent Hunter's orange or some outer garment containing at least 200 square inches of fluorescent Hunter's orange material visible from all sides; and,
4. May use hounds to chase coyote and fox (except during the Six-day Firearm Deer Season or the following Wednesday of the Shotgun Permit Deer Season).

If this describes your manner of hunting coyote and fox from January 1-March 15, then you do not need a Special Permit.

Provisions of the Special Coyote / Fox Permit allow hunters pursuing coyote and fox to:

1. Hunt without the fluorescent hunter's orange requirement when using with a firearm;
2. Use shot sizes larger than #4 fine shot during **daylight** hours ("BB" to #3 Buck);
3. Use a muzzleloading rifle (.44 caliber or larger) during **daylight** after the Permit Muzzleloader Deer Season expires;
4. Use center-fire rifle (.25 caliber or smaller using 80 grain ammunition) and rim-fire rifle (.22 caliber or smaller using 50 grain ammunition) during **daylight** hours;
5. Hunt during **evening** hours with 10-12 gauge shotgun only using shot sizes as small as #4 fine to "T" shot;
6. Hunt by calling and stand hunting only (so use of dogs is prohibited); and,
7. Use portable lights at night.

If any of the above provisions describe your manner of hunting coyote and fox from January 1-March 15, then you need a Special Permit.

Note: Federally-owned properties (Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and, National Wildlife Refuges) may prohibit the use of center-fire or rim-fire rifles. The State Park Service Code (NJAC 7:2) prohibits the use of any rifle, including a muzzleloading rifle, for hunting coyote and fox on all State Parks, Forests and Recreation Areas. Hunters should *always check with the landowner* before hunting coyote/fox. **HUNT SMART.**

What type of ammunition can I use to hunt coyote and fox with a firearm?

Firearm ammunition for legally hunting coyote and fox vary depending on which season you are hunting. All firearms used may not have more than three (3) rounds of ammunition while hunting. Refer to the chart below.

Firearm Ammunition Legal for Hunting Coyote and Fox in New Jersey						
An asterisk (*) indicates legal for use, but not recommended. A check (√) indicates legal for use						
Shotgun not smaller than 20 gauge nor larger than 10 gauge	Lead or Tungsten-Nickel-Iron Hybrid	Diameter / Caliber	Firearm or Bow Season (Small Game)	Special Permit Season		
				Daylight	Evening	
Bird / Small Game Shot	12	0.05"	*	Use prohibited	Use prohibited	
	11	0.06"	*			
	10	0.07"	*			
	9	0.08"	*			
	8	0.09"	*			
	7 ½	0.095"	*			
	7	0.10"	*			
	6	0.11"	*			
	5	0.12"	√			
	4	0.13"	√	√		
Waterfowl Shot	3	0.14"	Shot sizes greater than #4 fine shot are prohibited.	Use prohibited	√	
	2	0.15"			√	
	1	0.16"			√	
	B	0.17"			√	
	BB	0.18"			√	√
	BBB	0.19"			√	√
	T	0.20"			√	√
Buck Shot	TT	0.21"	Shot sizes greater than #4 fine shot are prohibited.	Use prohibited	Use prohibited	
	F	0.22"				√
	FF	0.23"				√
	#4	0.24"				√
	#3	0.25"				√
	#2	0.27"				√
	#1	0.30"				√
	#0	0.32"				√
	#00	0.33"				√
#000	0.36"	√				
Muzzleloading rifle		Min. 0.44 caliber	Use prohibited	√	Use prohibited	
Rim-fire rifle	Max. 50 grain Soft or Hollow point	Max. 0.22 caliber		√		
Center-fire rifle	Max. 80 grain Soft or Hollow point	Max. 0.25 caliber		√		

When / Where can I get a Special Coyote and Fox Permit?

Permits (\$2) are available at any license agent or via the Fish and Wildlife's Internet license sales site beginning about mid-December. A valid hunting license for the upcoming calendar year must be purchased prior to, or in conjunction with, the purchase of a Special Coyote and Fox Permit.