

2017 MIGRATORY BIRD SEASON PREVIEW

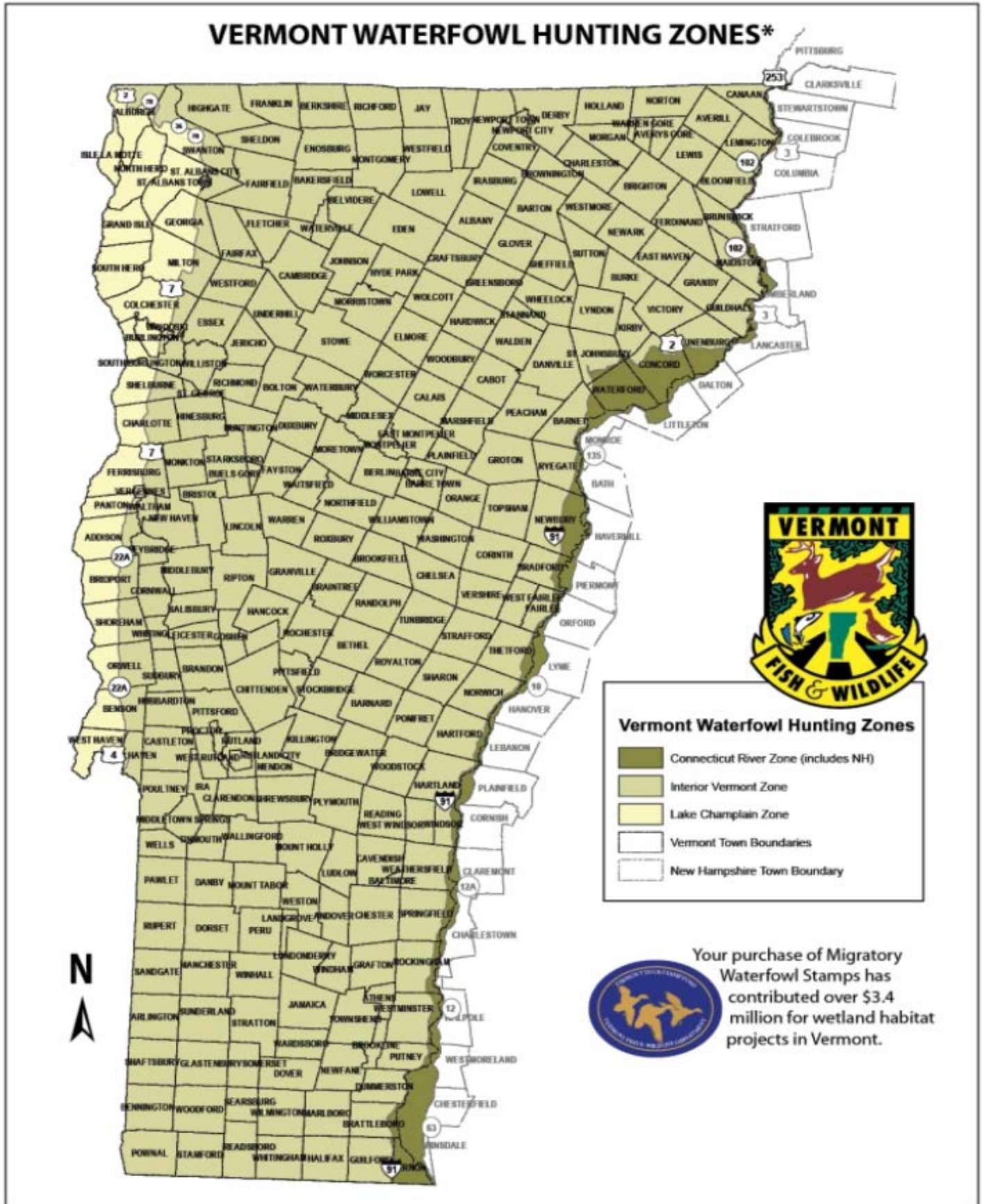


Figure 1. Vermont waterfowl hunting zones

[Send comments to ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@Vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@Vermont.gov)

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Table 3. USFWS Framework for 2017 Duck Seasons*

<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>OUTSIDE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY BAG</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT**</u>
60 Days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 28	6	18

SPECIES RESTRICTIONS - Daily Bag

MALLARD	4 (only 2 hen)
WOOD DUCK	3
BLACK DUCK	2
PINTAIL	1
REDHEAD	2
SCAUP	2
SCOTER	4
EIDERS	4
LONG-TAILED DUCK	4
CANVASBACK	2
HARLEQUIN	CLOSED
MOTTLED DUCK	1
FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK	1
HOODED MERGANSER	2

* Apply to Lake Champlain, Interior Vermont, and Connecticut River Zones.

** Possession limit is equal to three times the daily bag limit for these species.

SHOOTING HOURS - ½ HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE TO SUNSET (all days – all species)

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Table 4. USFWS Framework for 2017 Geese, Brant, Merganser, Coot, Snipe, and Woodcock Seasons

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>OUTSIDE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY POSSESSION</u>	
			<u>BAG</u>	<u>LIMIT**</u>
Canada Geese				
Resident	25 days	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25	15	45
Regular	50 days	Oct. 10 – Feb. 5	3	9
Snow & Blue Geese	107 days	Oct. 1 – Mar. 10	25	NONE
Brant	60 days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 31	2	6
Mergansers*	60 days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 28	5	15
(Hooded Mergansers)			(2)	(6)
Coots**	60 days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 28	15	45
Snipe	107 days	Sept. 1 – Jan. 31	8	24
Woodcock	45 days	Oct. 1 – Jan. 31	3	9

* Season length for mergansers equals season option chosen for ducks. Mergansers may be included as part of the daily duck bag, in which case the limit would be 6 mergansers/day. Of total merganser bag, only 2 daily and 6 in possession may be Hooded Mergansers.

** Season length for coots equals season option chosen for ducks.

MWS – mid-winter survey

SHOOTING HOURS - ½ HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE TO SUNSET (all days – all species)

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Table 5.

2017-2018 WATERFOWL SEASON RECOMMENDATION

LAKE CHAMPLAIN ZONE

	<u>SEASON TYPE</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT</u>
DUCKS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Oct. 15</u> & <u>Oct 28 - Dec. 21</u>	6	18
MERGANSERS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Oct. 15</u> & <u>Oct 28 - Dec. 21</u>	5	15
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Oct. 15</u> & <u>Oct 28 - Dec. 21</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 - Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	50 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Nov.29</u>	3	9
Snow Geese **	Split	107 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Dec.31, 2017</u> <u>Feb. 15 - Mar. 10, 2018</u>	25	NONE
	Straight(CO)		<u>Mar. 11 - Apr. 28, 2018</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 7 - Dec. 5</u>	2	6

SHOOTING HOURS - All Waterfowl - All Days - ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

* Federal species restrictions apply.

** Includes blue geese also.

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Table 6.

2017-2018 WATERFOWL SEASON RECOMMENDATION

VERMONT INTERIOR ZONE

	<u>SEASON TYPE</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT</u>
DUCKS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Dec. 9</u>	6	18
MERGANSERS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Dec. 9</u>	5	15
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Dec. 9</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 - Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	50 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Nov. 29</u>	3	9
Snow Geese **	Straight	107 Days	<u>Oct. 11 - Dec.31, 2017</u> <u>Feb. 15 – Mar. 10, 2018</u>	25	NONE
	Straight	(CO)	<u>Mar. 11 – Apr. 28, 2018</u>	15	NONE
	Brant	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 7 – Dec. 5</u>	2

SHOOTING HOURS - All Waterfowl - All Days - ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

* Federal species restrictions apply.

** Includes blue geese also.

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Table 7.

2017-2018 VERMONT MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS (regulations in effect September 1, 2017 through April 28, 2018)

Species	<u>Lake Champlain Zone</u>	Interior Vermont Zone	Connecticut River Zone
Ducks, Coots and Mergansers	Oct. 11 – Oct. 15 Oct. 28 – Dec. 21	Oct. 11 – Dec. 9	Oct. ? – Nov. ? Nov. ? – Dec. ?
Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 11 – Nov. 29	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 11 – Nov. 29	Sept. ? – Sept. ? Oct. ?2 – Nov. ? Nov. ? – Dec. ?
Snow Geese (includes blue geese)	Oct. 11 - Dec. 31, 2017 Feb. 15 - Mar. 10, 2018 Mar.11 – Apr 28, 2018	Oct. 11 - Dec. 31, 2017 Feb. 15 - Mar. 10, 2018 Mar.11 – Apr 28, 2018	Oct. ? – Dec. ?
Brant	Oct. 7 – Dec. 5	Oct. 7 – Dec. 5	Oct. ? – Oct. ?
Woodcock	Statewide	Oct. 1 – Nov. 14	
Common Snipe	Statewide	Oct. 1 – Nov. 14	

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend – September 23 & 24

BAG LIMITS

The daily bag limit is the maximum number of birds of each species that any person may take (or possess in the field) during any one day. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for all waterfowl species except snow geese.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Daily Limit</u>	<u>Possession Limit</u>
Ducks *	6	18
Mergansers **	5	15
Coot	15	45
Canada Geese		
September season		
Lake Champlain Zone	8	24
Interior Vermont Zone	8	24
Connecticut River Zone	5	15 ?
Oct. - Dec. season		
Lake Champlain Zone	3	9
Interior Vermont Zone	3	9
Connecticut River Zone	3	9 ?
Snow Geese	25	No limit
Mar. 11 – Apr. 28, 2018	15	No limit
Brant	2	6
Woodcock	3	9
Common Snipe	8	24

* The daily limit of 6 ducks may include no harlequin, and no more than 4 mallards (2 of which may be hens), 2 black duck, 3 wood ducks, 1 pintails, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 2 scaup, 4 scoters, 4 eiders, and 4 long-tailed duck.

** The daily limit of 5 mergansers is in addition to the regular duck bag, and together may include no more than 2 hooded mergansers.

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APPENDIX A

2017 FALL CALENDAR

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
SEPTEMBER						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
OCTOBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				
NOVEMBER				1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30		
DECEMBER						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						

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Appendix C.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK CHANGES IN HUNTING REGULATIONS 2017-18

After more than 30 years of 1-bird daily bag limits for black ducks, duck hunters in the U.S. will have an opportunity for a 2-black duck daily bag limit in 2017. Why the change after all these years? Three developments led to this shift.

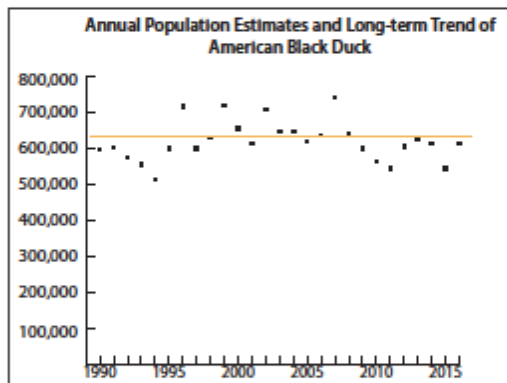


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1 Both eastern Canada and eastern U.S. have seen the number of duck hunters decline since the 1980s, as well as the harvest of black ducks. Since the late 1990s, the combined black duck harvest in the two countries has dropped from more than 300,000 birds per year to less than 200,000. However, during the same time span the black duck population size has been stable.

2 Wildlife managers have much better biological information on black ducks than they had during the first 20 years of restrictive black duck bag limits. Surveys of the breeding black duck population have been conducted annually in eastern Canada and northeastern U.S. since the 1990s, long enough to provide reliable information on the population trend and year-to-year fluctuations. The most up-to-date survey results indicate that the population is currently stable. In addition, an ongoing black duck banding program, coupled with band reporting from hunters, has provided annual estimates of harvest and survival rates. This information has enabled managers to evaluate the effect of harvest on survival rates of black ducks and, more generally, examine how harvest affects their population.

3 The much-improved biological data now available due to these on-going monitoring programs has enabled U.S. and Canadian biologists to construct a black duck population model that is now the basis for an International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. The Harvest Strategy, adopted in 2012, prescribes annual black duck hunting regulations in the two countries. The three objectives of the Harvest Strategy are: (1) Maintain a sustainable black duck population; (2) Maintain a robust black duck hunting tradition; and (3) Maintain the historical and relatively equal proportion of the black duck harvest between Canada and the U.S.



The yellow line shows the relatively stable population estimates of black ducks over a 26 year period.

These developments allowed U.S. and Canadian biologists to gain better insight into one of the most debated questions in waterfowl management over the past half century: "What effect does hunting have on the population?" If annual survival rates are lower in years when harvest rates are high, and increase when harvest rates decline, then this would suggest that harvest has a negative effect on annual survival and to some extent



Kyle Winterstein

Black ducks are among the most prized species for duck hunters in the east.

the population size. On the other hand, if there is no apparent relationship between harvest rates and survival rates, this suggests that harvest has a limited effect on population size. The most recent results from the black duck population model indicate that at the current levels of hunting, harvest is not affecting annual black duck survival at the population level. Accordingly, the Harvest Strategy allows for more liberal black duck hunting regulations in 2017. If liberalization of the hunting regulations causes black duck survival to decrease and the population to decline, those signals will be detected through the annual monitoring programs and the appropriate regulation changes can be made to ensure that black duck harvest is sustainable over the long term.

