

## 2018 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASON PREVIEW

### Summary of Issues for Consideration:

Much of Vermont's waterfowl season is driven by the federal framework for the Atlantic Flyway. Below are a few issues that must be decided for the 2018 hunting season. The Department would like the Board to consider the following:

- Hold the liberal season allowed under the federal framework related to season lengths and daily bag limits. The Board has the option to be more conservative.
- When to open the 2018 duck season.
  - Open the 2018 duck season on a Saturday. This year is scheduled to be a Saturday opening, following our tradition of two Wednesdays and a Saturday opening schedule.
  - Any splits within seasons to create segments should be considered for the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones.
  - Open this year on Saturday, October 13 and run through December 11, for the Interior Zone.
  - Lake Champlain Zone: October 13 - Oct. 28 and Nov 10 - Dec. 23.
- Alter the current approach for Wednesday and Saturday openings from a two Wednesday and one Saturday schedule to an every other year cycle.
- Opening the resident Canada goose season September 1<sup>st</sup> and continue through September 25.
- When to hold the 2018 migratory goose seasons.
  - Open the migratory Canada goose season on October 13.
  - Opening the Snow goose season on October 1.
- Increasing the northern pintail daily bag limit from one to two daily.
- Hold youth hunting weekend – September 29-30.
- Hold woodcock/snipe season: October 1- November 14.

### Background

In 2016 the Department had for the first time the opportunity to fully review the migratory game bird season options with the Board without being under a very short time constraint. As part of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) of the Department of Interior's retrospective regulatory review, they developed a schedule for migratory game bird hunting regulations that was more efficient and provided season dates much earlier than was possible under the old process. There are no longer seasons referred to as "early" (September Canada Goose, Woodcock and Snipe seasons) and "late" (migrant Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Brant and Duck seasons) season frameworks and selections to work through. With the changes that occurred within the federal framework setting process, we now combine late and early season selections into a single process. Under the new process, USFWS will develop proposed hunting season frameworks for a given year in the fall of the prior year and finalize those frameworks a few months later. We also have a final selection deadline of April 30<sup>th</sup> instead of August,

allowing us more time to announce seasons to hunters and to have the syllabus with regulations easily printed and distributed prior to the start of any migratory game bird hunting season.

Migratory game bird managers currently base the migratory bird population estimates and recommendations on predictions derived from long-term biological information and harvest strategies instead of current year surveys.

In addition, beginning in 2015 the Board was given authority by Legislature to set the migratory bird hunting regulations by process instead of rule. Part of Title 10 § 4082 reads:

(b)(1) Except as provided for under subdivision (2) of this subsection, the Board annually may adopt rules relating to the management of migratory game birds, and shall follow the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. For each such rule, the Board shall conduct a hearing but, when necessary, may schedule the hearing for a day before the terms of the rule are expected to be determined.

(2) Beginning with the 2015 hunting season, the Board may set by procedure the daily bag and possession limits of migratory game birds that may be harvested in each Waterfowl Hunting Zone annually without following the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. The annual daily bag and possession limits of migratory game birds shall be consistent with federal requirements. Prior to setting the migratory game bird daily bag and possession limits, the Board shall provide a period of not less than 30 days of public notice and shall conduct at least two public informational hearings. The final migratory game bird daily bag and possession limits shall be enforceable by the Department under its enforcement authority in part 4 of this title.

Tables 1 and 2 provide background information on past migratory game bird hunting seasons. Table 1 shows the hunting seasons approved during 2017 and is provided as a reference while considering bag limits and the seasons frameworks for 2018. Appendix B provides the history, 1942-2017, of Vermont's waterfowl seasons broken down into season type, season length, dates and bag limits. This may help one's understanding of how Vermont arrived at our current zones and season types.

Table 2 provides a historic look at waterfowl hunter participation and estimated harvest levels. For 2017, Vermont waterfowl stamps sold and the number of individuals that registered with the Harvest Information Program (HIP) equaled. HIP is a method used to generate more reliable estimates of hunting activity and of the number of all migratory birds harvested. The HIP program numbers include youth and adult waterfowl hunters, woodcock and snipe hunters. Only adult waterfowl hunters, 16 years of age and older, are required to purchase the state waterfowl stamp. The Department will populate the remaining portions of the table this summer after the USFWS examines wings collected randomly from hunters and harvest estimates are completed.

Vermont currently has three waterfowl zones (Figure 1):

- Lake Champlain Zone that we share with New York. Vermont sets the dates for this zone.
- Interior Zone that is entirely within Vermont.

- Connecticut River Zone that we share with New Hampshire. New Hampshire sets the dates for this zone as an extension of their inland zone.

Under Vermont's current three zones, Vermont is allowed to split any zone once to create two hunting segments. Vermont currently has sixty days to divide between the two segments in an effort to accommodate the diverse desires of the variety of Vermont waterfowl hunters. The zones were also set up to take into consideration the differences in the physiographic regions of the state and the climatic differences each has. Vermont's next opportunity to adjust zone boundaries will occur in 2021.

For your information, included below is the segment of the federal register that pertains to establishing zones and splits. The information below only applies to the regular duck season.

***Federal Register*** /Vol. 80, No. 139 /Tuesday, July 21, 2015 / Proposed Rules **43270-71**

*Guidelines for Duck Zones and Split Seasons*

*The following zone and split-season guidelines apply only for the regular duck season:*

- (1) A zone is a geographic area or portion of a State, with a contiguous boundary, for which independent dates may be selected for the regular duck season.*
- (2) Consideration of changes for management-unit boundaries is not subject to the guidelines and provisions governing the use of zones and split seasons for ducks.*
- (3) Only minor (less than a county in size) boundary changes will be allowed for any grandfathered arrangement and changes are limited to the open season.*
- (4) Once a zone and split option is selected during an open season, it must remain in place for the following 5 years.*

*Any State may continue the configuration used in the previous 5-year period. If changes are made, the zone and split-season configuration must conform to one of the following options:*

- (1) No more than four zones with no splits,*
- (2) Split seasons (no more than 3 segments) with no zones, or*
- (3) No more than three zones with the option for 2-way (2-segment) split seasons in one, two, or all zones.*

*Grandfathered Zone and Split Arrangements*

*When we first implemented the zone and split guidelines in 1991, several States had completed experiments with zone and split arrangements different from our original options. We offered those States a one-time opportunity to continue ("grandfather") those arrangements, with the stipulation that only minor changes could be made to zone boundaries. If any of those States now wish to change their zone and split arrangement:*

- (1) The new arrangement must conform to one of the 3 options identified above; and*
- (2) The State cannot go back to the grandfathered arrangement that it previously had in place.*

*Management Units*

*We will continue to utilize the specific limitations previously established regarding the use of zones and split seasons in special management units, including the High Plains Mallard Management Unit. We note that the original justification and objectives established for the High Plains Mallard Management Unit provided for additional days of hunting opportunity at the end of the regular duck season. In order to maintain the integrity of the management unit, current guidelines prohibit simultaneous zoning and/or 3-way split seasons within a management unit*

*and the remainder of the State. Removal of this limitation would allow additional proliferation of zone and split configurations and compromise the original objectives of the management unit.*

Throughout the development of the season recommendations, the Department relied on findings from the 2015 Waterfowl Hunter Survey Summary. Department staff weighed the survey results heavily while considering recommendations. As stated in the summary, “survey responses came from waterfowl hunters with a broad background that varied greatly by age, hunting experience, educational and economic background. Therefore, our results and summaries represent the variation in the entire waterfowl hunting user group, not just those who are vocal at public meetings”. We used the results to:

- Decide when to place the majority of duck hunting days by month. Most hunters prefer October to have the most waterfowl hunting opportunity.
- Determine what day of the week to open the season. Regardless of hunting zone, few (< 12%) hunters do most of their hunting on weekdays. Hunters either hunt weekends or split their time equally between weekdays and weekend hunting.
- Determine when to have the opening day of duck season, Saturday or Wednesday.
- Determine what week to recommend opening the season. Vermont hunters chose the second week in October as their preferred opening week for ducks and geese.
- Decide which zones to propose for splits and in which seasons. “Goose hunters in the Lake Champlain zone, regardless of residency, chose straight season more than split seasons. For the Interior Vermont zone, Vermont residents chose straight seasons most commonly for duck and goose seasons”.
- Decide on the length of the Lake Champlain Zone split. Vermont hunters preferred a two-week season split length if one is to be used.

#### 2018 Migratory Game Bird Season

Tables 3 and 4 provide the USFWS season frameworks for the 2018 duck and goose seasons, respectively, the latter including other migratory game birds as well. The only potential changes from 2017 hunting seasons shown on Table 3 is the bag limit of northern pintail going from one to two birds in the daily bag limit. The brant season and daily bag limit will be dependent on the number of birds found during the mid-winter survey. Tables 5 and 6 provide the Department’s 2018 hunting season proposal as a starting point for the Board to consider.

*2018 Duck Season:* The 2018 duck season options allow the opportunity to utilize a 60-day season within the dates of September 22, 2018 to January 27, 2019. The allowed daily bag limit is six birds, with species specific limits listed on Table 3. Vermont may allow a possession limit of 18 ducks total. The Board may be more restrictive on the length of the season and bag limits if desired, but the Board cannot set regulations more liberal. The Department recommends taking the more liberal hunting option allowed under the federal framework.

If the Board decides to continue with the tradition of having one Saturday opening day followed by two Wednesday opening days, then 2018 will be a Saturday opener. The Board has also traditionally held the youth waterfowl weekend the last weekend in September. The Department has withheld any fishing tournament permits for that weekend to reduce conflicts between anglers and youth waterfowlers. The youth weekend must be within 14 days of either end of the federal framework dates.

With updated information from the 2015 Waterfowl Hunters Survey, the Department would like to recommend changing the opening day schedule to Wednesday and Saturday on an every other year basis. The survey showed Lake Champlain zone hunters preferred a Wednesday opening day 45%, Saturday 33%, and no preference 22%. The Interior zone hunters preferred opening day to be Wednesday 44%, Saturday 26%, and no preference 30%. An increase in Saturday opening days may also allow additional school aged hunters to participate prior to the early season burn out period. One of the Department's goals is to increase the participation of youth hunters and younger adults that may not have leave time built up to allow for mid-week participation.

*2018 Goose, Brant, Mergansers, Coots, Snipe, and Woodcock Seasons:* Table 4 lays out the season options for geese, brant, mergansers, coots, snipe and woodcock. The available season lengths, outside dates for the seasons, daily bag limits and possession limits are broken down by species. The options for brant will be dependent on the mid-winter survey numbers that were flown the first week in January. Vermont has not heard from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service what the total winter population estimate is yet. This should be available by late February after all states supply their survey results.

In 2015 the Board changed the opening day of the resident Canada goose season from the Tuesday after Labor Day to the first of September. Depending on which course the Board takes, it will have an effect on three hunting days and one weekend within the potential 25-day season. We often receive requests to open the migratory Canada goose season in early October. We are not allowed to open the season on migratory Canada geese until October 10<sup>th</sup> to reduce hunting pressure on the Atlantic population that is flying through the state. Prior to 2010 we were unable to open the season until October 20<sup>th</sup>. This change came about because of efforts pursued by Vermont and some other New England states. The number of breeding pairs of the Atlantic Population of Canada geese has remained between 161,200 – 216,100 since 2003. While the total number of birds has decreased from 1.35 million to 705,900 from 2003 to 2017, we did see a slight increase from 2016. The overall population has seen an annual decrease of 4% per year, primarily due to low production caused by weather conditions during the nesting and hatching periods. We are viewing population numbers cautiously because of the possibility of non-Atlantic population geese being included in the count, likely molt migrants utilizing the area.

*2018 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days:* The Department may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days,” in addition to the regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holiday, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds. The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, mergansers and coots, and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Flyway species and area restrictions would remain in effect.

The age of youth hunter eligibility changed in 2016 at the federal level, which allowed the Board to consider changing the youth waterfowl hunter age. States were allowed to use their established definition of age for youth hunters. However, youth hunters may not be 18 years of

age or older. In addition, an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day. Youth hunters 16 years of age and older must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp). In 2016 Vermont changed the youth waterfowl hunters age to 17 and younger. Vermont also requires all hunters 16 years of age and older to have a state duck stamp. Historically, Vermont has been more restrictive than the federal law, by not allowing adults to hunt other species on youth hunting weekends while in the presence of a youth hunter who is hunting under the youth weekend regulations (ex. resident Canada geese). In some years, the end of the resident Canada goose season overlaps the youth waterfowl hunting weekend, this will not occur in 2018 if we choose September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> as the youth days.

*Special Falconry Regulations:* Falconry is a permitted means of taking migratory game birds in any State meeting Federal falconry standards in 50 CFR 21.29. These States may select an extended season for taking migratory game birds in accordance with the following:

**Extended Seasons:** For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons must not exceed 107 days for any species or group of species in a geographical area. Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of 3 segments. **Framework Dates:** Seasons must fall between September 1 and March 10.

**Daily Bag Limits:** Falconry daily bag limits for all permitted migratory game birds must not exceed 3 birds, singly or in the aggregate, during extended falconry seasons, any special or experimental seasons, and regular hunting seasons in all States, including those that do not select an extended falconry season.

**Regular Seasons:** General hunting regulations, including seasons and hunting hours, apply to falconry in each State listed in 50 CFR 21.29. Regular season bag limits do not apply to falconry. The falconry bag limit is not in addition to gun limits.

Vermont has traditionally run the falconry season during any open migratory game bird season. Last year falconers had the opportunity to begin on September 1<sup>st</sup> with the resident Canada goose season and ended their season on December 31<sup>th</sup>. A three-bird daily bag limit was in effect.

### Public Input and Outreach

The Department, in conjunction with the Board, is currently planning to hold three public meetings in 2018. Meetings are tentatively planned for the evenings of March 13 and 15, beginning at 6:30pm, in Bennington, Vermont and Essex Junction Vermont, respectively. Final arrangements are still being made for either March 20 or 21 in Whitehall, New York. In 2018 the Department proposes to add the Bennington meeting to try and expand the public input from another region of the State. During the meetings, the Department will review the season options, recommendations, current biological information, answer questions, and record public comments for the Board. The Department also intends to break the meeting into small groups and have staff and board members act as facilitators for the break out groups. The Department will also supply comment cards that can be dropped off at the end of the meeting for those that do not wish to make public comments verbally. The public will also be encouraged to submit

comments directly to any Board member or email them to the Department. Meeting times and places will be advertised on the Department website and through news releases.

After the Board approves final season dates and bag limits (tentatively scheduled for first Wednesday in April), the Department will submit selections to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by April 30<sup>th</sup> and the information will be sent to a printer for production of the 2018 syllabus of state and federal hunting regulations. The early decision deadlines will allow the Department to have the syllabus available to the public in print version by August 1<sup>st</sup>, a full month prior to any migratory bird hunting season. Approved seasons will be placed on the Department's website within days after the Board's vote.

Table 1. 2017 Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons

**2017-2018 VERMONT MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS**  
(regulations in effect September 1, 2017 through April 27, 2018)

Species	<u>FINAL</u> <u>Lake Champlain</u> <u>Zone</u>	<u>FINAL</u> <u>Interior Vermont</u> <u>Zone</u>	<u>FINAL</u> <u>Connecticut River</u> <u>Zone</u>
Ducks, Coots and Mergansers	Oct 11 – Oct 15 Nov 7 – Dec 31	Oct 11 – Dec 9	Oct 3 – Nov 5 Nov 22 – Dec 17
Canada Geese	Sept 1 – Sept 25 Oct 11 – Nov 29	Sept 1 – Sept 25 Oct 11 – Nov 29	Sept 1 – Sept 25 Oct 3 – Nov 5 Nov 22 – Dec 27
Snow Geese (includes blue geese) (Conservation Order)	Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2017 Feb 24 – Mar 10, 2018 Mar 11 – Apr 27, 2018	Oct 11 – Dec 31, 2017 Feb 24 – Mar 10, 2018 Mar 11 – Apr 27, 2018	Oct 3 – Dec 27 Mar 11-Apr 27, 2018 applies only to land, not CT River waters
Brant	Oct 7 – Dec 5	Oct 7 – Dec 5	Oct 3 – Nov 5 Nov 22 – Dec 17
Woodcock	Statewide	Oct 1 – Nov 14	
Common Snipe	Statewide	Oct 1 – Nov 14	

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend – September 23 & 24

The youth hunter age for the Lake Champlain and Interior Zones of Vermont is recognized as all hunters 17 years of age or younger on the date of the hunt. The Connecticut River Zone remains at 15 years of age or younger as mandated by New Hampshire law. Youth hunters age 16 and 17 are required to be in possession of a state and federal duck stamp. Youth hunters must also be accompanied by an adult, 18 years of age or older, who is also properly licensed to hunt in Vermont.

**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.

Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
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		
Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2017	25	No limit
Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2018	25	No limit
Mar. 11 – Apr. 27, 2018 (CO)	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 ducks, 3 wood ducks, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 2 redheads, 2 scaup, 4 scoters, 4 eiders, and 4 long-tailed ducks.

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



**Table 2. Vermont Waterfowl Hunting and Harvest Data Comparisons (Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Combined)**

	Federal Duck Stamp Sales	Vermont Duck Stamp Sales	Vermont HIP Registration	No. of Active Adult Duck Hunters	Average Seasonal Duck Bagged Per Hunter	Total Season Duck Harvest	Total Season Canada Goose Harvest	Total Season Snow Goose Harvest
1992	5,216	10,325		4,050	4.13	17,700	2,600*	1,700
1993	4,655	8,395		3,862	4.00	17,900	1,800*	2,200
1994	4,821	7,998		3,942	5.23	22,600	1,900*	2,000
1995	4,695	6,715		3,955	6.97	31,700	0*	1,800
1996	4,812	7,023		3,807	9.35	40,000	0*	3,600
1997	3,791	6,644		2,981	7.85	21,600	0*	1,300
1998	4,345	6,725		3,132	5.78	24,000	2,700	3,300
1999	4,542	6,320		1,600	11.9	25,000	4,100	1,700
2000	4,741	5,418		1,700	10.4	17,700	3,600	4,200
2001	4,824	5,685		1,700	10.4	17,600	4,300	2,200
2002	5,201	5,722		2,600	9.6	26,800	7,100	1,300
2003	5,242	6,012		1,300	12.6	16,300	3,600	3,400
2004	4,723	6,242		2,600	9.3	24,300	7,100	1,700
2005	4,956	5,682		2,400	10.6	25,400	9,300	400
2006	3,391	5,581		2,000	9.9	19,600	7,800	100
2007	3,193	6,137		2,300	9.2	16,700	6,300	500
2008	3,391	5,746	↑\$5-\$7.50	2,900	11.9	34,800	12,300	2,100
2009	not available	6,051		2,400	10.7	25,500	11,500	90
2010	not available	6,065 Last Stamp	5,404****	2,700	8.5	22,900	9,600	0
2011	not available	4,872 First Tag	4,949****	2,600	9.0	23,000	8,300	134
2012	not available	5,882	6,283****	2,100	10.0	20,500	8,600	34
2013	not available	6,436	8,719****	4,000	8.0	31,900	9,600	0
2014	not available	6,635	9,913****	2,600	6.8	17,800	12,300	46
2015	not available	6,244	11,122****	2,600	5.8	14,700	6,733	0
2016	not available	6,016	18,598****	3,400	5.2	16,000	8,800	0
2017	not available	5,954	7,006****	To date not available	To date not available	To date not available	To date not available	To date not available

\* Harvest restrictions in effect

\*\* Figures Preliminary

\*\*\* Includes youth hunters and woodcock/snipe hunters

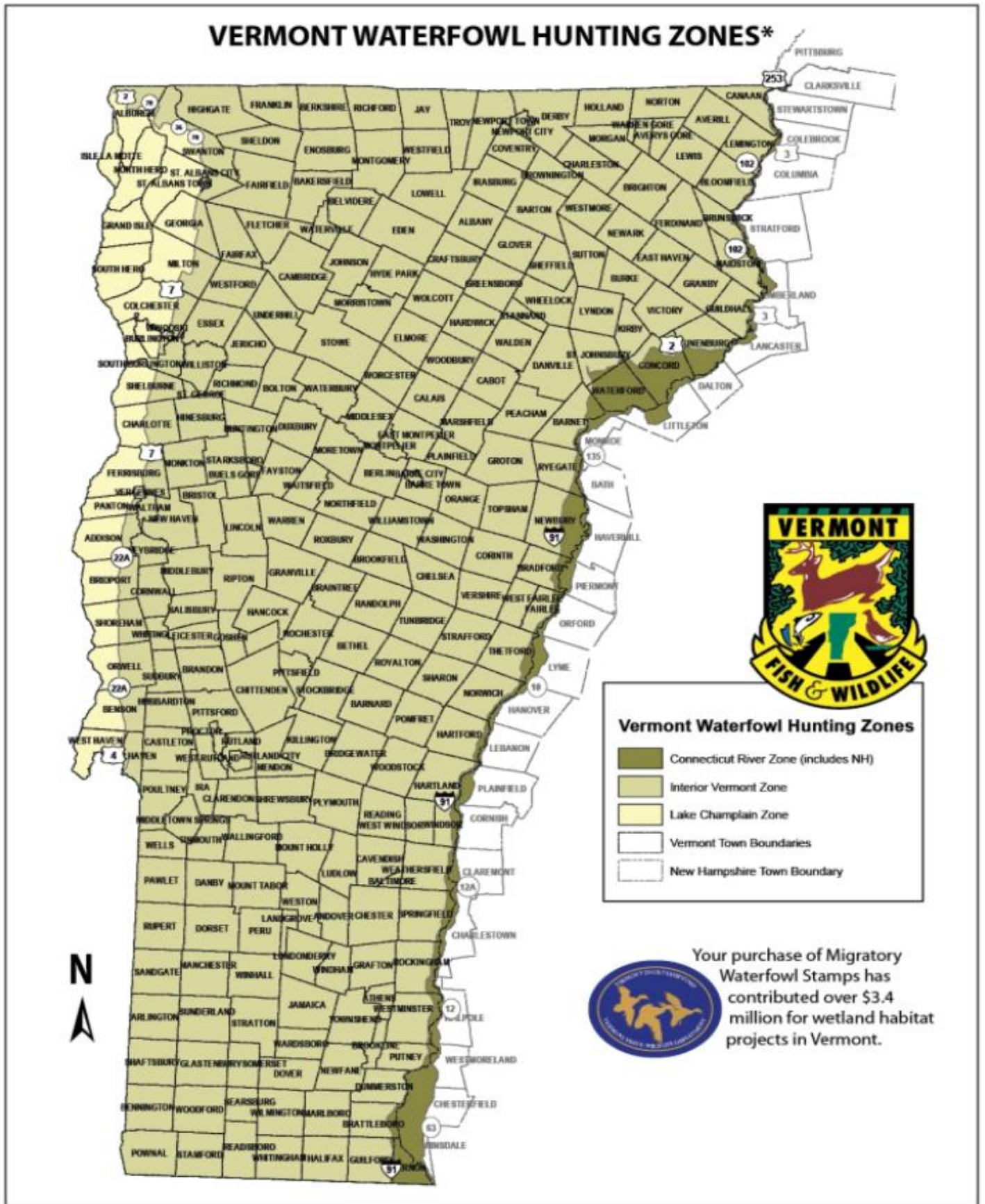


Figure 1. Vermont waterfowl hunting zones

**Table 3. USFWS Framework for 2018 Duck Seasons\***

<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>OUTSIDE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY BAG</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT**</u>
60 Days	Sept. 22 – Jan. 27	6	18

**SPECIES RESTRICTIONS - Daily Bag**

MALLARD	4 (only 2 hen)
WOOD DUCK	3
BLACK DUCK	2
PINTAIL	2
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)

**Table 4. USFWS Framework for 2018 Geese, Brant, Merganser, Coot, Snipe, and Woodcock Seasons**

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>OUTSIDE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY POSSESSION BAG 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. 22 – Jan. 31	2	6 (dependent on MWS)
Mergansers*	60 days	Sept. 22 – Jan. 27	5	15
(Hooded Mergansers)			(2)	(6)
Coots**	60 days	Sept. 22 – Jan. 27	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)

Table 5.

**2018-2019 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. 13 - Oct. 28</u> & <u>Nov 10 - Dec. 23</u>	6	18
MERGANSERS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 13 - Oct. 28</u> & <u>Nov 10 - Dec. 23</u>	5	15
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 13 - Oct. 28</u> & <u>Nov 10 - Dec. 23</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 - Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	50 Days	<u>Oct. 13 - Dec. 1</u>	3	9
Snow Geese **	Split	107 Days	<u>Oct. 1 - Dec.31, 2018</u> <u>Feb. 24 - Mar. 10, 2019</u>	25	NONE
	Straight(CO)		<u>Mar. 11 - Apr. 26, 2019</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 6 - Dec. 4</u>	2	6 ?

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

\* Federal species restrictions apply.

\*\* Includes blue geese also.

Table 6.

**2018-2019 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. 13 - Dec. 11</u>	6	18
MERGANSERS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 13 - Dec. 11</u>	5	15
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 13 - Dec. 11</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	24 Days	<u>Sept. 1 - Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	50 Days	<u>Oct. 13 - Dec. 1</u>	3	9
Snow Geese **	Straight	107 Days	<u>Oct. 1 - Dec.31, 2018</u> <u>Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2019</u>	25	NONE
	Straight (CO)		<u>Mar. 11 – Apr. 26, 2019</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 6 – Dec. 4</u>	2	6 ?

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

\* Federal species restrictions apply.

\*\* Includes blue geese also.

Table 7.

**2018-2019 VERMONT MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS**  
(regulations in effect September 1, 2018 through April 26, 2019)

Species	Lake Champlain Zone	Interior Vermont Zone	Connecticut River Zone
Ducks, Coots and Mergansers	Oct. 13 – Oct. 28 Nov. 10 – Dec. 23	Oct. 13 – Dec. 11	Oct. ? – Nov. ? Nov. ? – Dec. ?
Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 13 – Dec. 1	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 13 – Dec. 1	Sept. ? – Sept. ? Oct. ?2 – Nov. ? Nov. ? – Dec. ?
Snow Geese (includes blue geese)	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2018 Feb. 24 - Mar. 10, 2019 Mar.11 – Apr 26, 2019	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2018 Feb. 24 - Mar. 10, 2019 Mar.11 – Apr 26, 2019	Oct. ? – Dec. ?
Brant	Oct. 6 – Dec. 4	Oct. 6 – Dec. 4	Oct. ? – Oct. ?
Woodcock	Statewide	Oct. 1 – Nov. 14	
Common Snipe	Statewide	Oct. 1 – Nov. 14	

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend – September 29 & 30

**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.

Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
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. 26, 2019	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, 2 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.

**APPENDIX A**  
**2018 FALL CALENDAR**

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	30						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
<b>OCTOBER</b>		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			
<b>NOVEMBER</b>					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	
<b>DECEMBER</b>							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					



## APPENDIX B

Vermont Waterfowl Seasons				
YEAR	SEASON TYPE	SEASON LENGTH	SEASON DATES	GENERAL BAG LIMIT
1942	Straight	70	Sept. 26 – Dec. 4	10-20
1943	Straight	70	Sept. 25 – Dec. 3	10-20
1944	Straight	80	Sept. 20 – Dec. 8	10-20
1945	Straight	80	Sept. 20 – Dec. 8	7-14
1946	Straight	45	Oct. 5 – Nov. 18	7-14
1947	Straight	30	Oct. 21 – Nov. 19	3-6
1948	Straight	30	Oct. 15 – Nov. 13	3-6
1949	Straight	40	Oct. 21 – Nov. 29	3-6
1950	Straight	40	Oct. 20 – Nov. 28	3-6
1951	Straight	45	Oct. 12 – Nov. 25	3-6
1952	Straight	55	Oct. 7 – Nov. 11	3-6
1953	Straight	60	Oct. 5 – Dec. 3	3-6
1954	Straight	60	Oct. 10 – Dec. 8	3-6
1955	Straight	70	Oct. 5 – Dec. 13	3-6
1956	Straight	70	Oct. 5 – Dec. 13	3-6
1957	Straight	70	Oct. 10 – Dec. 18	3-6
1958	Straight	60	Oct. 10 – Dec. 8	3-6
1959	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28	3-6
1960	Straight	50	Oct. 7 – Nov. 25	3-6
1961	Straight	40	Oct. 14 – Nov. 22	3-6
1962	Straight	40	Oct. 12 – Nov. 20	3-6
1963	Split	45	Oct. 11 – Oct. 27 / Nov. 11 – Dec. 8	3-6
1964	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28	3-6
1965	Straight	50	Oct. 16 – Dec. 4	3-6
1966	Straight	55	Oct. 8 – Dec. 1	3-6
1967	Split	45	Oct. 7 – Nov. 4 / Nov. 25 – Dec. 10	3-6
1968	Straight	50	Oct. 12 – Nov. 30	3-6
1969	Straight	50	Oct. 11 – Nov. 29	3-6
1970	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28	4-8
1971	Straight	50	Oct. 9 – Nov. 27	4-8
1972	Split	50	Oct. 7 – Oct. 15 / Oct. 28 – Dec. 7	4-8
1973	Split	45	Oct. 6 – Oct. 21 / Nov. 3 – Dec. 1	4-8
1974	Straight	50	Oct. 9 – Nov. 27*	4-8
1975	Straight	50	Oct. 8 – Nov. 26*	4-8
1976	Straight	50	Oct. 6 – Nov. 24*	4-8
1977	Straight	50	Oct. 5 – Nov. 23*	4-8
1978	Straight	50	Oct. 4 – Nov. 22*	4-8
1979	Split	50	Oct. 3 – Oct. 14 / Oct. 27 – Dec. 3*	4-8
1980	Straight	50	Oct. 8 – Nov. 26*	4-8
1981	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28*	4-8

## Vermont Waterfowl Seasons – Page 2

YEAR	SEASON TYPE	SEASON LENGTH	SEASON DATES	GENERAL BAG LIMIT
1982	Split	50	Oct. 2 – Oct. 10 / Oct. 16 – Nov. 25*	5-10
1983	Split	50	Oct. 8 – Oct. 16 / Oct. 22 – Dec. 1*	5-10
1984	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28*	5-10
1985	Zoned**	40	Oct. 9 – Oct. 13 / Oct. 26 – Nov. 29 (LCZ)* Oct. 9 – Nov. 17 (IVZ)	5-10 5-10
1986	Zoned**	40	Oct. 8 – Oct. 12 / Oct. 25 – Nov. 28 (LCZ)* Oct. 8 – Nov. 16 (IVZ)	5-10 5-10
1987	Zoned**	40	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11 / Oct. 24 – Nov. 27 (LCZ)* Oct. 7 – Nov. 15 (IVZ)	4-8 4-8
1988	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 8 – Oct. 23 / Nov. 24 – Dec. 7 (LCZ)* Oct. 8 – Oct. 30 / Nov. 24 – Nov. 30 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1989	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 11 – Oct. 29 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 3 (LCZ) Oct. 11 – Nov. 5 / Nov. 23 – Nov. 26 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1990	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 10 – Oct. 21 / Nov. 15 – Dec. 2 (LCZ) Oct. 10 – Nov. 4 / Nov. 22 – Nov. 25 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1991	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 12 – Oct. 27 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 6 (LCZ) Oct. 12 – Nov. 3 / Nov. 25 – Dec. 1 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1992	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11 / Nov. 7 – Dec. 1 (LCZ) Oct. 7 – Nov. 1 / Nov. 26 – Nov. 29 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1993	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 20 – Nov. 7 / Nov. 25 – Dec. 5 (LCZ) Oct. 13 – Nov. 7 / Nov. 25 – Nov. 28 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1994	Zoned/Split	40	Oct. 15 – Nov. 6 / Nov. 19 – Dec. 5 (LCZ) Oct. 8 – Nov. 9 / Nov. 21 – Nov. 27 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1995	Zoned/Split	50	Oct. 11 – Oct. 22 / Nov. 4 – Dec. 11 (LCZ) Oct. 4 – Nov. 12 / Nov. 18 – Nov. 27 (IVZ)	4-8 4-8
1996	Zoned/Split	50	Oct. 9 – Oct. 20 / Nov. 2 – Dec. 9 (LCZ) Oct. 2 – Nov. 11 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 1 (IVZ)	5-10 5-10
1997	Zoned**	60	Oct. 4 – Oct. 19 / Oct. 25 – Dec. 7 (LCZ) Oct. 4 – Dec. 2 (IVZ)	4-8*** 4-8***
1998	Zoned**	60	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11 / Oct. 17 – Dec. 10 (LCZ) Oct. 7 – Dec. 5 (IVZ)	6-12 6-12
1999	Zoned**	60	Oct. 6 – Oct. 11 / Oct. 23 – Dec. 15 (LCZ) Oct. 6 – Dec. 4 (IVZ)	6-12 6-12
2000	Zoned/Split	60	Oct. 7 – Oct. 9 / Oct. 21 – Dec. 16 (LCZ) Oct. 7 – Nov. 12 / Nov. 18 – Dec. 10 (IVZ)	6-12 6-12
2001	Zoned/Split	60	Oct. 10 – Oct. 14 / Oct. 20 – Dec. 13 (LCZ) Oct. 10 – Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 2 – Nov. 4 / Nov. 21 – Dec. 16 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2002	Zoned/Split	60	Oct. 9 – Oct. 13 / Oct. 22 – Dec. 15 (LCZ) Oct. 9 – Nov. 14 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 15 (IVZ) Oct. 2 – Nov. 5 / Nov. 27 – Dec. 21 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12

## Vermont Waterfowl Seasons – Page 3

YEAR	SEASON TYPE	SEASON LENGTH	SEASON DATES	GENERAL BAG LIMIT
2003	Zoned**	60	Oct. 11 - Oct. 13 / Oct. 25 - Dec. 20 (LCZ) Oct. 11 - Dec. 9 (IVZ) Oct. 7 - Nov. 9 / Nov. 26 - Dec. 21 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2004	Zoned**	60	Oct. 6 - Oct. 10 / Oct. 23 - Dec. 16 (LCZ) Oct. 6 - Dec. 4 (IVZ) Oct. 5 - Nov. 14 / Nov. 24 - Dec. 12 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2005	Zoned**	60	Oct. 5 – Oct. 10 / Oct. 26 – Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 5 – Dec. 3 (IVZ) Oct. 4 – Nov.13/ Nov. 23 - Dec. 11 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2006	Zoned**	60	Oct. 7- Oct. 15/ Oct. 25 - Dec. 14 (LCZ) Oct. 7 - Dec. 5 (IVZ) Oct. 3 - Nov. 5/ Nov. 22 - Dec. 17 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2007	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10- Oct. 14/ Oct. 27 - Dec. 20 (LCZ) Oct. 10- Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 3- Nov. 4/ Nov. 21 - Dec. 17 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2008	Zoned**	60	Oct. 8- Oct. 12/ Oct. 25 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 8- Dec. 6 (IVZ) Oct. 2- Nov. 2/ Nov. 23 - Dec. 20 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2009	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10- Oct. 13/ Oct. 24 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 10- Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 6- Nov. 8/ Nov. 25 - Dec. 20 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2010	Zoned**	60	Oct. 6-Oct. 10/Oct. 23 - Dec. 16 (LCZ) Oct. 6-Dec. 4 (IVZ) Oct. 5-Nov. 7/ Nov. 24 – Dec. 19 (CRZ)	6-12 6-12 6-12
2011	Zoned**	60	Oct. 12-Oct. 16/Oct. 29 - Dec. 22 (LCZ) Oct. 12-Dec 10 (IVZ) Oct. 4-Nov. 6/Nov. 23- Dec. 18 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2012	Zoned**	60	Oct. 13-Oct. 17/Oct. 27 - Dec. 20 (LCZ) Oct. 13-Dec 11 (IVZ) Oct. 2-Nov. 4/Nov. 21- Dec. 16 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2013	Zoned**	60	Oct. 9-Oct. 13/Oct. 26 - Dec. 19 (LCZ) Oct. 9-Dec 7 (IVZ) Oct. 2-Nov. 3/Nov. 19- Dec. 15 (CRZ)*****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2014	Zoned**	60	Oct. 8-Oct. 12/Oct. 25- Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 8-Dec. 6 (IVZ) Oct. 2-Nov. 2/Nov. 16- Dec. 13 (CRZ)*****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2015	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10-Oct. 14/Oct. 24- Dec. 17 (LCZ) Oct. 10-Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 6-Nov. 5/Nov. 15- Dec. 13 (CRZ)*****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2016	Zoned**	60	Oct. 12-Oct. 16/Oct. 29- Dec. 22 (LCZ) Oct. 12-Dec. 10 (IVZ) Oct. 4-Nov. 6/Nov. 22- Dec. 22 (CRZ)*****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2017	Zoned**	60	Oct. 11-Oct. 15/Nov. 7 - Dec. 31 (LCZ) Oct. 11-Dec. 9 (IVZ) Oct. 3-Nov. 5/Nov. 22- Dec. 17 (CRZ)*****	6-18 6-18 6-18

\* Regular season was followed by a 16-day special goldeneye/scaup season – 3-bird bag

- \*\* Lake Champlain Zone – Split Season  
Interior Vermont Zone – Straight Season
- \*\*\* Two teal (either blue-winged or green-winged) allowed in addition to regular bag limit
- \*\*\*\* Connecticut River Zone set by New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission, same as NH Inland Zone